



DIVIDED SOCIETIES AND ETHNO-REGIONAL ANTAGONISMS: “A STUDY OF THE SOCIAL INTERACTION BETWEEN ANGLOPHONE NORTH WESTERNERS AND SOUTH WESTERNERS RESIDENT IN BUEA, SOUTH WEST CAMEROON”.

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## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project entitled ‘Divided Societies and Ethno-regional Antagonisms: “A Study of the Social Interaction between Anglophone North Westerners and South Westerners Resident in Buea, South West Cameroon” is the original work of **Arrey, William Hermann**.

Signature

Associate Professor Bror Olsen  
(Supervisor)

Signature

Associate Professor Diane Lister  
(Academic Coordinator)

## **DEDICATION**

**This work is dedicated entirely to my Grand Mother:  
Mary Egbe.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The most gratifying, but perhaps the most humbling part of writing any piece of work is to sit down at the end of the process and acknowledge the many debts incurred by the writer. In this perspective, I am highly indebted to my project supervisor, Associate Professor Bror Olsen for the painstaking job he has done, his constant advice and the patience he exercised towards me. Without him, this project would not have attained its present state.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis comes at a time when there is much talk on democratic deficit and questions concerning whether and how cultural groups should be recognized in politics in ethnically divided societies. The study therefore uses the Anglophone Cameroon North West/South West ethno-regional divide as an entry point to contribute to this issue of global concern. By employing a variety of research techniques and using ethnic and psycho-social conflict theories as tools of analysis, the study arrives at the conclusion that the recurrent antagonism between the two Anglophone provinces should be seen as a logical outcome of divisive policies at the national level as well as an expression of complex politico-economic and historical forces played out at the regional level. But what maintains the antagonistic interaction in their every day life is the old gap that divides them and which is ingrained in their psychology. Therefore, according to this study, Identity politics is used as a survival strategy under difficult life conditions and not as a cause to the recurrent antagonism. As such, the study rejects claims that cultural identities and diversity necessarily lead to social, economic and political conflict. By doing so, it stimulates further discussions and research on the need to assess the prospects for identity politics in world peace. Perhaps, the most striking finding of this study is that once there is a dominating conflict like that between Anglophone North Westerners and South Westerners, other small conflicts in the region are “translated” into this dominant one. Reflecting concern over this, it makes a strong appeal for a shift in conflict resolution perspective from a general to a contextual model. Indeed, this study analyses the North West/South West gulf to provide a holistic understanding of the phenomenon by placing it within the larger social context of liberal democracy, group rights and national development.



## CHAPTER I

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background for the Study.

Modern African states have evolved as complex political structures in which unitary forms of government maintain an uncertain equilibrium in ethnically plural societies. This thesis is therefore particularly timely at a moment when national governments in many parts of the world must face the adoption of more equitable forms of rule to hold their ethnically diverse and deeply divided societies together. While it is generally argued that such divided societies need a democratic regime that stresses consensus instead of opposition, that includes instead of excludes, it is striking that in most African countries, authoritarian regimes have been quick to grasp the very idea of democracy for playing parts of the opposition off against each other. More importantly, however, if one makes a cursory examination of the issue of ethnicity in the world, it would be undoubtedly true; indeed that Africa has some of the most fragmented societies in the world and its inhabitants most of which constitute a large proportion of national minorities. To this effect, there has always been a big challenge to the question of nation building in such diverse societies. This is especially true when one considers the fact that national minorities would always have their own theoretical and practical demands that are specific to them such as self-determination (regional autonomy). It is also important to note that not only the idea of self-determination is important to a marginalized group within a nation-state; it also serves as the prerequisite for achieving positive human conditions for decent life and self-fulfillment (Jeong, 2000:223).

Unfortunately, however, every effort by national minorities for self-autonomy (politically, economically, socially, or culturally) have often been met with strategies to grind these efforts and even putting forward more confusing and chaotic situations among these marginalized people themselves by the regimes that be. The situation in Cameroon especially in relation to the English Speaking (Anglophone) historical Minority is perhaps more illuminating and a call for concern. Contrary to the heavy ideological

emphasis in the 1960s and 1970s on national unity as a pre-condition for nation building in Africa at large and Cameroon in particular, the leaders are now eager to ally themselves with movements that defend the rights of autochthons against “strangers” and thus contest the very notion of equal rights of citizens throughout the Country. The point is that in the political scene, “autochthonous” groups fear to be outvoted by immigrants including even those who have already settled for generations in the area. To this effect, the question of ‘belonging’ have become a source of social conflict in inter-group every day political game<sup>1</sup>. To a greater extent, the state of Cameroon has made itself a focal point for competition as its various ethnic groups and regions seek to capture its politico-economic benefits. The public concern about ethnic and regional inequality therefore waxes and wanes with the political climate. Hence, the Cameroonian population has been highly vulnerable to the politics of identity and recognition to which one can convincingly assert that it is highly responsible for the great number of intrastate wars in the world today. The conflicts, between the Kosovo Serbs and Albanians, northern Arab elite groups and Southern elite groups in Sudan, the Tutsi and Hutu in Rwanda and Burundi, the small class of Americo-Liberians and the indigenous Liberian population etc, are cases in point. Furthermore, it is undeniably true that, exclusionary policies in these societies played an important role in secreting the conflicts and fueling their dynamics.

In the case of Cameroon, Political manipulation is characterized by clientelism, nepotism, regionalism and autochthonism. Yet, Cameroon today appears as one if not the only African Country that has been spared by the scourge of violent inter-ethnic or regional conflicts, at least in its recent history. The undebatable fact is that though the current regime has been successful to some extent in developing strategies and tactics to suppress the resentment and conflicts within individuals and marginalized groups, there exist the passion, the rumors and the tension, which could burst into the most awesome ethno-political conflict in Africa. For instance, the quiet and relatively stable political scene harbors a potential for growing unrest amid calls for separation by its Anglophone

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed discussion on the issues of autochthony and belonging in Cameroon, see Socpa, Antoine Democratisation et Autochtonie au Cameroon : Trajectoire Regionales Differentes in Peter Geschiere and Birgit ( eds) 2003, Modernity and Belonging Blackwell, Oxford.

minority population, growing pressure for further political opening and concerns expressed both locally and internationally about human rights violations by the regime in power. To this end, one can convincingly argue that the regime has been quick to grasp such opportunities like liberal democracy, ethno-regional politics and the politics of indirect rule to dismantle the Anglophone social identity and solidarity. However, these strategies shall be dealt with more closely under specific sections in this thesis. But what is noteworthy at this point is that through such tactics the Biya regime was to some extent successful in dividing the two Anglophone provinces by putting elites of both regions at logger heads and in a situation of bitter ethno-regional opposition. For these reasons, this thesis is highly concerned with the process of state deconstruction of the Anglophone social identity and the subsequent reconstruction of South West/North West identity in Cameroon and to eventually examine how this process is linked to the present day North West/South West divide as experienced in South West Cameroon in general and Buea in Particular.

### **1.2 Choosing the Project:**

I am a Cameroonian of both the English and French speaking origins and have lived in both parts of the country for a long time. This gave me the opportunity to capture some of the popular expressions which Francophones say against their Anglophone counterparts and vice-versa. In addition, as an indigene and resident of the South West Province of Cameroon I have been exposed to discourses and issues relating to the North West/South gulf and the resultant political climate. When I moved from the French speaking to the English speaking territory in 1996 for high school and subsequently University studies in Buea, I was convinced that despite the common Anglophone grievances against the Francophone leadership in Cameroon which I shall come to as we proceed, there are equally some tensions between the Anglophone North Westerners and South Westerners themselves which stand side by side to deconstruct their social identity and hence to weaken their solidarity. As Ngoh (1996:328) notes: “There is no doubt that an ‘Anglophone problem’ existed in Cameroon but within the Anglophone community, there was the South West and the North West problem.”

Among the ordinary Anglophone people today, it is common place to depict hostile attitudes such as ethno-regional stereotypes, prejudice and to some extent, discrimination. In the South West Province and especially Buea, the North Westerners have been labeled “*cam-no-go*” a term coined by former South West governor, Oben Peter Ashu. This expression derives from Pidgin English meaning scabies, some kind of a stubborn skin affliction which would not respond to any medication and hence would not leave the body of the afflicted. This provocative ethno-regional stereotype will therefore, always be used by South-Westerners against the North Westerners, to remind them of their “strangerhood” within the South West vicinity-a stranger who comes and would never think of leaving.

In this light, what struck my memory most were the popular expressions, during the 1998 Mount Cameroon eruption. While studying at the undergraduate level at the University of Buea, Mount Cameroon erupted. A phenomenon which created panic and fear among the Buea inhabitants considering the fact that Buea is located at the foot of the Mountain. While this was a matter of urgency and a kind of forced evacuation from Buea to some other localities, some South Westerners jubilated over this sad situation as it presented a good opportunity for North Westerners to leave their region. While I was also panicking and fled from the danger, my ears captured this from a group of young South Westerners: “It is really good that the mountain has erupted, perhaps this is the only opportunity for the *cam-no-go* to leave”! I really felt bad about such a statement, and even asked myself that if there should be human casualties in a natural disaster like this one, is it going to select between the settlers and the host population? I went further to pose the question: does the absence of violent intra-state war in Cameroon mean the presence of positive peace? These questions among others inspired me to institute this project. One of the main reasons why I also chose to conduct this study in Buea whereas the phenomenon is observable in the whole of South West Cameroon is that the situation in Buea is peculiar and fascinating. Besides the fact that Buea is the former headquarters of Anglophone Cameroon and present day capital of the South West Province, the area has always served as a fertile political ground for all sorts of Anglophone political associations and pressure groups in their inherent struggle for self-determination and regional autonomy (

ibid : 136). Moreover, my first hand experience in the Buea provides an additional advantage for the conduciveness of the study area.

However, this study does not only try to examine the social dynamics of the conflict of the antagonistic groups but it goes further to examine its implications on issues of liberal democracy, human rights, and national development. But taking full consideration of the fact that a conflict cannot be studied in isolation of its politico-historical underpinning, the study proceeds on three levels: first, the original tensions between North Westerners and South Westerners; second, the triggering of the tension and its subsequent manifestation at the macro-level i.e., government-elites relations and finally at the micro level which involves their every day social interaction and which is the main focus of this project. Even though a lot have been written as to the history of Cameroon in general and the Anglophone in particular, a sketchy description of the historical background is needed at this point. Decidedly, the discussion moves along the lines of colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial state of affairs.

### **1.3 The Colonial History:**

Originally, Cameroon was a German protectorate which was later on partitioned between France and Britain. Francophone (French) Cameroon which at that time was known as the Republic of Cameroon became independent in January 1960 after a gruesome anti colonial struggle. And the people of Anglophone (British) Cameroon, (formerly Southern Cameroon) which at no time was treated as single territory, had to decide their independence through UN-Organized Plebiscites, which were separate for the Northern and Southern Cameroons.(Fanso,1997, Samba Ngwana, 2001 ). These scholars further explain that the peoples of the Northern Cameroon voted to achieve independence as part of Nigeria and that the inhabitants of the Southern Cameroons voted to attain independence by reunification with Francophone Cameroon. After a constitutional conference in July 1961 in Foumban, the British and the French Cameroons reunified on 1 October 1961 to form the federated states of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, Anglophone Cameroon becoming West Cameroon and Francophone Cameroon East Cameroon.

From this brief background, one can begin to see why the Anglophones developed grievances against the Francophone leadership as I mentioned earlier. In the real sense, when talking of the Anglophones resentment against the Francophones, one do not mean the cordial relations between the two group of people, but the real problem was a constitutional one. The issue is that in 1972, the Ahidjo government unconstitutionally and in breach of the Fouban Accord, abolished the Federal Government and introduced a unitary government. This marked the beginning of the Anglophone grievances which was well documented as the “Anglophone Problem” (ibid). The resulting manifestations of the Anglophone Problem shall be highlighted in the subsequent sections. Notwithstanding, it should be recalled here that the Anglophone peoples themselves had their own internal problems.

#### **1.4 The Original Contradictions between North Westerners and South Westerners.**

It should be noted here that, within the Anglophone community itself, there was the problem of leadership. The South Westerners (Coastal and forest people) dominated the Anglophone political scene for a long time, since they had early contacts with Western trade, religion and education and by the 1950s the advantage was shifted to the *grassfield* people,( present day North West Province). This *grassfielders'* advantage was facilitated when Dr. John Ngu Foncha, a leader of the Kamerun National Democratic Party ( KNDP), an indigene from the North West stood for reunification with the Republic of Cameroon during the plebiscite of 1961, defeated Dr. Emmanuel Mbella Lifafe Endeley, an indigene of South West and leader of the Kamerun National Congress ( KNC)<sup>2</sup> . This situation gave Foncha the opportunity to become Prime Minister of West Cameroon and resided in the regional headquarters in Buea. In connection to this, we are made to understand that the Foncha regime maintained a hegemonic power in Anglophone Cameroon. For every post held by a North Westerner, he groomed fellow kith and kin to “succeed” him and the South Westerner regarded such tribal solidarity as tribalism (

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<sup>2</sup> The political landscape of Southern Cameroon and the events that marked the reunification process is well illustrated by Samba Ngwana (2001) in his book titled: The struggle For Political Pluralism and Democracy in Cameroon; Douala: African Development Cooperation Ltd.

Ngwane 1994:12). Moreover, there was a unidirectional labor migration from the North-West to South West to work in the German banana and palm plantation. It is said that there was a high influx of North Westerners into the South West in general and Buea in particular and as they came, they settled in the best land and dominated the local population in nearly all spheres of life (ibid.). The South West elites were highly aggrieved by this situation and perceived that they were being marginalized in their own region by the *grassfielders*.

### **1.5 Post-Colonial Government Politics and the Anglophone Solidarity.**

The post-colonial states has in many incidence taken advantage of existing contradictions within the Anglophone community to play off the south western elites against their north western Counterparts in a persistent effort to bolster the Unitary State and to deconstruct the Anglophone identity (Njamnjoh and Piet Konings 2003:2). However, for the purpose of coherence, it appears essential to situate the dynamics of this cleavage between elites of the two Anglophone provinces within the two post-colonial regimes so far in Cameroon. The idea is to start from the politics of Ahmadou Ahidjo to his successor Paul Biya, the President of the Republic of Cameroon since 1982 till date.

#### **1.5.1 The Anglophone Community under Ahidjo:**

Under Ahidjo, the Cameroonian political landscape was marked by efforts to achieve national unity upon independence through a systematic effort at regional balancing. Even though this dream for national unity posed serious problems to most newly independent African states, the case of Cameroon was very special and the challenges were enormous, considering the fact that two territories inherited from French and British colonial rule, with different cultural heritage, linguistic differences and different levels of economic development needed to be merged and form a single unitary hetero-ethnic nation. Space does not allow us to cover Ahidjo's policy of regional balance in detail. But what should be underlined here is that with regards to the Anglophone community, though to some extent, he maintained a common identity for the English speaking population by lumping the North West and South West peoples as the Anglophones, he was also discriminative towards Anglophone peoples by stubbornly refusing to respect the terms

of the 1961 federal constitution as previously mentioned. To repeat, this constitutional arrangement viewed both Anglophone and Francophone communities as separate autonomous entities, each with its own cultural heritage but joined together to form a single state<sup>3</sup>.

