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Editorial

Editors:

Prof Kizitus Mpoche and

Dr Balasubramanyam Chandramohan

The Commonwealth Day conference at the University of Douala in March 2017 was organised around the Commonwealth theme for the year: 'A Peace-building Commonwealth',

<http://thecommonwealth.org/media/press-release/peace-building-theme-commonwealth-day-2017>



Different Keynote addresses, sessions, and discussions dealt with this theme. The current issue of the Journal covers a selection of papers presented at the event. For Further details of the event are available below as Appendix 1 (Executive Summary and Full Report of the event), Appendix 2 (a participation/feedback report on the event by Femi Omotoyinbo, to Bristol Commonwealth Society, UK), and Appendix 3 (Full Programme, as initially planned)

Peace is multi-dimensional concept and mostly perceived as the absence of war or tensions, and defined in terms of relations between nation states or regions or human settlements within a geographical space. Then, there are dimensions that relate to individual characteristics/dispositions that make an individual or a group of people, internally at peace within oneself or the group. Thus, the conference discussed Peace in its 'external' dimension -- between nations and regions and the policies and institutions associated with building and maintaining peace (papers grouped in Part A). Simultaneously, it also covered peace at the level of individuals and groups --, their experiences, perceptions and ingroup and outgroup interactions (Papers grouped in Part B)

Many contributors focus on 'causal theories' to discuss problems related to (lack of) peace. They identify specific issues that accentuate a feeling of powerlessness, injustice and lack of equality among individuals and groups. Ngitir Bayena notices, in addition to the impact of colonial and postcolonial political/administrative structures, the negative impact of commercial imperatives in catering to clientele visiting museums in Bamenda Grasslands.

Suh Norbert goes straight to the heart of the problems facing Cameroon:

In Cameroon, English and French are official languages with equal status. However, the weak institutionalization of linguistic equality has created complexities of inferiority and superiority among Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians, expressed in the struggle between two linguistic movements: French-only movement acting offensive nationalism and English-only movement acting defensive nationalism.

Norbert continues:

Both movements which carry the germs of nationalism are in competition for survival, and in trying to do so, they reinvent political identities based on linguistic affinities.

While identifying problems in terms of historical factors, institutional failures, and individual and group dynamics, papers in the current issue take stock of the current political situation and potential solutions it offers. For example, the positive role of

Commonwealth 'in the framework of the spread of peace in Africa since the end of the East-West ideological confrontation (Raphaël Assil), development assistance, support for frameworks of human rights and democracy through strengthening institutions through election observation/monitoring.

Commonwealth was, in general seen as a providing the link to the bigger picture beyond conflicts and contentious issues. However, there were lines of unease and disagreement too especially in dealing with public policy and acceptance of some of Commonwealth's advocacy in matters of LGBT. Jie Romuald argues: '... [While] Cameroon is whole heartedly with the "club of gentlemen" [Commonwealth] ... [it] ... doesn't see from a bright angle why she should assist the organization in [matters of] Cameroonian homosexuals ...

Discussing Human Rights more generally, Femi Omotoyinbo, using a comparative study of the initiatives of the Commonwealth, and the Banjul Charter of the African Union, argues:

... [The] ... Commonwealth's human rights activities, as evident in its values and principles, could 'inspire' the Banjul Charter to make expected influence in harmony with regional standards. On the other hand ... whereas the Banjul Charter could be below expectations, it is capable of informing the Commonwealth to be more effective in its human rights mandate.

The role of the African Union in supporting electoral processes is also covered in another contribution (C Tsala Tsala).

A significant contribution of the Commonwealth to building and maintaining Peace has been the work of its Commission on Respect and Understanding, chaired by Professor Amartya Sen and Its report *Civil Paths to Peace* <<http://dx.doi.org/10.14217/9781848590014-en>> In its concluding remarks, the report stresses the 'importance of human minds in pursuit of peace and security'. It is on this territory, that battles and wars for Peace are won or lost.

In Part B, in exploring avenues and opportunities for Peace, the contributors examine signpost the importance of differences and dialogue between them as expressed in

literature, performance arts, and museums or in day-to-day survival strategies when confronted with inequality and perceived or real of injustice.

Mary Okolo explores colonial legacy through a study of Chinua Achebe's (2012) *There was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*, which 'offers a significant account of the Nigeria – Biafra civil war (1967-1970) and its continuing effect in the life of Nigeria as a nation'. The paper succeeds in its dual purpose: 'to offer a philosophical exposition on Achebe's book and to extract general rules or causal theories that can enhance peace-building, especially in Commonwealth nations.'

Par Laba 'investigates peace-building strategies via the philosophical realm of postwar literature in Germany' and concludes that 'only a work on the ethics of difference can achieve a durable world peace capable of creating a triumphant humanity'. Clement Ajiduhan, finds that Femi Osofisan 'has successfully used the medium of the theatre to arouse the consciousness of the public to embrace peace, unity and dialogue to enhance nation building'. In their 'radical Feminist' reading of Angela Makholwa's *Black Widow Society*, Prosper Ntambo and Pamela Christelle argue that 'Women suffer three facets of colonization ... race, class and sexual orientation [as heterosexuals, which leads to their oppression].'

With respect of Cameroon, Norbert concludes in the study cited above that 'Linguistic diversity [in Cameroon] can make sense for unity and stability when language communities perceive each other's language as complementary', and for Frida M. Mbunda-Nekang the current 'conflict can be resolved and peace ensured through a reorientation of the mentality of Cameroonians and this can be effectively done through their folklore'.

The Commonwealth is currently engaged with addressing the 'Anglophone' problem [or the 'Francophone' problem'? Or, both?], through high-level political initiatives;

Calls for peaceful dialogue in Cameroon

<http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/calls-peaceful-dialogue-cameroon>

Commonwealth engaging Cameroon on peace and governance

<http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/commonwealth-engaging-cameroon-peace-and-governance-says-secretary-general>

Cameroon's opposition parties discuss route to peace with Secretary-General
<http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/cameroon%E2%80%99s-opposition-parties-discuss-route-peace-secretary-general>

Secretary-General to visit Cameroon

<http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/secretary-general-visit-cameroon>.

In the year 2018, there will be two major pan-Commonwealth events. The Commonwealth Games in the Gold Coast, Australia, <https://www.gc2018.com/>, and Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting/Summit in London <https://www.chogm2018.org.uk/>. Commonwealth Day Celebrations in March are also being planned at the University of Buea. Details will be available in due course.

With best wishes of the Season and the New Year.

Editors

Note: Websites mentioned in the Editorial were accessed on 31 December 2017/
1 Jan2018]

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Appendix 1

Official Report of the Conference

- **Executive Report**
- **Full Report**



OFFICIAL REPORT OF COMMONWEALTH DAY CELEBRATIONS, 2017 UNIVERSITY OF DOUALA, DOUALA, CAMEROON

Executive Summary

Students, staff and authorities of the University of Douala commemorated Commonwealth Day at the Nelson Mandela Stadium Grandstand on Thursday 16 March 2017 under the theme 'A Peace-Building Commonwealth'. This commemoration was preceded by other activities such as sports walk, 'human investment' (voluntary cleaning up of the university campus), handball and football matches, Miss Commonwealth and Mr Commonwealth competitions, song, dance and drama.

On Monday 13 March, more than 600 students and staff did a sports walk that took them round a distance of about 20 KM. They held bill boards, banners, and green leaves bearing messages of 'Peace'. They sang songs of peace and at every road junction; they gathered and sang a solemn peace song. Crowds of people came out to listen and applaud them.

On Thursday 16 March, the Nelson Mandela Stadium Grandstand was full of students, lecturers, support staff, administrative and traditional authorities whom the Rector, Prof Francois Xavier Etoa, had invited. As the local newspaper *Cameroon Tribune* reported, 'The University of Douala celebrated Commonwealth in songs'. Coordinated by Professor Mpoche and Mr Chedjou, the students thrilled the crowd for more than four hours non-stop. The Governor of the Littoral Region, the

Government Delegate to the Douala City Council, the Senior Divisional Officer for Wouri, the Delegate of Culture for Littoral and other invited dignitaries were amazed at the colourful display of the Commonwealth Club of the University of Douala. Guest musicians Franck Epalle and Wams extended the 'show' in the evening.

The roundtable conference on 'A Peace-Building Commonwealth' was chaired by Rector Emeritus Professor Beban Sammy Chumbow, Pro Chancellor of the University of Dschang. This was followed by a scientific conference at which over 60 scholars from several universities in Cameroon, Nigeria and the UK presented papers all centred on peace from different perspectives.

This event ended on the evening of Saturday 19 March with a welcome reception of returning Commonwealth alumni.

End of Executive Summary



OFFICIAL REPORT OF COMMONWEALTH DAY CELEBRATIONS, 2017 UNIVERSITY OF DOUALA, DOUALA, CAMEROON

Full Report

REPORT OF DAY 1

Commonwealth commemoration at the University of Douala was launched by a sports walk that took students and staff across a distance of about 20km. This activity attracted a lot of attention especially as the participants held peace objects like green leaves, bill boards etc. They also sang peace songs. This started at 7am and ended at about 9.30am. In the afternoon there were handball and football matches.

REPORT OF DAYS 2 & 3

The two days were dedicated to 'human investments', handball and football matches, Miss Commonwealth and Mr Commonwealth Competitions, sketches, songs, drama, and dance. It is worth noting that the evenings were very thrilling.

REPORT OF DAY 4

This day was dedicated to the official ceremony of this commemoration. The Nelson Mandela Stadium Grandstand was full of students, support staff, university authorities, lecturers, local administrative and traditional authorities, etc. The Governor of the Littoral Region, the Government Delegate to the Douala City Council, The Regional Delegate for Culture, The Senior Divisional Officer for Wouri Division and many other authorities were impressed by the performances of the students.

Professor Emeritus Beban Sammy Chumbow could be seen visibly satisfied with the activities which included:

- Singing of the Cameroon National Anthem
- Singing of the Commonwealth Anthem
- Reading of the Queen's Commonwealth Day Speech
- The Commonwealth SG's Affirmations
- Speeches (Commonwealth Club, Commonwealth Alumni, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Rector of the University of Douala)
- Entertainment (Guest musicians, student songs, etc.)

REPORT OF DAY 5

The 17th March 2017 marked the fifth day of the commemoration of Commonwealth in the University of Douala. The first panel of presentations was chaired by Prof Beban Sammy Chumbow. On this panel, the following presentations were made:

- Bamenda Grassfields Living Museums: A Colonial Heritage by Dr Ngitir Victor Bayena
- Colonial Linguistic heritage and the Quest for Peace within the Commonwealth by Prof Mpoche Kizitus
- Variety Rivalry and Prospects: The Case of British and American Englishes in Cameroon by Dr Ekembe Eric and Dr Jude Berinyuy Tangwa
- Linguistic Equality, Political Unity and Stability in Multilingual Commonwealth States: Cameroon's Experience by Dr Suh Fru I Norbert
- L'Apport du Commonwealth dans le Renforcement de la Democratie et du Respect de Droits de l'Homme a Cameroun by Jie Jie Patrick Romuald
- Psycho-Political Activities of Youths and National Development by Beatrice Olawumi Ajidahun
- Le Monde s'Effondre de Chinua Achebe: Une Invite a plus de Paix entre les Hommes: Une Analyse Ethno-Stylistique by Claude Fingoue
- Relations Humaines entre Rapports Conflictuels et Conviviaux by Charles Ngadjifna

After this series of papers presented by this college of scholars on different aspects of peace promotion in Africa, the floor was given to participants to ask questions. The questions centered on how the Commonwealth has had an impact in Cameroon, how

the Commonwealth has contributed to foster peace and democracy in Cameroon. On this note, one of the speakers (Dr Primus Fonkeng, University of Buea) highlighted the contribution of the Commonwealth to democracy in Cameroon in the 90s.

A second participant asked the question on the advantages that Cameroon has drawn from the Commonwealth. The speaker replied that the assistance was at the level of the economy. In 2014 for example the Commonwealth helped in handling the debt of Cameroon and the funding of certain developmental projects. It was also indicated that the Commonwealth helped Cameroon in implementing a human right policy, in fighting against certain abuses and helping in the democratic process.

Another question came up on interdependent relationships between family members. On this issue the presenter (Dr Ajidahun, Adekunle University) said that parents should educate their children from generation to generation on the importance of peace. They should not feel marginalized by the society; we should give them a model because they want to achieve leadership and participate in political life.

Dr Ngitir answering a participant's question on the conservation of African art objects said that the appreciation of these arts would depend on the schools of thoughts. He said that they should be well conserved in museums and these objects through their representations could advocate a message of peace. The speaker insisted on the protection of our cultural objects as whatever that little that is left after many have been sold to whitemen should be well protected. As concerns the role of the government in the protection of our cultural legacy, it was emphasised that government should play their role. They took the example of Afo Akom that was stolen and later came from the USA. They furthermore articulated that culture is dynamic and we should develop culture towards a positive direction. There is also need not only to protect our museums but also to think about creation and production. On the question to know how these objects promote peace in our nation, the presenters said that museums are vectors of peace and national integration.

Another question came up on the cohabitation of varieties of English in Cameroon and how this affects peace pedagogically. The answer was that it is necessary to present the varieties of English to students because Cameroon is a bilingual country. Though the respondents to a survey carried out were not aware of the differences between British and American English, the speakers said that we should seek for a Cameroonian variety, which corresponds to the needs and realities of our context.

The next panel was chaired Prof Mamadou from the University of Douala. After introducing all the speakers on the panel, he gave the floor to the first of them Dr Clement Olujide Ajidahun from Adekunle University. His paper was on Drama as an instrument of peace and nation building in Commonwealth West Africa: a reading of Femi Osofisan's plays. In her address, the speaker announced that she intended to make a critical analysis of some plays written by Femi. She added that in those plays drama is a tool to propagate a message of peace. She said that if there is chaos in a society they should use drama to pass the message of peace.

The floor was next given to the second speaker Dr Gilbert Tarka Fai from the University of Bamenda. His paper was on Festival in the theatre of Wole Soyinka Emphasizing the religious, the harvest and the commemoration festivals in Africa, Dr Tarka pointed out that our festivals in Africa in general and Soyinka' work in particular help to tackle burning issues that are addressed by the Commonwealth. Soyinka, he said, castigates ills like corruption, moral degradation and help to promote values supporting peace.

The third presentation came from Dr Mpake of the University of Douala on the topic: L'Afrique centrale entre aspirations légitimes et les conflits socio politiques. The presenter started his presentation saying that for him, central Africa refers to 11 countries covering a surface area of 6500 square meters. He said that the states of this zone aspire to put an end to the different conflicts witnessed in the area. He centered his reflection on three key issues: the origins of conflicts in this area, the Great Lakes region, the Lake Chad and the Gulf of Guinea. He mentioned that violence in these areas is as a result of movement of populations, terrorism, lack of

resources and ethnic conflict. He added that to solve the crisis in these regions, the states should come together and adopt a preventionist policy.

Dr Wirba Ibrahim from the University of Bamenda was the next speaker. He talked about The Boko Haramisation of female heroism in Africa: a case study in afrocentric feminist literary criticism. He introduced his speech by saying that the women and young girls have been book-haramised. They are taken hostage and used as suicide bombers. He elaborated on the motivations of this situation and took participants through historical events, where some outstanding women like Queen Ashanti were arrested and finally played key roles in the liberation of their people. The speaker therefore envisaged a charismatic woman playing a heroic role in fighting for peace and justice advocated by the Commonwealth.

Dr Fombebe from the University of Buea made a presentation on the topic: Wifhood, Motherhood and Work in Cameroonian Women's Writings: challenges and prospects for peace and nation building. In her address, the speaker presented woman as giving and receiving love in the play *La Carapace*. Basing her analysis on the gender relation approach, she cited three types of figuration: prefiguration, configuration and reconfiguration. In the book *La Carapace*, she said, the author uses these three steps to construct peace in the character and in the language, to develop dialog between husband and wife.

Dr Tayo Olajubutu from Adekunle University, Nigeria gave a talk about gender equity as a quest for social peace in Nigeria. She observed that in her country the survey she carried out shows that there are some gender factors serving as a hindrance to women. If gender equity were observed, women would play an important role in the construction of the nation.

Dr Roland Ndille from the University of Buea made a presentation on Nkanag and Conflict Resolution in Bakossi-Cameroon: lessons for a peaceful Commonwealth. He introduced his paper by indicating that the Bakossi people in the south west have a lesson to teach the world on conflict resolution. He recounted the experience of

Nkanag where the people of one village handle disputes between people, get to the truth, and reconcile people without causing any bloodshed.

Dr Hanse Gilbert from the University of Douala presented a brief paper on *Les guerres asymétriques en Afrique depuis le retour démocratique*. After defining what asymmetric wars were, he made a few suggestions on how these wars could be fought and how democratic systems could be well handled.

The next paper was on *Les nouvelles stratégies de lutte contre Boko Haram au Cameroun: le cas du comité de vigilance* by Mr Paul Derrick Dang from the university of Douala. The speaker elaborated on a new force -- the vigilante groups -- in the fight against Boko Haram. These are patriotic young people determined to contribute to a peaceful country of theirs. They play a double role: they are the masters of the field and they provide information to the forces of defense. With regard to their utmost importance, the speaker ended by suggesting they could work at the borders of the territory, some could be recruited in the army and an emergency plan set up in the northern region.

All presentations led to a question and answer session well animated and well-coordinated by the chairperson of the panel.

After lunch break, Prof Mpoche introduced the next panel chaired by Dr Rose Frie from the University of Buea. She began by making her own presentation on the topic *Education in time of peace and conflict: citizenship education and skills education for refugees and internally displaced persons*. She based her analysis on Sudan where conflict that started in 1983 led to the displacement of many people to the south of the country. She said that Commonwealth is a peace building instrument; and, when there are displacements, the government has to face a lot challenges: disrupted families, human right abuses, lack of education, relocation of people, etc. She recommended that in case of conflicts, all parties should be involved in dialogue and the government should run rehabilitation camps for the displaced, and improve their income and provide education.

Another presentation, entitled *La prevention et la resolution des conflits en Afrique: Approche culturelle comme valeur ajoutée du Commonwealth* was delivered by Stéphane Aloys Mbono and Rodrigue Tasse from the University of Yaoundé II. The two speakers raised an important question: How does Commonwealth operate in solving and preventing conflict? They outlined the structural, dimension of Commonwealth, the legal texts and the operatory framework to show that Africa has for long been a hub of conflicts and that solving these problems through peaceful solutions has been the main concern of Commonwealth.

'Colonial heritage and Brittle peace: A philosophical reading of Achebe's *There was a Country*' was the next paper, presented by Dr Okolo from Nigeria. In this paper, the author made a mention of the colonial heritage of many African countries where independence was given on the front door and taken away from the back door. She analyzed this colonial legacy from Achebe's book and drew lessons for the development of Africa. She said that no matter how you discuss peace, it will hardly be achieved in Nigeria as long as this historical problem is not solved.

The next paper presented was by Dr Fasse Innocent from the University of Douala. The topic was *Abrupt Immersion of Anglophone students in French-only training programme at ENSET Douala: an explanatory analysis of the psycholinguistic impact and adaptation strategies*. In his presentation he pointed out some facts: More than 80% of courses are taught in French at ENSET, there are only two English speaking teachers out of 80 and surprisingly the students perform well. He therefore raised the question to know how the English-speaking students overcome the language problem. He added that he interviewed 34 students to find out how they cope with the problem. The latter mentioned rapid solutions to learn French quickly, attitudes to overcome the language barrier, taking notes appropriately and achieving success.

Dr Carlous Moluh from the University of Bamenda presented the next paper on *Rethinking and reconfiguring English language education: Averting linguistic genocide in Cameroon*. The author said his topic was inspired by a number of factors: He is an English language teacher, we are commemorating Commonwealth and we need English to communicate. Using a critical social theory, he demonstrated

that today English is a strategic weapon for promoting colonization. He justified his view by adding that English is detrimental to our local languages. He proposed a diversity balance to avoid what he called 'a programme of linguistic genocide of our local languages'.

The following paper, *Fictions francophones, l'empathie et l'utopie comme condition du vivre ensemble*, was presented by Dr Alain Okorong from the University of Douala. The speaker highlighted the notions of empathy and utopia and indicated that peace talk should have its language. He demonstrated that for peace building to work, we should all feel as vulnerable as the victims. He said that if the government sits on a discussion table without feeling what the other feels, they would be acting in a utopia.

All these presentations were followed by a question and answer session supervised by the chairperson of the panel. After the discussion the audience were reminded that no matter how powerful we are, we are always vulnerable to a certain extent. English should be used as a tool of national integration. We should use English in such a way that it matches the needs of our context. Commonwealth should be used not only to help develop Panafricanism but also to promote multiculturalism nationally.

The last panel of the day was introduced by Prof Mpoche. It was chaired by Prof Tsala Tsala from the university of Yaounde I. Taking the floor, the chairperson introduced his panelists and gave the floor to the first speaker Dr Raphael Betenguene Assil who spoke on *Le Commonwealth dans la mouvance de la promotion de la paix en Afrique depuis la fin de la guerre froide: enjeux et perspectives*. In his address the speaker noted that since the end of the Cold War peace has been seriously threatened in Africa. He added that in the 90s Africa was the continent that recorded the greatest number of deaths as a result of conflicts. His preoccupation was on how Commonwealth could better contribute to foster peace in Africa. He identified geopolitical, influential and security challenges to demonstrate that the Commonwealth will be succeed in maintaining peace in Africa if it works

hand in hand with African organizations, if it supports peace promotion actions and sensitizes the populations.

Dr Primus Fonkeng from the University of Buea made a presentation on Post-conflict reconstruction in the Bakassi Peninsula: Achievements and challenges. In his address the speaker talked about the peace building mechanism that the government set up after the conflict. He investigated if, since 2006, the population has felt an impact of the government measures, and, if the achievements prescribed were implemented. After redefining the notions of negative peace and positive peace, the speaker made a rundown of achievements by the government in the Bakassi peninsula. For him, in spite of these efforts, there are still many challenges like providing potable water to populations, developing projects, involving local communities in solving their problems.

Mr Femi Richards from Nigeria came made a presentation on Human rights, the Commonwealth and the Banjul Charter. He said that if Africa wants to achieve peace it should consider human rights. He analyzed the institutional structures and the implementation mechanism to demonstrate that Commonwealth and bodies like The African Union should work hand in hand if they want to promote veritable peace in Africa.

Dr Alain Roger Pegha gave a talk on *La démocratie comme modèle de la régulation sociale du système dominant et garante de la promotion de la paix et sécurité en Afrique: Illusion ou réalité.*

The question raised by the speaker was the following: Does democracy, as it is practiced in Africa today, guarantee peace and security on the continent? After defining the concept of democracy, the speaker said that the model of democracy used in Africa is not at the service of the people. He associated it to oligarchy, a model where the people are always absent from decision taking. He concluded by saying that the Commonwealth would help Africa by supporting our efforts in promoting peace and security and setting up a true democracy.

Dr Messina Mvogo was the next speaker on the panel. He dwelt on Les multinationales dans le Golfe de Guinée post-colonial: Facteurs de stabilité ou d'instabilité? Essai d'analyse du rôle d'ELF et TOTAL dans la vie socio-politique du Cameroun et du Nigeria de 1967 à 2002. Dr Mvogo demonstrated that ELF and TOTAL have exploited Cameroon and Nigeria as a result of the attitudes of the leaders of these two countries. He noted a direct implication of France in the Biafra war and indicated that by participating in the Biafra war, Cameroon set up a favorable ground for future conflicts with her neighbor, Nigeria.

Prof Tsala, the chairperson of this panel presented on L'Union Africaine et les crises post-électorales en Afrique. The scholar introduced his paper by indicating that after the Second World War, Africa rose to pose the problem of its independence. Two blocks will be formed in Africa: the Panafricanists who advocated the United States of Africa and the leaders of the French-speaking Africa who argued that the United States of Africa was not necessary. OAU was then created in 1963. When Africa came back to multiparty system in the 90s, Africa became a hub of insecurity. That is why in 2002 in Durban the AU was created to foster peace in Africa, help resolve post electoral conflicts and to set up a legal framework to promote peace, democracy and security in Africa. He ended by saying that if the African Union succeeded in certain countries; it failed in others. For this reason, he proposed that the AU be given another thought to better achieve its mission. It is on a give and take discussion following the presentations and this marked the end to this second day.

REPORT OF DAY 6

After a welcome by Prof Mpoche, the day started with a presentation by Dr Atoh on the topic: A discourse in the language of peace and traditional education in the Bafut Fondom. Taking the floor, he engaged the audience on peace development through language and education. He considered that language is the most remarkable tool to promote peace, knowledge and culture; a medium through which the relation with God is expressed. He further indicated that traditional education helps to settle conflicts, develop peace, socialize and solve problems the way they were solved in our African kingdoms.

The next paper presented was by Ms. Eithel from the University of Maroua speaking on behalf of Mr Ntambo who was absent due to unexpected circumstances. She spoke on the topic Mysogynism and the dynamics of power: A radical feminist reading of Angela Makholwa's *Black Widow Society*. After defining the key concepts of her topic, the speaker mentioned that the women have always played a second role in the society, they have always been victims of discrimination and marginalization. For the speaker, the time had come for the women to rise as one person to liberate themselves from men's domination, break social barriers, set up dynamics to promote peace and have their place in the society.

Dr Nicoline Agbor from the University of Maroua was the next speaker on the topic Language as a peace negotiating strategy by English-speaking students studying in French speaking universities in Cameroon. She said that her scientific paper targeted changes in the use of English by Anglophone students. She investigated the causes of the changes basing her research on Fishman's theory as a frame for data collection and analysis. After exploring the situation, she noted that her informants had a problem of language recognition, culture, poor marks allocation, natural conflicts, etc. She concluded by saying that students should develop language for peace negotiation.

Prof Assoumou who doubled as the chairperson of this panel made a presentation on the theme: Le programme national pour la promotion du bilinguisme et du multiculturalisme: enjeux et atouts pour la paix et la concorde au Cameroun. In his presentation he mentioned achievements of the state in terms of language development and peace building. For him the cultural and linguistic heritage is an asset as it helps to promote harmony. He cited the recently created commission for bilingualism and multiculturalism and other bodies like the Bilingual training programmer, the Advanced Schools of translators and interpreters which help foster our bilingualism and enable Cameroonians to accept one another. He regretted that the linguistic policy of Cameroon at the start was not clearly formulated and wished that the newly created commission help better conceptualize this policy.

The floor was next given to Dr Frida Mbunda from the University of Buea to give a talk on Folklore to enhance peace and national integration. She started her presentation by taking the Chinese example to demonstrate that cultural assets can help enhance peace and unity in the nation. African cultures through means like tales, stories, etc. should help advocate peace. She took some symbols of our country like the national anthem to show that our attachment to Cameroon is not well achieved. Talking about the democratization of the country, she said that her proposal is to Cameroonise democracy and not to democratize Cameroon.

Prof Nguepi was given the floor to make a presentation on the theme *Politiques linguistiques, enseignements bilingues et cohabitations sociales dans l'espace francophone: entre langage et pouvoir*. In his address Prof Nguepi questioned Cameroon's bilingualism and asked what could be done to make it a reality. He said that at the international level, linguistic policies take into account international policies. He mentioned some historical landmarks on the development of multilingualism and plurilinguism. He mentioned the Lagos Summit where Wole Soyinka suggested multilingualism as a means to teaching and national integration, the 1989 summit of Heads of State in Dakar where a thorough management of linguistic policies was recommended. He said that peace and unity in Africa will be well achieved if linguistic policies are at the service of this goal.

All the above presentations gave rise to a question and answer session where the participants asked speakers a good number of questions and also obtained satisfactory answers.

When the session reconvened after the lunch break, Dr Ngitir was given the floor to make a presentation on Challenges of chronological dating. In address, he defined dating as being a process of attributing dates to some events. He further engaged the audience on aspects like the methods of dating, the motivations, the field challenges, the conservation of art objects, historic landmarks, etc.

Prof Mpoche, then, took the floor to announce a parallel event on the agenda: the postgraduate workshop programme. In this session, Masters and PhD students were

given tips and strategies on conducting their research more effectively. The scholars invited for the exercise took the floor in succession to guide the students on how to handle each aspect of research.

Prof Pangmeshi was first to lecture on evaluating the sources in qualitative research. Prof Mpoche made a presentation on handling variables in social science research, Dr Adediran Adekunke Amos presented a paper on writing an empirical paper, Prof Assoumou spoke on methods of educational observation and analysis. Dr Primus Fonkeng gave a lecture on how to write an abstract; Prof Nguépi talked about quantitative and qualitative research. All these presentations, were well appreciated by all beneficiaries, and were followed by a series of questions to which the speakers gave convincing answers.

At this point, audience split into two: Commonwealth students went to Amphi 200 where they held their meeting and elected a new national bureau, and lecturing/research staff remained in Amphi 100 where they created a collaborative research group.

All were invited to an evening of 'Welcome' to returning Commonwealth scholars and fellows that was held at the Rhode Hotel. This event was an occasion for Commonwealth scholars and fellows to meet and know each other, and also for the big Commonwealth family to socialise, share ideas and think about a sustainable peace-building Commonwealth.

End of report

Appendix 2

Participant Feedback/Report

Mr Femi Richard OMOTOYINBO

To the Bristol Commonwealth Society

A Report on the Cameroon Commonwealth Commemoration Conference (Douala 2017)

Presented by Femi Richard OMOTOYINBO

To the Bristol Commonwealth Society.

A letter of invitation dated 22nd of February 2017 was sent via email to formally invite me for the 2017 Cameroon Commonwealth Commemoration as scheduled for the 16th to 18th of March 2017. My attendance at the conference was majorly funded through the kind support of the Bristol Commonwealth Society (BCS) and the encouragements of Gina Smith and Janet Kirk. I was actually a representative of the BCS at the conference. The flight to Cameroon on March 15, 2017 through ASKY airline took about 1 hour, 30 minutes from Lagos, Nigeria to Douala, Cameroon; and I returned to Nigeria on 20th of March 2017.

For the sake of clarity, I have divided the report into three parts:

1. Conference Overview
2. Personal Experience and
3. Overall Comment and Conclusion.

Conference Overview

The Cameroon Commonwealth Conference was actually between the 13th and 18th of March 2017 at the University of Douala. The conference has the same universal Commonwealth Theme for 2017: "A Peace Building Commonwealth", which was very apt for the conditions in many of the African member States of the Commonwealth, specifically Cameroon whose peace is experiencing political, linguistic and terrorist challenges. While events between the 13th and 15th of March was majorly for Students and Staff in the Douala University; dignitaries arrived from other Cameroonian Universities and from other parts of Africa (especially Nigeria) on 16 March. Authorities of Douala University, Professionals, government officials (the Governor of the region inclusive) and eminent scholars were among peoples that graced the opening ceremony of the conference at the Ground Stand of Nelson Mandela Stadium on 16 March 2017. The opening ceremony includes the singing of the Cameroonian National Anthem, the Commonwealth Anthem (composed and

sung by the Student Commonwealth Club of the University). It includes the reading of the Queen's Commonwealth Day Message, introduction of attendees, and a bilingual welcome speech delivered by the President of the Student Commonwealth Society (Joseph Chedjou), who hosted me on the final nights of my stay in Douala.

A round table on "a peace building Commonwealth" was later chaired by Professor Sammy Beban Chumbow; with a gender-balanced panelists to discuss peace, its nature and socio-political significances.

Professor Kizitus Mpoche was the major brain behind the 2017 conference since his usual co-organiser Dr Bala[subramanyam] Chandra[mohan] (in the UK) was unable to come for the conference. The responsibilities could have overwhelmed Prof. Kizitus if not for the assistance of some staff members and postgraduate students of the University. However, the conference had a massive student involvement, which is quite encouraging because the youth are effective agents of sustainable peace.

There was no boring moment throughout the conference because entertainment (including modern and cultural activities) and feeding were adequately provided. Accommodation for the guests was okay, and there was no need for transportation because the hotel accommodation is near the venue (the University of Douala). The papers presented at the conference raised topical issues on peace from historical, legal, political and socio-linguistic perspectives. I hope the papers would appear in the forthcoming edition of the Cameroon Journal of Commonwealth Studies published by the organisers of the conference.

Personal Experience

I am once again grateful to the BCS for the sponsorship. It was indeed a worthy investment because my attendance was obviously encouraging to everyone, especially the young people. I was probably the youngest among the guests and the presenters. Many of the students were happy to know more about the Commonwealth, and existing members of the Student Commonwealth Society were encouraged. Prof. Kizitus gave me a special introduction and I was later one of the panellists to discuss and answer questions on peace. I discussed the two natures of

peace (positive and negative peace) and mentioned some connections with the Commonwealth generally. Although funding was not actually enough and the organisers had to support me until I got more money via my credit card. Professor Kizitus was grateful for my participation and the support I rendered with the presentation gadgets during the presentations. Among other things, I was able to present an interesting paper with the title “Human Rights: the Commonwealth and the Banjul Charter” on the 17th of March 2017. I really wish it would be published in the Journal mentioned above.

The personal benefit I got from attending the conference include the honourable opportunity to represent the BCS, exchange of knowledge with erudite scholars, friendship, constructive networking and academic development. The latter was even marked with a certificate of participation, which could be useful for an academic career. I must mention my networking with some University dons from Nigeria; and their desire to kick-start a student commonwealth society in one of the two universities represented. I expressed my willingness to give them support in the course of establishing the commonwealth student society.

At the end of the conference and scientific presentations, the organisers set up a committee to sustain the continuity of the conference and its journal. I was invited to give some suggestions on the possible thematic focus of the journal in subsequent publications.

To finalise the whole event, a commonwealth alumni party commenced at one of the hotels, and I was invited to the high table as an Associate Fellow of the Royal Commonwealth Society with Commonwealth Fellows who had gained Commonwealth scholarships for postgraduate studies in the UK. Although I was recovering from an illness prior my travel to Douala, I still represented the BCS effectively to the best of my ability.

Overall Comment and Conclusion

The Douala Commonwealth Conference was not only interesting because of the international participation but it was also interesting because it erased the divide

between the Anglophone and Francophone communities in attendance. I was able to advise the youth to consider the Anglophone and Francophone divide as an opportunity to be bilingual rather than as a negative difference. I believe that events of this nature in Cameroon (and Africa generally) are needed to invest in the youth and prepare them as possible leaders in the nearest future.

Visits to some public places with Prof. Kizitus reveal that the conference has a constructive social impact even before it ended. Many people in the restaurants were busy chatting and exchanging views on some topical issues raised during the paper presentations. This further shows that the Commonwealth conference in Cameroon is a worthy development that deserves both moral and material support from the Commonwealth society. It is important to note that the sponsorship of the conference was in some way poor.

The poor sponsorship reflected in the type of materials (e.g., folders, pen, nametags etc.) presented to the guests during the conference. These materials were obviously low in quality compare to what is obtainable in conferences elsewhere. I use this medium to solicit more support for the Cameroon commonwealth conference; the organisers and participants deserve every encouragement possible, and the BCS would be making more impacts by increasing their support. Without such supports, commitments from the organisers and supporters would certainly decline.

I am happily grateful for the support from the BCS; I remain available for further duties as an 'ambassador' of the BCS and an Associate Fellow of the RCS.

Thank you.

Femi Richard OMOTOYINBO

Appendix 3

Conference Programme



**COMMONWEALTH DAY CELEBRATIONS
13 – 18 MARCH 2017
UNIVERSITY OF DOUALA, CAMEROON**

THEME: A PEACE-BUILDING COMMONWEALTH

The Commonwealth theme centres on peace. In this year, against a global background of increasing instability and rise of extremism and terrorism, Commonwealth member states will build on their diversity and reaffirm their commitment to international peace and security by discussing the theme 'Peace-Building Commonwealth'.

This is in line with the Commonwealth Charter principle: 'International peace and security, sustainable economic growth and development and the rule of law are essential to the progress and prosperity of all'.

<http://www.commonwealthofnations.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Charter-of-the-Commonwealth.pdf>

'At a time of increasing instability and uncertainty in the world, the Commonwealth family of nations in its rich diversity becomes an ever more-needed source of strength and hope for all its members. 'A peace-building Commonwealth' is a natural follow-on from 2016's theme of 'An Inclusive Commonwealth', and reaffirms the Commonwealth Charter principle that 'international peace and security, sustainable economic growth and development and the rule of law are essential to the progress and prosperity of all'. <http://thecommonwealth.org/theme#sthash.8NhRMTED.dpuf>

Conference delegates will participate in sports and cultural events, and discuss/debate the above theme to promote understanding on global issues, international co-operation and the improvement of the lives of citizens in its member states. Delegates will have the option of submitting their papers/contributions for publication in the special issue (2017) of the *Cameroon Journal of Studies in the Commonwealth* on 'A Peace-building Commonwealth' ISSN 2411-1325

<http://camerooncommonwealthjournal.com/>

The Conference is supported by the University of Doula, Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS), Bristol Commonwealth Society, Cameroon Alumni of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows (CACSAF), and University of Douala Commonwealth Club (UDCC).

Registration fee: 30.000 CFA (US \$ 60) for participants from Africa; and US\$ 100 for participant from other regions; Student discount: 50%

For further details, please contact:

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PROGRAMME

DAY ONE: MONDAY 13/03/2017

06.00 Sports Walk (Campus I of the University of Douala – Ecole Publique Deido -

Bessengue Railway Station - Carrefour Adjip - BP Cité - Ange Raphael)

14.00 - 15.30 - Handball Women: Faculty of Arts Vs Faculty of Economics & Applied Management

15.30 - 18. 00 - Football Men: Faculty of Science Vs Faculty of Law & Political Sciences

19.00 - 21.00 – Competition: sketches, poems, songs, humour, dances, Mr/Miss Commonwealth

DAY TWO: TUESDAY 14/03/2017

06.00 - Human Investment (voluntary cleaning up of university campus)

14.00 - 15.30 - Handball Women: Faculty of Science Vs Faculty of Medicine & Pharmaceutical Sciences

15.30 - 18.00 - Football Men: Advanced School of Economics & Commerce (ESSEC) Vs Advanced Teacher Technical College (ENSET)

19.00 – 21.00 – Semi finals: sketches, poems, songs, humour, dances, Mr/Miss Commonwealth

DAY THREE: WEDNESDAY 15/03/2017

06.00 - Media Animation on Radio VS Television

13.00 - 14.00 - Handball Women: ESSEC VS Faculty of Science

14.00 - 15.30 - Football Men: FGI VS FSEGA

15.30 - 18.00 - Football Men: Faculty of Arts VS Faculty of Medicine

19.00 – 21.00 – Finals: sketches, poems, songs, humour, dances, Mr/Miss Commonwealth

DAY FOUR: THURSDAY 16/03/2017: ROUNDTABLE & SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

08.30 Registration, Tea/Coffee, Assembly of students (Grandstand, Nelson Mandela Stadium)

10.00 Inauguration ceremony

- Arrival Student delegations from other universities
- Arrival of Cameroon Alumni of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows
- Arrival of Douala University Authorities
- Arrival of Traditional and Administrative Authorities
- Arrival of the Rector of the University of Douala (Government Delegate, Governor)
- Singing of the Cameroon National Anthem by the Douala University Choir
- Singing of the Commonwealth Anthem by the Douala University Commonwealth Club
- Welcome speech by the president of the Douala University Commonwealth Club
- Musical interlude
- Speech by the President of Cameroon Commonwealth Students
- Interlude (sketch)
- Speech by the Cameroon Alumni of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows
- Interlude (song)
- Speech by the Rector of the University of Douala
- Interlude (humour)
- The Queen's Commonwealth Day Message
- Interlude (Traditional dances)
- Visits to stands

12.30 - 14.00 Lunch (University Conference Room)

14.00 Keynote address: *Concepts and Practice of Peace-building in*

Commonwealth Countries: ancient to modern; Dr Balasubramanyam

Chandramohan, Commonwealth Institute, London; **Chair:** Professor Sammy

Chumbow, Rector Emeritus, Pro Chancellor, University of Dschang, Vice President

Cameroon Academy of Science, ACU Council Member 1999 – 2006.

15.00: Tea Break (ESSEC Forum)

15.30 Roundtable A Peace-Building Commonwealth (led by Prof Edward Ako), Rector of the University of Maroua, Association of Commonwealth University (ACU) Board Member)

Introduction and setting the scene for the discussion -- Prof Mpoche Vice Dean,
Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences, University of Douala)

Panelists

Prof Jules Assoumou: University of Douala

Mr Sanyi E. Sanyi: President Chevening Alumni

Prof Lilian Atanga: University of Bamenda

Dr Balasubramanyam Chandramohan, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London

Prof Mbuh Tenu: University of Bamenda

Prof Blossom Fondo: University of Maroua

Mr Femi Richard Omotoyinbo: Commonwealth Fellow, UK/Nigeria

Reporting a summary of the discussions -- Prof Mpoche

17.30 Dinner break (tbc)

Evening cultural programmes - 19.00 – 21.00 Nelson Mandela Grandstand:

Campus 1

- Presentations: sketches, poems, songs, humour, dances, Mr/Miss Commonwealth
- Guest Musicians Prince Afo Akom & Franck Epalle

DAY FIVE: (FRIDAY 17/03/17)

08.00 (Amphi 200):

Strand 1: Dimensions of lack of peace: Gender, Poverty, Inclusivity, & Entitlements (Chair: Chair: Beban Sammy Chumbow)

Religion and Peace within the Commonwealth: An Ethical Reflection S. Awoniyi
Adekunle Ajasin University

Bamenda Grassfields Living Museums: A Colonial Heritage, Ngitir Victor Bayena
University of Douala

Religion, Peace and Violence: An Appraisal of the Islamic Stand

Mahmud Adesina Ayuba, Adekunle Ajasin University

The Impact of terrorism on the Nigerian Economy and the Islam Solution, Muritala Kewuyemi University of Ibadan

Colonial Linguistic Heritage and the Quest for Peace within the Commonwealth, Kizitus Mpoche, University of Douala

Linguistic equality, political unity and stability in multilingual Commonwealth States: Cameroon's experience, Suh I Fru Norbert, University of Yaounde II

The Influence of Colonialism in two Linguistic Communities' Language and Culture in Old Akoko Division in Edo and Ondo States, Nigeria, Taiwo Opeyemi Agoyi Adekunle Ajasin University

The Niger-Delta Question in Nigeria's Quest for Peace and Nation-Building,

Umukoro Steven Ese and Akpoghiran Idamah Patrick, Delta State University

L'apport du Commonwealth dans le renforcement de la démocratie et du respect des droits de l'homme au Cameroun, JIE JIE Patrick Romuald, Université de Ngaoundéré

Psycho-political Activities of Youths and National Development, Beatrice Olawumi Ajidahun, Adekunle Ajasin University

Le Monde s'effondre de Chinua ACHEBE : une invite à plus de paix entre les hommes Une analyse ethno-stylistique; Claude Fingoue, Université de Douala

10.30 Coffee break (ESSEC Forum)

10. 45: Strand 2:

Manifestations of identity and peace: religion, language, politics (Chair: Edward Ako; University of Maroua)

Les Guerre Asymétriques en Afrique depuis le retour Démocratique: Hanse

Gilbert Mbeng Dang Université de Douala

The Boko Haramization of Female Herorism in Africa. A Study in Afrocentric Feminist Literary Criticism; Wirba Ibrahim, University of Bamenda

Les nouvelles stratégies de lutte contre Boko Haram au Cameroun : le cas du comité de vigilance; Hanse Gilbert Mbeng & Paul Derrick Dang A Goufan:
Université de Douala

Women Economic Earnings in Nigeria: Islamic Approach, Muritala Kewuyemi Kareem University of Ibadan, Ibadan. Nigeria

Drama as an Instrument of Peace and Nation Building in Commonwealth West Africa: A Reading of Femi Osofisan's Plays, Clement Olujide Ajidahun, Adekunle Ajasin University

Gender et engagement politique dans les sociétés musulmanes du Nord-Cameroun, Mamoudou, Université de Douala

Gender Equity as a Quest for Social Peace in Nigeria, Tayo-Olajubutu Olufunmilayo Adekunle Ajasin University, Nigeria

Postcolonial Theory and the African American Experience: Race, Subjectivity and Trauma in the Poetry of Langston Hughes and Claude McKay, Nformi Grace

Negotiating Cultural Spaces: Hybridization/Biculturalism in Kenjo Jumban's *The White Man of God*
Gerald Niba Nforbin, University of Douala

Festival in the Theatre of Wole Soyinka: "The Occasion for Speaking" in the Postcolonial Nation; Dr Gilbert Tarka Fai, University of Bamenda

La Securite et la Paix chez Spinoza: Gage de la Puissance de la Multitude; Alexandre Mbome, Université de Douala

Preventing conflict and ensuring peace through folklore: Option for Cameroon; Frida Mbunda Nekang, University of Buea

13.00: Lunch (University Conference Room)

14.00 PM: Strand 3:

Education in times of peace and conflict: citizenship education and education and skills education for refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (Amphi 200) (Chair: Primus Fonkeng, University of Buea)

Conflicts and Internally Displaced Persons in Sudan: A Challenge to Development, Rose Frie-Manyi Anjoh, University of Buea

Adult Education, Islam and Socioeconomic Development, Muritala Kewuyemi Kareem University of Ibadan

Colonial Heritage and Brittle Peace: A Philosophical Reading of Achebe's *There was a Country*, MSC Okolo, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta

Election Credibility and Sustainable Peace and Security in Commonwealth Counties. Fair Vote Representation Model, Yombo Sembe Eugène Arnaud, University of Yaoundé II, GRAPS

La Prévention et la Résolution des Conflits en Afrique : Approche Culturelle comme Valeur Ajoutée du Commonwealth, Stéphane Aloys Mbono et Rodrigue Tasse, Université de Yaoundé II, CERDAP

Abrupt Immersion of Anglophone Students in French-only Training Programmes at ENSET Douala: an Exploratory Analysis of the Psycholinguistic Impact and Adaptation Strategies, Fasse Mbouya Innocent, and Tcheundjio Rosaline, University of Douala

Fictions Francophones, l'Empathie et l'Utopie comme Conditions du Vivre Ensemble, Alain Ekorong, Université de Douala

L'Amour et la Paix: une Approche Interculturelle de quelques Fictions Post-Guerre en Allemagne et de la Littérature Postcoloniale Camerounaise, Maurice Laba, Université de Douala

The Place of Christian Doctrine in our Colonial Heritage and Peace Building in Nigeria Commonwealth of Nations: Oluwaseun Jegede, University of Lagos

Rethinking and Reconfiguring English Language Education: Averting Linguistic Genocide in Cameroon; Carlous Muluh Nkwetisama, University of Bamenda

15.30 Tea break (University Conference Room)

16.00: Strand 4:

Commonwealth, Consensus and Conflict Resolution: past, present and future (Amphi 200) (Chair: Lilian Atanga, University of Bamenda)

It Takes Two to a Tango: France and India in *de Facto* and *de Jure* Decolonisation of Pondicherry 1954-1962, Chandramohan, University of London

Autopsie des mécanismes de gestion des conflits dans l'espace Commonwealth : le cas des relations Cameroun-Nigéria dans le conflit de Bakassi et la question "Boko Haramienne", Paul Derrick Dang A Goufan, Université de Douala

Le Commonwealth dans la mouvance de la promotion de la paix en Afrique depuis la fin de la guerre froide: enjeux et perspectives, Raphaël Batenguene Assil, Université de Douala

Post-Conflict Reconstruction in the Bakassi Peninsula: Achievements and Challenges, Primus Fonkeng, University of Buea

Les Multinationales dans le Golfe de Guinée Post-colonial : Facteurs de Stabilité ou d'Instabilité ? Essai d'Analyse du Rôle d'Elf et Total dans la Vie Socio-politique du Cameroun et du Nigeria de 1967 à 2002, Ernest Messina Mvogo Université de Douala

Inter-religious Dialogue and Conflict management within the Commonwealth Countries: The Nigerian Experience, Ogunleye Adetunbi Richard Adekunle Ajasin University

Human Rights, the Commonwealth and the Banjul Charter, Femi Richard Omotoyinbo (Nigeria/UK)

Democratic Practice: A Postmodern Perspective, Gilead Nkwain Ngam, University of Bamenda

L'Union Africaine et les Crises Post-Electorales, Christian Tsala Tsala Université de Yaoundé I

Le Discours Politique Citoyen et la Promotion de la Culture de la Paix en Afrique, Flora Amabiamina, Université de Douala

19.00- 21.00: Evening programme (details to be announced)

DAY SIX (SATURDAY 18/03/17)

08.30 -- Strand 5:

Conflict and peace-building: a linguistic perspective (Chair: Jules Assoumou)

Language and Female Marginalization in Kom: A Source of Conflict Creation:
Prasidis Nain Wainkem, University of Yaounde II

A Discourse in the language of Peace and Traditional Education in the Bafut Fondom

Atoh Julius, University of Douala

Politiques linguistiques, enseignements bilingues et cohabitation sociale dans l'espace francophone: entre langage et pouvoir; George Victor Nguepi, Université de Douala

The Lamnso Passive Structure in Relation to English: Fonkpu Charles Univeristy of Douala

Variety Rivary and Prospects: The Case of British and American Englishes in Cameroon, Ekembe Eric Enongene & Jude Berinyuy Tangwa, University of Yaounde I

Embracing and Celebrating Language for Peace-Building in Nigeria: Adediran A. and Adeyanjue E. O, Federal College of Education, Abeokuta

Language change as a peace negotiating strategy by English-speaking students studying in French-speaking universities in Cameroon: Nicoline Agbor, University of Maroua

Le Programme national pour la promotion du bilinguisme et du multuculturalisme, enjeux et atouts pour la paix et la concorde au Cameroun Jules Assoumou, Université de Douala

10.30 – Tea Break

11.00 Education and Skills Capacity Building Workshops for staff (parallel events)

- **Capacity building** – academic staff (teaching and learning, research and publications)
- **Capacity building** – administrators - International and transnational education collaboration

13.00 - Lunch (University Conference Room)

14.30 - Meetings and Promotional Opportunities for Commonwealth

Organisations, and *Cameroon Journal of Studies in the Commonwealth (CJSC)* (ESSEC Forum) (parallel event)

POSTGRADUATE WORKSHOP PROGRAMME 18/03/2017 (parallel event)

8.00 – Registration/tea (FORUM ESSEC)

8.30 – Welcome to ‘The World of Research’ (Prof Ako O. Edward)

9.00 – Comment écrire une revue de la littérature critique/How to write a critical literature review

9.30 – ‘La problématique’ en recherche dans les sciences sociales (Pr Flora Amabiamina)

10.00 – Preparing for and carrying out a survey in language research (Dr Innocent Fasse)

10.30 – Tea break

11.00 –Evaluating Sources in Qualitative Research (Prof Pangmeshi)

11.30 – How to write a good empirical paper (Dr Adediran Adekunle Amos)

12.00 – Handling variables in social science research (Pr Mpoche)

12.30 –13.00 – Lunch

14.30 – Challenges of Dating and Chronology in the Visual Arts

15.00 – Diverse issues in Social Science Research (Panel: Pr Assoumou, Pr Nguepi, Dr Okolo, Dr Chandramohan)

16.00 – Commonwealth students societies meeting (Agenda and programmes to be decided by the group) (parallel event) Amphi 200

16.45 – Tea break

17.00 – Valedictory speech and vote of thanks

(by a member of the organising committee)

17.30 – Closing Remarks by the Rector of the University of Douala

(Pr Francois Xavier Etoa)

19.00 – Commonwealth Alumni Meeting

(Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows only)

End of Conference

Part A

Peace through public policy, and institutionalisation

Bamenda Grassfields Living Museums: A Colonial Heritage

Ngitir Victor Bayena
University of Douala

Abstract

One of the fundamental vestiges of colonialism among Commonwealth communities of Sub-Saharan Africa in the last few decades has been the birth and development of museums. The Tikar of the Bamenda Grassfields was the most predominant of the numerous ethno-linguistic groups that occupied the Western Highlands of Cameroon in the 19th century, embraced British colonial rule and established museums. This group comprised tribal entities like the Kom, Bafut, Nso, Babungo, Oku and others, said to have originated from the Adamawa in North Cameroon. A major hallmark of Tikar culture has remained the production, ritual use and preservation of spectacular sculptural art, thrones, stools and pottery products. By the turn of the 20th century, thousands of these masterpieces were lodged in special palace (*Ntoh*) chambers and secret lodges. Owing to an early British colonial collection policy in the Bamenda Province and pressure from post-independent stakeholders, some of these collections were transformed into museums in localities like Babungo, Mankon, Bafut and Oku. Despite their numerous challenges, these living museums have valorized the rich Tikar culture, enhancing tourism and promoting scholarship. This paper examines the role and impact of colonial policies and Western paradigms in the creation and sustenance of museums in some localities of the region. Our central question is: how and to what extent are the Babungo, Bafut, Mankon and Oku royal museums rooted in the British and German colonial collection policies? A blend of qualitative data and oral tradition, analyzed on thematic-cum-content basis provides the grounds for our conclusions. Despite persistent challenges of modernism, conservation and documentation, the palace museums that emerged from the ashes of colonialism lost much of their originality in the new world order in which capitalism prioritizes clientele desires.

Keywords: Commonwealth, Tikar, Bamenda Grassfields, colonial collection policy, capitalism, clientele

Introduction

One of the silent yet prominent colonial legacies in Africa has been the establishment of art galleries and museums. These were places of leisure and relaxation for those colonial agents who braved the 'malaria' scare to uphold empire. Gwinn (1992:478) asserts that after the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (1858), the South African National Museum in Johannesburg (1877) and Southern Rhodesia's network of four national

museums, the museum fever swept across East, Central and West Africa, reaching Cameroon in the 1920s and 1930s. Christraud (1983:15) asserts that in the French-speaking sector of Cameroon, efforts by French colonial officials, led to the establishment of the *Musé des Arts et Traditions Bamouns* (1920) by Mosé Yéyab and the Bamoun Royal Museum (1929) by King Njoya I. In K. Mbayu's (1994) opinion, the Bamenda Province of Southern Cameroons got its first museum when Dr M.D.W. Jeffreys, the British colonial administrator began a collection (1936) of ethnological and geological specimens that later became the Bamenda Provincial Museum. This marked the birth of a collection with a double-faced role. Though initially a research and leisure hub, it eventually served as a transit point where cherished samples, masterpieces and ethnographic art were studied, inventoried and prepared for onward shipment to London. Earlier shipments had been made by German agents to Berlin between the 1880s and 1912.

