

CAMEROON'S ANGLOPHONE CRISIS: ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL, SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

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Abstract

The article aims to analyse the present Anglophone conflict in Cameroon as a consequence of a perpetual political crisis, which has its roots in the colonial administration of the territory. Moreover, the Anglophone crisis is presented as a situation of a minority's marginalization and discrimination, highlighting the so-called francophonisation of the Anglophone system and the issue of the state's mismanagement of cultural diversity. Another interpretation tackled by the article is that the current crisis represents the direct consequence of the authoritarian style of leadership and of the dysfunctional democracy in the country. There are also illustrated the myriad of negative political, social and economic consequences of the crisis, by presenting the relation between the threatened political and economic stability of the country and the increased state authority and violence.

Keywords: political crisis, cultural diversity, marginalization, governance, violence, identity

Introductory remarks

Cameroon is a country situated in West and Central Africa and it has two official languages (French and English) and between 280 and 287

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national languages. Cameroon has been officially a bicultural and bilingual country since 1961, being one of the few bicultural countries in the world. The two cultures and identities, namely the Anglophone and the Francophone ones, represent a legacy of the country's colonial heritage inasmuch as France and Great Britain were the last colonial powers that dominated this African territory.¹ Hence, the two distinct identities which have formed and shaped the present Cameroonian state are based on the past colonial regimes from the country inasmuch as both France and Great Britain managed to inculcate their particular visions and systems on the Cameroonian territories.

The present issue of secession in Cameroon is based, therefore, on the different colonial heritages left by the French and the British and on the ineffective government protection of the Anglophone minority and specificity within the educational, legal and social national systems. As such, the feeling of marginalization of the Anglophone population represents the result of the mismanagement of cultural diversity and of the lack of political will to preserve the two colonial heritages.

The failure of real leadership and of embracing the value of diversity has accentuated the identity issue in Cameroon, emphasizing the discontent of a minority part of Cameroonians, namely, the Anglophones, who feel like second-class citizens in their own country. As a consequence, the present Anglophone crisis can be explained and analyzed from the perspective of the relative deprivation theory, which highlights the idea that a conflict arises when a person or a group feel deprived in comparison to the situation of the others, this theory accentuating the feelings of anger and resentment.² In this context, the Anglophones feel marginalized and discriminated against in comparison to the Francophone Cameroonians,

¹ Louis Marie Kakdeu, „Discours, cultures et représentations politiques au Cameroun”, in Sergiu Mişcoiu, Sedagban Hygin F. Kakai and Kokou Folly L. Hetcheli, *Recul démocratique et néo-présidentialisme en Afrique Centrale et Occidentale*, Iaşi: Institutul European, 2015, p. 167.

² Iain Walker and Heather J. Smith, „Fifty Years of Relative Deprivation Research” in Iain Walker and Heather J. Smith (eds.), *Relative Deprivation. Specification, Development and Integration*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 1-8.

who represent the majority of the population in the country and who dominate the different sectors in society.

Analysing the Anglophone problem from a historical perspective

The Francophone Cameroon gained independence as the Republic of Cameroon on 1st January 1960. One year later, through a UN organised plebiscite, the Anglophone Southern Cameroons decided to join the Republic of Cameroon. The two options of the 1961 plebiscite consisted of either the possibility of joining Nigeria or the alternative of reunification with the already independent Francophone Cameroon. Therefore, the first issue which triggered the Anglophone problem was the absence of the independence option inasmuch as the United Nations and Great Britain considered this alternative as unviable from an economic perspective and in order to avoid the creation of microstates and a further „Balkanisation“ of Africa. In this context, the question of the 11 February 1961 plebiscite was: *Do you want to achieve independence by joining Nigeria or by reuniting with the Republic of Cameroon?* Without the possibility of voting the independence option, Southern Cameroonians felt like they were given the Hobson's choice, which was a „choice“ they had to agree although they did not like it.³

The reunification with the Francophone Cameroon and the creation of the future federation was the result of the past discontentment of the Anglophone Cameroonians regarding the British administration and the Nigerian influence in their area. Thus, the result of the vote did not represent the real desire of the citizens, but it was more a strategic option for diminishing the Nigerian domination in the region. During the British colonial rule, the Nigerian Igbo tribe immigrated into Southern Cameroons and began to dominate a myriad of sectors from the economy. The

³ Nantang Jua and Piet Konings, "Occupation of Public Space Anglophone Nationalism in Cameroon" in *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 2004 <<https://journals.openedition.org/etudesafriaines/4756>> accessed on November 2019.

