

The impact of globalization on the protection of minorities: the Cameroon crisis

Introduction

According to Frank Lechner, *'since globalization is still unfolding, describing it is a bit like charting the course or gauging the flow of a river from midstream'*.¹ Nevertheless, the concept of globalization is frequently used in the media, which means that it has at least some, maybe vague meaning. In our opinion globalization can be seen as "widespread interaction" between different groups of humans.² As globalization is the result of exchanges that go beyond national borders, it may at the end blur those borders. Moreover, it impacts the relationship between national institutions and their corresponding territories. Although some regional forms of globalization³ should at least in some domains blur the boundaries within this superstructure, it may also have the undesired effect of sliding them. To support this idea, we would like to take the Cameroonian example.

Cameroon is a state composed of people of diverse origins, who, throughout history, have found themselves in territories with fluctuating borders. Recently, strong protests erupted from the English speaking part of the population, calling into question the existing boundaries. When a state ignores some of its citizens, within its borders, it weakens them, prompting these citizens to claim other borders. The Cameroonian State, while wishing to integrate its country into supra-state organizations, favored one of the linguistic and cultural communities- the Francophone one. The dominance of French in relation to English is present in several organizations of which Cameroon is a member. On the African continent, the process of integrating a state within a wider region often takes place at the expense of multiculturalism and multilingualism. By abandoning members of the population who are not part of the dominant culture, by integrating themselves more into Francophone organizations than Anglophones, and not caring about minorities, the will for globalization leads to an imperfect integration and possibly to new borders and states

This paper aims to describe the factors that leads to the current political, cultural and linguistic crisis in Cameroon. After a focus on the history of Cameroon and the role colonization played in the current situation, we will examine the structure of the state and the consequences it has on the design and the implementation of linguistic policies.

We will then concentrate on the international context. The Cameroonian case shows that to deeply understand the national conflict, it is necessary to have a look outside the states borders. Globalization and the regional and continental context also impact the national linguistic troubles. We will try to demonstrate how national institutions must first take the minorities living on their territory into account before engaging in the blurring of borders at the supra-state level.

¹ F.J. LECHNER, *Globalization: The Making of World Society*, 2009, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester.

² Larousse, *Dictionnaire de français en ligne*, <http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/mondialisation/52183>.

³ By globalization, we mean 'the integration of a population, a state, a structure within a larger structure'.

The current crisis

The triggering event

Since October 2016, several waves of strikes struck the English-speaking territory of Cameroon. The latter is composed of two out of the then regions of the country and has 5 million inhabitants (which is approximatively one fifth if the total population). The demonstrations were initially held for professional reasons but finally escalate into a social and political crisis.

The first strike was led by lawyers and took place on the 11th of October 2016. The reason was the announcement during the summer of a reform of the judicial system. This system, based on the Civil Code in the French-speaking part and on the Common Law in the Anglophone part of Cameroon, is bijuridical. Anglophones deplored the fact that they cannot dispose of certain legal documents in their own language.⁴ More specifically, Anglophone lawyers regretted the absence of translation of the uniform acts of the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA). Although this organization asserts using four working languages, namely French, English, Portuguese and Spanish, no English version of those legal texts were available.⁵

Furthermore, they denounced the presence of French-speaking judges, who were not familiar with the common law, in the English-speaking courts. They demanded judicial personnel that feels comfortable with the Common Law and is fluent in English. They also denounced that notaries were doing the work that should have been done by lawyers under the Common Law system.⁶

The claims concern various aspects and demonstrate that the specificity of the common law system is ignored in several respects.

On 8 November 2016, the lawyers mobilized in a higher number and asked again for the re-establishment of the common law system in the Anglophone part of Cameroon, like it used to be during the federal period.⁷ In fact, they also claim a federal state. Although this march was peaceful, the security forces arrested some participants.

Revolts also extend to the school environment. Following the recruitment of francophone teachers to teach in English schools without having English proficiency, six professional unions of English-speaking teachers of the northwestern city of Bamenda called parents, teachers and students for a strike on 21 November 2016. This manifestation was followed by a general mobilization of the Anglophones citizens.⁸⁹

On 28 November, the crisis, which had until then been limited to the Northwest, spread to the Southwest. Students at Buea University organized a peaceful march on the campus. They protested against the high cost of studies and asked for the cancellation of arrears due to late payment of tuition fees. Some students were arrested following the police repression of this demonstrations.¹⁰

⁴ <http://www.ohada.com/actualite/3228/cameroun-la-version-anglaise-des-textes-de-l-ohada-enfin-disponible.html>.

⁵ Treaty on the harmonization in Africa of Business Law, signed in Port Louis on 17 October 1993 as revised in Quebec on 17 October 2008, art. 42. See later, the impact of the international context on the linguistic conflicts in Cameroon.

⁶ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroon: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017.

⁷ See later, the part on the influence and weight of history.

⁸ <http://www.lapresse.ca/international/afrique/201612/01/01-5046869-cameroun-la-tension-monte-entre-francophones-et-anglophones.php>; <http://africatimes.com/2016/11/22/activists-cameroon-lawyer-protests-reflect-wider-social-injustices/>.

⁹ Not the first time, see events of 1994.

¹⁰ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroon: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017.

Negotiations and governmental measures

It is not the first time that Anglophones demand some changes. However, this time, the claims were so important that the government had to make concessions.

In December a negotiation process started between the Anglophone activists and the central authorities. The latter were represented by an ad hoc interministerial committee composed of four French-speaking ministries and the former by a consortium formed with associations of lawyers and teachers' unions.

To solve the issue of the assignment of francophone teachers with mediocre knowledge of English in Anglophone schools, the Cameroonian Head of State ordered the recruitment of 1,000 young teachers with perfect English proficiency and allocated a special fund of two billion CFA (app. 3 million of Euros) for private educational establishments. Nevertheless, the other claims, such as the one concerning the creation of a federal state, remained 'a dead letter'.

The most violent confrontation were on 8 December in Bamenda. A pro-government group organized a demonstration in the Anglophone regions, which occasioned a contra manifestation from the English speaking population. The government reacted with more militaries in the streets of Western Cameroon.¹¹

The breaking point

Government and activists were about to negotiate, but after police blunders on the 13th of January, this did not take place. The points accepted by the government included only the demands of the teachers and not of the judicial world or the English-speaking question more generally. There was little confidence for the Ad hoc Committee because it has only Francophone members. The government did not really want to hear about the possible changes in the structure of the state. Media houses that were 'promoting' federalism were prohibited and the meeting in favor of federalism which was supposed to happen in March was cancelled.¹² The day after, the consortium organized for the first time 'Ghosts Towns' by inviting all protesters not to leave their homes. It was possible to find completely empty streets in the cities of western Cameroon. Again, the government reacted to this and ordered on the 17th of January (till the 20th of April) an internet cut in the two Anglophone regions.

On the 23th of January, a National Commission on the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism, based on the one existing in Canada was created. However, it has no sanctioning power (it is rather an advisory board) and 9 members out of the 15 are Francophones.

Despite this measure, the crisis turned out to be more violent. « Night burners” put fire to public and private buildings.¹³

¹¹ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017 ; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/12/cameroon-excessive-force-that-led-to-deaths-of-protesters-must-be-urgently-investigated/>; http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/01/03/au-cameroun-les-negociations-avec-la-partie-anglophone-dans-l-impasse_5057153_3212.html.

¹² X

¹³ <http://observers.france24.com/en/20170110-cameroon-goes-quiet-operation-ghost-town-protest>, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-39665244>, ; <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-cameroon-protests/cameroon-orders-internet-restored-to-restive-anglophone-region-idUSKBN17M2EW>; International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 august 2017.

The response of March

Schools were closed and the 'ghost towns' phenomenon forced the government to take some additional measures. Those were presented by the Minister of Justice in March 2017. The head of the state is the one who appoints judges. He decided to transfer High Magistrates who could not speak English to Francophone regions.

The activists demanded the creation of a Common Law Section within the Supreme Court. The Minister of Justice was in charge of drafting a law amending the organization and functioning of the Supreme Court to include the Common Law Section; this resulted in the law of 3 July. The objective is that all cases coming from the Northwest and South-West Appeal Courts (the two Anglophone regions of Cameroon) will be examined by this English-language Section of the Supreme Court, in accordance with the Common Law.