Major Hallmark of the Bamenda Grassfields, Cameroon

The Tikar who for centuries have been the most preponderant communities in the Bamenda Grassfields are structured into powerful kingdoms (Kom, Nso, Bafut, Babungo, etc) whose common trade mark has, to a large extent, been the production, ritual use and preservation of spectacular visual art (sculptures, pottery, smithing and weaving products). As an ancestral tradition, these kingdoms established ethnographic collections and art treasures comprising a wide range of sacred objects, royal paraphernalia, thrones, stools, clay items, smithing products, jambs, lintels and other elements of traditional architecture.

Ngitir (2013:1) confirms that in their secret lodges one would find ancestral figures, masks, stools, caps, drinking horns, pipes, loincloths, gowns, necklaces armlets, anklets, whisks, staffs, standards, swords, ivory tusks, calabashes, ceremonial and food vessels, royal cloth, drums, beds, bags and so on. Then came the sacred passage-ways distinguished by carved pillars supporting the roofs. These were flanked by "aggregates of jambs, lintels, sills, door and house frames". Indeed, Grassfielders felt self-sufficient as their traditional industries produced the tools required for hunting, fishing, farming, and other activities. In the first decade of the 21st century some of these collections were transformed into museums. The

Babungo collection was transformed in 2002, Mankon and Bafut in 2003 and Oku in 2007. This paper addresses the question whether the present Babungo, Bafut, Mankon and Oku royal museums of the Bamenda Grassfields are Western prototypes or the ancestral representations they were meant to be.

Rupture of the Grassfields Artistic Splendour

From their ancestral sites, variously called Kimmi, Ndobbo, or Rifum and various migratory stop-overs, came the Tikar tradition of producing, using and conserving religious objects. By 1800, every Tikar palace (*ntoh*) collection worth the name comprised countless masterpieces, sacred accessories and royal paraphernalia (Ngitir 2013:81-82). This practice achieved so much and lasted so long that Tamara Northern (1973) makes allusion to *a golden age of Grassfields art*. Then rupture set in. Palaces began to lose much of this artistic heritage due to natural and human factors: fire accidents, insect pests, decay and fungi attacks, poor handling and conservation techniques, vandalism, theft, looting, illicit traffic and so on. Between the 1890s and 1950s, German and later British colonial agents, traders, missionaries, researchers and administrations crisscrossed the region in what progressively became a systematic transfer of Grassfields masterpieces and cherished art to their museums in Leipzig, Berlin, Hamburg and London [Ankermann, quoted by C. Christraud (1984:5)]

While a negligible proportion of these objects were gifts, donations and traded items, the rest, in their thousands, were illicitly acquired. According to G. Christraud (1984:11) colonial wars, social upheavals and German punitive expeditions provided more opportunities for looting, extortion and vandalism. Colonial records allude to Adolf Diehl, an agent of *Gesellschaft Nordwest Kamerun*, who, from 1902, supplied German museums with Grassfields objects purchased at worthless prices. Fumban which had long been a center of "souvenir art" saw its treasures emptied. Initially Diehl is said to have supplied masterpieces to the Leipzig museum but as the demand skyrocketed their quality began to drop. To meet the high demand, Diehl resorted to placing orders with virtually any artist he could reach. Some items allegedly got to him half-finished (Christraud, 1984:4-5).

Reports of theft, blatant seizures and unholy deals involving Grassfields chiefs and peoples on the one hand with German missionaries, traders and colonial agents on the other abound. Even the so-called treaties of trade, protection and military alliances often resulted in the shipment of huge stocks of Grassfields art to Germany. The deals that sustained close ties between Dr. Zintgraff with the Bali and Babungo; Conrau with the Bangwa; and Gesellschaft Nord West-Kamerun with the Bamum must be understood in this light.

Though less brutal and more humane, the British policy of Indirect Rule still resulted in the shipment of Grassfields antiquities to London museums and galleries. Even when some of the so-called gifts were made to the British, they were not genuine and rather served as instruments of diplomatic balancing. Sultan Njoya for instance was gifted in diplomatic balancing especially the Germans and the British. Amaazee (2002: 22) submits that 'the Germans in particular were feared for their cruelty'. Yet Njoya and his people sincerely preferred English rule. Hence, as the Germans displaced his British friends to annex Cameroon in 1884, he quickly switched camps and demonstrated unalloyed loyalty to his new German masters as soon as they reached Fumban. Amaazee (2002: 22) further explains that when World War I reached Cameroon in 1915, Njoya not only offered the Germans his soldiers, servants, horses, money (4.000 Marks), provisions, porters and permanent workers but promised much more. Yet, while openly professing loyalty to the Germans Njoya took secrete measures to befriend the British in case the Germans were defeated. Hence in 1915 Njoya wrote to the King of England:

The Great All-Powerful king of the English, I, Njoya the king of Bamoum send my humble salutations to the Great king of the English who puts the evil men to flight and the troublesome to prison ...

There is a very small thing in my hand which I wish to offer humbly to the English king. It will be nothing in his eyes. It is the chair in which I and my fathers have always sat and which is my strength and power.

Also, the two elephant tusks which are on each side of it. There are no other such tusks in the country. The chair and tusks are as nothing to the Great king, but they are all I have.

I, Njoya, and all my headmen and all my people I agree (sic) to the English flag which hangs in my town and I give greetings three times and I give my land and all that I have to the English. Amaazee (2002: 23).

It is doubtful if Njoya fully understood what he meant by placing his country under the British but one thing is clear. He was quite aware that he could not afford to oppose any European power that was in effective control of his land. He thus readily changed sides to support the winner. To achieve this, he used the most cherished European bait, Grassfields objects. This policy worked well with the Germans and the British but woefully failed with the French (Ibid. p.24). From 1922 to the 1950s, Indirect Rule enabled the British to attain not only administrative and political goals but also ensured a steady flow of artefacts and antiquities with Native Authorities (recognized chiefs) acting as trusted agents.

The demand for African antiquities at the international market reached climax in the 1960s and 1970s with thousands of masterpieces lost to art dealers who ferried them to British, German and American museums/galleries. Today, the number of collectors that come knocking at the doors of the international art market is unrivalled by any other enterprise. Despite worldwide sensitization and dissuasive international conventions, the traffic persists. Consequently, traditional and legal sources of antiquities have progressively gone dry. Matters worsened after 1960 when UNESCO and allied institutions placed stern restrictions on the illicit acquisition, ownership and disposal of antiquities.

The rupture of Grassfields stocks also took the form of theft within museums. It was largely caused by the high prices fetched by antiquities at the international market. Ndumbi (1979:38) testifies that by 1972 theft had become a recurrent phenomenon in the Bamenda Provincial Museum (founded in 1936). Statistics and information obtained from Ndamukong its curator, revealed that in a 1973 twin clay pipes

disappeared from the museum just as a group of visitors left the facility. According to the 1975 stock-taking, 8 objects were declared missing: 2 brass bracelets, 2 glass-bead necklaces, 2 beaded statuettes and 2 other ivory statuettes. Regarding the exact dates when these incidents took place, Ndumbi (1979) asserts:

It has been difficult to ascribe definite dates to these incidents for most were discovered long after their disappearance. However, a few cases were documented. On August 13 1978, three head masks, six clay pipes (valued at 3.5 million francs CFA) were stolen from the museum. On November 11, 1978, thieves struck the museum again making away with a throne, a fly whisk and a clay pipe (valued at 3 million francs CFA). On December, 9, 1978, thieves once more came visiting, this time breaking in through a window. They took away a skin-covered masks valued at 500.000 francs CFA. At this rate one has reason to fear that we may soon talk of the Bamenda Museum in the past tense.

King Njoya's collection was transformed into a museum in 1929, the Babungo collection in 2002, Mankon and Bafut in 2003 and Oku in 2007. These palace museums equally recorded heavy losses. Inquiries into these incidents produced three revelations: first, Bamum agents won a reputation as chief middlemen in the illicit traffic in antiquities from the region; second, the USA was identified as the first destination for most art leaving the region; and finally, state services in charge of arts and culture have not only failed in their duty to prevent the theft and illicit traffic, but have in some cases, been complacent with the infamous practice (Ngitir: 2014:305-306). Objects borrowed for exhibition by the Ministry of Arts and Culture (MINAC), the National Museums or other state officials were hardly, if ever, returned to the Grassfields palaces. By the end of the 1980s and the mid-1990s, the bulk of the Grassfields artistic heritage was gone, much of it irretrievably, due largely to unfriendly colonial policies and a defective national policy.

Research Question and Objectives

Until recently only a few Grassfields kingdoms had been studied to assess the extent of loss and perhaps the surviving fraction: the Bangwa (Fontem) by Bian (1971,

1972); the Meta (Dillon: 1973); the We (Geary: 1976); the Aghem (Kopytoff: 1973); the Kom (Nkwi: 1976); the Bamum (Tardits: 1980); and the Mankon (Warnier: 1975) to mention only these. Yet according to Christraud, (1984:5), the huge shipments from Cameroon to Europe represent only the tip of the iceberg when compared to the loss suffered by adjacent Nigeria. The region's surviving collections, now progressively constituted into palace museums are the subject of the present paper whose central question is: *Are the present Babungo, Bafut, Mankon and Oku royal museums Western prototypes or the Tikar representations they were meant to be?* It examines role and impact of colonial policies, attitudes and Western paradigms on the creation and sustenance of the said museums.

In addressing the above question, the paper attains some specific objectives. It traces the origins and evolution of Bamenda Tikar palace collections and museums; examines the role and impact of Western policies and influences on these museums; explores the extent of originality and community bearing of the museums; and outlines both the challenges and future prospects of these vestiges in the light of the ongoing conservation debate. Yet, the issues raised and conclusions drawn herein have been tailored on some fundamental concepts.

Key Concepts

Art: A skill with an aesthetic result; it embraces creative disciplines such as drawing, painting, printmaking, computer, media, sculpture, architecture, crafts, theatre, literature, archives dance, the visual arts and a host of others. The notions of art and art collecting are as ancient as humanity. Art is a powerful language through which artists communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings with a special vocabulary of visual elements such as color, line, shape, form, space and texture”.

Grassfields (Bamenda Grassfields): A German designation for the vast savanna that covered the north western part of their protectorate in Kamerun. It referred to the hinterland that was characterized by high altitude and grassy nature. Today, the boundaries of the Bamenda Grassfields coincide squarely with those of the North-West Region. As an administrative unit, the Region replaced the defunct North-West Province created in 1973.

Museum (living museums): A repository for the collection, conservation, restoration, education, recreation, research, display, management, display and transmission of cultural resources, historical objects, and artefacts. It is an entertainment center, an art gallery and a tourist resort. The Tikar museums of the Bamenda Grassfields were referred to a “living museums” because some of their collections were still functional. Time and again, a mask, costume, buffalo horn or other religious objects would be taken out, activated and used in various religious rites or festivals.

Tikar/Tikari: A term formulated and popularized by the British administration with reference to “those populations of the east and central Bamenda Grassfields whose dynasties claimed an origin from the region of the Upper Mbam River and its tributaries”. Some of them described their place of origin as ‘Tikari’, some as ‘Ndobbo’, and others as ‘kimi’ or ‘Rifum’. In the Bamenda Grassfields, those who claim Tikar origin include the Nso’, Kom, Bum, Bafut, Oku, Mbiame, Wiya, Tang, War, Mbot, Mbem, and many others. They migrated from the Upper Mbam River region in waves to the Western Grassfields (14th-18th century), mostly led by princes of Rifum desirous of setting up their own dynasties.

Origins of Art and Art Collecting: Afro-Cameroonian Involvement

A study of Grassfields collections and museums inextricably calls for a revisit of the genesis of art and its collection. Art production and collecting are old practices dating back to the Old Stone Age when stone implements, hatches, adzes and chipped sticks served primeval man of the time. Ngitir (2014) alludes to archaeological digs and analysis by the likes of F.W. Migeod, M.D.W. Jeffreys, J.P. Warnier, E.M. Chilver and P.M. Kaberry who point to an ancient peopling of the Western Grassfields of Cameroon by “ancient stocks” as well as the production and use of “stone objects akin to the Upper Paleolithic”. On the origins of art collecting, two schools of thought have made their voices heard. The Western school championed by R. Gwinn (1991), V.B. Chindong (2008) and others defines art collecting as the systematic accumulation of works by private individuals or public institutions. To this school, it began with the Hittites and Assyrians and then spread to classical civilizations of

Europe and Asia – the Chinese, Indian, Sumerian, Cretan, Babylonian and Persian. It then finally spread to other continents including Africa.

The African school of thought is championed by Phyllis and P. O'meara, (1977) J. M. Essomba (1982), E. Mveng (1964, 1980), W. Bascom (1973), G. Connah (2001) and others. This school dismisses the Hittite theory and argues that art collecting started in the African Stone Age. Essomba for instance holds that art plays an important part in immortalizing the African cosmogony. His argument hinges on the premise that Africa which produced the first civilization, was definitely at the origin of art production and collection. He situates this development between 1,000,000 and 500,000 B.C. This took the form of pre-historic stone tools and symbols. Essomba states that 'the Pre-historic cave and rock paintings, engravings and decorations unearthed by archaeological excavations in Western Europe, had their genesis in Africa'. From Africa, this form of expression was then diffused to the rest of the world.

Despite the controversies surrounding African art, the likes of Mveng (1980), Essomba (1982), Notue (2006), Knofli (1998, 2002) and Koloss (2000) are unanimous that very few African or Grassfields kingdoms originated on their present sites. Rather, myth and oral tradition point to some distant ancient ancestral home, inhabited by some god-guided primeval ancestors, said to have founded their first ruling dynasties. Mythical narrations also hold that "as a result of hardships (famine, drought, warfare, frequent misfortunes and plagues), these pre-historic groups (ethnic or tribal), were forced to quit their ancestral homelands and to migrate, sometimes dispersing in different directions". Sometimes they encountered worse situations in strange lands, until they finally settled at some peaceful, fertile and prosperous site 'ordained by the gods'.

In most cases, they settled down at new sites already split into smaller tribal groups. Such myth-surrounded ancestral origins have been recounted for almost every Bamenda Grassfields group. The Tikars for instance include the Bamum, Nso, Mbam, Babungo, Bafut, Bali, Kom, Oku, Babessi, Bamessing, Babanki and so forth who claim to have originated from the Upper Mbam region of the Adamawa in North Cameroon (Nkwi 1982:3-15). From their ancestral homeland, these groups learnt,

inherited and carried along ethics of traditional administration, local customs, kinship values, ritual ceremonies, enthronement, atonement and other sacred proceedings, local menus, land tenure systems, and not least important, the arts (especially iron metallurgy, statues, royal insignia and others).

Transformation of Collections into Museums

The concept of museums though born in Europe underwent tremendous evolution over time. It meant different things to different people at different times. Gwinn (1992) states that in ancient Greece museums (*muses*) were ancestral seats of worship located on the slopes of Mounts Olympus, Helicon and Parnassus. The Greek *Pinakotheke* was thus “a collection of paintings in honour of Greek gods (Ibidem). In Medieval Europe collections and early museums were championed by monasteries and the church and took the form of treasures of kings, princes and the clergy. In 15th century Italy museums were collections of Roman antiques displayed in the *galleria* and *hallways* for viewing and purchase. Terms like *cabinets* and *studiolo* were used to designate small square rooms where curiosities and treasures were preserved (Gwinn and Grolier, 1992). In 18th century Europe, the term “museum” described collections of curiosities. Similarly, the current budding concept of *African museography* has come a long way. Yet what Europeans, Americans and much of the world calls art today had a different perception in Africa not long ago.

In Africa, there was nothing as art but religious and socio-cultural objects meant for religious rites and related functions, not exhibition, not tourism, not research (Ngitir 2014:93-94). These collections like the Tikar collections of the Bamenda Grassfields were marked by restrictions and limitations. Access was only granted to a few initiates and royal dignitaries. However, with time (2000-2007) they were transformed into museums. The Babungo royal collection (the work of 25 sculptor kings) was transformed by Fon Ndofoa Zofoa III into a modern museum in 2002. The Bafut and Mankon collections were transformed into museums in 2003 by their respective Fons, Abumbi II and Angawfor II. The Oku palace museum was transformed into a modern museum by Fon Sintieh II in 2007. The Bali-Nyonga, Kom and Nso palace collections are yet to undergo this transformation (Ngitir, 2014).

The reasons for this transformation were diverse. They ranged from the pressure of educated elite and Western educated kings to a widespread desire to valorize and transmit Tikar cultural values. As the theft from palace chambers reached alarming proportions, palace authorities also saw the newfound museum formula of inventories an appropriate means of securing their collections from vicious guards and retainers (Ngitir:2014:287-288).

The transformations were also motivated, in part, by the desire of many Grassfields Fons to forestall the domineering influence of metropolitan museums. Township museums, most of them art galleries, had acquired many of their artefacts directly or indirectly from corrupt and poverty-stricken palace guards and artists. Provincial and national museums thus eclipsed palace museums which were their 'suppliers' (Ibid: 285-286). The need to bring palace collections to the touristic limelight thus necessitated their demystification and later transformation. The need to promote scholarship and disseminate vital information was also behind the setting up of royal museums and the transformation of Grassfields collections. After existing for many years as 'closed' domains, Grassfields palaces came to realize that museums were vital tools for education and information both for researchers and the general public. These restrictions hampered research, the dissemination of information and public education. However, the new dispensation offered by the new breed of learned Grassfields rulers as well as pressure from historians, sociologists, anthropologists, archaeologists and tourists led to the establishment of royal museums.

The introduction of taxation, the exigencies of the market economy and the high cost of running their large families also pushed some Fons to consider transforming their collections into sources of income. This must however, be understood against the background that Fons were the biggest polygamists (some had dozens of wives and hundreds of children) and consequently owners of the biggest coffee farms (lone cash crop) in their respective Fondoms (Ngitir, 2014:286-287). With the economic crisis of the early 1980s and the slump in the coffee economy, the Fons badly needed alternative sources of income. Ancient sources like hunting expeditions, slave raids and war booty were obsolete. Some Fons were so desperately poor that they joined their courtiers in the business of theft and the illicit traffic in antiquities.

The transformation of palace collections into museums was thus intended to make up for lost sources of revenue. Contemporary considerations like tourism, research and leisure must thus be understood against this economic backdrop.

The transformation of Grassfields royal collections into museums could also be attributed to the role of some stakeholders: ex-colonial masters, international partners and foreign donors. Though the motive for the German patronage of the Bafut museum rehabilitation project probably had the usual colonial undertones, its contribution to the sustenance of the facility was and has remained immense. It ranged from the construction (in 1940) of the royal guest house that was later transformed into a museum in 2003 to regular renovation of palace structures. More recently, the German embassy also carried out an internal restructuring and refurbishing of the museum's permanent exhibition. The Babungo, Bafut and Mankon royal museums also received financial impulse from the Italian non-governmental organization *Centro Orientamento Educativo* (COE) (Ngitir, 205-206). The Government of the Netherlands has also been very instrumental in fostering the Babungo museum project. Cameroon's ministry in charge of arts and culture has also, and at various times, made useful, though comparatively insignificant, financial grants towards the sustenance of some palace museums. UNESCO though little known and exploited by museums of the region has also been of assistance to some community museums.

The Colonial Legacy: Policies and Practices

The Western colonial impact on Cameroon's artistic heritage and the museum culture centers on seven main articulations. These include a change of connotation from sacred religious objects to Western aesthetic art; a structural transformation of royal treasures and collections into modern repositories; a change from indigenous to Western techniques of conservation; change from legitimate to largely illegitimate modes of acquisition; and a change from religious and socio-cultural functions to Western functions.

Regarding the change of connotation it must be stressed that the African objects we now refer to as art were not originally destined to be displayed in homes or museums

for aesthetic contemplation as is the case with modern European paintings, drawings and pottery. They were largely religious, ritual and closely associated with royalty. While the meaning of 'art' as a practice and skill is empirical, its notion as a concept is alien to Africa for, the primary motive behind the production and use of traditional objects in Africa was and has largely remained religion (Ngitir, 2014:79-80). It must thus be borne in mind that "art" is a Western rather than an African concept. While the West (Europe and America) perceived art as an essentially decorative and aesthetic phenomenon, Africans in general and Tikars in particular saw their objects as religious necessities, meant for ancestral practices and fundamentally for religious rites. The advent of museums (another Western imposition) into Africa thus marked a turning point.

The transfer of objects from palace chambers, secret lodges and treasures into museums marked a change of fundamental significance. It not only exposed sacred objects to the public but marked the beginning of a devaluation and *commoditization* of African objects. Today, sacred African objects are publicly desecrated either in transit or on exhibition stands in overseas museums. Unlike in the past, non-initiates, women and even children view and sometimes manipulate hitherto venerated objects (Knopfli, 1998, 2002). To ward off these abominations, the North-West Fons' Union (NOWEFU) recently resolved that local community museums be set up in palaces whose Fons as custodians of the heritage would appropriately cater for them. Their wish has been that objects that hinge on the cultural and religious integrity of the people be given due respect.

The colonial presence in the Bamenda Grassfields was also responsible for the transformation of sacred royal treasures into museums. At policy level after 1960, these museums were classified into public and private. In French Cameroon, the establishment of museums started in the 1920s with the transformation of the Fumban royal collection into a museum. However, the practice only gained official expression in 1944 (K. Mbayu 1994:35) when a French colonial order created a public museum in the then *Centre Camerounais de l'Institut Francaisd'Afrique Noire* (IFAN), a French research institute based in Dakar, with a satellite research center in Douala.

In the British sector, Dr. M.D.W. Jeffreyes, the British colonial administrator for the then Bamenda Province, began collecting ethnological and geological specimens that eventually constituted the Bamenda Provincial Museum in 1936. His target from every indication was to set up a collection and transit point to facilitate onward shipments to Britain, not a conservation center. This was evident from the fact that no indigenes were trained as professional conservators throughout the colonial period. In addition, the numerous disappearances of objects from the museum during that period were ascribed to British agents. Consequently, the timid conservation techniques introduced in the Bamenda Museum were viewed more or less stop-gap measures intended to stabilize the objects by providing some “first aid” and preventive treatment in readiness for shipment. This museum however became another ‘black market’ where objects were regularly reported missing.

At the private level, the bulk of collections and artistic treasures were found in palaces. The African museum boom of the 20th and 21st centuries probably took colonial influence over culture to its peak. The real colonial impact at local level began with the change of connotation of art. Grassfields religious objects began to be looked upon as decorative and aesthetic items. Items reserved for religious rites became objects of aesthetic attraction for public clientele. Items hitherto seen only by initiates were now displayed for public viewing at galleries and museums. Of course, such aberrations shocked startled traditional authorities and local communities beyond imagination the reality was that things would never be the same again. Objects initially meant for religious rites were now made to perform purely Western functions: aesthetic decoration, research, tourism and more.

The Anglo-German presence in the Bamenda Grassfields also led to a change from traditional to western techniques of art conservation. Hitherto, palace objects were preserved in secret lodges and conserved using crude methods. As collections suffered huge losses due to natural and human factors of deterioration, indigenous techniques such as the use of wild fruit pastes, tree saps and camwood. With Western influence, the collections were not only moved to more spacious exhibition halls but more was done to improve storage, regular inspection, lighting and the use

of insecticides and fungicides. Other Western innovations included the use of humidifying machines to regulate low relative humidity; suction machines to dehydrate rooms with high relative humidity; air-conditioning, ventilation ducts and fans to improved air circulation; petroleum bases with coal-tar or creosote for the preservation of wooden objects; oil-based preservatives containing wax or other water-repelling substances to protect objects against water; polythene, glycol and alcohol for the conservation of wood and bamboo items; and chemicals like carbonyl and xylamon for objects already infested with insects (Ngitir 2014:276-281). Though some of these logistics, chemicals and techniques required adaptation to tropical wood species, some of the innovations had come to stay.

The advent of German and later British colonial influences also symbolized a change from legitimate to largely illegitimate modes of acquisition. With the arrival of early Christian missionaries, explorers and traders a systematic shipment of antiquities from Africa to Europe and later to America began. Though many of the said objects were obtained through legitimate means (gifts and donations from some traditional authorities and art producers), the bulk was extorted. With time explorers and traders were joined by administrative officials charged with penetrating the hinterlands and subjugating inland kingdoms.

The result was the ransacking and looting of entire Grassfields palaces. Here and there, tribal groups were pitched against each other, resulting in endless feuds, frequent raids, vandalism and looting. Whatever the pretext used, and whoever emerged victorious, the final victors were German collectors who saw their stocks increased and their orders met. In the 1890s, Dr. Zintgraff took off from Bali and visited many Grassfields palaces in a series of exploratory campaigns. Like Gustav Conrau in Bangwa country, Zintgraff frequently travelled home with several masterpieces, some of them gifts. However, many German officers involved in the subjugation campaign ransacked Grassfields palaces, emptying them of masterpieces and other valuables.

Ankermann (1910), as quoted by G. Christraud (1984:25), writes:

Early German colonial records made allusion to an exotic traditional African art with the Grassfields featuring prominently in West and Central Africa. As soon as the Germans arrived [in] the region around 1900, they began to ship out to Europe masks, statues and other objects. In 1910 Ankermann remarked that German museums were flooded by “an apparently inexhaustible stream of new things from over there ... These objects were representative of a rich culture marked by great originality: wooden sculptures, ceramics, sacred objects, beaded art and so on. While German museums were getting saturated with these antiquities, our knowledge of those artifacts remained limited”

In Kom the story of German plunder and theft was alarming. Tamara Northern (1973:11-29) reports that close contact between the Germans and the Kom started in 1902 when Von Pavel, then commander of the *Deutsche Scultztruppen* set foot in the kingdom. A male figure representing *Foyn Yuh* (1865-1912), the Kom king who submitted to German rule was immediately shipped to the *Museum fur Volkerkunde*, Frankfurt (Frankfurt Museum of World Cultures) in 1902. To Tamara (1973), the famous Kom throne figures were the most targeted. Usually, they were produced in pairs, male and female. As sculptures “they consisted of two formally distinct elements: a throne or stool, joined to a male or female figure”. The dimensions of the stool were ‘functionally adapted for sitting while the life-size figures formed the vertical back’. Two of such pairs were smuggled off to German museums in 1904, together with the male figure of another pair. The female later found its way into Katherine White Reswick’s “Cameroon Collection” in Los Angeles in the 1960s (Ibidem)

Tamara Northern (1973: 11-29) affirms that these objects were “stolen from Kom by a German, R. Rhode who also took along two clay and brass royal pipes from Kom; a mask and male figure from Bali-Nyonga; a mask and stool from Babanki” etc. In 1906, this collection together with other treasures from Cameroon and Nigeria were exhibited in the “Cameroon Gallery” of the Frankfurt museum. Another pair of throne

figures was collected in 1905 by Captain Putlitz and channelled to the Berlin Museum *Volkerkunde*. In the same year, a detached male figure (the female declared missing) was looted from the Kom palace. It later found its way into the Furman Gallery, New York. The 'Linden-Museum, Stuttgart also contains two masks said to have been collected from Kom in 1903 and 1905 respectively.'

The story of the lost heritage of the Grassfields would be incomplete without mentioning the much publicized theft in 1966 of *Afo-A-kom* and its restitution later in 1973. This throne figure was central in a special pair of three or four throne statues representing the producer (FoyN Yuh), his mother and his wife respectively. Originally known as "*Mbang* (meaning the male sexual organ and representing fertility), this throne figure was renamed *Afo-A-Kom* (meaning a "Kom thing") only after its theft and discovery in the US" (Ngumi 2006: 61). This statue which was smuggled out of the loosely guarded *Ifim* sacred sanctuary in Laikom during the reign of FoyN Nsom Ngwe was said to have overwhelming mystical powers. Its disappearance from *Ifim* was said to have been "masterminded by a prince who doubled as palace retainer (*nchiNto*) named Henry YuhNdi. He acted on the financial intuition of James Yibain, another prince and nephew of Fon Nsom". The latter was equally said to have acted on the financial impulsion of one Bamum man, Ibrahim. The latter, a seasoned dealer in Grassfields antiquities, reportedly promised a down payment of \$10 if the theft succeeded.

According to Ngumi (2006), Yibain's earlier attempts to go through Pa Ngam Njam (another retainer) had been rejected on the ground that *Mbang* was "the heart of Kom". Hence, such an act was tantamount to an abomination. Yet the theft and sale of *mbang* could be attributed to poverty among palace retainers and the introduction in 1909 of the modern taxation system in Kom. Caught in this doubly frustrating web of hardship, Ngumi further states that most retainers who used to serve *kwifoyN* and guard the palace left for greener pastures in the coastal plantations.

In the meantime, the New York art dealer, Aaron Furman, a specialist in primitive African art who allegedly bought the statue for about \$60,000, said "theft was not involved in his acquisition of *Afo-A-kom*". He claimed to have bought it from an

impeccable go-between “outside Africa who told him that it was offered for sale by a king”. Christraud (1983:12) adds:

Some pieces were probably never seen by outsiders whereas other objects, whose existence and storage location were well known, have long tempted art dealers, Africans as well as Europeans to get them on the international market via shady channels. The example of *Afo-A-kom*, a royal figure from Kom, is well remembered. It was one of the few pieces ever to be returned to the Grassfields after having been illegally taken out of the country. Other objects such as famous masks that disappeared from the treasure house of the fon of Bafut, remain missing. These sad developments have recently led many chiefs to prohibit visitors from seeing the pieces in their treasure houses, even though outsiders had been admitted for many years previous.

This emphasis on the theft of *Afo-A-kom* is indeed intended to unveil the setting, networking and motivations that often surrounded other deals and thefts in the region. In view of the acute problem of lost heritage, local, national and international instruments have been put in place to halt the trend. At national and international levels, the application of ICOM and UNESCO conventions has been the main strategy to check theft and illicit traffic in antiquities.

The Nso palace was also a victim of several cases of theft in the 1960s. Sheey Wo Bamfem and Sheey Mfoka, two Kumbo-based art producers revealed that countless masks, statues, ritual calabashes and other sacred objects were lost through greed, poverty and palace fires. “They were stolen by princes, retainers, members of customary and regulatory societies” and sold to European or American dealers. Pa Fidelis Mbungai of Shisong (kumbo) who took part in a 1967 inventory of stolen objects ordered by Fon NgahBifon II, listed the following items as declared missing that year: sacred calabashes (*bomsé-fon*, *sho’si*, *ngiivsi*, *vighaa*), clay pots and other royal paraphernalia. Being an artist himself (specialized in the production of ritual calabashes), “Pa Mbungai was commissioned by the Fon to replace the stolen items with new copies in 1979”.

The Bafut ancestral god and goddess (*Forti and Mamforti*) were also reported missing during the Colonial period. In Mankon it was two *komngang* masks that disappeared from the palace treasure (Ngitir 2014: 276-277). In fact the story of Grassfields lost heritage is endless and perhaps suitable for a thesis. The number of objects stolen, looted, lost to palace fires or subject to illicit traffic is inestimable. Bernard Ayuk, former Director of National Patrimony (12/07/09) recalls his visit to Portland Oregon (USA) in the 1980s which brought him face to face with huge stocks of Grassfields art. Most of them were gifts offered to Rev. Gebauer by Grassfields Fons after his long missionary work in the region. Being a long time friend of Gebauer, Ayuk concluded as follows: "I was happy that the objects were well preserved in the US; they had all the chemicals, technology and logistics required for proper art conservation; those facilities are absent in Cameroon". He also confirmed having visited many American art galleries including the famous Smithsonian Institute where he realized that the best of Cameroonian and African art, though largely illegal collections, was well preserved abroad.

Finally, colonial presence in the Grassfields marked a change from religious and socio-cultural to Western functions of art. The forms and especially the functions of African art were markedly different from Western art which was essentially aesthetic and decorative. From the Renaissance to the 19th century, European emphasis shifted to painting, sculpture, secular buildings and other arts which essentially served the secular world.

African art on the other hand was essentially religious. Certain objects were and still remain indispensable in religious rites, customary ceremonies, the administration of justice, the display of wealth and social prestige. Others were used to reward exceptional bravery, to celebrate victory in war, as diplomatic gifts, as royal emblems and as gadgets of royal protocol. It is this use of artistic objects for non-artistic purposes (religious, secular) that distinguishes traditional African art from European art. The functions of African and Grassfields art are as many and varied as their motivations, forms, settings, values and the motifs attached to them by their ultimate owners and users.

Challenges and Perspectives

The challenges of Grassfields Tikar collections and museums have been enormous and include financial and material constraints; the lack of dating, identification and classification facilities; theft, plunder and illicit traffic in cultural objects; Western obstinacy towards the restitution of illegally acquired art; the weaknesses of government policy; natural and human factors of deterioration; poor techniques of preservation, conservation and restoration; poor managerial of museums; the decline of the traditional industries; poverty, ignorance and the flaws in international legislation.

Against the background of the above challenges, the present study suggests a future for Cameroonian museums within the framework of some recommendations. First, there is absolute need for a National Antiquities Commission to coordinate the establishment and computerized management of museum inventories and their computerized inventories. Secondly, Grassfields museums need to be empowered through financial autonomy over their collections and programs. Thirdly, the enactment/elaboration of any new legislation on the prevention of illegal exports of antiquities should include Africans who are the greatest victims of such transactions. Fourthly, reparation should be paid to victimized communities and their antiquities restituted. Finally, African rather than Western visual benchmarks should be used in the chronology and dating of African and Grassfields historical events.

Findings

The present study of the Anglo-German colonial impact on Bamenda Grassfields collections and museums provides a unique scientific opportunity to address practical problems. A review of the independent and dependent variable in consonance with our research questions enabled us to meet the set objectives. A blend of qualitative data and oral tradition, analysed on thematic-cum-content basis reveals the following findings:

1. The present Grassfields museums of Babungo, Bafut, Mankon and Oku are hybrids resulting from a metamorphosis of western inventions, perceptions and paradigms on the one hand with indigenous customary practices on the other;
2. The collections that produced these museums originated from ancestral sites of Rifum, Ndobbo and Kimmi in the Upper Mbam Valley in North Cameroon. They were “living museums” in the sense that time and again, objects were taken out, “activated” and used in religious rites, then deactivated and returned to the treasures and museums;
3. The transformation of palace collections into western-style museums has been a mixed blessing for Grassfields communities. In the process of valorizing Grassfields culture they transformed African religious objects into Western aesthetic art. Today at home and overseas these hitherto venerated objects are desecrated, devalued, commoditized and in most cases rendered functionless;
4. Grassfields art collections and museums have lost the bulk of their ancestral originality having been tremendously tainted by Western and other external influences, perceptions and paradigms;
5. The challenges bugging down Grassfields collections and museums are dominated by financial and material constraints, incompetent personnel, looting, theft and illicit traffic. These have emptied the region of millions of its masterpieces;
6. Though the doors of the conservation debate remain open, our position is that Africa’s sacred objects found in Western museums and galleries be returned to the rightful African owners.

Conclusions

Perhaps the best way to conclude this paper is to provide answers to the burning questions posed by the conservation debate. The questions are: *What can be done in the face of the heavy deterioration, theft and loss of African art by human and natural factors? Is conservation principally a matter of providing appropriate storage facilities? What does it take to conserve an African art object? If our lost antiquities were restituted, where would they be preserved?*

On these issues, the African and Western schools of thought remain diametrically opposed. While the West argues that it is better to allow the stolen art in the host countries of Europe and America as long as they are well preserved and conserved under ideal conventional standards, the Africanist school shouts a categorical “No”. We cannot talk of conservation out of an object’s functional context. An object taken out of its natural environment is no longer put to use in various rituals and consequently deteriorates both in physical value and significance. More so, the reverence given to it in its home country can never be found on exhibition grounds where they are systematically desecrated, commoditized and manipulated -- in contrast to traditional practices -- by women and non-initiates. These to the Africanist school *are the worst form of deterioration and devaluation. That is why Africanists talk of the “Devaluation and Rape of African Art”.* (Emphasis added)

We vividly recall that after the restitution of Afo-A-kom in 1973, the accompanying fanfare and euphoria were soon transformed into doubts and new questions loomed in the air: “what next?”, “will the Fon of Kom accept Ahidjo’s proposal to leave *Afo-A-kom* in the National Museum in Yaounde?” and so on. Skeptics began to question the *raison d’etre* of the fanfare when the statue had been moved “from a three-star hotel in New York to a thatch” far off in Laikom. We pay homage to Foyin Nsom Ngwe of Kom who took *Afo-A-kom* back home. It is our desire that the comfortable conservation facilities that host African antiquities *overseas together with the collections be relocated to Africa, their heritage home.*

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L'Apport du Commonwealth dans le Renforcement de la Démocratie et le Respect des Droits de l'Homme au Cameroun

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Résumé

Les relations entre le Cameroun et le Commonwealth of Nations sont fortement influencées par le passé colonial et davantage le processus qui a consacré le rattachement définitif du Cameroun Anglophone représenté par la partie du territoire désignée Cameroun Occidental dans l'entité étatique camerounaise. C'est le 16 Octobre 1995 au sommet Auckland en Nouvelle-Zélande que le Cameroun devient membre de l'organisation. Depuis lors, le Cameroun bénéficie des fruits d'une coopération multiforme avec cette organisation. L'un des domaines où le Commonwealth of Nations apporte particulièrement son soutien au Cameroun, est celui du respect de la démocratie, gage de paix ainsi que le respect des droits humain. Cette assistance, va en droite ligne avec l'un des objectifs fondamentaux de l'organisation à savoir : la promotion de la démocratie, des droits de l'homme, tout en mettant le cap sur l'établissement des relations économiques dépouillées de toutes entraves entre les pays membres et susceptibles d'accélérer le progrès social. Si le Cameroun est de tout cœur avec le « club des gentlemen », reste toutefois à souligner que dans le cadre du respect des droits humains, le Cameroun ne voit pas d'un bon œil, le soutien de l'organisation aux homo- sexuels du Cameroun, compte tenu de la législation camerounaise et de la société encore trop réfractaires à de telles tendances. Comment le Commonwealth of Nations promeut-il la démocratie et le respect des droits de l'homme au Cameroun ? Tel est le principal défi de cette communication.

Mots-clés: *Commonwealth, démocratie, droit de l'homme, Cameroun*

Abstract

The relationship that exists between Cameroon and the Commonwealth of Nations is under much influence by colonial history and even more due to the process which lead to the definite joining of southern Cameroon, represented by part of its territory called western Cameroon, in its entire state control. It's on October 16, 1995 at the Auckland summit in New Zealand that Cameroon became member of this organization. Since then, Cameroon has benefits of all sorts from her co-operation with this organization. One of the areas where the Commonwealth of Nations particularly grants help to Cameroon is the respect of her democracy, respect of human rights and a peace guarantee. This assistance is in direct link with one of the fundamental objectives of the organization; namely, the promotion of democracy, human rights, and in all the strengthening and fixing of all economic hindrances existing between membership countries and susceptibility to social growth. If Cameroon is whole heartedly with the "club of gentlemen", however, it is to be noted

that with respect of human rights, Cameroon doesn't see from a bright angle why she should assist the organization in Cameroonian homosexuals, given the respect of the Cameroonian legislation and the teenage societal myth linked to such practices. How does the Commonwealth of Nation do to promote democracy and the respect of human rights in Cameroon? Here is the main challenge of this communication.

Keywords: Commonwealth of Nations, democracy, human rights, peace, development

Introduction

De l'anglais *Commonwealth*, constitué de *wealth*, bien-être, richesse, abondance, et common, commun. Le "Commonwealth of Nations" est une libre association qui regroupe une cinquantaine de pays comprenant la Grande Bretagne et certaines de ses anciennes colonies.¹ Le "British Commonwealth of Nations" a été défini à la conférence impériale de 1926 puis officialisé en 1931 par le statut de Westminster. Successeur de l'Empire Britannique, le Commonwealth est constitué comme une association de pays libres et égaux.² Le Canada, puis l'Australie, la Nouvelle-Zélande et l'Afrique du Sud ont été les premiers pays à en faire partie, rejoints en 1947 par l'Inde après son indépendance. A partir de 1950 l'allégeance à la Couronne britannique ne fut plus une condition d'appartenance au Commonwealth et le mot "British" fut supprimé³. Le Commonwealth défend des valeurs communes à tous ses membres telles que l'égalité, la non-discrimination, la démocratie et la primauté du droit. Depuis 1991 (Déclaration de Harare) il reconnaît une importance particulière aux droits de la personne, à l'éthique démocratique, à l'égalité des sexes, au développement durable et à la protection de l'environnement⁴. Auplat,(2003) Le Cameroun qui adhère à l'organisation officiellement en 1995, est un grand bénéficiaire de l'action du Commonwealth tout particulièrement dans le domaine du respect des droits de l'homme et de la démocratie.

¹ Voir, <http://www.toupie.org/Dictionnaire/Commonwealth.htm>, consulté le 17-02-17.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

1. Les principes cardinaux du Commonwealth en matière de démocratie et de respect des droits humains

1.1 L'idéal démocratique au sein du Commonwealth

Le Commonwealth fait la promotion d'une série de valeurs communes à ses membres telles que l'égalité, la non-discrimination, la démocratie et la primauté du droit.⁵ La déclaration de Harare de 1991 a reconnu l'importance particulière qu'il accorde aux droits de la personne, à l'éthique démocratique, à l'égalité des hommes, au développement durable et à la protection de l'environnement.⁶ Au cours du temps, il s'est spécialisé dans certains domaines, ce qui lui a permis d'aider directement ses membres à faire face à des problèmes communs ou particuliers. En effet, ceux-ci bénéficient de l'appui d'un vaste réseau d'organismes privés, bénévoles et professionnels, comprenant entre autres des associations juridiques, médicales, d'universités et de parlementaires, des professionnels et des organisations médiatiques et sportives. Partageant une langue de travail commune et des systèmes juridiques, d'administration publiques et d'éducation semblables, le Commonwealth s'est érigé sur un passé commun pour devenir une association dynamique d'États en harmonie avec le monde moderne. Les objectifs du Commonwealth ont été rédigés pour la première fois en 1971 selon la déclaration de Singapour⁷ Moore, (1988) durant laquelle, le Commonwealth avait arrêté les objectifs suivants :

- La paix globale
- La promotion de la démocratie dans les pays membres et la liberté individuelle.
- La poursuite de l'égalité et l'opposition au racisme.
- La lutte contre la pauvreté, l'ignorance et la maladie.
- Le commerce libre.⁸

Tous ces objectifs ont été renforcés par la déclaration d'Harare (1991). Les plus grandes priorités du Commonwealth à l'heure actuelle sont la promotion de la démocratie et le développement, comme le prévoit la déclaration d'Abuja qui englobe la déclaration de Singapour et celle d'Harare.⁹ Cela étant dit, les domaines de concentration du Commonwealth sont résumés comme les suivants : la démocratie, l'économie, l'éducation, la bonne gouvernance, les droits de l'homme, la loi, le sport et la jeunesse. D'après le rapport du Secrétaire Général du Commonwealth daté de 1993, depuis sa création, et à cause du système multipartisme dans les pays

⁵ Voir, <http://www.commonwealth.org>, consulté le 17-02-2017.

⁶ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Voir, <http://blog.wikimemoires.com/2013/08/les-realizations-et-les-54-pays-membres-du-commonwealth/>. Consulté, le 17-02-2017

membres, le Commonwealth a envoyé des observateurs à des élections organisées par certains pays tels que la Zambie (octobre 1991), la Guyane (octobre 1992), le Ghana (novembre 1992) etc. Tous ces engagements ont pour but de maintenir la paix et la démocratie dans les pays membres.

1.2 La défense des droits de l'homme vue par le Commonwealth

Pour le Commonwealth, les droits de l'homme sont les droits inaliénables de tous les êtres humains, quels que soient leur nationalité, lieu de résidence, sexe, origine ethnique ou nationale, couleur, religion, langue ou toute autre condition.¹⁰ Nous avons tous le droit d'exercer nos droits de l'homme sans discrimination et sur un pied d'égalité. Ces droits sont intimement liés, interdépendants et indivisibles¹¹. Les droits de l'homme universels sont souvent reflétés et garantis par la loi, sous forme de traités, de droit coutumier international, de principes généraux et autres sources de droit international.

En accord avec les principes internationaux, le club des gentlemen, admet que tous les droits de l'homme sont indivisibles, qu'ils soient civils ou politiques, notamment le droit à la vie, l'égalité devant la loi et la liberté d'expression ; les droits économiques, sociaux et culturels, comme le droit au travail, à la sécurité sociale et à l'éducation ; ou les droits collectifs, comme le droit au développement et à l'autodétermination, sont indivisibles, liés et interdépendants.¹² Grimal,(1999) L'amélioration d'un droit facilite le progrès des autres. De la même manière, la privation d'un droit à un effet négatif sur les autres¹³. La non-discrimination est un principe universel dans la législation internationale des droits de l'homme. Le principe existe dans tous les grands traités sur les droits de l'homme et sert de thème central pour certaines conventions internationales comme la Convention internationale sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination raciale et la Convention sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination à l'égard des femmes.

Le Commonwealth insiste aussi sur le principe de la non-discrimination en matière de droits de l'homme et de libertés qui s'applique à toutes les personnes et interdit toute

¹⁰ Voir, <http://www.ohchr.org/FR/Issues/Pages/WhatareHumanRights.aspx> consulté le 17-02-2017.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

discrimination basée sur une liste non exhaustive et comprenant le sexe, la race, la couleur, etc.¹⁴ Miller, (1965). Ce principe s'accompagne du principe de l'égalité, qui figure dans l'Article premier de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme : "Tous les êtres humains naissent libre et égaux en dignité et en droits". Pour le Commonwealth, respecter les droits de l'homme signifie que les Etats évitent d'intervenir ou d'entraver l'exercice des droits de l'homme. Protéger signifie que les Etats doivent protéger les individus et les groupes contre les violations des droits de l'homme. Instaurer signifie que les Etats doivent prendre des mesures positives pour faciliter l'exercice des droits fondamentaux de l'homme.

2. Le Commonwealth dans le processus démocratique et la défense des droits de l'homme au Cameroun

Depuis plusieurs décennies, le Commonwealth s'investit pleinement dans la construction démocratique du Cameroun. Cette contribution s'est vérifiée lors de la procédure d'adhésion du Cameroun dans l'organisation, mais aussi, dans la délicate question du respect des droits de l'homme.

2.1 Une adhésion au Commonwealth, conditionnée par l'arrimage aux normes démocratiques

Dans les années 1960, quatre critères implicites fondent l'accession au Commonwealth : l'État candidat doit avoir des liens historiques avec un des pays membres; il doit accepter l'anglais comme langue de travail de l'association; il doit reconnaître le souverain britannique comme chef du Commonwealth; enfin, il doit contribuer, si peu soit-il, à la pratique de coopération au sein de l'organisation.¹⁵ Wheare, (1960). L'admission d'un candidat est décidée par consensus de l'ensemble des pays membres.¹⁶ Pays bilingue dont une partie a été administrée par les Britanniques pendant quarante ans, la République du Cameroun correspondait aux deux premiers critères et pouvait accepter de se conformer aux deux autres. Contrairement au processus d'adhésion du Cameroun à la Francophonie qui, bien que tardive, fut largement compensée par sa participation en qualité de membre

¹⁶ Ibid.

associé, le Cameroun anglophone, pour sa part, a dû sortir du Commonwealth of Nations au moment de sa réunification avec le Cameroun francophone. Davantage, le fonctionnement du Commonwealth n'offrait aucune possibilité d'y bénéficier d'un statut d'un statut de membre associé comme dans le cadre de la Francophonie, de même que les principes qui la guide ont rendu particulièrement laborieuse l'admission du Cameroun en son sein.

Il semble que deux itinéraires parallèles expliquent, en partie du moins, le délai imposé au Cameroun avant l'intégration au Commonwealth. D'un côté, le Commonwealth opère une réflexion identitaire approfondie et se tourne de plus en plus vers la promotion de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme. De l'autre, le Cameroun connaît une transition démocratique difficile. Après la Déclaration de Singapour de 1971, qui prône le respect de ces principes dans tous les pays du Commonwealth, les membres du Commonwealth ordonnent, lors du sommet de Kuala Lumpur en 1989, qu'un rapport sur l'identité et les objectifs du Commonwealth soit présenté au sommet d'Harare de 1991.¹⁷ Auplat (2003) Les chefs d'État et de gouvernement du Commonwealth y adoptent la Déclaration d'Harare, qui consacre démocratie et droits de l'homme comme principes directeurs du Commonwealth : désormais, tout pays candidat devra s'engager formellement sur des pratiques démocratiques et le respect des droits de l'homme avant d'être accueilli au sein de l'organisation.¹⁸

Une fois encore, l'admission du Cameroun est différée. Selon le gouvernement camerounais, ce contretemps résulte d'un nouveau problème de forme : la Déclaration d'Harare doit être ratifiée par l'Assemblée nationale que les Camerounais doivent élire en 1992, au cours des premières élections multipartites depuis la création du parti unique, UNC en 1966.¹⁹ Torrent, (2005 : 95) Ne pas s'engager sans le consentement des représentants du peuple est de fait un gage de respect démocratique. Néanmoins, l'adoption de la Déclaration d'Harare intervient à une époque où le caractère véritablement démocratique du Cameroun est mis en cause. Certes, le Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais de Paul Biya a

¹⁸ Ibid.

remplacé l'Union nationale camerounaise d'Ahmadou Ahidjo en 1985, et une première démocratisation a été effectuée au sein du parti unique. Toutefois, la transition démocratique a lieu dans la violence.²⁰ Lorsqu'en mai 1990, l'anglophone John Fru Ndi fonde le *Social Democratic Front* (SDF) qui va rapidement devenir le principal parti d'opposition, des manifestations sont réprimées, des opposants emprisonnés. Si le gouvernement officialise l'évolution démocratique avec les lois de libéralisation de décembre 1990, consacrant le multipartisme et la liberté de la presse, les heurts se poursuivent. Devant le refus du gouvernement d'organiser une conférence nationale souveraine, l'opposition organise l'opération « Villes Mortes » de mars 1991, paralysant le pays, et boycotte la fête nationale.²¹ Ahmadou, (2012) Le Premier ministre engage des discussions sur une réforme constitutionnelle pratiquement en même temps que s'ouvrent les sommets de la Francophonie et du Commonwealth. Mais il demeure que lors du sommet d'Harare, les « Villes Mortes » sont toujours en vigueur, et l'opposition accuse le gouvernement camerounais de violer la démocratie et les droits de l'homme.

Trois missions du Commonwealth se succèdent au Cameroun. Son secrétaire général, le chef Emeka Anyaoku, s'y rend en juin 1993. Si l'on en croit la presse anglophone, la visite est particulièrement importante, car l'aura internationale du diplomate africain renvoie aux Camerounais une image valorisante de ce que le Commonwealth peut leur apporter. Par ailleurs, la presse anglophone, y compris d'opposition, souligne l'enthousiasme que ressent la majorité de la communauté anglophone à l'idée de rejoindre un groupe dont elle partage de nombreux héritages et idéaux.²² Torrent,(2005 :113) Le chef Anyaoku espère que le Cameroun va progresser sur la voie de la démocratie. L'admission du Cameroun, conditionnelle, future, est alors annoncée au sommet de Limassol (Chypre), en octobre 1993.²³ En février et juillet 1995, deux autres missions du Secrétariat du Commonwealth se rendent au Cameroun, afin d'observer l'évolution de la démocratie, des droits de l'homme, et la situation des anglophones.²⁴

²⁰ Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

En réalité, la question de l'admission du Cameroun oppose deux représentations de la mise en place de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme. Faut-il exiger du Cameroun un système presque parfait avant de l'admettre au sein du Commonwealth ? Ou faut-il l'accueillir avec un système imparfait qu'il sera plus facile de faire évoluer une fois que le Cameroun aura intégré l'organisation ? En d'autres termes, l'admission de 1995 est-elle une opportunité manquée ou un pari sensé ? La décision d'accorder au Cameroun le statut de membre, le 16 octobre 1995 à Auckland en Nouvelle-Zélande, semble résulter d'un compromis entre les tenants des deux points de vue. Ainsi, les Canadiens ont très tôt estimé que le Commonwealth serait plus utile aux Camerounais si le pays était membre à part entière de l'organisation.²⁵ Certes, un minimum de progrès devait être exigé. Mais la perfection n'existait pas, et l'évolution se ferait plus rapidement si toutes les ressources du Commonwealth – séminaires, échanges interparlementaires, observation des élections, coopération matérielle – étaient mises à la disposition du gouvernement et de l'opposition. En revanche, certains partis d'opposition camerounais ont considéré que le Commonwealth devrait justement jouer sur la candidature au statut de membre pour obtenir d'avance tous les progrès à accomplir; d'autant que, le Cameroun étant déjà membre de la Francophonie, la politique d'équilibre national de son gouvernement exigeait l'entrée au Commonwealth : la victoire diplomatique aurait dû être différée jusqu'à ce que démocratie, droits de l'homme, droits des minorités aient été parfaitement garantis; les élections multipartites parlementaires et présidentielles de 1992 n'étaient pas des preuves suffisantes : la réélection de Paul Biya, en particulier, avait été entachée de nombreuses irrégularités et condamnée sur la scène internationale.²⁶ Fanny,(2011 :266) Des réserves également exprimées en Grande-Bretagne, selon certaines sources diplomatiques : de fait, plusieurs lords déplorent l'admission du Cameroun en novembre 1995.

Ainsi, le « compromis raisonnable » de l'admission, facteur de démocratisation et de cohésion nationale, l'a emporté en 1995, à une époque où les revendications anglophones atteignent leur paroxysme. Par ailleurs, le Cameroun apparaît alors

²⁵ Ibid.

comme un allié précieux pour le Commonwealth. Nouvel acteur dans le réseau de la coopération Sud-Sud, il permet au Commonwealth de pénétrer en Afrique centrale.²⁷ Torrent, (2005 : 95) Parallèlement, il vient agrandir le groupe des pays membres du Commonwealth et de la Francophonie, dont il est le plus grand pays en développement. Alors que le Commonwealth et la Francophonie ont signé un accord de coopération en 1992, l'admission du Cameroun s'inscrit dans la volonté des organisations multilatérales d'élargir et de renforcer leur coopération en réseaux.

2.2 Le rôle du Commonwealth dans la promotion de la démocratie au Cameroun

Le Canada et le Royaume-Uni dans le cadre du Commonwealth, ont soutenu la promotion de la démocratie au Cameroun depuis 1995. Le Canada et le Cameroun ont organisé un séminaire sur la démocratie en avril 1997; une délégation parlementaire canadienne s'est rendue au Cameroun, et le Cameroun a envoyé une mission parlementaire au Canada. L'Assemblée nationale de Yaoundé a également reçu une délégation de parlementaires britanniques en janvier et février 2003.²⁸ Le Commonwealth et le gouvernement camerounais ont organisé une conférence en octobre 2003, à Londres, et mis en valeur les progrès démocratiques au Cameroun.²⁹ Les participants comprenaient des représentants du Canada, de la France, de l'Allemagne, de l'Italie, de l'Afrique du Sud, du Royaume-Uni, des États-Unis, de la Banque africaine de développement, de la Francophonie, des Nations unies, ainsi que des associations du Commonwealth. La diversité des participants tendrait à confirmer que le Commonwealth représente un forum de valorisation et de dialogue pour ses membres, un point de rencontre entre plusieurs réseaux internationaux.