Southern Cameroonians felt under the significant influence of Nigerians and they perceived the double status of a colony. Moreover, they considered as being second-class citizens for the British administration and that Nigeria had a preferential treatment from the colonial power.⁴ This feeling of marginalization represented the moment when the Anglophone Cameroonian nationalism was developed and accentuated, this situation of economic subjugation representing the incentive for the Anglophones' reunification with the the Republic of Cameroon.

After the UN organised plebiscite, there was held the Foumban constitutional conference in which there were negotiated the conditions of reunification and the future form of the state, which would consolidate into a federation. The first issue regarding the negotiations for reunification was the lack of support of the British government for Southern Cameroonians, a fact which determined Charles de Gaulle to consider Southern Cameroons as "a small gift of the Queen of England to France".⁵ On the other side, the Francophone Cameroon had all the time relied on France's support, this representing one of the reasons why all the conditions of the constitutional conference were established by Ahidjo, the first president of Cameroon.⁶

Furthermore, the constitution of the future federation was also initially drafted by Ahidjo, with the support and guidance of France, and was given to the Anglophone representatives at Foumban only for studying it. The final version of the federal constitution did not include an equal status for French and English (the official languages of the federal republic), mentioning in Article 59 that the constitution is to be published in both languages, but the French version is the authentic one. At the same time, through the constitution, the federal state gained most of the authority, while the tasks under the competence of the federated states

⁴ Jules Roger Sombaye Eyango, *Inside the Virtual Ambazonia: Separatism, Hate Speech , Disinformation and Diaspora in the Cameroonian Anglophone Crisis*, The University of San Francisco, 2018, p. 25 <<https://repository.usfca.edu/thes/1158>> accessed on November 2019.

⁵ Nantang Jua and Piet Konings, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁶ Piet Konings and Francis Nyamnjoh, *Negotiating an Anglophone Identity: A Study of the Politics of Recognition and Representation in Cameroon*, Boston: Brill, 2003, p. 41.

were not clearly specified. Moreover, the constitution was criticized for the creation of the system of *presidentialism* rather than federalism, the president's competences influencing the principle of the separation of powers. Although the president had to be supported by a vice-president but who does not belong to the same federated state, the powers of the vice-president were inferior and this function was abolished in 1972, with the creation of the unitary state. Last but not least, another problem with the federal constitution is that its final version was approved only by the parliament of the Republic of Cameroon, this being the reason why the Anglophones consider that the reunification was made *without any constitutional basis*.⁷

The result of the Foumban conference was the formation of a centralized form of federation, the reasons for such an outcome of the negotiations having been various. As such, there can be mentioned the time constraint for the constitutional talks, the unknown conditions and implications of what means a federation for both the Francophone and Anglophone Cameroon, the lack of British support for the Anglophones, the French guidance for its ex colony, the internal conflicts within the Anglophone leaders and the absence of UN experts within the negotiation process.

During the federation phase, president Ahidjo followed a single goal, namely the realization of the centralized state, the identity of West Cameroon having been progressively abolished. The internal divisions among the Anglophone leaders regarding the establishment of an alliance with Ahidjo provided for the Francophone president the opportunity to dissolve the West Cameroon's parties and to create a single national party. Hence, all the Anglophone political leaders began to support the idea of a single party (that was called Cameroon National Union) in order not to lose their positions of influence within the state. With the one party state, Ahidjo surrounded himself only by Anglophones who supported the

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 43-48.

centralized system and therefore, forgetting about protecting the Anglophone identity. Furthermore, in 1972, Ahidjo finally decided to transform the federated state into a unitary one through the means of a referendum, thus not respecting the 1961 constitution which entailed that the form of the federation cannot be changed by any revision.⁸

During the one-party unitary state, the Anglophone community had to tackle political, economic and cultural marginalization and discrimination. Firstly, there can be emphasized the Anglophones' exclusion from the key positions within the government and the decision-making process. Secondly, there can be illustrated the total negligence of the Anglophones' economic areas of development and the use of the oil resources from the Anglophone territory only to the benefit of the Francophone elites. In addition, the Anglophones felt a total "francophonisation" of their specific educational and legal systems.⁹

Furthermore, when Paul Biya came into power in 1982, he started to promote the national integration goal, which proved to be only a strategy for assimilating the Anglophones' specificity. As such, in 1984, Biya changed the name of the country from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon.¹⁰ Hence, through the deletion of the word "united", there cannot be highlighted anymore the existence of two distinct cultures and identities in Cameroon, the purpose of this strategic movement having been the homogenization of the different cultural colonial heritages and especially, the ignorance of the Anglophone specificities. Biya's justification was that the country had reached the necessary level of maturity in order for overcoming the existent divisions within society. As a consequence, starting from that moment, there have

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 66.