English-speaking lawyers got the authorization to continue to practice notaries in the English-speaking regions.

Regarding the Ecole Nationale d'Administration et de Magistrature (ENAM), the authorities respected the will of the activists and announced the creation of a Common Law division. Furthermore, the organic texts of ENAM should normally be under revision to incorporate a Common Law component in the entry exam of the Anglophone participants. Also the creation of a Faculty of Legal and Political Sciences at the University of Buéa had been ordered. The Minister of Higher Education is preparing texts relating to the creation of the Departments of English Law in the francophone Universities of Douala, Maroua, Ngaoundere and Dschang.

The access to the internet was reestablished in April (after having reached the world record of the longest cut of access to the internet). According to several estimations, the direct cost of cutting access to internet alone can be put at CFA2 billion (€3 million).¹⁴

The continuation of the crisis

Even if the crisis seems to be running out of steam (mainly because of the economic consequences and pressure of the government), since the return of the Internet, the English-speaking mobilization continues virtually. Some radical groups call the population to stop paying taxes and to be violent towards Francophones. There is a general intimidation of the population that feel obligated to participate in strikes and in the ghost towns operations.

However, according to the activists, the initiatives of the government came too late. One calls now for structural state changes and the liberation of Anglophone activists who are still prisoned.

In June, the Anglophone activists added a new demand and asked the president for an Anglophone at the head of the Constitutional Council. This Council ensures the regularity of the presidential and

¹⁴ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017; Yonatan Morse, "Cameroon has been in crisis for six months. Here is what you need to know", *The Washington Post*, 2 June 2017; <https://www.cameroonweb.com/CameroonHomePage/NewsArchive/L-ENAM-aura-bient-t-une-section-de-la-Common-Law-409602>.

parliamentary elections and the referendum consultations and is therefore a very strategic function.¹⁵

To make up for the teaching days lost during the strikes and boycott, the students did not have any holidays in March and April and the duration of the academic year has been extended. Moreover, students and teachers who did not want to participate in the strike were exposed to violence and intimidations. Also for parents (especially mothers) the situation was difficult as they had to take care of their children during the 'no school' days. According to the International crisis group, this also caused 'increasing juvenile delinquency and teenage pregnancies'. In September, the new school year has started everywhere in Cameroon despite calls for a boycott from the Anglophone activists. By the end of July the trial of the key figures of the contestation had been postponed for the 4th time.¹⁶

Intern division

The crisis accentuates the gap between the views of the Anglophone population and the elite. Members of the elite, (including the prime Minister) attempted to mediate between the central government and the Anglophones activists but have been mocked by the demonstrators. Even in the activist groups, tensions appeared. The moderates call for effective decentralization or a federation with more than two states. The more radical ones, like the deputy Wirba, claim a federal state with two federated part or the secession.¹⁷ We will go through those different options later.

Francophone's viewpoint

Some francophone teachers in the Anglophone part feel discriminated and since January 2017, some francophone citizens experienced stigmatization and violence calls. In general Francophones are not in favor of federalism. They criticize Anglophones for playing the victims, while some problems, such as those affecting the economic crisis, are national in scope and affect Francophones as well.

However, although some of them support the governmental repression, there are exceptions agreeing with the Anglophone claims.¹⁸ Moreover, some Anglophones told that the personnel of public services in the capital Yaoundé treat them better and that greater attention was paid to bilingualism in the state communication, which is a sign of a bigger awareness from the Francophone's side.¹⁹

International reactions

¹⁵See <http://www.camernews.com/cameroun-the-president-of-constitutional-council-will-to-the-lest/#JOleGuEs4UC1ePq3.99>

¹⁶International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017 ; <http://www.camer.be/62762/6:1/cameroun-la-crise-anglophone-dans-limpasse-cameroon.html>; <http://www.bbc.com/afrique/region-41119838> .

¹⁷ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017; <http://www.rfi.fr/emission/20170709-cameroun-crise-anglophone-faiblit-pas>.

¹⁸ such as Abouem Atchoyi, former higher education minister and former governor of the Southwest and the Northwest who manifest his opinion publicly.

¹⁹ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017.



The attitude of the Cameroonian government is condemned by the United States, the UN and the Vatican who asked for respect for fundamental freedoms and minorities. The United Kingdom Bar and Amnesty International also denounced the action of the federal state. Apparently some EU countries were not in favor of a common reaction because they did not want to criticize Cameroon, active in the fight against Boko haram. Moreover, according to them, the crisis is limited to the country and has no incidence on the region.²⁰

Designing linguistic policies

*“Language is an important element in social organization which can contribute to the improvement of living conditions”.*²¹

Understanding the importance and the place

occupied by language in both the healthy development of a society and that of individuals, we understand the importance of designing adapted linguistic policies.

According to Spolsky, language policies are divided into three components. If one of the three is absent or not sufficiently present, the balance necessary for the success of the policies is not achieved. Those three components are language management, language beliefs or ideology and language practices. This division corresponds partially to the theory developed by Besong according to who *“[N]ormally, any management action, to minimize the risk of failure, must be based on two foundations: (1) the linguistic situation of the region where the action is planned [...]; (2) the demolinguistic and sociolinguistic situation (statistics on these languages, their status, their social distribution, [...].”*²² The first part corresponds with what Spolsky called the ‘practices’ and the second with his ideological component. In the same vein, legal theorists Ost and van de Kerchove developed a theoretical framework according to which, the validity of laws depends on their formal legality ‘relative to a given legal order’, their axiological legitimacy ‘relative to meta-positive values’, and their practical effectivity, ‘relative to attitudes, behaviors’²³

²⁰ International Crisis Group, ‘Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins’, Report n° 250, 2 august 2017 ; <http://cm.one.un.org/content/unct/cameroon/fr/home/presscenter/discours/propos-introductif-du-representant-special-du-secretaire-general.html>.

²¹ Djité, 1991, p. 122 cited by D. AROGA BESSONG, "Le bilinguisme officiel (français-anglais) au Cameroun: un problème d'aménagement efficace", in, *TTR*, vol. 101, (219), p.220.

important d'organisation sociale qui peut contribuer à l'amélioration des conditions de vie» (Djité, 1991, p. 122) »

²² D. AROGA BESSONG, "Le bilinguisme officiel (français-anglais) au Cameroun: un problème d'aménagement efficace", in, *TTR*, vol. 101, (219). P. 224.

²³ Ost, François, and Michel van de Kerchove, *De la pyramide au réseau: pour une théorie dialectique du droit*, 2002, Bruxelles, Publications des Facultés universitaires de Saint-Louis.

Linguistic crises emanate from flaws in the language policies pursued by the state. As stated by Spolsky “*multilingual societies inevitably face conflict over language choice*”.²⁴ The design of language policies is therefore even more important in multilingual or plurilingual countries such as Cameroon. Moreover, in this kind of countries, language policies necessarily implies translation policies.²⁵ Therefore, it is also possible that the state is lacking at the level of translation and the bridge between languages and structures.

How did the Cameroonian leaders devise these policies? How did they get their citizens to organize socially through the different languages in their country? Do current policies really improve the living conditions of Cameroon's citizens? In other words, are these language policies adapted to the linguistic specificity of Cameroon and further on, does the current state form allow for the design of adapted language policies? Those interesting questions are of course difficult to answer.

The analysis of the Cameroonian linguistic conflicts is quite complex as it requires taking into account a combination of both internal and external geopolitical factors. We tried to summarize them in the next point.

Internal factors influencing language policies

By internal factors, we mean the elements emanating from inside the borders of Cameroon and which influence the political and linguistic situation. External factors are those outside these boundaries. The distinction is therefore geographical.

Before examining current language and translation policies, we will go through Cameroonian history. The colonial legacy was considered by some to be the source of the current English-speaking problem.

The influence and weight of History

The richness of the Cameroonian subsoil, the diversity of its climate, and its fauna and flora makes it possible to explain (at least partially) why this country has, in less than a century, been the object of consecutive or sometimes even simultaneous colonizations.²⁶

The pre-colonial situation

During the pre-colonial period, the territories which form the present Cameroon were inhabited by various ethnics groups of different languages and beliefs. Through economic and cultural agreements made between the traditional leaders and the European traders, all languages were promoted (both the European and local ones).