Toutefois, depuis 1995, l'évolution des pratiques démocratiques au Cameroun n'est pas sans heurts. Selon l'opposition, le recours au *Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group* (CMAG) a été évoqué. Le Commonwealth n'a pas observé les élections présidentielles de 1997.³⁰ S'il a observé les élections législatives de juin 2002, le

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

report tardif des élections municipales du 23 au 30 juin 2002 a contraint la mission du Commonwealth à fonctionner avec un nombre réduit d'observateurs.³¹ Don McKinnon, secrétaire général du Commonwealth en 1999, s'est rendu au Cameroun en juin 2001, à l'invitation du gouvernement. Tout en notant que le Cameroun avait progressé dans le domaine de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme, il a mentionné le problème des détentions arbitraires, des disparitions pendant les gardes à vue, la nécessité d'instaurer une commission électorale véritablement indépendante. En juillet 2002, une ancienne secrétaire d'État aux Affaires étrangères canadienne, Christine Stewart, est nommée par Don McKinnon envoyée spéciale du Commonwealth au Cameroun, afin d'instaurer un dialogue régulier avec le gouvernement camerounais et d'accélérer le processus de démocratisation.³²

2.3 Le Commonwealth et le processus électoral camerounais

À la demande du gouvernement camerounais, le Commonwealth a envoyé une mission d'observation pour les élections présidentielles d'octobre 2004, qui ont reconduit le Président Paul Biya à la présidence. Si les observateurs ont estimé que les résultats traduisent la volonté des électeurs et un certain progrès, les critiques formulées en 1997 sont renouvelées.³³ Surtout, le rapport de la mission souligne qu'une commission électorale indépendante, dotée d'une autorité légale et financière adéquate, déjà suggérée en 1997, n'a toujours pas été mise en place, tandis que l'Observatoire nationale des élections manque de pouvoir et de crédibilité. En raison de problèmes d'inscription et d'information, une partie de la population camerounaise en âge d'exercer ses droits civiques n'a pas été en mesure de voter. La mission d'observation dresse une liste d'importantes réformes politiques et juridiques que le Cameroun – gouvernement et opposition – doit entreprendre s'il veut progresser sur la voie de la transition démocratique.

La commission des Droits de l'homme des Nations unies a publié en 1997 un rapport très critique sur le Cameroun : le Commonwealth étant accusé de manquer aux principes d'Harare pour avoir accueilli un tel État en son sein. La nouvelle Constitution camerounaise, bien que critiquée par l'opposition, a toutefois été publiée

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

le 18 janvier 1996, tandis que l'opposition l'a emporté dans sept capitales de province sur dix, au cours du même mois. Paul Biya a concrétisé la coopération avec le Commonwealth en demandant au Secrétariat d'observer les élections législatives de mai 1997. Alors que le Commonwealth avait refusé d'observer les élections en Zambie (novembre 1996) et en Gambie (janvier 1997), dont les gouvernements ne lui semblaient pas respecter les critères démocratiques fondamentaux, une mission est envoyée au Cameroun (8-22 mai 1997). Le gouvernement, l'opposition, les ONG, la société civile participent aux rencontres. Certes, la mission constate des problèmes concernant le décompte des suffrages, les inscriptions sur les listes électorales, l'influence des chefs, le manque d'informations pour les électeurs avant le scrutin, la délimitation des circonscriptions.³⁴ Toutefois, elle conclut à l'absence de violations systématiques de la liberté d'expression et souligne que l'évolution du Cameroun se poursuit, même si des progrès restent à accomplir. Le Cameroun participe à la table ronde des chefs de gouvernement de l'Afrique du Commonwealth sur la démocratie et la bonne gouvernance, les 24 et 25 février 1997, à Kasane, au Botswana.³⁵ Ngué, (2010 :64)

La délégation gouvernementale, conduite par le Premier ministre P. Musonge, est assistée par une délégation d'experts, qui comprend les principaux chefs de l'opposition, John Fru Ndi et Bello Bouba Maïgari. La Déclaration commune finale souligne l'importance accordée au rôle des femmes, la volonté de promouvoir la démocratie et d'enraciner des institutions démocratiques, ainsi que la nécessité que le gouvernement, l'opposition et la société civile œuvrent conjointement. Le Cameroun participe également à la conférence tenue à Queen's College, à Cambridge, en 1998, sur la pauvreté, la corruption, la gestion des élections, le rôle des médias et des femmes.

2.4 De l'assistance technique en vue du développement des ressources humaines dans le domaine démocratique

L'assistance technique du Commonwealth se traduit par l'aide apportée au gouvernement camerounais dans la formation des cadres dans le domaine démocratique et du respect des droits de l'homme. Cette assistance technique, se

³⁴ Ibid.

fait par le double canal des « Training Programm », de la coopération universitaire et de l'envoi des experts.³⁶ Au chapitre des formations dispensées au Cameroun, il y'a le séminaire organisé en mars 1998, sur les droits de l'homme à l'intention des intendants, régisseurs de prison et autres cadres de l'administration pénitentiaire ; le séminaire conjoint Commonwealth-Francophonie sur le thème « démocratie et société plurielles » le 24 janvier 2000...³⁷ Hors du territoire national, les camerounais ont pris part à de nombreuses sessions de formation : le sommet sur la démocratie et la bonne gouvernance, tenu à Gaborone au Botswana en février 1997 ; la conférence sur les droits de l'Homme et les affaires criminelles tenues en Grande-Bretagne en Octobre 1998 ; le cours de formation sur la corruption en Australie en Novembre 1998 ; le séminaire sur le vote démocratique en Grande-Bretagne en septembre 1998...³⁸

En somme, le Commonwealth a beaucoup contribué à la formation des camerounais dans des domaines où le besoin se faisait sentir. Cette assistance technique est étoffée par l'octroi de nombreuses bourses universitaires aux camerounais, principalement dans le cadre de la « Cameroon Commonwealth scholarship agency »

2.5 Le soutien à la cause des homosexuels dans le cadre de la défense des droits humains

Depuis 1972, l'article 347 bis du Code pénal stipule « qu'est punie d'un emprisonnement de six mois à cinq ans ferme et d'une amende de 20 000 à 200 000 FCFA toute personne qui a des rapports sexuels avec une personne de son sexe ». Le Cameroun poursuit des personnes en justice pour relations consenties entre personnes du même sexe avec plus d'ardeur que presque tout autre pays dans le monde, ont déclaré quatre organisations de défense des droits humains dans un rapport publié. Ces organisations – Alternatives-Cameroun, l'Association pour la défense des Homosexuel-le-s (ADEFHO), l'association Cameroonian Foundation for AIDS (CAMFAIDS) et Human Rights Watch, ont constaté que depuis 2010, 28 personnes au moins ont fait l'objet de poursuites judiciaires pour relations

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

homosexuelles au Cameroun. Selon ces organisations, la plupart des affaires ont été marquées par de graves violations des droits humains, notamment des actes de torture, des aveux extorqués, le refus d'un accès à une assistance juridique, et un traitement discriminatoire de la part des agents des forces de l'ordre et des autorités judiciaires Camerounaises.

Le rapport de 59 pages, intitulé « *Coupables par association : Violations des droits humains commises dans l'application de la loi contre l'homosexualité au Cameroun* », présente dix études de cas portant sur des arrestations et des poursuites menées en application de l'article 347 bis du code pénal camerounais, qui punit les « *rappports sexuels avec une personne de son sexe* » de peines de prison pouvant aller jusqu'à cinq ans.³⁹ Le rapport a constaté que la plupart des personnes mises en accusation pour homosexualité sont condamnées sur la base de preuves plutôt minces, voire inexistantes. Le rapport comporte de nombreux cas dans lesquels la loi contre les relations homosexuelles a été utilisée pour régler des comptes, montrant à quel point la loi est facilement sujette aux abus. Des dizaines de Camerounais purgent des peines de prison uniquement parce qu'ils sont soupçonnés d'être gays ou lesbiennes, selon les constatations des quatre organisations.

Pour le « *Commonwealth Human Right Initiative* », L'article 347 bis du code pénal camerounais viole les normes internationales en matière de droits humains et la constitution du Cameroun elle-même.⁴⁰ Les lois contre les rapports sexuels consentis entre personnes du même sexe violent les dispositions du Pacte international relatif aux droits civils et politiques (PIDCP) qui protège la vie privée et le droit à la non-discrimination. La constitution du Cameroun intègre les traités internationaux que le Cameroun a ratifiés, y compris le PIDCP, dans la législation nationale, et stipule que lorsque le droit international entre en conflit avec le droit camerounais, c'est le droit international qui prend le pas sur le droit national. La constitution camerounaise prévoit également de fortes garanties de la vie privée. En outre, le Cameroun est un État membre du Commonwealth, qui dispose d'une nouvelle charte opposée à toute discrimination quelle qu'elle soit. Mais pour les autorités de Yaoundé, le soutien

³⁹ Voir, Human Rights Watch, 2013, rapport de 59 pages, intitulé : « [*Coupables par association : Violations des droits humains commises dans l'application de la loi contre l'homosexualité au Cameroun*](#) ».

⁴⁰ Ibid.

même voilé du Commonwealth à la cause des homos sexuels camerounais est considéré comme une forme d'ingérence négative dans les affaires internes du Cameroun. Yaoundé, officiellement rejette une culture occidentale jugée déviante.

3. Au-delà de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme la question du développement économique du Cameroun

En matière de développement, les relations entre le Commonwealth et le Cameroun semblent ne s'être jamais éteintes. Certes, les liens économiques entre le Cameroun et les pays membres du Commonwealth ont toujours été relativement faibles. Dès 1960, la France est le premier partenaire du Cameroun en matière d'échanges commerciaux et d'aide au développement. Si les États-Unis occupent une place de plus en plus importante, la France demeure omniprésente dans un pays qui appartient à la zone franc. Dès la réunification, les dirigeants camerounais critiquent l'aide britannique qu'ils comparent à l'abondante contribution de la France. Camerounais francophones et anglophones relèvent que le territoire administré par le Royaume-Uni est bien moins développé que l'ancien Cameroun sous tutelle française – même s'il faut noter le relatif retard du nord du territoire. L'aide du Royaume-Uni n'est certes pas inexistante. Les hauts responsables britanniques, au sein du *Foreign Office* notamment, soulignent le caractère singulier du Cameroun : s'il ne fait pas partie de la « famille » du Commonwealth, il n'est pas non plus tout à fait étranger, une portion du territoire ayant été gérée par Londres pendant quarante ans.

Parmi les pays d'Afrique qui n'appartiennent pas au Commonwealth, c'est le Cameroun qui reçoit tout d'abord l'aide au développement la plus considérable.⁴¹ Torrent, (2005 :95) Le pays est également un allié précieux pour les Britanniques. Désirant devenir le point de rencontre entre Afrique francophone et Afrique anglophone, à l'image de la réunification entre Cameroun méridional anglophone et République du Cameroun francophone, le Cameroun représente, en Afrique, un élément fédérateur. Le Royaume-Uni participe à l'effort de développement et de promotion du bilinguisme du gouvernement d'Ahmadou Ahidjo : des fonds sont débloqués, du matériel, des enseignants sont envoyés au Cameroun, une antenne

du British Council y est établie, à la fin des années 1960.⁴² Toutefois, les Britanniques eux-mêmes reconnaissent les limites de leur action par rapport aux programmes menés par la France. Dues à l'intérêt supérieur accordé aux pays du Commonwealth, ces restrictions s'expliquent également par le souci des Britanniques de ne pas froisser les hauts responsables français par leurs relations avec un pays qui demeure perçu avant tout comme francophone. On revient ainsi à l'ambiguïté entre un Cameroun réunifié, uni, et la perception double qu'en ont les Britanniques.

Cette ambivalence apparaît également à travers les nombreux liens qui sont conservés entre Cameroun et Commonwealth en matière de développement, alors que le Cameroun est en dehors du « club ». Au lendemain de la réunification, la *Commonwealth Development Corporation* maintient des relations avec la *Cameroons Development Corporation* dont les plantations s'étendent au Cameroun occidental, verse des fonds et participe à sa gestion – un accord de gestion sera encore renouvelé en 1970.⁴³ Surtout, le fait le plus marquant est le maintien de la préférence impériale au Cameroun occidental, après le 1^{er} octobre 1961 et jusqu'au 1^{er} octobre 1963.⁴⁴ Alors que le principe de la préférence impériale est exclusivement réservé aux membres du Commonwealth, comme son nom l'indique, le gouvernement et le parlement britanniques acceptent d'en faire bénéficier le territoire camerounais pour lui permettre de réaliser la transition économique la plus sereine possible. Certes, il a toujours été question d'une prolongation à la fois exceptionnelle et temporaire, mais l'événement prouve bien le statut tout particulier de la nouvelle République camerounaise. Les pays de la Caraïbe anglophone, dont le Cameroun est un concurrent majeur pour la production et l'exportation de bananes, manifestent un virulent mécontentement et arguent que l'esprit du Commonwealth est affaibli par ce traitement de faveur injustement accordé à un territoire qui vient de rejeter l'appartenance à l'organisation.⁴⁵ La prolongation de la préférence impériale est toutefois présentée par les Britanniques comme la preuve de l'intérêt que les pays développés du Commonwealth doivent accorder au développement de leurs alliés, présents mais aussi passés. Conclusion logique en octobre 1963 : les liens passés

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

avec le Royaume-Uni et le Commonwealth ont permis de faciliter la transition du Cameroun occidental; la distance désormais prise implique que les privilèges propres au Commonwealth soient retirés.

Tout lien n'est pourtant pas rompu après 1963. Trois événements marquent la poursuite de relations entre le Cameroun et le Commonwealth. De façon significative, il s'agit alors bien de liens avec le groupe Commonwealth plutôt qu'avec le Royaume-Uni ou d'autres membres individuels. Lors des négociations de la CEE avec les États africains et malgache associés, les tensions entre les membres africains du Commonwealth et certains pays africains francophones, en particulier le Sénégal, sont apaisées par l'intervention d'un diplomate camerounais, Nzo Ekangaki, alors secrétaire général de l'OUA. Arnold Smith, secrétaire général du Commonwealth, rencontre N. Ekangaki à Londres, en février 1973 en présence du chef Emeka Anyaoku, directeur des affaires internationales du Secrétariat du Commonwealth, et qui sera secrétaire général de l'organisation lors de la procédure d'admission du Cameroun. Même si la rencontre n'est pas suivie d'effets immédiats, Arnold Smith rapporte significativement dans ses mémoires qu'elle marque un tournant dans les perceptions du Cameroun et du Commonwealth, qu'elle les rend plus conscients l'un de l'autre. Autre fait, la *Commonwealth Foundation* offre une aide financière à l'Institut panafricain de Buéa en 1971-1972, à la demande de ce dernier.⁴⁶ Certes, il ne s'agit pas du financement d'un établissement camerounais : l'institut a une mission de formation destinée aux pays de l'Afrique occidentale, anglophones et francophones. Il est toutefois notable que le pays choisi ait été le Cameroun bilingue, et que la *Commonwealth Foundation* y ait vu un projet utile, digne d'être financé, malgré son caractère exceptionnel. Enfin, le *Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation* du Secrétariat du Commonwealth choisit ce même institut comme partenaire, en 1986. L'intérêt régional de l'entreprise, qui concerne au premier chef des pays membres du Commonwealth comme le Nigeria et le Ghana, explique l'action du CFTC. Mais est également démontrée, trois ans avant l'annonce de la candidature camerounaise, une voie commune d'action en faveur du développement entre Cameroun et Commonwealth.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

On peut avancer que la candidature du Cameroun a été précipitée par la crise économique qui s'installe à partir du milieu des années 1980. Les indicateurs économiques s'effondrent, les conséquences sociales de la crise apparaissent, la production de pétrole diminue, la progression du développement camerounais est mise en grave péril. Depuis 1961, le Commonwealth a évolué considérablement, pour se transformer en un véritable moteur de développement. Le Secrétariat n'a pas pour vocation d'être une agence de prêt. Mais les contacts qu'il établit entre les pays membres sont inestimables. Il collecte et redistribue des informations afin d'aider les pays en développement à mieux négocier, notamment au sein des instances multilatérales. Des séminaires sont organisés afin de mettre en commun les expertises, la coopération Sud-Sud connaît un essor considérable à l'échelle continentale et intercontinentale. Le Commonwealth est devenu un atout réel pour l'Afrique. Le Commonwealth « africain » est d'autant plus présent que l'Afrique du Sud s'est retirée en 1961, que le Commonwealth a mené une lutte farouche contre l'apartheid et la domination étrangère en Afrique, et joue, dans la seconde moitié des années 1980, un rôle de premier plan pour éradiquer ces deux fléaux. Le Commonwealth est alors devenu un partenaire non seulement acceptable, mais également fort utile.

4. Sur les droits de l'Homme, et la démocratie au Cameroun, un bilan mitigé

Malgré les aspects bénéfiques de l'action du Commonwealth au Cameroun, dans divers domaines, le Commonwealth reçoit son lot de critiques dans son action au Cameroun. Si des pays comme le Soudan et le Yémen sont si intéressés par le Commonwealth, c'est aussi parce que le coût de cette tribune est moins élevé qu'un lobbying à l'ONU, notamment sur le chapitre des droits de l'Homme. Le Commonwealth n'accorde aucun avantage et ne dispose donc d'aucun moyen de pression sur ses membres. Si la défense des droits de l'Homme est inscrite dans ses statuts, son bilan dans le domaine est peu envié. Le « *Commonwealth Human Right Initiative* » a beau recenser les atteintes au sein du club, il ne dispose que d'une fraction des budgets des programmes de l'ONU pour intervenir. Dans le même temps, le Commonwealth a plutôt la réputation de porter un œil très indulgent sur ses membres. L'adhésion du Cameroun en 1995 par exemple, fut assez mal vue par bon

nombre d'observateurs internationaux étant donné que les conditions optimales d'admission ne semblaient pas être respectées.

Parmi les chiffres qui inquiètent les associations des droits de l'Homme, 41 pays du Commonwealth continuent de criminaliser l'homosexualité parmi ceux-ci le Cameroun. Malgré les exhortations du Commonwealth en direction des autorités de Yaoundé, à dépénaliser l'orientation sexuelle et à s'engager dans une véritable lutte contre toutes les formes de discrimination, via des mesures administratives, politiques et légales afin de garantir le respect des droits humains et libertés fondamentales de tous les individus indépendamment de leur orientation sexuelle ou de genre, conformément aux standards internationaux, l'hostilité à l'égard des homosexuels restent intacte. Plus grave, encore, la révision du Code pénal camerounais a durci la répression de l'homosexualité en cas de « circonstances aggravantes ». Cela concerne l'infraction d'homosexualité commise sur mineur entre 16 et 21 ans, condamnée à 8 ans de prison, et celle commise sur mineur de moins de 16 ans et dont la condamnation oscille entre 10 et 15 ans de prison, mettant sur un pied d'égalité homosexualité et pédophilie.

L'adhésion du Cameroun à la cause des droits de l'homme ne fait pas de doute, au regard des instruments internationaux et régionaux qu'il a signés et ratifiés et de leur intégration dans l'ordre juridique interne. Il s'agit là d'un pas important mais qui n'est pas suffisant, car la reconnaissance au plan théorique (constitution, lois, règlements) de ces droits et libertés doit pouvoir être mise en œuvre et concrétisée en pratique, dans le vécu quotidien des populations.

Conclusion

Les relations que la République du Cameroun entretient avec le Commonwealth of Nations sont fortement marquées par deux faits majeurs. Il s'agit d'abord d'un passé tumultueux mais riche, et qui a fini par léguer au Cameroun un héritage anglo-saxon indélébile au plan politique, culturel, juridique...civilisationnel en somme. Aussi, le retrait du Cameroun occidental du Commonwealth of Nations au moment de la réunification du 1^{er} Octobre 1961 n'a nullement aboutit à l'instinction des relations diplomatiques avec les Etats membres de cette organisation, survivance de l'Empire

Britannique. Après sa réintégration en 1995, le Cameroun va pleinement bénéficier du « club des gentlemen » dans divers domaines et particulièrement dans ceux de la défense des droits de l'homme et de la démocratie. Malgré la lenteur dans ce domaine et l'étendue modeste des progrès, l'importance de la participation du Cameroun au Commonwealth ne doit pas être diminuée. Depuis 2002, tout membre du Commonwealth peut être suspendu pour violations systématiques des droits de l'homme et des pratiques démocratiques, et non plus simplement pour changement non constitutionnel de régime. Dans un pays où le statut de membre du Commonwealth a été érigé par le discours officiel comme signe et garant de l'unité nationale, toute suspension entraînerait un dangereux déséquilibre. Utilisé à bon escient, il devrait être un moyen de pression pour que s'accélère, ou tout au moins se poursuive, la progression démocratique du Cameroun bilingue.

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Linguistic (in)Equality, National Unity and Stability in Multilingual Commonwealth States: Cameroon's Experience

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the political function and implication of linguistic (in) equality on the potential of national unity and stability in multilingual Commonwealth States. Official multilingual States may enjoy the envious reputation of being bilingual or multilingual as the case may be, but run the risk of political instability when all the languages are not treated justly. The risk of politicizing linguistic injustice or inequality is high in multilingual societies where one language is seen to dominate others. In Cameroon, English and French are official languages with equal status. However, the weak institutionalization of linguistic equality has created complexities of inferiority and superiority among Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians, expressed in the struggle between two linguistic movements: French-only movement acting offensive nationalism and English-only movement acting defensive nationalism. Both movements which carry the germs of nationalism are in competition for survival, and in trying to do so, they reinvent political identities based on linguistic affinities. The study finds that linguistic inequality can be interpreted as a form of linguistic injustice and serve political claims that could go as far as questioning the form of the State. However, there is hope. Linguistic diversity can make sense for unity and stability when language communities perceive each other's language as complementary.

Keywords: national unity and stability, multilingual Commonwealth States, Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians

Introduction

The ideal model of a nation-state rests in a considerable part upon the belief that each nation-state is a separate linguistic entity (Emerson, 1960:132). However, the number of official languages determines the scope of nationhood. In multilingual States, language can act as a unifying factor depending on how the linguistic communities perceive and behave toward linguistic differences. Politicians and policy makers also have a critical role to play in determining the extent to which language differences make a difference with regards to unity and stability. Linguistic inequality is a reflection of State's failure to ensure equality in the genuine and objective use

and understanding of at least those official languages enshrined in the constitution. As society's shaping organism, the State is expected to treat, consider and organise language differences out of anomic paths into a framework that ensures unity and stability.

What is the relationship between linguistic (in)equality and political unity and stability? What are the political functions and implications of linguistic inequality in multilingual Commonwealth States? Has Cameroon's official bilingualism been beneficial or detrimental to national unity and stability? Linguistic inequality represents a danger to political unity and stability because of the risk of it being politicized. The risk of political instability and fragmentation is high in multilingual States with bias language policies and practices. States that have constitutionally endorsed more than one language but fail to put it into practice run the risk of inviting linguistic injustice. The risk of politicizing linguistic injustice is high in multilingual States where one language is viewed as the dominant language. On the other hand, linguistic equality is likely, other factors being equal, to enhance and sustain political unity and stability. There is a positive and constructive correlation between linguistic equality and political unity and stability.

Cameroon is a bilingual Commonwealth State in which both English and French are constitutionally recognized as official languages with equal status.⁴⁷ However, the intended or accidental nationwide domination of French has aroused feelings of linguistic underrepresentation and marginalization among Cameroonians of typical English language expression.

To determine whether bilingualism has been beneficial or detrimental to national unity and stability, the behaviour/attitude of Cameroonians from the two linguistic divide towards bilingualism and how it affects their perception and relation to the State and governmental official is examined. It is believed that bilingualism policies affect people's attitude and perceptions of the State in constructive or destructive ways. The more bilingual one is, the more likely one feels Cameroonian and less

⁴⁷ It should be recalled however, that the equality in the status of both English and French was expressly recognized and stated only in the third constitution of 1996. The first two others gave a slight upper hand to French. Details are examined in subsequent sections.

contentious one becomes. On the other hand, the less bilingual one is the more contentious and contemptuous one is likely to become. When one speaks a single language in a multilingual setting, the degree of perceiving the other as different is wide.

The work is divided in two main parts: part one examines some theoretical considerations by trying to establish the relationship between language and politics. It also identifies and analysis the key concepts. It traces the historical foundation and evolution of Cameroon as a multilingual Commonwealth State with particular attention paid to English and French bilingualism. The second part examines the impact of official bilingualism on the potential of unity and stability. It observes that although English and French bilingualism led to some form of unity in the country, English-only and French-only movements are threats to the foundation of unity and stability.

1. Language, Politics and nation-State: Theoretical Considerations

1.1 The Political functions of language

Language is the primary instrument of social communication (Emerson, 1960:133). The existence of a language is predicated upon the existence of a community of speakers who guarantee they can understand one another (Rajagopalan, 2001:19). As a factor of identity, it is an integral part of the foundation and survival of modern States.⁴⁸ Rajagopalan posits that the idea of nationhood had become closely linked with the concept of a language and the whole equation was summed up in the slogan “one nation, one people, one language” (Rajagopalan, 2001:20). Today, languages and language loyalties are frequently exploited by in-power and out-power political actors to further political ends.

Language has a political identity owing to the fact that it is linked to nationalism. Nationalism is a powerful political weapon that hinges on language and that can degenerate into chauvinism and xenophobia, its flipside (Rajagopalan, 2001:20). Linguistic identity arises from two things: the feeling that you are able to

⁴⁸ However, it was in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, with the emergence of modern nation-states that language began to assume an uncontested political dimension.

communicate with your fellows and the presence of a stranger/foreigner whose language we cannot comprehend (Rajagopalan, 2001). The language of the foreigner represents the voice of unreason, to be systematically challenged, annihilated. Identity stems from the fact that the very notion of a language is constitutively dependent on the knowledge that there are forms of speech other than the one we are versed with. Identity, pursues Rajagopalan (2001:21), also derives from one's ability to be convinced that the forms of speech are just as comprehensible to its speakers as ours is to ourselves. Historically, if British Southern Cameroonians had not had any contact with French Cameroonians, the sense of distinct linguistic heritage, and with it such notions as "unity in diversity", "bilingualism", "one and indivisible Cameroon", simply would not have made sense as it seems to be doing today.

The value of a particular language can only make sense in the midst of other languages and this could imply that language in multilingual States is essentially exclusionary. Knowledge of and the effective presence of languages different from ours predispose us to feel a sense of linguistic superiority and or inferiority, as the case may be, but hardly ever a sense of equality. A bilingual or multilingual State inherently breeds linguistic competition which is the offensive and or defensive struggle among languages for survival. Those who feel linguistically cheated are likely to initiate struggles for linguistic recognition and revalorisation, and in most cases, these struggles are not without political claims. Those who feel linguistically superior are likely to initiate actions to consolidate their linguistic superiority.

Another political dimension of language is its interaction and strategic dimensions. Given that an enormous amount of social and cultural information is encoded in a message and that verbal interaction in a speech community is a cultural event; language reinforces sense of belonging and asserts one's existence in a community. As a political instrument, language is a tool used by political entrepreneurs to gain some form of interest. Political speeches play a strategic role in promoting political interests in several ways. Below are some strategic functions of political discourses: According to Chilton and Schaffner (1997: 212-213) language is used politically to:

1. Coerce (laws, edicts, commands, censorship, agenda setting, and making assumptions about realities that hearers are at least obliged to accept)
2. Resist, protest and oppose (slogans, chants, petitions, appeals that oppose existing structures)
3. dissimulate (divert attention from troublesome and controversial issues)
4. legitimize and delegitimize—which are macro functions (quoted in Mazid 2007:353)

According to Thompson (1990: 60-67) the political functions of language are:

1. unification (bringing and keeping people of diverse backgrounds together i.e. a form of unity which embraces individuals in a collective identity)
2. fragmentation (fragmenting individuals and groups whose unity may challenge the dominant individuals and groups—also known as divide and rule)
3. reification (maintaining status quo as natural) (quoted in Mazid, 2007:353)

Language is political under conditions of isolation or interaction. If language is not used to unify, it is used to fragment, and if it is not used to fragment, it is used to maintain the status quo. In any case, the politicization of language oscillates between these three functions. Unifying language is all about creating feelings of togetherness and belonging to the same fatherland and in a bilingual State, this can only be reinforced when both languages are used. Fragmentary language creates feelings of differentiation and other complexities among the different linguistic communities that undermine the unity and stability of the bilingual State. A strongest political character of language is its ability to reproduce identities and given that identity is almost exclusively a natural claim of politics, language is therefore political.

National identity for example is found and sustained in everyday language. The routine use of small words and slangs to describe people of a particular linguistic expression in pejorative or hailing terms only remind them of their national identity. Nationalism operates with prosaic, routine words, which take nations for granted, and which, in so doing, inhabit them (Billig, 1995:93). There are small words rather than grand memorable phrases, that offer constant, but rarely conscious reminders of the

homeland, making “our” national identity unforgettable (Petersoo, 2007: 420). One of these banal or small words is the personal pronoun ‘we’ which Petersoo (2007: 420) sees as of utmost importance in the discourses about nations and national identities. The use of ‘we’ or ‘nous’ in Cameroon is a reminder of the existence of the other — “them” or ‘eux’. ‘Bamenda’, ‘Anglofous’, ‘Anglo’ used in French-dominated regions to describe predominantly people of English speaking regions only reminds them of their status as people of a different identity or of Cameroonians apart.

1.2 Linguistic (in) equality, national unity and political stability

National unity means the presence of high sense of cohesion and identification with the nation-state. In the context of multilingual States, national unity could be a feeling of belonging to the same linguistic community independent of the linguistic belonging of governmental authorities and one’s linguistic belonging. The language of the other is perceived as an asset, and not as a political liability. Political stability is the absence of credible threats to national cohesion and unity. Political stability is normalcy associated with the life of a State. It is the process by which a State goes about its normal activities unperturbed. As a matter of fact, national unity and political stability feed on each other. Unity breeds stability and stability rests on unity.

Linguistic equality is equal treatment the State gives to two or more of its official languages. In the case of Cameroon, this means an effective attribution of equal socioeconomic, cultural and political status to English and French. Under conditions of linguistic equality, there is no such thing as linguistic bias or linguistic complexes of superiority and inferiority.

The opposite is true of linguistic inequality. This is when the State creates conditions of linguistic inferiorities and superiorities. Linguistic inequality is said to exist in but not exclusive to multilingual States with minority-majority linguistic divides. Linguistic inequality expresses planned or unplanned cultural assimilation which favours the assimilation of minority languages and cultures by a majority dominant language and culture (Chumbow, 2009:27). In multilingual States, linguistic inequality represents a challenge to political unity and stability. In the first place, it is a credible instrument of political propaganda. As noted above, language differentials can be reinvented to create national identities based on linguistic lines and such weaknesses can be

exploited to fuel tensions between the various national linguistic communities. Inequality in the use of English and French particularly in official circles probably weakens national cohesion and the feeling of oneness among Cameroonians of the two national linguistic divide.

1.3 The linguistic identity of Cameroon: Between official bilingualism and private multilingualism

Multilingualism means the use of more than one language for communication. However, there are varying degrees of multilingualism. It can be classified into three categories: private multilingualism (States with more than one unofficial language and one official language), public multilingualism (States with more than one official language and perhaps none or one private language), and public-private multilingualism (States with more than one language in both public and private realms). Public realm languages are usually imported or foreign languages inherited from contact and interaction with foreigners or colonialist and private realm languages are the indigenous or ethnic languages (Chumbow, 2009). Thus in addition to Chumbow’s two macro-linguistic disparities (i.e. the public and private realm languages which fit squarely well the private and public multilingual States: one can add the public-private multilingual countries which are the least common.

Table 1: Linguistic status of Commonwealth States in Africa

State/membership year	Official languages	Other languages	Linguistic status
Botswana , 30 September 1966 as a Republic	English	Setwana, Kalanga, Sekgalagadi	Private multilingual
Cameroon , 11 November 1995 as a Republic	English, French	Numerous indigenous languages	Public-private multilingual
The Gambia , 18 February 1965 as a Realm – became a Republic on 24 April 1970	English	Mandinka, Wolof, Fula, other indigenous vernaculars.	Private multilingual
Ghana , 6 March 1957 as a Realm – became a Republic 1 July 1960	English	Akan, Adangme, Moshi-Dagomba, Ewe, and Ga	Private multilingual
Kenya , 12 December	English,	Numerous	Public-private

1963 as a Realm – became a Republic on 12 December 1964	Kiswahili	indigenous languages	multilingual
Lesotho , 4 October 1966 as a Kingdom	Sesotho (Southern Sotho), English	Zulu, Xhosa.	Public-private multilingual
Malawi , 6 July 1964 as a Realm – became a Republic on 6 July 1966	English, Nyanja (Chichewa, Chewa)	Lomwe, Tumbuka, Yao, other languages important regionally.	Public-private multilingual
Mauritius , 12 March 1968 as a realm – became a Republic on 12 March 1992	English, French	Creole, Hindi, Urdu, Hakka, Bhojpuri	Public-private multilingual
Mozambique , 12 December 1995 as a Republic	Portuguese	Makhuwa, Tsonga, Lomwe, Sena, numerous other indigenous languages.	Private multilingual
Namibia , 21 March 1990 as a Republic	English	Afrikaans, German, & indigenous languages: Oshivambo, Herero, Nama.	Private multilingual
Nigeria , 1 October 1960 as a Realm – became a Republic on 1 October 1963 – suspended between 11 November 1995 and 29 May 1999	English	Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo (Ibo), Fulani, Ijaw, Ibibio and about 250 other indigenous languages spoken by the different ethnic groups.	Private multilingual
Rwanda , 28 November 2009 as a Republic	Rwanda (Kinyarwanda, Bantu vernacular) French, English	Kiswahili (Swahili)	Public multilingual
Seychelles , 29 June 1976 as a Republic	English, French	Creole	Public multilingual

Sierra Leone , 27 April 1961 as a Realm – became a Republic 19 April 1971	English	Mendesc, Temne, Krio, Creole	Private multilingual
South Africa , 3 December 1931 as a Realm – withdrew on becoming a Republic on 31 May 1961, rejoined 1 June 1994	11 official languages, including Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, Pedi, Sesotho (Sotho), siSwati (Swazi), Xitsonga (Tsonga), Tswana, Tshivenda (Venda), isiXhosa, isiZulu		Public multilingual
Swaziland , 6 September 1968 as a Kingdom	English, siSwati		Public multilingual
Tanzania , 9 December 1961 as a Realm – became Republic of Tanganyika on 9 December 1962, United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar on 26 April 1964, and United Republic of Tanzania on 29 October 1964.	Kiswahili (Swahili), English,	Arabic, Gogo, Haya, Makonde, Nyakyusa, Nyamwezi, Sukuma, Tumbuka, many other local languages.	Public-private multilingual
Uganda , 9 October 1962 as a Realm – became a Republic on 9 October 1963	English	Ganda, other Niger-Congo languages, Nilo-Saharan languages, Acoli, Swahili, Arabic	Private multilingual
Zambia , 24 October 1964 as a Republic	English	Bemba, Kaonda, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Nyanja, Tonga, and about 70 other indigenous languages.	Private multilingual

<p>Zimbabwe, 18 April 1980 as a Republic – suspended on 19 March 2002, departed on 8 December 2003</p>	<p>English</p>	<p>Chishona (Shona), Sindebele (Ndebele), Sotho and Nambya, Shangani, Venda, Chewa, Nyanja, and Tonga.</p>	<p>Private multilingual</p>
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Source : Author, 2017

This linguistic classification measures the degree of linguistic polarization and its impact on national unity and political stability. It is likely that the more linguistically polarized a country is, the lesser it's potential for national unity and political stability and the less polarized it is, the greater the potential for national cohesion and political stability.

The African continent to which Cameroon is a part is the most linguistically diversified continent with more than 2086 languages of the over 6600 languages of the world (Chumbow, 2009:26). All African countries are multilingual in varying degrees; from three languages in Rwanda and Burundi to over 450 in Nigeria and Cameroon is no exception to this rule. However, unlike many other countries Cameroon has an exceptional linguistic personality. It is officially bilingual and unofficially multilingual. In other words, it is a public-private multilingual State. Besides English and French, which are the official languages, more than 250 private languages (also known as indigenous and religious languages) are spoken by some 20 million Cameroonians (Kouega, 2007). Nigeria may have over 450 private languages but it has officially recognized only English as the public language.

The accidental genesis of Cameroon's public-private linguistic status

Cameroon draws its public-private multilingual status from separate sources. Its public multilingual identity derives from its contact and interaction with foreign agents. Cameroon owes its linguistic uniqueness to its history under foreign administration (Constable, 1974), (British and French Mandated/Trusteeship administrations). Its private multilingual status is somewhat a prehistoric genetic inheritance and the ability of these languages to have resisted the onslaught of imported languages.

Cameroon's close to 45 years official contact and interaction with Britain and France left a dual linguistic legacy which makes Cameroon an English and French bilingual country.

Although Germany controlled Cameroon until the end of the First World War, it never left a linguistic impact that Britain and France did after they left Cameroon at independence in the early 60s. The defeat of Germany by joint Anglo-French forces meant that Cameroon had to be divided between Britain, who took 1/5 and France who took 4/5, and above all the introduction of English and French in the respective territories. In February 1961, the British territory of Southern Cameroons voted in a UN-administered and supervised plebiscite to join the French part of Cameroon and Federation was born comprising two federated States: East Cameroon Federated State which was dominated by French language comprised the majority and which was the former French Cameroon Republic and the West Cameroon Federated State which was dominated by English language. According to Constable (1974:233) the two parties in the Federation appear to enjoy rather unequal status in that 4/5 of the population was in the Eastern territory which is also much bigger than the West, and the capital, Yaoundé, is in the French-speaking East, as are the main commercial and industrial activities (Douala and Edea), all of which contribute to make harmonization in educational, political, administrative and judicial fields a major concern.

Compared to public multilingualism, private multilingualism in Cameroon has remained constant over the years and has not been a subject of severe political debate. There are well over 250 different private languages spoken across the different ethno-linguistic communities in the country (Kouega, 2007), including the Pidgin English and camfranglais lingua franca, which are appearing as the third and fourth most widely spoken languages respectively. In the midst of this linguistic merry go round, English and French have been constitutionally recognized and accepted as the two official languages although this is with varying degrees of sociopolitical and economic considerations.

The importance of English and French Bilingualism

According to Omotoyinbo (2016) how prestigious a language is, can be determined by its perceived socio-economic value, its status raising potential, perceived instrumentality, esteemed functions or roles in the nation, its numerical strength, political and economic power, the use of that language in official domains, and its educational value. There are instrumental and strategic advantages of being really bilingual. Bilingualism opens new horizons and new opportunities (Baker, 1997, Cummins, 2000). A State that is officially bilingual stands to gain more than a monolingual State. The benefit is even enormous when the official languages are spoken worldwide. English and French are official international languages—being the working language of the UN for instance, among others. Thus from an international or diplomatic point of view, Cameroon enjoys the enviable reputation of being among the few English and French bilingual States in the world.

Although all languages are important, under particular circumstances some languages can appear to be more important than others. The English language for example is of particular importance for international communication. The importance of English can be examined from political, economic and educational dimensions (Plonksy et al., 2013). Politically, English is an official or working language of most international political gatherings throughout the world and 85% of international organizations use English as the language of official communications (Plonksy et al., 2013:4). Economically, as developing States seek to compete in the global marketplace, English is the language in which most negotiation and marketing schemes must take place. English is also the primary language of academia, as the majority of academic publications are written in English (Plonksy et al., 2013:4-5).

The linguistic status of Cameroon has enabled her to strategize and win partners and membership in multiple international organizations. Cameroon has gained membership in both Commonwealth and Francophonie, partly because of her linguistic status as an English and French bilingual State. Its citizens have gained scholarships and other benefits from this forum-shopping opportunity.

Being 'perfectly' bilingual as Cameroonian enhances a feeling of complete citizenship compared to others who are semilingual or monolingual. Citizenship and the civic culture are also about being able to identify with the official language. In other words, a 'true' citizen is not only one who registers to vote during elections, but one who is able to regularly speak and be fluent in the official language(s). Identification with language is a mark of citizenship which implies that anyone who fails to do so is an incomplete or quasi-citizen at best. Identification with the official language is not a matter of choice; it is a matter of civic duty and obligation.

Bilingualism provides an opportunity for Cameroonians to create a national identity that eliminates or minimizes the disruptive effects of linguistic affiliation based on ethnicity. From inception, English and French were languages upon which modern Cameroon was created as a unified State. As Kouega (2003:402) puts it the first Cameroon Government of this had one major objective, namely national cohesion: it had to tackle pressing political problems such as management in a situation of federation of States, preservation of power, intertribal skirmishes and so on. It therefore shelved issues such as choosing the Cameroonian language(s) that could be promoted to official status and the only language that was likely to be whole heartedly accepted by all citizens at the time was the language of the ex-colonial master.

Bilingualism has an empowering capacity. It facilitates cross-linguistic communication and predisposes individuals to socio-cultural comfort. Bilingualism is the passport to national acceptance and socio-national integration. Thus a 'perfectly' bilingual is one who is able to wield influence and limit the influence of others on him/her. According to Duquette (2015:636) being really bilingual allows young people to integrate fully into mainstream society, and contribute further in building a society that fosters unity through diversity. It helps people realize that majority language norms, while essential to ensure a functioning and unified society, does not mean that everyone should always speak the same language, live in the same culture, and think the same way (Duquette, 2015:636). Bilingualism as a means is not only viewed as an instrument of communication, but also as an instrument to political power, economic attainment and social prestige. Although, formally, the status of bilingualism does not

determine who has access to political power in Cameroon, there are signs that in the nearest future it is going to be so.

2. Bilingualism: Implications for National Unity and Stability

The scope of official bilingualism in Cameroon

An Official language is defined as one or more languages that a country utilizes as an official form of communication in education, government, or commerce. UNESCO defines official language as a language designated by law to be employed in the public domain (Plonksy et al., 2013:5). This is distinct from a national language, which is a “language spoken by a large part of the population of a country, which may or may not be designated an official language (UNESCO, 2013). English and French are the official languages in Cameroon. This implies both English and French have been encoded and endorsed by law as the language to be used by all Cameroonians in their public transactions.

The constitutional dimension of English and French bilingualism

Although English and French are constitutionally proportional, as per the 1996 constitution (the latest in force), it is important to note that the Federal constitution gave a pride of place to French without refusing to endorse English as an official language. In the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Cameroon of 1st September 1961 English was considered as second language (the weaker language). Article 1, paragraph 3 states « Les langues officielles de la République Fédérale du Cameroun sont le français et l’anglais. » In Article 59, paragraph 2, it is stated that « La constitution ainsi révisée sera publiée en français et en anglais, le texte en français faisant foi ». The phrase « le texte en français faisant foi » implies constitutional endorsement of the preeminence of French. It authenticates the French version of a constitutional document. This policy relegated the use of the English language in Cameroon to the second position after French.

In the Constitution of the United Republic of Cameroon of 2nd June 1972, the linguistic diversity of Cameroon is first of all hailed as value in the Preamble (see first sentence) and in Article 1, English and French are again recognized as official languages. However, Article 39 still maintained the primacy of French when it rules

that « La présente Constitution sera enregistrée et publiée au Journal Officiel d l'Etat en français et en anglais le texte en français faisant foi » The 18 January 1996 Constitution however, addressed linguistic inequality in its Article 1, Subsection 3 when it emphasizes equality between English and French. It states that:

The official languages of the Republic of Cameroon shall be English and French, both languages having the same status. The State shall guarantee the promotion of bilingualism throughout the country. It shall endeavour to protect and promote national languages.

It was expected that Article 69 of 1996 constitution, like Articles 59 and 39 of previous constitutions, as seen above, would emphasis the primacy of French. It did not. Rather, it endorsed the unconditional equal status of both languages when it states that the law shall be registered and published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Cameroon in English and French. This implies that of the three major constitutions that have shaped the life of the State in Cameroon, only one (1996 Constitution) really explicitly endorsed linguistic equality. The 1961 and 1972 Constitutions were disproportionately in favour of French. Constitutionally speaking therefore, Cameroon has witnessed 35 years (1961-1996) of linguistic inequality characterized by the official belief that French language was foremost. Meanwhile, linguistic equality is some 20 years only.⁴⁹

The bureaucratization of official bilingualism

The bureaucratization of official bilingualism is the process by which governmental officials try to promote English and French in public circles. Public authorities formulate and enforce laws that encourage Cameroonians to study and be fluent in both languages. The fate of English and French bilingualism in Cameroon was also shaped by governmental officials. Governmental officials issued decisions on rights and access to both English and French languages in Cameroon (Constable 1974, Enama 2016, Fasse Mbouya 2012, Kouega 2007, and Kouega 2003). Decrees and

⁴⁹ This change however, might have been due to the alarm raised by the All Anglophone Conference of 1993 in which the constitutional preeminence of French was condemned and a resolution was taken to make French and English equal languages.

laws were enacted to promote the use of both languages in public spheres such as public schools and public ministries. Decrees, instructions, circulars and service notes have been issued in various ministries to promote bilingualism among Cameroonian civil servants and in the public service as a whole with varying degrees of effective implementation. However, it is the education sector (Ministries of Basic Education, National and Higher Education) that is making considerable efforts towards bilingualism. As a matter of fact, nothing compels civil servants to be bilingual whereas students and pupils have to try to be bilingual to succeed in their exams and to do so with flying colours.

According to Kouega (2003), the promotion of bilingualism policy in Cameroon was characterized by three major phases which include the pre-1975 phase, the phase between 1975 and 1996, and the post-1996 phase. Although Kouega's interest was in the domain of primary school education, it is important to note that the three phases also reflect a general trend. Phase one was introduced to bring an end to the French-only and English-only movements that used to be the medium of instruction in French and British Southern Cameroons before 1961. From this period, French, which used to be the medium of instruction in Francophone schools before Reunification, was introduced into Anglophone schools; similarly, English, which was the language of education in Anglophone schools, was introduced into Francophone schools (Kouega, 2003:409). This effort was also extended to other areas. The official press was produced in two versions, one in French and the other in English, and the national radio broadcasted programmes in French and English at regular intervals, meanwhile courses were taught in the only State university in either French or English depending on the availability of teachers; at the secondary education level French was a subject in Anglophone schools and so was English in Francophone schools (Kouega 2003:409).⁵⁰ The second phase within the area of primary education was the introduction of English/French in the curriculum and the extension of the hours per week taught from 1.5 to 2.5 hours for 30 weeks, and last phase was the introduction of dual-language schooling program (Kouega 2003:409).

⁵⁰ For details on the promotion of bilingualism policy in primary schools, see Kouega 2003.

Policies to promote bilingualism were intended to institutionalize bilingualism. Unfortunately, official bilingualism is weakly institutionalized and this is because of the absence of a formal system of reward and punishment. This has left many Cameroonians, to think that bilingualism is an individual (personal) affair.

The meaning of being bilingual in Cameroon

There are several approaches to defining bilingual: fluency-based and regularity-based approaches. Chan and Abdullah (2015:56) propose the following definitions: A narrow definition of a bilingual is that he or she is able to grasp and perfectly understand two languages; a wider definition of a bilingual is one who uses two languages to communicate. Bilingualism is also the regular use of two languages, rather than fluency (Enama Belilibi, 2016:21). However, the reality is that bilingual has several social interpretations. The term 'bilingual' is applied by people in different ways (Chan and Abdullah, 2015:56). For some, it means an equal ability to communicate in two languages. For others, it simply means the ability to communicate in two languages, but with greater skills in one language. In fact, it is more common for bilinguals, even those who have been bilingual since birth, to be somewhat 'dominant' in the use of one language.

The failure to institutionalize bilingualism in Cameroon has led to individual interpretations of what it means to be bilingual. There are at least three definitions or understandings of a bilingual Cameroonian. The first is that a bilingual is anyone who speaks and understands both English and French fluently and regularly, and this category is arguably the least represented. This category is directly in line with Constitutional prescription that talks of equality in both English and French. A bilingual in this sense is often called 'perfectly bilingual' or 'parfaitement bilingue'.

The second is that a bilingual is anyone who speaks either English or French but understands the other. The constitution stipulates that both English and French are official languages. This implies that a 'true' Cameroonian from a linguistic perspective is that person who can speak and understand both languages without exception. The constitution does not talk of English or French or English and/or French. Yet the practice on the field indicates that the constitution has been misinterpreted to mean English or French or English and/or French. From a constitutional perspective, any

Cameroonian who accommodates only one of the languages is indeed violating the constitution. In fact anyone who gives preference to one language is predominantly quasilingual or semilingual, to use the expression of Valadez and his colleagues (2000),—not bilingual in the sense of the constitution. Semilinguals are bilinguals who display limited proficiency in their two languages due to deficiencies in competences including size of vocabulary, correctness of language, degree of automatism, ability to create neologisms, meanings and imagery and mastery of the emotive and cognitive functions (Valadez et.al, 2000). This category argues that Cameroon and not Cameroonians is said to be bilingual. Even those who are educated usually display a dominant French language and underdeveloped English language skills, or vice versa (Enama Belilibi, 2016:19).

The third category is made of those who perfectly grasp only one of the languages and make very little or no effort at learning the other language. Cameroonians in this category usually feel contented with one language and are likely to treat the other language with contempt. They have the tendency to justify their being unable to master and accommodate both languages on the grounds that it is Cameroon that is said to be bilingual, and not Cameroonians. This linguistic incivility or quasi-bilingual attitude has caused many to minimize bilingualism i.e. the genuine willingness to accommodate both English and French.

So, one begins to see that from inception, the language issue was politicized given that majority of Cameroonians interpreted it as a matter of choice and not a matter of obligation. Bilingualism is only limited to the extent that Cameroonians as individuals permit. Bilingualism lies in the eyes of the beholder—such is how bilingualism is best represented. It implies that Cameroonians have the leeway to make a choice between English and/or French which means that linguistic choices can be made for political interest.

English and French bilingualism as factor of unity

Unity and political stability in a multilingual State can be understood from the perspective of the contact theory. According to the contact theory, personal interaction with people from linguistic groups other than one's own, whether as neighbours, friends, relatives, or coworkers breaks down stereotypes, produces cross-cultural understanding and over all better intercultural relations. The idea is that

more contact between individuals belonging to antagonistic social groups (defined by custom, language, beliefs, nationality or identity) tends to undermine negative stereotypes and reduce prejudice, thus improving inter group relations by making people more willing to deal with each other as equals.” (Forbes, 1997: ix, cited in Adsett and Morin, 2005).

Chumbow (2009:29) also argues that linguistic diversity is rarely in itself the cause of tension, conflict, disunity and war. In his view, linguistic related conflicts are ultimately caused by problems of social, economic and political power inequalities between linguistic communities, not by the languages per se. The implication is that if linguistic diversity does not bring war, it can contribute to peace and unity.

To some extent, official bilingualism has preserved some form of unity in Cameroon. Bernard Fonlon (1969) (himself a bilingual Cameroonian) already saw in bilingualism a cultural factor of unity. According to him “one people, one language” that is heard in countries like Israel, for instance, is not an empty political slogan. The unifying power of language is that it not only binds together, in heart and mind, the people whose property it is, it not only give them a distinctive personality, but, when a language acquires the enviable fortune of becoming a medium of wider expression, at the world level, it serves to bring closer together the far flung people that use it (Bernard Fonlon, 1969:25). At independence, nearly all African states became a patch-work of linguistic and ethnic groups which became united through an official language. In essence, the best fit approach to enhance and consolidate national unity in multiethnic societies of Africa at independence was to have a foreign or better say a neutral language that acts as the language of all without necessarily jeopardizing other private languages. Even though in practice, English and French bilingualism in Cameroon is far- fetched, they enhance a sense of collective bilingualism among Cameroonians. Through collective bilingualism, there is a general feeling that every Cameroonian needs and has to be bilingual without exception. One reason for advocating bilingual education in Cameroon is to instill a sense of integration and equality among Cameroonians, apart from viewing bilingual education as a step towards gaining the means to communicate socially and effectively. Chan and Abdullah (2015:56) demonstrate that when students gain fluency in the language that

is used in mainstream society, it enables them to integrate and feel connected to their peers and society. The road to effective bilingualism may be long and winding, but Cameroonians, in their large majority, perceive English and French bilingualism as forming part of their vision to be Cameroonian and important to the Cameroonian identity.

At the symbolic level, major identification papers are in both English and French. The National Identity Card, the Passport, the Voter's Card, is in English and French. Letter head inscriptions in major official documents bearing the signs and symbols of the institution, the seal and motto of the Republic of Cameroon are in both languages. These make Cameroonians feel at least symbolically that they belong to the same linguistic community and hence nation.

The English-only and French-only movements as threats to unity

The English-only and French-only movements are about language restrictionism and reductionism. These are movements that set to holistically establish or regain the importance or preeminence of one language. They set to create the exceptionality of a particular language. These movements are opposed to the English-French-only movement which is what is expected to be, at least from a post-1996 constitutional standpoint. Underlying these movements is the fact that proficiency in both languages is not equated to political loyalty to Cameroon. Instead, the movements produce competing nationalism feelings which threaten national unity. In a study of language attitude towards the State in the French-dominated province of Ontario in Canada, Duquette (2015:636) finds that the mastery of only one language limits human contact and cross-cultural understanding. In such movements an attempt is made to appropriate one language, promote it through persuasion or force or prevent it from influence, make of it one's personal property and identity, and when the ripe time comes, it is used as a weapon against the 'other'. English-only and French-only movements are out to reassert language differentials and to remind the State that although all may be citizens of one country, they have different linguistic backgrounds. This implies that apart from the national identity, there is an infra identity based on one's belonging to a particular linguistic community. In a context of language-only movements, national identity co-exist with infra-national identity which is perceived as a threat to the feeling of oneness, "unity in diversity" because it rests

on linguistic particularism. In Cameroon, where Francophones constitute the linguistic majority and Anglophones the linguistic minority, both movements co-exist and compete for sociolinguistic power and representation. The English-only and French-only movements in reality express some form of defensive and/or offensive nationalism in the web of linguistic ethnocentrism.