⁹ Joseph L. Nfi, "The Anglophone Cultural identity in Cameroon 50 Years after Reunification" in *International Journal of Advanced Research*, no. 2(2), 2014, p. 125, <http://www.journalijar.com/uploads/299_IJAR-2632.pdf> accessed on December 2019.

¹⁰ Piet Konings and Francis Nyamnjoh, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

appeared several movements for the creation of an Anglophone independent state, namely, Ambazonia.

The nation-state project after reunification and the implicit domination of the Anglophone population by the Francophone Cameroonians proved to be one paramount factor which accentuated the intensity of the Anglophone problem. Although the regime in power tried to create a united Cameroonian identity which would have stifled the particular group identities, the Anglophones demonstrated the fact that the state cannot form or "fabricate" the nation in Cameroon. The lack of equilibrium and political will for embracing all the particular identities for the purpose of a forced national integration and unity managed only to amplify the Anglophones' determination for the protection of their colonial inheritance. Thus, it was the regime's oppressive strategy and the feeling of being second-class citizens in their own country which created the Anglophone consciousness.

The Anglophones began to organize in defence of their interests during the political liberalisation process in the early 1990s. The newly created Anglophone movements were then able to place the Anglophone problem on the national and international agenda. In this context of political liberalisation, the first opposition party in Cameroon was formed in the Anglophone territory. The Social Democratic Front (SDF) was created especially for the protection of the Anglophone interests, promoting a populist agenda and promising the establishment of a truly democratic and just society, through slogans such as „power to the people and equal opportunities for all".¹¹ However, SDF presented as a national party, which integrated Francophone members too, particularly the Bamileke ethnic group, who are related to ethnic groups in the North West Province.¹²

¹¹ Piet Konings, "Opposition and Social-Democratic Change in Africa: The Social Democratic Front in Cameroon" in *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, no. 3, 2004, p. 2.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 5.

The political liberalisation actions were also felt and developed in universities, where the students created themselves opportunities for expressing their views and perceptions. Fighting for the stringent need of reforms in universities and in society in general, the African students have begun to engage in struggles against the corrupt regimes, initiating or intensifying the political liberalisation processes.

Despite all the Anglophone attempts to moderate and tackle the „francophonisation” of their particular system, the centralised state maintained its authoritarian style of leadership. As such, the Anglophone crisis has metamorphosed into a genuine conflict in September 2016, the main actors initiating the current crisis having been the lawyers and the teachers. *Grosso modo*, the demands of the Anglophone community were the end of the marginalisation issue in the country, a return to the two-state federation and therefore, the preservation of the educational and legal Anglophone particular systems. At the same time, their demands entailed the restoration of the internet, which had been blocked for a period of three months, obstructing not only the communication channels but also the economic activities from the region.¹³

One major action taken by the Anglophone community as a symbol for their revolt and protest against the government is represented by Operation Ghost Town, which includes the intentional stagnation of the Anglophone towns and more specifically, blocking the functioning of schools, shops and businesses.¹⁴ The Operation Ghost Town represents a form of civil disobedience inasmuch as there is not included any form of violence, the purpose of the protest being to attract the attention of the government and of the international community. Moreover, the Anglophones’ reasons for blocking the proper functioning of the towns is

¹³ Nna-Emeka Okereke, “Analysing Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis” in *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, no. 3(10), 2018, pp. 8-12.