This period marks the beginning of a certain multiculturalism and multilingualism. Those linguistic policies did not try to erase a language in favor of another one. The way it was implemented resulted in a peaceful coexistence of local and European languages.²⁷

²⁴ B. SPOLSKY, *Sociolinguistics*, 1998, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 57.

²⁵ R. MEYLAERTS, G. GONZALEZ NUNEZ, “No language policy without translation policy: A comparison of Flanders and Wales”, *Language Problems and Language Planning*, 39:1, 2014.

²⁶ F.N. BIKOI, "L'aventure ambiguë d'un pays bilingue. Le cas du Cameroun", in, *Documents pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde*, vol. 40/41, p. 1.

The colonial situation

During this period, the territories of the present Republic of Cameroon were colonized by three European states and experienced three different linguistic regimes. In general, official monolingualism was promoted. There is talk of "linguistic Eurocentrism"²⁸ or about linguistic assimilation and acculturation²⁹ to qualify those linguistic policies.

In 1884, during the so-called 'Partition of Africa' and as a consequence of the Berlin conference, Cameroon became officially a German colony (and its name was spelled as "Kamerun").³⁰ The linguistic policies implemented throughout this period aimed to favor German at the expense of local languages.

After the First World War and the defeat of Germany, Cameroon was placed under the jurisdiction of the League of Nations who entrusted the colony to France and Great-Britain.³¹ The territory was divided in two parts (the French one being much bigger), where each of the European powers ruled according to its culture and traditions. Consequently, two different languages were imposed in the two parts of Cameroon.

The French linguistic policy was very similar to the German one. The French colonizers made use of what is called a policy of assimilation. The latter consists in *"using means, generally planned, with a view to accelerating the minimization or extinction of certain linguistic groups, in this case the local indigenous languages."*³² French symbolized the revolutionary ideal of one single language within one state. It was regarded as the language of the civilization and was associated with the building of the nation.³³

Their policy was thus to promote French to the detriment of German and local languages. Furthermore, the French authorities were contested and not well accepted in this part of Cameroon, because of the war between the settlers and the nationalistic movement, democracy was implemented to a lesser extent in this part of Cameroon.

On the other hand, the linguistic policies implemented in the British part were similar to those of the pre-colonial time. The settlers chose for an indirect administration system, commonly known as "indirect rule", which allows for a kind of self-government and leaves a certain power to traditional chiefdoms. As a consequence of this administration system, the Anglophones of Cameroon knew the

²⁷ X, See Jean-Paul Ossah Mvondo, *Le Cameroun précolonial entre le XV^e et le XIX^e siècles*, AMA-CENC, Yaoundé, 2006 (2^e édition), 243 p. ?

²⁸ AROGA BESSONG, D., "Le bilinguisme officiel (français-anglais) au Cameroun: un problème d'aménagement efficace", in, *TTR*, vol. 101, 219-244.

²⁹ Terms used by P.G. ROSTAND, "Usages militants du pidgin-english au Cameroun: forces et faiblesse d'un prescriptivisme identitaire", in, *Arborescences* afl. 1, p. 6.

³⁰ To be more precise, it was in fact a 'protectorate' resulting from a treaty signed by the German government and the traditional Douala chiefs. F.N. BIKOI, "L'aventure ambiguë d'un pays bilingue. Le cas du Cameroun", in, *Documents pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde*, vol. 40/41, p. 2.

³¹ Those territories experienced different status. In 1922, France and UK got a mandate from the League of Nations to administer the two territories. In 1946 the two territories became Trust territories of the UN and were still administered by France and the UK.

³² <http://www.axl.cefanel.ulaval.ca/monde/polassimilation.htm>.

³³ N. HALAOUI, "L'identification des langues dans les Constitutions africaines", in, *Revue française de droit constitutionnel*, vol. 1, afl. 45, (31), p. 37 ; G.B. NOUKIO, "L'aventure ambiguë de la langue française parlée au Cameroun", in, *International Journal of Innovation and Applied Studies* May, vol. 11, afl. 2, p. 351

freedom of press, pluralism and democracy.³⁴ The British settlers administered their part of Cameroon from Lagos, one of the provinces of Nigeria, also a British colony. The legal system in Cameroon was the Common law system. The money and the school system also followed the English model.³⁵

Bokamba uses the neologism 'ukolonia' to speak about the linguistic and cultural policies developed by the British settlers. It refers to the indoctrination of the colonized people that made them "*believe that everything of theirs, including their indigenous languages and culture, was inferior and barbaric.*"³⁶

This impact of this phenomenon is still tangible nowadays as local languages are barely promoted, as will be pointed out later.

The post-colonial situation

On the first of January 1960, the French part of Cameroon, became independent³⁷. French was the only official language. A large amount of citizens of the southern part of English colony wanted to be independent too. However, some countries (among other the UK) did not want the creation of micro states. The United Nations feared that the low demography of its territories and the fact that it would be stuck between two big neighbors, Nigeria and Cameroon, would be problematic.

In February 1961, the UN organized a referendum in British Cameroon. Citizens of this part had to choose whether they wanted to be part of Nigeria or of Cameroon.³⁸ The Northern part of the Anglophone territories chose to stay with Nigeria. They wanted to reintegrate their ethnic groups, who had been split at the Berlin conference, which divided Africa without taking into account the configuration of ethnic groups and populations³⁹. The southern part of British Cameroon chose to be part of the République du Cameroun. A large part of the population wanted to be independent. Although it shared the same language as the Nigerians, they did not want to be an official part of Nigeria. One of the main reason was the cultural tensions between the ethnic groups of the south of Anglophone Cameroon and the Ibos of Nigeria. The ethnic groups located in the Anglophone Region of Cameroon considered the experience with Nigeria as one of being dominated.

In July, at the conference of Foumban, named after a city located in the west of the francophone part, the head of the Cameroon state and some representatives of the Anglophone part met to discuss the reunification. A constitution was drafted and promulgated in September 1961.⁴⁰

³⁴ 'This allows for a kind of self-government and leaves a certain power traditional chiefdoms', International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 august 2017. p. 2.

³⁵ N. HALAOUI, "L'identification des langues dans les Constitutions africaines", in, *Revue française de droit constitutionnel*, vol. 1, afl. 45, (31), p. 45.

³⁶ A. NGEFAC, 'Globalising a local language and localizing a global language: the case of Kamtok and English in Cameroon', *English Today* 105, Vol. 27, No. 1 (March 2011).

³⁷ and became the 'République du Cameroun'.

³⁸ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 august 2017.

³⁹ The referendum organized in British Togo and Ghana, which are exactly in the same situation as Cameroon, had produced the same result. The region of British Togo had opted for its attachment to Ghana but this reattachment was based on ethnic considerations.

⁴⁰ N. HALAOUI, "L'identification des langues dans les Constitutions africaines", in, *Revue française de droit constitutionnel*, vol. 1, afl. 45, (31), p. 41. ; International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 august 2017.

A few months later, on the first of October 1961, the two Cameroons (the former French part and the south of the English part) reunited in order to form one federal state. It is made of two federated states: West Cameroon (former British Southern Cameroons⁴¹) and East Cameroon (former French Cameroon). Actually, the Constitution had not really been negotiated by the two parts and was more like a text imposed by the president of that time. Furthermore, in practice, the only language used by the federal administration and authorities was French. Anglophones feared the disappearance of Anglophone culture as some measures, such as the imposition of the French speaking part's metric system, currency and driving rules, were taken.⁴² In fact, there was no egalitarian federalism like the Anglophones had wished, but rather an unbalanced regime, where the federal government had much more power than the two federated states.⁴³ The two different federated states had no equal power within the federal legislative and executive power. Although federalism was enshrined in the Constitution, it was reduced by a decree of the President, dividing the territory into 6 administrative regions. For each region, an inspector attached to the federal government was appointed. This decree transformed the constitutional federalism into a state with administrative regions.⁴⁴ Members of the Anglophone elite, knowing that the federalized state had no real power, were fighting for places in the federal authorities. The president exacerbated the tensions between different ethnic groups by arranging the competition between Anglophone Cameroon members so that at the time there was not a single Anglophone clan. The imposition of a single official language during the colonial time had consolidated the different ethnic groups of the French part of Cameroon. After the colonial period and accustomed to these linguistic policies, Francophone Cameroonians could hardly imagine a federal state.