Put aside Ahidjo's policy of regional balancing which more or less served to contain the original contradictions between the two Anglophone provinces, he preoccupied himself with some form of politics of indirect rule with regards to Prime Ministerial appointments. However, following the appointment of Mr. S.T Muna by President Ahidjo as Prime Minister of West Cameroon in 1968, in succession of Bobe Augustine Ngom Jua, confusion was set up among the Anglophones wherein, the *graffis* thought that the coast had been developed because Buea was made headquarters of West Cameroon. As a result, they started asking for their own headquarters in Bamenda (Ngwane, 1994). Understandably, south-western memories of north-western dominance in the Federated State of West Cameroon (1961-72) created resistance among the South West elite against the Anglophone movement's advocacy of a return to a two-state ( Anglophone/Francophone ) federal arrangement (ibid). Evidently, therefore, while the Coastals were already fed up with too much *Graffi* power in Buea they advocated for the separation of the West Cameroon State in two regions which through the 20 May 1972 constitutional arrangement, gave rise to what we have today as the North West and South West Provinces ( ibid:12). These events form the basis of the process by which the Anglophone social identity came to be weakened.

### **1.5.2 Political Liberalization.**

President Paul Biya, inherited his predecessor's regional politics and even took it a step further. He nursed ethnic and regional resentments while foreclosing the environment which they can be peacefully aired. What shall actually be looked at here is Biya's neo-

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<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed discussion on the 1972 constitutional arrangement, see Ngoh (ibid) History of Cameroon Since 1800 and Samba Ngwana (2001) The Struggle for Political Pluralism and Democracy in Cameroon.



colonial politics of liberal Democracy, how he failed to “match his words with his tongue” and the resulting consequences on the Anglophone population.

The wind of change in Cameroon in the 1990s wherein Biya introduced a large measure of political liberalization gave Anglophone Cameroonians the opportunity to air out their grievances against the Francophone leadership. The Anglophone resentment was that they were underrepresented, played an inferior role in the national decision-making councils and that the infrastructural development of their region of the country was neglected (Nghoh, 1996). Furthermore, they accused the Francophone leadership of violating the terms of the 1961 Federal constitutional agreement. They argued that they went into the union with the understanding that they would operate a federal structure, in which they would live in a mighty, united, economically strong Cameroon Nation; guaranteeing every citizen inalienable and civic rights, equal opportunities and respect for the bicultural character of the country( Samba Ngwana, 2001:108-109).

Therefore, this explains more or less why the floodgates of multiparty politics that were hitherto closed by the Ahidjo/Biya governments were opened on 26 May 1990 when Ni John Fru Ndi an Anglophone from the North West province bravely launched his party, The *Social Democratic Front* (SDF). This party was thus given an Anglophone twist, seen as an Anglophone party by the Francophone-led government. This situation gave the Biya regime a more compelling reason to consider the Anglophone population as “Les enemis dans la maison” (Enemies in the house) but also and more importantly to intensify strategies for neutralizing Anglophone identity( Nyamnjoh and Konings 2003). Hence, after intense pressure on Biya, he announced competition in the event of multipartism a certain degree of freedom of press, association and the holding of public meetings and demonstrations. This further gave Anglophones the opportunity to form pressure groups such as the *Southern Cameroons National Congress* (SCNC) that represented Anglophone interest on several occasions. Not surprisingly, therefore, the *All Anglophone Conference* (ACC) held in Buea , January 3-6, 1993 endorsed a return to the federal system. The *Social Democratic Front* (SDF) in its 1994 convention also accepted the

federal system and from the 29<sup>th</sup> April to 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1994, the *All Anglophone Committee Two* (ACC2) WAS converged in Bamenda to discuss *The Road to Peaceful Self-Determination* (Samba Ngwana 2001:102-103). In a nutshell, it was during the first multiparty presidential elections in 1992 that the Anglophones actually expressed their grievances against the Biya government by massively voting for the opposition-the SDF party which was considered the Anglophone party (Nghoh, 1996). This act of solidarity kept on increasing with the events of the All Anglophone Conferences as earlier mentioned. Perhaps it is interesting to have flair of this spirit of unity from the address of the chairman of the *Cameroon Democratic Party* (formed in 1983) to the conference on 29 April 1994:

...On behalf of my humble self, and on behalf of all the sons and daughters of Anglophone Cameroon, I thank the ALL Anglophone Conferences (ACC) organizers for providing our people this cherished opportunity to discuss open-heartedly this matter that is of common interest to us as Anglophones....We as a people with one blood and one destiny salute the ACC Standing Committee on this unique occasion (Samba Ngwana, 2001: 103)

With this high political tension in the Anglophone Provinces of North West and South West, the Biya government developed fears for the possibility of Anglophones to unilaterally declare autonomy (ibid). There was therefore a need to develop strategies to contain this Anglophone threat and it is strongly believed that one of the major tactics used by Biya was that of the politics of indirect rule which I will come back to latter. Most Anglophone scholars are also of the strong opinion that this strategy is at the heart of the bitter ethno-regional opposition between the two English speaking provinces of Cameroon today. It is against this backdrop that this study stands out to address the following research questions:

- 1 Do the North Westerners and South Westerners living in Buea actually consider their relations as being conflictual? If so what are the forces that serve to maintain this antagonistic sentiment?
- 2 How do the colonial experiences particularly the legacies of indirect rule influence post-colonial politics of identity and recognition? Is politics of identity a potential source of the conflictual attitudes between these two groups of people?
- 3 If the principle of liberal democracy sees individuals as entitled to “govern” their own life, within limits connected primarily with the mutual recognition of equal

opportunities for all. Then the question that springs up and which this thesis cannot afford to dodge is: What social transformation has occurred in their relationship following the wave of democratization in Cameroon?

- 4 To what extent is the antagonistic sentiments contained and maintained within their relationship, to enable them as a people and as citizens of Cameroon to reach a new stage or level of peaceful existence?

### **1.6 Working Assumption:**

Policies recognizing cultural identities and diversity do not lead to fragmentation, antagonism and weak development. Such policies are both viable, and necessary, for it is often the suppression of culturally identified groups like the Anglophone Cameroon minority population that leads to tensions and national disintegration. I have mentioned earlier how the first President of Cameroon Ahidjo stubbornly abolished the 1972 Federal Constitution that recognized the bicultural character of the Cameroon people. According to Ngwane, the Anglophones were told to “think Cameroonian” and forget they are Anglophones (ibid: 13). When he quitted office on 4 November 1982 and handed over to Biya, the situation became more chaotic as the marginalization and stigmatization of the Anglophone community reached its peak. At this juncture, I think it would not be unreasonable to have a picture of the way some Anglophone scholars lament over this sad situation. In the words of Samba Ngwana,

“...our fight, our struggle is not against Francophones but against the oppressive CNU/CPDM governments of Ahidjo/Biya, which have denied us our fundamental rights and frustrated our political, economic and social aspirations. Governments which reduced us to second class citizens, and are hell-bent on keeping us there”. (ibid: 108).

This thesis therefore moves by the premise that if the Francophone leadership had recognized the Anglophone minority as a distinct people, the inter-provincial wrangle between the North Westerners and South Westerners would not have been so intense as it is today.

### **1.7 Purpose of the Study:**

Overall, this study sets out to examine the social dynamics of the antagonisms between Anglophone Cameroon North Westerners and South Westerners living in the South West Province in general and Buea in particular. Specifically, it focuses on the social interaction at the grassroots level and the forces that serve to maintain such an ethno-regional divide. With a view to proposing ways and strategies that would go a long way to improve their level of mutual understanding, trust, tolerance and cooperation and hence maintaining a more peaceful and harmonious relationship. In this way, this could provide an environment for human and national development.

### **1.8 The Epistemological Foundation of the Study.**

Epistemologically, this study is guided by the Constructivist approach to the study of Social phenomena, which holds the general view that truth and meaning do not exist in some external world but created by the subjects' interactions with the world. Meaning is constructed, not discovered, so subjects construct their own meaning in different ways even in relation to the same phenomenon<sup>4</sup>.

Therefore, the research position adopted is interpretive, so as to actually interpret the actions of the research subjects vis-à-vis the issue under investigation. To this end, attention was highly focused on the forces that serve to maintain the antagonistic sentiments. Problems and themes should emerge from the fieldwork setting rather than being imposed by the investigator. In this light, on entering the field I wanted to escape the bonds of grand theory and generalization.

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<sup>4</sup> For a more illustrative account of Constructivistic research, see Gray D.E. (2004) Doing Research in the Real World, Sage, London.

## CHAPTER II

### ENTERING THE FIELD.

#### **2.1 Research Design:**

To ensure that the research is sound both on ethical and epistemological grounds, the design adopted for this study is qualitative in character and the theoretical insights should ideally be discovered in the empirical method so-called “Grounded Theory”. The aim is to gain an integrated overview of the study including the ways in which the two antagonist groups act and to account for these actions. Also, the aim is to get a theory that is: discovered, developed and provisionally verified through systemic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon<sup>5</sup>.

#### **2.2 Target Population:**

The population for this study consisted mainly Cameroonians of the English speaking origin residing within the Buea Municipality. Research population was thus selected without discrimination on any grounds-gender, age, religion, socio-economic and educational background. But for the purpose of reliability, persons depicted to be under fifteen (15) years of age were not included in the research.

#### **2.3 Sample Size:**

This depended highly on the issues that were emerging during the fieldwork process. As such, the sample size was continuously developed until the point of theoretical saturation. By the time the number of observation was depicted to be good enough for the information needed, about 120 people had been interviewed.

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<sup>5</sup> For an interesting and detailed discussion on “grounded theory” as an approach in social research , see Denscombe, Martyn ( 2003) The Good Research Guide For Small-Scale Social Research Projects (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) Open University Press, England.

## **2.4 Fieldwork Stories:**

The most striking story concerns the month long University of Buea students strike action (from April 27 to May 27 2005), which I had grappled with before I had ever got to the field. By the time I was almost at the completion of my research proposal, I almost got discouraged with the project when I learnt about the level of military and police violence on students' hostels, on April 27 and 28, 2005. This event subsequently led to the killing of two University students by the Cameroon national police. Gilbert Nforlem, a master's degree Zoology student and Aloysius Abuoam, a student from the Faculty of Education department of Biology were taken casualties. The police shot Nforlem in his chest while Abuoam was shot in his head from behind, on Thursday, April 28 (*the post News paper No. 0663 Monday May 3, 2005 p.3*).

With this kind of violence, questions related to the obstacles and dangers of conducting research in an area of violent conflict started to worry me. Nevertheless, I developed some courage, stemming from my past experience with the area and decided to still embark on the project. Surprisingly, in the field, I pictured out that the University crisis was an advantage to my research project. What was indeed astonishing was the manner in which a simple student strike became polarized and escalated into what could be regarded as a "protracted crisis."

From the time the strike kicked off and through my fieldwork process, tension and uneasy calm hung in the air. From the moment I entered the fieldwork area, I met with heavy military presence by troops and movements in the vicinity were particularly restricted. This therefore formed a "critical turning" point as it slowed down the research process to some extent. While this paper cannot handle the entire dynamics of the strike activities, at least, it tells us something about its aftermath. The student strike turned into an unfolding drama as the Buea populace also became soaked into the rioting and violent confrontation between the striking students and the forces of law and order. By the end of the Strike activities by means of a peace pact between the Higher Education Minister Professor Jacques Fame Ndongo and the striking students on the May 27, 2005, the population of Buea had experienced huge material damage in and out of the University

Campus. Besides the human casualties, material damage ranged from the destruction of the administration building of the University, lecture halls, University Canteen, the destruction and burning of cars and tyres on the road, individual private businesses and so on.

However, the question that necessitates answer here is: what was actually the genesis of the Buea University Students' Strike action? What was really their demand? The Eden News Paper vividly puts the whole scenario as follows:

Obviously inspired by the University of Yaounde I Strike, as early as 7 am on Wednesday April 27, 2005, a group of students bombed into various lecture halls beginning from the U-Block Complex and forced all lecturers to terminate on-going lessons and increasing in number as they moved along. But the University of Buea had their own grievances indicated in the various placards they carried along-No French 101, No English 102, we need all courses to feature in the resit exams, we want Hotel VIDALU out of campus, we need a student union etc. Nonetheless, the projected peaceful demonstration turned into violence as the Police intervened. The demonstrations reached the apex Thursday 28... the police started firing tear gas, grenades and some bullets towards students who in turned retaliated by throwing stones on them.( The Eden News Paper No.011 May 3, 2005, p.4.)

This brief piece gives some indication that the students had at least some objective grievances and were involved in a situation of a latent conflict with the University administration. But because of lack of conflict management skills by the Cameroonian forces of law and order and poor peace negotiation ability of the public administration, this situation burst out into violent action. The part that struck me most and which I found particularly interesting was the manner in which there was the unidirectional accusations during and after the crisis. The strike took a totally different trajectory as the public "behavioral space" became highly charged with xenophobic doctrines from the South West population.

Consequently, the strike was projected to involve a "stranger element" and the image of an "enemy other". South Westerners persistently interpreted the strike as being orchestrated and masterminded by the settlers-North Westerners. For instance, the *Heron News paper* interpreted the communiqué issued by the South West Elites Association (SWELA) during the peak of the strike actions as apportioning blames to what it referred to as 'North Westerners' ( *The Heron News paper No. 0094, Wednesday May 18-24,*

2005, p.2.). At this level of the discussion, I think it would not be unreasonable to have flair of SWELA's communiqué during their annual assembly in Mudemba, Ndian division in the South West Province:

...SWELA deeply mourns the loss of lives of students at the University of Buea [...] Regrettably, SWELA is well aware that persons and groups that hate the South West Province and its people have infiltrated and are manipulating the students to senseless destroy the University, public and private property. In the past, such persons destroyed the Women's House and the defunct Produce Marketing Board in Kumba, South West Province [...] SWELA resolved and warned: "The people of the South West Province will no longer stand idly by to allow public property in the Province damaged or their sons and daughters targeted for destruction by unpatriotic persons. Enough is enough (Eden News Paper No. 013, May 18, 2005 p.9).

Rightly or wrongly, this demonstration against "strangers" in the Southwest Province was later on implicitly echoed by the then Vice Chancellor of the said University, Dr. Dorothy L. Njeuma, a Buea native. In a speech which she presented to the visit of Higher Education Minister, Prof. Jacques Fame Ndongo to the University on May 27, 2005, She accused a certain group of people for actually masterminding the University of Buea crisis. She reported that the riot of students was instigated by some members of the teaching staff of the said University who all along demonstrated an attitude of lawlessness. She said instead of teaching the students what is on the program, they only talk about their deans, the vice-chancellor, the President of the Republic and the regime and that when she was out of the country, these same teachers instigated students into violent riot. She even went ahead to demonize such persons:

"...There are some members of staff who are prepared to kill because they want posts. Such persons must know that the appointment to a position of responsibility is not a right. Appointments are deserved; they cannot be obtained by force or through intimidation"<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, my original plan was to unravel the forces that serve to maintain the antagonistic relationship at the grassroots level. But when I learnt about the Buea University crisis and saw the direction that it finally took, I decided to expand my focus to include issues relating to the crisis and the subsequent North West/South West relations which I shall come back to during data analysis.

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<sup>6</sup> A full text of Njeuma's Speech is provided by the Post News Paper No. 0673, Monday June 6, 2005 p. 11



Evidently, however, this identity politics did not end with the Buea University crisis. I could say my entire field work was marked by issues of identity formation and maintenance especially vis-à-vis the struggle over land. When I entered my first fieldwork site-*the Molyko Banana camp* so as to establish initial contacts with the camp heads, I was met with a dramatic scenario. Two women of about 45 years old were engaged in a very bitter quarrel which subsequently culminated into a fight of high intensity. One of the women was stripped naked and dragged on the ground by her protagonist. From their quarrel I pictured out that the one who was left naked was a North Westerner and the one with the leading role was a Bakwerian of the Buea municipality. Not surprisingly, their quarrel and open confrontation quickly took an ethnic undertone. On the one side, the woman from the North West was accusing her south western counterpart for cultivating her back yard and insulting her to be lazy, unable to go far away into the forest to cultivate where land is abundant. On the other side, her south western counterpart doubted loudly how a “stranger” could come and be disputing land with her in her own indigenous land. This chaotic drama was later on settled by the community members, while one other woman rushed into her house and brought a cloth to cover this woman’s nakedness.

