Subject Category: Social Sciences

A Historical interrogation on Cameroon Government Retorts to Anglophone Marginalisation Expressions 1961-2016

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Abstract

The Republic of Cameroon today torn apart by a seemingly failing effort of integration was established by reunifying two former factors of German Kamerun in 1961. This created in the new republic two constitutional identities; the Anglophone and the Francophone each made of an area and a people having been governed by the United Kingdom and France respectively under international supervision since the end of the First World War. The ensuing reunifying constitution made integrating these factions capital. This integration, the Anglophone faction have recurrently blamed for being bias as it subjected them to marginalisation. In this paper, note is taken of the array of literature on marginalisation to make an analyses of the efforts made by government in response to the expressions of marginalisation as decried by Anglophones. The paper observes existing realness in Anglophone marginalisation and argues that since reunification, government has continuously made responses to the plight of Anglophones though most often, these efforts are half-baked and emerge largely as a result of resistances which are at times violent from the marginalised minority. To this extent, marginalisation has continued unabated making the achievement of national integration problematic.

Keywords: Marginalisation, integration, government efforts, constitution.

INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND

The territory known today as the republic of Cameroon came under German sovereignty in 1884 as a German protectorate. This was sanctioned by the Germano-Douala Treaty signed between German authorities and local chiefs of the Douala area, in particular, then, gradually German influence was extended into the interior through conquest and diplomatic arrangements with the indigenous people of the interior as well as the signing of frontier agreements with the British and the French to establish the international boundaries of German Kamerun [1]. Thirty-two years after the signing of the Germano-Douala Treaty, this German protectorate was partitioned by the British and French in 1916 following the defeat of the Germans in the territory and disagreement between Britain and France over the administration of the territory by way of a condominium [2].

At the post First World War settlement in Paris, there emerged the idea of putting in place a world body with the objective to guarantee world peace. This world body, (League of Nations) came into being in 1919 with a number of functional agencies established to ensure the achievement of the leagues goals [3]. These arrangements continued to evolve in both British and French Cameroon until the disruption of the world order by the Second World War. By the end of the war, the United Nations Organisation had succeeded the League of Nations as the world's organization in charge of guaranteeing world peace. This new organization like the league established agencies with which to effectively carryout its mission. Thus the responsibility of the Permanent Mandate Commission was inherited by the United Nations Trusteeship Council [4].

The terms of trusteeship for each territory to be placed under the Trusteeship System, including any alteration or amendment, shall be agreed upon by the states directly concerned, including the Mandatory power in the case of territories held under Mandate by a member of the United Nations, and shall be approved as provided for in Articles 83 and 85 [5].

With respect to this article, Britain and France once more engaged in separate agreements which guided the administration of their respective factions of the Cameroons under United Nations trusteeship. Whatever was to be the terms of the exclusive agreements, Article 87 of the Charter stated that the functions and powers of the Trusteeship Council included consideration of reports submitted by the administering authorities, acceptance and examination of petitions and provision of periodic visits to the trust territories. This was to ensure that the council attained its ultimate goal which according to a statement made by UN Secretary General, Trygve Lie while addressing the opening session of the Trusteeship Council on 26 March 1947, was:

> … to give the Trust Territories full statehood... A successful Trusteeship System will afford a reassuring demonstration that there is a peaceful and orderly means of achieving the difficult transition from backward and subject status to self-government or independence, to political and economic self-reliance [6].

On the bases of this therefore, Britain and France were under obligation to ensure the enhancement of their respective spheres of Cameroon to self-government and eventually to independence whether this fell within their colonial aspirations or not.