In 1965, the president created a single party in the name of the unity of the country. Anglophone leaders were in favor of 'pluripartism', but they did not oppose the will of the president, for fear of losing their posts in the federal government.⁴⁵ This marked the beginning of the centralization process. With time, the Anglophones did finally lose some political power and places in the government.

On 20 May 1972, the Cameroonians voted in favor of a unitary state. French and English were still recognized as official languages by the Constitution.

By opting for this unitary form, the Cameroonian state has greatly reduced the chances of safeguarding the cultural specificities of each of the parts.⁴⁶

With the next and current president, Paul Biya, things did not get better for the Anglophone's feeling of marginalization. Paul Biya decided to change the name of the country and to come back to the

⁴¹ This part of British Cameroon officially took its independence from the British on 1 October, just before it became one federal state with the former French Cameroon.

⁴² The change in currency had a negative impact on the economical power of West Cameroon, International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 august 2017.

⁴³ The Anglophones could not negotiate any other form of state but they obtained the system stated in article 41 of the constitution according to which 'The blocking minority means that laws applying to the two federations can only be adopted by the federal assembly if a majority of deputies in both federated states vote for them. Article 47 of the constitution of 1 September 1961'; N. HALAOU, "L'identification des langues dans les Constitutions africaines", in, *Revue française de droit constitutionnel*, vol. 1, afl. 45, (31), p. 41.

⁴⁴ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 august 2017.

⁴⁵ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017.

⁴⁶ M. ABOYA ENDONG, « Le parlementarisme sous tutelle de l'état fédéral, (1961-1972) : une construction politique par le droit de l'état unitaire du cameroon », *revue française de droit constitutionnel* 2014/1 (n° 97), p. e1-e29.

name of the former Cameroon, before the reunification.⁴⁷ The real problem is rather the lack of adequate mechanisms for the protection of the linguistic minority, such as an effective participation of the minorities in government. Cameroon is historically composed of two nations, which draw their origins from the second colonization phase after the Second World War. The nation here is defined as the desire to live collectively, the sharing of a common historical heritage. However, the current Cameroonian authorities seem to ignore that crucial fact.⁴⁸

The strikes of last year were not the first ones. Since 2002, posts in the Anglophone part were appointed by Francophone magistrates. Anglophone lawyers have already asked for an Anglophone bar and for federalism in the past, but there has been no answer from the government.⁴⁹

Legal basis for Cameroonian bilingualism

The general Instruction of 4 June 1998 on the organization of governmental work gives an idea of the official viewpoint of the central authorities on linguistic policies: *"Our constitution stipulates that Cameroon is a bilingual country, which adopts English and French as an official language of equal value and guarantees the promotion of bilingualism throughout its territory. In this regard, it is unfortunate to recall that the Prime Minister, members of the Government and officials of public authorities at all levels are obliged to work for the development of bilingualism. The Secretary General of the President of the Republic is specifically responsible for promoting bilingualism. As such, he conceives and develops the policy of bilingualism at the national level, he ensures and controls the linguistic quality of the acts taken by the public authorities. If necessary, he shall propose to the head of the State any measure tending to improve the use of our official languages and to develop the bilingualism in the country"*.

In the following lines, we will try to summarize the main legal initiative regarding languages taken by the authorities and concerning the way the state (and its administration) communicate with his multilingual population.

Official bilingualism

The first Constitution of independent Cameroon in 1961 recognized French and English as official languages and therefore theoretically affirm the constitutional protection of bilingualism. French was first cited. This was reaffirmed in the further constitutional texts and thus also in the one of 1972 changing the federal into an unitary structure.

As stated in article 1 (3) of the current constitution (written 1996) *"[t]he 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 endeavor to protect and promote national languages."* This text goes one step further by citing the language alphabetically and by guarantying the equal status of the languages. This equality can also be deduce from the Instruction of 30 May 1996 relating to the preparation, signature of legal texts. Since it

⁴⁷ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017.

⁴⁸ P.G. ROSTAND, "Usages militants du pidgin-english au Cameroun: forces et faiblesse d'un prescriptivisme identitaire", in, *Arborescences* afl. 1, p. 10.

⁴⁹ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017. For example in May 2015.

stated that “prepared, signed and published in French and English”, this means that theoretically, the entire legislative process should be bilingual.

The aim of this text was to instore a ‘personal bilingualism’, with citizens that spoke both English and French. However, this failed and the country remained linguistically split in two part. Cameroon was and is, regarding French and English a multilingual rather than a plurilingual state.⁵⁰

Bilingual publication of laws

The Constitution also regulate the publication of laws. According to article 31 (3) and 69, the Constitution itself and legal texts should be published in both English and French.

Moreover, article 2 of the Ordinance of 26 August 1972 provides that laws, ordinances, decrees and regulatory enactments shall be published in the Republic’s Official Gazette in both English and French. The linguistic version that should prevail have to be determined by law.

Furthermore, the Decree of 6 January 1977 give a more complete list of the instruments that should be published in the Official Gazette. This concerns also nomination acts (e.g. for bailiffs or notaries, etc.) and international treaties and their related decrees (for ratification and publication). This means that officially, international treaties need to be available in French and in English (as the journal is bilingual).

Circular of 16 August 1991 on the practice of bilingualism in public and parapublic administration

In this circular, the former Prime Minister SADOU HAYATOU formulated 9 measures to make the administration more bilingual. In our view, these measures can be grouped into three categories.

Linguistic freedom of citizens

The first measure goes by the following: *“Every citizen of Cameroon in general and, in particular, any user of a public or parapublic service, has the fundamental right to address himself in English or French to any public or parapublic service in English or French to any public or parapublic service and to obtain an answer in the official language of his choice ”.*

This measure raises a concern regarding the illiteracy rate of the country. A substantial part of the population cannot afford schooling and consequently has never learned English nor French.

How can citizens, who are not able to express themselves in one of those two languages, then communicate with the public services of their own country? There is no guarantee of the effectiveness of this measure. Furthermore, public servants are not obliged to be bilingual, although they have to respond to users of public and parapublic services. The measure is inefficient as the quality of the information given to the citizens doesn’t really matter. If the public servant gives citizens wrong information because he/she does not master the language, harmful consequences may arise and such a situation may undermine legal certainty. Moreover, the public officers do often

⁵⁰ N. HALAOUI, "L'identification des langues dans les Constitutions africaines", in, *Revue française de droit constitutionnel*, vol. 1, afl. 45, (31) citing Renaud, 1987 ; Tabi-Manga, 1994.

use the argument that everyone has a right to an interpreter to justify their monolingualism. Nevertheless, no substantial budget is allocated for professional translators.⁵¹

The second recommendation of the Circular which is the logical consequence of the first, adds, with a few exceptions (Air Controllers and Language Teachers, for example) that "*The public servant has the right to work in the official language of his choice without that it affects his career. However, it is the responsibility of the public official who deals directly with the public to be understood by the public.*" The objective of the measure is that any public official who deals directly with the public should be able to be understood by the public. Once again, as there are no language examination or control, this measure would require other more specific texts in order to be effective.

Access to public information

The third measure holds that services offered and the official documents published by public or parapublic services and intended for the general public (speeches, notices, regulatory acts, advertising inserts) have to be available in both languages. However, the circular doesn't specify what 'general public' means, which may lead to a confuse application of the measure.

The fourth principle stipulates that posters, billboards, banners concerning the use of such services must be drawn up in both official languages on the same medium or on two separate media placed side by side and in such a way that the text of each language is also visible, apparent and available. About international legal instruments, the fifth measure affirms that any treaty or agreement concluded between Cameroon and foreign States or associations must, at its signature or as soon as possible be available in English and French. A provision stating that both versions are equally authentic is also required.

The sixth measure concerns judicial matters. It requires that judgments rendered by the courts, and in particular Supreme Court judgments, be made available as soon as possible to the public in both official languages, especially when it is of obvious importance or interest to users. It should be note that the Act of 27 July 2005 establishing the Criminal Procedure Code allows the assistance of an interpreter, either for the parties or for a member of tribunal, based on the needs. However, in practice, French is mainly used as a language of law. One example of the discrepancy between law in books and law in practice is the flawed use of translation in courts. Although the presence of an interpreter is imposed by law, litigants are often asked to speak French. Those kind of situations pose obvious problems of social justice and do not fit in equity-based language policies.⁵²

The seventh measure recommends a special effort to major cities, in particular those of Douala and Yaoundé, which are considered as showcases of the Republic of Cameroon for the outside world. Therefore, all the services or institutions that are in direct contact with the outside world are asked to fully reflect the bilingual character of the country.⁵³

⁵¹ Initiative de Gouvernance Citoyenne, *Droit d'accès à l'information et transparence administrative au Cameroun. Etendue et limite du cadre normatif*, Yaoundé, 2010, in www.citizens-governance.org, p.80. Read also Gomez Sanchez I., La question linguistique de la République Démocratique du Cameroun, *Revista de lenguas Modernas*, n°26, 2017, pp. 173 – 187, p. 182.