In a related story, this contested identity over land also found grounds in a dispute between some Bakweri elders in Molyko and North West women over the Molyko CDC Banana Land. With the economic boom of Buea and its high level of population influx, there is the problem of land scarcity. In this regard, the Bakweri chiefs pleaded that the government should give them part of their land which is under CDC occupation around the *Molyko*, Buea. Mean while this hectare of land was not put in use by CDC, the local people tended to do farming on the area. It appears therefore, that most of the land was being cultivated by women from the North West Province living in Buea. When rumors, be it true or false started arriving that the government has granted the chiefs’ demand, the time was up for some Bakweri elders to mobilize their youths to go to these hectares of land for the clearing and the demarcation. I happened to escort some friends to this place just as if I knew another drama was going to take place. While we moved by, in the farms, it so happened that two women were in their farms and wondering where such a

noise was coming from, they asked: “Who are those”? This was like a provocation to the Bakweri elders and so the response was “who are you, you these *graffis*” (meaning North Westerners and their Bamileke brothers), is it because we have allowed you to be cultivating this land?” This simple question triggered the elders to order the youths to cut down every food crop that they came across such as fresh corn and vegetables. This inhumane scene did not end there, the women were even ordered to harvest corn put into bags and offer this malevolent gang, which they took happily home. What could come out of the mouth of one of these women was: “We shall see something in this coast” speaking painfully and shaking her head.

Before we proceed any further, it is crucial to realize the manner in which both the University of Buea crisis and the struggle over land were being transformed into the main conflict between North Westerners and South Westerners.

### **2.5 Fieldwork Techniques and Adopting Roles:**

This project is based on fieldwork material collected from early May to late July 2005. Data collection actually involved three phases. I started by conducting a pilot study so as to determine the initial sites for fieldwork based on their likely relevance for the issue under investigation. In this light, focus was on those areas where the level of day-to-day social encounters between the two identity groups was depicted to be high. This was soon after followed by the collection and reading of news papers that captured issues related to the North-West/South-West divide. In fact, this was to give me a better focus on the field. Information was thus collected from three categories of people that make up the municipality. These were: The local community, student community and public intellectuals. The reason why the study population was sub-categorized as such was to give my analysis a balanced perspective.

For the purpose of this study, the student population and a greater part of public intellectuals came from the University of Buea. The public intellectuals were considered to be persons outside the University who were depicted as being knowledgeable as far as the issue at stake is concerned. These persons were mainly chosen by means of snowball

sampling. One key informant always recommended the next. Taking into cognizance the fact that classes were not going on at the University during the strike period and coupled with the fact that the memories of students and staff were filled with the repercussions of the University crisis, I decided to start the interviewing process with the local population and end with the University population. Besides, there is something unseemly about pushing aside the memories of the University students' in relation to their mates killed during the strike action just for the purpose of keeping alive an academic endeavor.

The second phase was therefore the conduction of interviews with the local population. The initial sites included the *Molyko Banana Camp and Buea Town* (particular the *Bonaberi and Babouti* neighborhood popularly known as "*Stranger Quarters*"). Before entering each of these sites, contacts with the various quarter heads were made first, introducing myself to them and the purpose of the study to the Anglophone community and why their community is solicited. Due to the sensitivity of the research topic and the various interpretations which the Buea University Crisis attracted, these community leaders, agitated a bit and even tended to doubt my identity and personality. Guardedly, I always got to the field with my identification papers, ranging from my Cameroonian national identity card, Norwegian student identity card and some proof of having studied in Buea for a long time. All these identifications, created some confidence in them. To this end, they accepted to assist by informing their various community members about the exercise at least a day before the interview process.

To ensure that informants speak freely and give unbiased answers, I asked the quarter head of the *Molyko Banana camp* to accompany me to the households of North Westerners as he made me to know that he is a North Westerner by origin. I then asked him to provide me with one other member from the council who is from the South West, to take me to the household of South Westerners. As for the interview process in "*Stranger Quarters*", the quarter head was neither from the North West nor from the South West Province. He presented himself as a Bamileke from the West Province who has spent more than fifty years in Buea and living only in the same "*stranger quarters*".

Therefore, he was figured out fit to accompany me to the household individuals from both sides of the divide.

Interview was mostly conducted in the evenings when most people came back from their farms and market activities. It was really interesting the way these community leaders introduced me to the households. The usual saying was: “Good evening Mr/Mrs “X”, that our son has come”. “Oh! My son, you are welcomed we have been told about you”. In fact, I was delighted and felt accepted. But for the purpose of continuous confidence building and trust, I presented myself again to each interviewed household, as a student interested in social change and progress. Almost always, I would explain that I am an Anglophone Cameroonian citizen and have lived and studied in Buea for a long time before traveling abroad for further studies. Hence, my interest in the Anglophone community in general and the misunderstandings between Anglophones from the North West and those from the South West, as experienced in Buea in particular. In every case, my role for interacting with both South Westerners and North Westerners in the field was a great deal more complex and partly beyond my control. Most of them saw me as an outsider and an insider, a researcher and a Buea resident. It was surprising that, most of the time, this was an asset as it enhanced rapport and confidence building. This was thus, contrary to what I had anticipated: the problem of leaving one’s own country through to getting back to it for research on an issue that is highly sensitive and seemingly trivial to every Cameroonian of the English speaking origin; the constraints of studying a conflict and be part of it. Hence most informants were so delighted to find a young man who shows concern for his own country and community. So subjects spoke more than what was expected. I was indeed in possession of information that would have taken an outsider years to accumulate.

Notwithstanding, there were few problems. One was the ambiguity in some people’s mind about my identity. Some were still curious in knowing whether I was an Anglophone from the North West or from the South-west province. I actually did not want to dwell on my identity as a North Westerner or South Westerner, but when research subjects insisted to know, I opened up and this gave ample chance to the South

Westerners to air out their minds. As one of my informants from the South West camp plainly told me that he is happy to be part of the research but he has things which he would not tell me. After I convincingly proved that I was also from the South West, this man poured out all he had in mind. This same situation happened with one of my informants under the intellectual category. In his words, “I take you to be a North Westerner” as I depicted that he was worried about my identity; I also made it clear to him on the side to which I belong. Noticing that not only we are all South Westerners, we actually come from the same division. He also found himself safe to pour out all the “dust”. Meanwhile North Westerners also spoke freely; I observed some kind of uneasy interview responses, especially each time the term “cam-no-go” was mentioned. As a matter of facts, it was to some degree impossible to probe analytically, at least to the degree that I wished.

Another obstacle which I encountered during my interview process with the local population was that of interviewer bias. Some unscrupulous subjects still expected me to know the truth of the matter if I say I am an Anglophone Cameroonian. But for research with a constructivist perspective as explained in the research epistemology, I entered the field with the idea that the awareness of what it means to be “different” from others, does not make it trivial or inconsequential. In this regard, I went into the field with a minimum reliance on my own beliefs, expectations and predispositions about the phenomenon under investigation (Suspending my own “common sense” temporary for the purpose of the research). To do this adequately, I adopted the role of a “native as professional” making myself naïve about the whole situation. This role actually enhanced confidence in my research subjects as they depicted that they were able to be of service and to contribute to the aim of the exercise.

Upon reaching the level of theoretical saturation where new themes were no longer emerging from the data collection with the local community, the subsequent site was the University of Buea where classes had just resumed after the students’ strike. When I entered the University campus, it was clear that the research process would be a different experience from anything I had previously encountered. There was congestion at the

faculties, students and teachers trying to meet up with their various activities, as exams were also fast approaching. Meanwhile lecturers were very busy with the marking of students' continuous assessment scripts, students were very busy preparing for their exams. There was thus a very big problem of not respecting appointments; lecturers will not always turn up due to their commitments. Considering the fact that all the University students could not be interviewed, focus was on those who belonged to their various ethnic group associations recognized by the University. There was also a great problem tracking down such students. Nonetheless, focus group interviews were conducted with two North West students' associations namely the *Metta Students Association* (MESTA) and the *Boyo Students Association* (BOSTAS). The *Boyo* Association was made up mainly of students from *kom*. It was relatively easy to track down these students during their meeting days on Sundays, compared to the ethnic associations from the South West which showed a low level of organizational ability. The South West groups interviewed are: the *Fako Students Association* (FASA) and the *Manyu Students Union* (MASU). All these could only be possible by passing through old University friends who voluntarily made the arrangements. In each of the focus group interviews between six and fifteen members were present. Even though it was practically very difficult to track down lecturers for interview, I did not feel discouraged and persisted until I had interviewed most lecturers from the faculty of Social and Management sciences. Departments which were focal point included: the departments of Sociology and Anthropology, Political Science, Law, Economics Journalism and Mass Communication etc. This is because the teaching staffs under these departments were found to have a social science research profile and could have an exciting perspective as far as the phenomenon under study is concerned. However, most of these lecturers, demonstrated a lot of care before opening up as it was believed that I am being sponsored by a political organization to investigate into issues relating to the outcome of the strike. I was even sometimes asked to present my project description, which I did. This relatively low level of cooperation and constraints at the University actually slowed the project down.

In all the interview processes from the local community, to the University, responses were taken down by means of a note book and tape recorder. All the research subjects,

approved the use of tape recorder, but their confidentiality was guaranteed. Therefore, considering the fact that the tensions between these two groups of people is still ongoing especially the dimension taken by the University crisis, I reasoned that it will be impossible to write about the phenomenon without taking steps to protect the identities of the individuals who had been interviewed. Reflectively, fictitious names would be used during analysis. To this effect, information related to persons demographic characteristics and family background would not be included. As such information could be traced against the interviewees and as a consequence, could further strain interpersonal relations in their community life. Or the information even used against such individuals.

At the third and last phase of the fieldwork process, participant observation accompanied with some interviews, photographic evidence and the study of documents became the dominant techniques. This research phase was a way of coping with the limitations of unstructured interviews. More specifically, my worry was about a methodology that placed so much emphasis on what people said on their subjective accounts. The aim here was to see if there is a difference between what people said and what they actually did in practical terms. Observations were therefore carried out around the business centres from the University junction to the *Omnusport stadium* at “*Check-point*”. Also, following the issues that arose during the interview process, observations were equally carried out on Students’ hostels in *Molyko*, and women involved in the sale of food crops in *Muea Market*. Here again, there was a very big obstacle. Some persons saw me as a thief, patronizing their hostels and businesses during the day so as to come and steal in the night. Thus, another role had to be adopted to minimize this constraint. The following day, I went to some of these places dressed business-like and telling the people that I have been sent by the University to assess the impact of the University strike on their various businesses, things that were destroyed or stolen. That this has already been done at the University campus and we now want to start operating off-campus. This strategy was really successful as not only persons spoke what was happening at their various business places, but were even eager to provide information relating to the family background and province of origin of the owners and their workers.

## CHAPTER III

### CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL ORIENTATION.

This section provides a conceptual and theoretical roadmap for the analysis of the conflict between North Westerners and South Westerners in Cameroon. Thus, as far as this study is concerned, the following terms have to be closely examined: **‘the legacy of indirect rule’, ethnic groups, politics of identity, ‘ethno-regional antagonism’, peace, development and liberal democracy.**

#### **3.1 The Legacy of Indirect Rule.**

Indirect rule was a popular policy of colonists throughout history. This was the main policy adopted by the British in tackling the problems that troubled their West Africa colonies. It was a system of governance under which ‘natural rulers’ were given the opportunity to rule their people under the guidance of the British authorities (Ngoh, 1996: 168). Relating this policy to the Cameroonian case, it has been pointed out earlier in a different manner that the League of Nations through Article 22 of its Covenant gave former German Cameroon to Britain and France as a mandatory territory in 1919. The British and the French ruled the two parts of Cameroon (British and French Cameroon) in very different ways. In his book *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, Fredrick Lugard points to the fact that British administration in British Cameroon was based on the policy of “Indirect Rule” (ibid: 170). They ruled through local kings and chiefs. They thought the people would like being ruled by local rulers. The British also thought it would be easier and cheaper to rule this way. The chiefs and kings ruled their people in the name of British government. Therefore, by raising the research question: *how do the colonial experiences particularly the legacies of indirect rule influence post-colonial politics of identity and recognition?* The point is to ascertain whether the present politics of autochthony and ‘belonging’ in Cameroon as a whole and the South West province in particular thrives on the politics of indirect rule, what is generally known today in post colonial Africa as the politics of “ Divide and Rule” backed by what social scientists generally refer to as neopatrimonialism ( Mbuagbo: 2002). In this politics of neopatrimonialism, the rational and effective management of the state is truncated and



replaced by a reticulated network of ties of personal loyalty and support, governed by materialistic considerations (Claphan, 1991; Fatton Jr, 1986; Gordon, 1996). In such a situation, state patronage and clientelism serve to consolidate regimes by offering access to state resources in exchange for political acquiescence (Boone, 1990).

As mentioned earlier, it is believed by most Anglophone scholars that this was the main political inventiveness Biya used to accommodate the Anglophone threat. It would therefore seem reasonable at this point to link the discussion with some politico-historical processes in Cameroon that relates to North-West/South West differences and Biya's strategy of divide and rule. With this political tool his main logic was to make a distinction between the supposedly conciliatory Coastals of the South West Province and the unpatriotic ungrateful power monger *grass fielders* of the North West Province (Nyamnjoh and Konings, 2003). With this strategy, the Biya regime encouraged the formation of the South West Elites Association (SWELA) with the objective to promote the Socio-economic development of the South West Province in line with Government act (Ngwane, 1994:17). For some South Westerners, the birth of SWELA marked the end of *Graffi* domination (ibid). The political game extended to the point of encouraging a merger between SWELA and the Elites Association of Native Douala. Hence, forming the Grand SAWA Movement (ibid, 2003). With these regional associations to represent and defend South West interest, there was nothing any longer like the Anglophone identity. Subsequently, the North West Elites Association (NOWELA) was also erected in the process (ibid, 1994:19). The deconstruction of the Anglophone social identity and weakening of their solidarity was openly manifested for instance with the appointment of Achidi Achu, a politician from the North West Province to the revived post of Prime Minister and head of Government, following parliamentary elections in 1992 and the subsequent reduction of South West Province representatives in the cabinet for failing to deliver constituencies. To South West Elites, the victory of the CPDM in the North West and the appointment of Achidi Achu unveiled the nasty political game of the North West elites by fueling opposition and supporting the ruling party at the same time (Nyamnjoh and Konings, 2003). Given the intensification of the power struggle between the South West and North West elites during political liberalization process, the Biya regime again,

found it politically lucrative to tempt the “peaceful and conciliatory” South West elites away from the Anglophone solidarity with strategic appointments and the idea that their real enemy was the “unpatriotic, ungrateful, and power mongering” North Westerners (ibid.). This is probably because the regime found the North-Westerners to be most threatening, as the first opposition party, the *Social Democratic Front* (SDF) upon the restoration of multi-party politics came from the North West Province. So when the table turned the other way round in September 1996 with the replacement of Simon Achidi Achu a North Westerner by Peter Mafany Musonge, a South Westerner from the Buea municipality and the appointment of more South Westerners than North Westerners to key cabinet positions, the South West people went “crazy” it was high time for South Westerners’ jubilation and a convenient time for the South West people to develop a spirit of revenge and strategies to weaken north western domination within the Anglophone population<sup>7</sup>. This event made the South West elites to depict the presence of North-Westerners in their region as a continuous embarrassment and a threat to their being. As a matter of consequence, the South West Elites argued that support for Biya’s regime for the forth-coming parliamentary elections in 1997 and presidential elections in 1998 was a necessity for all the sons and daughters of the South West Province. This was imperative in order to maintain this” political victory” regarding the Province disadvantage position since the Ahidjo’s regime. It may therefore be interesting to relive the war cry issued by former South West Governor Oben Peter Ashu at the eve of the 1997 parliamentary elections as captured by Dickson Eyoh:

We are ready to fight to the last man to maintain our son as Prime Minister. This is the time for all South-Westerners to be ready to die or survive.... We have the Prime Minister and what we need now is only satisfaction and social amenities.... Referring to North Westerners resident in the South West,...the governor said the South-West was satisfied with what it had and “anyone who is not here to safeguard the interest of the Province should immediately pack to his home (Eyoh: 2004).