In the pursuit to attain UN Trusteeship Council goals and with pressure from Cameroonian nationalists, French Cameroun became independent as *La Republique du Cameroun* 0n January 1, 1960 and in October 1, 1961; the southern part of British Cameroon following the results of a plebiscite held on February 11, 1961 joined *La Republique du Cameroun* to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon. It is important to emphasise here that the plebiscite was a consequence of divided opinion over the subject of how the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration will emerge to independence. With the outcome of the plebiscite being reunification for Southern Cameroon, the established political division was carried into the reunified Cameroon. Consequently, the constitutional making process required national integration processes that could accommodate not only the bi-cultural nature of the territory established by the 1916 partition but equally to nit a fine link between opposing political opinion that still loomed over the subject of reunification in former British Southern Cameroon after the plebiscite in an effort to effectively integrate the different fragments in the territory. On account of this, the option of a federal constitution was adopted in view of integrating the divergence in culture developed throughout colonial history as briefed above. Within these integrative efforts emerged the problem of inequality as the former Southern Cameroons which initially became West Cameroon accounted for just about one fifth of the total land surface of the area and

about a quarter of its population making them a minority. It is on this count that studies on relations between the former Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon have often been characterised by the subject of Anglophone marginalisation typically emerging from existing/developing inequalities.

The subject of Anglophone marginalisation as a whole has been developed in an array of literature Suh, Ebune and Konings and Nyamjoh focused their studies on the foundations of Anglophone Cameroonian marginalisation with varying areas of emphases, Suh [7] points to the absence of clarity in the international law of self-determination which made entrepreneurs of statehood to engage politically in contending and often overlapping approaches to territorial sovereignty and statehood. According to him, it was the ambiguous nature of the principle of self-determination developed into diverse political ideologies in British Southern Cameroons prompting the UN to grant independence to the territory through a plebiscite. Following this plebiscite results, he asserts, British Southern Cameroon could only attain independence by reunifying with French Cameroon. The tempting political option of self-determination resurrected in the 1990s when the former Southern Cameroonians started demanding for their independence. From the author's point of view, the absence of clarity in the UN principle of self-determination laid a foundation for what has become the Anglophone problem.

To Ebune [8], the unrealistic goal of the federal system of government that was adopted in 1961 when British Southern Cameroon and *La Republique du Cameroun* united was central in the eventual marginalisation of the Anglophones. He makes an analysis of the role played by Southern Cameroonians which made their aspirations a failure and observes that the federal structure was simply an annexation of the state of West Cameroon by *La Republique of Cameroun*. The Federal constitution that was adopted according to Ebune gave the Head of state absolute powers as opposed to the loose Federation proposed by Foncha making it unfavourable for integration as there was the absence of revenue allocation formula that could separate power between the Federal government and federated state governments in the Federal constitution. To this author, marginalisation was evident as early as 1959 when Southern Cameroon politicians failed to agree at the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference on the form of independence for their territory. The desire to satisfy personal interest contributed to the collapse of the federal system and facilitated the annexation of West Cameroon state by the Republic of Cameroon.

Konings and Nyamjoh [9] see marginalisation as emanating from inequality that emerged following the adoption of a two states federation in 1961, that is West Cameroon and East Cameroon. They traced the

Anglophone problem to the creation of colonial boundaries by Britain and France. Contrary to the general tendency among Anglophones to blame Francophone elites for the Anglophone problem, the authors observe that Anglophone political leaders bear an important share of the responsibility of the Anglophone predicament. The authors have equally talked about Anglophone reactions to marginalization and creation of movements to that effect.

The development and expression of marginalisation and its evolution has also attracted academic discourse with the works of Jua and Konings, Kah, Kenfo and Ami-Nyoh and taking diverse but related positions. Jua and Konings [10] liken the reunification to a loveless marriage arranged by the United Nations between two people who hardly knew each other. They bring instances of discrimination against the Anglophone community and Anglophone reactions against marginalization. They assert and provide narratives to argue that there exists ample evidence to demonstrate that Anglophone nationalism is the result of a long process of Anglophone identity formation and is currently feeding on the multiple grievances of Anglophones in the post-reunification era. To Kah [11], Ahidjo exploited his position as a leader of an independent country to dictate the terms of negotiation as concerns the federation that was adopted in 1961. The author concludes that, Ahidjo exploited some articles of the Federal constitution to his favour and argued that for national unity to be achieved, Cameroonians should look beyond their narrow horizons and their gullibility. This approach to governing systematically exposed the Anglophone Cameroonians to discrimination. Kenfo [12] observes that the 1972 referendum accelerated the frustration of Anglophones and occasioned differences that emerged between Ahidjo and Foncha.