The French-only movement and offensive nationalism

The French-only movement is said to have emerged as a result of the fear of the onslaught of English language. Crystal (2004) reported that the English language has become the common language of the world, with approximately 1.4 billion users across the globe. This implies that if English language continues to spread like wildfire, the French language risks extinction.⁵¹ In fact, French language is on the decline and even in the Francophone world. The most striking examples are found in Africa: south of the Sahara. Countries which formerly had large French-speaking populations are making the switch to English due to its relevance in Southern Africa, as well as internationally (Plonksy et al., 2013:7). As an official language of the African Union and as an international language, English is more important for the continent than French. There is an increasing fear that French is being relegated to the background as second language. It has even been argued that in two decades, French may not be spoken in Africa at all, and according to Plonksy et al. (2013:7) that reality seems possible in Rwanda, where “only a minority of the population speaks passable French” and where English has, since 2008, been emphasized in academic and political life.

The spread of English is not only seen as an empowering force but also as an imperialistic tool. In the view of Plonksy and his colleagues, the real reason for the triumph of English is the triumph of the United States and it can be argued that the growing importance of English is a way in which the power of the United States is wielded, and this linguistic power is a new, post-colonial way of spreading influence (Plonksy et al., 2013:17).

⁵¹ Today, 26 countries in sub-Saharan Africa use English either as an official language exclusively (like Nigeria and Ghana) or as an official language alongside another African language (like in Kenya or South Africa). English is also used for communicative purposes in some 53 countries in Africa (Negash, 2011; World Factbook, 2013).

In Cameroon, underlying the French-only movement is the fact that to be Cameroonian is first of all to be able to be proficient in French. This French-first ideology means that proficiency in French is equated with political loyalty to Cameroon as a State and what it means to be Cameroonian. This implies that an emphasis on the use of another language could be attacked as a barrier to learning French and could be viewed as a threat to national unity.

The first two constitutions as examined above emphasized the authenticity of French over English, and even with the advent of the 1996 Constitution which talked of linguistic equality, nothing much has changed. French is the dominant language in public services in spite of the efforts made to bureaucratize bilingualism. Some official documents are by default written exclusively in French. When French language is taught as a dominant and compulsory language in schools, this is a French-only movement. Those who receive this education grow up to be more fluent in French, usually at the expense of English.

The English-only movement and defensive nationalism

The English-only movement emerged as an attempt to limit the onslaught of French and reassert the importance of English as a language of a set of Cameroonians apart. Proficiency in English is first of all equated with the fact that one is first of all Southern / English Speaking Cameroonian, Anglo Saxon Cameroonian, before being Cameroonian. Like the French-only movement, this implies that the use and teaching of French, or English by predominantly French Speaking Cameroonians could be attacked as a barrier to learning of English and could be viewed as a threat to national unity. Proponents of the English-only movement argue that the struggle is aimed at resisting a form of linguistic assimilation from French domination. The English-only movement perceives French as an imperial language, given that it is the language of the majority. The movement is therefore seen as a struggle against French imperialism and domination.

The English-only movement is said to be an attempt to establish a form of linguistic justice by revalorising English. Anglophones have resented the domination of French in official expressions, symbolic expressions and representations of State's artifacts. In informal interactions, Anglophone stereotypes and clichés are

commonplace and Anglophones have associated this to French domination. As a minority language, English suffers from feelings of cultural assimilation.⁵² It was in 1968 that Georges Orwell first recognized that “modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble” (Orwell, 1968:128). Taking the necessary trouble means “political regeneration” which implies widening the scope of those involved in the fight against bad English beyond professional writers (Ibid). Defenders of the English language in Cameroon feel that as their linguistic identity, English is in trouble because it is being imitated by unqualified English language professionals. Thus the *Francophonisation* of English is the process by which unqualified professionals (usually those of predominantly French language expression) involve in the teaching of English to pupils and students undertaking the English sub-system of education.

In essence, the English-only movement is an attempt to limit the influence of French over English and in so doing French and Francophones are excluded from carved-out English-only territorial spaces. The English-only movement operates by *Anglophonising* pre-established norms and institutions in Cameroon. In the domain of education for example, Anglophones’ request for the two State Universities (Universities of Buea and Bamenda) situated in the Anglophone regions to be Anglo Saxon is not only an indication of an attempt to preserve English/Anglo Saxon culture and identity, but, also, it reflects an attempt to exclude French and mainstream Francophones. In the same direction, petitions to government against the teaching of English and English language subjects by mainstream Francophone teachers in secondary schools and universities, particularly in Anglophone regions symbolize an exclusionary attempt to restore *Anglophonism* at the expense of *Francophonism*. Anglophone lawyers have also petitioned government against the influence of the

⁵² According to Chumbow (2009:27) linguistic inequality is an expression of cultural assimilation (planned or unplanned). As he puts it, Cultural Assimilation is an ideology which favours the assimilation of minority languages and cultures by a majority dominant language and culture. Cultural assimilation is a process whose finality (within the context of a hidden or open agenda), is the loss or death of the minority languages and cultures, usually within the space of three generations. Furthermore, Cultural assimilation whether ideological or not, is the result of the unfavourable balance of power against the minority language and culture. The dominant language and culture usually assimilate the weaker language where dominance is determined by such factors as the prestige status of the language, the number of valourising functions (economically viable domains in which the language is used), etc.

French legal system over the English legal system. The civil law, they argue, which is the French legal system is incompatible with the Common law system, which is the English legal system in operation in Anglophone Cameroon. The transfer of Francophone magistrates to preside over courts in Anglophone Cameroon is viewed not only as a threat to Anglophone legal system, but perhaps, most importantly, the request that these magistrates be retransferred in Francophone regions is even more of a threat to bilingualism and a frustration to attempts of Francophones who try to be bilingual by working in Anglophone regions. Through these attempts not only is French being rejected or neglected, but, bilingualism itself is under attack. When English is taught as a dominant and compulsory language in schools, this is an English-only movement. Those who receive this education grow up to be more fluent in English, usually at the expense of French.

Conclusions

Official bilingualism might have earned the enviable status of Cameroon being a bilingual country, but the effective practice of bilingualism has essentially remained an individual affair or the affair of society outside the State. The weak institutionalization of official bilingualism might have maintained political stability but might be failing to sustain or at least reinforce national cohesion. Weak institutionalization has created complexities of inferiority and superiority among the two linguistic communities. Anglophone Cameroonians have felt the French-only offensive movement and developed, as counter measure an English-only defensive movement. Both movements which carry the germs of nationalism are in competition for survival, and in trying to do so, they reinvent political identities based on linguistic affinities. Today, linguistic inequality in multilingual Commonwealth States can be interpreted as a form of linguistic injustice and serve political claims that could go as far as questioning the nature of the State. Given that linguistic diversity is vulnerable to political instrumentalism, it is incumbent on multilingual States to stress the need for its citizens to interpret language diversity in terms of complementarities. This can be accomplished through a system of rewards for those who make genuine efforts to be effectively multilingual.

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Human Rights: The Commonwealth and the Banjul Charter [Footnote 53]

Femi Richard Omotoyinbo

Abstract

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights [Banjul Charter 1981] is the latest among other human rights regional instruments, i.e., ACHR 1969 and ECHR 1950. While this may be unproblematic, there are contentions that the Banjul Charter is the least effective among other instruments of human rights; it lacks significant influence on the African continent and seems to exist only in theory. The unstable peace in many African States further suggests the ineffectiveness of the Banjul Charter. Given this narrative, this paper presents a two dimensional reaction to the contentions. On one hand, I will show that the Commonwealth's human rights activities, as evident in its values and principles, could 'inspire' the Banjul Charter to make expected influence in harmony with regional standards. On the other hand, I will identify that whereas the Banjul Charter could be below expectations, it is capable of informing the Commonwealth to be more effective in its human rights mandate. The presentation of the two dimensional reaction involves a comparative assessment of the definition, nature/attributes, institutional structure, and implementation mechanism of human rights in the Commonwealth principles on human rights and the Banjul Charter. This comparative assessment would *inter alia* show the implementation mechanism of the Commonwealth human rights mandate from which the Banjul Charter could take a cue. It would also explore the unique nature of human rights in the context of the Banjul Charter to highlight its capability to informing the Commonwealth to be more effective in its human rights mandate.

Keywords: African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Commonwealth principles on human rights, comparative assessment

Introduction

The World War II has been a significant trigger of the attentions given to human rights. There is, therefore, common consensus that human rights could be fundamental for the realization of peace, unity, and social sanity (UDHR 1948, Sidorsky 2000, Beitz 2009). To put human rights into practice, the international community has designed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as a blueprint for (consenting) States to follow. There have been some replications at the regional levels, i.e., European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR 1950), the American Convention on Human Rights (1969), and the African Charter on Human

and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter 1981)⁵³. Despite cultural and socio-political difference(s) in the regions, the UDHR still has influence on the regional instruments of human rights to increase their similarities in content, scope and purpose. However, the similarities in the regional human rights instruments do not suggest that there are similar actualization and sustenance of the envisaged outcomes of human rights. Of course, socio-political exegesis and challenges of modernization perpetuate the need for reconstructions, adjustments and strengthening of the human rights instruments across all levels. Notwithstanding, every human rights instrument should have considerable impact in their respective domains or regions.

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter 1981) is the latest among other human rights regional instruments, i.e., ACHR 1969 and ECHR 1950. While this may be unproblematic, there are contentions that the Banjul Charter is the least effective among other instruments of human rights; it lacks significant influence on the African continent and seems to exist only in theory (Evans and Murray, 2002). The unstable peace in many African States further suggests the ineffectiveness of the Banjul Charter.

Given this narrative, this paper presents a two dimensional reaction to the contentions. On one hand, I will show that the Commonwealth's human rights activities, as evident in its values and principles, could 'inspire' the Banjul Charter [representing the African Union and/or its human rights mandate] to make expected influence in harmony with international standards. On the other hand, I will identify that whereas the Banjul Charter could be below expectations, it is capable of informing the Commonwealth to be more effective in its human rights mandate. The presentation of the two dimensional reaction involves a comparative assessment that would *inter alia* show the implementation mechanism of the Commonwealth human rights mandate from which the Banjul Charter could take a cue. I will also explore the unique nature of human rights in the context of the Banjul Charter to highlight its capability to informing the Commonwealth to be more effective in its human rights

⁵³ In the course of this paper, the 'Banjul Charter' may not always mean the Charter per se: it could mean the AU/OAU, and/or its human right mandate.

mandate. I will use the final part of the paper to address a number of objections, and then provide the conclusion.

The Comparative Assessment

There could be a number of comparisons to consider, but for the purpose of this paper, the comparative assessment would be on the definition, nature/attributes, institutional structure, and implementation mechanism(s) of human rights in the Commonwealth principle on human rights and the Banjul Charter. The comparative assessment would *inter alia* reveal the shortcomings in the Commonwealth Human Rights mandate and in the Human rights in the Banjul Charter context. It would also show the respective advantages that could be borrowed for the effectiveness of the two – especially the Banjul Charter

Definition

Neither the Commonwealth principles on human rights nor the Banjul Charter is explicit on the definition of human rights. This is not to say that there is no specific identification of human rights for both the Commonwealth principle and the Banjul Charter. The two clearly consider their human rights mandate to be in accordance with international standards available in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human rights (Harare Declaration 1991. African [Banjul] Charter, 1981). I will take this to mean that whatever definition that is applicable at the international level applies at the regional levels. The international definition of human rights is only available from the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), as “rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status.” In other words, both the commonwealth human rights principle and the Banjul Charter consider ‘human rights’ as rights of any entity/person who qualifies as human being irrespective of their backgrounds or origins. Going by this common definition of human rights between the Commonwealth human rights principle and the Banjul Charter, I will proceed to consider the nature/attributes of human rights in the two contexts.

Nature/Attributes

Three attributes are quite apparent in the common definition of human rights mentioned above.⁵⁴ First, we could identify that 'human rights' are rights and nothing else. Albeit being tautologous, human rights are neither privileges nor social benefits at the prerogative of an authority. Citizens/People may not need to satisfy some conditions before they could enjoy their fundamental human rights; they deserve the rights by virtue of being human. This is not to claim that human rights may not appear as constitutional rights, which require the individual to conform to the constitution (i.e., constitutional duties) in order to enjoy or sustain the enjoyment of the rights. However, it is a usual understanding that being human remains the prerequisite for enjoying human rights (at least under normal circumstances).

The second noticeable attribute is that the rights are in plural form, i.e., 'rights'. Apart from the semantic significance, the plural nature of human rights suggests that the rights are somehow interwoven. The right to participate in the government of one's country, for example, has link with the right to a nationality and even the right to life. Although a breach of one right may not translate to a breach of other rights, yet the protection of a right is only meaningful when other rights enjoy similar protection. The declarations and communiques of the Commonwealth and the contents of the Banjul Charter all construe human rights in this plural form (e.g., Harare Declaration 1991, Kampala Communique 2007, Banjul Charter, 1981).

Thirdly, human rights are conceived as a universal phenomenon. Recall that the definition of human rights (common to both the Commonwealth principle and the Banjul Charter) takes everybody as deserving human rights as far as they are human. It may be right to conclude from the above that human rights are universal for both the Commonwealth principle and the Banjul charter. However, it is important to notice a difference between the universality of human rights and the universality of the applicability of human rights. While the Commonwealth principle and the Banjul Charter are similar on the former, they have some differences in respect of the latter.

⁵⁴ More information on these attributes is available in the work of Nickel, James. 2014. Human Rights. *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.) [Assessed 14 February 2017 (<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/rights-human/>)]

That is, both agree that human rights are for everyone in the universe, but the practical realities of the Banjul Charter show that not all human rights are applicable in the African setting. There are socio-cultural factors that may prove contrary to the applicability of certain rights. For example, many African countries deny the applicability of the *LGTB*⁵⁵ right and even the right to life (that involves the removal of death penalty). The difference here is that the Commonwealth takes a *foundational approach*⁵⁶ in that any right on the “official lists of human rights” counts as a human right. Whereas the Banjul Charter takes a *culture-dependence approach*, if a right would be applicable in the African context, it must not be to the detriment of established culture or tradition. Although the difference is yet another sensitive issue between the Commonwealth and relevant African member states, its significance to the purpose of this paper would be obvious latter.

Institutional Structure

By institutional structure, I refer to the organs, units, agents via which there is a pursuit, actualization and sustenance of the human rights mandate. The institutional structure of the Commonwealth is not quite straightforward. This could be the reason why Tim Hancock claims that the human rights mandate of the Commonwealth is not well known and that its human rights mandate does not “match practice” (The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) 2014). *Au contraire*, the Commonwealth has an institutional structure for its mandate. Meanwhile, a possible reason for the supposed oblivious nature of the Commonwealth human rights mandate is that all the units/sectors of the Commonwealth engage with the human rights mandate. The numerous engagements seem to becloud the organ, which is the key human rights institutional structure of the Commonwealth. The organ of the Commonwealth that majorly serves as the human rights institutional structure is the Human Rights Unit (HRU) established in 1985 as part of the International Affairs Division. At the onset, the HRU has the mandate to promote the understanding of and respect for human rights in line with the Commonwealth principles and the United Nations (UN) human rights institutions. Later in 2002, the mandate of the HRU included the protection of

⁵⁵ *LGTB* is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, and Transgender

⁵⁶ See Nickel, James. 2014. Human Rights. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). [Assessed 14 February 2017 (<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/rights-human/>).]

human rights in the Commonwealth (Mckinnon. 2013, Human Rights Unit, Commonwealth Secretariat 2014:2). From the above, we could broadly consider the institutional structure of the Commonwealth to extend from the Secretariat to the International Affairs Division and then the HRU, where the latter serves as the key unit in charge of the human rights mandate.

In the context of the Banjul Charter, there exists also an institutional structure. Articles 30-44 of the Banjul Charter launched the Human Rights Commission (the Commission) into existence. Article 45 lists the specific responsibilities of the Commission to include promotion and protection of the human rights mandate. Unlike the HRU of the Commonwealth, the Commission is not the only major institutional structure for the human rights mandate of the African Union [AU formerly OAU]. After about two decades [1981 – 2004], the African Human Rights Court (the Court) exists by virtue of Article 1 of the protocol to the Banjul Charter. In effect, the Court is to complement the Commission in the quest to uphold the human rights mandate of the African Union (See Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights). Thus, in contrast to the (single) institutional structure of the Commonwealth, the Banjul Charter (representing the OAU) has a dual institutional structure for its human rights mandate.

Implementation Mechanism(s)

Having seen the institutional structures of both the Commonwealth and the Banjul Charter, we would now consider the implementation mechanisms for human rights put in place through the respective institutional structures and other complementing efforts. I understand the implementation mechanism of the Commonwealth to be of seven dimensions. A very interesting dimension is that the Commonwealth makes human rights mandate (at least in virtue of ratifying the UN Charter and the UDHR) a membership criterion for members and potential members.

Secondly, the HRU provides human and material resources through its open offices (in London and Geneva) for member states to work on issues concerning human rights (Human Right Unit [HRU] 2014:9). Through the Commonwealth secretariat,

States receive moral and financial supports during the process of their Universal Public Review (UPR) as required by the UN Human Rights Council (HRU 2014:6). The fourth dimension involves sensitization, trainings and publications to promote and protect human rights among member states. Parliaments and the Judiciary are the general targets of the trainings, while the publications are for the Police officers so they could be abreast of human rights developments and corresponding requirements. An example is the Commonwealth Manual on Human Rights Training for Police (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2006).⁵⁷

Another dimension is that there is an internal cooperation within the Commonwealth on the human rights mandate. The HRU works together with other bodies [e.g., the Secretariat, the Commonwealth Head of Government (CHOG), the Eminent Persons Group (EPG), and even the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG)]. This cooperation on the human rights mandate takes us to the sixth dimension, which is the reiteration of the human rights mandate in all actions and events (e.g., communiqués and declarations). Finally, the HRU has been creating partnership with local and international organisations to motivate human rights education among member States, and to encourage the creation of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) across the Commonwealth member States (HRU 2014:6).

The implementation mechanism of human rights in the context of the Banjul Charter is also different. However, unlike in the Commonwealth context, where we have seven dimensions, there are five dimensions in the AU contexts. Article 2 of the protocol shows the first dimension, which is between the Court and the Commission. The Court is to complement the mandate of the commission, while the Commission could advise the Court or submit complaints to the Court as lodged by eligible States. The Court also exists for the interpretation and application of the Banjul Charter, the protocol and other human rights instruments (Article 5, 6 (1&3), and Article 3).

The second dimension is between the Court and the Secretary-general, the latter receives nominations into (judicial) positions in the former (Article 13 (1)). The

⁵⁷ See Commonwealth Secretariat. 2006. Commonwealth Manual on Human Rights Training for Police, Commonwealth Secretariat, London. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14217/9781848598720-en>

Secretary-general also has the responsibility of declaring a seat vacant in the Court, upon information from the President of the Court (Article 20). Thirdly, there is the Assembly of Heads of States and Government (the Assembly) who ensures proper representation of the major African regions among the Judges of the Court (Article 14 (2)). The Assembly is also responsible for the financing of the Court, in terms of emoluments, expenses, allowances and budget of the Court (Article 32). The Council of Ministers is in the fourth dimension of the implementation mechanism. Any decision of the Court concerning a case is transmitted to both the Assembly and the Commission, but the Council of Ministers are to monitor the execution of the Court's decision on behalf of the Assembly (Article 29 (1&2)). Organisations are also part of the implementation mechanism of human rights in the African context. I consider their involvement as the fifth dimension. The Court has jurisdiction on cases from African Intergovernmental Organisations (AIOs) and could give Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) observer status in its proceedings and other activities on human rights (Article 5 (1e) & 5 (3)).

Now what is the significance of this comparative assessment?

Taking a Cue: the Banjul Charter

From the comparative assessment above, it is clear that there are similarities between the Commonwealth human rights principles and the Banjul Charter (representing the AU human rights mandate) on the definition and the nature/attributes of human rights. Minor differences begin to appear on the nature/attributes of human rights; and there are major differences in terms of the implementation mechanisms in the two contexts. I consider the implementation mechanism of the Commonwealth not only to have more dimensions than what is obtainable in the Banjul Charter context, but also that the Commonwealth human rights policies could yield better results than the AU human rights mandate. A reason for my claim is that the AU is yet to pursue a common reaction to human rights among its member States as it is in the Commonwealth context. We could observe that while almost all the African States have ratified the Banjul Charter, only twenty-four States ratified the protocol establishing the Court. So how could the Court

complement the effort of the Commission in the States that are yet to ratify the protocol? No wonder that the Court seems less effective and existing only for Tanzania, where it is located.

The Commonwealth is exemplary in making the ratification of some human rights treaties an essential condition for membership; it thereby achieves some uniformity among its member States. It is unlikely that the African Union could use such membership policy to promote human rights mandate among its members States because the issue of membership is already over. However, it is still possible for the AU to follow such means to encourage a common consciousness to human rights among the AU States. This could provoke misunderstanding among the States at the onset, but if the AU is sincere about its human rights mandate, it would seek the success of the human rights mandate as much as possible.

The comparative assessment shows that the Commonwealth and the AU share similar mandate, which is the promotion and protection of human rights. On the part of the AU, it still has a cue to take from the Commonwealth. Recall that the Commonwealth gives financial commitment to the promotion and protecting of human rights through financial support to member States that are preparing for their Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The AU could follow the same method and even fund the creation of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) within its member States. Financial commitment to the human rights mandate could go along with the creation of research facilities or even institutes for the use of the AU members States. Although I must admit my inability to verify the financial commitment of the AU to its human rights mandate, I still believe that the AU is capable of doing more than what the Commonwealth does.

Additionally, the AU could copy the Commonwealth implementation mechanism in which publication materials on human rights are given to the Police, the legislature and the judiciary of member States. On one hand, this could make the Banjul Charter to have practical significance among member States. On the other hand, it could be a means of enlightening States who are yet to ratify the protocol establishing the Court to consider ratifying it. The trainings and publications would not only encourage

human rights practice at the national levels but individual citizens within the AU would enjoy their human rights, as they would be protected by the actions of trained judiciary, legislatures, and police within the States.

In the fifth dimension, we could see that there is internal cooperation within the Commonwealth regarding human rights; but the human rights mandate is not limited to the internal system of the Commonwealth. In the AU context, external involvement is minimal; NGOS and AIOs are only having relevance in the human rights mandate at the discretion of the Court. A major outcome is that the NGOs are not encouraged to contribute to the human rights mandate of the AU. Hence, the 'burden' of promoting and protecting human rights is still fully on the institutional structure of the AU and good success might be farfetched. The AU could take a cue from the Commonwealth and seek an active engagement of NGOs for the protection and promotion of human rights.

The AU is keen to distant itself from the former OAU; and it has taken considerable actions, especially on human rights. Bience Gawanas (2009:137-138) comments that the AU has increased its commitments to human rights through the 'adoption of the African Union's Constitutive Act, and through the 'New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The consequences of the above includes the reaffirmations of African Union's commitment to its human rights mandate; increased priority for human rights as a catalyst for development, and the policy change from *non-interference* to *non-indifference* to human rights issues within African States. While these could be commendable, I believe that that there is still more to be done; and more would be achievable if the positive aspects of human rights implementation mechanism of other regions or bodies (like the Commonwealth) are considered as lessons for the African Union.

Taking a Cue: The Commonwealth

Though I use previous section of this paper to focus on the possible lessons that the AU could take from the Commonwealth human rights principle, I do believe that the AU (Banjul Charter) could as well inform the Commonwealth to be more effective in

its promotion and protection of human rights. I will use the following section to focus on what exactly is in the Banjul Charter from which the Commonwealth could also take a cue.

The Banjul Charter is very unique in its exclusive inclusion of 'duties', it is considered the first human rights treaty to enumerate or give some focus to individual's duties (Steiner and Alston 2000:692). Note that by 'individual duties' the Charter does not mean the corresponding reactions of individuals to the human rights mandate of the AU. The inclusion of 'individual duties' clearly shows that, for the AU, human rights are considered to cover all strata of the society. We could see the diction of Articles 27-29 requiring that the individual has a duty to the 'family and society, the States and other recognised communities and the international community' (Art. 27). It is also important for the individual to respect his fellow beings (Art. 28). Additionally, the individual has the duty to "preserve harmonious development of the family", "cohesion and respect", "service to national community", "strengthen positive African values" and "contribute...to the promotion and achievement of African Unity" (Art. 29).

The major point of emphasis here is that human rights promotion and protection is not only a task for the States, government or non-governmental organisations but for everyone across all levels. So how does the notion of 'duties' inform the human rights mandate of the Commonwealth?

One point that would guide us to answering the above question is that the Commonwealth human rights mandate (as shown above in its implementation mechanism) is yet to consider human rights in the contexts of individuals. We could remember that much focus is given to States, their units or organs and relevant NGOs in the quest to promote and protect human rights among member States. The Commonwealth seems to disregard the fact that individuals constitute the units, NGOs or States' organs in its focus. However, a direct influence on these individuals would have positive effect on its human rights mandate. For example, if the Commonwealth could affect individuals to participate in the human rights mandate, they could serve as watchdogs in their States, they could organise or form human

rights pressure groups, clubs or even 'blow whistle' on any hidden breach of human rights across all levels. It is even possible that the influenced individuals would develop professionally to occupy sensitive positions in their States; they would have the capacity plus responsibility to uphold the promotion and protection of human rights in their respective offices. This could reduce the expenses to organise enlightenment trainings on human rights, because individuals are already well enlightened so there would be a cost-effective realization of the human rights mandate.

Furthermore, the possible inclusion of 'duties' by the Commonwealth, as it in the Banjul Charter, could give the Commonwealth an opportunity to impact all levels of the societies that exist within the member States. Imagine that the Commonwealth HRU would organise 'human rights mentoring scheme' for youths and select annual 'human rights ambassadors' to reflect or represent the human rights mandate of the Commonwealth. The individuals concerned would in turn affect their families, friends, their associates, the society, and the States at large. Thus, the foundation of human rights is made solid for the member States, and the demise of human rights in the future becomes more difficult. Having provided some ways in which the notion of 'duties', in the Banjul Charter, could inform the effectiveness of the human rights mandate of the Commonwealth, I would reiterate here that although the Banjul Charter (could be less effective at the moment it) is not irrelevant in informing the effectiveness of an active human rights mandate.

Potential Objections

Before reaching the end of this paper, I will briefly consider a few objections to my claims.

The first objection that I will consider is about the choice of the Commonwealth as an example for the Banjul Charter. The argument of this objection is that the Commonwealth is less apt for such comparative assessment: unlike the European Union or the Organisation of American States, the Commonwealth is a body of inter-regional States and not a regional group of States. Its institutional structure is also

dissimilar to the institutional structure of the regions: the Commonwealth has a Human Right Unit but not a human rights Commission or a human rights Court. As such, a proper comparative assessment should be between either of the regional organisations and not with a body like the Commonwealth.

The first reply to this objection is that the choice of the Commonwealth (for the comparative assessment) is apt in the context of this conference, which is an event about the Commonwealth and it takes place in Africa (Cameroon). Secondly, the similarities between the regional organisations neither necessitate their aptness for comparison nor make the Commonwealth less apt for the comparative assessment. While the regions may be similar indeed, we cannot deny possible socio-cultural differences between them. Meanwhile, region-based socio-cultural differences have little effect on the Commonwealth because, as a body, it cuts across all regions. Therefore, a comparative assessment of human rights mandate between the Commonwealth and the African Union is not only unproblematic but also worthwhile in other regions like the European Union and the Organisation of American States.

Another objection concerns the notion of 'duties' as it appears in the Banjul Charter. I have earlier claimed that the Commonwealth would be more effective in its human rights mandate if it adopts the notion of 'duties'. The attack here is that the notion of 'duties' in the Banjul Charter is still problematic and has not yielded any results in the African context let alone its likelihood to influence the Commonwealth human rights mandate. There are two major claims of this objection. On one hand, the contents of the 'duties' need linguistic clarity. For example, the 'family' in Article 27 of the Banjul Charter is not explicit enough. Are we to consider the 'family' in terms of extended family, the nuclear family or as both? On another hand, the AU needs to provide interpretation or elaboration on the legal implementation of 'duties'. It is unclear if the 'duties' are "strictly binding" or if they are simply informative on the obligations of individuals⁵⁸. I consider the claims of this objection to be very important because if the notion of 'duties' is problematic and less effective in its original context (i.e., the AU) there is no guarantee that the notion of 'duties' would have considerable impact in another context.

⁵⁸ See Steiner and Alston 2000, pp. 693-695 for more.

However, despite the importance of this objection, I do not consider it a big threat to my claim. Yes, the effectiveness of the notion of 'duties' is yet unverifiable, yet it does not imply that the notion of 'duties' is ineffective. We consider the fact that the Banjul Charter is the latest among human rights regional treaties, and still has opportunities for tests and amendments. The notion of 'duties' may be presently ineffective in the AU context because it has not been pursued practically. However, it is likely that the concept could be effective if put into practice in the Commonwealth context. There could be some alternative to make the Commonwealth human rights mandate extend to the individual levels, but until such is identified and confirmed, I still maintain that the notion of 'duties' remains a considerable option to pursue.

Conclusion

The attention given to human rights makes it more noteworthy in modern times as very crucial for peacebuilding. At all levels, there is need for increase in the commitment given to the promotion and protection of human rights. In this paper, I considered the human rights mandates in both the Commonwealth and the Banjul Charter contexts. Using a comparative assessment, I showed that the Commonwealth human rights principle could inspire an effective human rights promotion and protection in the Banjul Charter context (i.e., the African system) – specifically in terms of the implementation mechanism. In addition, I identified that that the notion of 'duties' as presented in the Banjul Charter could inform the Commonwealth to extend its human rights mandate into the individual levels among its member States. Notwithstanding the differences, human rights organs/bodies could share ideas and mechanisms for a holistic realization of the human rights mandates since such realization could strengthen the likelihood of sustainable peace in the world at large.

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Le Commonwealth dans la mouvance de la promotion de la paix en Afrique depuis la fin de la guerre froide: enjeux et perspectives

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Introduction

Depuis la fin de la guerre froide, l'Afrique apparaît comme une zone grise où la paix est sans cesse en péril. L'impasse des crises africaines, crises cumulatives selon Cathérine Coquery- Vidrovitch, sans issue politique, économique ou militaire a conduit Pierre Conesa à forger le concept du « monde inutile »⁵⁹ pour désigner l'Afrique. Vus de l'Occident, les Etats africains sont perçus comme des Etats prédateurs, des « entités chaotiques ingouvernables », des foyers potentiels de conflits où la paix est une vacuité, un mirage. Nombre de spécialistes occidentaux prédisent à l'Afrique plus de malheur. Certains rendent d'ailleurs les Africains responsables de cette dramatique situation. Selon eux, non contente de mourir, l'Afrique, frappée par le « syndrome de victimisation » serait en train de se suicider, assistée par ses thuriféraires qui lui mentent. Cet afro-pessimisme se nourrit d'une triste réalité ; depuis 1990, l'Afrique est la région où les conflits armés ont fait le plus de morts dans le monde. Bien plus, environ 65% du temps de travail à l'ONU est consacré à la recherche des solutions aux problèmes africains : guerres, massacres, coups d'Etat, crises politiques et sociales, dictatures, exodes... Ce triste bilan pose le problème de la responsabilité collective à l'égard de l'Afrique.

Au regard de ses objectifs, le Commonwealth est un fait majeur des relations internationales contemporaines, bien moins par la croissance du nombre de ses membres que par ses actions qui contribuent à l'édification d'un ordre international plus solidaire. De ce point de vue, l'intérêt et l'importance des recherches sur cette organisation internationale est indéniable notamment en ce qui concerne la promotion de la paix. En effet, à l'instar des autres institutions internationales, la paix occupe une fonction centrale. Elle constitue un objectif légitime pour le « club des gentlemen ».

Cette contribution est une tentative d'appréhender, à l'aune des paradigmes réaliste et néo-réaliste, les efforts déployés par le Commonwealth dans le cadre de la diffusion de la paix en Afrique depuis la fin de la confrontation idéologique Est-ouest. Dans une approche constructiviste et analytique, elle se propose de cerner les enjeux ainsi que les perspectives du déploiement de cette organisation intergouvernementale sur une scène africaine en mutation.

Mots-clés: la guerre froide, « monde inutile », organisation intergouvernementale

⁵⁹ *Le Monde diplomatique* Mars 2001.

Abstract/Introduction in English

Since the end of the Cold War, Africa has appeared to be a grey zone where peace is constantly in danger. The deadlock of African crises, cumulative crises according to Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, without political, economic or military outcomes, has led Pierre Conesa to create the concept of the 'useless world' to refer to Africa. Viewed from the West, African states are perceived as predator states, 'chaotic, ungovernable entities', potential sources of conflict where peace is a vacuity, a mirage. A number of Western specialists predict more adversity for Africa. Some, moreover, hold Africans responsible for this tragic situation. According to them, not content to die, Africa, struck by the 'victim syndrome', would be committing suicide, assisted by its thurifers who lie to it. This Afro-pessimism feeds on a sad reality; since 1990, Africa has been the region where armed conflicts have caused the most deaths in the world. Moreover, about 65% of time spent at the UN is dedicated to searching for solutions to Africa's problems: wars, massacres, coups d'états, political and social crises, dictators, exoduses... This grim assessment poses the problem of collective responsibility towards Africa.

In view of its objectives, the Commonwealth is a major force in contemporary international relations, much less by the growth of the number of its members than by its actions which contribute to the construction of a more interdependent international order. From this point of view, the interest and importance of research on this international organization is important, particularly with regard to the promotion of peace. Indeed, like other international institutions, peace plays a central role, which is a legitimate goal for the "gentlemen's club".

This paper is an attempt to apprehend, in the light of the realistic and neo-realistic paradigms, the efforts made by the Commonwealth in the framework of the spread of peace in Africa since the end of the East-West ideological confrontation. Using constructivist and analytical approaches, the paper sets out to identify the issues as well as the prospects for the presence of this intergovernmental organization on a changing African scene.

Keywords: Cold War, 'useless world', intergovernmental organisation

I- Les enjeux de l'implication du Commonwealth dans la promotion de la paix en Afrique post guerre froide

Le déploiement du Commonwealth dans le cadre du maintien de la paix en Afrique post bipolaire est soutenu par des enjeux géoculturel, d'influence et sécuritaire.

A- Les enjeux géoculturel et d'influence

Le positionnement du Commonwealth en tant qu'acteur du maintien de la paix en Afrique après la guerre froide relève d'une confrontation géoculturelle et d'influence avec l'espace francophone. En effet, la fin de la guerre froide a marqué la fin de l'opposition idéologique entre les deux superpuissances à savoir : les Etats-Unis et l'Union Soviétique. Celle-ci a favorisé une offensive du club des « gentlemen » qui avait longtemps laissé le terrain à l'ACCT devenue l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie. Ainsi, l'accentuation de son déploiement surtout dans le domaine politique et de la promotion de la paix en Afrique s'est faite dans l'optique de rattraper son retard et de se repositionner face à la Francophonie qui avait une longueur d'avance dans ces domaines.

Cette conviction de l'appui politique et démocratique en faveur de la paix en Afrique est tributaire de la concurrence latente entre l'espace anglophone et francophone dont les querelles sont anciennes et jalonnent l'histoire politique internationale. Un regard non approfondi de leurs relations pourrait amener à penser que les deux institutions entretiennent une relation cordiale. Mais, une lecture sous le prisme de la *real politik* révèle une tension au sujet de l'harmonisation et de l'universalisation de la démocratie en Afrique. Ce qui traduit une volonté de singularité et de différenciation des schémas internes du Commonwealth⁶⁰.

Se positionner comme acteur de maintien de la paix et surtout de promotion de la démocratie nouvellement retrouvée en Afrique a mis le Commonwealth dans la mouvance non seulement offensive d'un espace tombé en disgrâce après la chute du mur de Berlin, mais aussi dans la posture d'un acteur important de pacification des foyers de tension. Ces actions concourent au rayonnement de l'organisation et à son repositionnement sur l'échiquier international. Par ce biais, le Commonwealth étend ses valeurs et usite sa langue comme un outil d'affirmation et d'influence.

B- L'enjeu sécuritaire

Après la guerre froide, nombre de pays africains en particulier d'expression anglaise basculent dans la violence et les troubles politiques. L'Afrique du Sud qui est l'un de

⁶⁰L. Sindjoun et S. Monney, 2010. « Le Commonwealth », in J.P. Vettovaglia et als, *Prévention des crises et promotion de la paix*, volume II, *Démocratie et élections dans l'espace francophone*, Paris, Bruylant,.

ses membres les plus importants sur le continent subissait les foudres d'une communauté internationale exaspérée par les crimes perpétrés par le régime de l'apartheid. Les autres membres non moins importants tels que le Kenya traversaient une période de transition démocratique laborieuse. L'apprentissage de la démocratie fut en passe de transformer l'aire d'influence africaine du Commonwealth en une véritable poudrière. Il était impératif d'agir, de procéder à une action forte pour maintenir la stabilité et la paix au sein de ses Etats membres africains. Bien que ne constituant pas ses priorités avant 1990,⁶¹ les questions sécuritaires, de promotion de la paix et de la démocratie vont paraître dans l'agenda de l'organisation et l'Afrique en sera un axe majeur de la mise œuvre de celles-ci.

II- Les modalités du déploiement du Commonwealth en faveur de la promotion de la paix en Afrique depuis 1990

Le Commonwealth mène en Afrique des actions pour la promotion de la paix et du respect de l'Etat de droit depuis le début des années 1990. Ce déploiement se fait sous la forme d'une diplomatie préventive allant du respect des droits de l'Homme à la promotion d'une culture de paix sur le continent, avec des mesures contraignantes pour ses membres.

A- Le respect des droits de l'Homme, la promotion de la démocratie et de la culture de la paix

Le Commonwealth est resté longtemps indifférent à la question des droits de l'homme et de la démocratie. Durant les décennies 60 et 70, les seuls aspects des droits de l'homme abordés étaient ceux relatifs à la discrimination raciale, en raison de la situation d'apartheid en vigueur en Afrique du Sud. La fin des années 70 a marqué une évolution de l'Organisation par rapport à la question des droits de l'Homme avec plusieurs déclarations telles que celles de Lusaka en 1979, celle de Melbourne en 1981 et surtout celle de Kuala Lumpur en 1989.

⁶¹Le texte de référence du Commonwealth en matière promotion de la paix et de démocratie est la Déclaration d'Harare de 1991.

La Conférence des chefs d'Etats et de Gouvernement de Kuala Lumpur de 1989 marqua une rupture au sujet de l'intérêt porté par l'organisation à la démocratie. Dans le communiqué des Chef d'Etats et de gouvernements, ils demandaient à ce que le Commonwealth s'intéresse aux modalités d'organisation des scrutins électoraux afin d'aider à la consolidation des institutions démocratiques dans les Etats membres⁶².

L'assistance électorale est devenue, depuis le début des années 1990, un volet essentiel des opérations de promotion de la paix menées par le Commonwealth. L'avènement du multipartisme en Afrique dès 1990 et le vent de démocratisation qui y a soufflé ont constitué le socle du retour aux élections pluralistes sur le continent resté longtemps dominé par des régimes monolithiques. La préservation et le maintien de la paix dans cet espace nécessite une implication particulière de la communauté internationale. La contribution du Commonwealth ne peut être que bénéfique.

En fait, la finalité de l'assistance électorale de l'organisation, notamment l'observation des élections, n'a pas simplement porté sur l'expertise apportée aux Etats membres en transition démocratique. Mais, elle a aussi servie à la construction, au sein de cette institution anglo-saxonne, d'une véritable culture politique et démocratique authentique établie autour des valeurs défendues, partagées et assumées par les pays-membres du Commonwealth⁶³.

Les élections sont en effet considérées et acceptées comme le principal moyen de légitimation des institutions de gouvernance. Plus encore, des élections crédibles et transparentes sont l'une des étapes clé pour établir et rétablir une paix et une sécurité durables dans les sociétés sortant d'un conflit⁶⁴. L'objectif de l'assistance électorale fournie par le Commonwealth est d'accompagner l'institutionnalisation de la démocratie dans les pays membres, par la mise en place de processus électoraux durables, permettant la tenue d'élections libres et crédibles, à intervalles réguliers.

⁶² Z. Ayari, 2012. « L'exigence démocratique en droit international », Master 2 Droit international public, Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3, p. 32.

⁶³ L. Sindjoun et S. Monney, « Le Commonwealth ».

⁶⁴ M. Luntumbue, *L'implication de la communauté internationale dans les processus électoraux en Côte d'ivoire et RDC : une analyse comparée*, 2012. Note d'analyse du Groupe de Recherche et d'Information sur la paix et la sécurité (GRIP), Août, p.3.

La déclaration de Harare de 1991 reflète les valeurs politiques fondamentales du Commonwealth auxquelles les observateurs doivent adhérer. Cependant, le Secrétariat du Commonwealth rappelle que les élections ne doivent pas être considérées comme un événement isolé, mais, « dans le contexte du processus démocratique dans son ensemble ». Cette Déclaration stipule que

the protection and promotion of the fundamental political values of the Commonwealth;
democracy, democratic processes and institutions which reflect national circumstances, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, just and honest government;
fundamental human rights, including equal rights and opportunities for all citizens regardless of race, colour, creed or political belief;
equality for women, so that they may exercise their full and equal rights;
provision of universal access to education for the population of our countries;
continuing action to bring about the end of apartheid and the establishment of a free, democratic, nonracial and prosperous South Africa;⁶⁵

En effet, entre 1990 et 2004, le Commonwealth a été très actif en matière d'observation des élections. Il a envoyé 46 *Commonwealth Observer Groups* (missions d'observation du Commonwealth) dans les pays membres dont l'essentiel en Afrique. La « méthode du Commonwealth » est une stratégie qui interpelle à la fois les gouvernements, les partis politiques, la société civile et les structures électorales au respect des règles en matière de démocratie et de transparence des processus électoraux.⁶⁶ L'observation de la mission du Commonwealth a été effectuée indépendamment de celle des autres délégations (délégations des Nations Unies, de la Francophonie...). Lesdites missions d'observation en Afrique tant aux élections présidentielles que législatives ont été déployées au Kenya, au Cameroun, au Nigeria, en Gambie, en Afrique du Sud, au Zimbabwe et aux Comores entre autres. Son groupe de soutien au maintien de la paix a contribué à la formation des

⁶⁵*The Harare Commonwealth Declaration* -1991, p.2.

⁶⁶Les missions d'évaluation préliminaire ont généralement pour objet de vérifier si les conditions essentielles à une mission d'observation sont réunies.

forces africaines de maintien de la paix et, bien qu'il n'ait pas de mission de maintien de la paix, il assiste les Etats africains et les aide à coordonner leurs efforts dans ce sens⁶⁷.

L'observation des réformes initiées dès lors dans la plupart de ces pays est tout à fait édifiante au regard de l'évolution qui s'en est suivie. La dynamique d'assistance électorale du Commonwealth a conduit de nombreux pays à une alternance politique au sommet de façon acceptable. C'est le cas en Zambie, au Malawi et accessoirement au Nigéria.

Le Commonwealth a davantage démontré cette orientation avec sa souscription à la déclaration de principe pour l'observation internationale des élections et au code de bonne conduite à l'usage des observateurs électoraux internationaux aux côtés d'autres organisations internationales telles que le Réseau Mondial d'Observateurs Nationaux des Elections (GNDEM), la Commission Européenne pour la Démocratie par le Droit (commission de Venise), le Service International de Réforme Electorale (ERIS), le Réseau Européen des Organisations d'Observation Electorale (ENEMO), l'Organisation pour la Sécurité et la Coopération en Europe, le Bureau des Institutions Démocratiques et des Droits de l'Homme (BIDDH), l'Institut National Démocratique pour les Affaires Internationales (NDI), l'Union Africaine et l'Organisation des Nations Unies.⁶⁸

L'attachement du Commonwealth à la démocratie, à la bonne gouvernance, aux droits de l'Homme et à l'Etat de droit a été rappelé à la Déclaration de Aso Rock de 2003 et surtout en 2009 par le *Affirmation of Commonwealth Values and Principles*.⁶⁹

Dans la mouvance du maintien d'un climat de paix et de respect de la démocratie et des droits de l'Homme, le Commonwealth a noué de nombreux accords avec des

⁶⁷ F. Faria, 2004. « La gestion des crises en Afrique subsaharienne. Le rôle de l'Union Européenne », *Occasional Papers* n°55, Institut d'Etudes de Sécurité de l'Union Européenne, p. 33.

⁶⁸ Déclaration de principes pour L'observation Internationale d'élections et le code de conduite à l'usage des observateurs électoraux internationaux, commémoration le 3 avril 2012 à l'Organisation des Nations Unies, New York.

⁶⁹ *Affirmation of Commonwealth Values and Principles, Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, November 2009.*

organisations et institutions internationales. C'est le cas avec la Cour Pénale Internationale dont de nombreux Etats africains ont signé et ratifié le statut de Rome.⁷⁰ De même, le Secrétariat du Commonwealth travaille avec l'Organisation des Nations Unies en qualité d'observateur. En effet, bien que ne participant pas au maintien de la paix dans son volet sécuritaire (déploiement des forces armées), le Secrétariat, en collaboration avec l'Organisation des Nations Unies s'est plutôt employée à désamorcer les situations de crises potentielles ou réelles (Sierra Leone, Gambie, Nigeria, Kenya ...). Dans cette perspective, le Commonwealth a joué un rôle en matière de diplomatie préventive et de consolidation de la paix. Il n'est peut-être pas inutile de rappeler qu'à la suite de la résolution 772 (1992) du Conseil de sécurité, le Commonwealth a déployé en octobre 1992 une mission d'observation du Commonwealth en Afrique du Sud qui a travaillé en étroite collaboration avec l'Organisation des Nations Unies et d'autres groupes d'observateurs ainsi qu'avec les structures créées en vertu du National Peace Accord. L'objectif était de briser le cycle de violence et de favoriser l'établissement d'une atmosphère propice à la reprise des négociations constitutionnelles.⁷¹

Plusieurs organisations régionales et sous-régionales, autres que celles appartenant au système des Nations Unies, ont apporté leur soutien au projet transdisciplinaire "Vers une culture de la paix" et exprimé leur intérêt pour un partenariat avec l'UNESCO dans le cadre de l'année internationale de la culture de la paix en l'an 2000. Il s'agit notamment de l'Organisation des Etats américains (OEA), de l'Organisation de l'Unité Africaine (OUA), de la Communauté Economique des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEDEAO), du Conseil de l'Europe, de l'Association des Nations de l'Asie du Sud-Est (ASEAN), du Secrétariat général de l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie et du Commonwealth. Comme le disait le secrétaire général du Commonwealth dans sa lettre adressée au Directeur général de l'UNESCO :

⁷⁰Protocole d'accord de coopération entre la Cour Pénale Internationale et le Commonwealth entré en vigueur le 13 juillet 2011.

⁷¹*Agenda pour la paix : diplomatie préventive, rétablissement de la paix et maintien de la paix*, 1993. Rapport du secrétaire général de l'ONU S/25996/Add. 2, p. 2.

Le Commonwealth soutient cette initiative de l'UNESCO en faveur de l'instauration d'une culture de la paix, fondée sur les principes énoncés dans la Charte des Nations Unies, car elle est conforme à ses propres valeurs fondamentales qui sont la démocratie, le respect des droits de l'homme et de l'Etat de droit, le respect de la diversité et de la tolérance, l'égalité des droits pour les femmes et le développement durable.⁷²

B. Les contraintes à l'encontre des pays violant la Déclaration d'Harare (1991) et les principes démocratiques prônés par le Commonwealth

A l'instar de l'Organisation des Etats Américains (OEA) et de l'Union Africaine (UA), le Commonwealth a adopté sa propre version de la « clause démocratique ». Il s'est doté, en 1995, du Programme d'action de Millbrook. Ce programme d'action se décline en trois grands axes d'intervention à savoir: la promotion des valeurs politiques fondamentales du Commonwealth, celles du développement durable et du consensus. Concrètement, ce programme d'action prévoit des mesures de soutien des processus démocratiques et des sanctions en cas de violation de ces principes et il décrit explicitement la procédure à appliquer en cas d'atteinte au processus démocratique et/ou aux droits de la personne au sein d'un Etat membre du Commonwealth.

La référence du Commonwealth dans les cas de violation manifeste des valeurs et des principes démocratiques, inscrite dans le Plan d'Action de Millbrook, est le point B.3 qui stipule que :

Where a member country is perceived to be clearly in violation of the Harare Commonwealth Declaration, and particularly in the event of an unconstitutional overthrow of a democratically elected government, appropriate steps should be taken to express the collective concern of Commonwealth countries and to encourage the restoration of democracy within a reasonable time frame.⁷³

⁷²Lettre adressée au Directeur général de l'UNESCO par M. Eméka Anyaoku, secrétaire général du Commonwealth, le 15 juin 1998, *La culture de la paix et l'action de l'UNESCO dans les Etats membres*, UNESCO, Paris, le 30 Octobre 1998, p. 4.

⁷³*Millbrook Commonwealth Action Program on the Harare Declaration*, 1995.

Ainsi, différentes mesures peuvent être employées, en vue de la restauration complète de la démocratie et des droits de la personne. C'est le cas de :

- ❖ l'intervention du Secrétaire Général afin de manifester la désapprobation collective des pays membres;
- ❖ la prise de contact du Secrétaire Général avec le gouvernement *de facto*, suivie d'une
- ❖ mission de bons offices et d'une assistance technique appropriée afin de faciliter le retour rapide à la démocratie;
- ❖ l'amorce de démarches bilatérales entre les pays membres, plus spécialement ceux qui font partie du même ensemble régional que le pays concerné, à la fois pour exprimer leur désaccord et favoriser la restauration du processus démocratique ;
- ❖ l'envoi d'un groupe d'éminents représentants du Commonwealth suite à la prise de contact préliminaire du Secrétaire Général ;
- ❖ dans l'éventualité d'une évolution lente du conflit en cours, l'exclusion du gouvernement concerné des réunions ministérielles du Commonwealth, incluant les réunions des Chefs de gouvernement, en plus de l'impossibilité de participer aux réunions de l'organisation et de bénéficier de l'assistance technique s'il n'y a pas de progrès réalisés après une période de deux ans ;
- ❖ une période de deux ans est susceptible d'être accordée pour la restauration des principes et valeurs démocratiques dans le cas d'un pays où il y aurait impossibilité, dû à un vide institutionnel, de tenir un scrutin dans un délai inférieur à six mois.

la possibilité d'adopter des mesures bilatérales et multilatérales appropriées dans le cas où le gouvernement concerné choisirait de quitter de son gré le Commonwealth, ou dans le cas de la persistance des violations des principes contenus dans la Déclaration de Harare, et ce même après ladite période transitoire de deux ans⁷⁴.

L'application de ces textes relève du groupe ministériel d'action du Commonwealth sur la déclaration de Harare, qui évalue les situations et recommande aux Chefs

⁷⁴Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie XXXVI^e session, *Document n°8*, Dakar 5-8 juillet 2010, p.9.

d'Etats les mesures à prendre. Il est composé du Secrétaire général de l'Organisation du Commonwealth et de huit ministres titulaires des affaires étrangères issus des différents pays membres du Commonwealth. L'ajout d'un ou deux membres de la région affectée est parfois nécessaire, selon la gravité de la situation. La nomination des membres du groupe ministériel s'effectue une fois tous les deux ans⁷⁵.

Le Commonwealth a appliqué des sanctions de différentes natures pour violation de la démocratie et des droits de la personne à plusieurs pays, dont le Nigeria en 1995 ; en raison du putsch militaire organisé par le Général Sani Abacha contre le gouvernement intérimaire. Les mêmes mesures ont été appliquées en Zambie et Zimbabwe. Ces sanctions ont varié de l'envoi d'un facilitateur à la réprimande, allant jusqu'à la suspension d'un pays du Commonwealth, comme ce fut le cas pour le Nigeria.

A l'instar des autres organisations internationales, le Commonwealth s'efforce de définir et de promulguer des critères. Ainsi, il a organisé la *Conference of Commonwealth Chief Election Officers* (Conférence des responsables électoraux) en 1998⁷⁶ et un atelier sur la démocratie et l'égalité entre les sexes en Namibie en 2000.⁷⁷

Cette ouverture vers un processus davantage démocratique peut-elle être considérée comme une conséquence d'un mouvement généralisé dans plusieurs pays ou comme étant liée à la nature intrinsèque de l'Organisation? En fait, comme le précise Redonnet, le Commonwealth n'est « ni un club, ni un vecteur géoculturel d'une langue, ni une organisation de défense, ni même une zone de libre échange ». Aujourd'hui, son identité est bien connue et se traduit en une force axée vers le progrès. Il s'agit assurément d'une orientation assez récente puisque, à l'origine même de l'institution, elle avait un penchant raciste car seuls les gouvernements «

⁷⁵Rapport d'information n°3305 de l'Assemblée Nationale française sur les droits de la personne et la Francophonie, p.35-36

⁷⁶Voir *Voting for Democracy*, 1998, *Report of the Conference of Commonwealth Chief Election Officers* Rapport des responsables électoraux du Commonwealth, Cambridge, Royaume-Uni, 23-26 mars 1998.

⁷⁷Voir *Gender and Democracy*(égalité entre hommes et femmes et démocratie), 2000, Report of the Commonwealth Workshop on Gender and Democracy (Rapport de l'atelier du Commonwealth sur la parité et la démocratie), Windhoek (Namibie), 9-11 février 2000.

blancs » étaient concernés. La déclaration du sommet d'Harare (1991) qui a été suivie d'un plan d'action en 1995 a réaffirmé la lutte contre le racisme, l'inviolabilité des droits humains sous tous leurs aspects et la dimension cardinale de la démocratie. Son adoption a nettement marqué l'avènement d'une nouvelle ère au Commonwealth. Par ailleurs, la création, à la suite d'une initiative canadienne, du Groupe d'action ministérielle du Commonwealth à savoir le *Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group* (CMAG) au Sommet d'Auckland en 1995 et, plus récemment en 2001, la « *High Review of the Future of Commonwealth* » présidée par le Président sud-africain Thabo Mbeki, sont autant d'autres initiatives qui ont affirmé davantage les engagements du Commonwealth en matière du respect des droits de l'Homme et de la promotion de la paix.

Dans cette perspective, le CMAG est un symbole. Il se veut être un bras séculier dans le cadre de la déclaration d'Harare. Il est constitué d'un groupe de neuf ministres des Affaires étrangères⁷⁸ qui se rencontrent pour analyser les menaces contre la démocratie au sein des pays membres. Le groupe incarne, dans les faits, la volonté de l'Organisation pour qui les atteintes et les attaques contre la démocratie et la paix sont ressenties comme «la négation d'un lien majeur que le Commonwealth cherchera à protéger ou à restaurer chaque fois qu'il en aura les moyens ». Dans un article au titre évocateur et annonciateur de son volume, Srinivasan ne voit pas dans ces initiatives des percées notoires. Il déplore que les choix d'intervention s'avèrent parfois trop parcimonieux en faveur des droits humains.⁷⁹

Une autre structure, plus ancrée dans l'histoire, mais qui a su se renouveler, mérite qu'on s'y arrête un instant, car elle démontre dans quelle mesure le Commonwealth peut se régénérer et comment cette innovation n'est pas seulement le fait des initiatives britanniques. Il s'agit de la réunion biannuelle des Chefs d'État et de gouvernements le *Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting* (CHOGM). On le constate, les origines du CHOGM sont typiquement impériales puisqu'elles s'appuient sur une tradition qui remonte aux conférences coloniales en 1887 auxquelles ont succédé les conférences impériales. Elle s'est transformée alors que

⁷⁸Le *membership* est renouvelé en alternance par moitié tous les deux ans.