¹⁴ Cameroon ‘Ghost Towns’ Protest Against French-Speaking Bias in *France 24*, The Observers, 2017 <<https://observers.france24.com/en/20170110-cameroon-goes-quiet-operation-ghost-town-protest>> accessed on December 2019.

that they want a total rebirth of the region, in accordance to their particular vision. However, this operation brings a myriad of negative consequences for the Anglophones themselves, highlighting the radical dimension of the crisis, especially from an educational perspective. As such, the decision of closing the schools for a long period of time creates even more marginalisation for the Anglophone minority and at the same time, it encourages a violent type of education for the new generations, which are indoctrinated to hate Cameroon and to fight for their own nation, particularly Ambazonia. Thus, this radical measure has, ineluctably, negative consequences on the unity, harmony and integration in the country, creating a deep division between the Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians.

The impact of the crisis on the political system and the increased government authority

The radical dimension of the present Anglophone crisis entails a myriad of negative political consequences, among which there can be emphasized the illusion of the legitimate use of state violence in order to fight against the Anglophone „terrorists“. Hence, the official reaction of the government is that the Anglophone minority which is involved in the present conflict is a terrorist group, manipulated by various external actors and representing a significant risk for the unity of the Cameroonian nation. As a consequence, the government justifies the use of violence in order to protect the paramount purpose of national integration and security. Justifying the stringent need for security and peace in the state, the government's use of violence intensifies the regime power and the authoritarian style of leadership. Therefore, the state's strategy is to determine the citizens to give up their liberty in order to gain more security.

Moreover, the government's fight against „terrorism“ neutralizes the importance of democracy and of social debate in the country. The

concept of democracy is totally ignored by the government, which forgets about human rights, freedom of speech and about the paramount principle of embracing the cultural diversity. The official governmental reaction is that prevention is a crucial imperative measure for diminishing the „terrorist“ Anglophone movement. Thus, although prevention may include using violence and neglecting democracy, the state’s paramount purpose is to provide security to the citizens, accentuating its specific dictatorial style.

In this regard, there can be specifically illustrated the official reaction of the Cameroonian government, which justifies the regime’s violence for the vital necessity of unity and order: „The responsibility of each government in the world, particularly the one in Cameroon, is to preserve the public order. It is unacceptable for a state which respects itself to tolerate a group of individuals who, through the means of violence, insurgency and threats, block the development and functioning of an entire region. [...] All the persons who initiate the ghost towns operations or any form of revolt must expect to deal with the Republic’s system of laws“.¹⁵

Furthermore, president Biya puts the blame for the loss of lives in Cameroon on the „manipulated extremist Anglophones, who have also destroyed public and private buildings, the most sacred symbols of the country and who have paralyzed all the economic activities of the region“.¹⁶ Therefore, president Biya refuses to assume responsibility for the direct consequences of the conflict, sustaining the fact that the state has to deal with „terrorists“ who plan to introduce a situation of anarchy in Cameroon. At the same time, the president’s discourse entails manipulative strategies which create the roles of the victim, of the enemy and of the hero. In this context, the victim is the Cameroonian citizen, the enemy is the radical Anglophone and the hero is the state, which has to protect the population and the present form of the state. Consequently, „Cameroon is one and indivisible“ and „the unitary form of the state is non-negotiable“.¹⁷

¹⁵ Pierre Kamé Bouopda, *La crise anglophone au Cameroun*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 2018, p. 101.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 93.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 94.

However, the enemy which the Cameroonian government constructs has been formed within and even by the state itself. The discontent of the Anglophone minority regarding their marginalisation and constant discrimination does not represent a novel situation for the Cameroonian authorities, which could have tackled the diversity issue in a more inclusive way. Hence, there can be mentioned the fact that the „enemy“ who targets the centralized and authoritarian style of leadership had been, paradoxically, created by the state itself, questioning the regime's management of the perpetual crisis in the country.

Last but not least, the negative political impact of the Anglophone crisis can be illustrated by analyzing the lack of trust of the Cameroonian population and of the Anglophone community particularly in the public institutions and in the political system in general. Moreover, the Anglophones' low level of trust is also directed towards the functioning of democracy in the country.¹⁸ As such, the majority of the Anglophone population is very critical towards the status quo and the regime in power, considering that they live in a disfunctional democracy and therefore, demanding a change of the recurring political structure.