### **3.2 The Concepts of Ethnic Group, Ethnic Identity and Politics of Identity.**

Ethnic identity has become more salient and ethnic conflict more marked in many parts of the world in recent decades. This is one of the reasons why there has been increasing

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<sup>7</sup> An interesting analysis of the strategies used by the Francophone leadership to deconstruct the Anglophone identity and hence solidarity is found in Piet Konings and Francis B. Nyamnjoh ( eds) 2003, Negotiating an Anglophone Identity : A Study of the Politics of Recognition and Representation in Cameroon, Leiden.

emphasis in the social sciences on the importance of ethnicity since the 1960s (Schilder 1994:2). Unfortunately, however, much confusion still surrounds the use of terms such as ethnicity, ethnic group and identity. In most definitions of ethnic groups, the “subjective” dimension of a consciousness of being members of the same group as distinct from comparable groups is combined with “objective” dimension of a group name, shared notions about a collective past and /or common cultural traits (ibid). But in this thesis, an ethnic group is taken to mean the largest inclusive group which is characterized by communal boundaries. This communal boundary is socially constructed. To put it differently; this communal boundary marks what is seen as the social organization of cultural difference (Barth, 1969:13). To the extent that actors use ethnic identities to categorize themselves and others for the purpose of interaction, they form ethnic groups in this organizational sense. Relating this notion to the case of Cameroon North Westerners and South Westerners, it can be said that an ethnic group can exist only in the presence of other comparable groups. Together forming an ethnic region ( e.g South West) which may stand against a neighboring ethnic region ( e.g North West) with a clear “us” and “they” differentiation in their day to day social encounters.

Even though the concepts of ethnic group and identity are interrelated and interwoven I want to mention here that the concept of identity as used in this thesis is in line with the views of Ger Duizings ( 2000:18-19). He argues that identity represents primarily a link between the individual and a specific category or group of people. It is based on perceived sameness which at the same time implies difference from others. He underlines this point further by noting that if a category becomes a principle of group formation, then identity represents primarily a social bond between the individual and a collectivity or community, which may vary according to time and space and may be accepted or contested by both outsiders and insiders (ibid:18). The foregoing implies that, via social interaction a community develops a sense of common experience. Individuals incorporate elements of the social experience in their personal identities. The common elements create a sense of a community, a collective identity (for instance Cameroon South Westerners and North Westerners). It is also worth noting that ethnicity is a special form of identification wherein group histories, cultural traditions and common stories are

emphasized and have the potential for producing either constructive or destructive actions (Byrne 2000). Thus, with respect to ethnicity, the dynamics of group identity is associated with competition; exclusiveness and conflict. The meaning of 'identity dynamic' as used here derives from Terrell A. Northrup who defines identity dynamic "as the tendency for human beings, individually, and in groups, to establish, maintain, and protect a sense of self-meaning, predictability, and purpose and that the dynamic of identity provokes changes toward escalation and rigidification of conflict ( Northrup 1989: 63). All in all, the concept of identity as used in this academic endeavor is a social-psychological, political and historical fact.

Now connecting these ideas of ethnic group and dynamic of identity to the broad concept of politics of recognition through the politics of identity, Charles Taylor in a perceptive philosophical and historical essay argues that the demand for recognition comes to the fore in the current politics of nationalism, in the aspiration of minority groups, in some form of feminism and in the broad movement of 'multiculturalism' (Taylor 1994). One could somewhat figure out that the most influential idea in Taylor's argument is that the lack of recognition inflicts harm that threatens the very existence of minorities and other disadvantaged groups. People can suffer real damage, Taylor says, "...if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves" (ibid). Thus, we can understand the intensity of responses to perceived injury to the ethnic group on the part of its members, up to and including the unleashing of extreme violence, as Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The aggressive and murderous ethnic militia man may even believe that his very existence is threatened by the perceived injury to his ethnic group (Nnoli et al., 1998: 5). Evidently, therefore, when talking about the politics of identity in this study, the focus is on the politics of recognition which revolves around the individual and group identity phenomenon. Grievances that are redressed through the politics of recognition seek to revise the self-image identity issues among both the subjugated and the powerful (Englund, in Englund and Nyamnjoh's editions, 2004). For this reason, the tendency of members of a particular ethnic group or region to identify with the fortunes of their co-ethnics may be understood. Concomitantly, a poor villager for example believes that a cabinet minister

from her/his village or region represents his own share of the “national cake” even though s/he may never receive any personal material reward as a result of the appointment. When seen in the intra-Anglophone Cameroon context, ordinary North Westerners and South Westerners are driven by political discourse of representation at the national level. It is more or less believed at the micro level politics that a Minister from the South West province represents the whole province in the sharing of the “national cake” like wise a Minister from the North West province and her/his followers. Meanwhile in effect, this may not be the case.

### **3.3 The Concept of Liberal Democracy.**

Interestingly, Charles Taylor was not only concerned with politics of recognition and identity but he was also busy linking this political agenda to the larger social context of liberal democracy. According to Taylor, the principle of liberal democracy sees individuals as entitled to “govern” their own life, within limits connected primarily with the mutual recognition and equal opportunities for all. Liberty is seen not as a special privilege of elite but in principle available to all. Even though Taylor writes about the West, the task is not to adopt this Western ideology to the Cameroonian case but to see whether and/or how the principles of liberal democracy could be adapted to the Cameroonian context.

Therefore, while there is no universally agreed definition of democracy, this study considers democracy to go beyond mere multiparty democracy as the situation in most of post colonial Africa is. Ultimately, democracy according to this thesis is linked to the question of how to organize a shared life, the way in which a common sense and civic virtue are combined, the manner in which citizens’ capacity of exercising rights and duties are expressed. Common good is thus built on the convergence of ideas of equality and freedom without intimidation of any sort. It would seem therefore that there is a special relationship between the satisfaction of individual and collective identity, genuine democracy and national development.

### **3.4 The Interconnection between the concept of identity politics, democracy and national development.**

The concept of 'development' cuts across many levels. It refers to macro issues (such as patterns of a nation's growth), as much as it refers to meso problems (such as river-basin plans), or to micro problems (such as local community development). All three levels - macro, meso and micro are interwoven (Olympio Barbanti, 2004). Development interventions are thus intended to move societies from a situation in which they are believed to be worse off, to a situations in which they are assumed to be better off. Certainly, there is a great deal of contention on what determines who is 'worse' and who is 'better'. The traditional paradigms of development theory have historically been similar to those of economics. Specifically, the field of *Development Economics* tries to explain differences in development conditions mostly through macroeconomic factors. A country's GDP has been, for most economists, the major parameter with which to measure development success. Recently, the contributions of Nobel laureates of the 1990s, who stressed the political and social dimensions of development, have come under more consideration (ibid). Research on development has become multi-disciplinary, embracing policy analysis and starting to focus largely on the major problems of failed development, *poverty*. The driving idea here is that human beings are most happy and productive when they enjoy freedom of mind and body and that this can only be achieved in the atmosphere of peace and stability, guaranteed by a stable and good government through genuine democratic performance. According to Van de Walle ( 2000) , the spread of the "third wave" of democratization to Africa in the early 1990s represented the most significant change in the continent since independence period three decades before. "New democratic governments face exceptionally strong distributive pressures, both from groups reentering the political arena after long periods of repression and from established interests groups demanding reassurance" (ibid: 3). Undoubtedly, it is an urgent challenge to think through how in the present context of politics of identity and new policies of development, some of the basic rights that were attached to citizenship can be safeguarded. Hence, the idea of national development as used in this study mainly concerns the ideology of nation building or national integration and the emphasis is that

there can be no national development in the absence of human development. According to *Human Development Report (2004)*, human development is first and foremost about allowing people to lead the kind of life they choose-and providing them with the tools and opportunities to make those choices. The report also argued that human development is as much as a question of politics as of economics. Therefore, economic, social and political developments all depend on human development to complete the process of national development. The idea is that unless people who are poor and marginalized (Who more often than not are members of religious or ethnic minorities or migrants) can influence political action at local and national levels; they are unlikely to get equitable access to jobs, education, health, justice, security and other basic services. In this way, even national development is put into jeopardy.

### **3.5 The Concept of ethno-regional antagonism.**

For an appropriate understanding of the concept of ethno-regional antagonism, it is important to shed light on the concept of conflict. There has been much scholarly debate as to what should be considered when defining conflict. One prominent definition has been that conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable aspect of social change. It is an expression of the heterogeneity of interests, values and beliefs and arises as new formation generated by social change come up against inherited constraints (Mial et al., 1995: 5). While this essay generally supports this definition, it moves the idea further to argue that, the dynamics of conflicts should be analyze along the following four components: (1) conflicts unfold over time ;( 2) conflict is a multidimensional phenomenon ( intrapersonal aspects of conflict interact with social or relational ones, and both of them are influenced by higher level, political, economic and social changes); (3) conflicts contain realistic and nonrealistic issues; (4) power distribution among parties plays an important role in conflict development. But it is crucial to take note of the fact that conflict behavior in intrastate situation can be conciliatory as well antagonistic.

In theorizing the origin of ethno-political and other group violence, Staub (2001: 291) has argued that a history of antagonism often creates an “ideology of antagonism”. In his discussion, an ideology of antagonism refers to a view of the other as an enemy bent on

one's destruction, a view of one's own group as an enemy of the other, and at least an implicit belief that the world would be a better place without the existence of the other group. Furthermore, he points to the fact that an ideology of antagonism makes it difficult to make concessions required for resolving conflict and that it even leads groups to accept suffering in order to impose greater suffering on the other. Decidedly, when I talk of the ethno-regional antagonism of Anglophone Cameroon North Westerners and South Westerners, I consider each region as a larger ethnic group, each group claiming some kind of ethno-regionalist identity. Thus, the social conflict that exists between them for such a long time is taken here to be expressed by way of ethno-regional antagonistic sentiments and/or opposition.

### **3.6 The Concept of Peace.**

The concept of peace has often been taken to mean the absence of war or direct violence as the media has often portrayed. This is by and large the traditional definition which merely stands for negative peace. The concept of peace is now broadly understood to include many situations that guarantee positive human conditions. According to Galtung's understanding of peace science, violence can also be direct, structural and cultural (Galtung, 1996). Direct violence in Galtung's view is concrete and evident and committed by and on particular people, such as assault, drive-by shooting, torture and war. In such a situation, both the perpetrator and the victim of violence are known. By contrast, he understands structural violence to be indirect, gradual, imperceptible and diffused in society as the way things are done as a matter of whose voice is systematically heard or ignored and who gets particular resources and who goes without. This is mostly seen in terms of oppressive and exploitative socio-economic and political structures in society, often hidden, chronic and institutionalized. And cultural violence includes all aspects of religion, ideology, art science, language and cosmology, which justify and legitimize direct and structural violence (ibid: 3). All in all, Galtung defines violence as "unnecessary insult of basic needs". All basic needs-survival, well-being, identity and freedom needs-can be violated by both direct and structural violence. Concurrently, the concept of peace as employed in this thesis is seen in its most positive form-a state of complete direct, structural and cultural peace that is, the complete absence of all three types of violence.



## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

My three months of fieldwork in Buea, were aimed at elucidating data necessary for examining the social dynamics of the antagonism between Cameroon North Westerners and South Westerners. Consequently, the information offers many analytical opportunities vis-à-vis my general research questions. But in attempting to generate a theory grounded on the phenomenon under investigation, it appears absolutely important to unravel both groups' perspectives as to the causes of their present antagonistic relations. The aim also is to begin to understand the forces that serve to maintain the antagonistic sentiments. By and large, the current animosity is sometimes intuitively understood as a kind of ethnically driven conflict. In this light, before entering into the analysis, it is imperative to first of all have a critical look at the theoretical pitfalls of analysis which are predominantly concerned with the origin and causes of ethnic, ethno-political and other forms of inter-group conflicts. Understood as such, I intend to base my analysis on the works of social anthropologies such as Edward Azar, Ervin Staub, Fredrick Barth and Max Gluckman all of whom are highly involved in the theorizing and re-theorizing of theories of ethnically driven conflicts. After the critical theoretical inquiry, the task will be to ascertain the extent to which this is applicable to our case study.

Scholars of conflict theory have written extensively about the sources of conflict, but have usually, according to their respective disciplines, merely looked at and emphasized only one specific source as the real explanation of the cause of conflict while sometimes undermining or diminishing the importance of others. Reasonably, the fact that more and more conflicts in the developing world are protracted and ethnic in character, rather than purely strategic, attention has been drawn recently by some theorists like Edward Azar, to the fact that in order to manage and hopefully resolve these kinds of conflicts, a comprehensive approach that sees conflict as having multiple causes in the context of historical, ethnic and nationalist, socio-psychological, political, economic factors etc is

required. Azar thus used the term protracted social conflict “to suggest the type of ongoing and seemingly irresolvable conflict” ( Azar, in Burton and Dukes, 1990 ). Echoing Azar, Stephen Ryan defined protracted conflicts as “usually conflicts between ethnic groups which have been going on for some time, and which may appear to be irresolvable (Ryan, 1990). The argument of Azar is that, it is at the juncture of actual physical and psychological deprivation that structural victimization bursts into hostile and violent actions (Azar, in D. Zinnes, 1983). This theoretical position though useful and interesting, needs to be re-theorized especially when seen within the context of our case study. Though the ongoing antagonisms between North Westerners and South Westerners can be seen as a kind of protracted social conflict, it is hard to confirm that this is as a result of physical and psychological deprivation in the midst of structural victimization. Especially when looked from the angle of the struggle over land and the Buea University strike. Closely related to Azar’s view point is that of Staub (2001: 289-93). He extends Azar’s ideas by stressing that to understand the origins of group violence requires a multidisciplinary approach, arguing that this requires a conception that considers social conditions, culture, the political system, and group and individual psychology. To him, social conditions within a group can be a starting point for group violence. Difficult life conditions, consisting of intense economic problems, political conflict and disorganization, or great social and political changes, often lead groups to turn against others, he underlines. As an after thought, he points out that these conditions have important psychological consequences, difficult life conditions make people insecure and afraid; they make people ineffective and weaken their identity; they create disconnection as everyone focuses on the satisfaction of their own needs. Cautiously, he also makes mention of the fact that there is almost always an ideology involved in group violence. Relating his theoretical argument to conflict between superordinate and subordinate groups, he contends that subordinate can be based on ethnicity, religion, class, caste, political history, and so on. Interestingly, he brings to light the fact that groups often have peacefully lived for very long periods of time with discrimination that limited their rights, opportunities, and education and as a result, their well-being. Staub also sheds light on the fact that the presence of unhealed wounds from past victimization is another important predisposing characteristic of inter-group violence. That members of

victimized groups tend to have vulnerable, damaged identities in which case in the event of group conflict this makes it extremely difficult for them to consider the other's legitimate needs. In such a situation, conflict and threat easily give rise to what they see as defensive violence. Staub also takes into account the role of leaders and followers in situations of inter-group conflicts. He argues that there are always potentially extreme leaders, but it is the combination of instigating conditions, specific cultural characteristics, and the material and psychological needs they create in a population that makes members of a group especially open and responsive to scapegoating, destructive ideologies, and other violence-generating relationships (ibid). What does the foregoing imply in ethnically related conflicts? It simply points to the fact that the role of leaders and elites in a particular society should not be taken lightly when analyzing ethno-political or other forms of inter-group conflicts. That leaders and elites frequently use their political status to inflame ethnic hatred and other forms of discrimination. However, I see great potency in Staub's model of inter-group conflicts especially those with some ethnic character. He cogently puts forward an integrated understanding of inter-group violence. But by way of analyzing our conflict situation, we shall be able to see that as illuminating as Staub's theory is, it harbors some defects.