Ami-Nyoh [13] in an attempt to demonstrate the constitutional manifest of marginalisation which rendered the policy of national integration difficult to realise observes that reunification between *La Republique du Cameroon* and Southern Cameroons in 1961 could be aptly described as the coming together of a master and his servant so that the master could adequately exert authority over his subject. The national integration process, which in the sense of constitutional processes, would have been enhanced by the federal constitution was rather marred by it, since there seemed to have been nothing federal in the constitution except the existence of federated institutions that unfortunately were soon eroded by federal institutions even before the demise of the federal system. This state of affairs has often been used by Cameroonians of former West Cameroon extraction to generalise the blame of the failing integration and the denigration of their identity on the citizens of former French Cameroon faction as if all the citizens were at decision making positions.

Fonchingong [14] on his part gives an account of the efforts made by Anglophones in their quest for autonomy as orchestrated by marginalisation. He presents the galvanisation of concerted action posed by Anglophones since 1980, the strengths and weaknesses that characterised these efforts and how government tried to frustrate the efforts put up by Anglophones. He asserts that although Anglophone activists have proclaimed the restoration of the sovereignty and independence of the Southern Cameroons at various instances, composed an anthem, designed a flag and applied for membership in international organisations such as the United Nations Organisation, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), and the Commonwealth of Nations, the reestablishment of the autonomy of the Anglophone region remains a forlorn hope, unless Anglophones sink their differences, put the common good before individual interest and decide to fight it.

These studies have enriched the literature on the origins of Anglophone marginalisation showing the different areas of discrimination exacted on Anglophones as well as efforts made by Anglophones to express their grievances which developed from the quest for constitutional reforms or the return to federation, pleas for separate identity institutions and symbols to secessionist stance. It is on the heels of these that this paper attempts an analyses of efforts made by government in response to the plight of Anglophones. To this effect, the paper argues that government responses have very often than not been in response to demonstrations stages by Anglophones rather than an urge to erase identity discrimination. Consequently, these responses have been half-heartedly received by the complainants as they observe continuing marginalisation.

Constitutional Responses
There is argument that in the Cameroon Republic, the federal idea was among some political shades accepted only as a temporary measure. Shortly after the Northern Cameroon plebiscite, in which the Northern Cameroon population voted for the integration with Nigeria, a conference under the theme "Reunification of Federation" was held by the Cercle Culturel Camerounais, a group founded by Cameroonian students in France. The conclusion drawn at the conference was that federalism was not the best form of government for a reunified Cameroon. [15] They however asserted that federalism was appropriate for the immediate situation to give time for the harmonization of the different cultures. This was communicated thus:

> *Donc, a moins d'être démagogue, tout le monde doit convenir que c'est une fédération qu'il nous faut aujourd'hui. Mais une fédération fondamentalement provisoire, transitoire et dont le dynamisme puisse nous*

acheminer, le plus tôt possible, vers un Etat unitaire, seul idéal de tous les heros du nationalisme camerounais et que plusieurs ont déjà payé de leur sang...il faut pour cela un délais, mais un délai n'est qu'un délai [16].

Therefore, the preferred model of reunification for these students' bloc was clearly a unitary state. With federation having been accepted as a temporal measure, they recommended that one legislative chamber be considered with a strong central government as well as no state Prime Ministers to avoid cost on the economy. What however came out of the Foumban arrangement had some nuances with their aspirations. It is in these regard that constitutional issues take precedence in the subject of Cameroon Anglophone marginalisation. In reality, marginalisation as presented in existing literature largely emanated from failed constitutional aspirations, a failure which sustained inequalities and engendered discrimination at diverse levels.