The consequence of the distrust in the public institutions represents a direct risk for the unity of the Cameroonian nation inasmuch as based on the feelings of being treated as second-class citizens in their own country, the Anglophones tend not to identify anymore with the Cameroonian identity.¹⁹ The Anglophone minority fights for the creation of their own nation, in which they would apply a novel political structure, based on their particularity. Hence, from this perspective, there can be suggested the fact that the Anglophone crisis has its roots not only in the feeling of marginalization and discrimination of a minority, but also in the

¹⁸ Mireille Razafindrakoto and François Roubaud, „Sous la crise anglophone au Cameroun: frustrations politiques et défiance à l'égard des autorités publiques“, pp. 14-16, <<https://ideas.repec.org/p/dia/wpaper/dt201810.html>> accessed on November 2019.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

population's deep dissatisfaction regarding the political structure and the perpetual authoritarian regime of Paul Biya.

The social effects of the Anglophone crisis

The radical negative dimension and amplitude of the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon has affected the educational sector in a significant way, the education being perceived as „a victim of war”.²⁰ The various ghost town operations which were held in the Anglophone Cameroon blocked the proper functioning of schools, a fact which created a plethora of issues for the new generations of Anglophone pupils and students. Without enjoying the possibility of attending school, the statistics regarding various examinations within the educational system were marked by a high level of regress. As such, there can be emphasized the fact that enrolment in the basic and secondary sector in the North West Anglophone region alone dropped by 198.65% between 2016 and 2018. Furthermore, the performance of students at the GCE (General Certificate of Education) examinations also dropped regarding the quality and quantity points of view. The students registered for GCE examination were with 5.79% less in the year 2018 compared with the year 2016 and there was a 27.04% decline in the number of students who passed the GCE examination.²¹

The consequences of school boycott are even more complex inasmuch as in addition to the limits imposed on the professional and intellectual progress, there can also be stressed the high level of illiteracy, teenage pregnancy, household burden and poverty. Moreover, the school boycott and the ghost towns have increased the school dropout rate in the two regions by over 80%, increased crime rates by over 45%, alcohol

²⁰ In Cameroon, Education Has Become a Victim of War in *The New Humanitarian*, 24 July 2019 <<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2019/07/24/cameroon-education-has-become-victim-war>> accessed on November 2019.

²¹ Forbe Hodu Ngangnchi, Vukenkeng Andrew Wujung and Adamu Pangmeshi, "Analysis of the Socio-Economic Consequences of the Crisis in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon on the Economy of the Two Regions (2016-2018)" in *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, no. 2(7), February 2019, pp. 381-382.

consumption and drug abuse by over 35% and also the income resources were significantly diminished.²² Thus, the forced closure of schools for a longer period of time represents a form of protest directed against the government and the official authorities from Cameroon, but it affects the Anglophone population itself, creating a general situation of chaos and anarchy. As a consequence, targeting the pillars of a functioning state, such as the education system, the society will have to tackle a devastating situation, characterized by an accentuated level of insecurity and instability.

Moreover, another negative consequence of the school boycott is the self-marginalization of the Anglophones inasmuch as they limit themselves and the future of their children. The lack of education will determine the future generations of children to be raised in a radical style, learning to hate their nation and fight for Ambazonia, which is the state the Anglophones imagine for themselves.²³ Hence, the pause in education creates an even greater marginalization for the Anglophone regions and it determines the children to involve in the present conflict, Cameroon dealing also with the issue of child soldiers.

Besides the paramount impact on the education system, the Anglophone crisis has indubitably accentuated the identity debate in the country and it has created an even deeper division between the Anglophone and the Francophone communities. From this perspective, the general opinion of the Francophone population is that the Anglophones are fighting for an identity which is colonially inherited and which represents a risk for the unity and national integration principle. Thus, the Francophone position highlights the fact that the identities inherited from the colonies need to be erased from the collective memory of the Cameroonian nation, applying in this context the historical amnesia strategy. This method of

²² *Ibidem*, p. 382.

²³ Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to Get to Talks?, *International Crisis Group*, Report no. 272/Africa, May 2019 <<https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1161586/download>> accessed on December 2019.

reaching unity and forgetting about the particular inherited identities implies selective memories of the past in order to neglect the colonial importance in the formation of the Cameroonian communities and to promote the myth of the united and indivisible Cameroon. Nevertheless, the Anglophones consider that the colonial domination shaped in a significant measure their identity and vision of the world and this represents the reason why they fight for the protection of their particularity and against the francophonisation of their specific system.