Barth (1969) in his study of ethnic boundary maintenance has argued that actors themselves self-ascribe to ethnic groups, and this activity has the quality of organizing interaction between them-*if a group maintains its identity when members interact with others this entails criteria for determining membership and ways of signaling membership and exclusion.* Stable ethnic relations, Barth holds, presuppose such a structuring of interaction and needs a set of prescriptions governing situations of contact, and allowing for articulation in some sectors or domains of activity (ibid:16). It is undeniably true that Barth's presents one of the most influential theories on issues of ethnic group interaction and boundary maintenance but when reflecting concern over the case we have at hand, his argument could be criticized for having a narrow understanding of the issues revolving around the phenomenon of ethnic group interaction and identity. At first glance, his theory could be criticized for being ahistorical and apolitical and this no doubt spoils its tidiness.

The model of Max Gluckman (1973) can also be useful in analyzing our present conflict. When it comes to the mobilization of groups against an outside group and hostilities within the same group in the absence of an outside group, Gluckman drawing inspiration from the Nuer, he tells us that the various districts of a Nuer tribe link up in larger and larger sections by being grouped with more distant ancestors of the tribe's aristocratic clan. He argues that in this way, if one district is involved in fighting, those related to it in brotherhood unite with it against its enemies who will be joined by their brother districts. But if one of them is involved in fighting against with a more distant section all these districts may join up with one another. Consequently, these larger districts are composed of sections which may at times be hostile to one another, but unite against a more distant enemy ( *ibid* : 8 ). He borrows the terms of Evans-Pritchard of "fusion" of members against larger groups and "fission" into sections when not involved against those larger groups to summarize his argument. Understood in this light, I tend to see some potency in Gluckman's ideas of "intra" and "inter group" conflicts especially within the context of Cameroon North-Westerners and South Westerners. Each of the provinces is made up of several ethnic groups that are mobilized to form a larger and united front against an external enemy. Meanwhile the South West or North West regions are actually characterized by internal ethnic rivalry. I shall come back to this later.

With this theoretical orientation, I will attempt here to develop a theoretical argument founded on facts from my fieldwork data and which will be politico-historically and socio-psychologically inclined. As this more or less are issues that account for protracted social/ethnic conflicts. The fact that the intra-Anglophone conflict has been going on for such a long time and is still ongoing makes it to be seen as a conflict that is socially protracted. The task at this juncture is therefore, to find out whether this protracted ethno-regional antagonism drives from politics of identity. I suggest that we start with data from interviews before moving to stories from the field, participant observations and the study of official documents. But in full recognition of the theoretical "mismatch" of analysis, an attempt here is to begin by developing a theoretical argument along the lines of psycho-cultural or socio-psychological conflict theory which is a direct off shoot of protracted social conflict theory. The psycho-cultural conflict theory emphasizes the role

of culturally shared, profound “we-they” oppositions, the conceptualization of enemies and allies, and deep-seated dispositions about human action stemming from earliest development (Utterwulghe, 1999). It thus seems reasonable to assume here that conflicts about real interests take place under certain psychological dispositions and in certain psycho-social contexts which serve to influence substantially the intensity and duration of serious conflicts ( as in ethnic conflicts) and ultimately determine the outcome. One need see only the surface of events in Buea to know that ethnic claim is gradually becoming a central issue in the day to day interaction between North-westerners and South-westerners. Significantly, the analysis shall proceed along the perspectives of both antagonistic groups. Thoughtfully, to give my analysis a balanced perspective, a comparative analysis of the views of all the units of analysis-the local community members, students’ community and public intellectuals from both antagonistic groups shall be critically reviewed.

#### **4.1 South Westerners’ (Host Population) Perspective of the Antagonism**

When I asked my South West Informants what according to them is actually the genesis of the present animosity between ‘they’ and the North Westerners in their region, most of them traced the antagonism from the periods of North West hegemonic intentions in their region. They related their perspectives from the colonial to the post-colonial arena right up to the 1990s with political liberalization wherein the two antagonistic groups were entrapped in a tensed competition for political power. From the South Westerners’ perspective, they find themselves as living under North-Westerners’ domination, especially with the high rate of unidirectional migratory pattern from the North West to the South West for economic reasons. They complain for example that their land has been completely alienated from them by the North Westerners. Besides the fact that North-Westerners had occupied large portions of land (from the native South Westerners in the distant past which they got almost for free since by then land was valueless around the Buea vicinity and to some extent, the whole of South West), South Westerners also complain that their North-Western counterparts are driven by expansionistic ideology and coercive behavior. Some of them subjectively complain that there is a high level of political and economic greed ingrained in the minds of North Westerners, besides being

too provocative. By implication, South Westerners regard North Westerners as aggressive immigrants. To illustrate this it seems interesting to have a taste of the wordings of some of my South West informants. When I asked an elderly woman, 59 years old about her impressions concerning the ethno-regional stereotype *cam-no-go* which South Westerners use against North Westerners in the South West vicinity, this was her response:

“The name does not matter; it is they themselves who brought the name. My son you cannot imagine a ratchet woman like me, I buy a piece of land to farm but my neighbor, from the North West is bent on taking this portion of land from me with force. So that doesn’t mean anything. It is they who made themselves to be called that way due to their way of doing.

This woman’s views are echoed by *Mr. Alpha* a 50 year old man living within the same community. This is what he has to say:

“Well, from my point of view, we South Westerners are normal, we do not find them any trouble but it is ‘they’ North Westerners who bring us problems here. For example, you will give him a piece of land to pay just a very small amount of money sometimes even for free for him to cultivate. What he gives back to you in return is downgrading utterances insulting you to be lazy and foolish. They are always trying to challenge us. In fact, how can a ‘stranger’ come to your place and refuses to give you respect but instead wants you to respect him? It is all these things that make us to be bitter with them and also call them such names as ‘cam-no-go’ that if your place is good why can’t you stay there or return there instead of coming here and disturbing us!”

We can see that South Westerners consider North-Westerners as aggressive and greedy immigrants. *Mr. Jojo*, 60 years old living in another community also expressed strong anger against the attitudes of the ‘settler’ population when asked about his point of view regarding the antagonistic behavior. In his words:

“...if I come to your house and meet you eating *Achu* and I don’t feel like eating this kind of food, what I have to do is to congratulate you and encourage you to go ahead and enjoy your meal, rather than forcing you to stop eating the *Achu* but to instead eat *Koki beans* because it is what I am use to. If it were possible that one party should force the other then it is the landlord who ought to force the stranger to eat what he is eating. Again, nearly all the North Westerners here in Buea and the South West as a whole militate with the SDF opposition party. To me, the way I look at it, politics cannot separate us. But it seems to me that if one is not a member of the SDF party, then one automatically becomes an enemy or an antagonist. That is not the meaning of politics. Politics is a fair game, but here in Buea the settlers are using force. So there is nothing more I can tell you than this their ‘force’!

All these ideas of the aggressive, provocative and hegemonic attitudes of the North-Westerners vis-à-vis their host population in Buea is strongly supported even by South-West intellectuals and the student population. But interestingly, some of them bring in another perspective on the present situation. According to this view, conflict can also be attributed to the lack of cultural understanding and tolerance from both parties. They even go further to pinpoint that South Westerners cannot continuously blame the North-Westerners for their present underprivileged position in their own region and that the problem also lays within the South Westerners themselves. To Mrs. *Tchuchang*, a Buea University lecturer, we have to look at the antagonism also from a cultural perspective. She says the North West and South West peoples though they are united geographically and linguistically, they also have quite different values which both antagonistic groups turn to misunderstand making them to become highly ethnocentric. Each group sees its own values as the best and that of the other as nonsensical.

*Mr. Omega*, a 45 year old intellectual explains that the dichotomy is first and foremost because of politics, which is the core of the problem. The reason being that when they came, they were welcomed but as multi-party politics came, it brought with it tribalism. But he cautiously makes mention of the fact that the problem should be traced from the distant past during the colonial era until the post colonial regime of former president Amadou Ahidjo. He laments that the South Westerner was politically, economically, socially and administratively trampled by the North Westerners in the Anglophone region of Cameroon, since they held all important political positions. “They would take land and then say it is government land, later on they would be building on this same land while South Westerners themselves were afraid to build on the land”. He also recalls the fact that the person in charge of foreign scholarships was a North Westerner and this person made sure that their children from the North West were granted scholarships to study abroad while taking less interest in South West Children. So to him, if North Westerners are claiming today that they are more of an intellectual class than the South Westerners that is not true it is simply because of the opportunities they had in the past to the detriment of South Westerners. He even claims that they the South Westerners are very welcoming and liberal whereas people from the North West are too conservative and

tribalistic. In some way, he also put blames on the South West people themselves for the fact that they are fighting against the North West people meanwhile they have not consolidated their foundation since within the South West province itself, there are internal ethnic divisions.

#### **4.2 North Westerners (Settler population) Perspective of the Antagonism.**

From the perspective of many North Westerners on the other hand, South Westerners are simply envious and jealous of their hard work and entrepreneurial spirit which makes them to dominate the economic life of Buea in particular and South West in general. This particular perspective is held by all the categories of North-Westerners, from the local community members, to the students' population and the North West intellectuals in the region though with some slight differences. One of my North West informants of about 52 years old, by name Mr. *Gentel* said that he has been living in the South West for 30 years and that they came to the South West in their numbers simply to fight for their survival. And due to their strength and industrious attitude, they have developed Buea, they have built good houses and cultivated large farms and now South Westerners call them 'cam-no-go' that they have to leave their region. However, he makes mention of the fact that naturally, the South West man is very good but it is the government that is always trying to separate the Anglophone people. In a related story, a certain Mrs. *Young* says: "we have come and opened their eyes now they want us to leave. All the times they keep on reminding us that you these 'Bamendas' won't you go?!" When a certain Mr. "Tengten" of about 50 years old was asked about his point of view vis-à-vis the ethno-regional stereotype 'cam-no-go' which the South Westerners frequently use against them, this is what he had to say:

"...that is just a song to foster the divide, it came through politics to make the South Westerners' hate us and now the politics have tended to enmity. In deed, I had a personal experience during the 1998 Mount Cameroon eruption. The Bakweri youths formed a certain group wherein they marched from house to house, street to street where North Westerners reside, singing: *Epasa Moto* do your work, *Epasa moto* do your work. It is now that these *grafis* must leave. I asked myself that, the house I am living in is my personal house how can these people come at my door steps singing that I must leave?"

The term *Epasa Moto* is the name the Bakweri indigenes in Fako give to the 'god' of the Mountain. It is believed that when there is a natural calamity around the Mountain such



as an eruption, and then *Epasa Moto* should be angry. In the beginning it was mentioned that it was this very Mountain eruption that provided the investigator with the inspirational motivation for instituting this project. What is one to make out of the foregoing? This simply point to the fact that South Westerners especially the Buea indigenes are depicting the presence of North Westerners in their region as a real threat to their existence and they would be happy to live without this people. This point is supported by Staub's idea concerning a history of antagonism and an 'ideology of antagonism which we shall come back to when analyzing both groups' perspectives. The view that North Westerners consider themselves as actually dominating the South Westerners in their own region is supported by a lecturer by name Mr. *Mbam*. this is what according to him is the root cause of the antagonism:

“...it is like South Westerners are regretting the fact that they sold their land to people from the North West in the distant past. It of course true that because North Westerners have the numerical strength and more hard working, South Westerners are afraid of total invasion and for them to be living like strangers in their own land. Notwithstanding, it is clear however that when people are together, there is bound to be problems but it shouldn't be magnified the way it is. It is not like something which cannot be redeemed. There are people who don't want to see that these two groups of people come to the table and solve out their differences. They don't want to see that a spirit of dialogue is cultivated. They like that it should be in this condition so that they can achieve their own private aim!”

The above implies that there are detractors exploiting the conflict as shall be explicitly demonstrated as we move along. Until now, the task has been to depict whether the people in their day to day interaction actually consider their relationship as being antagonistic and the main reasons they both offer as the main causes of the divide. From the perspective of individuals from both groups it is clear that they acknowledge that they are not co-existing peacefully and harmoniously. Before proceeding any further, it is crucial to take note of the fact that from both perspectives, though it may not be conclusive, it is at least suggestive that the causes of the present situation of animosity should be viewed from a “multidimensional eye”. With the economic being at the core of the antagonism at the micro level as they constantly struggle over land ownership and the political the main reason of the antagonistic relations at the macro level. The antagonism also appears to have a psychological root. However, it would be hard to reach any logical

conclusion by basing my analysis on mere subjective facts which both antagonists provide by way of interviews. In this regard, with the next subheading, the task is to fill the cracks of grounded theory as a research approach by bringing into picture some practical facts obtained from field work stories, participant observation and the study of documents accompany with some interview responses. To reiterate, the major concern is to see whether what people say is what is actually obtainable on the ground.

### **4.3 An Overview of both Perspectives.**

The concern of this part is to objectively address the research questions which this thesis sets out to examine. In this regard, the question: *what are the forces that serve to maintain the antagonistic sentiments?* Is used as an entry point to the questions: *How do the colonial experiences particularly the legacies of indirect rule influence post-colonial politics of identity and recognition? Is politics of identity a potential source of the conflictual attitudes between these two groups of people?*

By now, one could begin to depict that according to the people's views, some of the forces that serve to maintain the antagonistic sentiments could be seen to be: elements of greed especially from the settler population, the host population's fear of continuous domination by the settler population, non compatibility of cultural differences, mutual lack of confidence, mutual suspicion and mutual distrust. One of my informants from the South West clearly told me: 'even if we are militating in the same political party, I do not trust them, they are too tribalistic'. In support of this point, one other South Westerner, journalist by profession, says: "it is indisputable that North Westerners are very industrious but what is killing them is their exploitative tendencies, attitudes of favoritism, tribalism, greed and discrimination!" To see whether what the people say are tenable on the ground or not, participant observation was carried out on major business centers along one side of the road, from the *University Junction* to the *Check-Point* in the *Molyko* neighborhood. The types of business activities ranged from the most prestigious to those considered as odd jobs, these include: hotels, Internet service providers and operators, provision stores, drinking spots, electronic shops, computer documentation,

beauty saloon, shaving saloon, phone booths, building materials, sale of car spare parts, clothes shops, stone cracking etc. In this observation, the following results were obtained:

**Table 1: Ownership of Business Activities.**

Owners of Businesses	Absolute Frequency (AF)	Relative Frequency ( RF) %
North Westerners	61	62.89
South Westerners	19	19.59
Francophones	11	11.34
Foreigners	6	6.18
Total	97	100

The table clearly indicates how economically dominant North Westerners are compared to other such groups within the vicinity. For as shown above, out of a total of 97 business activities studied, North Westerners alone own 61 earning them 62.89 percent of the total. Besides that, it was depicted that the major business centers around the area-Paramount Hotel, internet providers such as Jupiter, Media Planet and Trustech are all owned by people from the North West Province. Furthermore, the table reveals that the next competitive group is the South Westerners but with only 19.56 percent of the total. Most of the Francophones owning businesses are the Bamileke and the Bassa and foreigners are mainly Nigerians. Another important thing to note from the table is that while the proportion of North-Westerners is far beyond that of South Westerners who come next on the rating. It can be seen that the Francophones are closely following the South Westerners. So it could be deduced that the competition should rather be between the Francophones and South Westerners because clearly, no group is proving to be able to compete with the North West group. Another important thing which was seriously considered was the number of business activities owned by the Buea indigenes themselves. Even though South West as a whole got 19 business places out of the 97, the Buea indigenes own only 4 out of the 97 giving them a proportion of 4.12 % of the total. Also some focus was on the origin of workers of some main business activities. It was observed that while the Francophones and the South Westerners employed a mixture of personnel, some South Westerners, others North Westerners and even Francophones, the majority of workers in business centers owned by North Westerners came mostly from

the North-West Province. This observation somewhat confirms the interprising, conservative, tribalistic, favoritism and solidarity character of North-Westerners compared to South Westerners who prove here to be somewhat liberal, less tribalistic and uninterprising. With this result, I was prompted to visit some students' hostels around the same neighborhood to see whether the same phenomenon is observable and this was the result unraveled:

**Table 2: Ownership of Students' Hostels.**

<b>Owners</b>	<b>AF</b>	<b>RF ( % )</b>
North Westerners	28	56
South Westerners	11	22
Francophones	11	22
Others	0	0
Total	50	100

Again, as revealed by the table, out of a total of 50 students' hostels that observation was carried out, North Westerners are still topping the lead with 56 % of the total. It can now be seen that, as with business activities where Francophones were strongly following South Westerners in the market competition, their proportions has now equaled that of the indigenes of the region-South Westerners. Another issue that was taken into consideration was the origin of the care takers of the various hostels. Just like the observation made with business activities, the same was equally made with students' hostels. All the care-takers responsible for the 28 hostels owned by North Westerners came also from the North West. With this observation, it was figured out interesting to ask question that related to the province of origin of those who got contracts to build the hostels as well as the ordinary workers involved in the building. Not surprisingly, I was told by the care takers that the contractors and most of the ordinary workers came from the North West, providing reasons that North Westerners do not demand very high payments like people from the South West. Thoughtfully, since the observation was highly confirming the industrious and hard working spirit of North Westerners, the next site to visit was the Muea Market to also see what is going on in relation to the sale of farm harvests as the picture below illustrates.