In concise terms, political developments leading to the establishment of a one party system in Cameroon, described in political lexicons of the time as efforts towards national cannot be disassociated from constitutional lapses which gave the head of state, the powers to rule by decree. With such powers, acts of subversion rather than being a declaration of state laws initiated by the judiciary on the basis of the law were declarations of the president which he used to brutally repress all acts of opposition. In 1965 for instance, a West Cameroonian deputy, Anthony Nguijoh dared to propose reforms to the electoral system with the hope that the electorate will be provided with a wider choice of candidates for elections to the National Assembly. He was charged with subversion and given a two year custodial sentence by a Victoria based Military Tribunal [17]. To Anglophones of West Cameroon extraction, such action was disintegratory though to the regime it could represent republicanism given that the constitution had subjected the judiciary to the president and therefore any reform proposal that could mar the intended power protection of the president could be treated by the 'president's court' as an act of subversion. Therefore, by use of presidential prerogatives, constitutional options which could have enhanced civil and political rights were marred, forcing citizens to live in dissonance [18]. In this case, some Anglophones naturally judged the act as discriminatory to their identity. It is possible that this had an impact on the amplification of UPC activities understood in Cameroonian pro-leadership lexicons of the times as acts of terrorism. It was within such political tension that the federal instruments were dismantled for a unitary system to be adopted in Cameroon. This was however nothing but a failed effort on the part of government to enhance national integration by integrating the Anglophones while effectively expanding their grievances.

With the federal instruments eroded, the Anglophones minority saw their identity clearly denied as articles of the constitution and state symbols as well as institutions that reflected the dual heritage of the country were gradually dismembered. Institutionally, there was, for instance, the abolition of the state houses of assembly and the West Cameroon House of Chiefs. Symbolically, one of the two stars on the tricolour flag (green, red, yellow), which represented West Cameroon, since they were the reason for its introduction, was removed in 1975. With this change, former West Cameroonians saw their dominance by their francophone counterparts heightened as the new flag with a single star was actually the pre-reunification flag of East Cameroon. This is because as Dze-Ngwa and Lang put it; "the various symbols of Cameroon were fashioned in an effort to aid the process of national unity" [19]. If West Cameroonians presumably were comfortable with the referendum to have massively voted in favour of a unitary constitution as the referendum figures portray, they were at least frustrated with its institutional and symbolic relegation and somewhat rejection of their identity. But then, they had no choice except to remain comfortable with what they did not engage for in 1961. The regime in power had used decrees to create administrative services whose powers undermined those of state authority, leaving the citizens in West Cameroon with the permanent impression that the state government had nothing to offer [20]. This undesirable situation however skyrocketed when in 1984 the name of the country changed from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon; the name of the independent country with which British Southern Cameroons reunified to form the Republic of Cameroon [21]. This provoked tention and mistrust in reunification amongst Anglophones some of whom took secession as an option declaring the independence of a country they named Republic of Ambazonia with numerous groups created to fight the Anglophone plight.

This pressure from the anglophones coincided however with national pressure for reforms that spurred the government to convene the Tripartite Conference leading to the constitution of 1996 which according to the government was an opening of a landscape to the worries that were explained during AAC I and AAC II. The Tripartite Conference was convened by president Paul Biya from 30th October to 18th November 1991 to solve the political and economic crisis caused by radical opposition parties' protracted ghost town campaign was attended by representatives of government, opposition parties and civil society. At the end of the Tripartite Conference, a technical committee was set up to work on constitutional matters under Joseph Owona, Secretary General at the Presidency of the Republic as Chairperson. Among the members of the committee were Anglophones like Benjamin Itoe, Barrister Sam Ekontang Elad, Dr Carlson Anyagwe who became

inspired and organised the All Anglophone Conference I held on the 2nd April and 3rd 1993 in Buea to discuss Anglophone participation and contribution to the national debate on constitutional reforms in Cameroon [22].

AAC I as well as AAC II, called for the return of the federal system and declared the unitary constitution as illegal. In response to this quest, the government controversially terminated the constitutional process by promulgating the 1996 constitutional which opted for a decentralized Unitary state. This approach was out rightly contradictory of constitutional making and instances especially if such is intended to deliver the peoples' desires. Constitutions, Aristotle opined, gave an identity to the polis, which meant that a change in the constitution brought about a change in the polis:

> For since the *polis* is a community of citizens in a constitution, when the constitution of the citizens changes and becomes different in kind, the *polis* also does. We may compare with a chorus, which may at one time perform in a tragedy and at another in a comedy and so be different in kind, yet all the while be composed of the same person [23].