⁵² X

⁵³ Gomez Sanchez I., *Op.cit*, p.181.

Linguistic assistance

The eighth recommendation states that “bilingual services must be provided to all persons using public or parapublic means of communication”. The ninth and last one imposes public and parapublic services “to encourage and assist enterprises and other bodies under their supervision, control or authority to reflect and promote the bilingual image of Cameroon, both inside and outside the country”.⁵⁴

Complementary legal instruments to bilingualism

The dispositions cited below are not the only one concerning bilingualism in the Cameroonian legal system. Also in the private sphere, as the (electronic) commercial sector, language use is regulated in order to protect the consumers.⁵⁵

The problem is the way the linguistic equality promoted in legal texts is implemented. The legal protection of bilingualism goes beyond the legal affirmation of the principle of equality of English and French and the bilingual publication of legal and administrative documents. The current legal framework does not respond to the reality of the field.

Absence of minority status for the Anglophones

The Cameroonian society is a kind of hybrid form of cultural pluralism. In Cameroon as well as on the whole African continent, citizens tend to identify themselves in terms of their religion, their geographic origins and their ethnicity.⁵⁶ These identity parameters are supplemented with an identification with either the francophone or Anglophone linguistic region, inherited from the colonial period. While this last level of identification is less important in popular culture, it has important practical implications. In Cameroon, Anglophones are not recognized as a minority, although English is only spoken in two out of the ten regions. In no legal text is the notion of linguistic minority applied to Anglophones. In other words, the language policy in Cameroon does not take into account the existence of this linguistic minority and Anglophones complain that the country is run as if there were only francophone citizens. They feel marginalized⁵⁷ and victims of an incomplete implementation of their linguistic rights.⁵⁸

Feeling of abandonment

⁵⁴ www.axl.cefan.unlaval.ca/afrique/cameroun.htm

⁵⁵ According to article 21 of the act regulating commercial activities in Cameroon (Act No. 90/031 of 10 August 1990) any enterprise marketing consumer goods in Cameroon, whether for professional use or not, has the obligation to include an information leaflet with e.a. the essential characteristics and the duration of guarantee of the product in French or in English. It is worth noting that according to this law, the company can choose in which language she wants to warn her clients. In the electronic commerce sector, the Decree of 15 June 2011 requires the specification of the languages in the electronic contract offer.

⁵⁶ See Georges BALANDIER, “Réflexions sur le fait politique : le cas des sociétés africaines”. Un article publié dans les Cahiers internationaux de sociologie, vol. 37, juillet-décembre 1964, pp. 23-50. Paris : Les Presses universitaires de France in http://classiques.uqac.ca/contemporains/balandier_georges/reflexions_fait_politique/reflexions_fait_politique_texte.html.

⁵⁷ <http://www.camer.be/58761/30:27/cameroun-marginalisation-un-anglophone-ne-sera-jamais-president-de-la-republique-cameroun.html>.

⁵⁸ The recognition of linguistic minorities may avoid abuses of the majority by implementing specific mechanisms as for example the alarm bell, alert mechanism used in Belgium.

As already mentioned, the disregard of the central authorities creates a feeling of abandonment among Anglophones. In their opinion, the English-speaking minority has never been represented in the various ministries. Key positions within the executive power (as the Ministry for Spatial Planning, Education and even Finance) have only been occupied by Francophones. It is true that the office of Prime Minister has always been allocated to an Anglophone, but his power is inferior to that of some of his ministers.⁵⁹

The National Commission on the Promotion of Bilingualism⁶⁰

With the attempt to calm down the crisis, the National commission on the promotion of Bilingualism and Multilingualism was established by the Decree of 23 January 2017.

The tasks of the Commission are numerous. Firstly, the Commission is given the power to submit reports and opinions to the President of the Republic and the Government on matters relating to the protection and promotion of bilingualism and multiculturalism. Another task of the Commission is to monitor the implementation of Constitutional provisions which strive to equalize the value of two official languages: English and French. The Commission is also empowered to carry out any study or investigation as well to propose any measures with the purpose of strengthen the bilingual and multicultural character of Cameroon.

The composition of the commission, however, does not satisfy the Anglophones. Some Anglophones feared that the various solutions proposed by the Commission will remain in the drawer, while they expect justice and transparency. Furthermore, the influence of external factors is being completely ignored.⁶¹ The 'regional' integration policy introduced by the Cameroonian government is more beneficial to Francophones than to Anglophones. Tackling discrimination which would occur on that level is, nonetheless, not one of the Commission's tasks.

The forgotten local languages

Article 22, second paragraph (b) of Law of 22 July 2004 confers to municipalities the competence to promote local languages. This mainly done by churches and local radios.

According to different authors there are between 239 and 248 local languages in Cameroon.⁶² Those language are related to various ethnic groups which means that plurilingualism in fact pluriethnism is. The recognition of those languages would implies that of the various ethnic groups and cultures which do not correspond with the unity policy of the president and central authorities in general.⁶³

The Constitution of 1996 introduced a slight change in the formulation of its article on languages. Like in the fundamental text of Gabon, the Cameroonian constitution uses now the word 'adopted languages', which means that French and English were not initially spoken in the territory. This is thus an implicitly references to the local languages even if it does not recognize any status.

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<http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20170305-cameroun-anglophones-buea-marginalises-reportage>;
<http://www.camer.be/62533/6:1/cameroun-liberation-des-leaders-anglophones-lequation-dun-gouvernement-de-consolidation-de-la-serenite-cameroon.html>.

⁶⁰ <https://www.prc.cm/fr/multimedia/documents/5214-decret-n-2017-013-du-23-01-2017-creation-cnpbm-fr>.

⁶¹ <https://journalducameroun.com/en/duplicative-legislation-go-back>.

⁶² 309 ou 239, 248 (Dieu et Renaud, 1983) selon les auteurs.

⁶³ N. HALAOUI, "L'identification des langues dans les Constitutions africaines", in, *Revue française de droit constitutionnel*, vol. 1, afl. 45, (31).

Apart from that, no efforts is made to promote local languages although they “*significantly carr[y] the identity and ecology of Cameroon as*” without those languages, Cameroon runs the risk to lose his own identity.⁶⁴ Because of the strong link between linguistic diversity and the preservation of culture. Marie - Alix Forestier argues in this regard that the disappearance of the language can directly lead to the complete disappearance of sections of traditional culture.⁶⁵

According to Ngefacs, it is suitable to promote local language and culture in order to ease tensions about official languages. Upgrading local languages would also make it possible to combat illiteracy. Also those languages can play a role in the communication of knowledge.

In his scientific article dedicated to Kamtok, Ngefacs deplores the lack of promotion and standardization measures by the government, the fact that it is permitted to use it in public spheres but also the ‘misrepresentation of its developmental status by both scholars and laypeople, and lack of scholarly interest from local researchers.’ The ideological and management part of Spolsky trilogy are missing here. Kamtok is not generally regarded as language that worth it to be learn and no measure are taken to change this view of a part of the population. This confirm that the use of a language only is not sufficient for his promotion or its survival.⁶⁶

Furthermore, no linguistic arrangement helps to directly bridge those different cultures and ethnic groups in Cameroon.⁶⁷ Consequently, the communication between different ethnic groups goes through English and French, the two dominant languages in the country. In that aspect, Pidgin and Francanglais may potentially reunite the various linguistic groups.

Pidgin⁶⁸

Alongside French and English, another language was created by the natives to escape the control of the colonizers and to ease communication between different ethnic groups in Cameroon. It is called Pidgin and is considered negatively by the colonizers as a language of resistance. The English and French colonizers were very hostile to the development of this language. Today, this language is perceived negatively as a language of traders and illiterates by people who speak French or English well.