⁷⁹K.Srinivasan, 2003. « Commonwealth Principles – Compliance or Complaisance? », *The Round Table*, n°327, p. 604-606.

les Premiers Ministres ont tenu des réunions quasi annuelles à Londres jusqu'à ce que le Premier Ministre canadien Pierre-Elliott Trudeau suggère qu'il soit institué des réunions de chefs de gouvernements sur une base rotative, en évitant une hiérarchisation des lieux de rencontre. Le premier sommet des chefs de gouvernement du Commonwealth a eu lieu à Singapour en 1971. Ces réunions au Sommet sont particulièrement importantes puisqu'elles sont l'incarnation politique du multilatéralisme. C'est en effet lors de ces conférences que le *leadership* polymorphe propre au multilatéralisme peut s'exercer et que des États autres que le Royaume-Uni peuvent orienter le cours des événements. Leurs influences s'exercent d'autant mieux que les chefs de gouvernement se rencontrent ici dans un cadre beaucoup moins formel que celui d'autres sommets et y entretiennent des contacts plus directs. Ces instances ont servi de cadre aux Premiers Ministres canadiens pour faire avancer plusieurs dossiers que les canaux diplomatiques n'avaient pas pu. L'exemple qui a probablement le plus marqué l'histoire est celui de Brian Mulroney qui a eu, lors du sommet de Vancouver de 1987, un entretien privé avec Margaret Thatcher.⁸⁰ Cette rencontre a marqué, aux dires de maints observateurs et analystes, un point de non-retour dans l'évolution du dossier en faveur d'une solution menant au démantèlement du régime d'apartheid en Afrique du Sud.⁸¹ En fait, le Commonwealth et la Grande-Bretagne ne pouvaient se laver totalement les mains de cette question puisque c'est en tant que colonie de la couronne britannique que le gouvernement sud-africain a dépossédé les cultivateurs noirs de leurs terres au profit des colons blancs.

Dans le cadre de son déploiement international, notamment en Afrique, depuis le début des années 1990, le Commonwealth s'est résolument orienté vers la promotion de la démocratie et le respect des droits de l'Homme gages de la

⁸⁰N. Michaud, 2007. « Le Canada et l'idée du Commonwealth : nécessité, mission ou outil de politique étrangère ? », *Revue internationale de politique comparée*, (Vol. 14), p. 30.

⁸¹Déjà, sous le premier ministre conservateur John G. Diefenbaker, le Canada avait milité et obtenu l'expulsion de l'Afrique du Sud, pourtant l'un des membres fondateurs du Commonwealth. Le rôle et l'influence du Canada dans ce dossier reste toutefois une question qui est débattue, les minimalistes tels Linda Freeman n'y voyant qu'un apport marginal in L. Freeman, *The Ambiguous Champion : Canada and South Africa in the » Trudeau and Mulroney Years*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1997. Pour un bon résumé de ce débat et pour une analyse plus poussée de la politique canadienne envers l'Afrique du Sud sous les gouvernements conservateurs, voir D. R. Black, « How Exceptional ? Reassessing the Mulroney Government Anti-Apartheid 'Crusade' », Michaud, N. et Nossal K. R. (dir.), 2001. *Diplomatic Departures: The Conservative Era in Canadian Foreign Policy, 1984-1993*. Vancouver, UBC Press, p. 173-193.

préservation de la paix. Il a su s'intégrer dans un environnement international marqué par la crise de l'aide ou de l'appui aux opérations de maintien de la paix dans ce continent conflictogène. Toutefois, de nombreuses perspectives restent à explorer pour une meilleure efficacité.

III- Les perspectives de l'implication du Commonwealth dans la promotion de la paix en Afrique

L'action du *Commonwealth of nations* dans le cadre de la promotion de la paix en Afrique gagnerait à explorer ou à renforcer certaines pistes en vue d'une meilleure efficacité. Pour y parvenir, le Commonwealth gagnerait à étoffer sa coopération avec les Organisations Régionales Africaines et soutenir l'africanisation du maintien de la paix sur le continent. A cela devrait s'ajouter une meilleure implication dans l'accompagnement du développement pour la stabilisation des zones conflictuelles comme substrat de déploiement.

A. Etoffer sa coopération avec les Organisations d'Intégration Régionales (OIR) Africaines et soutenir l'africanisation du maintien de la paix sur le continent

L'efficacité de l'action de certains partenaires internationaux dans le cadre du maintien de la paix en Afrique relève d'une coopération étroite avec les Organisations Régionales Africaines et abouti à une africanisation de la sécurité sur le continent. Cette africanisation du maintien de la paix est soutenue par la mise en place des programmes de renforcement des capacités africaines de maintien de la paix, programmes initiés par l'Union Européenne et par certaines puissances siégeant au Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies.

En effet, conscients des problèmes rencontrés par les Africains dans la résolution des conflits et peu désireux de s'y engager comme par le passé, plusieurs pays occidentaux ont conçu des programmes pour développer les capacités des pays africains en matière de maintien de la paix. Les plus importants sont les programmes américain et français avec, pour principal objectif de promouvoir des solutions endogènes. La première action de maintien de paix africaine fut menée par la CEDEAO en 1990 au Libéria à travers l'ECOMOG. Cette structure africaine a

poursuivi son déploiement en Sierra Léone en 1997, en Guinée Bissau en 1998, en Côte d'Ivoire en 2002 et aujourd'hui au Mali. Depuis lors, l'Union Africaine et les autres organisations sous-régionales africaines ont tenté de l'imiter mais, leurs capacités d'intervention étant limitées, elles ont, toutes, appelé de leurs vœux, une intervention directe de l'Organisation des Nations Unies et des puissances occidentales comme la France dans la gestion de leurs conflits. Les difficultés de l'AMISOM en Somalie, de la FOMUC en RCA et de la MICEMA au Mali et les opérations françaises au Mali et en RCA en sont aujourd'hui révélatrices.

Une implication plus importante du Commonwealth à ces niveaux optimisera l'efficacité de son action en faveur du maintien de la paix en Afrique. L'Union Européenne, l'Organisation Nations Unies et l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie sont présents sur tout le continent et leurs actions contribuent à contenir les poches de tensions et même dans une certaine mesure à renforcer leur rayonnement.

B. Mieux s'impliquer dans la réalisation du développement afin de stabiliser les zones conflictuelles

Dans la prévention et surtout le soutien apporté aux pays ou aux zones récemment perturbés par les conflits, de nombreux partenaires internationaux tant bilatéraux que multilatéraux entreprennent un accompagnement du développement économique et social.

Après la fin des hostilités et la réussite des pourparlers entre les belligérants, les populations, principales victimes restent exposé à la misère, à la pauvreté et aux seigneurs de guerre et autres prédateurs ou recruteurs terroristes. La violence présente dans le contexte africain actuel, soutenu par la montée franche du terrorisme ne peut être résolue uniquement par les armes et par l'anéantissement physique des personnes impliquées. La paupérisation et l'analphabétisme constituent des terreaux fertiles pour le recrutement des jeunes par des individus sans scrupules.

Il est donc important que le Commonwealth s'implique davantage pour accompagner les gouvernements et surtout les populations locales dans la reconstruction comme le font déjà certaines organisations internationales telles que la Francophonie, l'UNESCO, l'ONU et certains gouvernements étrangers (France, Canada etc.). Dans cette reconstruction, l'éducation est une priorité. Il faudra procéder par la sensibilisation, la conscientisation des masses et l'intensification des efforts tendant à élever l'indice de culture de la paix dans les esprits. Une population non instruite reste une proie devant ces propagateurs de violence et alerte leur vigilance devant toute forme de manipulation. Promouvoir les initiatives de développement économique des populations locales et de réinsertion sociale des populations afin de les éloigner de l'appât que constituerait la manne financière drainée par ces recruteurs est une nécessité.

Conclusion

Cette étude avait pour but de montrer les enjeux et les perspectives de l'implication du Commonwealth dans la mouvance de la promotion de la paix en Afrique depuis la fin de l'ère bipolaire. Il ressort des développements antérieurs que les enjeux du déploiement du Commonwealth en faveur de la paix en Afrique sont géoculturel à savoir se repositionner comme acteur majeur dans un environnement de concurrence larvée avec la Francophonie et sécuritaire au regard des formes de violence en vigueur sur le continent. Plusieurs initiatives sont implémentées par le club des gentlemen dans le cadre du respect des droits de l'homme, de la promotion de la démocratie et de la culture de la paix.

Toutefois, cette implication du Commonwealth gagnerait à être renforcée par des mesures susceptibles de contribuer à aider l'Afrique à se prendre en charge. Il y'a lieu de raffermir les liens de coopération avec les Organisations Régionales Africaines et favoriser l'africanisation du maintien de la paix. Face à ce grand défi, il est indispensable de promouvoir des initiatives endogènes à travers l'implication de la société civile et le renforcement des capacités dans le secteur de l'éducation des masses sur l'importance de la paix.

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Variety Rivalry and Prospects for Peaceful Co-existence: The Case of British and American Englishes in Cameroon

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Abstract

The spread of English around the globe and continuous increase in its users has exceeded that of famous languages like Latin during the Roman Empire. The enviable position the language currently occupies, as evident in the number of those learning and using it, has been the most striking example of language spread in the 20th century, if not in recorded history. The expansion of the British colonial power that peaked towards the end of the 19th century and the emergence of the USA as the leading economic power can be considered key factors responsible for the unending widespread of the English language. Nevertheless, with nearly 70% of all speakers of English as a mother-tongue in the world and with economic and political dominance, it is likely that the USA should have current control and interest in the way the language is used and developed (see Crystal 2003). This is much to the disadvantage of British English which has the legitimate claim to the status of the real native variety. Crystal (2003) observes that the real native speaker the British find this loss of historical linguistic pre-eminence unpalatable. Our articulation is that the popularity and autonomy once enjoyed by British English as the leading native variety in non-native settings is rocked by the emergence of American English that is growing in leaps and bounds. On such premise, we examine the contribution of the British and American varieties as the main outsource varieties of the local variety spoken in Cameroon at the level of vocabulary and submit that British English is losing its status as the mainstream lexicifier in favour of American English amongst English-speaking Cameroonians.

Keywords: variety, rivalry, peaceful co-existence, British, American, Cameroon

Introduction

The expansion of the British colonial power which peaked towards the end of the 19th century and the emergence of the USA as the leading economic power in the 20th century can be considered key factors responsible for the unending widespread of the English language. However, it seems that it is the latter factor that continues to explain the world position of English as the number one language today, much to the discomfort of some in Britain who find the loss of historical linguistic pre-eminence unpalatable (Crystal 2003). He further observes that with nearly 70% of users of

English as a mother-tongue and with economic and political dominance, it is likely that the USA should have current control and interest in the way the language is used and developed. Our articulation is that the popularity enjoyed by American English is growing in leaps and bounds and threatening the peaceful existence as well as further spread of British English. The tussle for hegemony between these two mighty varieties⁸², especially in non-native contexts, is further amplified by continuous increase in the number of English users all over the world. Mbibeh (2013: 144) feels that “the jostling for position by the goliath varieties; British and American English within the international arena leaves the tentacle varieties in bewilderment”. In this article, we evaluate the situation of British and American Englishes in Cameroon and subsume that variety rivalry affects the vocabulary of English-speaking Cameroonians. This takes precedence from the common understanding amongst scholars in New Englishes that the most noticeable features of the local variety are at the level of vocabulary.

About the Spread of English

The spread of English around the globe and the continuous increase in the number of those using it for daily communication is yet to be challenged by any other language. In fact, the number of those learning and using the language has been the most striking example of language spread in the 20th century, if not in recorded history (see Platt et al 1984). Although the spread of English across the globe reached the peak during the colonial era, the end of colonisation has not negatively affected the language. Due to its growing importance as the language of wider communication, business and the like, English continues to infiltrate countries that were not formally colonised by Britain.

In reality, the problem is not with those countries where English is a first language, but rather, where it is or has the status of a second language or foreign language like in Cameroon and other non-native settings because the teaching and learning of the language are determined by conscious and well calculated policies. Kachru (1992) and Crystal (1995) nonetheless posit that the strength of English as a global

⁸² Here, we are referring to the British and American English; two well-known native or standard varieties that serve as reference to non-native users of English.

language lies in the number of countries using it as their first language or mother-tongue, the number of countries adopting it as their official language, and the number of countries teaching it as their foreign language of choice in schools. In Cameroon, English shares the official language status with French as a second language to English-speakers and foreign to French-speakers (Elly van Gelderen, 2014).

Polemics of British and American Englishes in Cameroon

History has it that from 1884, Germany became the sole colonial power in Cameroon until the end of the First World War when she was defeated and booted out⁸³ by France and Britain. Following her exit, Cameroon was divided between the two victorious powers as a Trusteeship Territory of the League of Nations. On the British part of the territory, English was the main language of administration and English-speaking Cameroonians had the civic obligation to know and use the language. Thus, historically, Cameroon was never colonised by America and so, the coming of English to Cameroon is thanks to the British and not Americans. In that light, the linguistic heritage Cameroon retained from Britain after colonisation eludes America.

Besides, the edge that British variety has over American variety cannot only be attributed to colonisation. It also stems from the fact that Britain administered part of Cameroon as a Trusteeship Territory after the First World War which created an avenue for effective implantation of British variety of English in Cameroon⁸⁴. This is today an asset and the country's pride on the global table because Cameroon is the only country in Africa, and alongside Canada in the world, that uses English and French as two official languages. In addition, the use of British English in formal contexts, and its teaching as a subject to both Anglophones and Francophones in Cameroon schools establish a pecking order that naturally does not favour American English. It is however important to establish that the consideration of British English

⁸³Dze-Ngwa (2014: 93) in *Rethinking Cameroon's National Anthem and the Challenges to Internal Cohesion: A Historical Review, Fifty Years after Independence and Reunification* even emphatically states that "The country is a German creation, which was seized and partitioned by the combined Anglo-French forces in 1916 during the First World War".

⁸⁴ As regard, English in Cameroon Wolf (2001) has written extensively on that tracing the path from colonial days to independence.

as the recommended variety in Cameroon is merely on mutual understanding of the historical past that the two countries share because, as far as we know, it is not clearly and formally stated somewhere that British variety is the official English of Cameroon. Even the most supreme and legal document, the Constitution⁸⁵ of Cameroon, does not indicate which variety should be considered official. Which English then?

Irrespective of the slight advantage British English has over American English in Cameroon, the rise to power of the USA as the world's most powerful nation and the development of American English have seen the linguistic autonomy of Britain challenged. Atechi (2010) adds that even though Cameroonians may claim that British English is the reference variety, the socio-cultural, economic and even political might of the USA has been accompanied by the silent admiration for American English as translated in the steady rise in the number of those who prefer American English. As the hegemony of the mother variety drops and that of American English rises, the L2 user in Cameroon is caught between extremes. Consequently, the co-existence of the two native varieties, whose roles are not clearly defined, is a source of confusion which leaves English-speaking Cameroonians in a dilemma.

The presence of both British and American varieties of English in Cameroon have adverse the effects. Today, a good number of English-speaking Cameroonians use the two varieties interchangeably yet intelligibly in formal and informal contexts with little or no sign to suggest that they actually know the difference. Atechi (2008) opines that the ESL teacher in Cameroon is more or less in a dilemma as to which of the Englishes (British or American) he or she should use in their classroom. There is an indication that Cameroonians have moved from silent admiration of American English to overt usage or adoption to an extent that it is gaining popularity over British English (Atechi 2010). This is contrary to report from Mbibeh (2013:143) that among Cameroonian teachers from the North West Region, Cameroon English (CamE) is preferred because of its simplicity and closeness to the learner's social realities, than

⁸⁵ In the English version of Law N°96/ 06 of 18 January, 1996 to Amend the Constitution of June, 1972, as amended and supplemented by law N° 2008/001 of April 2008 in Part I, Article 1, it is simply stated that " the official languages of the Republic of Cameroon shall, be English and French..." . There is no specification as to which type of English is referred to here.

British English (BrE) based on the necessity to meet the exigencies of the global village and American English (AmE) rejected on stereotypical bases. We contend in this paper that American English cannot be out rightly rejected “with the claim that the variety is related to youthful language imbedded with crime oriented undertones” as suggested by Mbibeh’s informants. We argue that most English-speaking Cameroonians unconsciously use both native varieties to constitute what can be termed ‘Cameroon English vocabulary’. Thus, the choice of variety depends on context and familiarity with the available lexicon in the users’ linguistic repertoire.

As mentioned earlier, the use of British and the American varieties⁸⁶ does not pose problem of intelligibility among Cameroonians. However, it should be stressed that there are clear differences between the two, specifically at the level of vocabulary, orthography, syntax, stress, intonation and pronunciation. The variations look like a deliberate attempt by the Americans to gain even linguistic independence from the British who once colonised them. It would appear that America as the world power still feels hurt that she was once colonised by Britain. As such she would not hesitate to do away with any mark that reminds her of such a historical stain, even if it is linguistically. No wonder therefore that although British and American Englishes are the most commonly cited varieties, the differences between the two are evident at every significant linguistic level. This draws from everyday use of the language to demonstrate that the upsurge of American English is at the expense of British English. This is evident in Cameroonians’ ability to shuttle between the two varieties with seemingly no awareness of the differences. The co-existence of British and American Englishes has brought unconscious competition as every Cameroonian seeks to express themselves in the variety that they are more comfortable with.

Conceptual Framework

We have chosen the Usage-based theory as the conceptual framework for this article. Conceived by Tomasello (2003) and reinforced by Bybee (2010), Usage-based theory anchors on relatively small set of cognitive processes, such as categorization, analogy, and chunking to explain language structure and function. It is

⁸⁶The various variations between British and American English have been spelt out in SimoBobda (2002), Mbangwana (2002) Mbangwana & Simo Bobda (1993) Kouega (2005).

particularly concerned with how language is used or how it functions within a given context and the outcome. In that light, we examine how English is used among English-speaking Cameroonians and argue that due to the co-existence of two native varieties in this setting, users indiscriminately draw from British and American Englishes to communicate their ideas. Given that language is a complex adaptive system, the language people know changes due to multiple competing factors, as is the case of English in Cameroon. Tomasello (2003), Goldberg (2006) and Bybee (2010) stipulate that in Usage-based theory, whether the focus is on language processing, acquisition, or change, knowledge of a language is based on knowledge of actual usage and generalizations made over usage events.

It is the basis of the above articulation that we use Usage-based framework to argue that since language change is inevitable, English speakers in Cameroon that had once been exposed mainly to British English as a result of colonialism, have had to embrace American English since the emergence of the USA as front runner in world's affairs. Bysee (2010) observes that people are quicker to recognize high-frequency words because the more often a word is encountered the more entrenched that representation is and the more easily it is retrieved. Thus, there is a strong "cognitive commitment" to explaining the frequency of certain linguistic structures and probably words (see Taylor, 2002, Ibbotson 2013). In the case of Cameroon, certain vocabulary items from specific variety, either British or American, were more frequent and readily used than others by our informants. The interaction here is not uncommon as language is a complex representation and adaptive system that is measured at the level of the interaction between cognition and use among its users.

Methodology

Through observation and eventual administration of a production task to subjects, we got feedback from language users with an English-speaking background which served as the base for our submission. General observation on how English speakers use the language, especially in formal context was carried out. Here, the native variety the informants use most often when writing or even speaking was noted through jotting in a number of speech acts situations. However, in order to check the data for reliability, production task was designed and used it to obtain quantifiable samples to enable us to sustain the argument that with the presence of

American English in Cameroon, British English is no longer the yardstick variety to determine the standard or sub-standard nature of English in Cameroon.

Simo Bobda's (1994, 2002) publications served as source material for the establishment of a list of common synonyms to test the subjects' familiarity with lexicons in the two native varieties. The aim of the production task was to identify the variety that informants would go for when they encounter two words that are different in forms but have a similar meaning in British and American Englishes. To avoid confusion relating to the context in which such words could be used, the various tasks were accompanied by explanations. Over one hundred (100) English-speaking Cameroonians from all walks of life participated in the exercise. They included secondary and high school teachers, university lecturers, workers in the formal and informal sectors, personnel of the Ministry of Secondary Education as well as university students. The basis for participation was, at least, Advanced Level in the English sub system of education.

After administering and sorting out the data, we retained that the co-existence of British and American Englishes has a significant impact on Cameroon English. In reality, the users sampled were not loyal to any of the native varieties because many of them fluctuated between the two, depending on the context or familiarity with the word in question. For a better appreciation and comprehension, we have decided to group results under different thematic captions. This is accompanied by tables that give global synopsis to the actual situation relating to the use of the two varieties in Cameroon.

- **Clothing or Dressing**

Clothe-related vocabulary is unavoidable in daily usage because of the importance of clothes to humans. In the context of Cameroon, English-speakers basically have to choose from either British or American variety. While most of them would use American *pullover* or *sweater*, to refer to a piece of clothing made of wool which covers exclusively the upper part of the body as well as the arms but does not open in the front, others are comfortable with British *jumper*. Conversely, when they want to refer to a piece of cloth that covers the lower part of the body from waist to the

feet, consisting of two cylindrical parts for each leg, it is rather the British word, *Trousers* that is in vogue, and not the American *Pants*. In fact, within a typical Cameroonian context, the word “pants” means underwear for either men or women. Statistically, this is what the fluctuation between the two varieties produced:

Table 1: Clothing or Dressing

British	Cases /100	%	American	Cases/100	%	Neither Nor	
						Cases/100	%
Jumper	13	13	Pullover	85	85	02	02
Trousers	82	82	Pants	14	14	04	04
Total	95	47.5	Total	99	49.5	06	03

The majority of the subjects, representing 49.5%, preferred American English when it came to dressing-related vocabulary as opposed to those for British with 47.5%. The tight existing between the two groups further emphasises the dilemma of the L2 user in Cameroon who has to make do with words from the two varieties that scramble for a space in his linguistic repertoire

- **Transportation**

In Cameroon, like elsewhere, virtually everyone is directly or indirectly involved in transport or transportation. It is worth noting that although informants still shuttled between the two varieties, quite a good number of them were more comfortable with British variety. For instance, many went in for British *Flyover* rather than American *Overpass* to refer to a bridge that carries a road or a railway over another road. Despite the fact that some informants used the word “overpass”, from experience, it is honest to admit that this is a rare lexicon in the vocabulary of Cameroonians because it is not often heard in daily usage. In the case of *Railway* and *Railroad* respectively from the two varieties, the majority still identified themselves with British *Railway* to describe the metal tracks on which trains run.

Table 2: Transportation

British	Cases /100	%	American	Cases/100	%	Neither Nor	
						Cases/100	%
Flyover	88	88	Overpass	10	10	02	02
Railway	92	92	Railroad	8	8	00	00
Total	180	90	Total	18	09	02	01

As the table displays, quite a significant number of subjects were familiar with British words that relate to transport means, either by road or by rail, as the case may be. The fact that 90% used the British variety as against 09% for the American testifies to the popularity of the former in this domain area.

- **Housing or Household**

Here, the tides were overwhelmingly in favour of American variety as most informants showed familiarity with American lexicons that name household related items. Consequently, when referring to a set of rooms for living, especially on one floor or building, *Apartment* looked more palatable to many Cameroonians than *Flat*. Even at the level of household items, very few used British *Paraffin*, when compared to those for American *Kerosene*, to describe a liquid with a strong smell made from coal or petroleum and used as fuel, especially in heaters such as British “stove” or American “cooker”. It can even be claimed that it was quite surprising that a handful of English speakers preferred *Paraffin* because, from experience and general observation, it is not a common lexicon in the vocabulary of mainstream Cameroon English. In fact, if a one were to walk to a store or petrol station in Cameroon and demand for *Paraffin*, instead of *Kerosene*, he or she may find himself wanting because this would likely create a situation of unintelligibility.

Table 3: Housing or Household

British	Cases /100	%	American	Cases/100	%	Neither Nor	
						Cases/100	%
Flat	26	26	Apartment	70	70	04	04

Paraffin	9	9	Kerosene	90	90	01	01
Total	35	17.5	Total	160	80	05	02.5

Based on the feedback from informants and on the chosen words, we can note that the popularity of the American English far exceeds that of British English at the level of housing or household. As a result, the American variety recorded 80% and that of British had just 17.5% frequency. This further strengthens the view that in Cameroon, the hegemony earlier enjoyed by British English is put to question as the counterpart variety gains grounds.

- **Food items or Chewables**

As regard what is consumable either as chewable or food, once more, a good number of English-speaking Cameroonians preferred American lexicons. Thus, those who used the American lexicon, *Biscuit*, to name a type of small, flat cake that is usually dry and sweet and often baked in round pieces, outnumbered those who used British *Cookie* to describe the same item. It should be stressed here that in reality, using the word *Cookie* in the place of *Biscuit* is quite strange to ESL speakers within the Cameroonian context. In fact, the lexicon is largely unintelligible to a typical Cameroonian.

However, in finding a suitable word to describe a tall plant grown in many parts of the world for its yellow or white seeds which are eaten as food, made into flour or used to feed animals, a significant number of the subjects settled for British *Maize* over American *Corn*. We would like to indicate that irrespective of the frequency recorded by each variety here, the two words are used interchangeably and understood among Cameroonians to designate the same entity. By implication, we want to think that these synonyms are intelligible and the choice of one over the other depends on the user in question and not necessarily on popularity per say.

Table 4: Food items or Chewables

British	Cases /100	%	American	Cases/100	%	Neither Nor	
						Cases/100	%
Cookie	11	11	Biscuit	89	89	00	00
Maize	72	72	Corn	28	28	00	00
Total	83	41.5	Total	117	58.5	00	00

The preceding table therefore displays quantitative information as far as users' choice of the two varieties was concerned. Those who used American diction to name food or chewable, had 58.5% whereas those for British variety had 41.5% frequency. Once more, we note here that the preference of the latter variety over the former is visibly felt.

- **Utensils or Furniture**

Although referencing to utensil or furniture was another domain that ESL users fluctuated between the two varieties, on overall bases, American variety recorded yet another stride over British English. In that light, many overlooked British *Basin* for American *Bowl* to describe an open dish or a round container that is open at the top and deep enough to hold water, fruit among others. But it is important to note that from general observation, the two words are not used interchangeably because what is considered a *Bowl* among most Cameroonians is relatively smaller and is generally in plastic material whereas a *Basin* is a larger utensil often made up of metal. In relation to furniture, quite a significant number of informants chose British *Cupboard* over American *Closet* as a description for a piece of furniture with space for storing things such as kitchen utensils and drinks. This did not however come as a surprise because although one can once in a while hear Cameroonians use the word *Closet*, it is not a very popular word among majority of English speakers.

Table 5: Utensils or Furniture

British	Cases /100	%	American	Cases/100	%	Neither Nor	
						Cases/100	%
Basin	26	26	Bowl	72	72	02	02
Cupboard	67	67	Closet	32	32	01	01
Total	93	46.5	Total	104	52	03	01.5

We can deduce from the table above that on an overall consideration, 52% of informants went in for American expression while 46.5% were comfortable with that of British English. For a clearer view, perception and comprehension of the rivalry between the two native varieties, we have decided to further group statistics and project them in the form of general table.

Table 6: British or American Vocabulary

VOCABULARY	British English		American English		Neither Nor	
	Cases/200	%	Cases/200	%	Cases/200	%
Clothing or Dressing	95	47.5	99	49.5	06	03
Transportation	180	90	18	09	02	01
Housing or Household	35	17.5	160	80	05	02.5
Food or Chewable	83	41.5	117	58.5	00	00
Utensil or Furniture	93	46.5	104	52	03	01.5
Total	486	48.6	498	49.8	16	01.6

The table above is an overall reproduction of information earlier discussed in sub-tables. Although the difference in frequency between those who chose American English over British is not quite much, it is nonetheless symbolically significant and further highlights the rivalry between the two varieties that is seemingly tilting in favour of the former. Such competition, coupled with socio-linguistic realities, gives Cameroon English an impetus and unique status that other non-native varieties do not possess.

Prospects for ‘Peaceful’ Co-existence of British and American Englishes

The rise to prominence of American English and the need for British English to stay top as the mother variety are indicators that the tussle between the two is complex and probably unpredictable. The co-existence has evidently come to stay, even if it is to the disadvantage of British English whose hegemonic status is put to test in Cameroon by the presence of another rivalry variety. Even though just a slight number of informants went in for American English at the expense of British, it is nonetheless significant, especially within the context of Cameroon where English language was transported and transplanted during the colonial era thanks to the British.

Given that America did not colonise Cameroon and the etymology of English in Cameroon has generally been traced from the British who scrambled for colonies in Africa in the 19th century, logically, Cameroonians should be closer to and more versed with British English than American. Curiously, feedback from the field reveals that the reverse is true as if to suggest that the linguistic wind of change that is blowing over the world has equally affected Cameroon. Although the British may not find this loss of linguistic heritage palatable⁸⁷, they have to make do with that because the situation is evidently irreversible. Considering the circumstances surrounding, we are convinced that the need to strike a balance between the two varieties is unavoidable. This would go a long way to create a space for their mutual and peaceful co-existence in a complex linguistic setting as Cameroon.

The study reveals that the majority of those who prefer either British or American English are unable to make a difference between the two. Besides, preference of one variety over the other can globally be attributed to familiarity or palatability of the lexicon in question. This highlights the dilemma of the non-native English speaker in general and that of Cameroonians in particular, who are caught between extremes as the two native varieties jostle for supremacy. As the competition between the two

⁸⁷ According to Crystal (2003), the British have not been quite comfortable over the fact that American English is increasingly the dominant variety with over 70% of the world population using it as mother tongue.

intensifies, it is increasingly evident that the debate on the standardisation of Cameroon English cannot be laid to rest without considering these native varieties as bedrocks or sources of reference. This is so because the problem is not with those countries where English is a first language, but for those where it is or has the status of a second language or foreign language, and where its role is often defined by a conscious process of planning and not by the natural course of linguistic evolution (Crystal, 1995).

It is necessary to stress here that the co-existence of British and American Englishes in Cameroon does not raise the question of intelligibility among users. However, Cameroonians do not actually know the differences between the two varieties and this may be a handicap in communicating with the outside world. We want to think that the context of teaching and learning English in Cameroon is somewhat responsible for the co-existence of the two varieties and the confusion plaguing the users. First of all, teachers are themselves L2 users who lack a firm background on the differences between the two varieties and as such, there is no systematic distinction between the two varieties at the base. As a result, learners grow up picking up the two varieties and end up with both forms in their linguistic repertoire. The tussle between two varieties is therefore bound to continue and the one that is easily accessible and readily available during writing, speaking or any form of communication takes precedents over the other. We therefore think if these varieties are openly taught in schools, it would go a long way to create a space for their peaceful co-existence in Cameroon as elsewhere and consequently enhance communicative ability of ESL learners wherever they may be.

Conclusions

Our key articulation in this paper has been that the hegemony once enjoyed by British English in Cameroon as the leading variety is being challenged by the upsurge of American English. On a general note, it can be said that the dominance of American English over British, especially at the level of vocabulary, cannot be undermined. It is a strong indication that American English has grown in lips and bounds and is now threatening the very existence of the variety that led to its rise. From the look of things, the trend would continue and in years to come, English may

no longer be considered as a colonial legacy in Cameroon because the variety that resulted from that could be usurped. Today, we can argue that the spread of English, its evolution as language of business, technology and wider communication cannot longer be traced only to colonialism but also to the political, economic and military might of the Americans. While our interest in the paper has been to track the development of the American variety over the British variety, it is worth noting that the choice of lexis in natural situations of language use competes with an indigenous variety that has lexeme for items that are not locally rooted in the Cameroonian culture and ecology. Although the choice of a Cameroonian variety may tend to be predictable, based on the relationship between the item in question and cultural resonance in the users' mind, that of the American and British varieties is still illogically unpredictable. This therefore calls for further inquiry relating to access, retrieval, and use of a lexeme in the new nations in a situation of competing codes.

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L'Union Africaine et les Crises Postelectorales

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Résumé

Considérées comme racine principale de la démocratie, les élections ont parfois été à la base des conflits et par conséquent responsables de la déstabilisation des pays et même des sous-régions. L'Afrique ne se soustrait pas à cette règle depuis la chute du mur de Berlin. Les conflits post électoraux y sont légions au point d'en faire un "un monde inutile ; un conservatoire des maux de l'humanité ; l'unité de mesure du chaos social, humain et de la mort.» Pour changer la donne, l'Union Africaine (UA) a mis sur pied une architecture politico-institutionnelle appropriée. Dans ce travail, nous essayerons de faire une évaluation des efforts de l'UA dans la prévention, la gestion et le règlement des crises post électorales en Afrique depuis 2002. Nos sources sont officielles et non officielles, nationales et internationales.

Mots-clés : élections, conflits, Union Africaine, prévention, paix, règlement.

Abstract

Considered as the main root of democracy, elections have also been at the cause of conflicts and the destabilization of countries and even sub-regions. Africa is not an exception to this rule since the fall of the Berlin Wall. There are many post-electoral conflicts which make it a "useless world", a conservatory of the evils of humanity, a barometer of social, human and death chaos. To change the situation, the African Union (AU) has put in place an appropriate political and institutional structure. This paper aims at assessing AU's efforts in the prevention, management and settlement of post-election crises in Africa since 2002. Our sources are official and unofficial, national and international.

Keywords: elections, conflict, African Union, prevention, peace, settlement.

Introduction

Les élections constituent l'un des ressorts essentiels de la démocratie représentative. Elles permettent au peuple de choisir régulièrement ses dirigeants, sur la base des programmes politiques. Elles n'en sont pas moins des processus compétitifs pouvant déboucher sur des conflits, quand elles ne sont pas gérées de manière transparente et constructive. Elles peuvent aussi être responsables de la déstabilisation des sociétés et même des Etats. Avec l'avènement de la nouvelle vague de démocratisation de l'Afrique facilitée par le vent de l'Est, au début des

années 1990, les élections sont redevenues la pierre angulaire de la participation populaire au processus de gouvernance démocratique. En même temps, elles ont engendré des conflits qui ont mis à mal des alliances ethniques et régionales, allant parfois jusqu'à menacer l'ordre social, le développement économique et les efforts visant à consolider l'intégration régionale. Cette montée de plus en plus spectaculaire des crises post électorales a fini par faire de l'Afrique une zone de tension, l'unité de mesure des conflits post électoraux et de l'insécurité. Pour faire face à cette situation, une architecture politico institutionnelle a été mise sur pied par l'Union Africaine (UA). Il va sans dire que l'ambition de cette organisation est d'asseoir une stabilité quasi permanente dans le continent. Dans ce travail, nous nous proposons de faire une évaluation du rôle de l'UA dans la prévention, la gestion et le règlement des crises post électorales en Afrique depuis 2002. Pour y parvenir, nous avons conçu un plan de travail tripartite. La première partie énonce les dispositions juridiques adoptées par l'UA pour la paix, la démocratie et les élections. La deuxième souligne les mécanismes de prévention, de gestion et de règlement des conflits post électoraux, alors que la dernière fait une évaluation critique de l'action de l'UA sur le terrain. Nos sources sont officielles et non officielles, africaines et internationales.

I. Les Dispositions Juridiques de l'Union Africaine pour la Paix, la Démocratie et les Elections

Les Etats africains réunis à Addis-Abeba⁸⁸, au lendemain de leur accession à l'indépendance, ont conjugué leurs efforts non seulement pour la quête de la sécurité collective mais aussi dans la recherche du développement socioéconomique et politique du continent. Quatre décennies après ce conclave, le constat est macabre. L'Afrique est toujours en proie aux conflits et crises polymorphes. Ce qui a interpellé la sensibilité des dirigeants africains. Réunis à Lomé⁸⁹ et conscients du fait que le fléau des conflits en Afrique constitue un obstacle majeur au développement socioéconomique du continent, ils ont trouvé nécessaire de promouvoir la paix, la sécurité et la stabilité : conditions préalables à la mise en œuvre de leur agenda dans le domaine du développement et de l'intégration⁹⁰. Il était désormais urgent pour ces

⁸⁸ L'Organisation de l'Unité Africaine (OUA), créée dans la capitale éthiopienne, le 20 mai 1963.

⁸⁹ Acte constitutif de l'Union Africaine, le 11 juillet 2000 adoptée dans la capitale togolaise au cours de la 35ème session ordinaire de la conférence des chefs d'Etats et de gouvernements de l'OUA.

⁹⁰ Préambule de l'acte constitutif de l'Union Africaine.

dirigeants d'élaborer un certain nombre de stratégies palliatives par le truchement des canaux juridiques mis sur pied à cet effet.

I-1. Instruments juridiques pour la consécration de la paix, la démocratie et la sécurité en Afrique

S'il est vrai qu'au lendemain de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, l'idéal de paix constitue, à l'échelle internationale, un impératif moral et humanitaire à réaliser, il n'en demeure pas moins vrai qu'un demi-siècle après les indépendances, la quête de la paix reste une problématique qui se pose avec acuité en Afrique au regard des atrocités qui colorent le climat sociopolitique du continent. Au regard de ce postulat, les dirigeants africains ont consentis de revitaliser les instruments juridiques qui meublent le projet de construction de cet édifice dont la paix constitue le socle sur lequel sont respectivement fixées la démocratie et la sécurité. A cet effet, l'acte constitutif de l'Union Africaine implante la fondation de cet édifice qu'est la paix. Il est en réalité le principal maillon juridique de cette chaîne. Il prône une acceptation sans équivoque des gouvernements démocratiquement élus et, condamne sans ambages tout tripatouillage constitutionnel. Ici, l'élection est la principale voix pour toute transition politique : expression de la souveraineté du peuple. Les articles 3 et 4 de cet acte sont assez explicites et fort évocateurs⁹¹. Le marketing de la paix est sous-tendu par la promotion des institutions démocratiques synonymes de bonne gouvernance qui protègent les droits de l'homme et des peuples, conformément à la charte africaine y relative. C'est dire que le respect de la vie humaine reste sacré chez les descendants de Cham. L'acte constitutif réitère ainsi l'engagement de l'UA à bâtir un continent démocratiquement stable et qui prospère grâce à un climat socio-politique pacifié. Dans cette perspective, les droits de l'homme, la bonne gouvernance et la démocratie constituent des normes dont le respect atténuera à coup sûr, et de façon non négligeable, le risque de conflit et de violence.

Au chapitre des dispositions juridiques qui conventionnent la quête de la paix, de démocratie, et de sécurité au sein du continent, l'UA institue une conférence sur la

⁹¹Il s'agit en effet d'un éventail d'« objectifs » mis en exergue par l'article 3 dont la réalisation passe nécessairement par les exigences des « principes » énumérés par l'article 4 ; de l'acte constitutif de l'Union Africaine.

sécurité, la stabilité, le développement et la coopération en Afrique (CSSDCA)⁹². Cette déclaration traduit dans les faits la volonté des dirigeants d'assainir le climat sociopolitique en même temps qu'ils proposent un environnement favorable à un Etat de droit, pour le développement socio-économique du continent. Ce qui fait de ces chefs d'Etats les principaux architectes de la paix. C'est donc un protocole qui ambitionne la prospérité du continent à travers la coopération des Etats membres et la valorisation du secteur privé avec lequel il va falloir collaborer étroitement, en même temps qu'il élabore des indicateurs des performances et des calendriers pour la réalisation et l'évaluation des objectifs fixés à ce propos. Cependant, son volet économique est subordonné aux exigences démocratiques et politiques qui sont des invariants prioritaires. Ainsi, la liberté d'expression, le respect de la constitution et la limitation des mandats et même la définition du calendrier électoral sont des signaux dont la présence effective est prônée dans le contenu de ce protocole. Cette déclaration prescrit aussi la mise sur pied des institutions nationales, régionales et continentales pour la prévention, la gestion et le règlement pacifique des conflits et crises ; ceci avec l'action conjointe de la société civile et des organisations communautaires. Son volet judiciaire est appréhendé par la mise sur pied d'une cour africaine de justice, une « équitabilité » recherchée et de plus en plus manifestée dans le cadre de la représentativité du genre féminin au sein des institutions étatiques.

L'inventaire de ces instruments juridiques sommairement évoquées ne saurait être conclu sans identifier l'instance juridique qui chapeaute le chapitre de la sécurité collective au sein du regroupement continental. En effet, le Conseil de Paix et de Sécurité (CPS) est un système de sécurité collective et d'alerte rapide, visant à permettre une réaction prompt et efficace aux situations de crise et de conflit en Afrique⁹³. Son existence juridique fait de lui le cheval de bataille dont l'UA se sert dans sa conquête conventionnelle et institutionnelle de la paix. Cette conquête passe aussi par une hygiène démocratique ressentie par la transparence des scrutins.

⁹²Cette Déclaration a été adoptée au cours de la conférence des chefs d'Etats et des gouvernements de l'UA, tenue en 2000, à Durban en Afrique du Sud. C'est elle qui institue le protocole d'accord sur la CSSDCA.

⁹³ Protocole relatif à la création du CPS, article 2.

I-2. Instruments juridiques pour des élections crédibles

La crise de la démocratie constitue une pesanteur qui handicape le processus de stabilité et de consolidation de la paix au sein des Etats africains post indépendants. L'historicité de ce régime de gouvernance repère son avènement en Afrique en 1990, et s'identifie comme une importation occidentale. Les principes et les exigences de ce mode de gouvernance érigent donc les élections comme l'expression par excellence de ce type de régime. A cet effet, la grande majorité des crises africaines trouve sa source au sein des dérives et maladroites issues du processus électoral. Cela constitue une entorse à la démocratie et incite des comportements et soulèvements contestataires dont les manifestations sont nocives dans la plupart des cas, au lendemain des publications des résultats. Dans cette veine, l'UA se propose, à partir de l'un de ses projets phares, de redonner à l'Afrique un lustre international, une crédibilité qui passe par un processus électoral transparent. La déclaration de l'UA sur les principes régissant les élections démocratiques en Afrique⁹⁴ a justement dressé un canevas en la matière. En effet, cette volonté manifestée par les dirigeants africains prône l'organisation des élections libres et transparentes sur la base d'un agenda électoral précis et défini par une constitution juridiquement approuvée. Les principes de ce protocole identifient d'abord les élections démocratiques comme un gage de la prévention, de la gestion et des règlements des conflits. Il caractérise ensuite la bonne gouvernance, le maintien de la paix, la sécurité et de la stabilité comme des fruits juteux d'une régularité des scrutins. Enfin, les élections garantissent aussi bien l'autorité de tout gouvernement que la représentativité au sein de cet organe étatique. A la suite de ces principes régissant les scrutins démocratiques, le groupe continental mandate les émissaires pour matérialiser sa volonté. Les directives pour les missions d'observation et de suivi élaborées à cet effet sont: l'observation, le suivi, la médiation, l'assistance technique et/ou la supervision et le contrôle.

Ces différentes déclarations constituent des canevas appropriés pour l'UA qui cherche à redynamiser le processus électoral en Afrique. Cette démarche est consacrée par l'élaboration de la charte africaine de la démocratie, des élections et

⁹⁴ Adoptée lors de la Conférence des chefs d'Etats et de gouvernement tenue à Durban en 2002.

de la bonne gouvernance⁹⁵. Elle s'inscrit aussi dans une philosophie similaire à celle des deux déclarations précédemment commentées. Elle est donc perçue comme la consécration des efforts de l'UA pour la promotion de l'agenda globale favorable aux exigences démocratiques, des élections et de bonne gouvernance. Elle prône à cet effet l'organisation régulière des scrutins conduisant à des résultats légitimes. Elle est à l'origine de la mise sur pied de la Commission Electorale Indépendante (CEI), propre à chacun des Etats membres de l'Union. Elle prescrit également la création des mécanismes nationaux pour régler, dans les meilleurs délais, les contentieux électoraux. De plus, la charte africaine de la démocratie, des élections et de la bonne gouvernance recommande un accès équitable aux médias étatiques pendant les échéances électorales, à l'effet de réduire considérablement les contestations du verdict des urnes par les candidats perdants à l'issue du processus du décompte des voix. Considérée comme étant le principal instrument de la démocratie en Afrique, cette charte, de manière préventive, en son article 13, prescrit que les « Etats parties prennent des mesures pour établir et maintenir un dialogue social et politique, ainsi que la transparence et la confiance entre les dirigeants politiques et les populations, en vue de consolider la démocratie et la paix ». Elle légitime aussi l'association des autorités électorales africaines au même titre que le mécanisme africain d'évaluation par les pairs (MAEP). Par ailleurs, son article 23 s'oppose systématiquement aux putschs ou coups d'Etat perpétrés par des groupes dissidents armés ou par des mouvements rebelles contre tout gouvernement démocratiquement élu.

II - Les mécanismes de prévention, de gestion et du règlement des violences postélectorales

Comme nous l'avons signalé plus haut, l'UA a mis sur pied plusieurs organes et structures ayant pour objectif la prévention, la gestion, le règlement des conflits et des différends résultant des élections. La prévention s'applique aux situations de conflit encore embryonnaires, pour empêcher qu'elle ne dégénère. La gestion intervient lorsque le conflit est déjà survenu. Dans ce cas, des mesures sont rapidement prises pour réduire son intensité. Le règlement quant à lui est convoqué

⁹⁵ Elaborée au cours de la session de l'Union Africaine en mai 2007 et adoptée pendant la session ordinaire de la conférence des chefs d'Etats et de gouvernements de l'Union Africaine du 30 janvier 2007 à Addis-Abeba.

pour transformer les situations de conflit en consolidation de paix. L'approche de l'UA, dans le cadre des conflits résultant des élections, comprend cinq volets à savoir

- l'alerte rapide et la diplomatie préventive ;
- l'observation de suivi des élections ;
- la médiation ;
- l'assistance technique et de gouvernance et ;
- la reconstruction et le développement post conflit.

II- 1. Le Système d'Alerte Rapide et la Diplomatie Préventive

Le Système Continental d'Alerte Rapide (SCAR) a été créé au titre de l'article 12 du protocole relatif au Conseil de Paix et de Sécurité pour « faciliter la prévision et la prévention des conflits »⁹⁶. Ce système est essentiel à la prévention des conflits résultant des élections. Les signes précurseurs de tensions politiques doivent être détectés à temps, afin de permettre à l'UA d'intervenir immédiatement par le biais de la diplomatie préventive. La prévention est une stratégie d'anticipation qui consiste à fournir les efforts nécessaires pour éviter les affrontements armés⁹⁷. Intervenant avant la crise, la prévention épargne les vies humaines des rancœurs profondes consécutives à des affrontements sanglants. En effet, c'est dans cette prévention que s'exercent par excellence les règlements pacifiques des litiges, comme l'énonce d'ailleurs l'article 4 de l'acte constitutif de l'UA⁹⁸. La diplomatie préventive, contextualisée par l'agenda pour la paix du secrétaire générale de l'ONU, est un outil de ce programme. Elle se réfère à l'action diplomatique engagée le plus tôt possible afin « d'éviter que les contestations ne surgissent entre les parties ; d'empêcher qu'un démêlé existant ne se transforme en conflit ouvert et si une confrontation éclate, de faire en sorte qu'elle s'étende le moins possible »⁹⁹. Dans le cadre des crises générées par des élections, cette démarche est capitale dans la mesure où les causes des tensions politiques et socio-économiques sont déjà existantes et ont tendance à s'aggraver lors des élections. C'est la raison pour laquelle les missions d'information et d'évaluation pré-électorale entreprises par l'UA dans les pays organisant les élections, sont importantes.

⁹⁶ Anonyme, Guide de l'Union Africaine, African Book, 2015, p. 53.

⁹⁷ Hassatou, Baldé, « L'Union Africaine doit privilégier la prévention des conflits armés », note de recherche, *Thinking Africa*, novembre 2013, p.3.

⁹⁸ Cf. Acte Constitutif de l'UA.

⁹⁹ Hassatou, Baldé, « L'Union Africaine doit privilégier la prévention », p.3.

Le SCAR est composé de deux éléments suivants :

- ❖ un centre d'observation et de contrôle dénommé « salle de veille ». Il est situé au sein de la direction de la gestion des conflits de l'Union. Il est chargé des collectes et de l'analyse des données sur la base d'un module d'identificateur convenable¹⁰⁰ et ;
- ❖ des unités d'observation et de contrôle des mécanismes régionaux, directement liés à la salle de veille par des moyens de communication appropriés, et qui traiteront des données recueillies à leur niveau et les transmettront à la salle de veille¹⁰¹.

Pour rendre plus efficient le rôle du SCAR, afin de remédier aux tensions électorales et éviter que des conflits se transforment en violences manifestes, l'UA et les mécanismes régionaux pour la prévention, la gestion et règlement des conflits ont tenu à Alger, du 05 au 06 janvier 2008, un cadre de réflexion. La déclaration de cette retraite a apporté des révisions notoires.

Elle recommande au CPS :

- ❖ assurer un meilleur suivi de l'évolution politique dans les pays en phase pré-électorale y compris au moyen du système d'alerte rapide ;
- ❖ renforcer l'observation électorale ;
- ❖ conjuguer au moins les moyens de l'UA et les organisations régionales compétentes y compris le déploiement de missions conjointes d'évaluation et d'observation électorale ;
- ❖ procéder, le cas échéant, à des déploiements préventifs d'opération de soutien à la paix et ;
- ❖ faire en sorte que l'Afrique, à travers les missions déployées sur le terrain, soient en mesure de se prononcer d'une seule voix¹⁰².

Le groupe des sages est un organe qui intervient en appui aux efforts du CPS, du SCAR, en termes de collecte et d'analyse des données. Il a été créé en vertu de

¹⁰⁰ Groupe des sages de l'UA, Rapport sur *les conflits et la violence politique résultant des élections, consolider le rôle de l'UA*

dans la prévention, la gestion et le règlement des conflits, décembre 2012, p.8.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.

l'article 11 du protocole du CPS.¹⁰³ Il fait office d'organe ayant pour but de renforcer la capacité de médiation de l'UA. En tant qu'instrument de conciliation, il facilite l'établissement du dialogue entre l'UA et les parties en conflit.

II-2. Observation et suivi des élections

L'observation et le suivi des élections jouent un rôle important. Il va sans dire que ce module vise la crédibilité des élections, la transparence et l'intégrité du processus électoral, et la légitimité des résultats par les principaux acteurs électoraux. C'est à cette fin que l'observation et le suivi des élections constituent une partie intégrante des outils utilisés dans le cadre de la prévention, de la gestion et du règlement des conflits pour l'UA.

Sur le terrain, l'observation des élections repose sur la collecte des informations pouvant permettre d'évaluer la crédibilité, la légitimité et la transparence du processus électoral. Ce recensement est très souvent mené par des organismes externes qui ne sont pas habilités à intervenir dans les processus électoraux ou dans l'opération de dépouillement des votes.

Le suivi quant à lui porte principalement sur la collecte, l'analyse de l'information ainsi que l'évaluation du processus électoral. Il est souvent mené par des organisations nationales de la société civile qui interviennent et remédient aux insuffisances identifiées dans le processus électoral, sans s'ingérer dans la gestion des élections.

L'UA a élaboré un cadre qui est utilisé depuis 2002 pour l'observation et le suivi des élections. Ce cadre comprend : la déclaration sur les principes régissant les élections démocratiques en Afrique, les directives pour les missions d'observation et de suivi des élections et la charte africaine et de la démocratie, des élections et de la gouvernance¹⁰⁴. Toutes les missions d'observation des élections de l'UA s'inspirent de ces trois instruments. Cependant, les Communautés Economiques Régionales (CER) ont également élaboré les directives d'observation des élections.

¹⁰³ Anonyme, Guide de l'Union Africaine, African Book, 2015, p.54.

¹⁰⁴ Groupe des sages de l'UA, Rapport sur *les conflits et la violence politique résultant des élections, consolider le rôle de l'UA dans la prévention, la gestion et le règlement des conflits*, décembre 2012, p.74.

Conformément aux dispositions de la charte africaine de la démocratie, des élections et de la bonne gouvernance, l'UA déploie des missions d'observation dès qu'elle reçoit une invitation officielle d'un Etat membre. Avant le déploiement, l'UA s'assure que la mission d'observation dispose d'un temps suffisant pour les préparatifs nécessaires, des informations essentielles à des fins de planification, de l'expertise professionnelle appropriée, des ressources financières et d'autres requises¹⁰⁵.

C'est dans ce contexte que l'UA a déployé, en janvier 2004, une mission d'observation aux Comores, à l'occasion des élections législatives qui devaient se tenir en mars de la même année. A la demande du président des Comores et dans le but de créer des conditions de sécurité propice aux élections de 2006, le CPS a établi la mission de l'Union Africaine pour le soutien des élections aux Comores¹⁰⁶. Cette mission avait pour objectif de soutenir le processus de réconciliation, de contribuer à créer un environnement sécuritaire stable avant, pendant et après le processus électoral et de vérifier que les forces de sécurité comoriennes n'étaient pas impliquées dans les opérations électorales.

De mai 2007 à octobre 2008, une nouvelle mission de l'UA a été autorisée par la CPS aux Comores, La mission d'assistance électorale et sécuritaire de l'Union Africaine aux Comores (MAES)¹⁰⁷. Elle a été mandatée pour favoriser la mise en place des conditions de sécurité propice au bon déroulement d'une deuxième série d'élections, surveiller le processus électoral, encourager le dialogue et faciliter la restauration effective du gouvernement central dans l'île d'Anjouan.

A l'occasion de l'élection présidentielle togolaise du 25 avril 2015, le CPS a dépêché une mission d'observation électorale de l'UA¹⁰⁸. Cette mission avait pour agenda l'évaluation indépendante, objective et impartiale du processus électoral en république togolaise. Dès son arrivée à Lomé, la mission a rencontré les autorités gouvernementales en charge des affaires étrangères, de l'administration territoriale,

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Anonyme, Guide de l'Union Africaine, African Book, 2015, p.62.

¹⁰⁷ Cette mission comptait entre 350 et 470 personnels.

¹⁰⁸ Conduite par Kabiné Komara, ancien premier ministre de Guinée Conakry, la mission était composée de 43 observateurs comprenant les ambassadeurs accrédités, des parlementaires panafricains, des responsables d'organes de gestion des élections et des membres de la société civile africaine.

de la décentralisation et des collectivités locales ainsi que le président de la Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI).