In this direction, Aristotle stresses the importance of citizens' participation in constitutional procedures to ensure that they are committed to it because it is the citizens' commitment that makes the objective of the constitution to be attained. In the Cameroon constitutional development process, very insignificant efforts were made to ensure citizens' commitment to it. Consequently, an identity frustrated by constitutional provisions naturally preferred to resist and where reforms were not introduced to remedy the situation, calls for secession emerged.

The preamble of the 1996 constitution clearly stated that, the state shall ensure the protection of minorities and shall preserve the rights of autochthonous population in accordance with the law [24]. The constitution transformed Cameroon into a decentralized Unitary State with provinces [25]. The clause on decentralization was in response to the Anglophone plea for federalism which to an extent brought the people closer to the government. Notwithstanding, government failure to quickly compliment this decentralization hastily waved away the good faith which some Anglophones had nursed in the effort. But while the constitution preached protection of minority rights, did the administrator/politician ensure its application? The No which answers this question is the reason for which Anglophones have continued to decry inequalities in government appointments, public service positions, recruitments in the military amongst others. As their grievances were not adequately attended to, this identity began to quest for institutions that will guaranty the welfare of their identity.

The Institutional Response

The federal constitution made the English and French languages the official languages in the Federal Republic of Cameroon. At the level of education, bilingualism was introduced in order to foster the bilingual nature of the country. In an effort to enhance bilingualism and achieve national integration an experiment on bilingualism was conducted in the Buea Bilingual College where an equal number of Anglophone and Francophone students were admitted to follow intense linguistic courses in each of the official languages. These students were put together in linguistic classes and taught for two years in French and English. At the end of the four years of training, the Anglophones and Francophones were to sit for the BEPC examination but the Francophones were not obliged to sit for the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary level because the course dispensed in the 5th year of the Francophone system had nothing to do with the set Anglophone examination questions. This practice was interpreted by the Anglophones as assimilation and was particularly disadvantageous to the Anglophones because it did not allow for effective preparation for the General Certificate of Education examination [26]. Therefore the attempt by government to enhance the teaching and learning of the two official languages conversely ended in the provocation of request for a separate examination board for the English sub-system of education occasioned by imbalance in the application of the policy on bilingual training.

The quest for the establishment of an autonomous GCE Board which started in 1983, continued till 1993. The pressure from TAC and the parents made the Minister of National Education, Mbella Mbappe to forward a report with favourable comments to the Prime Minister on 7th January which was to be passed to the presidency for a final decision. Responding to this request, a decree creating the General Certificate of Education Board was signed on July 1, 1993. On October 25, 1993, the GCE board was effectively established in Buea and Sylvester Dioh was appointed its first Chairman, Andrew Wara, the TAC President was appointed its first Registrar [27]. This institution became the official body responsible for setting, marking and distributing public examination results for the English sub-section of Education in Cameroon for secondary schools at two stages; Ordinary and Advanced levels. Though it took too long for this decision to be arrived at, it was a positive response from the Cameroon government because this institution was purely an Anglo Saxon institution created to preserve the Anglo Saxon culture there by curbing down the fear of "frenchification" of the Anglophone culture.