**Figure 1: Photo of Women Selling Food Crops at the *Muea* Market.**

In a cohort of about 20 women whom I came across, only one appeared to come from the South West and she was not even a Buea indigene. When one of these women was asked whether she is really able to earn her living out of this business, she said that she feeds her children, sends them to school and does many other things only through her farming activity. Adding quickly that, now things are abit hard but that in the past when Gabonese use to come with their big trucks to buy, she and her colleagues were really fine. She explained that they simply supplied their farm produce in large quantities and at higher prices and then go back to their farm yards for more harvest. With this respond, I was interested in finding out whether she faces constraints getting land to cultivate. This is the way she sadly expressed herself:

“At first we had no problem, the bakweri people use to give us large portions of land just for a small amount of money and you could cultivate the land for several years without having to pay again. But now they have discovered that we are really benefiting and have become conscious. So to have a piece of land now to farm, you have to go far away into the forest just to get a small portion for a high amount of money. The larger the portion of

land, the more the money and you have to pay every year. The people are really jealous now. But we cannot do otherwise, we are forced to buy!”

It could be reasoned out at this juncture that South Westerners especially the Bakwerians tend to envy the North Westerners regretting that they allowed North Westerners to own large portions of land in the past just for a small monetary compensation. For, one might ask why is it that all of a sudden, the Bakwerians have tended to be very strict as far as the sale of farm land is concerned. Another issue which could be confirmed from the interview is that because of this envy, South Westerners are developing strategies to make life difficult for these North West women whom they know are highly dependent on farming. But then it could also be deduced that the North West women have been all along exploiting the ignorance of their South West counterparts regarding the importance of farm land until now that people from the South West have become aware of the value of land. All these issues shall be touched again during theory building.

However, all the above activities were considered to be more or less local activities mostly carried out by the local population. There was thus need to visit the National School of Penitentiary Administration situated in Buea. The aim here was to see whether South Westerners are more or less competitive in relation to national recruitment opportunities in their own region. According to the document concerning the 2002 national recruitment of students, released by Cameroon Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, a total of seven hundred (700) students were admitted. By way of studying this document together with one of the officers of the said Institution, with the purpose of determining the province of origin of the admitted students, six hundred and sixty six (666) candidates were found to come either from the North-West Province, South West Province and the various Francophone provinces, it was however difficult to determine the region of origin of the remaining 34 students since this was done manually focusing on their names. All the francophone Provinces are simply summed up as Francophones. The table below gives us the results.

**Table 3: Region of Origin of Students Admitted into the National School of Penitentiary Administration in August of 2002.**

<b>Region of Origin</b>	<b>AF</b>	<b>RF ( % )</b>
North West	81	12.16
South West	55	8.26
Francophones	530	83.58
Total	666	100

The table unfolds that even though the Francophones are mostly the ones admitted into the school, our concern is the North West/South West relation and as seen, the North Westerners are still dominant with a proportion of 12.16 % compared to 8.26 % for South Westerners, mindless of the fact that the School is located in their region. When the investigator asked the officer (a North Westerner by origin) the reason why South-Westerners are very few, he was made to understand that even though such national recruitments are based on quotas for each province, it appears that South Westerners are not that interested in this kind of occupation, they view it as odd since the workers here are mostly concerned with taking care of prisoners. But that if one goes to the Police School one would see many of them maybe even more than people from the North West Province. Since they consider police work to be prestigious. This same response was obtained from the President of the Buea Taxi Town Drivers Union (a Bakwerian from Buea) when asked the reason why very few young South Westerners are involved in the profession.

He said that though North Westerners outweigh South Westerners demographically, South West boys do not show interest in taxi driving, they like to drive but private cars. According to them, taxi driving is exhausting. From here one can assert without fear of being contradicted that there is an element of pride inculcated in the minds of South Westerners. They see no reason to strain themselves as they consider that they are “the Sons of the Soil”. By now, moving into theory building is less scary, having unraveled the forces behind the antagonism. It bears repeating that the forces that serve to maintain the antagonistic opposition are: Mutual lack of confidence, mutual distrust, mutual

suspicion, cultural incompatibility, too much greed from the North Westerners, pride and envy on the part of South Westerners, and fear of continuous North West domination.

#### **4.3.1 Towards a Theoretical Framework for Analyzing the Intra-Anglophone Cameroon Antagonism.**

The opening question at this level of the analysis is that with the rise of ethnic consciousness from the host population, what outcome should we expect? When for example the story of the two women caught up in a quarrel and finally a fight of high intensity takes an ethnic undertone of being a North Westerners or South Westerner. This event facilitates the reasoning that the fight did not only result from the competition over land but there were some psychological forces in their memories regarding North West/South West relations. The situation is even more telling when one re-examines the aggressive behavior of the Bakweri elders who mobilize their youths for action against the North West women, destroying their crops and even going to the extent of forcing the women to harvest their crops and give them to take home. This only serves to confirm the high level of ethnic anger of South Westerners against the North West people.

From the two stories it is evident that while a settler identity (*the graffi*) most often emerges in their frequent encounters an ethno-regionalist identity amongst the South-Westerners especially the indigenes of Buea is undermining the citizen rights' of migrants in land matters. One might therefore raise an argument that this contested identity over land struggle, is partly responsible for the increasing tensions and episodic communal violence. Difficult life conditions, consisting of intense economic problems, political conflict and disorganization, or great social-political changes, often lead groups against others, Staub argues (*ibid*). Evidently, the North West/South West rivalry as experienced today in Buea goes a long way to buttress this theoretical position. The situation even becomes more illuminating if we take the analysis further to involve issues of the University students' strike action which as we have seen, was translated in terms of the dominating conflict between North Westerners and South Westerners.



Taking cognizance of the fact that actors form beliefs subjectively, largely on the basis of past interaction (Lake and Rothschild, 1996), It could be argued that even though there could be elements of hostilities on the part of the Bakweri elders and their youths in the farm yards, one should also look at the fact that the formation of ethnic group psychology against an “enemy other” subsequently leads to hostile behavior and a psycho-social (mental) distancing between “us” and “them”. By and large, historical experiences between North Westerners and South Westerners tend to shape the beliefs of one group over the intentions of the other. Another important issue which emerges here is that material dispute like the struggle over land is evolving into a form of identity conflicts. The truth of the contention is that the indigenes are not the automatic winners in the competition for limited economic resources with the high rate of population influx that has led to resource scarcity. The fact that the non-natives have progressively occupied lucrative sectors such as land and worked in the CDC Palm and Banana Plantation which were previously neglected by the natives actually enabled them to have high economic power over the natives. Our data have clearly shown how economically dynamic North-Westerners are, compared to their south western counterparts who have all along proven to be dormant economically. Undoubtedly, such a situation provokes feelings of frustration and eventually ethnic anger. This conflict situation is similar to the conflict in the heart of former Yugoslavia wherein Bax Mart in his study of “Barbarization of a Bosnian Pilgrimage Center” nicely demonstrates how neighbors were caught up in a war which is often regarded as pointless and bizarre. He tells us that the Ostojici had once been a poor clan with very little land and as a result were belittled by the local population, referring to them as ‘stone eaters’ and strange. But as time unfolded, the table turned the other way round with the Ostojici becoming the most economically privileged clan with the economic boom of Medjugorje . With the capital the Ostojici earned as they were forced to travel abroad due to their previously underprivileged condition in their area, they soon rose to occupy a dominant position in the religious industry and eventually became the economic giants of the vicinity ( Bax, 2000: 194). The scholar further tells us that this super-entrepreneurism indeed led to the outburst of jealousy. The Jerkovici and Sivrici, the oldest and most respected clans, felt particularly humiliated by those “stone eaters”. With the subsequent economic hardship of these old

and most respected clans and the economic inequality in favor of the “stone eaters” the jealousy and envy finally boiled down to spirals of pointless bloody scenario.(ibid:195). Just like the Yugoslavian experience, the contention is that with the North West/South West case in Cameroon all the old resentment have surfaced and culminated into a psychological interaction of power relations involving feelings of inferiority-superiority between the two antagonists. This is also especially as a result of the perceived and real domination of the South Westerners by the North Westerners in the South West in general and Buea in particular. Even though we have been talking generally about South Westerners, it is indeed interesting to touch specifically the indigenes of Buea-the Bakwerians. The indigenes of Buea are almost absent in the real market competition, with a proportion of less the 5% of the total. With such a high level of laxity on the part of the host population one could jump to the conclusion that instead of immigrants behaving “stranger-like” it is the South Westerners themselves, especially the indigenes of Buea who are the real strangers in their own locality. They tend to adopt the position of a “toothless dog” they keep on backing to chase the North Westerners while in effect they are merely wasting time and energy on people who have already consolidated a very strong foundation within the South West. Consequently, the most important conclusion that could be reached so far is that the conflict between these two groups of people is highly psychologically based rather than identity based conflict as it is often perceived by some people. Moreover, this psychological aspect of the antagonism exists along side and exacerbates objective conflict such as the competition over limited natural and state resources. Therefore, resource scarcity such as land which by and large appears to be the focal point of competition between these two peoples in their every day life especially at the micro level is simply an instigating condition to the resurrection of past animosities which is expressed through more antagonistic lenses such as the politics of identity. In this light, before proceeding with the theory building, it stands safe to note here that **politics of identity** is not a potential source of the antagonistic relations between people from the two Anglophone provinces of Cameroon per se. Rather, material disputes in their every day social existence simply evolve into identity conflict largely due to the psychological component of the conflict. This psychological element of the conflict even

becomes more poignant when seen in the realm of the government politics of divide and rule.

By way of addressing the question on the policy of divide and rule and the politics of identity and recognition in the intro-Anglophone conflict, the major aim is to examine the role played by the outside actor(s) in exacerbating the North West/ South West dichotomy. The outside actor in our case is the Francophone government. Reasonably, analyzing the conflict situation outside the politics of Cameroon will mean that the analysis is fragmented and incomplete. It should be reflected from the introductory part that political manipulation in Cameroon is characterized by clientelism, nepotism, regionalism and autochthonism. All of which are features inherent in the post colonial government politics of divide and rule in the form of neopatrimonialism as explained before. Understood this way, the next task is to examine how the government strategy of divide and rule has greatly influenced political thinking at both the grassroots and national levels through elitists' political behavior.

When conceptualizing the politics of indirect rule, it was seen how the South West Elites especially governor Oben Peter Ashu was strongly propagating destructive ideologies through the "war cry" he issued against the settler population which in our case are people from the other English speaking province of Cameroon. In a way, it could be argued that the governor used such a destructive ethnic undertone as a political tool not only to win the minds of the South West people but also to institutionalize the North West/South West divide for his own political gain. It is indeed hard to confirm that his ideologies were wholly supported by all ordinary South Westerners. In addition, the 'war cry' gives the impression of a systematically marginalized people both politically and economically who have now been brought out of this state of political coma. This political behavior has both an intended and an unintended effect. On the one hand, the intended effect is more or less to show the regime that be that they are the 'good guys' and those deserving high political appointments. On the other hand, the unintended effect is the long term damage created in the minds of the ordinary South Westerners and North Westerners. It can clearly be seen here that Biya's politics of divide and rule has largely

been to the detriment of the Anglophone community, deconstructing their social identity and hence weakening their solidarity. The situation even becomes more compelling when one looks at the subsequent identification of the South West people with SAWA movement as discussed earlier. Clearly, the government of Cameroon has consistently preoccupied herself with the identification of areas of differences rather than areas of common Anglophone aspiration and shared memories as a distinct people. It could even be argued that economic, political and social injustices in Cameroon have provided a fertile ground for the Anglophone political elites to exploit cultural differences by engaging in political discourse that emphasizes ethnic particularities and the importance of localities. Thus, depending on circumstances, ethno-regional space and to some extent villages themselves in the South West have been depicted as “localities” to be defended too much against “invaders” or “strangers” (the North West people especially). It stands to contend here that the political tool of divide and rule breeds more confrontation than concerted action and keeps the country more often on political friction when linked for example to the Anglophone Cameroon experience. For it is evidenced that such a political inventiveness has the implicit aim of putting the two Anglophone province at logger heads so that the people divert attention from their one time common goal of regional autonomy or even secession ideologies, so to speak.

The Politics of divide and rule in Cameroon can more or less be seen as being in a system of interaction with President Biya’s **New Deal Policy** of a large major of political liberalization and its unintended effects on the masses, with a particular focus on the intra-Anglophone uneasy relationship . This paves the way for us to ascertain the social transformation that has taken place in the North West/South West relations in the event of political liberalization in Cameroon. When conducting interviews with my research subjects, just a look unto their minds and faces (both old and young, the poor as well as the intellectual class), shows that there is bitterness, doubt, uncertainty and total disillusionment. Nearly all my North West informants totally rejected the fact that there is any democracy in Cameroon looking at their past and present political and economic situation or that if there is one, then it should be what is regarded to as ‘quasi’ or ‘dictatorial democracy’. And that their cordial relationship with their South West brothers

has even greatly deteriorated only with the emergence of political liberalization under the disguise of democracy. While most South West intellectuals and students pointed to the fact that democracy in Cameroon is limited to the freedom of press and electoral democracy in which case the politically excluded masses pay the price of democracy. According to one intellectual from the North West camp, democracy in Cameroon has not reached a stage where it could be said that there is a free, fair and transparent system which are essential ingredients of real democratic ideals-“we have democracy with unfair elections and corruption, everything is still under the monolithic way of doing things, democracy in this country is used as an umbrella to monolithic rule”. This view is strongly echoed by another ordinary community member still from the North West side when he says there is absolutely no democracy in Cameroon, that the songs about democracy in Cameroon is just a camouflage, a constitutional manipulation to deceive the international community. Adding angrily that here in Cameroon, opposition is an enemy to the state meanwhile elsewhere around the World, opposition parties help to build the nation by telling the government what is wrong. A certain Mr. *Chigchig* a North Westerner also strongly regrets over this ideology of political liberalization in the name of democracy in Cameroon. To him, the present hatred which they are experiencing in Cameroon vis-à-vis their South West brothers stems from the politics of liberalization. He says the enmity has now intensified so much so that he feels insecure under such a condition in which they live in the South West.