La mission a exhorté toutes les parties prenantes togolaises à renforcer les conditions d'un climat de confiance et d'opter pour un consensus en vue d'une élection crédible et apaisée¹⁰⁹. D'autres missions d'observation de l'UA ont été déployées en Algérie en avril 2014 dans le cadre de l'élection présidentielle, et en Mauritanie en juin 2014.

II-3. Médiation, assistance technique et gouvernance et l'action de la RDPC

La diversité des sociétés africaines est souvent sujette aux conflits. Lesdits désaccords constituent une menace à l'édification de la nation et à l'harmonie sociale. Bien que ces querelles surgissent à tout moment, elles ont tendance à s'aggraver lors des échéances électorales. Cela est dû au fait que les élections sont sources de contestation politique. C'est en raison de la dominance des conflits violents post électoraux que l'UA intervient par le biais de la médiation. Cette démarche est importante dans la gestion des conflits et dans l'apaisement de la violence politique. L'expérience la plus exemplaire et la plus réussie dans la médiation des différends post électoraux a été enregistrée lors de la crise politique au Kenya en 2008. La mission fut dirigée par l'ancien secrétaire général de l'Organisation des Nations Unies, Koffi Annan.

Dans le cadre de l'assistance technique et de la gouvernance, l'UA n'a pas encore fait preuve d'une grande efficacité. Il est prévu, avec l'établissement de l'unité pour la démocratie et l'assistance électorale, une aide appropriée afin de renforcer les capacités des principales institutions de gouvernance des Etats membres de l'UA.

L'assistance technique de l'UA et le groupe des sages mettent l'accent sur le renforcement des capacités des organismes de gestion des élections, des partis politiques et des organisations de la société civile. Dans l'assistance technique et de gouvernance, les missionnaires de l'UA se concentrent davantage sur les organismes de gestion des élections dans le but de les aider à gérer tous les

¹⁰⁹Rapport de la mission d'observation de l'UA pour l'élection présidentielle du 25 avril 2015 au Togo, Lomé avril 2015.

aspects du processus avec efficacité. Ils s'évertuent aussi à prévenir et à gérer les conflits qui résultent des élections avant qu'ils ne dégénèrent en violence politique. Leur mission consiste aussi à entreprendre l'éducation des électeurs et à prioriser l'éducation civique ; à mettre en application et de manière idoine le code de conduite et appuyer les mesures des réformes électorales¹¹⁰.

Le cadre d'action pour la reconstruction et le développement post conflit (RDPC) a été adopté en juillet 2006, à Banjul en Gambie, au cours de la conférence des chefs d'Etats et de gouvernements. La RDPC est destinée à servir de « directive pour développer des politiques et des stratégies globales qui préconisent des mesures visant à consolider la paix, à promouvoir le développement durable et à ouvrir la voie à la croissance et à la reconstruction des pays et des régions conflictogènes »¹¹¹. L'objectif de la RDPC est d'améliorer le respect des délais, l'efficacité de la coordination des activités dans les pays conflictogènes et de jeter les fondements d'une justice sociale et d'une paix durable¹¹². La RDPC comprend six éléments constitutifs à savoir : la sécurité, l'assistance humanitaire, la gouvernance politique et la transition, la reconstruction et le développement socioéconomique, les droits de l'homme, la justice et la réconciliation ainsi que la promotion de la femme et du genre.

III - Evaluation du Role de l'UA dans la Prevention, gestion et Reglement de Crises Postelectorales

A sa naissance à Lomé en 2002¹¹³, l'UA s'est dotée d'un certain nombre d'attributs devant lui permettre de se saisir des affaires africaines avec efficacité et célérité. Dans cette veine, il est intéressant de s'appesantir sur les prouesses qui connaissent également des faiblesses relatives à la gestion des crises au sein des Etats africains. De la sorte, il serait nécessaire de faire également des propositions en vue d'améliorer les capacités de l'UA en rapport avec la gestion des crises post électorales.

¹¹⁰ Groupe des sages de l'UA, *Les conflits et la violence politique résultants des élections, consolider le rôle de l'UA dans la prévention, la gestion et le règlement des conflits*, décembre 2012, p.80.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ D. Bangoura, *L'Union Africaine face au problème de paix et de sécurité*, Paris, L'Harmattan, s.d., p.45.

III-1. Forces et Faiblesses

En Afrique de l'Ouest, l'UA a longtemps été tenue à l'écart du fait de la pro activité de la Communauté des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEDEAO). En Côte d'Ivoire, la gestion de la crise post-électorale opposant Laurent Gbagbo à Alassane Ouattara a néanmoins démontré que l'organisation continentale était en mesure de faire entendre sa voix.

En effet, lors du sommet de l'UA, en janvier 2011, alors que la situation s'enlisait dans le pays où étaient déjà déployé plus de dix milles soldats onusiens, l'organisation a exprimé son scepticisme vis-à-vis de tout recours à la force pour déloger Laurent Gbagbo. A ce sujet, Jean Ping, alors chef de la commission de l'UA, dit : « On a remis la balle au centre et le centre c'est l'Afrique »¹¹⁴. Cette affirmation sonne comme une remontrance envers les pays occidentaux et l'ONU où sont émis de nombreux appels d'une intervention militaire ; il s'agit également d'une manière de montrer aux membres de la CEDEAO, divisés quant à l'opportunité d'une telle initiative qu'il faut compter avec l'avis de l'organisation continentale¹¹⁵.

L'autre mérite de l'UA en rapport avec la résolution des crises post électorales est relatif à l'échéance kenyane. A l'issue de la consultation présidentielle de décembre 2007, un vent de protestation et de contestation traverse le pays. L'UA réagit en envoyant son président en exercice, John Kufour, pour la médiation. Il arrive au Kenya en janvier 2008 et invite Mwai Kibaki et Raila Odinga, principales figures en controverse à s'accorder sur les principes et de se plier au verdict des urnes. De facto, c'est le président Tanzanien, Jakaja Kikwete, qui conclut la conciliation, et les deux opposants taisent leur rivalité et s'engagent à former un gouvernement de coalition par le biais de la signature d'un accord national de réconciliation¹¹⁶. Au finish, Raila Odinga devient premier ministre en date du 17 avril 2008 et Mwai Kibaki président de la république.

Toutefois, il faut relever que les faiblesses de l'UA en matière de résolution des crises post électorales sont légions. C'est d'ailleurs le moment de rappeler que même

¹¹⁴ Jean Ping, *Conférence de presse en marge du sommet de l'UA*, Addis-Abeba, 20 janvier 2011.

¹¹⁵ Romain, E., « l'Union Africaine 10 après », *Bulletin de la sécurité africaine*, n° 19 mars 2012, p.5.

¹¹⁶ [Http : \TOW.wikipedia.org/wiki/2007-08-kcnyancriscs.coHi](http://tow.wikipedia.org/wiki/2007-08-kcnyancriscs.coHi). Consulté le 11/06/2015.

le cas ivoirien reste un échec bien que les intentions soient bonnes, car on réalise que la spirale de la violence a atteint son pic le plus élevé avec des conséquences très lourdes sur le plan humain.

La démarche de l'UA dans le cadre des crises post électorales s'apparente donc à une cacophonie¹¹⁷. Tout part du postulat selon lequel « le régionalisme africain est né sous le prisme de la dualité des positions entre leaders. Ce qui a déteint sur la dynamique de celui-ci, au point qu'il est difficile aujourd'hui de poser un problème africain sans y trouver des voix divergentes d'au moins deux camps qui s'opposent à l'intérieur d'un même continent »¹¹⁸. Ainsi, la division du continent entre plusieurs cadres de coopération rend complexe la solution d'ensemble aux maux africains. Cette divergence entre l'UA et les cadres régionaux ou sous régionaux complique l'unité de position sur les problèmes intra étatiques et particulièrement sur la résolution des crises politiques désacralisant ainsi le principe de subsidiarité.

III-2. Perspectives

Au regard de la difficile réalisation des objectifs cadrant avec la gestion des crises post électorales, l'UA doit intégrer des nouveaux paradigmes afin de mieux traiter les crises post électorales sans cesse croissantes sur le continent.

Le comportement des Etats africains à l'égard de l'intégration s'assimile plus au chauvinisme. D'où la nécessité de renforcer l'orientation du régionalisme africain, élément de restructuration. Ceci passe évidemment par la redéfinition des conditions d'adhésion à l'UA¹¹⁹. En effet, l'adhésion de fait ou collective devrait être remplacée par une adhésion volontaire. Cette volonté partagée doit être accompagnée d'un certain nombre de règles, de normes et de procédures conférant à l'UA l'image d'un organe international fort et bien structuré.

¹¹⁷ F. M. Foukou, « L'Union Africaine dans l'état des crises politiques en Afrique : entre cacophonie et tâtonnement, *Thinking Africa*, n° 24, janvier 2015, p.4.

¹¹⁸ F. M. Foukou, «Les handicaps idéologiques à l'intégration africaine. Une analyse théorique du régionalisme africain », mémoire de Master en Relations Internationales, Institut des Relations Internationales du Cameroun, Université de Yaoundé II-Soa, 2013, p. 44.

¹¹⁹ De fait, toute organisation internationale est régie par un certain nombre de normes et de principes directeurs. Ce qui, dans le cadre de l'UA, reste contradictoire car certains principes ne permettent pas d'aboutir aux objectifs fixés par l'organisation.

Il est essentiel pour toutes les institutions de l'UA (en particulier le département paix et sécurité et le département des affaires politiques) de s'investir dans les mécanismes de prévention et d'alerte rapide axés sur les pays qui ont des antécédents de violence électorale, ou qui présentent des signes révélateurs de déclenchement de conflits suite à la concurrence provoquée par des élections et la contestation politique. Étant donné que la plupart des activités du cycle électoral sont réalisées en période pré-électorale, des initiatives diplomatiques et des actions préparatoires opportunes s'imposent afin de s'assurer que les pays susceptibles de sombrer dans la violence électorale puissent organiser des élections pacifiques et compétitives. Si on n'identifie pas les pays potentiels à problèmes, il sera impossible pour l'UA de développer des mesures de prévention significatives qui reflètent le caractère unique et les particularités de chaque pays. Face à des contraintes sérieuses en matière de ressources, il est important pour l'UA de développer des mesures d'interventions stratégiques concentrées sur les pays qui en ont le plus besoin.

Dans le cadre des mécanismes de prévention et d'alerte rapide, l'UA doit :

- renforcer ses capacités de collecte d'informations en ce qui concerne les points névralgiques électoraux potentiels ; cela suppose l'accès et la collecte des informations disponibles auprès d'institutions comme le MAEP, le CPS, le département des affaires politiques, les systèmes d'alerte rapide des CER et d'autres organisations, tel le Forum des anciens chefs d'État basé à Pretoria, en Afrique du Sud;
- établir un calendrier annuel, ainsi qu'une typologie des prochaines élections en Afrique, afin de déterminer quels pays pourraient avoir besoin d'un suivi étroit et que soient déployés des efforts de prévention pour éviter qu'il y ait contestation des élections ;
- donner la priorité aux pays qui nécessitent une attention urgente pour atténuer les problèmes potentiels ;
- accorder la priorité au déploiement d'équipes d'évaluation pré-électorale avec un mandat clair et précis. Examiner aussi bien la préparation technique des parties prenantes aux élections que le climat politique général des élections,

et de promouvoir le dialogue entre les candidats tout en suggérant, si besoin est, la tenue ou non d'une élection ou son report à une date ultérieure plus convenable¹²⁰.

En outre la redéfinition du dialogue entre l'UA et les communautés économiques sous régionales¹²¹ s'avère importante dans l'optique de renforcer le rôle de l'UA en matière de crises post électorales, ceci à travers une mise en lumière du principe de subsidiarité en vertu duquel les macros instances sont plus qualifiées pour assurer une sécurité collective. Ce dialogue s'appuie sur le respect des normes de hiérarchie en vertu desquelles l'instance supérieure a primauté sur l'instance inférieure. L'UA et les CER ont un large éventail d'institutions habilitées à gérer en temps opportun les crises post-électorales. La question la plus importante qui se pose est de savoir quand et comment l'UA peut mobiliser ses énergies institutionnelles pour atteindre les objectifs qu'elle s'est fixée dans les pays secoués par la violence électorale. Le rôle de ces institutions dépend de leur degré de préparation et de leur aptitude à se coordonner pour effectuer la transformation des contextes post-électorales incertains et violents en résultats pacifiques, équitables et justes qui cadrent avec les normes démocratiques. Étant donné que l'escalade de la violence électorale dénote souvent de l'absence ou de l'échec de mécanismes méthodiques pour la gestion de la compétition, le rôle des acteurs et des institutions externes est encore plus aigu pendant la phase postélectorale. Heureusement, la violence post-électorale survient souvent lorsqu'un grand nombre d'acteurs internationaux sont encore présents sur le terrain en qualité d'observateurs électoraux. Il est alors plus facile d'attirer l'attention de la communauté internationale sur la situation du pays affecté. Cela signifie que lorsque les tensions déclenchent, des acteurs externes comme l'UA et d'autres observateurs peuvent rapidement intervenir pour empêcher que la violence ne dégénère. À cette étape, l'UA et ses institutions peuvent prendre l'initiative de:

- faire respecter le code de conduite électoral et utiliser des mécanismes de règlement de différends judiciaires et alternatifs dans le règlement des différends et des conflits ;

¹²⁰ Groupe des Sages de l'UA, *les conflits et la violence politique résultants des élections, consolider le rôle de l'UA dans la prévention, la gestion et le règlement des conflits*, décembre 2012, p.71.

¹²¹ P. Chabal, *L'Afrique est parti! Du désordre comme instrument politique*, Paris, *economia* 2003, p.28.

- encourager les parties à régler les conflits électoraux par le biais de mécanismes judiciaires régionaux et continentaux, telle la Cour africaine de justice et les mécanismes judiciaires mis en place par les CER (cela est particulièrement important là où les mécanismes nationaux présentent des faiblesses ou sont contestés) ;
- mettre en place des dispositifs de médiation politique et de consolidation de la confiance entre les parties pour empêcher une nouvelle escalade de la violence ;
- rassurer le public par rapport aux inquiétudes de la communauté internationale quant au retour à la cohésion sociale et au respect de l'Etat de droit¹²².

Le cas du Kenya et celui du Zimbabwe nous renseignent sur les moyens qui ont été utilisés par l'UA pour régler les conflits post-électoraux. Au Kenya, l'entremise de l'UA a permis de mettre sur pied, en temps opportun, un panel d'éminentes personnalités présidé par Kofi Annan. Pour ce qui est du Zimbabwe, l'UA a encouragé la Communauté de Développement de l'Afrique Australe (SADC) à concilier les forces en présence. Ces deux cas de figures révèlent des approches nées d'institutions continentales et régionales différentes mais complémentaires, avec des atouts divers et variés.

Les acteurs internationaux constituent un maillon fort dans la chaîne de la gestion des élections en Afrique, en ce sens qu'ils mobilisent les fonds, renforcent l'expertise technique et administrative, exercent la pression politique sur les groupes différents, observent les élections et apportent une légitimité à leurs résultats. Étant donné que la violence électorale à grande échelle devient un problème important dans le paysage africain, les acteurs bilatéraux et multilatéraux, étatiques et non étatiques, deviendront encore plus indispensables à chaque étape du cycle électoral, en termes de financement et d'assistance technique.

¹²² *Groupe des sages de l'UA, Les conflits et la violence politique résultants des élections, consolider le rôle de l'UA dans la prévention, la gestion et le règlement des conflits, décembre 2012, p.77.*

En tant que nouvelle institution dotée d'une autorité morale et de force de persuasion, le groupe des sages de l'UA se trouve en pole position pour exploiter judicieusement sa position remarquable et ses talents de médiation et de négociation de manière à prévenir, gérer et régler les conflits électoraux, en collaboration avec d'autres structures et instruments de l'organisation continentale. Le nombre modeste de ses membres permet une flexibilité suffisante pour intervenir rapidement à toutes les étapes du processus électoral, en particulier dans les cas où l'on prévoit qu'une crise pourrait survenir. Les compétences personnelles et professionnelles des membres du groupe des sages leur donnent une grande marge de manœuvre pour jouer pleinement leur rôle.

Pour cela, d'importantes ressources financières et techniques devraient être allouées au groupe des sages, sur le moyen et le long terme, lui permettant ainsi de mener des activités de bons offices. Le département paix et sécurité et le département des affaires politiques doivent conjointement fournir au groupe des sages un appui technique dans sa gestion des conflits. Il faudrait aussi renforcer les capacités du secrétariat du groupe et tenter de lier les interventions de ce dernier, de manière stratégique, à celles des deux départements dans le domaine de la prévention, la gestion et le règlement des conflits résultant des élections. Grâce au nombre croissant d'anciens hommes d'État et d'autres éminentes personnalités africaines, le groupe des sages disposera d'un grand réseau d'individus expérimentés auxquels il pourra constamment faire appel dans l'accomplissement de ses tâches. En collaborant étroitement avec l'UA et les mécanismes d'alerte rapide sous régionaux, le groupe des sages devra régulièrement effectuer l'évaluation des situations électorales pouvant aboutir à la violence et au conflit, afin de jouer un rôle préventif. Dans ses interventions de prévention, de gestion et de règlement des conflits résultant des élections, le groupe des sages peut également s'appuyer sur les autres organes clés de l'UA.

Il peut être déployé à deux étapes critiques des élections : la phase pré-électorale, avec un accent sur la diplomatie préventive et l'alerte rapide, et la phase post-électorale, en se concentrant sur la médiation.

- Au stade pré-électoral, le groupe des sages peut intervenir de la manière ci-après
- par le biais de l'alerte rapide, à travers des missions et des contacts discrets ;
- en effectuant lui-même des missions d'information;
- en entreprenant des navettes diplomatiques pour désamorcer les conflits qui pourraient surgir dans la phase des préparatifs conduisant aux élections ; à travers ces missions, le groupe fera des recommandations à la commission de l'UA ainsi qu'aux gouvernements et aux parties prenantes nationales, sur les conditions relatives à la tenue des élections ;
- par le biais de structures consultatives et de médiation préliminaires, ainsi que des fora établis où les partis se disputent sur les règles de scrutin et les contestent ;
- dans les situations fragiles et explosives, le groupe des sages pourra librement agir au nom du CPS ou du président de l'UA en proposant des mesures à prendre pour anticiper sur l'escalade des conflits ;
- dans les situations où le groupe des sages estime qu'une élection est susceptible de déclencher des actes de violence politique qui pourraient entraîner la déstabilisation du pays, il doit s'efforcer d'obtenir un report du scrutin à une date ultérieure après, que des efforts visant à enrayer le conflit aient été déployés ;
- le groupe devra aussi coordonner avec les autres institutions et organes pour garantir un environnement pré-électoral propice à un processus crédible ;
- le groupe des sages devra encourager les États membres de l'UA à mettre en œuvre des programmes réguliers et systématiques d'éducation civique et d'éducation des électeurs, afin de promouvoir une culture démocratique de tolérance politique et de paix à travers toutes les couches de la société ;

Rendu au niveau post-électoral, le groupe des sages devra envisager que :

- ❖ son principal rôle à ce stade porte essentiellement sur la médiation des conflits en vue de renforcer la paix ;

- ❖ la mise sur pied d'un comité d'intercession sur le modèle de la troïka qui a parfaitement réussi au Kenya, concept qui devra être institutionnalisé et élargi;
- ❖ le renforcement des capacités du comité de médiation du groupe devra être soutenu au moyen de l'assistance technique et la formation d'une équipe compétente d'appui à la médiation ;
- ❖ les processus d'évaluation et d'audit postélectorales devront être institutionnalisés à travers des organes compétents de gestion des élections avec la participation d'autres parties prenantes, afin de s'assurer que les mesures correctives sont prises grâce à des réformes contre la violence électorale ;
- ❖ La mise en œuvre des recommandations des missions d'observation des élections, y compris celles de l'UA, par ses États membres devra être suivie et contrôlée¹²³.

Conclusion

Les défis nés de la violence électorale et politique mettent en relief l'importance que revêt la mise en place d'institutions pour assurer l'équilibre entre la compétition et l'ordre, la participation et la stabilité, la contestation et le consensus. Conscient de la floraison des conflits et de la violence politique liés aux élections, l'UA a initié des réflexions sur des mécanismes et les modalités susceptibles de garantir une gouvernance démocratique viable à travers des stratégies visant à prévenir, gérer et résoudre les conflits électoraux. En analysant les divers efforts déployés par l'UA pour élaborer des protocoles et des instruments susceptibles de consolider les modèles et les pratiques démocratiques; il en ressort que des progrès ont déjà été réalisés dans la perspective d'avaliser une participation harmonieuse et l'inclusivité politique à travers l'établissement des normes et règles relatives à l'organisation et à la tenue d'élection libres et régulières en Afrique. Cependant, les initiatives continentales dans ce domaine ont enregistré des lacunes et des insuffisances auxquelles il convient de trouver des solutions afin de renforcer leur efficacité et leur légitimité. Il est donc impératif que toutes les institutions de l'Union

¹²³ *ibid.*

travaillent en intelligence pour une mise en place effective des mécanismes de prévention et d'alerte rapide centrés sur les pays prédisposés à des violences électorales. De ce fait, l'Afrique doit faire des efforts pour évoluer, de façon progressive et créative vers des systèmes électoraux qui élargissent la représentation adossée sur la diversité, le respect du principe d'égalité et la règle de la majorité tout en protégeant la minorité. Un soutien doit être apporté à l'Union à travers son unité d'assistance électorale en vue d'asseoir une coordination plus efficace et effective de l'observation et de l'assistance électorale. Etant donné que la violence électorale à grande échelle devient une question principale dans le continent, les acteurs internationaux apparaissent comme le centre névralgique de la gestion des élections à travers leur rôle dans la mobilisation des ressources et de l'expertise politique et administrative. L'avenir du continent africain en dépend.

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Part B

Peace through culture and understanding

Colonial Legacy and Brittle Peace: A Philosophical Reading of Achebe's *There was a Country*

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Abstract

It is impossible to understand Nigeria's political landscape without being aware of the nature and consequences of the Nigeria-Biafran war and the ideas of brittle peace and impending war that emerged from these experiences. Achebe's (2012) *There was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra* offers a significant account of the Nigeria – Biafra civil war (1967-1970) and its continuing effect in the life of Nigeria as a nation. The book highlights a number of important features and contradictions frustrating the unity of Nigeria, including: (i) the 1914 amalgamation of Nigeria and the legacy the British colonial government bequeathed to Nigeria at independence: (ii) the role ethnicity played in the war and has continued to play in Nigeria's political life; (iii) the need to openly engage the issue of genocide that occurred during the war and why silence over such a *capital* offence is not in the best interest of the nation; (iv) the need to seriously assess the future of Nigeria through a mind revolution, rebirth of ideas and genuine commitment to excellence. *There was a Country* directs attention to the fact that in real terms Nigeria has not learnt any meaningful lesson from the war. Nigeria-Biafra war is much more than who is right and who is wrong. It is a history that should form a long memory of the nation to guide and guard the citizens on the pitfalls of excesses, intolerance, non-compromise and, especially, the dangers in enthroning mediocrity. The paper has a dual purpose: to offer a philosophical exposition on Achebe's book and to extract general rules or causal theories that can enhance peace-building, especially in Commonwealth nations.

Keywords: Achebe, Nigeria-Biafra Civil war, genocide, Philosophy, History, Peace-building

Introduction: Reading a Personal History Philosophically

In order to evaluate a personal account philosophically the following issues should be considered:

- i. To what extent can the author draw a clear line between fact and fiction given that the boundaries between fiction and reality are often blurred? Commenting on his fictional representation of facts in his novel *Weep Not, Child* Ngugi (2010) notes that he was not sure if he was able truly to capture the intricate web of the mundane and the dramatic, the surreal normality of

ordinary living under extraordinary times in a country at war. Equally Abrahams (1954:66) reminds that there are times 'in which the dividing line between reality and dream was so fine as not to exist.'

- ii. To what extent can a personal account avoid distortion given that facts can be manipulated and rearranged? Isaak (1975) draws attention to the somewhat pathological nature of all human beings. He insists that facts 'are pre-selected and pre-interpreted on the basis of certain value assumptions and on the basis of certain human interests' (261). Experience, values, background knowledge, prejudice, proximity or otherwise to an issue/situation no doubt play a significant role in the interpretation we give to a situation.
- iii. Are there other ways of evaluating the issues raised other than those presented by the author? Is there a disagreement(s) between the author's account and other accounts from reliable sources on the same subject? In this wise, other critical works such as Soyinka's (2006) *You Must Set Forth at Dawn*, Gould's (2013) *The Biafran War: The Struggle for Modern Nigeria*, Awolowo's (1981) *Awo on the Nigerian Civil War*, Alabi-Isama's (2013) *The Tragedy of Victory: On-the-Spot Account of the Nigeria-Biafra War in the Atlantic Theatre*, Byrne's (1997) *Airlift to Biafra: Breaching the Blockade*, Ezeani's (2013) *In Biafra Africa Died: The Diplomatic Plot* among others will be used to assess Achebe's account.
- iv. Does the account go back far enough historically to the conditions that explain the starting points and premises? Does the author have enough time perspective to make sense of what happened? On the cover flap of *There was a Country* the publishers wrote that Achebe begins his narrative with 'Nigeria's birth pangs and the story of his own upbringing as a man and as a writer, so that we may understand both the young country's keen sense of promise..., and Achebe's view of the particular obligation of the artist, especially in a time of war'. Further they note that the book is '[a] marriage of history and memoir, vivid first-hand observation and decades of further research and reflection'.

These questions are not the only ones which may be asked. They do, however, offer a framework for evaluating the text. It is important to hold them in mind as the discussion progresses as representing some of the core concerns in rendering an adequate philosophical reading of Achebe's *There was a country: A Personal History of Biafra*.

Text Summary

In *There was a Country*, Achebe blends history, memoir and research in an attempt to render a firsthand account of the Nigeria-Biafra civil war (1967-1970). Published forty-two years after the war ended, the book provides clear expositions of what in the author's view happened and why it happened.

Perhaps, what Achebe hoped to achieve were four broad elements. First is to capture the features and contradictions frustrating the unity of Nigeria. Even though Nigeria is bound together in a common fate, parochial ethnicity continues to sustain a fragmented national interest more suited to pre-amalgamation era than to post-amalgamation period.

Second is to present a major account of Nigeria-Biafra war and its continuing effect in the life of Nigeria as a nation. For him, it is not easy for people outside to understand what Biafra truly means. Achebe (156-7) explains Biafra this way: 'We were able to demonstrate that it was possible for African people, entirely on their own, to refine oil. We were able to show that Africans could pilot their own planes and manufacture their own bomb – "Ogbunigwe".' Nigeria's continued underdevelopment is linked to the destruction rather than harnessing the progress made by Biafra during the war.

Third is to highlight the issue of genocide and why silence over such a capital offence is not the best option. Due to silence the lessons that should have been learnt from the war are ignored. Importantly, it does not appear as if anything is about to halt the trend. It is *this* historical amnesia that the book seeks to both draw attention to and to correct.

Fourth is to open a serious debate regarding the future of Nigeria and her parochially tribal citizens. While there is no wish for the country to disintegrate, there is heavy

concern as regards what it will take to hold the country not just together but as a country to be reckoned with among community of nations. To achieve this, three conditions are particularly required. First is to shun mediocrity and place emphasis on excellence, show respect for individual talent and encourage healthy competition. Second is for Nigerians to try to aim for an egalitarian and democratic society in both manners and procedures, at every level. Third is the willingness of those piloting the country's affairs to pay the price necessary to achieve these goals.

Analysis: A Philosophical Reading of *There was a Country*

The analysis will be carried out under the following subsections:

Post-Colonial Legacy

Why did Nigeria disintegrate so soon after her independence from Britain? Was there an in-built flaw? In short, what kind of legacy did the British colonial government bequeath to Nigeria at independence?

Achebe (51) contends that 'Nigerian independence came with a British governor general in command'. The purpose was to ensure that power went to the Northern part of the country. In addition, the country was structured in such a way that 'there was an inbuilt power struggle among the ethnic groups and those who were in power wanted to stay in power' (51). It was this inbuilt power struggle that was manipulated following the first coup. The initial spontaneous jubilation that accompanied the announcement of the coup was replaced by a second story that it was 'a sinister plot by the ambitious Igbos of the East to seize control of Nigeria' (66). Given the tribal composition of the country, 'the rumor of an "Igbo coup" began to find acceptance' (66). In Soyinka's (57) account the British government did not only rig Nigeria's first election, 'to make absolutely certain that power did not fall into the wrong hands, specific instructions were issued by the British Home Office to its civil servants' to manipulate the final results of elections to the federal legislature, where necessary, in favor of the Northern politicians.

From the foregoing it is safe to deduce that Nigeria's political beginning was not based on merit. The defining qualification was willingness to remain loyal to British authority. Soyinka (2006:57) refers to this as 'John Bull was not about to leave an independent

Nigeria under the control of any uppity radicals – as the Southern nationalists – the East and the West – were perceived’. In Okigbo’s (1991:424) view colonial government left behind at independence ‘a fractional politics calculated to prevent nation-building. More often than not power had been placed in the hands of a pliant and accommodating leadership most ill-equipped for running a modern state’. This set the precedence for a government of mediocrity in Nigeria. Achebe (69) avers that ‘the chaos enveloping all of us in Nigeria was due to the incompetence of the Nigerian ruling class’. For Okigbo (1987:111) ‘any society that does not actively and consciously cultivate excellence is doomed’.

Brittle Peace: Nigeria-Biafra war

Achebe traced the origin of the Nigeria-Biafra war from the ‘discovery’ of Africa by Europe, to the transatlantic slave trade, to the Berlin conference of 1885 that Balkanized Africa’s ancient societies. The most seminal factor responsible for the war, however, was the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates in 1914 which became Nigeria. Gould (2013:9) informs that the ‘British style of administration... meant that from Nigeria’s inception its pre-colonial history of ethnic divisiveness was confirmed.’ He maintains that ‘there was inevitability about the two coups leading to the war, because of politicized tribalism and ethnicity and the army’s naivety in meddling in politics, for which it was ill-prepared and ill-trained.’ Ezeani (2013:16) notes that Nigeria’s amalgamation was achieved at the cost of ‘ignoring the wider and deeper historical and sociological divergences between the North and the South.’

This difference became very apparent in the events that followed Nigeria’s independence in 1960. To begin with Nigeria’s independence was manipulated by the British government anxious to retain its power on Nigeria. The result was the installation of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as Nigeria’s first prime minister. Achebe (51) observes that within ‘six years of this tragic colonial manipulation Nigeria was a cess-pool of corruption and misrule.’ Soyinka (2006:57) reports that the ‘elections that placed a government in power at the center were rigged – by the British!’

At this point evaluative questions will be central in analyzing events leading to the civil war: What should an ethnic group whose interest is not being protected by the state do? Under what conditions should the state demand loyalty and support from an ethnic group which interest is not being protected by the state? At what point should war become a preferred option bearing in mind Creveld's (2009:90) warning that in war the stakes are 'awesome, the highest that exist'?

Achebe points to Nigeria's first coup of January 15, 1966 as the most direct genesis of the Nigeria-Biafra civil war. He reports that the 'weeks following the coup saw Easterners attacked both randomly and in an organized fashion' (66). It got to the point that he 'realized that the only valid basis for existence is one that gives security to you and your people' (71). According to Alabi-Isama (2013:32) 'the counter-coup of July 1966 by the Northerners ... made all the Ibos (sic) ... to feel unsafe except in their own region of origin'. In Iloegbunam's (2016:43) view 'the July 29 [1966] counter-coup appears to be the bloodiest in the world's recorded history because the casualty figures it posted far outstrip those registered in decided bloody coups'. Isaak (1975:12) reminds that '[r]evolutions occur when some of the people making up a nation no longer recognize the state or organization governing their lives as legitimate.' For Mandela (1990:34) a government that willfully neglects to protect part of its citizens cannot expect nor demand loyalty from that group. In fact it is the duty of the group to seek victory through 'a bitter struggle'. For Soyinka (2006:153) the only basis for advocating one Nigeria should be based on 'political parity.' He points to the massacre of the Igbos and the lackadaisical attitude of Gowon's government towards the killings as a major contributory factor to the war. Biafra's secession which culminated in the war was as a result of the inability and unwillingness of the Federal Government to protect the lives and property of the Easterners.

Another factor that resulted in the war was Gowon's renegeing on the agreement reached with Ojukwu at Aburi. Achebe reports that in March 1967 the government of the Eastern Region warned Gowon that his repeated failure to implement the Aburi Accord resolutions could lead to secession. Ojukwu proclaimed the independence of the Republic of Biafra from Nigeria in May 30, 1967 which led to the war. Gould

(2013), Ezeani (2013) and Soyinka (2006) also attribute a significant cause of the war to the non-implementation of the Aburi Accord.

An aspect of the cause of the war that deserves more attention than it generally receives is the fact that culture and language are deeply interconnected and define and shape the nature of political tension, conflict and solution in an environment. In tracing where the 'rain' that led to the war 'began to beat' Nigeria, Achebe (11) notes that the area of West Africa handed to Great Britain during the Berlin Conference of 1885 'was one of the most populous regions on the African continent, with over 250 ethnic groups and distinct languages.' Unfortunately this difference was downplayed during the amalgamation. Achebe (2) observes that 'the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates inextricably complicated Nigeria's destiny'. For Soyinka (2006:59) the 'developing fissures, nation-wide, were perhaps inevitable, given the artificial grafting of the British parliamentary system on a patchwork nation with different pre-colonial histories and systems of self-governance'.

Another cause of the war was attributed to Aguiyi-Ironsi's reluctance to execute the coup plotters. Achebe (80) reports that there was 'growing anger and dissatisfaction among officers from Northern Nigeria, who wanted revenge for what they saw as an Igbo coup'. The revenge took the form of full scale massacre of the Igbos in the North. Pregnant women were cut open. Hands and legs were cut off, eyes pulled out, skulls crushed. Soyinka also attributes Aguiyi-Ironsi's prevarication over what to do with the coup plotters as a factor that contributed in the cause of the war. In Anele's (2016:24) view the tension and confusion that characterized that period 'prevented Ironsi from moving against Nzeogwu and his group under detention.' He argued that 'Ironsi could not have taken decisions all by himself' without consulting the Supreme Military Council. He further stated that both Major-Generals Hassan Usman Katsina and David Ejor revealed that the SMC chaired by Ironsi eventually decided that the coup plotters should be court martialled not later than October 1966. Ironsi was, however, killed in the Hausa revenge coup in July 29, 1966, two months before the agreed time to try the coup plotters.

Besides, the designation of the coup as 'Igbo coup' requires some interrogation. Does the fact that the coup was spearheaded by two Igbo officers qualify such generalization? Does coup making admit crowd involvement? More importantly the coup was crushed by Igbo army officers, principally Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi and Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu (Madiebo, 1980; Achebe, 2012; Ezeani, 2013). Besides, according to Ezeani (34) 'the coup was plotted in order to forestall the Yoruba land from being destroyed by the North as earlier planned. Secondly, the coup plotters agreed to hand over power to a prominent Yoruba politician, Obafemi Awolowo'. Soyinka (108) reports that in the West 'the coup was a hand of salvation, and they did not especially care by what means it was extended, or how blood-stained it was'. It would appear that the 'Igbo coup' did not have Igbo people as its beneficiaries. However, as Iloegbunam (45) notes the composition of the coup plotters and the fact that the coup casualties were non-Igbo 'fanned the fiction that it was an Igbo coup'. Interestingly subsequent coups in Nigeria – Murtala Muhammed, Dimka, Buhari, Babangida and Orkah – were not associated with the ethnic origin of their principal plotters except Ifeajuna/Nzeogwu's own which was labeled Igbo coup and used as an excuse to decimate the Igbos. Achebe (74) observes that 'Nigerians will probably achieve consensus on no other matter than their common resentment of the Igbo'.

Importantly, the need for power is at the core of every war. Giddens (2001:420) describes power as 'the ability of individuals or groups to make their own interests or concerns count, even when others resist'. The reason Nigeria went to war against Biafra was to 'keep Nigeria one'. This position clearly sidelines the fact that the North was the first to opt for secession. Soyinka (2006) and Gould (2013) claim that this attempt was stopped by the British High Commissioner, Cumming-Bruce, who persuaded Gowon and the Emirs that secession would be economic disaster for the North. The issue, then, may not be 'one Nigeria' as such. In Byrne's (1997:13) opinion the war might never have happened if the rich oil resources of Biafra were not there. It may just be that the wish of the North should prevail at all times since it is the will through which colonial *might* can easily be expressed.

The Question of Genocide

Raphael Lemkin, a Polish-Jewish lawyer, created the term 'genocide' in 1944 from a combination of two words, *genos*, a Greek word for race, ethnic group or nation and *cide*, a Latin word meaning to kill. Lemkin used the term to describe a co-ordinated plan of different actions aimed at annihilating a group of people. In the hierarchy of crimes, Shabas (2009:11) assigns genocide as belonging 'at the apex of the pyramid'.

In Achebe's view the deliberate and systematic killing of the Igbos following the coup of 1966 and the federal government policies of economic blockade that prevented shipments of humanitarian aid, food and supplies to the needy in Biafra that led to more than two million deaths during the war amount to crime of genocide. According to Achebe (82) 'a detailed plan for mass killing was implemented by the government – the army, the police – the very people who were there to protect life and property. Not a single person has been punished for these crimes'. Achebe (134) also reports that Pope Paul VI emissary, Monsignor Georges Rocheau, was of the opinion that there 'has been genocide for example on the occasion of the 1966 massacres'. Ezeani (2013) wonders why a major genocide in Africa – the Biafra genocide – is not acknowledged. Soyinka (2006) links genocide committed against the Igbos to their resolve to secede. For him 'when a people have been subjected to a degree of inhuman violation for which there is no other word but genocide, they have the right to seek an identity apart from their aggressors (110)'.

Gould (2013:143), however, quotes Gowon as stating that '[he] was deeply distressed that people thought that [he] even considered genocidal action towards the Igbo people. It never even entered [his] thought process'. Schabas (2009) reminds that it is inconceivable that an infraction of such magnitude as genocide could be committed unintentionally. For him, 'international crimes in general, but genocide in particular, are virtually inconceivable without the involvement of the state' (512). Gowon's claim is further compounded by his position. According to Schabas (270) 'command responsibility holds the superior liable for the acts of subordinates when the superior knew or ought to have known that the subordinates were committing such acts and the superior failed to intervene'.

It is reasonable to state that Gowon was responsible to the extent he failed in his duty to exercise his influence to prevent the massacre. A codicil, however, may need to be added. Gowon's actions and inactions should be interpreted within the context of a comprehensive background. Gowon by his own admission was not ready to be a head of state at that time. According to *Sunday Vanguard* report of October 19, 2014:5, Gowon confessed that he 'was not trained to be in government' and that he was not ready to become the Nigerian leader after the July 1966 coup d'état. According to Gould, Gowon admitted that once he was chosen as Head of state he appealed to the British High Commissioner, Cumming-Bruce for help; a claim Cumming-Bruce admitted as true. This had devastating consequences for the war. Leadership at the best of time is a very serious issue that demands excellent skill and training. In war situations, it is particularly so. The atrocities of the civil war, some of which Gowon claimed to be ignorant of, were blamed on him.

This, however, does not take care of Achebe's main claim: why is it that to date the genocidaires have not been brought to book? Schabas (2009) provides a useful insight. Explaining why genocide perpetrators often go scout free, he notes that 'genocide was generally, although perhaps not exclusively, committed under the direction or, at the very least, with the benign complicity of the state where it took place'(1). For this reason domestic prosecution was obviously 'unthinkable even where the perpetrators did not in a technical sense benefit from some manner of legal immunity. Only in rare cases where the genocidal regime collapsed in its criminal frenzy, as in Germany or Rwanda, could accountability be considered'. Based on this line of thinking Biafra's case is understandable. Nigeria won the war; Biafra lost. Nevertheless, the brutal killing of Igbo people apart from negating civilization was a clear sabotage on the solidarity of Nigeria as a nation.

No Victor, No Vanquished

Gowon made a national broadcast on the eve of Biafra's official surrender to announce the end of the Nigeria-Biafra civil war. The core message of that speech as it has also come to be known was that there was 'no victor, no vanquished' in the war. He also called for the full reintegration of Igbos into the fabric of Nigerian life.

Achebe argues that this conciliatory proclamation was *completely* lacking in content. To begin with immediately after the war the federal government adopted a banking policy which nullified any bank account which had been operated by the Biafrans. In place of that a flat sum of twenty pounds was approved for each depositor of the Nigerian currency regardless of the amount of deposit. Achebe (234) observes that if 'there was ever a measure put in place to stunt, or even obliterate the economy of a people, this was it'.

This was followed closely by the ban on the importation of second hand clothing and stock fish – two trade items the Eastern commercial sector needed to reemerge. Again the Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1974, also known as the Indigenization Decree fronted as 'pro-African liberation strategy' to empower Nigerian businesses and shareholders was a mere chicanery. The real intent was to achieve a permanent shift of the balance of economic power away from the East to other constituencies given that the former Biafrans at that point had no financial muscle to participate meaningfully in the scheme.

In addition, Igbo properties were confiscated in Rivers State under the Nigerian Government Abandoned Property Policy. Although the Federal government of Nigeria launched an elaborate scheme highlighted by three Rs – for Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, and Reconciliation, Achebe (235) claims that they were not implemented. Anele (2015:10) wonders why '[i]f Gowon was serious about his "no victor, no vanquished" slogan and genuinely wanted reconciliation with the Biafrans, why did his government implement extremely harsh measures against Ndigbo after the conflict?' Nwakanma (2016:7) notes that 'since 1970, the South-East of Nigeria has received the least infusion of federal capital ... less than 11% of all capital expenditure. The old Kano state comprising Kano and Jigawa receive more in federal allocation than all of the South East put together. This is strategic diminution'. In Ajani's (2015:13) view '[e]very nation seeks the total sum of good for its people Since after the civil war, what ordinarily ought to have been a Marshall Plan of sorts for the South-East was never engaged'.

Gould (2013) observes that despite Gowon's proclamation of 'No victor, No vanquished' the ongoing reality has been very different. In his assessment the Igbo's are cut off from the three main areas – politics, education and economics - relevant to a country's successful development and sustainability. For Sanusi (1999) the Igbo people 'have been defeated in war, rendered paupers by monetary policy fiat, their properties declared abandoned and confiscated, kept out of strategic public sector appointments and deprived of public services. The rest of the country forced them to remain in Nigeria, and has continued to deny them equity'. Alabi-Isama (2013:601) has this to say: 'Gen. Gowon announced, "No victor, No vanquished." Were the owners of the property not Nigerians?' He concludes that those affected were the vanquished. Ezeani (2013) submits that the real intension behind the Nigeria Government Abandoned Property Policy was to transform the Igbo-land into an Amphitheatre of hatred where brother would turn against brother.

Importantly, in a situation where the notion of equality is highly compromised, it will be difficult to establish enduring peace. At best what happens is for the person with the upper hand to secure outward behavioral compliance which has nothing to do with *real* compliance. In such a situation *everything* is a matter of time. The end of war may not be peace but armistice. Woodrow Wilson in Isaak (111) warns that when a victor's terms is imposed upon the vanquished it 'would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which the terms of peace would rest, not permanently, but only as upon quicksand. Only a peace between equals can last.' Achebe (228) admits that the war and events after it left the former Biafrans 'indigent, stripped bare, and stranded in the wilderness.' Gould (205) notes that despite the 'No victor, no vanquished' proclamation 'the undercurrent of dissent and disquiet with the ruling oligarchy is never far from current day-to-day life' in Nigeria. Sanusi (1999) warns that by continuing the marginalization of the Igbo people, 'the nation is sitting on a time-bomb.' Isaak (152) cautions that 'a war that is badly settled leads inevitably to another war.' Agitation for Biafra continues to this day typically expressed through the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) and Radio Biafra. Almost on daily basis there is newspaper report on Biafra.¹ Thus, a war can end without affecting the idea that

brought the war into being. Nwakanma (2015:8) enlightens, 'Easterners consider themselves victims of state-terror. There must be both reconstruction of the East and reparation for the years of discrimination. These facts will continue to drive the agitation for Biafra'.

The problem with the notion of No victor, No vanquished, is that it is fundamentally flawed. The concepts are *very* opposite in meaning. To place them at par even in a most emphatic arrangement will entail serious psychological reordering. This is, often, a price both the victors and the vanquished are not willing to pay. The vanquished always know their true position and depending on what caused the war in the first place, if the issue remains the same, then the peace will be troubled because the arrangement is not yet that of equals. The true essence of no victor, no vanquished is, perhaps, best captured in the nature of the relationship between the Northern part of Nigeria that waged the war on behalf of Nigeria and the former Biafra. Gould (206) sums up, '[t]he North had defeated her recalcitrant neighbor and since the war there has been a political determination that no other part of Nigeria would be allowed to challenge the authoritative power of the North.'

Lessons/Causal Theories for Peace Building

A war that lasted for 30 months, claimed about 3 million lives, left many thousands physically and/or psychologically scarred, destroyed countless properties worth billions, pauperized millions of people should count for something significant at the end of it. What did the Nigeria-Biafra war achieve? What did it leave behind for the benefit of posterity?

Achebe contends that the significant lessons the war ought to teach have been wilfully ignored. The chief purpose of the war was to 'keep Nigeria united'. This has not been achieved due to 'the political ineptitude, mediocrity, indiscipline, ethnic bigotry and corruption of the ruling class' (243). For Alabi-Isama (569) part of the tragedy of our nation is that 'after a war of unity, we have not been able to put leaders in place who will think about our people, their welfare and their security'. The problem may be that slogans do not always correspond to reality. Was the war *really* a war of unity with the sole purpose of keeping Nigeria one? Or was it a war of *interest* which driving motive

was mostly to safeguard the economic interest of Nigeria and her foreign partners? Be that as it may, the war left behind some invaluable lessons. I choose seven to highlight the point.

One, the Nigeria-Biafra war teaches that war does not follow the law of prediction. When Nigeria fired the first shot that started the war at Garkem on July 6, 1967, Gowon was confident of victory within weeks. The war lasted for 30 months – many times over both in the projected period and devastation. The devastation was such that Gowon admitted to being shocked. This shows how things can go wrong in a war. Alabi-Isama (591-592) reminds that ‘in military strategy there is what is called “friction” which is the difference between what you planned and the end result of what you got’. Such reminder should help in guiding through choices. The recourse to war should be the final and only option left. Once a war is on it creates a free zone for psychopaths and people with unlimited capacity for wickedness to unleash their terror on society. Even the ‘most principled of struggles,’ Soyinka (2006:85) avers ‘has its share of psychopaths’.

Two, in conflict situations one should go beyond personal principles and convictions to anticipate the opponent’s responses including those that may not conform to *normal* reasoning. This is best exemplified by Gowon’s renegeing on the Aburi accord. Ojukwu’s inability to foresee this may have been responsible for his insistence that either the Aburi accord is upheld or nothing. This shows that, probably, Ojukwu did not consider the importance of neurotic bargaining in defeating an opponent in a conflict. Isaak (170) explains that ‘the essence of neurotic bargaining is to persuade your opponent that you will do one thing and then surprise him by doing the opposite. The method is effective precisely because the reversal seems so risky and inconsistent that your opponent cannot believe any sane person would do it’. Achebe and some scholars (Gould, 2013; Soyinka, 2006; Ezeani, 2013), however, attributed Gowon’s action to his ill-preparation for the conference and the advice of his followers. Even if neurotic bargaining was not what motivated Gowon’s action, the result, no doubt, had the same effect. It is, therefore, important to recognize that in conflict situations and in issues relating to power and politics, there are people who do not mean what they say, and mean what they do not say.

Three, is the disastrous consequences that accompany the philosophy of non-compromise. One reason often cited for the longevity and the heavy toll the war took was the inability of the two sides to compromise. In a situation where two sides are unyielding, the losing side bears the greater brunt. This was true of Biafra. Ojukwu held on to his famous mantra 'on Aburi we stand'. This ideological rigidity prevented him from addressing the specific needs of his people – millions of starving Biafrans – who were suffering at the present for the sake of a futuristic achievement.

In addition to the lives and property that probably could have been saved, Ojukwu's non-compromise cost him dearly in terms of internal support. Achebe and Gould (2013) link Ojukwu's political decline to the withdrawal of Azikiwe's support. Gould (156) further quotes Lt. Col. Effiong, General Officer Commanding Biafra's army, as stating that Ojukwu 'did not know when to apply the brakes'. The inability to apply brakes when it is called for can easily lead to a situation where a leader cannot see reality for what it is. When a leader suffers from such optical illusion his people suffer accordingly as in the case of Biafra. The war teaches, then, that extremism is not the best of ideologies in conflict resolution.

Four, is the need to recognize the salience of history. Achebe blames a significant part of Nigeria's problem on the fact that requisite lessons that should have been drawn from history as regards the civil war are being ignored. He raises three critical questions in this regard: 'Is the information blockade around the war a case of calculated historical suppression? Why has the war not been discussed, or taught to the young, over forty years after its end? Are we perpetually doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past because we are too stubborn to learn from them?'(228). Gould (201) reports that 'spending a year travelling and visiting all the major centers throughout the country, it is striking that there is little to remind the visitor of Nigeria's civil war'. Creveld (2009:150) cautions that 'the society that does not honor those who died fighting for it has yet to be born. Had it been born, one would not expect it to survive for any length of time'. Commemorations act as constant reminder and a check against the evils of war. It is in this regard that the United Nations General Assembly established the International Holocaust Remembrance Day in memory of

the victims of the Holocaust in 2005 to be marked every 27 January. Nigeria needs to do a similar thing regarding the civil war. Its place in Nigeria's history should be acknowledged and openly discussed. In Byrne's view the ability of Nigeria to face its history would be a demonstration of maturity. Creveld (171) reports that Herodotus, regarded as the father of history, said that his objective was to investigate and record the great deeds committed by both Greeks and Persians during the war between them so that future generations would not forget them. Indeed, Achebe (251) attributes the rise of the militant Islamist sect Boko Haram to the fact that for 'over half a century the federal government has turned a blind eye to waves of ferocious and savage massacres of its citizens – mainly Christian Southerners; mostly Igbos or indigenes of the Middle Belt; and others – with impunity'.

History is important but not for recriminations. It helps to provide a comprehensive understanding of an issue, thereby helping to point out future pitfalls. Nigeria-Biafra war is much more than who is right and who is wrong. It is a history that should form a long memory of the nation to guide and guard the citizens on the pitfalls of excesses, intolerance and non-compromise. If the country is allowed to slide into another war, then the danger of genocide again looms. Having being through its devastating effect before, any self-preserving country should not expose her citizens to it again. There is need to include the history of Nigeria-Biafra war in the curricula of schools in primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

Five, is the need to consider the total picture and calculate the long-term consequences of war before embarking on it. Beginning with the 1966 coup that led to the war, placing it on cost/benefit analysis what did the coup solve versus the problem it created? Did the coup plotters attempt to look beyond the coup to its aftermath in case it fails? What measures did they put in place to handle the 'inevitable' high risk of intertribal war? In case of conflict who are the ex-colonial master's likely to back? What weight will their assistance or non-assistance carry? Britain was seriously implicated in the defeat of Biafra. Achebe (133) reports that three months after the Biafran invasion of the Mid-West, Nigerian forces were able to reorganize and "armed to the teeth" with British weapons staged a successful counter offensive. In Soyinka's (147) account the role 'played by the British mission at this

critical time in shoring up the confidence of the regime has yet to be fully narrated – it certainly was not a negligible factor’.

The failure of the coup plotters to think carefully and comprehensively through their action has left devastating mark on the country. The fragile sense of regarding Nigeria as a natural right was irretrievably destroyed. In treating Nigeria’s independence as settled and permanent, they did not see its fragility which the aftermaths of the coup exposed. Notions of ethnicity, tribal projection and protection still retain the foremost consideration in the scale of political values in the country. By not seeing the complete picture the coup plotters sacrificed their lives and those of their ethnic people for an *imaginary* country.

Six, is the need not to base actions on other people’s promises. One major accusation Achebe labeled against Awolowo and other Yoruba leaders was their failure to secede from Nigeria after the Igbo’s had done so. Colonel Paul Ogbemor in an interview with Ibileke (2013:27) reports that what prompted Ojukwu to secede was probably the meeting some people in the West had with the Easterners to say: ‘Let’s divide Nigeria. Let the Ibos[sic] go as Biafra, let Midwest go as Republic of Benin and let the West go as Republic of Oduduwa’. For Ezeani (72) ‘[b]oth literature and empirical evidence show that not only the West reneged on its alleged public declaration to secede when the East seceded; it joined the North to fight against the East for seceding’.

Be that as it may, a mental shift is required. It is important to move from conceptualization of agreement as a static state. Agreement is vital life-force, the result of an ever-evolving interaction and conflict among disparate groups. It is an unending social process. Many things could (possibly not weighed during the meeting) have been responsible for Awolowo and other Yoruba leaders’ decision not to follow the lead of Biafra. There is something called second reflection. It is possible that they reconsidered their stand and discovered that Nigeria is better as one or/and that Yoruba’s interest is safer with Nigeria. Whatever the case, Awolowo’s action should serve as a caution against trusting completely. No matter how secure an agreement or promise is, it should be seen within the backdrop of an ever-evolving

interaction. That way there is always a fluid space that can absorb the shock of disappointment, betrayal, disloyalty, distrust and other negative attributes that afflict social relationship. Importantly, in taking major decisions and carrying out significant actions one should be guided by deep and complete personal convictions. It is wise to always remember Fukuyama's (2011:28) warning that 'it is always risky to think one understands the true intentions of great thinkers'.

Seven, is how victory can cloud vision. There was no attempt to build on the advancement, especially in the area of science and technology, made by Biafra during the war. Achebe (156-157) notes that in the two and a half years of the struggle Biafran scientists were able to develop rockets, bombs – Ogbunigwe -, telecommunication gadgets and devised an ingenious strategy to refine petroleum. These happened in spite of European oil companies' insistence that 'oil-industry technology was so complex that [Africans] would never ever in the next five hundred years be able to figure it out'. Achebe (301) further quotes Ojukwu as stating that '[i]n three years, [Biafra] had broken the technological barrier, became the most advanced Black people on earth'. The benefit that Nigeria should have derived from the war by building on Biafra's invention in the area of technology was lost due to lack of vision. By failing to tap into that advantage Nigeria lost a valuable opportunity to advance in the area of science and technology. The effect is that Nigeria has continued to be a *self-imposed* colonial country: borrowing culture and technologically dependent on others.