Another institutional area where Anglophones expressed their marginalisation was in the domain of higher education. Cameroon higher education started when the Federal University of Cameroon opened its doors in 1962. By the end of the 1977/78 academic year it was observed that this institution with about ten establishments was facing numerous challenges including; a student population rising above infrastructure and staffing viability, orchestrating numerous deficiencies one of them being the problem of language use drawn from the linguistically diverse nature of the country [28]. The problem of student-lecturer ratio and congestion posed the problem of success rates which in 1992 stood at 30% resulting from congested lecture rooms and linguistic diversity. Within this context the numerical superiority of French-speaking lecturers made things worse as marginalisation was decried by English-speaking students who were disfavoured by the policy of individual bilingualism [29]. According to Tambi and Njeck at the University of Yaounde, 80% of lectures were delivered in French and only 20% in English. In the midst of these disparities, it became common for English-speaking students to blame poor results to the fact that the professors lacked the linguistic competence to properly understand andcorrect scripts in their second language [30]. Such cleavages provoked the rise of a series of strikes from English-speaking students which Konings has termed; "Anglophone nationalist struggle" [31]. As a result of these pressures and other weaknesses suffered by the system, the Cameroon university system was reformed. This reformation gave birth to five additional universities out of which three were made to practise individual bilingualism these were the Universities of Douala, Dschang and Yaounde II and the two others were unilingual ; the University of Buea and Ngaoundere [32].

The creation of the University of Buea as an Anglo saxon University was a government response to the rising request for a solution to Anglophone students plight in the University of Yaounde. This newly created university emerging out of the 1993 Cameroon university reforms was made monolingual with English as a unique language of instruction. According to Ngwana [33], the birth of unilingual universities actually helped in increasing university success rates in the country. Students' success rate which in 1992 stood at 30% in the then university of Yaounde generally observed an increase as in 1995/96, that of the University of Buea was 70%, University of Dschang 48%, and University of Yaounde one 48%. Thus, the reforms did well in shifting success rates upward [33]. Though the reform succeeded in improving success rates, it actually stifled the achievement of unity in diversity, as young learners in the unilingual institutions remained disconnected from their fellow countrymen of the opposite culture. Over and above this, the gap between Anglophones and Francophones was widened

in the context lof human resource development as the increase in success rate was not however directly translated into increase post-university success rates considering that in the professional institutions which till present are the major access routes to public service jobs in Cameroon were French language dominated. In addition to Frenchspeaking staff dominance in these public service institutions, access was a great problem as competitive entrance examinations into institutions like Ecole Normale d'Enseignement Technique (ENSET) Douala and the National Advance School of Engineering were often in French language or atleast based of the curricula of the french subsystem of education. Therefore, the policy of Buea unilingual university did not effectively establish any safe haven towards enhancing the higher education prospects of anglophones. It is worthy to emphasise here that students' academic efforts are primarily guided by the need to acquire a better job, to earn a good salary, to gain an appreciation of ideas, and to prepare for graduate or professional school [34]. Therefore the opening of an anglo-saxon university in Buea and latter in Bamenda while being a response to anglophone demands did not effectively overcome the problem of marginalisation in the educational sector.

Even with the creation of the UB in 1994, the Anglophones still felt that the departments were not enough to handle the challenges that the Anglophone students were facing at the time. With the ups and downs of Ombe technical school in the South West Province of the Anglophone region where the representatives of the Union of Parent Teachers' Trade Association, UPTA, and the Cameroon's Teachers Trade Union, CATTU, campaigned to persuade parents to withdraw their children From Government Technical Colleges saying children pursuing studies in those Technical Schools have no future, because of lack of qualified staff and poorly-equipped workshops and said the campaign will intensify if government failed to create Advanced Technical College for Anglophones with same status as the Polytechnique Yaoundé [35]. and the low profile attitude of Anglophones on technical education by the 1980s and 1990s up to about 2000s made Anglophones to find themselves wanting and everything that had to do technical education was in French Cameroon. Most Cameroonian pupils progressing to secondary schools choose general education rather than technical, nevertheless, with an increase in unemployment, technical education graduates have had for the pass years an edge over their general education peers in finding employment [36]. Higher Technical Teacher Training College (HTTTC) Bambili was then created with the hope that teachers could emerge to be able to teach in technical schools in Anglophone Cameroon. This culminated in the demand by the Teacher's Syndicate spearheaded by the frequent strikes in the University of Buea crowding in the university hostels and overcrowding in the Amphi

Theatres. The University of Buea alone could not accommodate the population that was flowing from the Anglophone backgrounds. Consequently, demands for the creation of another Anglo Saxon university were made by civil society organisations and politicians for which of course by 2011 the government responded positively.