Paradoxically, democracy in Cameroon has not yet reached the stage where one can say it is liberal, emphasizing equal rights and opportunities. One might even argue that in the real sense of the term ‘democracy’, Cameroon is still to be democratized. Democracy in Cameroon instead emphasizes the importance of ethnic and regional compatriots rather than the expected national citizenship and this only goes a long way to downplay a peoples’ desire for peaceful relationship. Without any doubt, the North Westerners’ experiences facilitate the understanding that their past interaction with South Westerners was smoother and this good surface relationship has been spoiled by the so called political liberalization or liberal democracy so to speak. But then one could ask: why is it that North Westerners are more aggrieved compared to South Westerners, regarding the

country's undemocratic processes? The fact that politics in the former Anglophone Cameroon was dominated by North Westerners including political representation at the national level and the perceived marginalized position of South Westerners explains why North Westerners should be itzier and South Westerners more subtle as they are now favored in the national decision making. For example the December 8, 2004 cabinet reshuffle saw the replacement of Prime Minister Mafany Musonge by another South Westerner Inoni Empraim. Moreover, according to statistics from *Cameroon-info-net* only 5.1% of Anglophones were made Ministers amongst whom no North Westerner was made a full-fledged Minister or Minister Delegate. Such a political game does no good than to further antagonize people from the two Anglophone provinces of Cameroon. Stuaab had rightly asserted that social conditions within a group can be a starting point for group violence stressing the fact that disorganization, or great political changes often lead groups to turn against others (ibid).

This communal violence has even reached the point where one could argue that South Westerners no longer appreciate the economic contribution of North Westerners in their region. Most ordinary South Westerners including the intellectual class tend to depict the development efforts of North Westerners in Buea and most of South West as biased and unintended. Providing reasons that North Westerners are simply indirectly developing the place in the process of building large hotels; students' hostels where they extract the money from the students and go and develop the North West. An intellectual from the South West openly said : "The fact that I do not support the antagonism does not mean that I do not have any values against them but it is simply because I find it unfair to ask them to leave or ask someone to abandon his/her belongings and leave". Interestingly, even though the government's policy of divide and rule as well as her sister ideology of liberal democracy within the Cameroonian context has instead served as powerful tools for the government to take advantage of the intra-Anglophone differences to create more hatred and hence to neutralize their social identity as a minority group, it has instead served a positive purpose for the South Westerners to rally over a common cause regarding the North Westerners not only as being exploitative but even not worth mixing with in their every day social encounters. Hence their social relations deteriorate every

day especially when politics comes in. North Westerners complain for example that the local government in Buea refuses to tar their road because they say the place is mostly inhabited by the *Bajiri*. The term *Bajiri* is the plural form of *Mujiri* used in the *Bakweri* dialect to refer to non Bakweri indigenes but it is employed here as a negative connotation against the settlers which in our case are the North Westerners. The same issue emerged when conducting interview with the Manyu Students Union. They said that people from the North West living in Manyu division, South West are known as *Vasem*, meaning slaves. It could therefore be figured out that South Westerners are bent in developing stereotypes against North Westerners, as the stereotype 'cam-no-go' to some extent no longer mean any thing to North Westerners, "It is our body lotion", one of them said.

Contrary to the high condemnation of the government by the ordinary North Westerners for actually perpetuating the violent interaction between the two Anglophone provinces, the ordinary South Westerner does not actually see the fact that the government is utilizing any divisive policy. As most of my South West informants see the SDF party (which at first was viewed as an Anglophone party and today as an opposition party solely for the North Westerners) as being dominated by an ideology of force that is why even if they joined it before, they were simply misled. In the words of one of my South West informants:

"...those monetarily minded people who want positions by all means will never be satisfied and always utter bad words against the government. How can we be eager to get a pure leader meanwhile we ourselves our minds are not pure? If our brothers from the North West want the regime to go because it is not pure, they themselves must learn to be pure; you cannot get a good thing from a bad source!"

There are also some slight disparities in the positions held by intellectuals from both antagonistic groups and this also reflects the political practices of their various followers. While the North West intellectuals expressed very negative feelings against the government for actually masterminding the North West/South West dichotomy, expressions from South West intellectuals was not as bitter as that of their counterparts from the North West. Though they acknowledged the fact that the government is actually playing the central role in the hostile relationship in which the two Anglophone provinces

are caught up. This view takes us back to the Buea University strike that shows how the politics of divide and rule and the absence of genuine democracy come into play and the manner in which pseudo intellectuals and politicians use their position to inflame ethnic anger, propagate destructive ideologies and scapegoating in the midst of socio-economic hardship. As illustrated previously, the South West Elites Association (SWELA) blamed the North Westerners for actually orchestrating the strike. The accusation did not end with the strike situation but led to the resurrection of past animosities between the two groups of peoples, the communiqué explicitly “pointed fingers of blame” to the “stranger” population for the major destructions that have been taking place within the South West Province and that they could no longer stand indolently watching such destructions from “aggressive immigrants.” More critically, what is one to make of such a communiqué? Without searching, it is clear that detractors hiding under the umbrella of SWELA had the aim of igniting ill will and to continuously polarize the “behavioral space” with “xenophobic dust” because of the benefits they reap from the divide. SWELA’s reaction to the University Students strike action did not by any means represent the aspirations of all ordinary South Westerners. In a way, the ethnic undertone one can argue was employed for their own selfish political interest.

Rightly or wrongly, the Vice Chancellor herself actually demonized the settler population implicitly by pointing to the fact that there are some members of staff who can kill because they want posts. The South West students on their part fell into the trap of “like leaders like followers”. They no longer acted as one with their north western counterparts. I met with a group of South-West Students who lamented that these ‘cam-no-goes’ are really bent in disrupting the smooth functioning of our University but they cannot go untouched”. From here we see that because of the politization of ethnicity, in an educational environment by opportunist politicians, the striking students from the North West and South West camps became confrontational to each other. Consequently, the students were the ‘shock absorbers’ to the escalating tensions as they failed to act unanimously. It is becoming clearer and clearer that there is a small bunch of South West politicians who are highly involved in scapegoating ideologies that has become



embedded in the minds of their followers. Like one Mr. *Gregory*, a South Westerner candidly said:

“Imagine that this same student strike occurred elsewhere in the nation but nothing was destroyed. In reaching Buea, there was large scale destruction on and off campus don’t you see that there was a lot of ill will from the settlers? They were behind it. There is no smoke without fire, SWELA’s communiqué was not wrong. Look, even up to now, as I’m sitting here, I don’t trust any of them!”

Connectedly, Biya’s implicit ideology of igniting feelings of hatred on the South West elites that North Westerners are power hungry, exploitative, aggressive and their real enemies no doubt has gone not a small way in destroying the thin line of harmony previously existing between the two people. Alas, because the South West elites have also been successful in inculcating this ethnic bitterness in their people, every act of aggressiveness or any thing qualified as bad is attributed to North Westerners in the South West.

When some North West students were asked whether they have been experiencing any sort of discrimination stemming from the North West / South West divide, their responses expressed deep anger and frustration. According to the way they spoke, there seemed to be no hope again for the North West youthful generation in Cameroon. Some of them painfully explained for example that if they went for a strike, it was for the common good of all of them students but it latter tended to be that they, the North West students were out merely for public destruction in the South West. One might even wonder whether some of the students’ demands that were met after the strike action, is benefiting only the North West students. From the strike, North West students tended to characterize those from the South West as cowards and unable to unite over a common cause. The level at which the antagonistic sentiments are contained and maintained even becomes more poignant when one links this analysis with the issue of inter-marriages between North West and South West youths. I was frankly told by one North West students in a focus group interview that for him personally, he has vowed not to ever marry a girl from the South West and that even if he does, his parents will kill him. Likewise, a female student from the South West said getting married to a North Westerner is a taboo in her family.

By and large, we hope to have had ample evidence to confirm the fact that the North West/South West antagonistic relations is highly molded in the peoples' mindset, leading to a socio-psychological distance of 'self' and 'other' based on 'other' dehumanizing 'self'. This situation as we have seen is also fostered by parental indoctrination.

Be that as it may, the question is whether the relationship within each of these regions is that of harmony and cooperation. There is also a situation of in-house negative competition among South Westerners themselves as echoed by many South West youths and intellectuals. They also somewhat appreciate the students, intellectuals and elders from the North West, living in the South West for being each other's "watch dog," always ready to provide support to one another. The situation is that presently, the South Westerners seem to have been exceeded demographically in their original settlement by peoples from other areas and this has provoked the rise of ethnic consciousness and ethnic determinism. In order to survive under the resulting difficult political and economic conditions they have resorted to the negotiation of identity. Many micro-ethnic solidarity groups originally defined by geographical origin have tended to incorporate themselves into a larger group thus forming an ethno-region. The same condition also obtains with North Westerners in the South West. Therefore, inspired by Gluckman (*ibid*) these larger groups (ethno-region) are composed of several ethnic groups which may at times be hostile to one another, but unite against a more distant enemy as the North West/South West dichotomy reveals. As a result, there is a shift from ethnic identity to ethno-regionalist identity in the conflict situation.

What I have observed above is a system of asymmetrical power relations. It is important to recognize that as North Westerners have more economic power than their South West counterparts, this elicit resistance from South Westerners. This could clearly be seen in the way South Westerners both individually and collectively are constantly involved in the construction of an "enemy other" with the settler population and the manner in which elites mastermind the situation. This scenario can be connected to Staub (2001) where he addresses the issue of leaders and their followers in inter-group violence. As examined earlier, he has argued that conventional thinking has been that leaders turn the group

against others to gain or strengthen their leadership and to increase cohesion in the group. But this seems to be only part of the story, pointing to the fact that leaders are members of their group and, like followers, are affected by social and cultural conditions. They may also carry unhealed wounds both as members of their group in their personal history. It has been shown from the specific history of the antagonistic groups and from the perspective of South Westerners that they hold identities that incorporate their sense of having generally been victims of oppression and domination by the North Westerners. This tends to make both the elites and their followers feel threatened and distrustful. It could be explained that the South West people are merely acting to prevent further marginalization and domination and by so doing the North-West group experiences this as threat. Hence, both groups are recurrently caught up in an antagonistic interaction. With this understanding, it is also worth noting that the intra-Anglophone symbolic violence is not a totally isolated act. It is related to a competitive relationship and thus the product of a historical process that may extend far back in time and that adds to the explanation of the present situation of increasing animosity between the two Anglophone provinces.

In this vein, while elitist politics could be figured out as hardly for the collective welfare, but always that of sectarian development, one should not also lose sight of the fact that elites also form part of a society that has suffered past interaction of victimhood and are also living with this memory of marginalization. To this end, they are always ready to retaliate when ever possible especially with a change in the political structure as seen with the present political appointments in favor of South Westerners. Therefore, while Staub argues that to understand the origins of group violence requires a multidisciplinary approach, which requires a conception that considers social conditions, culture, the political system, and group and individual psychology it is difficult to see whether he also takes into consideration the role played by external actors in inter-group social violence.

By addressing the research questions related to the legacy of indirect rule in the Cameroonian post-independence political scene, it has been possible to find out that besides a small group of political elites who might have an interest in the conflict for their

own selfish gain, the highest beneficiary in the intra-Anglophone conflict is the post colonial regimes , starting from President Amadou Ahidjo's politics of indirect rule, to his successor President Biya who took it a step forward. At one time the government uses North Westerners against South Westerners and at other times, South Westerners against North Westerners. The CPDM government is actually exploiting the intra-Anglophone antagonism to be able to cope with the threat this people could posed to the regime should they stand as one. It is for this reason that though Stuaab makes interesting and important claims as far as group violence is concerned, he fails to bring into light the role of the government in fueling inter-group conflict. His ideas regarding the political aspect of group violence are somewhat limited to elitist politics. Worse still is Azar's theoretical position that it is at the juncture of actual physical and psychological deprivation that structural victimization bursts into hostile and violent actions (Azar, 1990).

The analysis of data has hitherto revealed that the denial of human and group needs such as the need for political, economic and decision making institutions are merely triggering factors in the North West/South West antagonism. What is actually keeping the conflict going, escalating and taking various forms is the psychological barrier between the two antagonistic parties. It is essential therefore to reiterate that the root causes of the present animosity between the two Anglophone provinces in Cameroon is a combination of many factors. Opportunist politicians simply take advantage of particular triggering situations to fuel the divide.

But then, it would also seem clear that even though the political discourse of these elites may not reflect the wishes and aspirations of the ordinary Anglophones the history and narratives of past victimization has already been strongly held by the South West people. In which case, the rational and general is always seen to be replaced by ethnic sentiments of an "enemy other" in their every day life. Paradoxically, Azar's theoretical position though useful and interesting, needs to be re-theorized especially when seen within the context of the case under review. With the theoretical arguments that spring from the conflict situation under study, it is doubtful whether any one will echo Fredrick Barth

when for example he spends the greater part of his time working on ethnic group maintenance and arguing that actors themselves self-ascribe to ethnic groups, and this activity has the quality of organizing interaction between them-*if a group maintains its identity when members interact with others this entails criteria for determining membership and ways of signaling membership and exclusion.* Stable ethnic relations, Barth holds presuppose such a structuring of interaction and needs a set of prescriptions governing situations of contact, and allowing for articulation in some sectors or domains of activity, and a set of proscriptions on social situations preventing inter-ethnic interaction in other sectors ( Barth, 1969: 16).

Our case has underlined the significance of “mythico-history”. With regard to this, not only is Barth’s theory ahistorical and apolitical, it has very little explanatory force when viewed within the context of our case study since he mostly talks about the maintenance of inter-ethnic relationship on a micro level. Emphasizing the manner in which meetings are organized mentally and socially for specific identities/roles (ibid). The situation under review has been clearly indicative of the fact that it is under high socio-economic hardship and political changes in the society that the past relations of North West hegemonic intentions over South Westerners resurfaced, driven by a psychological element.

With this understanding, the theoretical framework that emerges from this study which can of course be used in analyzing the conflict situation is that the recurrent intra-Anglophone antagonism as experience in Buea in particular and the South West in general should be seen as a logical outcome of divisive policies at the national level as well as an expression of complex politico-economic, historical and psychological forces played out at the regional level. The logic goes this way: the engine that propels the antagonistic opposition is found in the peoples’ psychology resulting from past interaction and amplified by opportunist politicians so to speak, both at the regional (North West or South West) and national levels. Boiling down into a situation that is analogous to **organized crime** wherein many tend to benefit from the divide including outside actors like the regime in power

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS.

#### 5.1 Discussion of Research Findings.

*“...even when ethnicity was studied seriously as in the seminar works of Nnoli ( 1978, 1989), the point of departure was still the integrative needs of the “ nation-state” rather than the possibilities and constraints offered by the actual historical dynamics of the sub-nation groups and formation whose integration lies at the heart of “ nation-building” (Mustapha, in Nnoli et al., 1998: 27).*

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Questions concerning whether and how cultural groups should be recognized in politics are among the most salient and vexing on the political agenda of many democratic and democratizing societies today (Gutmann, 1994: 5). This thesis emphasizes that it is rather the suppression of culturally identified groups like the Anglophone Cameroon minority population that leads to tensions and national disunity. Today, post-colonial African political leaders and other developing states have found that one of their most awesome tasks is to control “their internal divisions”. Many of these blame this legacy of ethnic disharmony on the colonial policy of divide and rule (Morris-Hale, 1996:255). As mentioned earlier, most Anglophone scholars rightly or wrongly believe that the present negative relations which the two Anglophone provinces are entrapped in, drives from the post colonial policy of divide and rule.

Daily events in Cameroon reveal that the strong desire for “nation building” understood as the quest to transform territories and their plural communities inherited from colonialism into a development-sustaining nation state whose subject share a strong sense of common belonging, remains a defining aspiration for Cameroonian nationalism. As Pfetsch and his co-authors have argued, the progression from international to national and sub national conflicts corresponds to a system of nation-states in an anarchic setting ( Pfetsch et al., 2000:24). Even though advocates of a multicultural citizenship endorse the use of state-based constitutional mechanisms for the realization of a more fully inclusive participatory democracy (ibid: 242), the Cameroonian experience presents a defilement.