Conclusion: Nigeria's Future

It is impossible to understand Nigeria's political landscape without being aware of the nature and consequences of the Nigeria-Biafran war and the ideas of brittle peace and impending war that emerged from these experiences. *There was a Country* makes it clear that except for injurious idealism, Nigeria is not one. Three assumptions support this.

First, the nation is facing critical problems which will overwhelm it unless different ethnic groups learn to work together to find solutions. Second, Nigeria's democracy is bereft of content. The elections that bring leaders into office is based on 'godfatherism

– an archaic, corrupt practice in which individuals with lots of money and time to spare ... sponsor their chosen candidates and push them right through to the desired political position, bribing, threatening, and, on occasion, murdering any opposition in the process' (Achebe, 245). By marginalizing the poor and the politically weak and exacerbating inequality, the country is paving the way for its own demise. Political institutions may not be enough if they are not backed up by proper cultural attitudes. Fukuyama (2011:5) remarks that the 'mere fact that a country has democratic institutions tells us very little about whether it is well or badly governed. This failure to deliver on the promise of democracy poses what is perhaps the greatest challenge to the legitimacy of such political systems.'

Third, Nigeria has not been able to 'locate' and 'elect' the *right* leader. Achebe (244) puts it thus: 'Having grand ideas was fine, but their execution required a strong leader....Nigeria's principal problem was identifying and putting in place that elusive leader.' The responsibility of a leader is to lead through example by demonstrating clear commitment to issues that strengthen democratic institutions such as accountability, justice, citizens' welfare and zero tolerance for corrupt practices. This point is particularly pertinent when one relates it to Gandhi. Reforms are more endearing and enduring when the reformer begins with self.

Notwithstanding the foregoing the future of Nigeria is a free zone conjectural space. Spanier (1983:97) urges us 'to remember...that forecasts about the future of humanity are basically guesses, even when based on fairly reliable data about the current world'. Gould (45) reports that on his second meeting with Cumming-Bruce, in September 2, 2008, he greeted him with the comment: 'I sometimes wonder whether I did the right thing in keeping Nigeria together.' This comment no doubt is based on the devastating role ethnicity played in the war and has continued to play in Nigeria's political life. The issue of ethnicity is mind-based and cannot be wished away. Soyinka (109) quotes Awolowo as stating that 'I've always insisted to myself that my first duty is to the Yoruba nation. We are a nation....And I put that nation first, then the one called Nigeria.'

Awolowo's comment is understandable. In Nigeria, once one steps out of his/her ethnic space he/she becomes the 'Other' and an easy target for all forms of discrimination. The Nigeria union was not as a result of conscious and willing engagement. The different nations did not develop the *mental space* to accommodate each other. Associations succeed where the parties involved are willing and able to create mental space for each other. Besides, loyalty to one's region is normal, even natural. What is problematic is too much loyalty. Aristotle reminds us that the *mean* is the most desirable condition. In this wise the continual survival of Nigeria as a nation will depend critically on replacing simplistic solutions such as hiding behind ethnicity, chorusing popular ideologies, singing one-sided slogans and championing uncritical group ideas with cooperative, integrated thinking and variable approach in the handling of national affairs. Ultimately, it is the quality of an association that determines its longevity and worthwhile association takes time to build. Achebe (247) reminds that '[b]uilding a nation is not something a people does in one regime, or even in a few years; it's a very long process'.

Importantly, it is misleading to think that the breakup of Nigeria will necessarily bring peace to the separate regions. The strife may be more. Human problems do not dissolve because brothers are left to themselves. When Southern Sudan's 2011 independence from Sudan shattered in 2013 it was 'brother against brother': an internal political power struggle between President Salva Kiir and his ex-deputy Riek Machar. Whether Nigeria continues to exist as one or separate entities without empathy, tolerance, a commitment to live together in peace, a *practical* willingness to unite strength for the development of the country, and a commitment to competency and professionalism in the choice of people to man government institutions, Nigeria's problems will be rehashed perhaps in different guises in all the new entities.

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L'Amour et la Paix: une Lecture de la Littérature Post-guerre en Allemagne

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Résumé

Cette étude analyse les modes de construction d'une humanité pacifique en sondant les imaginaires littéraires d'après-guerre en Allemagne. Elle part de l'hypothèse que pour réussir une paix durable, il urge de donner une place centrale aux imaginaires, et pas seulement à l'histoire, qui accompagnent les représentations culturelles d'un groupe ou d'une communauté donnés. Prenant appui sur les fondements philosophiques des approches culturelles, et en considérant avec l'Ecole de Frankfurt la littérature comme mode privilégié de production culturelle, l'étude explore le moment de crise de l'histoire allemande pour proposer une considération de l'amour-*philia*, c'est-à-dire amitié, à partir d'un rapport particulier à l'altérité. L'étude arrive à la conclusion selon laquelle seule une éthique de la différence peut efficacement permettre la réalisation d'une *harmonia mundi* dans laquelle s'épanouit une humanité triomphante.

Mots-clés: paix – amour – littérature post-guerre – catastrophe –rencontre

Abstract

This study investigates peace-building strategies via the philosophical realm of postwar literature in Germany. It formulates the hypothesis that in order to build durable world peace, one has to take into account narratives put forth by a given community in the process of constructing its identity. Borrowing from cultural studies theories and the Frankfurt School its foundational tenets analyzing literature as a particular mode of cultural production, this study considers catastrophe as an ideal place in which love – *philia* -, friendship, becomes a possibility, a space for the emergence of alterity and thus, respect for the other. This analysis concludes that only a work on the ethics of difference can achieve a durable world peace capable of creating a triumphant humanity.

Keywords: peace, love, postwar literature, catastrophe, encounter

Introduction

Le thème de l'Amour est au centre des préoccupations humaines depuis les origines, mais paradoxalement, il est rarement présent dans les discussions sur la paix dans le monde. Or, comme dans les siècles passés, les conflits qui articulent le quotidien du monde font de la question de l'amour une préoccupation atemporelle et *illimitrophe*, un néologisme qui inscrirait la pluralité comme fondement du vivre ensemble. En effet, la violence qui caractérise les contacts entre diverses civilisations humaines la

transforme en trope permanent de la rencontre. L'intérêt de la présente réflexion réside justement dans l'inscription de la violence comme topos de la rencontre culturelle, c'est-à-dire comme évènement constitutif de la fabrique de la modernité. Elle est ce que René Girard (2007) nomme « entité », la métaphore d'un objet qui a été détourné de sa nature première. Cet objet, nous le nommons amour car il est l'histoire d'une rencontre manquée, sorte d'avortement éthique. Notre réflexion est donc essentiellement une éthique de la rencontre que nous analysons à travers l'imaginaire littéraire.

I. Dire l'amour ou réécrire la paix universelle

Avec Levinas (1980), cette étude considère l'Amour dans sa rupture avec le paradigme parménidéen qui gratifie le besoin du Je, une exigence dont la possibilité de satisfaction confirme l'économie Moi. Ce travail envisage l'Amour comme un appel de l'Autre et inscrit l'Altérité et la Différence comme piliers d'une *harmonia mundi*, d'une *paix universelle* nécessaire à la survie de l'humanité. En effet, si Parménide percevait son dilemme philosophique comme choix entre être et non être – et la vérité étant du côté de l'être –, notre réflexion aborde cette question comme une amphibologie entre autonomie et hétéronomie, c'est-à-dire comme une ambiguïté essentielle entre moi et l'Autre. Dans ce contexte, l'Amour repose sur le résultat d'un mouvement qui va d'un monde intime et familier vers l'univers de l'étranger, mais aussi celui du *befremdliche*, de l'étrangeté. Ce *befremdliche* n'est pas, comme le *umheimlichkeit* de Freud (1907), une cristallisation des peurs et des pulsions du sujet, mais plutôt un espace de la rencontre de l'Autre. Cela dit, malgré les multiples définitions qui existent sur l'Amour, ce travail repose sur l'analyse de deux éléments fondateurs de sa réalité : le sujet et l'autre. Mais pour mieux ancrer nos réflexions, une brève histoire des théories sur l'amour s'impose. Pour les besoins de l'argumentation, nous considérons dans l'ordre les théories platoniciennes, psychanalytiques et aristotéliennes¹²⁴.

¹²⁴ Nous considérons en effet que les thèses de Platon sont plus proches de celles des psychanalystes puisqu'elles mettent en scène Eros et que celles d'Aristote préparent l'argumentaire central de cette thèse car elles abordent l'amour via le concept de *philia*, de l'amitié.

1. Platon : Eros, une pulsion vers l'immortalité

L'une des philosophies les plus influentes du monde occidental sur l'amour est le platonisme. Engagée dans les écrits de Platon sur l'amour (principalement le *Banquet*, *Phèdre* mais aussi la *République* et les *Lois*), cette tradition va se vivifier à travers Aristote, Plotin, le néoplatonisme, l'Amour courtois du Moyen-âge, le Romantisme du 19^e siècle et même la psychanalyse du 20^e siècle. Aujourd'hui, l'intérêt pour les idées platoniciennes sur l'amour reste important comme l'attestent les travaux des chercheurs tels que Moravcsik (1972), Vlastos (1999), Levy (1979), Nussbaum (2001). Mais comment caractériser l'essentiel des idées de Platon sur l'amour ?

Pour Platon (1989), l'amour est à la fois désir perpétuel de possession du Bien et désir d'Immortalité. En effet, dès le *Banquet*, l'auteur met l'accent sur le fait que lorsqu'on aime, on cherche en réalité la possession du Bien qui réside selon lui en la chose aimée. Et ce désir est permanent et non temporel (1956, 86). L'amour est donc d'abord désir et cela articule la présupposition fondamentale selon laquelle l'être humain est par essence programmé pour cette pulsion primaire. Le problème réside dans la reconnaissance par l'être humain de l'objet même de l'amour. Or cet objet, Platon le nomme *Bien* ou *Beauté absolue*. Pour comprendre ce que l'auteur nomme Bien ou Beauté absolue, il faut considérer sa théorie sur les Formes.

Dans cette théorie, Platon propose que la réalité ultime n'est pas ce que nos sens perçoivent mais des entités éternelles qu'il nomme formes ou idées. Ainsi, tout savoir sur le monde est savoir sur les formes. L'univers n'étant pas aléatoire, la plus haute connaissance que nous avons d'elle montre que tout tend vers la réalisation de l'être. Et, puisque toutes les choses participent d'un seul et même ordre du monde, il s'ensuit qu'il existe un seul bien recherché par tous. C'est cela que Platon nomme Beauté absolue, le Bien, qui serait donc la plus haute de toute les Formes, l'ultime catégorie au sein de laquelle toutes les autres réalités peuvent être expliquées. Ainsi posé en tant que désir suprême, le *Bien* ou la *Beauté absolue* devrait être présent dans toutes les phases de la vie humaine.

Cette compréhension de l'amour comme possession perpétuelle du Bien engendre sa re-création à l'infini. D'où la deuxième caractérisation de l'amour chez Platon : le désir d'immortalité. Ce dernier explique pourquoi l'amour est constamment associé à la reproduction des espèces car la procréation apparaît ainsi en fin de compte comme notre expérience la plus proche de la perpétuité. En effet, si on chérit nos enfants, c'est d'abord parce qu'à travers eux nous rentrons dans le futur catégorique. Ainsi, lorsque nous contemplons la beauté absolue avec une âme affranchie, nous rentrons en contact avec l'éternel de façon à ce qu'il garantisse la perpétuité. Dans *Phèdre*, la quête du Bien ou de la Beauté Absolue est envisagée à partir des problèmes que l'âme rencontre dans son désir d'immortalité. Pour Platon, l'âme est immatérielle et indestructible et par conséquent immortelle. Mais à partir du moment où elle descend dans le monde naturel, elle s'enferme dans l'enveloppe matérielle du corps. A son stade naturel, l'âme selon Platon vivait avec les dieux et bénéficiait ainsi de l'essence des Formes éternelles. Aux yeux de Platon, la nature humaine est double, une instable composition du corps et de l'âme, et gouvernée par des pulsions contraires. Chacune de ces deux parties lutte pour déplacer l'être humain vers sa direction et ces deux mouvements sont dictés par l'amour. Le corps autorise les tentations charnelles et tend vers le bas alors que l'âme veut ramener l'être humain vers la hauteur et la transcendance des Formes éternelles. L'âme ne se préoccupe ainsi que de la réalisation de l'excellence à travers une relation pure, noble et spirituelle permettant à ceux qui s'aiment d'améliorer leur quête de la vertu. A ce titre, l'amour chez Platon devient l'expression de la beauté divine et est constitué à la base des deux pulsions que nous évoquions tantôt : c'est Eros et c'est lui que retravaillent les théories psychanalytiques.

2. La psychanalyse, Freud ou l'autre Eros

Dans la tradition psychanalytique fondée par Freud, l'amour se conçoit comme pulsion libidineuse vers l'objet d'amour. Ici, Eros est considéré comme l'un des deux instincts de base du comportement humain. Il est responsable du désir d'unité, de préservation et de réunion des choses, des entités et des individus. C'est l'instinct de vie qui permet la création et la prolifération des espèces et est donc essentiellement la fondation du processus de civilisation. Chez Freud, Eros doit permettre l'harmonie de la race humaine en créant une symbiose parfaite entre les nations et les peuples.

Même si les travaux de Freud sur l'amour sont vastes et en perpétuel mouvement, on peut résumer les bases de sa pensée en explorant le rapport qu'il établit entre narcissisme et amour.

En 1914, Freud aborde effectivement la question de l'amour du point de vue du narcissisme. Il comprend l'amour comme un transfert de la libido du moi d'un sujet (*Ich* et pas encore *dasIch*) vers une autre personne. Ce transfert, il le nomme cathexis (1914) ou investissement. La cathexis peut se produire pour plusieurs raisons mais ce qui importe, c'est son caractère révocable car elle peut être retirée en fonction des besoins par le moi. Il faut aussi noter que lorsque cet investissement est fait, le propre moi du sujet s'implique moins car son regard sur soi diminue dans la mesure où pour Freud, chaque sujet ne possède qu'une certaine quantité de libido qui baisse chaque fois qu'il y a transfert. Dans sa discussion préliminaire sur l'amour (1914), Freud établit la distinction entre ego-libido (une libido qui ne s'investit qu'en soi-même) et objet-libido (allant vers l'objet d'amour). La première forme d'ego constitue ce que Freud appelle « narcissisme primaire » et est semblable à l'instinct de l'animal qui ne se préoccupe selon lui que de sa survie (manger et se défendre). Ici, ce type d'ego ne pose pas de problème particulier puisqu'il est automatique¹²⁵. La seconde forme, elle, se produit lorsque le sujet s'attache à un objet ou s'investit en lui et à ce moment, son narcissisme baisse puisqu'une partie de sa libido se transfère à l'objet. Cela amène Freud à théoriser qu'il existe deux types d'objets choisis par les êtres humains :

- Si nous choisissons quelqu'un qui nous ressemble ou nous rappelle d'une manière ou d'une autre la personne qui a pris soin de nous durant l'enfance ou qui a satisfait nos besoins primaires, nous choisissons ce que Freud nomme objet « anaclitique » (d'attachement). L'objet peut alors ressembler à l'original de plusieurs manières : le nom, la couleur des yeux ou des cheveux par exemple. Tomber amoureux signifie dès lors, aux yeux du psychanalyste, confondre l'objet avec une image idéale préexistante et ainsi associons-nous souvent notre partenaire à notre mère, notre père ou à toute personne ayant joué un rôle significatif dans notre enfance.

¹²⁵Lacan (1966) considère plutôt que cette forme d'ego s'élabore et est loin d'être automatique.

- Si nous choisissons comme objet quelqu'un qui nous ressemble et pas une autre personne, nous opérons ce que Freud appelle choix narcissique. Tomber amoureux signifie la confusion du moi et de l'autre, une sorte d'identification virtuelle à l'autre et on pourrait dire avec Rimbaud que Je un est Autre.

Il apparaît ainsi que dans la psychanalyse freudienne, l'amour est pris au piège des pulsions du sujet et que la rencontre de l'autre se fait dans une sorte de mise en scène du désir. Cette mise en scène correspond aussi à la tension permanente que vit le moi partagé entre désir de soi et désir de l'autre. Cette aporie, les théories aristotéliennes avaient déjà tenté de la résoudre.

3. Aristote : Philia ou la quête de l'amitié

Dans son *Ethique à Nicomaque*, notamment aux livres 8 et 9, Aristote pose les jalons de toute sa réflexion sur ce qu'il appelle *philia*, qui pourrait signifier amitié ou amour. Notre thèse veut justement arriver à poser l'amour comme vecteur de l'amitié ultime et comme réponse à la violence et au chaos. Il convient donc d'explorer en profondeur les propositions faites par Aristote à ce sujet.

Philia est un terme d'une exceptionnelle importance dans la philosophie de la Grèce antique. Signifie-t-il amitié comme le pense la majorité de la critique sur Aristote ou amour tel qu'il apparaît dans certains contextes ? Est-ce une émotion, une vertu ou une disposition ? On retrouve d'ailleurs la même ambiguïté avec le terme *philos*, souvent traduit comme « ami » mais qui pourrait également renvoyer à un frère ou à d'autres types de liens de sang. Elizabeth Belfiore (2000) suggère que « the noun *philos* surely has the same range as *philia*, and both refer primarily, if not exclusively, to relationships among close bloodkin » [Le nom *philos* a la même dimension que *philia*, et tous les deux renvoient premièrement et exclusivement aux relations entre personnes de même lignée] (20). Dans la *Rhétorique*, Aristote ajoute au rapport *philia/philos* la dichotomie toute aussi riche entre *philia* et *philein*, verbe apparenté des deux premiers termes, pour mener sa réflexion sur les *pathé* (émotions), notamment des passions comme la colère, la peur, l'envie ou la pitié. Il est intéressant de remarquer que Aristote (1963) continue sa réflexion non pas en définissant *philein* (amour) mais *to philein*, (*aimer*) ce qui l'amène à proposer une nouvelle définition de

philos : « L'ami est celui qui aime et qui est payé de retour. On se regarde comme ami quand on est disposé l'un pour l'autre » (159).

De ces quelques propositions, il apparaît clairement deux points majeurs dans la tentative d'Aristote de définir l'amour. Le premier est que l'amour, tel qu'il le conçoit, est fondamentalement et intrinsèquement altruiste car l'amoureux agit de manière à réaliser de bonnes choses pour le bien de l'autre, et cela en accord avec ce que l'autre conçoit comme bien. On veut ainsi pour les autres ce qu'on veut pour soi-même. La réciprocité devient alors la caractéristique propre de cet amour-partage. Le deuxième point important chez Aristote est l'idée que l'amour n'est pas défini comme un sentiment ou une émotion mais plutôt comme une intention et c'est ici la grande originalité de la pensée aristotélicienne.

En effet, ainsi posés, ces deux points permettent à Aristote de transcender les apories *post-modernes* sur la possibilité même de l'altruisme tel qu'envisagé par Jacques Derrida (1997) pour qui il ne peut y avoir de cadeau sans l'inscription de la réciprocité. De même Bourdieu (1997) insiste pour sa part sur le caractère ambigu du cadeau qui, d'une part est refus de calculs égoïstes, exaltation de la générosité et, d'autre part, conscience refoulée d'une sorte de logique de l'échange. Mais pour Aristote, pour que l'amour soit total, il faut arriver à l'amitié et cela est fondé sur la réciprocité. Pour lui, la réciprocité ne signifie pas que le cadeau de l'amour est une dette, une sorte de commerce de la matérialité. La réciprocité est, fondamentalement, l'inscription de l'altérité dans le geste d'amour car elle appelle le sujet à ne pas ignorer l'autre, à reconnaître sa face.

Cette réflexion sur les grandes théories sur l'amour nous permet d'ancrer la question centrale de cette étude : comment l'amour peut-il devenir un site de construction de la paix et du vivre ensemble dans un monde où la violence s'est installée comme trope permanent (Zizek, 2005) des rapports entre les individus, les communautés, les nations, les peuples, les cultures et les civilisations ? Les propositions d'Aristote, celles notamment qui posent la *philia* comme condition de cette *harmonia mundi* utopique, nous poussent à retourner à Emmanuel Lévinas et à sa théorie de la rencontre de l'Autre pour découvrir les structures anthropologiques de l'amour qui

président à la littérature allemande dans une situation de crise absolue. Cette réflexion sonde ainsi les abîmes de l'espoir comme utopie nécessaire à la survie de l'humanité. De ce point de vue, la littérature allemande d'après-guerre peut devenir un laboratoire de fabrication d'une humanité plus triomphante.

II. La littérature de l'Heure zéro ou la catastrophe comme abîme primaire de *l'harmonia mundi* et de la paix universelle

L'année 1945, et particulièrement la fin de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale le 8 mai de cette année, est aujourd'hui appelée en Allemagne par les historiens Nullpunktou StundeNull, littéralement « Point Zéro » ou « Heure Zéro ». Même si les deux expressions ont deux dénnotations et des connotations légèrement différentes, elles impliquent toutes les deux l'idée d'une rupture absolue avec le passé et un recommencement radical. La situation de l'Allemagne après la défaite du Troisième Reich, la destruction de la plupart des villes allemandes et l'exode forcé de millions de personnes des provinces de l'Allemagne de l'Est semblent effectivement traduire un sentiment général de catastrophe et d'apocalypse.

En janvier 1945, les camps de concentration de Auschwitz avaient été libérés et dès mai 1945 lorsque se rend le Reich allemand aux Forces Alliées, les nouvelles de l'extermination des Juifs par les Nazis font le tour du monde et le jour même de la capitulation, c'est un écrivain –certainement l'un des plus célèbres qu'ait connu l'Allemagne – Thomas Mann (1942), qui monte au créneau pour dire la catastrophe en ces termes : « notre honte s'étale aux yeux du monde...chaque chose allemande, chacun qui parle allemand, qui écrit allemand, qui a vécu en Allemagne est ainsi affecté par cette honteuse révélation...L'humanité frémit à l'idée même de l'Allemagne » (261).

Mann le vieillard, qui a été pendant longtemps l'un des meilleurs représentants de l'Allemagne démocratique durant le règne d'Hitler, fait partie d'un groupe d'écrivains qui vont choisir de dire à leur manière le sentiment général de catastrophe qui habite ce peuple. Dans cette même veine, l'écrivain autrichien Franz Werfel (1945) né en 1880 dans une famille juive mais dévouée catholique adresse un discours au peuple

allemand dans lequel il pose la question de la honte et de la culpabilité, une question qui va devenir une des plus centrales de l'après-guerre:

Peuple allemand ! Sais-tu ce que ta culpabilité et ta complicité ont causé durant les années de Heil ! de 1933 à 1945, sais-tu que ce sont les allemands qui assassiné des millions d'européens pacifiques, inoffensifs et innocents avec des méthodes feraient rougir de honte le diable lui-même, connais-tu les chambres à gaz de Maidanek, la montagne puante de victimes pourrissantes de Buchenwald, de Belsen et les centaines d'autres camps de l'enfer... Les crimes du National-Socialisme et l'inimaginable prise en otage de la vie allemande sont les résultats logiques des enseignements insolents et diaboliques qui célèbrent le droit du plus fort (p.24)

Et les exilés sont loin d'être les seuls à poser la problématique de l'écriture de la catastrophe. En Allemagne même, plusieurs écrivains débattent de ce rapport des allemands à la culpabilité et à la responsabilité politique. Dans son discours à la jeunesse allemande, le romancier Ernst Wiechert décrit justement le caractère apocalyptique de la situation en termes existentialistes :

Nous ne tenons ici debout en face la maison désertée et voyons les étoiles éternelles briller au-dessus des ruines de la terre et écoutons la pluie tomber dans les torrents des tombeaux des morts et sur le tombeau d'une époque. Etiquetés comme aucun peuple ne l'a jamais été. Et alors nous posons nos fronts sur les murs en ruines, et nos lèvres murmurent la vieille question humaine : « Que doit-on faire ? »

Le débat ainsi posé est celui de la capacité du peuple allemand à émerger d'une situation de néant. A ce titre, le *nullpunkt* est davantage lié à la possibilité d'une renaissance. Comme le Chaos primordial de la Bible, il appelle une réécriture de l'histoire. Cette nouvelle histoire, on le verra, passe par une métaphysique de la rencontre humaine, ce que notre travail nomme amour. En tout cas, le moins que l'on puisse dire est que le *nullpunkt* impose une rupture et de ce point de vue, ne signifie nullement la prééminence d'un vide absolu car comme le suggère le philosophe

Jürgen Kocka (1989), « les gens essayèrent de survivre les ruines... » (127). Dans ce contexte, survivre devient un art et cela a fait dire à Günter Grass que « tout ce à quoi aspirait le peuple, c'était de vivre, rien d'autre ». Cela explique en partie pourquoi si on cherche dans les archives de l'histoire de 1945 en Allemagne, on ne trouve dans aucun document des références aux expressions « *stundenull* » ou « *nullpunkt* ». Le concept même de *nullpunkt* semble ainsi davantage le fruit d'un regard extérieur à l'Allemagne autant que la défaite d'Hitler. La plus puissante référence à un quelconque vacuum ou néant provient en réalité des armées Alliées qui déclarent en 1945 que le Troisième Reich a cessé d'exister. De même, la première référence significative au *nullpunkt* apparaît dans un film du réalisateur néoréaliste Roberto Rossellini produit en 1948 intitulé *Germania, annozero* (L'Allemagne, l'année zéro). Ce film relate les problèmes et le suicide d'un jeune allemand de 13 ans et tente répondre à la question de savoir comment survivre dans une civilisation qui semble avoir été complètement détruite et dans laquelle toute certitude a disparu. Le film de Rossellini propose le désir comme solution à la catastrophe.

En 1940, bien avant Rossellini, Erika Mann, la fille péripatétique de Thomas Mann, exhorte déjà les américains à prendre au sérieux la menace que pose l'Allemagne Nazie dans un article intitulé « Ne commettez pas les mêmes erreurs » en ces termes

Vais-je trop loin ? Suis-je une étrangère ? Suis-je en train de me mêler des affaires des autres ? Il n'y a qu'une seule affaire – celle de l'humanité – et elle me concerne autant qu'elle te concerne- Dans les mains de l'Amérique, entre tes mains, Dieu a placé les affaires de l'humanité. Agissez ! C'est votre heure, l'heure finale- l'Heure Zéro ! (76)

Dans ce contexte, l'Heure Zéro renvoie clairement à l'urgence d'une action décisive de la part des américains afin d'éviter la catastrophe. Si, l'historien controversé Friedrich Meinecke (1946) suggère dans son ouvrage intitulé *Die deutsche Katastrophe: Betrachtungen und Erinnerungen* (La catastrophe allemande) l'impossibilité de comprendre absolument cette période de l'histoire allemande, l'écrivain de la première génération d'après-guerre Hans Werner Richter, figure centrale du Groupe 47 met lui, l'accent sur la logique de la discontinuité et de la

rupture qui doit distinguer les générations pré et post guerre. Il traduit une vision radicale du *Nullpunkt* qu'on retrouve également chez des écrivains tels que Ernst Wiechert et Alfred Andersch (1946) pour qui

A cause du diktat d'une situation inédite, la jeune génération se tient ainsi face une *tabula rasa*, devant la nécessité de réaliser, à travers un acte original de création, la renaissance de la vie spirituelle allemande (27).

Comme Richter, Andersch suggère ainsi la nécessité d'un recommencement, d'une re/naissance du peuple allemand qui se fonde sur sa capacité à aller à la rencontre de l'autre et de la différence. Comme nous l'avons déjà suggéré *en limine* de cette thèse, de tels discours soulignent l'intention de la jeune génération de réécrire un passé traumatique et les notions de *Zwang* (force) et *Notwendigkeit* (nécessité) montrent que l'accent doit être mis sur la quête d'un ordre nouveau. De la sorte, pour ancrer le renouvellement de la vie intellectuelle allemande, il n'y a pas meilleure figure que celle de l'écrivain Heinrich Böll pour illustrer la tension qui anime cette nouvelle génération.

En effet, dès 1950, Böll attaque de front la question identitaire, notamment la problématique de l'aliénation, dans une courte nouvelle intitulée *Wanderer, kommst du nach spa*. Elle met en scène le retour tumultueux d'un jeune soldat dans sa ville natale, dans son lycée transformé en hôpital. Bien qu'il n'en soit pas conscient, le jeune soldat a perdu ses deux bras et une jambe et la narration se construit autour de la réalisation graduelle de ce retour traumatique dans un environnement supposé plus familial. Malheureusement, cet univers sensé le ramener vers un chez soi le transporte davantage dans le monde de l'étrangeté. Il vit ainsi ce qu'on peut décrire en termes brechtien comme « aliénation » et « défamiliarisation », un processus dans lequel ce qui fut familier devient complètement étrange. Non seulement l'école avec ses salles de classes et son personnel sont sujets de cette aliénation mais également toute la tradition des humanités germanistiques se trouve ainsi oblitérée.

C'est dans ce même contexte qu'il faut situer l'écriture de Christa Wolf, prise au piège entre volonté de transcender le passé et refus de libération d'une histoire glorieuse. Mais c'est surtout Günter Grass qui réussit à saisir ce moment de catastrophe au sein

duquel l'envie de renaître prend le dessus sur l'horreur et sur le Mal. En effet, son *Danziger Trilogie* (*Trilogie de Danzig*) composé de *Die Blechtrommel* (*Le Tambour*), de *Katz und Maus* (*Le Chat et la Souris*) et de *Hundejahre* (*Les Années de chien*) tente ainsi de représenter une génération au bord de la faillite morale. Oskar Matzerath, Joachim Mahlke et Walter Matern, respectivement personnages principaux de la trilogie sus-citée sont ainsi peints comme des héros dont la morale est ternie par un contexte particulier de tragédie. Il est vrai par exemple que dans *Le Tambour*, les actions de Oskar entraînent la mort de son opportuniste père nazi Matzerath mais elles sont aussi la cause de la mort de son oncle résistant polonais et de celle de son putatif père biologique Jan Bronski. Quant au héros juvénile de *Les Années de chien* Walter Matern, il joint un peu trop facilement les rangs de la SA et fait très peu lors de la persécution de son ami juif Eduard Amsel. Le protagoniste principal de *Le Chat et de la Souris* Joachim Mahlke lui, rêve de gloire en tant que officier de la Marine Allemande et ne se confronte avec les autorités nazies que lorsqu'il vole la Croix Gammée d'un soldat. Dans chacun de ces livres, le travail que propose Grass sur la période nazie confère à ses personnages principaux un caractère sadique de leurs impulsions permettant d'ériger la question de la morale en artéfact au sein duquel doit se construire une nouvelle humanité. Ce que semble vouloir mettre en scène Günter Grass, c'est l'image d'une nouvelle génération débarrassée des pesanteurs du sentiment de culpabilité et prête à aller à la rencontre de l'Autre, de l'Humain.

De la sorte, l'Heure Zéro peut être caractérisée à la fois comme échec et nécessité, une nécessaire renaissance construite au sein même de l'échec d'un système ayant renvoyé l'amour à l'exercice de la catastrophe. L'Heure Zéro dans ce travail est donc une écriture qui se fabrique dans les archives de l'Absence. En empruntant à Sartre (1936) dans *Transcendance de l'ego* sa théorie sur l'amour de soi, l'Absence qui fonde l'esthétique de Grass dans cette trilogie pointe vers une discussion sur la « présence matérielle de Moi » (54), comme si ce refus d'aller vers l'autre qui caractérise ses personnages principaux traduit en fait une volonté de réécrire l'amour. Une telle proposition prend à contrepied le paradigme heideggérien du Néant comme discours de son autodestruction et met en scène la vérité de la rencontre, lieu où les « négatités » - les absences, les manques – doivent constituer le début de l'existence, celle de l'humain. Et, lorsqu'en 1967 le critique littéraire Hans Mayer déclare que

« l'idée de l'Heure Zéro s'est transformée en néant », il exprime en réalité un sentiment général de perte » qui appelle davantage une entreprise de « restauration » que de renouvellement. De ce point de vue, l'Heure Zéro devient une sorte de cordon sanitaire érigé contre un passé traumatique. Dans sa forme la plus absolue, elle implique l'idée que l'histoire allemande se doit de rentrer dans la différence pour se donner son visage humain. Le moins que l'on puisse dire est que la catastrophe fonctionne comme archétype d'une théorie de la renaissance allemande. Cette renaissance, Bernard Schlink la travaille dans son œuvre controversée *Le Liseur* et exige qu'on s'y attarde un peu plus longuement.

III. Bernard Schlink, l'amour, une morale de la mémoire et du passé

En effet, c'est dans le *Liseur* de Bernhard Schlink que se trouve posé avec une grande acuité ce rapport entre la mémoire et le passé. La question esthétique à laquelle est confronté le lecteur du *Liseur* est ce que Efraim Sicher (2005) décrit comme « l'insupportable poids de la mémoire ...avec toutes les difficultés liées à la métaphore et au langage, aux risques de profanation et de trivialisation que cela comporte » (203). La publication du roman de Schlink entraîne d'ailleurs une vive discussion dans les milieux académiques sur les thèmes de la mémoire, de la culpabilité, de l'identité, de l'innocence, de la victimisation, et sur ce qu'on a appelé *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Le roman semble capter avec une certaine vérité les relations entre le passé allemand et un présent allégorique à travers la relation amoureuse qui se produit entre un jeune garçon nommé Michael Berg et une femme âgée nommée Hanna Schmidt, plus tard accusée de crimes de guerre. Le texte met en scène de manière particulière les complexités légales et morales de la représentation de l'histoire en littérature, de même qu'il met l'accent sur la responsabilité et la comptabilité morales du lecteur. Le titre allemand du roman, *Der Vorleser* se traduit d'ailleurs comme « celui qui lit à haute voix aux autres » alors que les traductions française (*Liseur*) et anglaise (*Reader*) sont incapables de prendre en compte la question de l'altérité qui fonde le mot allemand car elles mettent davantage l'accent sur la dimension solitaire de la lecture. D'ailleurs, le vocable allemand a un côté autoritaire, comme si le lecteur portait avec lui la voix des autres.

1. L'amour et le trauma

Der Vorleser a souvent été décrit comme un texte surdéterminé car la lecture qu'effectue à haute voix le protagoniste Michael Berg avertit le lecteur des dangers d'un analphabétisme figural en l'exhortant à s'éloigner de lectures simplistes. La relation amoureuse qui lie Michael et Hanna doit donc être analysée comme une allégorie de la morale et de la culpabilité née de l'horreur de la guerre. Il convient de rappeler le contexte de leur rencontre pour mieux analyser les ressorts esthétiques et politiques sur lesquels repose l'amour.

La narration commence en effet par la mémoire qui rappelle à Michael sa relation transgressive avec Hanna. Cette mémoire lui rappelle, et rappelle au lecteur, que la première rencontre du jeune garçon de 15 ans avec la sexagénaire se fait dans la nausée – littéralement et figurativement. En effet, inconsciemment malade d'hépatite, Michael est pris de malaises devant l'appartement de Hanna et celle-ci s'engage à l'assister. La référence au *Gelbsucht* ou jaunisse est intrinsèquement liée à l'étoile jaune des Juifs et de la fièvre jaune allégorique qui s'empare de toute la société allemande. Cela est, on s'en doute, une métaphore vive de la décadence morale provoquée par l'Allemagne Nazie, de même que le nettoyage de ces vomissements constitue le début du processus de restauration et de pardon.

A la base de l'acte amoureux donc, il y aurait une thérapie du traumatisme qui commence dans la reconnaissance de sa culpabilité et de sa responsabilité. D'ailleurs le thème de l'eau fonctionne dans ce contexte comme un lien mystique à la culpabilité et à la responsabilité dans la mesure où elle fait partie d'un rituel, le lavage du corps souillé de Michael, une instance particulière où la séduction traduit l'impossibilité de séparabilité du bien et du mal. Pour Joseph Metz, cette séduction de Michael par Hanna correspond une cartographie allégorique d'une Allemagne fascinée par le fascisme. Et, les cauchemars au sein desquels apparaît encore et encore l'appartement de Hanna et qui assiègent les rêves de Michael lorsqu'il devient adulte participent de cette entrée dans le noir du nazisme. La maison est ainsi décrite comme aveugle et située dans une ambiance cadavérique (« DasHausistblind », « Die Weltisttot »). L'apparence physique même de l'immeuble est toujours décrite comme

inaccessible, isolée, abandonnée ou détachée. C'est un immeuble fait de sable noir, davantage noirci par la fumée et qui s'érige tel un fantôme sorti des ténèbres. Les habitants mêmes y apparaissent fantomatiques :

Mais comme l'immeuble avait été noirci par les ans et par la fumée des trains, j'imaginai que ses imposants habitants étaient sinistres, qu'ils étaient devenus bizarres, peut-être sourds ou muets, bossus ou boiteux. (p.7)

Des années plus tard, l'adulte Michael remarque en face de l'appartement de Hanna un chantier sur l'ancien site sur lequel se trouvait la station de train. Ce chantier, découvre-t-on, est celui de la construction des immeubles devant abriter le tribunal et l'administration centrale, juxtaposant ainsi figurativement et métaphoriquement l'espace où se rencontrent le Troisième Reich et la nouvelle République Fédérale dans *Der Vorleser*. Dans ce contexte, cet espace du roman de Schlink figure la rencontre amoureuse comme le locus idéal de la rencontre archétypale entre un passé traumatique et horrible et un présent-futur possible, lieu de fabrication d'une nouvelle humanité.

Dans la même veine, la mémoire du retour chez Hanna en vue de la remercier pour son aide contient des images ténébreuses de son appartement et c'est dans cette ambiance ténébreuse que commence leur relation sexuelle. Il importe de revisiter ce contexte pour comprendre comment la catastrophe positionne l'amour comme moment héraclitéen, c'est-à-dire comme instant à partir duquel la rencontre du bien et du mal devient un archétype, une image primordiale de la construction d'un humanisme triomphant.

En effet, une semaine après être allé la remercier, démarre une relation sexuelle entre les deux. En guise de prélude à cette rencontre, Hanna envoie Michael lui ramener un seau à charbon. Mais, ce dernier renverse accidentellement le seau sur lui et se couvre de cendre noire de la tête aux pieds. La métaphore est certes simple mais efficace : la relation amoureuse est dès le départ souillée et s'inscrit d'emblée dans la violence de la transgression, elle est couverte de honte et de culpabilité. Cette relation est construite autour du contraste entre la noirceur de Michael et la propreté – la

blanchéité – de Hanna et met ainsi en lumière une dimension mécanique (presque fasciste) de cette dernière. On peut simplement dès lors affirmer que cette relation amoureuse permet de rentrer dans les profondeurs de l'émotion humaine.

De même, la nature *inter-générationnelle* de la relation amoureuse entre Michael et Hanna transcende la simple question de la distance d'âge qui existe entre eux. Elle trahit le conflit et la tension entre ceux qui ont été directement impliqués dans l'Holocauste et la soi-disant deuxième génération en rapport avec la problématique de la responsabilité morale des uns et des autres. *Der Vorleser* repose ainsi sur la double victimisation de Hanna à travers son analphabétisme et les circonstances de sa culpabilité d'une part et, d'autre part, sur le fait que Michael est lui-même victime de cette dernière. Mis autrement, le rapport amoureux autorise une relecture de l'histoire et mieux que tout autre phénomène humain, l'amour permet de rentrer dans la fêlure de l'être humain.

D'ailleurs Schlink choisit des noms significatifs pour ancrer ses personnages dans une symbolique de la catastrophe et de la restauration- Hanna (et sa variante juive Hannah) est un nom biblique signifiant « grâce préférée » alors Michael est un nom hébreu qui signifie littéralement « celui qui est comme Dieu ». Ce choix de la nomination renforce ainsi dans le roman les notions de péché, de honte, de jugement et de pardon, comme si la rencontre humaine passait justement par une sorte de propédeutique de l'humanisme et l'amour en devient le socle. Ainsi, à mesure que leur relation évolue, Hanna prend la figure d'une dominatrice dont les désirs doivent être assouvis, coûte que coûte. Pendant leurs courtes vacances, Hanna attaque par exemple Michael avec une ceinture pour avoir été incapable de lire une note à elle laissée pour expliquer le lieu de son départ. Paradoxalement donc, Michael est récipiendaire de la rage que Hanna éprouve envers elle-même pour son analphabétisme et, pour la première fois, son côté violent et noir est révélé.

En tout état de cause, ce que *Der Vorleser* suggère, c'est la manière propre qu'a littérature de travailler le trauma historique et la catastrophe. En mettant en scène un amour qu'on pourrait qualifier d'interdit et de transgressif, Bernhard Schlink pose clairement la question du rôle de la littérature après l'horreur, tel que l'a été

l'Holocauste. Cette question a largement été débattue dans les milieux académiques, et les échanges les plus notoires contenus dans les propositions de deux philosophes français : Jean-François Lyotard (1988) et Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe (1988).

4. La littérature, quelle écriture de l'horreur ?

Pour Lyotard en effet, dans une situation post-guerre, tout le monde est impliqué dans les événements constitutifs de ce qu'il nomme *caesura* – la rupture – et est pour ainsi dire obligé d'affronter son impact de déstabilisation. Chez Lacoue-Labarthe, l'extermination des juifs met l'Occident en face de son ipséité. Auschwitz en tant que métonymie de l'Holocauste est ainsi présenté comme un problème fondamental de la connaissance historique. Mis autrement, Auschwitz pose clairement le problème de la crédibilité historique des témoins d'un événement historique et plus spécifiquement la capacité de savoir si un événement a eu effectivement lieu dans le cas où il n'y a pas de survivants pour témoigner, ou si lesdits survivants sont incapables de raconter ces faits ou même se contredisent. Pour Lyotard, la question est celle de savoir comment on peut établir des règles historiques strictes pour conclure que les témoignages de ces survivants sont véridiques et représentent avec vérité une partie de la situation générale qui prévalait. Plus important encore selon Lyotard, est la manière dont on évalue le sens du silence en rapport avec ces événements. Pour lui, ce qui est dit dans ces témoignages est certes important, mais ce qui n'est pas dit ou ne peut pas être dit est fondamental. Dans ce sens, même lorsque tout a été dit, les espaces du silence restent dans le témoignage – non comme résultat de l'oubli, de la distorsion ou de la répression traumatique mais parce qu'il y a toujours quelque *d'autre*, quelque chose de *plus* ou quelque chose de *moins* qui doit être dit. Pour Lyotard, ces silences ne sont pas des faits, mais des signes de l'histoire. Parlant d'Auschwitz, il explique :

Le silence qui entoure la phrase, Auschwitz était un camp d'extermination, n'est pas un état d'âme, c'est le signe que quelque chose reste à être énoncé qui n'a pas été énoncé, quelque chose qui n'est pas déterminé. Ce signe affecte une suite de phrases. L'indétermination des signes laissés en souffrance, l'extermination de qui ce qui leur aurait permis d'être déterminé, l'ombre de la négation évitant la réalité au point de la dissiper, en un mot, le tort causé aux victimes qui les condamne au silence- c'est cela, et non l'état

d'âme qui appelle des phrases inconnues à être liées au nom d'Auschwitz.
(p.93)

En s'ensuit que le silence dans ce contexte et dans *Der Vorleser* signifie aussi bien un témoignage explicite qu'une évidence historique empirique. Il signifie différemment. Il est important de noter que Lyotard n'invite nullement les historiens à négliger les « faits historiques » mais plutôt qu'ils abandonnent leur détermination de la réalité en termes de cognition et de règles de détermination du savoir. Auschwitz, « la plus réelle » de toutes les réalités est donc, dans ce sens, une occurrence inédite de réalité et d'histoire qui constitue un différend au sein même de l'histoire et de nos paradigmes de reconstitution et de représentation du passé.

Lyotard propose en fait de ne pas laisser l'histoire, la littérature ou la philosophie oublier ce qui a été, mais de rappeler aussi qu'il y a toujours eu et qu'il y aura toujours quelque chose d'oublié dans ce qui est remémoré et présenté comme ayant été. Cette proposition de Lyotard, on la retrouve de manière plus claire dans un de ses travaux intitulés *Heidegger et les Juifs* dans lequel il décrit ce qu'il appelle la « principale obligation » et « l'unique lot » qui est celle de n'oublier ni l'Oublié et ni la capacité de l'esprit à fabriquer l'horreur et de la lui faire oublier. L'obligation ne se trouve donc pas selon lui dans l'expression « ne jamais oublier » mais dans la reconnaissance que dans toute mémoire existe l'Oublié et envers lequel il existe plus de devoir. Dans ce sens donc, *Der Vorleser* et l'art en général devient un « idiome de l'irreprésentable » (93) et le différend de Lyotard témoigne en même temps de l'impossibilité et de la nécessité de la mémoire, de la narration de cette nécessité et de cette impossibilité même de la narration. Mis autrement, la relation amoureuse que construit Schlink entre Michael et Hanna est en réalité l'expression à la fois de l'impossibilité de dire l'histoire et de la nécessité raconter ce que l'histoire n'a pas pu dire, c'est-à-dire l'humain, dans toute sa noirceur, mais aussi dans tout son possible. Et, c'est seulement à ce moment que la paix durable peut se construire puisque s'instaure enfin un dialogue total prenant en compte les survivants et la mémoire des Oubliés. C'est d'ailleurs sur cette ligne de la fracture de l'histoire humaine que Lacoue-Labarthe campe sa discussion.

En effet, il prend pour point de départ l'identification de Auschwitz comme « site de dissociation » qui a permis de révéler « une autre histoire » (45). Dans ce sens, Auschwitz n'est plus seulement le résultat d'une série de développements historiques dans lesquels les Juifs ne sont que des victimes, mais aussi et surtout comme un « évènement pur » qui a interrompu pour toujours le cours de l'histoire, qui a pour ainsi « fermé toutes les possibilités de l'histoire ». Ce qui reste, c'est bien une forme de « nullité », une « temporalité fracturée » qui condamnent l'humanité à errer dans les sphères de « l'impensable », perdue dans une abysse fondée sur l'absence de sens, elle-même conséquence d'un hiatus (46).

A propos justement de l'écriture de « l'inécrivable », il a souvent été théorisé que la lecture de la fiction et de la poésie apporte très peu de preuves aux limitations liées à la représentation de l'histoire. L'idée que l'histoire de l'Holocauste peut être « contenue... sauvée par les métaphores, par le langage ou par des formes littéraires » apparaît subitement comme possibilité. Cela a pu faire craindre à Cheyette (1998) la capacité de la littérature et de la fiction à altérer la nature de *caesura* en lui donnant une forme et un sens qui détruiraient la compréhensibilité de la cruauté et des *néгатités* morales et métaphysiques au cœur même de l'Holocauste. Pour Cheyette, le témoignage du survivant est ainsi une exception en ce qu'il se construit sur la base d'une « incertitude agonisante » et de la peur que ce récit ne « trahisse le mort ». Mais cette lecture de Cheyette est insuffisante car en réalité nous suggérons qu'il est peu productif d'appréhender le témoignage comme une concurrence faite à la fiction et qu'il est plus pertinent de le concevoir comme un engagement permanent avec la césure, une volonté de constamment lere-imaginer.

Der *Vorleser* instaure donc la relation amoureuse comme la seule assurance de la perpétuité de la thérapie et l'art en vient finalement à signifier l'existence du seul moyen qui permette de revivre un évènement altérant en permanence la conscience humaine. De ce point de vue, l'expérience que vit Michael à travers le procès de Hanna saisit parfaitement le dilemme des générations post-Holocauste :

J'avais été spectateur, et j'étais soudain devenu partie prenante, dans le jeu et dans la décision. Je n'avais ni cherché ni choisi ce nouveau rôle, mais je l'avais — que je le veuille ou non, que je fasse quelque chose ou que je reste passif. (p.74)

L'amour semble pousser Michael à répondre au dilemme de vouloir sauver Hanna sans l'exposer. Il décide alors de parler à son père, professeur de philosophie ayant publié des travaux sur Kant et Hegel, comme si l'amour permettait ainsi de philosopher sur la nature morale de la posture à adopter. Pour cela, une métaphore vient rassembler à elle seule toute cette aporie : les fenêtres d'un des bureaux de son père ne s'ouvrent pas sur le monde extérieur mais sont décrites comme des tableaux au sein desquels le monde extérieur se fixe comme une photo, c'est-à-dire un simulacre de la réalité extérieure. Cette métaphore est d'ailleurs renforcée par un sentiment profond d'étrangeté similaire à celui que dépeint Hoffmann (1816) dans ses *Contes* (notamment *L'Homme au sable*)

Le bureau de mon père était un habitacle où les livres, les papiers, les idées, la fumée de pipe et de cigare avaient créé des conditions climatiques particulières, distinctes du monde extérieur. Elles m'étaient à la fois familières et étrangères. (p.75)

En tout état de cause, la relation amoureuse entre Michael et Hanna vue sous ce prisme, devient, essentiellement partie importante d'une sorte d'inconscient collectif de la société allemande. Pour ceux de la seconde génération post-guerre, cela se retrouve dans le florilège d'œuvres littéraires et de films produits depuis lors. En conséquence, l'exposition à ces films et à cette littérature permet à Michael de construire sa relation amoureuse sur les ruines de la catastrophe et du traumatisme. Cela explique pourquoi dans une tentative de se débarrasser de ces clichés, Michael décide de visiter un camp de concentration en Alsace, racolant pour y aller un officier SS responsable des fusillades des juifs. Lorsque que ce soldat découvre la destination de Michael, ce dernier tente de lui faire comprendre que les bourreaux ne détestent pas vraiment leurs victimes. Ils les tuent *simplement* parce que celles-ci (les victimes juives) lui sont indifférentes. Arrivé au camp, Michael a du mal à construire

une image réelle de la souffrance des prisonniers. Elle est au-delà du langage, elle est indicible, elle est le réel. Cette indifférence des bourreaux correspond à ce que Hannah Arendt (1963) nomme « banalité du Mal » (9).

En réalité, une lecture au premier degré de *Der Vorleser* suggère que l'analphabétisme de Hanna représente une forme primaire d'analphabétisme moral, sorte d'allégorie d'un avortement éthique, celui de l'échec de la rencontre humaine. Cela est du reste confirmé par les premières impressions que Michael développe au sujet d'Hanna. Ainsi, lorsqu'il l'observe entrain d'enfiler ses bas, il développe l'hypothèse selon laquelle Hanna apparaît comme si elle s'était en réalité retirée au sein de son propre corps, complètement coupée du monde extérieur :

Je me rappelle que son corps, ses attitudes et ses mouvements donnaient parfois une impression de lourdeur. Non qu'elle fut lourde. On avait plutôt le sentiment qu'elle s'était comme retirée à l'intérieur de son corps, l'abandonnant à lui-même et à son propre rythme, que ne venait troubler nul ordre donné par la tête, et qu'elle avait oublié le monde extérieur. C'est cet oubli du monde qu'avaient exprimé ses attitudes et ses gestes pour enfiler ses bas.

Et, c'est loin d'être une coïncidence que cet état d'oubli et cette absence de pensée critique ou d'autoréflexion correspond au désir de succomber à la puissance thérapeutique de l'amour, car lorsqu'on aime, on oublie, on s'oublie dans l'autre. En réalité, la séduction de Michael par Hanna l'entraîne dans les abysses de sa culpabilité et de son passé souillé. Son innocence morale en est ainsi compromise par leur relation amoureuse et en lui intimant l'ordre de lui lire des romans et des théâtres divers constitue la première étape vers la guérison de cet analphabétisme. La lecture prend dès lors une dimension allégorique dont la nature messianique est indéniable, décrite dans le texte à travers les métaphores contrastées de la lumière et des ténèbres. Cette métaphore est si vivante qu'elle arrive à peindre Hanna touchant l'épine même du livre, plongeant ainsi dans ses propres ténèbres, les éclairant !

Si certains¹²⁶ ont pu voir dans l'analphabétisme de Hanna une tentative de réduire la responsabilité et la culpabilité des allemands du Troisième Reich, il est évident que vu sous l'angle du rapport amoureux, cet analphabétisme est une fenêtre qu'ouvre la victime sur la tragédie de l'Holocauste car il pose explicitement la question de l'altérité et de la différence dans un contexte où la pensée unique est non seulement un *modus agendi* mais aussi un *modus operandi*, c'est-à-dire une idéologie pernicieuse s'infiltrant dans toutes les pratiques sociales et un mode opératoire propre à un système raciste dans son essence.

En tout état de cause, *Der Vorleser* de Bernhard Schlinket une bonne partie de la littérature d'après-guerre en Allemagne montrent que l'amour correspond à un imaginaire particulier de la catastrophe et le *stundenull* la métaphore d'une mise en scène de ce que Freud nomme « avortement éthique », un échec de la rencontre humaine. Mais cet échec est fondamentalement un lieu archétypal de la reconstruction. Mis autrement, c'est au sein même de cette rencontre manquée que se fabrique la structure fondamentale sur laquelle émergera le nouvel Homme, une humanité pacifiée.

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¹²⁶Voir Donahue (2001) dans "Illusions of subtlety: Bernhard's Schlink's *Der Vorleser* and the moral limits of Holocaust fiction" publié dans *German Life and Letters*.

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Drama as an Instrument of Peace and Nation Building in Commonwealth West Africa: A Reading of Femi Osofisan's Plays

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Abstract

This paper is a thematic and critical analysis of the plays of Femi Osofisan that exemplify the theme of peace and nation building in Commonwealth West Africa. The paper discusses drama as a veritable tool for propagating the message of peace as an indispensable variable in nation building. The paper is hinged against the backdrop that several nations within the Commonwealth West Africa have been embroiled in ethno-religious and socio-political crisis since independence. Such crises have been engendered by poor leadership, religious fanaticism, corruption, greed, youth restiveness, social injustice and inequality. The paper countenances the concept of peace and the national development in order to provide a solid background for the critical discussion of the plays.

The paper adopts the sociological literary theory which sees literature as a tool for tackling the fundamental socio-political issues confronting the society as the theoretical framework. A critical discussion of the relevant plays of Femi Osofisan that project him as an apostle of peace, negotiation and unity as indispensable ingredients needed to enhance national development, as some African playwrights are noted for their revolutionary postures in solving diverse problems confronting Commonwealth West African nations. Among the plays discussed include *Morountodun*, *Yungba Yungba and the Dance Contest*; *Red is the Freedom Road* and *Farewell to a Cannibal Rage*. The paper concludes that Femi Osofisan has successfully used the medium of the theatre to arouse the consciousness of the public to embrace peace, unity and dialogue to enhance nation building.

Keywords: Drama, Literature, Criticism, Nation Building, Femi Osofisan.