Deconstruction of the Anglophone Identity by Government

The reaction of Anglophones at the time of democratization became manifest in the emergence of an opposition party, the SDF and other Anglophone movements which posed a series of threat to the national stability. In reaction government adopted some strategies to deal with the Anglophone problem. One of such approaches was trivialisation by which the separateness of the Anglophone identity was simply ignored by brandishing the common identity which the two cultures had under German rule. President Paul Biya argued that the unitary system was the best and suitable form of state to Cameroonians within a multi-ethnic context and that the unitary system adopted in 1972 was as a result of a referendum ballot and therefore expressed the wishes of Cameroonian. There was also the practice of demonisation by which authorities in government equated federalists thinkers to secessionists. Paul Biya persistently suspected secession was a hidden agenda of the Anglophone strife for federalism. He was not very far from the truth as this was evident in the Southern Cameroons National Council celebration of independence by hoisting of their blue and white flags in parts of Anglophone Cameroon. Anglophone leaders along these lines were therefore presented by the government as extremists and radicals [37].

In response to the Anglophone problem, the government of Cameroon also used the divide-and-rule tactic with considerable success splitting Anglophones by using the cultural and ethnic differences that exist between the North West and South West Regions taking advantage of the fact that the two Anglophone regions are geographically and culturally dissimilar. Apart from colonial experience, there is no marker of identity for the people of North West and South West [38]. Through this approach government created an intra-Anglophone rivalry that was used to weaken the Anglophone community. Developing from this state agenda, the population of the South West region began to complain about North West domination in political representation, Paul Biya quickly responded by appointing Peter Mafany Musonge of South West origin to replace Simon Achidi Achu who was of North West origin as Prime Minister in 1996. Subsequently, more politicians of South West background were appointed into cabinet positions and the ruling party. In this way, government was succeeded to propagate that the people of the North West Region and not Francophones were the real enemies of South Westerners [39]. Seemingly this action was alternatively used to lay same blame on the population of the South West Region when the regime appointed someone of the North West to the position of Prime Minister, Head of Government.

Repression to dilute the attempts of anti-centralist also took centre stage. The members of the Anglophone movements created in the 1990s were frequent victims of government repression. A case in point could be seen from government's refusal to permit the AAC I hold in 1993 at the campus of the University of Buea and in 1994 the government attempted to obstruct the organisation of the AAC II in Bamenda that it was planning secessionist moves [40]. The agents of the government attempted to obstruct the holding of the AAC II by announcing over Cameroon Radio Television (CRTV) that the meeting has been postponed by the conveners and the announcement was purported to have been signed by Dr Simon Munzu, Dr. Carlson Anyangwe and Barrister Sam Ekontang Elad all of whom refuted the claim. CRTV was not able to provide a copy of the announcement and refused to broadcast a disclaimer prepared by Dr. Simon Munzu [41]. However, the government might have tried to stop AAC I from holding at the University campus purposely because it was an academic environment which in normal circumstances should not be involved in matters that concern politics. The University Campus was not a safe ground for such a meeting especially over the fact that it put the lives of students at risk.

CONCLUSION

The bone of contention in this paper has been to assess the reaction of government towards the recurrent decry of marginalisation by Anglophone Cameroonians. Drawing from an array of literature, marginalisation of Anglophone Cameroonians has been topical with divers positions taken by government to address the ugly phenomenon. From the findings of this paper, there is hardly any consistency in government retort to the plight of Anglophones. Rather, there is evidence that each time the marginalised identity have brought their grievances to public space, some half-baked attention is given to portions of the grievances presented. These government efforts have usually inter-twined between trivialisation, repression, institutional change as well as constitutional shift. This persistence in the lack of coherence and consistency in addressing an age old problem have left marginalisation and Anglophone resistance to marginalisation unabated and seem to be at the centre of Anglophone radicalisation. By this approach, Cameroon has no guarantee of peace as the Anglophones continue to have reason for some sporadic though unfairly organised violent resistance.

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