However, according to Guy Rostand, Pidgin should really be taken into account as it “*responds better than others to the objectives of genuine community and unity of Cameroonians.*”⁶⁹ The

⁶⁴ A. NGEFACS, ‘Globalising a local language and localizing a global language: the case of Kamtok and English in Cameroon’, *English Today* 105, Vol. 27, No. 1 (March 2011).

⁶⁵ M.-A. Forestier, Un multilinguisme stratégique au service d’une intégration régionale ambitieuse et durable en Afrique des Grands Lacs et de l’Est, *Synergies Afrique des Grands Lacs n°2 – 2013*, pp. 21 – 31.

⁶⁶ ‘The use of that language seems to be very important as it is still use ‘in varying degrees in the civil service, in court, on radio and TV, in records, in advertising, in conversations among friends, colleagues and relatives, in teacher-student interaction outside the classroom, in patient-doctor interaction, in large scale business transaction, in petty trades, literature and performing arts, in religion, in political campaigns and in traffic police-coach driver ‘ A. NGEFACS, ‘Globalising a local language and localizing a global language: the case of Kamtok and English in Cameroon’, *English Today* 105, Vol. 27, No. 1 (March 2011) citing Chumbow and Bobda, 1996: 420, Schröder, 2003: 181 and Kouega, 2008.

⁶⁷ J. SUH CHE, ‘The role of translation in the implementation of language policy in Cameroon’, <http://translationjournal.net/journal/57cameroon.htm>.

⁶⁸ P.G. ROSTAND, “Usages militants du pidgin-english au Cameroun: forces et faiblesse d’un prescriptivisme identitaire”, in, *Arborescences* afl. 1.

⁶⁹ P.G. ROSTAND, “Usages militants du pidgin-english au Cameroun: forces et faiblesse d’un prescriptivisme identitaire”, in, *Arborescences* afl. 1, p. 14. « *Il est sans doute trop tôt pour se prononcer sur la viabilité d’une standardisation officielle. Néanmoins, la reconnaissance et l’usage de la langue dans les perspectives de développement socio-économique et*

varieties of Pidgin can be understood by both the Francophones and the Anglophones, which shows that pidgin had the potential to be a 'neutral' languages used by the entire population. Therefore, it plays and can further play a role in the economic and social situation of Cameroon.

Francanglais⁷⁰

In certain social classes and in certain generations (especially young people), "one does not try to speak one or the other language well but to use what seems necessary to express oneself". The 'language' that is derived from this mixture of official and local languages and from the creation of neologisms, is called "Francanglais". According to Noukio, this language could bring the two parts of Cameroon together by shaping a common Cameroonian culture. In contrast with the "one state - one language and culture - one nation" ideal of the French revolution, this common culture would not be imposed but would emerge. In this sense, the structure of a unitary state would suffice.

The unitary form of the State

The state's obsession

Cameroon is characterized by the obsession of a unitary state that denies the ontological existence of two different nations⁷¹. It is worth reminding that current Cameroonian state is the result of an association between on the one hand territories with mainly Francophones and on the other hand a smaller region essentially inhabited by English-speaking residents. Although the principle of linguistic equality is mentioned in legal texts, it remains a fiction as it is not implemented as such. As a consequence, a satisfactory communication between the Anglophone minority and their administration and state is barely impossible. Furthermore, it should be underlined that such issues may also concern Francophones in the Anglophone part of Cameroon, although they are much more isolated cases.

The Cameroon government's obsession with preserving the unitary form of the state and claiming the existence of a single Cameroonian nation is in contradiction with the reality on the ground. The unitary form of State presents practical limits in the management of both bilingualism and cultural diversity.

The unitary structure of the Cameroonian state can be maintained if and only if it takes cultural diversity into account. The deliberate ignorance by a state of the cultural diversity within his borders may be a trigger for multiform conflicts. Indeed, claims for recognition of cultural diversity may lead to other demands, difficult to decipher.⁷²

Decentralisation

One of the structural causes of the linguistic conflict is the repartition of competences.

In 1996, the decentralization had been introduced by a constitutional law. Only in 2004, three law texts concerning decentralization have been adopted. However, it has not been implemented yet.

politique du pays semblent plus urgents, et même, incontournables à l'heure actuelle. »

⁷⁰ G.B. NOUKIO, "L'aventure ambiguë de la langue française parlée au Cameroun", in, *International Journal of Innovation and Applied Studies* May, vol. 11, afl. 2.

⁷¹S. MADANI SY, « Formes et structures de l'état : l'état multinational et le pluralisme politique », *Présence Africaine* 1983/3 (n° 127-128), p. 298-307 .

⁷² Such as secession.

Hilaire Kouomegne Noubisi argues that decentralization in Cameroon, despite some relative progress, still suffers from the strong financial and technical dependence of local authorities on central state. Contrary to the theory of decentralization as enshrined in administrative law, decentralization in Cameroon does not favor the financial and administrative autonomy of local authorities.⁷³

This goes together with a high supervision by the central state. There is thus an important influence of the central authorities on local communities and the central state does not encourage citizen participation and does not take local realities, such as the traditional chiefdoms, into account. According to the Constitution, the President of Cameroon appoints the regional officials himself (co-opting system), which leads to a hypercentralization of power.⁷⁴

The weakness of decentralization has a negative impact on the implementation of language policies in Cameroon. Strong centralization leads to several abuses, particularly in the recruitment of primary and secondary school personnel. This kind of situations will lead to what some Anglophone adults call a collective –cultural- suicide as, according to them, the next generations will be poorly educated and ‘incompetent’.⁷⁵

Religion and beliefs⁷⁶

Through multilingual preaching and multiple translations of the Bible, Christianity played an important role in maintaining and further developing the Cameroonian local languages. Moreover, animism and local ancestral beliefs contributed to maintain and promote local languages and cultures since their rites necessarily took place in local languages. By contrast, since there is no translation of the Coran, Islam helped promoting the Arabic language and culture in the North of Cameroon.⁷⁷

External factors influencing language policies

The influence of the other States and organizations cannot be neglected either. They had a positive impact during the crisis. Although the response of the international community was rather limited, the crisis nevertheless urged the Government to adopt the above-mentioned measures. The authorities of Yaoundé appear to be more sensitive to international demands than to the ones of national actors.⁷⁸

However, the international context also plays a negative role in this crisis and in the Anglophone issue in general. The particularly strong influence of France has an impact on the promotion of

⁷³ There is an increasing involvement of the deconcentrated services of the State in the realization of the public works of the local authorities.

⁷⁴ La décentralisation au Cameroun : un gout inachèvé, in <http://www.wikiterritorial.cnfpt.fr/xwiki/wiki/econnaissances/view/NotionsCles/LadecentralisationauCamerounungoutdinacheve>.

⁷⁵ <http://www.rfi.fr/emission/20170709-cameroun-crise-anglophone-faiblit-pas>.

⁷⁶ We choose to put religion within the internal factor category, however, historically, it also rely on external factor.

⁷⁷ Dongmo Kenfanck L- W., *Analyse sociohistorique de la traduction des textes religieux et didactiques en langues yemba : le cas de l'arrondissement de Dschang*, Edition Connaissances et savoirs, Rouen, 2016, p.37.

⁷⁸ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017.

bilingualism. In addition, the tension with Nigeria generates a fear for English by the Francophone majority.⁷⁹

The relations with Nigeria

Nigeria was and still is the strongest country of the region, both economically and demographically. At the time of the British colonization, the Anglophone part of Cameroon was administered from Lagos, the biggest city of Nigeria and of the entire African continent. Since then, the Cameroonian authorities feared the influence of powerful Nigeria. It has the same language and culture as the Cameroonian citizens who have been left behind. Nevertheless, despite this and the fact that Cameroon shares his biggest border with Nigeria, English does not expand in Cameroon. Probably, due to the perception of the majority of Cameroonians who still consider their country as the extension of the French empire or as the prolongation of France in Africa.⁸⁰

Besides the tensions inherited from the colonial time, the two countries have been struggling until 2008 for control of the island of Bakassi, today part of Cameroun. This episode strengthens the nationalistic feeling in Cameroon as the country won both the judicial and military battle.⁸¹

Apart from some sympathizers in the southwest, Nigeria did not involve in the current Cameroonian crisis because it feared that the Cameroonian Anglophone movement triggers independents' wills within its territory.⁸²

Boko haram

Nigeria's neighboring countries, including Cameroon, have set up the regional fighting force against Boko Haram, called Multinational Joint Response Force on the initiative of Nigeria, Chad, Benin, Niger and Cameroon Since June 2015.