Tatah Mentan in an internet article titled: *Ethnicity, State and the National Question in Cameroon*, fervently asserts: “Cameroon’s seemingly unity is faced at the cost of many denied identities and unsettling wounds”. The undisputable fact is that the post-colonial divisive politics through constitutional fashioning has frustrated every effort towards a national consensus in Cameroon. The 1996 constitution which is still in use today promises special state protection for autochthonous minorities. It is clearly stated in the preamble: *the State shall ensure the protection of minorities and shall preserve the rights of indigenous populations in accordance with the law*. The constitution also defines identity for the populations concerned not by where individuals are born or live, but by their ethnic area of origin (Njamnjoh and Konings, 2003). These scholars note that such a constitutional manipulation has also stretched the conventional idea of minorities to such ambiguous proportions that historical minorities like the Anglophones have seen themselves denied the status of minority while any small ethnic grouping which appears to distance itself from the opposition has been met with government support (ibid).

It can thus be argued that while Biya’s ideology of liberal democracy in the 1990s led to the re-inception of multi party politics and to the notion of free and fair competition it brought new competitive methods and heightened existing conflicts and even produced new ones among the various sub-national groups. This thesis hope to demonstrate that in one way, the North West/South West gulf is becoming an elitist game used by few people for their own selfish political motives. The findings also reveal that the intra-Anglophone conflict is operating at the primary level of social relationships where the maintenance of ethnic boundary is continuously reinforced among individuals from the North West and South West, the meso level especially in the market environment where social contacts and transaction take place and finally at the macro level where national political decisions are made and where the political mobilization of ethnic allegiance is created through political favors in the context of neopatrimonialism as explained earlier. Not unexpectedly, this political backdrop of ethno-clientelism, stemming largely from constitutional manipulation, one can convincingly argue is highly responsible for the new emphasis on autochthony and ‘belonging’ and has further institutionalized the North West/South West dichotomy.

This takes us to the question of politics of recognition through the politics of identity which shall lead us to re-examine this whole concept of liberal democracy within the context of our case study. As said earlier, democracy has a variety of meanings, dimensions, and connotation. Our concern here is to review the concept of liberal democracy with its emphasis on individual rights rather than group rights. As some political philosophers have argued, the current structuring of representative mechanisms around ideological differences emphasizes the social inequality aspect of politics, but fails to address the `misrecognition of difference` aspect which have a high potential of leading to politics of resentment or to destructive politics (Taylor, 1994, Fentton and May, 2002) .

So far, the case study under review has brought to light the fact that disparities, tensions, and conflict arising from differences in values and patterns of identity of both antagonistic groups tended to enhance those that arose from the differences between more hardcore economic and political interests. The liberal democratic model conceived as a set of rights enjoyed equally by every member of the society in question, embodies an idea of social justice. Everyone has a common set of political entitlements whatever their social, cultural and economic status (Fentton and May, 2002: 229). This emphasis on individual rights though useful, is seen in our case as a kind of Western imperialism and ill adapted to the Cameroonian context. In his subtitle: *African communalism and Western individualism*, Van der Walt points out that one of the outstanding differences between African and Western cultures is that the one (Africa) stresses human community while the other ( the West) emphasizes the individual as the most important (Van der Walt, 2006:133). By pointing out this difference, he stresses that this is not to divide us but rather to enrich us. In this African communalism, the community is seen before the individual-I am because we are, I share in the community, therefore I exist (ibid: 134). As we have seen with the case of post-independence Africa in general and Cameroon in particular, modernist arguments for group representation as a form of recognition of poly-ethnicity within a state are often rejected on the basis that they undermine the liberal commitment to universal justice as impartiality. I have earlier shown how the first President of Cameroon in his ambition for national unity was faced with enormous



challenges considering the fact that two territories inherited from French and British colonial rule, with different cultural heritage should be merged and form a single unitary hetero-ethnic nation. To this end, the Anglophones were forced to ‘think Cameroonian’ and forget that they are Anglophones (Ngwane, 1994). The subsequent retaliation of the Anglophone community against the Francophone was thus expressed through a number of social movements and political organizations. Some Anglophone activists pointed out that their struggle for self determination was not against the Francophones but the oppressive governments of Ahidjo/Biya which denies them their fundamental rights and frustrating their political, economic and social aspiration- a government which reduces them to second class citizens. Understandably, the citizen model which has emerged within current liberal democratic political structures has entailed a very specific political form and I believe it is internally contradictory to the African politics like the Cameroonian case unfolds.

Also, a good understanding of Cameroon’s socio-political climate facilitates the conclusion that in this country as most of Africa, people militate in political parties not because of the political project but because of ethnic inclination and the use of “soft power” (through the sharing of the national cake) by the ruling party. Something that could be termed “moral terrorism”- you can only get your own share of the cake if you vote for the regime in power. Paradoxically, applying the concept of liberal democracy in Africa simply shows a narrow understanding of African communalism. Demand for recognition of minorities in post colonial Africa as the thesis emphasizes is not necessary to defend an autonomous sphere of civic activism but, on the contrary, it represent an effort to become a part of and thereby to transform the state into a more harmonious relationship with its national minority populations. No right thinking Cameroonian will attest that ethnic minority is synonymous to national minority. The Cameroonian present day Constitution has failed to clearly define such terms and hence confused the whole notion of the collective rights of minority populations. It would therefore seem that the combination of the post colonial forces of division may have engendered potential conflicts and radically actualized or manifested them in the political sphere of national life. Hence, as I laid the claim in the beginning, if the post-independent Cameroon

government of President Ahidjo and his successor Biya had respected the federal arrangement that recognized the Anglophone community as a distinct people with their own cultural heritage, the inter-provincial disintegration would not have been as severe as it is today. The suppression of the Anglophone social identity by Ahidjo, one can argue planted the seeds for Biya's success to deconstruct the Anglophone identity and thus weaken their solidarity through his numerous political inventions. Reasonably, socio-economic hardship in the country and political disorganization are merely instigating factors to the present day North West/South West antagonism.

By viewing the people's narratives in their social context, we have been able to see how social agents relate narratives to happenings and action. In this way, we have seen how certain patterns appear throughout different stories which have their nexus in a general notion of victimization especially from the South Westerners' perspectives. Although the meanings attributed to this notion vary in different stories, it might serve to order experience and maintain the boundaries of a moral community like the South West peoples against the North West peoples in Cameroon. In this context, one might wonder how to successfully build a nation on the foundation in which feelings of mutual enmity, revenge, fear and other strong emotions are. Without any doubt, the state of Cameroon has created the conditions for the growth of ethno-nationalism and ethnic antagonism by assuming that diversity is an obstacle to national integration and development. But while it is undeniably true that many diverse societies have low levels of income and human development, there is no evidence that this is related to cultural diversity (Human Development report, 2004). One study argues that diversity has been a source of poor economic performance in Africa-but this is related to political decision making that follows ethnic rather than national interest, not to diversity itself (ibid.). Our case study exemplifies this situation especially well. The constant negative evaluation of the other actor resulting in a mental and social dissociation from him/her has to be seen within the framework of State ignorance and deconstruction of the Anglophone identity through the politics of divide-and-rule and regional inequality. This no doubt has made it more difficult to establish forms of cooperation and interaction which in order to be successful

must be based upon a certain amount of trust and solidarity; a feeling of not only being good neighbors but belonging to the same family or the nation.

## **5.2 Conclusion.**

The major concern of this thesis has been to track down the forces that serve to maintain the antagonistic sentiments between groups of North Westerners and South Westerners in Cameroon. In tracking down the conflict trend from the colonial to the post colonial state of affairs, with a focus on daily events in Buea, it can be said that the pendulum of North West/South West relationship has been swinging between peace and hostility, between cordiality and tension and between trust and suspicion. It has been clearly visible from the analysis that the antagonism is shaped by a complex web of multifaceted factors, involving remote and immediate causes. From the findings of the study, we have been able to see how all the past animosities between the two groups of people have resurfaced as the ethnic factor is mobilized by political elites in their quest for politico-economic resources. The result has been ethnic consciousness and ethnic determinism by South Westerners in order to survive the difficult political and economic conditions in the country. The remote causes of the antagonism have roots in the peoples' colonial and post colonial experiences while the immediate causes could be explained in terms of clientelist politics, unequal sharing of power and protection by the post colonial State.

As such, the study has demonstrated that tensions are widening social divisions that have existed between the two conflicting groups and are contributing to the creation and reinforcement of separate ethno-regionalist identities. The whole process thus represents some kind of deconstruction and reconstruction of group identity. In one way, we could observe the deconstruction of the Anglophone identity by both the regime in power and some Anglophone detractors within the South West. In another way, we find a process of renegotiation/reconstruction of regional identities and especially the South West social identity for action against aggressive immigrants. Hence, while I acknowledge the crucial role played by identity politics in exacerbating the conflict, I refrain from concluding that Politics of identity is the source of the conflictual relations existing between the two Cameroon English speaking Provinces. It does have a role for the North West/South West

conflict-not as a cause but as a driver for ethno-political mobilization. The theoretical argument reached at is that the recurrent antagonism between the two regional neighbors should be seen as an expression of complex political, economic, and historical forces played out at the national and regional levels but the locomotive force is now psychological, ingrained in people's mindset. By viewing this North West/South West rivalry and the question of minority rights, liberal democracy and national development as linked factors, the study has shown that Cameroon is an example of a fractured and disintegrating state where the peoples' rights have been seized by undemocratic means. The bone of the contention has been that while the State agency opened up greater political freedom through the re-inception of multi party politics in the 1990s, in practice the Biya regime reinforced the dominance of clientelist politics left behind by his predecessor President Amadou Ahidjo. In such a condition where the State is incapable of engineering genuine nationalism, the conducive environment for human, social, political and economic development-the sum total of national development is put into jeopardy.

Furthermore, this study has highlighted the fact that in an environment of exclusionary state policies individuals and groups who lacked access to State power in the colonial and post colonial arena are propelled to seek power especially along ethno-political lines. Indeed, the most striking finding that has emerged from this study is that once there is a dominating conflict between groups, other small conflicts are "translated" into this dominant one. This has clearly been seen with the case of the University strike and the struggle over land matters. For these reasons, this thesis rejects any claim that policies recognizing cultural differences necessarily leads to disintegration and weak development. Reasonably, since politics of identity is simply used as a coping strategy in an anarchic state like that of Cameroon, it would seem that such critical matters in world peace certainly require further in-dept research with a focus on how identity concepts can be re-created to promote human security and sustainable development. As the North West/South West divide has brought to light, manipulation of ethno-regional sentiments, ethnic political discrimination and even political intolerance have become legitimate means in political struggle. In this way, ethno-regional tension at a very high level has

been the overall effect. That a country can mount a united anti-colonial movement is no guarantee that it will be able to maintain national solidarity once the common enemy, the colonial power, is displaced. In this perspective, it becomes undoubtedly true that a more basic sense of national cohesion is necessary, if national solidarity is to endure, and that sense of belonging together-through the experience of a common destiny, and a set of common goals-is something no state can create overnight.

### **5.3 An Outlook into the Future?**

*Constitutions and legislation that provide protections and guarantees for minorities, indigenous people and other groups are critical foundation for broader freedoms. But unless the political culture also changes-unless citizens come to think, feel and act in ways that genuinely accommodate the needs and aspirations of others-real change will not happen.*

*(Human Development Report 2004).*

Based on the above perspective, I express serious doubts about any measures for a lasting peace that does not begin with a psychological healing process- eliminating the images of an 'inappropriate other'. This is the path that South Africa took in ending apartheid through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In this regard, the major task of the Anglophone people themselves is to tackle the psychological roots of the conflict.

In both groups' popular folklore we have been able to see that the people are highly involved in mutual stereotyping and provocative utterances. As such, there is certainly a need for some kind of "coexistence education". Coexistence is a state of mind shared by society members who recognize the rights of another group to exist peacefully as a legitimate, equal partner with whom disagreement have to be resolved in nonviolence ways (Bar-Tal, 2004:253). Gavril Salomon, from the University of Haifa, Centre for Research on Peace Education, states that Peace education should, "aim primarily to attain the legitimacy of the other side's perspective, its collective narrative, fears, dreams and experiences" ( Salomon, 2003). Salomon holds that working to try and understand the other's point of view helps individuals and groups move towards peace.

Although the incorporation of co-existence education into the peace process is not without significant challenges, it goes without saying that it can enable the antagonist groups to get rid of their hatred and divisions should both groups come to have a common vision for peace. What is needed is exposure that will bring about the understanding of the other, psychological healing and shared consciousness. This educational process should promote values of conciliation, compromise, consensus, and tolerance as these would play not a small role in reducing their antagonistic gap and laying the ground work for coexistence. The fact that some people seem to want to avoid talking about the conflict will not do any good to the Anglophone community. In this connection, concrete measures might include the use of regional media to fight against negative stereotypes, inter-cultural activities, and sporting events. The analysis of data has also unfolded the fact that their level of co-operation in economic activities is low. On the one hand, we have seen that most business owners from the North West camp appear to be conservative and will rather prefer to work with their kith and kinsmen than to work with people from the South West. On the other hand, most South Westerners tend to underrate North Westerners in their every interaction. In which case, some economic activities which they consider to be degrading are reserved to the *graffi* people-North Westerners. For this reason, it seems to me that initiating activities that encourage joint action especially economic co-operation at the grassroots level could lead the two antagonist groups toward a brighter future. By working together for common interests, their divisions and misunderstandings can be avoided and real friendship can be promoted. What is needed indeed is “in-house” co-operation rather than competition.

However, I am running short of space but the thesis cannot go without touching on the crucial role of the government in this peace building process since whatever else they do, governments organize and wherever possible, monopolizes violence (Tilly, 1985:171). The major task of the government in rebuilding sustainable peace between the two antagonistic groups should primarily be on genuine constitutional development with a focus on power sharing, electoral systems, federalization and so forth as many Anglophone scholars have argued (Ngwane, 1994, Samba Ngwana, 2001, Nyamnjoh and Konings, 2003 etc.). Unfortunately, detailed analysis of this political-institutional

building lie beyond the scope of this thesis. But the point remains, if the government believes and accept that a country belongs to all the citizens, whatever their social categories, then the government should avoid provincial favoritism and create opportunities where every section can participate and belong. Political appointments should not be used to provoke one side of the divide. It is indeed dangerous to allow economic and political inequality to deepen between the North West/South West peoples because as depicted earlier, ethno-regional groups are easily mobilized to contest these disparities as injustice.

#### **5.4 Contribution to Peace Studies.**

The conflict situation between Cameroon North Westerners and South Westerners is peculiar in itself. This case represents some kind of protracted social conflict as the causes are multifaceted and difficult to determine. We have seen how all the past animosities between the two identity groups always resurface whenever there is mutual misunderstanding in the region. This has been interpreted as a kind of psychological interaction of mutual fear, distrust and suspicion. As such, Buea in particular and South West as a whole have tended into a battle ground of antagonistic ideologies and scapegoating. The resulting effect as we have seen is that all other small conflicts that emerge in their every day interaction are “translated” into the dominant one. The critical question therefore is: what does this kind of finding imply in conflict resolution? It seems obvious that like our case-though dormant, most protracted social conflicts are mismanaged because their underlying causes are misdiagnosed. In my view, if we are to adequately analyze and resolve such a local and seemingly intractable conflict (which is sometimes ill-defined as identity based), there should be a shift in perspective from a general to a contextual model of conflict resolution that will have to strongly consider the psychological base of conflicts in peace building efforts. Drawing reference from the case under review, it is certain that diplomatic negotiations can hardly be successful when the psychological wounds remain unhealed. Since, this will always have the potential to propel individuals and groups to their recurrent antagonistic interaction in the long run.

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Appendix: Maps.