On the other side, although the level of empathy and solidarity from the Francophone community towards the Anglophone cause is not as high as expected, the present conflict has definitely drew the attention to the marginalization and dissatisfaction of this minority. The dimension of the crisis has determined both the authorities and the citizens to take several measures for dealing with the Anglophones's feeling of being discriminated against. For instance, the government has decided to establish the National Commission on the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism. At the same time, in 2017, president Biya encouraged the recruitment of 1000 bilingual teachers who had technical and scientific competencies with the purpose of addressing the Anglophone teachers' demands.²⁴ However, the Anglophones perceive these measures as being cosmetic and taken too late and consequently, they reached the point in which they plan to construct their own state.

Regarding the impact of the Anglophone crisis on the culture of people in Cameroon, there can be stressed the idea that the traditional values of society have been drastically changed and degraded. For instance, in some communities like Belo, women had the opportunity to bury corpses for the first time, in defiance of cultural and traditional norms. The traditional rulers, considered as responsible for the protection of the traditions, have been attacked, killed or they had migrated into some safe places. Therefore, the violence and dimension of the conflict represent

²⁴ Nna-Emeka Okereke, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

dangerous factors which threaten the local traditions and change the roots of the communities in the country.

The Anglophone conflict's consequences on the economic sector

There is, indubitably, a very strong connection between intrastate conflicts and the economic development of the involved countries. This relation is cyclical inasmuch as in a period of peace, the investment and economic stability are enhanced. At the same time, the low economic development can cause intrastate conflicts. Therefore, there can be suggested the fact that the Anglophone present conflict has a myriad of negative consequences on the economic development of the region but at the same time, it has its roots in the economic marginalization and fragile development of the territory. Thus, the source of the crisis accentuates, in fact, its negative impact too, creating an even higher economic marginalization and a dysfunctional functioning of the region's economy.

Regarding the economic impact of the crisis in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon, there can be illustrated the fact that the production of goods and services in the Anglophone regions have dropped by more than 75% inasmuch as the main agro industries ended up being paralyzed. Moreover, according to the General Manager of UNVDA (The Upper Noun Valley Development Authority), which is particularly responsible for rice production, the output dropped from about 2000 tones to less than 5 tones because farms cannot be accessed due to road blocks and general insecurity. In addition, farmers have abandoned their farms, leading to very low individual productions. Thus, the budget of UNVDA dropped by about 40% within the 2019 financial year. Furthermore, according to GAICAM (Go-Africa Initiative Cameroon), which is a social organization whose mission is to promote economic growth and reduce youth unemployment, at least 6000 jobs have been lost because of the crisis.²⁵

²⁵ Forbe Ngangnchi, Vukenkeng Wujung and Adamu Pangmeshi, *op. cit.*, p. 381.

On the other hand, the Anglophone crisis has provided opportunities for other interest groups, for example, those who deal with arms and ammunitions. Both the government and the separatists have spent huge sums of money to buy arms, equipments and logistics. At the same time, this crisis has created certain political jobs with the creation of various institutions, such as, the Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism, the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Committee.²⁶

Furthermore, the Anglophone crisis represented an opportunity for some persons to enrich themselves illegally through stealing, kidnapping or ransom. Many of the combatants on the ground have taken over abandoned properties, including houses and farmlands from those who could not withstand the tension and had to escape to safer cities.²⁷ Last but not least, the road blockade, the ghost towns and the burning of shops have all very negative consequences regarding the flow of goods and services. Furthermore, the general insecurity affects drastically the business trips too, this representing a harmful effect on the diplomatic relations of Cameroon.

Conclusions

The article illustrates the fact that the present Anglophone conflict in Cameroon has its roots in the colonial period and in the distinct administration of the Anglophone and Francophone territories. As such, the population from the two regions assimilated the identities of their colonizers and from that moment, there was created a deep division between the Anglophone and Francophone communities in the country.

The Anglophone minority has always felt as being marginalized and under the significant influence of the Francophones and from this perspective, the Anglophone problem in Cameroon represents a crisis of

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 383.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 385-386.

affirmation of a collective identity of a group. The strategy of the government to homogenize the various identities in Cameroon only intensifies the need of the communities to accentuate their particular identities. Hence, the article tackles the crisis as the result of the mismanagement of cultural diversity but at the same time, as the consequence of the authoritarian style of leadership.

Furthermore, there have been emphasized the political, social and economic consequences of the present Anglophone conflict, suggesting in this form the amplitude of the crisis and the stringent need of taking immediate measures and of finding sustainable solutions for reaching a consensus among the involved actors.

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