The Cameroonian crisis occurs while Cameroon is fighting against Boko Haram. The border with Nigeria does not only influence the rise of Islam in the North of Cameroon. It also intensifies the activities of the terrorist movement Boko Haram and causes an increasing feeling of insecurity. The military and security forces of the countries are mainly deployed there in this area.⁸³

Furthermore, Anglophones deplore the misuse of laws designed in order to pursue terrorists, as they were invoked against Anglophone activists. Those were involved in a military court process. Moreover, they claim inequity as Boko Haram's terrorists are tried 'at home', in the Anglophone part, while the protestation leaders have been taken to Yaoundé for trial in French-speaking courts.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ <http://cm.one.un.org/content/unct/cameroon/fr/home/presscenter/discours/propos-introductif-du-representant-special-du-secretaire-general.html> .

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⁸¹ H.. V. Lukong, The Cameroon- Nigera Border Dispute. Management and Resolution, 1981-2011, 2011, Mankon,Bamenda, Langaa Research & Publishing CIG.

⁸² International Crisis Group, ' Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017.

⁸³ International Crisis Group, Cameroon : Confronting Boko Haram, Report n° 241, 16 November 2016.

⁸⁴ <http://www.rfi.fr/emission/20170709-cameroun-crise-anglophone-faiblit-pas>;
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/01/cameroon-activists-to-remain-in-jail-as-terrorism-trial-is-delayed>;
http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/08/30/cameroun-paul-biya-decrete-l-arret-des-poursuites-contre-des-leaders-anglophones_5178742_3212.html

Integration policies - regional associations⁸⁵

Cameroon has six borders. Four of them are shared with Francophone countries (Chad, Car, Republic of Congo and Gabon), one with Equatorial Guinea where French and Spanish are the official language and finally one with the Anglophone country of Nigeria, as we just mention.

Until 1970, Cameroon, while wishing to assert its place within the francophone countries, remained vigilant in its commitments, lest to annoy the Anglophone minority.⁸⁶ However, now, except from connections with the Commonwealth, Cameroon is not engaged in any other Anglophone organizations. The regional organizations it is part of meanly use French as their working language.

The CECAC (Economic and Monetary Community of Central African States) developed a common monetary policy. Cameroun shared with the neighbor countries cited above a common currency. As most of the states participating to this union do have French as official languages, the communication within this group is made in French.

Another influencing group is the OHADA (Organization for the Harmonization of African Business Law). It was created in 1993 and has today seventeen member states. It is dominated by Francophone countries. The acts emanate from this association are written and voted in French although English, Spanish and Portuguese are also recognized as working languages. Furthermore, the work of the association is based on the French business law, which contributed even more to import the French (legal) culture in the states, members of the association.

Moreover, in 1994, the International Monetary Fund asked the government to privatize the Cameroon Development Corporation, which was of high importance in the Anglophone part of Cameroon. This generated some protests from the Anglophones.⁸⁷

The logic of this regional integration is that of linguistic uniformity (unilinguism) as it recognizes only French as a working language at the expense of other (official and local) languages. When sub-regional integration policies are promoted, protection of (cultural, linguistic) minorities is not taken into account, which of course is a threat for cultural and ethnic diversity. Even though the African Cultural Renaissance Charter of January 24, 2006 (replacing the African Cultural Charter and adopted by the Organization of African Unity) recognizes the importance of cultural diversity and the promotion of multilingualism, there is a considerable gap between those prescriptions and the reality on the ground in the different African countries.

No equitable plurilingualism that would boost a sustainable, efficient and competitive regional integration is implemented.

The fact that those associations use French, and that the documents that emanate from that cooperation are in French, exacerbates the urge for well-developed and implemented translation policies in order to counteract the linguistic injustice. However, that is not the case. This context of globalization accentuates the powerful position of the Cameroonian Francophones and further represses the Anglophone minority, who, therefore, may want to be protected by new borders.

⁸⁵ M. TSHIYEMBE, 'L'Etat multinational ou l'Etat multiethnique : nouvel acteur de la coopération internationale in <http://www.politique-africaine.com/numeros/pdf/066140.pdf>.

⁸⁶ F.N. BIKO, "L'aventure ambiguë d'un pays bilingue. Le cas du Cameroun", in, *Documents pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde*, vol. 40/41.

⁸⁷ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017.

Possible solutions

Even if the tensions seem to have cooled down, the crisis will not cease until important changes take place. The European nation State model, which does not correspond to the African realities and which is a political form 'surpassed by the present globalization' should be avoided. What are the possible options? What is the most suitable model, that will solve the problem of a minority oscillating 'between desire for integration and autonomy'?⁸⁸

A State whose form is adequate is made up of institutions that guarantee to the citizen a minimum base of fundamental rights and enables all citizens of the same State to lead the life he wishes in full respect of others. With this ethical principle in mind, the challenge is to find a State that takes into account the multiculturalism and multilingualism of these populations. A structure that makes of the bilingualism aspect of the country not a disability but an advantage.

Secession

The feeling of marginalization and injustice, the non-representativeness of communities leading to an undemocratic environment and the lack of transparency, all represent elements that may possibly lead in case no consensus can be found, to the total division of the country.

That is already the wish of the more extremist Anglophones as they consider the actual State is not willing to take the linguistic diversity into account and to recognize the Anglophone minority. This opinion can be deduced from the speech of Joseph Wirba, Member of the National Assembly of Cameroon and elected in the region of Ebui in West Cameroon. He pronounced in 2016 the following words: *« Vous violez nos enfants! La fille de mon frère a été violée à Buea. Je jure devant le gouvernement de ce pays. Le président de ce pays sait-il que les gouverneurs, les préfets et tous les administrateurs que vous avez envoyés au Cameroun occidental sont sur le terrain en train d'afficher le comportement d'une armée d'occupation? Nos populations n'ont nulle part où aller. Nous avons fourni tous les efforts. Nos ancêtres vous ont fait confiance! C'est la raison pour laquelle ils ont accepté un gentlemen's agreement qui débouchait sur la cohabitation de deux peuples qui se considéraient comme des frères. Si c'est ce que vous nous présentez après 55 ans, il est dont clair que, ceux qui affirment qu'il faut diviser le Cameroun ont raison! Ils ont raison ! Les originaires du Cameroun occidental ne peuvent pas être vos esclaves. »*⁸⁹

However, even within the secessionists groups, there are some disagreements. The one are in favor of the diplomatic way, others prefer actions with a faster impact like the 'ghosts towns' phenomenon. Some want the reattachment with Nigeria because Nigeria also used to be English colony and thus share the same English culture.)⁹⁰

⁸⁸ S. MADANI SY, « Formes et structures de l'état : l'état multinational et le pluralisme politique », *Présence Africaine* 1983/3 (n° 127-128), p. 298-307 ; <http://www.rfi.fr/emission/20170709-cameroun-crise-anglophone-faiblit-pas>.

⁸⁹ Cameroun, la colère des anglophones: le plaidoyer historique du député Joseph Wirba à l'Assemblée nationale, in <https://actu.cameroun.com/2016/12/20/colere-des-anglophones-du-cameroun-le-plaidoyer-du-depute-joseph-wirba-a-lan/>
⁹⁰ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 august 2017 ; <http://www.rfi.fr/emission/20170709-cameroun-crise-anglophone-faiblit-pas>.

Federalism

A linguistic balance had been observed during the federal period of the State.⁹¹ This experience of a well-implemented linguistic policy, promoting official bilingualism, leads us to deepen the link between the promotion of multiculturalism and multilingualism and the form of the State.

As said in the speech of Marafa Hamidou Yaya, the defenders of federalism argue that the attempt to be a unitary state failed : *« Lorsque, par le référendum du 20 mai 1972, le peuple camerounais a choisi de mettre fin au fédéralisme pour donner naissance à une «République unie du Cameroun», l'ambition de tous, anglophones et francophones réunis, était, me semble-t-il, de préparer l'avènement d'un Camerounais nouveau, biculturel, héritier à part égale des «leçons» retenues des deux régences et susceptible de tirer le meilleur de ces deux héritages. Les événements actuels prouvent suffisamment que ce projet a échoué. Les Camerounais anglophones, qui ont aujourd'hui le sentiment que leur destin leur échappe, dénoncent à raison la trahison de l'esprit du pacte d'unification établi en 1972 entre les représentants des deux communautés. »* *« Le bilinguisme inscrit dans notre Constitution étant appliqué de façon profondément inégalitaire dans l'administration, la justice et l'enseignement, ils ne jouissent pas de l'égalité des chances qui devrait être accordée à tous les citoyens d'un État moderne et démocratique. Cette inégalité frappe également leurs conditions de vie: ils souffrent, plus encore que leurs compatriotes francophones, du chômage et du déficit en infrastructures. Et les anglophones n'ont aucun recours, aucun relais pour dénoncer ces discriminations, puisque, enfin, leur communauté est largement tenue à l'écart des postes clés de l'État et de l'administration, y compris au sein de leurs propres régions. »*⁹²

Federalism is what most of the Anglophones want. They argue that the autonomy of regions can positively influence the linguistic policy and the attention for local specificities of each region without calling into question the unity of the country. However, they do not all agree on the way federalism should be implemented. Some suggest a federation with 10 states, in accordance with the 10 existing regions. According to another group, the most suitable form is a federal State with four or six States; this should better reflect the sociological composition of Cameroon. Anyhow, those two approaches would be able to take into account the multi-ethnic character of the country as the more flexible State framework allows to take into account cultural and linguistic differences. Other are in favor of a two-State federation, like it used to be between 1961 and 1972, *“with genuine decentralization within the two regions of the Anglophone federated state.”* Some people believe that Yaoundé, the capital should not be part of any federalized states. Still others suggest to let people choose by referendum.⁹³

Counter arguments⁹⁴

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⁹² Marafa Hamidou Yaya , Colère des anglophones: Pour Marafa Hamidou Yaya Il faut donner enfin vie au pacte de 1972, bâtir enfin une République Unie, in <http://enjodi.blog.lemonde.fr/2016/12/16/cameroun-colere-des-anglophones-pour-marafa-hamidou-yaya-il-faut-donner-enfin-vie-au-pacte-de-1972-batir-enfin-une-republique-unie/>

⁹³ <http://aa.com.tr/en/africa/analysis-cameroon-s-anglophones-call-for-secession-or-federalism/785179>; International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017 ; <http://www.rfi.fr/emission/20170709-cameroun-crise-anglophone-faiblit-pas>.

⁹⁴ <http://www.rfi.fr/emission/20170709-cameroun-crise-anglophone-faiblit-pas>; International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017 ; S. MADANI SY, « Formes et structures de l'état : l'état multinational et le pluralisme politique », *Présence Africaine* 1983/3 (n° 127-128), p. 298-307.

However, the central authorities do not want to give up the unitary form of the State. In their view, changes are taboo. To defend their position, they make use of Article 64 of the Constitution which provides that the form of the State cannot be changed. However, a revision of the Constitution is still possible. Furthermore, the same kind of disposition, even more severe, was also written in the Constitution of the federal period, and did not prevent changes back then.

Some people fear the so-called “institutional lasagna” and argue that federalism would represent more financial costs. Even if federalism seems to be an adequate solution in many respects, it must be ensured that it does not restrict the plurilingualism of the population. In addition to territorial language policies, policies that promote language learning at the national level must also be designed. What is key is not to repeat the same mistake and implement a western form of State. The Cameroonian federalism should take the local specificities of Cameroon into account.

While it is well understood that the modification of the form of the State is not sufficient on its own, the legislation supposed to ease tensions and promote cultural diversity should be accepted by the population and effectively enforced, by both the federal and federalized states.

Effective decentralization

This seems to be the more feasible solution as it would represent a compromise between Francophones and Anglophones. Some Anglophone activists asking for federalism would be satisfied with an effective decentralization.⁹⁵ They ask for more in the hope to get a bit. In the light of the criteria of Ost and Spolsky, what is lacking are the practices that make the legal texts take effect. It is because this element was missing that the decentralization, legally established years ago, failed or actually had never really started.⁹⁶ The co-optation system should definitively be abandoned in favor of a regional election system. A transfer of competences and financial means is also necessary. The government will lose its omnipotence. However, with a crisis like the one at stake the risk of losing more power is real. Choosing for an effective decentralization may help the central authorities to gain in legitimacy.⁹⁷

Necessary steps

Rebuilding mutual trust

The current linguistic crisis in Cameroon was particularly violent. What initially started as some corporatist strikes turned out to be a political crisis which reveals the structural problem of the central State⁹⁸. Part of the population radicalized during the crisis. Trust between the government and the Anglophones has been broken and this sentiment has been exploited by the most extreme who claim secession. Even if at the beginning, non-violence was promoted, the call to the armed struggle is sometimes present on the social networks.⁹⁹ No lasting solution can be found without a

⁹⁵ B. Spolsky, *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Policy*, 2012, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.; Ost, François, and Michel van de Kerchove, *De la pyramide au réseau: pour une théorie dialectique du droit*, 2002, Bruxelles, Publications des Facultés universitaires de Saint-Louis.

⁹⁶ <http://www.rfi.fr/emission/20170709-cameroun-crise-anglophone-faiblit-pas>.

⁹⁷ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017.

⁹⁸ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017.

⁹⁹ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017.

constructive dialogue between the parties. And the latter can only happen if mutual trust between the citizens and the authorities is restored. Even though the government finally responded on certain points, its primary attitude of contempt, denial and repression had an impact on people's beliefs, one of the component necessary to a valid a language policy.¹⁰⁰ To show its willingness, the government should first allow the debates on federalism and provide the arrested activists with a fair and open trial. Indeed, the hearings are only in French and translations, if any; are often "approximate". The trials of English-speaking activists point to many flaws in the implication of legal bilingualism and give more reason to Anglophones to claim a better taking into account of the particularity of English and bilingualism in the judicial system. Also a presidential journey in the Anglophone part would be a strong signal, as the President would show that he cares about the situation and is not only concerned about keeping the power, as some claim.¹⁰¹

The demands in particular areas of justice and education must be addressed with effective language and translation policies. This starts with an effective implementation of the announced measures. However, according to the International Crisis Group, additional measures are also needed to "strengthen the semi-autonomous character of Anglophone educational and judicial systems".¹⁰² Secondly, it is necessary to ensure that Anglophone public services are available in Anglophone areas.

Involving the international community

As for the international community, it should condemn the use of anti-terrorism legislation for political purposes, encourage peaceful change, and mediate if necessary.¹⁰³

Conclusion

Because of a strong francophone international integration, the Anglophone minority is marginalized. By not remedying the francophone character of the organizations of which Cameroon is part by effective translation policies, this globalization or regionalization is at the origin of the event that triggered the crisis and which brought back the old demands and injuries. The Cameroonian state has not developed policies that take into account its place on the international or regional scene and its linguistic and cultural diversity. This lack of policies could lead to federalism or secession, thus shifting the borders of the state and in the worst case, causing oil spills and causing other parts of Nigeria notably to secede. What was supposed to transgress or erase boundaries and standardize a region will be the cause of a displacement and a hardening of these boundaries by generating more nationalist ideologies.

Language policies may thus influence the organization and tracing of borders. These elements are directly intertwined with the level and quality of democratic infrastructure.

The Cameroonian situation is extremely complex. Like many revolts, those currently taking place in Cameroon are an epiphenomenon, a gutter overflowing with a state structure unsuited to the social,

¹⁰⁰ B. Spolsky, *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Policy*, 2012, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

¹⁰¹ <http://www.camer.be/60157/30:27/crise-anglophone-vivement-un-changement-de-regime-au-cameroun-cameroun.html>.

¹⁰² International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017.

¹⁰³ International Crisis Group, 'Cameroun: la crise anglophone à la croisée des chemins', Report n° 250, 2 August 2017.

cultural and economic realities of the people of Cameroon. We hope to have, in these few pages, highlighted the importance of language, of the freedom of its use as well as the responsibility that the leaders have in language matters vis-à-vis their citizens.

The challenge now is, as Aroga Bessong rightly emphasizes, *"to include official bilingualism in Cameroon in the ambient reality of a very dynamic plurilingualism."*¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ AROGA BESSONG, D., "Le bilinguisme officiel (français-anglais) au Cameroun: un problème d'aménagement efficace", in, *TTR*, vol. 101, 219-244.