Introduction

The deployment of drama as a veritable tool for the promotion of peace and the enhancement of nation building has been the preoccupations of literary artists and scholars who are of the view that the relationship between literature and the society is symbiotic. Dramatists all over the ages have turned the theatre as an arena to reflect the socio-political, economic and religious realities in the society. The theatre therefore becomes the tower for playwrights who are adjudged as the conscience and the

whistle blowers of the society to call to order the impunities and inanities and all other forms of societal disorders that are capable of engendering mobocracies, anarchies and destructive and untamable mayhems. Such dramatisations on stage could be a re-enactment of actual events or products of the playwright's creativity. In most cases they are satiric presentations on stage in order to attack their human objects who are considered villainous and iniquitous elements in the society whose presence and continuous actions as the drivers and leaders of the people will continue to jeopardise and endanger the survival and existence of the masses who are the playwrights' immediate clients in the society. In the European drama, Ibsen Henrik, Bernard Shaw, Bertolt Brecht and his popular epic drama were maverick artists and quintessential dramatists whose theatre intimidatingly dazzled the European world with their realistic plays that ineluctably created the desired social changes into their societies through their dramatic presentations. Their theatres were mercurial and tempestuously volatile that the European societies of their days were shaken and poised irrevocably for a good change.

The theatre has also been widely known to be the barometer for measuring and evaluating the behavioural patterns of leadership. Consequently, opinions about leadership and governance are thus formed and finally judgement is passed by the audience. Literature thus becomes a potent weapon in the hands of artists to arouse the revolutionary impulse of the masses with a view to provoking them to rise against all the forces of oppression and subjugation that have continued to cripple the progress of the society in all fronts. Literature, as a subversive weapon, has become a formidable instrument for bringing transformation to the society. Little wonder then why Plato banished them from his ideal Republic.

The revolutionary drama of Gibson Kente, Workshop '71, People's Experimental Theatre (PET) which was founded in Lenasia in 1973 and the Market Theatre in Johannesburg were among the armless but ferocious literary tools that dismantled the obnoxious apartheid regime in South Africa. Their theatres were biting, piercing, acidic and very coarse to the extreme provocation of the white overlords whose administrations were maliciously and malevolently repressive, autocratic and despotic.

Such a despicable administration was conspicuously rebuffed and condemned in unmistakable terms on stage.

Even the conciliatory plays of Athol Fugard and Alan Paton that were tacitly opposed to the deployment of violence to tackle apartheid became a neutralizing theatrical tool for canvassing for the use of negotiation and dialogue to resolve the genocide. Both the revolutionary and conciliatory drama worked for the dismantling of apartheid and prevented further bloodshed. South Africa that was known for the revolutionary theatre is now witnessing the theatre of reconciliation. The narratives of South Africa like all other societies are captured in its drama. Drama thus becomes a tool for documenting, archiving, preserving and transmitting the history, myth, ethos, cultures and traditions of the society. After all, it is only in the narratives of a nation that the future generations can draw inspirations from to combat the emerging postcolonial challenges.

In the midst of cultural, geographical, ethnic and linguistic diversities, drama has also become a tool for forging unity, integration and social cohesion. The theatre has become a common unifying place for all categories of people in the society just like the stadium does. It breaks all social, economic and ethnic barriers and levels all up at least during the performance. The theatre generates in its audience who are the representatives of the larger society the right cathartic effects and delivers into their hands and conscience the appropriate way forward in tackling the various challenges confronting the society. The playwright has the opportunity, like the ecclesiastic preacher, to sermonize and brainwash his audience to jettison their philosophies of violence, revenge, retaliation, ethnic cleansing and genocide and toe the path of peace, sanity and rationality that are catalysts and propellers for nation building.

Nation Building: A Conceptual Framework

The concept of nation building is indispensable for the understanding of the ideological position of the dramatic works under consideration in this paper. Nation building for some scholars is about the reconstruction of the State that has been depleted by conflicts, ethno-religious and socio-political crises. Some countries like Nigeria, Chad, and Cameroon have been under the bombardment of Boko Haram insurgency.

Consequently, lives and invaluable property have been lost. The consequences on the economies of these nations are incalculable apart from the trauma and other psychological effects the insurgency has continued to have on the society such as ethnic animosity, distrust, hatred, rivalry, injustice, and feeling of marginalization among others. In most cases, the ruling class has been fingered and accused of partiality, favouritism, complicity, injustice and religious chauvinism. Even the masses no longer have confidence in the government as their arbiter. Such a nation needs to be reconstructed in a way that can guarantee peace and reconciliation among all the ethnic groups.

Besides, nation building is about stimulating the public about the crucial factors that can easily compromise the spirit of nationhood such as greed, ethnic bigotry, religious fanaticism, youth restiveness, social injustice. So many nations in the Commonwealth are oblivious of these fundamental issues that are capable of eroding and undermining the corporate existence of a nation if not adequately addressed. Every nation owes its citizens that onerous responsibility of arousing the nationalistic tendencies in them and calling their attention to the devastating consequences of giving room to graft and corruption, ethnic chauvinism, nepotism and all forms of social vices and anti-democratic elements that quench completely the zeal and zest of nationhood. Such sensitisations and propagandas are not just the exclusive responsibility of government; they are the natural literary engagements of artists of all ages who have identified themselves as the society's town criers and watchmen.

One of the root causes of ethnic conflicts within the Commonwealth is the tendency for a particular ethnic group to rule and dominate other ethnic groups by regarding them as constituting the minority groups. For instance, in Nigeria where we have over four hundred ethnic groups, Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are generally regarded as the dominant ethnic groups. Yet, the tendency, as seen by most Nigerians, is that the Hausa ethnic group regards themselves as the majority. Consequently, they will like to rule over other ethnic groups in Nigeria. That is why the Boko Haram insurgents are calling for the rejection of western education and they are thus demanding, in a most virulent, despicable, vicious and barbaric way, for the complete Islamisation of the nation against the wishes of all other ethnic groups. That is injustice and a complete

violation of the fundamental rights of all other ethnic groups to freedom of religion and freedom of association as entrenched in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Nation building is therefore about developing and building a nation that is widely recognised by the majority of its citizens and not by the minority who have constituted themselves as the perpetual rulers over all others through all means.

Nation building should also guarantee that everybody will have equal access to all public utilities and facilities without any form of discrimination and segregation among its citizens. Such a nation should also provide adequate security for its people and ensure that the rule of law is in place. Where the nation's laws are applied discriminatorily, arbitrarily and unfairly, there is bound to schism and upheavals and all forms of unmanageable conflicts in the nation which can threaten and heat up the polity with shattering consequences.

The issue of citizenship is crucial to nation building. The development of a policy template on citizenship where everybody will understand the status of citizenship under the justice, socio-economic and socio-political systems is therefore indispensable. Lack of this definition has been the root cause of some ethnic violence in Jos, Nigeria and in some other nations. Issues of indigeneship, naturalization, ethnicity and all other related issues must be constitutionally sorted out because they impinge on enfranchisement of the citizens and the general growth of democracy within the Commonwealth nations. According to 1 Gambari (2008: 4), nation building is therefore the result of mindful statesmanship and not an act of coincidence. It is always a continuous and vigorous method of development and re-invention.

Challenges of Nation Building

One of the challenges of nation building is the inherited colonial legacies that created a lot of imbalances and prejudices among the ethnic groups. For instance in Nigeria, the Lord Lugard administration that divided Nigeria into Northern and Southern Protectorates introduced the indirect rule system of administration into the Northern region. The indirect rule system did not quite succeed in the Southern part for obvious reasons. The judicial and the educational systems introduced by the colonial government into the two regions were different. From the beginning Nigeria was set on

the threshold of prejudice and discrimination. According to 2 Gambari (2008:5), the two regions, North and South were like two countries tied together by one common currency and transportation system. The nation was therefore founded on prejudice and fear. Regionalism, therefore, has become a major challenge confronting nation building and every attempt to adopt federalism as a formidable alternative by successive government as a policy of unity-in-diversity has been undermined.

Another challenge is leadership crisis. In Commonwealth nations, leadership selection is war as the process is marred with all sorts of electoral malpractices. Even those who emerge as leaders lack the charisma, élan and leadership requirements that are associated with such positions. Nepotism, graft and corruption, despotism, lack of accountability, manipulation of the judiciary process and injustice characterize leadership in Africa. Such a disposition is a daunting inhibitor to nation building. The Liberia civil war crisis, for instance and its attendant consequences on the African nations will remain unforgettable in the annals of African history as a good example of a nation whose leadership's greed, corruption, nepotism and political indulgence turned its people into ghosts and refugees and the country into cemeteries.

Besides, where socio-injustice and economic inequalities thrive, there will be social crisis and violence. For instance, the policy of quota system puts a particular ethnic group at an advantage over the others. There are university graduates who are engaged in menial jobs, whereas their colleagues from another ethnic group are engaged in juicy jobs in oil and gas companies with fat salaries. The scholarship system favours the children of the rich more than the children of the poor. The judicial and the economic systems are skewed. The hospitals lack the human and material resources to meet the health needs of the citizens. While, the rich travel abroad for medical treatment and incur the huge debts on the country, the poor are left uncared for. The armed robbers are executed, while the pen robbers are given national awards. Under these askew conditions, we should naturally expect increase in the crime rate. No wonder, kidnapping, armed robbery, ritual killing, youth restiveness, ethno-religious riots are on the increase. In addition, the constitution is skewed to favour a particular ethnic group while the other ethnic groups are being marginalized. Every agitation being made for the production of an acceptable constitution by majority

of the citizens that will reflect true federalism is being rebuffed by the ruling oligarchy that sees leadership as their birthright.

In addition, in Nigeria for instance the democratic institutions such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Control (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Judiciary and the Civil Service that should strengthen the nascent democracy in Nigeria have been over-politicised that their existence becomes irrelevant. The institutions have become the tools of victimization and oppression in the hands of the ruling hegemony to harass, intimidate and suppress their perceived enemies. This is indeed a threat to nation building.

Textual Analysis of Femi Osofisan's Plays

Femi Osofisan is one of the most distinguished and outstanding African playwrights. He belongs to the generations of writers directly following Wole Soyinka, the indomitable 1986 Nobel laureate and the "lion of Ilujinle." Femi Osofisan is an acclaimed and celebrated dramatist of repute, a ferocious literary giant, a scholar, a social critic, theatre director, newspaper columnist and composer. The theatre to Osofisan is a veritable subversive weapon to attack the societal ills and arouse the revolutionary consciousness of the masses towards creating a new social order where there will be social justice and equality. Osofisan stylishly and tacitly does not want to be labelled a Marxist even when his plays are Marxist inclined. There is no known African playwright of his generation whose dramatic works are more Marxist and revolutionary than his. The fecundity and the profundity of works have placed Osofisan as one of the renowned and dedicated artists whose works are wholly and copiously committed to the liberation of the oppressed in the society. Osofisan abhors oppression, nepotism, bloody revolution, war and unnecessary hostilities. His diagnosis of the ills of the society is dispassionate and ingenuous, while his prognosis is impeccable and unimpeachable. In his plays, he advocates for collaboration, unity, solidarity and peace as inexorable tools for engendering nation building in the Commonwealth nations that have been embroiled in a lot of ethno-religious and socio-political crises that have remained intractable. Osofisan in his drama submits that bloody revolution will never be a solution to African problems. It is against this background that such plays that project his ideology are examined.

In *Red is the Freedom Road*, Osofisan explores the issues of rebellion and revolution against oppression. The play tells the story of a people captured in war and enslaved, the attempt made by the people, and Akanji their leader to free themselves from slavery and its aftermath. Akanji, the hero of the play is seen as the only capable person who can lead his people out of captivity. On the other hand, the slave masters also see him as a potent tool that can be used in the continued enslavement of his people. Akanji has to choose between these two options. Subsequently, the King wants Akanji to become the Bashorun so that he can fight their wars for them:

KING: Are you ready now to serve us? To carry our emblems? To fight our wars? To fight our wars? Never to beat retreat? Remember, no one must fail us. You will be Bashorun, because the law of our land forbids the post to our own people. Only strangers and captured slaves. But that man must be strong, or he dies. Let me warn you now, you can still withdraw. Death for whoever fails us.

AKANJI: The response is in the deed. Already my muscles tingle. Test me.

KING: From this moment, not tonight, not tonight, you become Bashorun, slave-prince, commander of our forces! Therefore rise, and wear our ring. As symbol of your authority and of our power. Therefore rise and wear our beads. As symbol of our power, and of your authority. Therefore rise and take our sword. (121-123)

Akanji has been crowned the Bashorun. He accepts this because he is in a state of dilemma. According to him, 'I am not free now. Everywhere I go their eyes pursue me. Every road I take, footsteps follow like shadows' (118). His wife Ibidun cannot understand why Akanji will accept to serve the very people that enslave them:

No, I can't believe it! You'll serve a man who laid waste your homeland. Who set your farms on fire. Who killed your father, enslaved your people. Who flung your mother lower than the dung pit? For what? (119)

Akanji jettisons the plea of his wife who is carrying a two months old pregnancy, beats his mother in order to pass the King's test. In the process, his mother dies. Akanji refuses to allow filial love and family commitment to hinder him from serving his community. That pleases the King because to him, Akanji has passed the test. Such a custom is made by the gods.

One of the greatest theatrical qualities of the play is what 3 Ola Ogundolapo (1994:28) says in his review of *Ona Ominira, Ona Eje*, a Yoruba translation of *Red is the Freedom Road* written by Ademola Aremu. He opines that One of the high points of the play is how Akanji is able to manoeuvre himself from being the recognized leader of the town's warriors chosen by the King himself to maltreat the oppressed to becoming the leader of the oppressed themselves. (28)

As the play progresses, Akanji suddenly makes all the slave soldiers realize the fact that all of them are heroes and princes in time past. This is informed by the fact that Shokunbi, one of the soldiers refuses to acknowledge Akanji's leadership as Bashorun. He disobeys him and prides himself as a soldier. Akanji seizes the opportunity to address them all, not to glory in their present position but to think:

How soon you forget! How soon you forgive! You used to command warriors to fight your wars! You it was who gave out commendations in the stadium, and men received from your hands. Have you forgotten? Tall, tall men you were. Men with gait of panthers, all handsome in their splendor. Ah, how you're shrunk! You were never men to fall under any man's whip... You were not all born slaves. Some of you were born princes... What about the kingdoms you left behind, the thrones awaiting you? ... All the children, who ask of you, and are silenced nightly with falsehood! And the friends, the faithful friends whose eyes keep watch on the road of your welcome... I think your name is Jengboran, the one who owned a thousand slaves. Is that you now, just another slave? And you, Arigbidi, do I recall your face? They said no one had ever seen your forehead. It was always covered with laurels... You the Hunter of Heroes... It was said that whenever you painted your face in charcoal, your enemies quickly sued for peace. But so, you fell too! And Sokunbi! Ogunwolu, the handsome man! Sogaolu, Asiwaju, Kikanloro, all here? ... Lions in a hunter's cage. Alas, who will do your roaring now? (128-130)

Uji (1989: 106) describes Akanji as 'a tough revolutionary strategist, without abnegating' volunteers to do the roaring for them. He says, "I shall lead you into war! But it shall be the war of freedom! Warriors, the road is hard but straight. We shall

fight our way to freedom” (131). All the soldiers are determined to wage war against all the oppressors and set the slaves free. The oppressors, according to Ibidun “harness our women to their chariots, feed our children to their gods” (117). But unfortunately, Akanji dies prematurely in the revolution because he lacks good followers. The lessons are obvious. Osofisan’s first message is that the price of freedom is very great, ‘And red runs the freedom road’ (133). The horrors of war are: corpses, stench, wailing of widows, of abandoned children, hunger, disaster, death, looting by soldiers. Osofisan expresses a similar view in *Women of Owu* in which he condemns war and regrettably enumerates poignantly the casualties of war who are mostly women, children and the masses whereas the oppressors are never affected by the war. Osofisan is thus of the view that war is destructive and its price is ignoble. For Osofisan, peace is a good alternative to nation building.

Osofisan is convinced that killing cannot be used to end all killings. Oppression cannot be adopted to punish the oppressors, and detention cannot be employed to banish detention. For as long as people resort to violence and killings, peace will continue to elude them. The only way out of oppression is through dialogue:

1ST SOLDIER: O when will men learn the truth? War is not the only means of dialogue.

2ND SOLDIER: Nor can peace be won by warriors.

1ST SOLDIER: No prosperous harvest from battlefield

2ND SOLDIER: But Corpses only. Stench and horror. But corpses therefrom.

1ST SOLDIER: You cannot reap cocoyams when you plant blood. All feet flounder when the road runs red. The flower must wither in its season. O when shall we learn?

2ND SOLDIER: Men falling. Men dying. Lames on the world all over. Forever anthems of grief.

1ST SOLDIER: Hope dying. Night falling. Tears in the world all over.

2ND SOLDIER: But when will the world learn the truth? (135)

Akanji loses his mother and incurs her wrath and curses. He also loses his wife’s two months old pregnancy, his own life and finally his wife dies. Besides, the palace is razed down and the whole town is filled with the wailing of widows and of the children abandoned just because the people want freedom. For as long as the people resort to shedding of blood to end oppression, Osofisan opines that darkness will continue to fall again and again.

Osofisan re-echoes the same message in *Morountodun* when Director says that 'In the end, peace came, but from the negotiating table, after each side had burned itself out' (79). Osofisan calls for unity among the peasants against the economic exploitation of the bourgeoisie. Their unity will enable them to fight and win through a peaceful revolution as against the option of war which is very destructive. Osofisan adopts the resolution of the Agbekoya uprising to resolve the conflict in the play. That is why Baba tells Marshall to let them give peace a chance and sue for a truce: "We declared a truce with the police. On our honour. Tomorrow we're supposed to hang our weapons" (76).

So, just as Agbekoya uprising was resolved through a negotiation after all the killings, the main conflict in *Morountodun* is resolved through negotiation too. It is the sincere belief of Osofisan that peace can only come through dialogue and negotiation and not through war. That is why Ibitokun (1995:96) says that:

Osofisan has an organicist dialectical view of human society. Any society which remains like a stone will dish out obnoxious values to its people. A society must therefore demonstrate its internal dynamism for change. (96)

I took Femi Osofisan up on this during an interview with him. I asked him if he was completely opposed to a violent revolution. I also asked him if it was possible to have a revolution without violence. How will freedom come then? Should the oppressed keep quiet in the face of oppression? Osofisan responded:

Can we have revolution without violence? Yes of course, we have peaceful revolution. That is what I will prefer and where it is not possible you will have to take to violence... look at Bulgaria now, look at Sierra Leone. They have had to come to the table to negotiate. Look at Israel, the Palestinians? The Arab? Are they not negotiating? The thing is that you can have violence, yes! Sometimes you don't have a choice. You just have to have the violence even to get yourself heard, to get yourself noticed because you can talk and nobody will notice. Ken Saro Wiwa was shouting for years and nobody listened but when he became aggressive, the world noticed. Unfortunately, he had to pay

the price for that. If violence becomes necessary, then violence cannot be helped. But, violence is not the goal, it is not the end. You have to put that in the front of your consciousness. Violence is just a means to achieving something because the temptation with violence is that once it starts, people get so enmeshed in it. They forget the actual thing they are fighting for, and violence becomes an end in itself. Look at apartheid, it had to be negotiated. Look at all the fighting and fighting. It had to be negotiated... We say that violence is not for itself, it is only justified when it is towards a goal and as soon as that goal is achieved, it must be jettisoned and stopped. It's not easy to kill other people.

In *Twingle-Twangle: A Twynning Tayle*, Osofisan contrasts power with wisdom and war with peace. In the contest for Tinuade, the heiress to the throne of Ereko, Elenon the king of Ereko becomes angry with Taye and orders for his arrest for breaking the rules of the contest. The stage is set for war. After a lot of intrigues and manoeuvres and manipulations, Taye wants peace instead. They call on Lawunmi to persuade her husband to call off war and opt for peace:

LEADER: What we cannot bear, what tears our womb apart, is the death that comes prematurely.

WOMAN: Tell him, Olori, that we are tired of these wars.

WOMAN: Wars in which our sons perish in the noon of their lives.

WOMAN: Wars from which we gain nothing, but in which the seeds so tenderly nurtured in our wombs are carelessly wasted.

LAWUNMI: What do you want?

LEADER: Peace, Olori, An immediate declaration of peace, today, now! You are the ears of your husband, that's why we came to speak to you. You must talk to him quickly. We love him but we are tired of war. (67-69)

Besides, as the warriors of Etido approach Ereko, the people of the land meet them amidst singing, drumming and dancing. Taye, a comrade, leader and teacher of the people sues for peace and agrees to serve the people of Etido because he and the people of Ereko abhor war and bloodshed. Life to him is very precious. Taye agrees

that the whole town will be their subjects and slaves. They promise to submit to their instant punishment, pay regular tribute to them, send a dozen of their prettiest women every year among other terms.

The warriors from Etido are served and entertained with the food drugged by the Ereko people. The warriors consequently begin to droop. Taye immediately commands that their weapons be seized. Kehinde's crown is also removed and placed on Taye. All the enemies are tied. Taye becomes victorious as Kehinde loses the battle. Digbaro later wakes up Kehinde for their return journey home. The play ends on a debate as to whether it is better to live in Etido where men live by the power of their muscles or in Ereko where men live by wisdom. Taye refuses to go into warfare with his blood brother, Kehinde who relishes in the power of armed confrontation but opts for wisdom and peace which enable him to overcome his enemies. Osofisan's message here is that in the spirit of brotherhood and fraternity, we should allow wisdom and peace to prevail in resolving conflicts rather than resort to violence and bloodshed.

Similarly, in *Farewell to a Cannibal Rage*, a play that is dedicated to the memory of Biafra, Osofisan preaches love and reconciliation as the only way by which the bitterness, agonies, hatred and the angst that the Nigerian Civil War brought upon the Nigerians can be forgotten. In the play, Adigun threatens to kill Akanbi. In a confrontation between the two, Adigun who typifies the old generation that fosters acrimonies and hinders true reconciliation is brought down on his back which is a symbol of the death of the old generation. Akanbi, the symbol of the new generation wins and says:

A new sun's risen, our sun, and we
Are weary of war.
All we want is to live
Just to live, like men
Not like gods,
We shall heal the words of war,
Erect a future of peace.
Go into the night

Farewell to Iloto
(Bisi comes to his side)
Farewell to hate. Welcome, love. (67)

Osofisan thus erects the pillars of peace and love, condemns war and its consequences and bids farewell to all forms of cannibal rage in its entirety for the growth and development of the society.

In *Yungba Yungba and the Dance Contest*, Osofisan is of the view that as the people of a nation are living in disunity, the people will always be calling for a “messiah” to take over; who will eventually, misrule the people. This is reinforced in the story of Song, Drum and Dance. Song, Drum and Dance are daughters of one woman called Felicity. Each of these daughters can represent each of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

At one time or the other, each of these groups had threatened to secede. Just like Song and Drum and Dance need one another to bring a perfect harmony, these ethnic groups must co-exist and work together in peace if Felicity (Federal Republic of Nigeria) must survive. This point is well made in the song rendered by Aperin and All:

My friends, so the lesson is clear
That if, Felicity must last,
Men must join hands, work as one,
As those sisters did before –
For Discord is our foe
It puts its wedges in our weft;
Let's learn from Song, and Drum and Dance
How we need to live as one
For happiness is our goal,
Yungba-Yungba's the name of sweetness –
Let's all join hands and work as one
And sweetness will fill our lives! (117-118)

Osofisan detests disunity and the call for war and violence as a way of resolving African challenges because such a call will only lead to anarchy and encourage the emergence of despots and tyrants in the society. He therefore opts for collaboration,

dialogue, harmony, unity and peace to resolve all the lingering crises in the Commonwealth nations including the current Anglophone crisis in Cameroon and the insurgency especially in West African countries.

Conclusion

The themes of peace, love, unity and collaboration as critical ingredients for fostering nation building dominate Osofisan's drama to reflect his ideological commitment as a dogged fighter for the oppressed and more importantly as an apostle of Blackism and Pan-Africanism that believe in the unity and solidarity of all blacks in the world as a way of engendering nation building. The plays portray Osofisan as a nationalist and patriot as he deploys the platform of the theatre to inform and sensitise the audience to imbibe the spirit of unity, dialogue, consultation and oneness to resolve societal challenges. His theatre has clearly demonstrated his revulsion and disgust for bloodshed and war because of their attendant devastating and irremediable consequences on the society. Peace, therefore, to Osofisan is an inevitable tool for nation building. His plays remain irrevocably committed to this theme.

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Preventing Conflict and Ensuring National Peace through Folklore: Options for Cameroon

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Abstract

This paper focuses on those aspects of Cameroon's folklore whose promotion will enhance peace, security and national unity. Life in Cameroon is to a large extent oriented toward the study of Western art and models that Cameroonians have become like 'albinos, neither Whites nor Blacks. The strife, conflict and destruction cause by the Boko haram and civil society in the North, North West and South West Regions has made true in Cameroon Eliot's assertion that 'a people who ceases to care for its literary heritage (which includes folklore) becomes barbaric, ceases to move in thought and sensibility' (14). If Cameroonians to use Achebe words wish to 'regain belief in themselves and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self – abasement' (by the colonial masters, corrupt governance and now Boko haram and the Civil society; if they have to continue to sustain a sense of nationhood and national security; they must fall back on their folklore. This functional approach is used and our contention is that conflict can be resolved and peace ensured through a reorientation of the mentality of Cameroonians and this can be effectively done through their folklore. This is possible because no matter the level of education and sophistication of a people, their behaviour especially with regard to daily routines of life is guided mainly by the standards and principles traditional transmitted by their ancestors. Some forms of Cameroonian folklore are analyzed to show how they can be used to ensure national identity, national pride, harmony, unity and peace.

Keywords: Folklore, conflict, Nation, peace, unity

Despite the desire as seen in its motto and national anthem and attempts as seen in the various measures taken by the government to ensure national integration; unity and peace Cameroon has continue to be a nation in Conflict. This I believe is because as Emmanuel Yenshu VUBO (2003:596) maintains:

Cameroon, is the product of geopolitical processes consequent on the interplay of European political forces in the 19th and 20th centuries as well as internal dynamics resulting from decolonization and attempts at nation-building. Originally created as a German protectorate during the Berlin conference on the partition of Africa, it was later divided after Germany's defeat in the First World War and placed under a League of Nations mandate

administered by France and Britain...The decolonization process in the French Cameroons was marked by an insurrection led by the Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC) ... When Ahmadou Ahidjo took over power in 1958, the task of “pacification” undertaken by the colonial state thus devolved on the new regime which developed an autocratic and coercive style of government and tough centralization that went far beyond the insurrection. When the British territory of Southern Cameroons opted to join the independent République du Cameroun in 1961, it was simply integrated into this precarious situation....The task of nation- building was thus characterized by the management of an already extremely diverse ethnic situation, the banishment of political dissent and the cooptation of a dominant faction of the Anglophone elite. Such a style of governance implied a combination of repression and an obsession with the concepts of unity/integration and peace.

The above statement (When Ahmadou Ahidjo took over power in 1958, the task of “pacification” undertaken by the colonial state thus devolved on the new regime) shows that Cameroon independence was gotten out of conflict and the government after independence was a continuation of the colonial government. Our leaders succumbed to the colonial masters and continued to implement his policies (policies from individualistic-oriented cultures of Europe and not collectivistic-oriented cultures of Africa). They forgot the saying that a man who does not know where he comes from can hardly know where he is going and Francoise Sengat Kuo’s statement cited by Nol Alembong that ‘the tree goes out in the conquest of the sun only by holding firm on mother earth, feet moistened in the lake of the grave’ (1996:122) and anchor their government on a foreign system. This is the origin of the conflict in Cameroon because as J. Graham *et al* (2013:366) says ‘people from individualistic-oriented cultures tend to judge moralized issues in regard to concerns for the individual such as whether an act is fair or unfair while people from collectivistic-oriented cultures judge moralized issues by taking into account whether an act might violate group concerns such as loyalty. Referring to the Cameroon nation after independence Bernard Fonlon (1968:8) clearly states that ‘this new integrated culture of yours with the African

stream diluted by French and English currents, call it whatever you please, but don't call it African'.

A Chinese proverb says 'I approach my elder brother with respect, my father and mother with veneration, my grandparents with awe', this means Chinese place importance on the past. Though they borrow from outside, they allow Chinese folklore to rule in China. One of the objectives of this study is to encourage us Cameroonians to retain the tradition or ways handed to us by our ancestors. Ways which Okot P'bitek (1984:41) emphasized 'are good, Solid, not hollow, not thin or easily breakable, cannot be easily blown away by the wind because their roots reach deep into the soil; Ways which Afigbo (1982:5) rightly observes, 'gave our father and those before them their distinctive individuality.' These are the ways that will prevent conflict and ensure peace in Cameroon.

Prior to slavery, colonialism and now globalization as S. I. Radda (2002:2) rightly opines, 'our societies were peaceful and vibrant. The people acted in unison on virtually all matters. Respect for the elders had pride of place and laws concerning holy days and rituals were binding to all and a man was respected not because of what he had but for how well he related with fellow men'. Technological advancement and western incursion into Africa has as J.S. Coleman (1959:79). maintains profoundly affected traditional loyalties, patterns of behaviour, and social obligation and created new tension and economic insecurity as well as individualistic and materialistic attitude and values Sule Bello (1998:8) confirms this when he asserts that:

We tend not to appreciate ourselves or our cultures and therefore disregard or under-value and do not believe nor have confidence in ourselves, our endemic capabilities and potentials. We have thrown our values to the dogs, that to the ordinary African now, development is conceived almost exclusively from material or technological perspective, with no consideration for the human persons. It is seen as fast cars sky-scrapers, mobile phones, punk hair style, extravagantly luxurious houses, and designers wear. Freedom or independence manifest in nudity, immorality, depravity, religious decadence and a neglect of our languages and art

Our negative attitude towards our folklore has disrupted the natural process of a generation passing on its stock of symbols, images and thoughts to another. Life in Cameroon is thus to a large extent oriented toward the study of Western art and models that Cameroonians have become like 'albinos, neither Whites nor Blacks. The strife, conflict and destruction cause by the Boko haram in the North and some members of civil society in the North West and South West Regions have made true in Cameroon T. S. Eliot's (1964:14) assertion that 'a people who ceases to care for its literary heritage (which includes folklore) becomes barbaric, ceases to move in thought and sensibility'. William Bausch (1999: 26-33) rightly maintains that 'every people, nation, and community has stories and myths that preserve and prolong the traditions that give them their identity. When a nation is in trouble, it often returns to its traditional stories to look for direction and healing, to regain a sense of what made it great in the past and what will nurture it into the future...a country without its story has ceased to exist. "Humanity without its story has lost its soul'. Nol Alembong (1996:120-121) in 'Folklore and Identity: Lessons for Cameroon' in the same light observes that folklore has engendered and fostered the pride of many nations in the world. He cites the polish national anthem (while still we live), a popular folk ballad in Poland during its turbulent history that was adopted as a national anthem. Also the Mau Mau struggle in Kenyan succeeded as he says not because of their Military strength but because they identified and developed those aspects of their folklore that strengthened their identity and resistance. Steve Evans in his article 'The Impact of Cultural Folklore on National Values: A Preliminary Study with a Focus on Bhutan' sets out to discover the similarities and differences between the values of the Bhutan people those found in their folktales. His contention is that people's stories answer questions of identity and values.

Our submissions in this paper are that Cameroonians can to use Chinua Achebe's words 'regain belief in themselves and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self –abasement' (by the colonial masters, corrupt governance, Boko haram and now civil society) and continue to sustain a sense of nationhood and national peace if it into account its folklore; that the conflict in the country can be resolved and peace ensured through a reorientation of the mentality of Cameroonians and this can be done not by laws and programs because the feeling of peace is a

matter of the heart and as Brent Curtis and John Eldredge cited by Steva Evans (2010:17-18) rightly say:

The heart does not respond to principles and programs; it seeks not efficiency, but passion, Art, poetry, beauty, mystery, ecstasy: These are what rouse the heart. Indeed, they are the language that must be spoken if one wishes to communicate with the heart. Life is not a list of propositions; it is a series of dramatic scenes. Story is the language of the heart. Our souls speak not in the naked facts of mathematics or the abstract proportions of systematic theology; they speak the images and emotions of story.

This justifies why the numerous laws that have put in place since independence have not succeeded to make Cameroon a peaceful nation. What the government needs is to touch the hearts of the people and this can be effectively done through their folklore. Cameroon should do what His Excellency President Paul Biya has preached on several occasions (Cameroonize democracy and not democratize Cameroon). To cameroonize democracy means to anchor political rule in Cameroon on the ways of the people; that is, on their folklore. F M. Mbunda (2008:9) in her poem *African democracy* distinguishes clearly between African and western type of democracy. As she states: Western democracy is dictatorship of the majority while African democracy is communalism, the true democracy, the rule of all. The minority always considered, always consulted, and always listened to. Majority or minority, none prevails. The Fon is not paramount, the Nkwifon is not paramount, and the people are not paramount (Lines 17-23). Peace will be achieved if Cameroonian leaders model their rule on Cameroonian folklore, not on the French or English systems. Cameroon has a rich folklore, the social, material and oral culture of the ethnic groups that constitute Cameroon. It includes its songs, motto, narratives, proverbs, dances, masquerade performances, symbols rites and all the traditions that ensure its continuous existence as a nation. This folklore should besides been collected and preserve for posterity and taught in schools be use in the business of everyday life. That is, it should become the currency of everyday communication both in the villages and in towns. This is possible because it is believed that no matter the level of education and sophistication of a

people, their behaviour especially with regard to daily routines of life is guided mainly by the standards and principles traditional transmitted by their ancestors.

Folk refers to a discourse community, a group of people who share at least one common factor an occupation, a history, a language, or religion; that is, a group that has some traditions which it calls its own (its lore). A Cameroonians are a folk because they have a common history, tradition and language. Cameroon is a discourse community because her people have a strong cultural affinity, common goals, interest and aspiration. This does not mean that there is uniformity of opinion. Alan Dundes (1965:136) say folklore includes forms like epics, tales, myths, legends, proverbs, riddles, songs, jokes, legends, insults, and toasts, nursery rhymes, street vendor's cries and prayers, games, festival, dances and religious rites, Architecture, arts and crafts; symbols and quilt. Olivia Adaobi Ihueze (2015:57) in *Folklore in Literature: A Tool for Culture Preservation and Entertainment* 'defines folklore, as traditional art, literature, knowledge, and practice that was disseminated largely through oral communication and behavioural examples... It may be folk songs, folktales, riddles, proverbs, or other materials preserved in words or in writing. She concludes that folklore is a tool for both culture preservation and entertainment. Oyekan Owomoyela (1979:1) in *African Literature: An Introduction*, rightly maintains that folklore is the medium through which the behavioural values of the community, the cumulative wisdom and technology are communicated from one generation to another and thus preserved for posterity. As he rightly maintains, 'there is hardly any phase of tradition and life that is not affected or regulated by some aspect of the folklore.

Early scholars of Folklore like Taylor and Frazer viewed folklore as survival, remnants of the cruder stages of the primitive past, but as Haywood Charles (1961:xv) rightly maintains: 'Folklore is not survival, it is a lively organism still growing and developing wherever people live, struggle, hope, make merry, despair and die'. Henning Cohen (1965:242-243) in an article titled 'American Literature and American Folklore' says 'folklore can be: passive or active. The passive is mere recordings which become lifeless when put into print while the active is functional. To O.A. Ihueze (2015:58-60) the passive folklore serves for 'only for culture preservation the active serve the

purpose of entertainment, culture preservation and gives us new insights into our understanding of creative writing. She says:

Songs incorporated in creative writing makes reading pleasurable, they often mark the structure of the story in a clear attractive way, add a musical aspect, an extra dimension of both enjoyment and skill, provide a formalized means for audience participation...tales pass moral judgment on characters. The proverbs function as independent statements about the nature of human wisdom, the deceptiveness of outward appearance and the complementary interaction of opposites-age and youth, male and female, tradition and change.

The functional approach is used in this study. The functional approach is used in this study. Forms of Cameroonian folklore like its national anthem, its motto and proverbs are analyzed to show how they can be used to ensure national pride, national identity, harmony, unity, democracy and peace. Elements of folklore that encourage our knowledge of and understanding of one another and a positive outlook are discussed. Issues like friendship, social cohesion, compassion, caution, sincerity, social justice, self-discipline, optimism, helpfulness, restraint, patriotism that ensure peace are examined. This is done to show how folklore can enhance national identity, national unity, and national peace and how it can be used for civic education and social control.

Peace according to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary is freedom from war and violence. It refers to a situation in which people live and work together without disagreement, a situation in which people are peace loving, that is they try to live and act in a way that bring peace (913). Peace is not just the absence of war. Peace is said to exist when members of a discourse community have a sense physical and psychological security, when they understand each other and work together and have a sense of belonging. This can only happen when there is the rule of law and human rights are respected. Peace is absent when there is instability and uncertainty. For there to be total peace in Cameroonian there must be peace in the various groups that make up Cameroon, but this is not the case. Life in Cameroon is modelled according

to two (English and French) which are all foreign to Cameroon. One culture believes that the end justifies the means while for the other, the means justifies the end. The difference between these cultures has caused so much conflict; one culture feels marginalized, exploited and despised while the other is arrogant. This has made it impossible for Cameroon to achieve national peace and security. Contemporary Cameroon as Alembong (1996:122) rightly maintains is 'the age in which social values are flouted with impunity' He says that 'a revival of and tapping from our oral tradition will help in the fostering of social propriety, social regulation and social control.

Often Cameroonians use expressions like, "it is the Cameroonian factor or the impossible is not Cameroon," to shield their consciences from guilt when they do what the society abhors, but if I must ask, how did these expressions originate? Certainly not from the Cameroonian folklore where a man's worth is measured not in terms of what he has but in terms of what he does for his community. Cameroon folklore reflects the society so if Cameroonians are consciously exposed to their folklore, if the folklore is studied not just for examination purpose it will become a veritable instrument for preventing conflict and ensuring peace and national unity.

Steve Evans (201:18) in his article 'The Impact of Cultural Folklore on National Values: A Preliminary Study with a Focus on Bhutan' sets out to discover the similarities and differences between the values of the Bhutan people and those found in their folktales. His contention is that people's stories answer questions of identity and values. He submits that 'every individual asks the questions, "Who am I? Where do I belong? What are the accepted norms of behavior for me?" A people's stories help answer these questions. To what extent does Cameroonian folklore answer these questions for Cameroonians? Often Cameroonians use expressions like, "it is the Cameroonian factor or the impossible is not Cameroon," to shield their consciences from guilt when they do what the society abhors, but if I must ask, how did these expressions originate? Certainly not from the Cameroonian folklore where a man's worth is measured not in terms of what he has but in terms of what he does for his community. Cameroon folklore reflects the society so if Cameroonians are consciously exposed to their folklore, if the folklore is studied not just for examination purpose it

will become a veritable instrument for preventing conflict and ensuring peace and national unity.

Folklore and Civic Education

C. A. Okafor (2004:410) in 'Oral Tradition and Civic Education in Africa' rightly states that 'the primary goal of civic education in any country is the acculturation of the citizens into the world view of that nation. Generally, the mission of such education is to endow the citizens with the information and skills to recognize and do what is right in any given situation. Cameroonian folklore expresses social values; values that determine what is accepted and what is not accepted; what are proper social norms and what constitutes deviance from these norms; what are cherished dignified achievement and undignified achievements. Its songs and proverbs teach the virtues of humility, honesty, optimism, kindness, loyalty, gratitude, hard work, heroism, patriotism etc. This negritude inspired national anthem presents an idealized image of the nation with the aim to inspire Cameroonian toward achieving this ideal.

The national anthem, (a song that is sung daily throughout the country) contains praises for the Cameroonian landscape (hills, valleys, rivers, mountains, streams) culture and people. It is a prayer for peace, unity, integrity patriotism and prosperity that can be used to imbue in the people the potentials to live in peace. The national anthem articulates Cameroonian's world view and gives meaning and value to the place we call home. If it is taught or sung with understanding it will be an effective element of folklore to prevent conflict and ensure national peace. As the anthem states, Cameroon is our home, the cradle of our fathers (Line 1), Every Cameroonian should have a sense of belonging. No Cameroonian citizen is more Cameroon than the other. We should jealously guard our freedom and liberty and not allow anyone to make us feel as second class citizens or enemies in 'the cradle of our father'. Cameroon as stated in line 2 of the anthem is a holy shrine. It contains mountains hills streams and rivers where the gods of our fathers reside and are worshiped. Cameroon is the land of promise and the land of glory, (Refrain of the anthem) It is a land whose worth no tongue can tell (line5), the garden our ancestors cultivated, a land whose welfare we will win in toil and love and peace (line7).Cameroon is the

land of deep endearment forevermore, not only went things are going on well but also went things are difficult.

If we imbibe the consciousness of Cameroon as a holy land and as land of great opportunities we will have citizens and leaders who are optimistic and ready to shun corruption, oppression and tribalism; vices that are endangering the peace and stability of this nation. When the youths believe that Cameroon is a land of promise and glory as presented in the national Anthem they will be patient and look forward for a better future at home. This will stop the violence and disillusionment in our society and the brain that is making Cameroon a barren land.

Folklore Identity, Unity and peace

One of the conflicts in Cameroon is that of identity. As George Nyamndi (2004:13) in *Whether Losing Whether Winning* rightly states:

A Francophone in Cameroon grows up in a system that is essentially his. No adjustments are required of him, no sacrifices. There is no rupture in his cultural growth. He does not suffer any traumatic changes of system and codes. ... Homes have always been searched without a search warrant. Suspects have always been detained without bail. ... His President has always spoken to him in French. Everything is done to give full meaning to his citizenship...The ethnic Francophone is at home in his country, the ethnic Anglophone on the other hand has a grave problem coming to terms with the complexity of his status. His life is a permanent quest for an identity. Who is he? Where is he from? What is his real place in this whole tangle called Cameroon? Can he stand up and be counted? If so, by whom?

The disregard for Anglophone culture that resulted from the failure of the state to acknowledge the historical past and to know that the nation's identity is multiple, not unique has led to the strife in contemporary Cameroon. More than fifty years after independence and reunification, derogatory expressions like frog and Anglo are still in use. Francophones and Anglophones hate each other's language and are suspicious of each other. As Charles Bikoi cited by Nol Alembong (1996:123) says:

a nation can only exist and be strong if it is conscious of its individualities and can identify them, direct them and cement them without demagogy into the frame –work of a chain of solidarities... a chain in which the individual recognizes himself in the whole, and where the whole, far from seeking uniformity, works to reinforce individual components of its unity’).

Alembong ‘a nation’s identity is the sum total of the history, culture and religion of all the ethnic groups that make up the nation and national identity is meaningless if not looked at in the context of ethnicity (1996”123). Peace can be achieved only when there is unity and for there to be unity people must be humble, honest and respectful. Verse two of Cameroon’s national anthem is a plea to the ancestors to unite all the sons of Cameroon into a union that is as mighty as the Buea Mountain

Instill in them the love of gentle ways
Regret from errors of the past,
Foster for Mother Africa a loyalty
That truth shall remain till the last
(Verse Two Lines 4-8)

A kind, honest and peace loving person loves gentle ways; a humble person regrets the error of the past and a loyal person loves truth. If Cameroonians are conscious of this prayer they will work towards achieving these goals and this will lead to the elimination of vices like deceit, violence, arrogance, greed and corruption that characterized contemporary Cameroonian society. This will narrow the present wide gap between the ideals of the anthem and the realities in the society enhance national pride and create a sense of belonging in all Cameroonians.

Folklore commitment and peace

The national anthems teaches us that we have a secure inheritance from our ancestor (we have inherited a holy shrine where in our ancestors now repose) and we have an abundant future (A land of promise and a land of glory). We are therefore call upon to work together for a common good so there need to be reciprocity. We are advised to

guard our liberty, a liberty that was got not in a platter of gold but by the commitment and sacrifice of our patriots as seen in 'Their tears and blood and sweat thy soil did water' (Line 3). Our fore fathers were loyal, honest and patriotic. They embodied the highest ideals of the nation so are held up for emulation. They are men who would rather loss their lives than their honour. This heroic portrait is used to encourage our people to emulate their ancestors. When this consciousness of Cameroon as a great heritage is revitalized peace will reign because we will begin to examine ourselves and continuously ask (How can we ever pay thy due? Line 6). This will make us to think of what we will like our fore fathers bequeath to the next generation. We will become more committed and will in taking decisions have the interest of the nation at heart as oppose to the present situation where individualism and greed have led to the exploitation and plodding of the nation. The anthem enhances our awareness of a shared history and heritage (cradle of fathers) and gives each Cameroonian a sense of belong and encourage them to continue to work together for the development and survival of the nation. It instills in Cameroonians a revolutionary consciousness and gives them a determination to carry their struggle for freedom to the end (Thy welfare we will win in toil and love and peace (line 7). It can encourage them to fight to regain the old society- the holy land in which there was transparency fairness and unity we will be to thy name ever true (Line 8).

Singing the national anthem is a declaration of commitment, a promise to defend the nation in every situation. Whatever we do should be for the good of the nation and nothing is too much so long as it is for the good of the nation. The anthem emphasize on the need for Cameroonian to have gentle ways, to be able to show restrain because unrestrained power dehumanizes. It discourages the hunger for power and prestige that leads to oppression.

Besides the national anthem there are Cameroonian proverbs that advocate for unity humility, restrains hard work, truth and honesty as virtues that can prevent conflict and ensure national peace. These are opposed to vices like arrogance deceit, exploitation and oppression that have caused conflict and endangered national peace and security some of these proverbs are:

1. A fight against a brother is felt in the flesh not in the bone
2. i. You cannot plant cocoyam and harvest cassava
- ii. A goat can never give birth to a cow
- iii. If you don't touch bitter your hands will not be bitter
- iv. If you don't step on a dog's tail it won't bite
3. A broom stick can easily be broken but not a buddle
4. i A short man is not a boy
- ii. He who despises another despises himself
5. A hungry man is an angry man.

In a symbolism the first proverb warns Cameroonian against violence stating that differences between brothers should be settle peacefully (felt in the flesh and not in the bone).

The proverbs in number two above inform them that there are things that cannot be changed (A goat can never give birth to a cow) and warn them of the consequences of their actions (If you don't step on a dog's tail it won't bite). One of the things that cannot be changed is the indivisible and multicultural nature of the nation. Both the state and the people are call upon to avoid acts that will lead to division hence proverb three advocates for unity (A broom stick can easily be broken but not a buddle). Proverb four advices on restrain respect and humility while proverb five is an advice to especially the rulers to provide for the needs of the citizens (A hungry man is an angry man). As this proverb states disillusionment arises when people cannot achieve their dreams.

Conclusion

Cameroon folklore is an effective medium for transforming Cameroonians into informed and committed citizens. Cameroonians to use Achebe words can 'regain belief in themselves and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self – abasement' (by the colonial masters, corrupt governance and now Boko haram and the Civil society and continue to sustain a sense of nationhood and national security, Cameroon can move again in thought and sensibility if it falls back on its folklore. The National anthem, an important element of Cameroon folklore has been analyzed to

show how it can be used for civic education and to ensure national peace and unity. As (Martha Ngum, 1992:83) rightly maintains cultural performances are more than just entertainment, didactic or persuasive formulations. "They create occasions in which as a culture people reflect and redefine themselves, dramatise collective myth while remaining the same in other".

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Appendix

National Anthem

English Version

O Cameroun, thou cradle of our fathers,
Holy shrine where in our midst they now repose,
Their tears and blood and sweat thy soil did water,
On thy hills and valleys once their tillage rose.
Dear Fatherland, thy worth no tongue can tell!
How can we ever pay thy due?
Thy welfare we will win in toil and love and peace,
Will be to thy name ever true!

Chorus

Land of promise, land of Glory!
Thou, of life and joy, our only store!
Thine be honour, thine devotion,
And deep Endearment, for evermore

Second Verse

From Shari, from where the mongo meanders
From along the banks of lowly Boumba Stream,
Muster thy sons in union close around thee,
Mighty as the Buea Mountain be their team;
Instill in them the love of gentle ways,

Regret For errors of the past;
Foster, For Mother Africa, a Loyalty
That true shall remain to the last.

Chorus

Land of promise, land of Glory!
Thou, of life and joy, our only store!
Thine be honour, thine devotion,
And deep Endearment, for evermore

L'Hymne national du Cameroun

Les paroles françaises

Premier couplet:

Ô Cameroun berceau de nos ancêtres,
Va debout et jaloux de ta liberté,
Comme un soleil ton drapeau fier doit être,
Un symbole ardent de foi et d'unité.
Que tous tes enfants du Nord au Sud,
De l'Est à l'Ouest soient tout amour,
Te servir que ce soit le seul but,
Pour remplir leur devoir toujours.

Refrain:

Chère Patrie, Terre chérie,
Tu es notre seul et vrai bonheur,
Notre joie et notre vie,
En toi l'amour et le grand honneur.

Deuxième couplet:

Tu es la tombe où dorment nos pères,
Le jardin que nos aïeux ont cultivé.
Nous travaillons pour te rendre prospère,

Un beau jour enfin nous serons arrivés.

De l'Afrique sois fidèle enfant

Et progresse toujours en paix,

Espérant que tes jeunes enfants

T'aimeront sans bornes à jamais.

Refrain:

Chère Patrie, Terre chérie,

Tu es notre seul et vrai bonheur,

Notre joie et notre vie,

En toi l'amour et le grand honneur.

Misogynism and the Dynamics of Power: A Radical Feminist Reading of Angela Makholwa's *Black Widow Society*

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Abstract

Women around the globe and Africa in particular have been subservient to men. They always play a second role and are sometimes considered as the weaker sex. Women suffer three facets of colonization which are, race, class and sexual orientation. This paper unravels the fact that sexual orientation as heterosexuals lead to their oppression and black women in post-apartheid South Africa still live at the margins of the society. They are not fully given a voice, and the space they deserve is most often circumscribed. They are often associated with negative images like poverty, marginalization, sexual assault, depersonalization, amongst others. As a result, women can still be termed as being part of the subaltern group as the access to their rights has not been completely acquired. Read against the backdrop of Radical feminist discourse, this paper argues that the women in Makholwa's oeuvre have resorted into acts of taboo like, murder, lesbianism, prostitution amongst others in order to redefine a space of their own. Although radical feminists argue that women's oppression will not be eradicated simply by reforming political or economic institutions; rather, feminists must transform the entire gender system. In her text, women not only recognize the destructive patriarchal images of women that permeate their sense of self but also that they create a world other than patriarchy. This crime fiction posits that a woman's place and space in society should be well defined in order not to spur the chaotic and morally barren society that prevails in this text. It also depicts how battered women in order to liberate themselves from the chasms and prism of male domination and suppression, flout all moral conventions in sheer savagery. These women transgress all the social barriers in order to create their space and give meaning to their existence. By transgressing the code prescribed for them, women resist against their oppression by empowering themselves sexually through the expression of free sexualities which is exhibited through prostitution and lesbianism. They also empower themselves by taking away their husband's lives who always impede on their freedom.

Keywords: Dynamics, radical feminism, taboo, misogynism and crime fiction.

Introduction

From time immemorial, women have been suffering from inequality to men and this has been a considerable concern for many female writers. This culture of subjugating women is worldwide and has successfully been handed down from one generation to

another. This is made possible by their ability not to change the way things are, is limited by the absence of values that are themselves transformative. Transformation of values must coincide with and stimulate the undoing of systems of gender-based oppression. Most of the canonical texts of feminists discourse are predominantly written by men and they do so from their own standpoint. These varied ideologies have often, been attributed largely, to the specificity of place and time, which compels women to prefer one brand of feminist movement to another. In the midst of varied definitions of the term feminism by different critics, the definition offered by Joni Lovenduski and Vicky Randall (1993) which states that any ideology, activity and policy "whose goal is to remove discrimination against women and to break down the male domination of society" (19) seems more appropriate for the purpose of this paper. Existing feminist theories such as Marxist, radical, liberal, socialist, anarchic, ecological and psychoanalytical all propound ideologies that address the status of the female in the patriarchal society. However, the theory that best suits the argument being pursued in this paper is radical feminism, although it should be noted that all the theories are intertwined. The aim behind their empowerment is not only to disempower the men but also to make themselves stronger before male dominant figures, which through physical and psychological oppression make women weaker and vulnerable. Zimmermann and Rappaport [1996] define empowerment as an active process. Its form is determined by the circumstances and events but its essence is human activity in the direction of change from a passive state to an active one. They further posit that 'the process brings about an integration of self-acceptance and self-confidence, social and political understanding in decision making and in control over the resources of the environment' (76). Thus women's empowerment does not only make them stronger before the men, but also by attaining these different levels of power, women directly resist patriarchal norms which are instituted by the colonial ideology. When women empower themselves, they strip themselves of colonial and patriarchal principles which are ascribed for them and which some are bound to follow. These ascribed roles constantly tie the women down thus, preventing them from expressing their true identity.

Contending that gender has been constructed in order to ensure women's subordination, radical feminists argue that women's oppression will not be eradicated

simply by reforming political or economic institutions; rather, feminists must transform the entire gender system. Shulamith Firestone identified a phenomenon she termed 'sex class'-the condition of women as an oppressed class "so deep to be invisible" (1). In her book *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970), Firestone articulated her version of the central tenet of radical feminism: "Man's domination of woman is the fundamental form of oppression, one that is so intricately woven into virtually all facets of our lives that it thoroughly pervades our sense of what it is to be a woman or to be a man" (42). Mary Daly (1976), for example, defines radical feminism as a "journey of becoming"(1). In other words, Daly argues that feminism requires that women not only recognise the destructive patriarchal image of woman that permeate their sense of self but also that they create a world other than patriarchy. Radical feminism is therefore a perspective within feminism that calls for a radical reordering of society in which male supremacy is eliminated in all social and economic contexts. Radical feminists seek to abolish patriarchy by challenging the notion of traditional gender roles, opposing the sexual objectification of women, and raising public awareness about such issues as rape and violence against women. Radical feminists locate the root cause of women's oppression in patriarchal gender relations, as opposed to legal systems (as in liberal feminism) or class conflict (as in anarchist, socialist and Marxist feminisms). While some radical feminist propose that the oppression of women is the most fundamental form of oppression, one that cuts across boundaries of all other forms of oppression, others acknowledge the simultaneous and intersecting effect of other independent categories of oppression. These other categories of oppression may include, but are not limited to, oppression based on race, social class, perceived attractiveness, sexual orientation, and ability. Some radical feminists such as Phyllis Chesler, Monique Wittig, Mary Daly, Jill Johnston and Robin Morgan have called upon women to govern women and men alike. They assert that society is a patriarchy in which the class of men are the oppressors of the class of women and because of that, women have systematically been viewed as the 'other' to the male norm. They fervently hold the conviction that; the way to deal with oppression of any kind is to address the underlying causes of it is through revolution of any kind too. Alice Echols and Ellen Willis (1990) argue that, the main difference between radical feminism and other branches is that they didn't concentrate on equalising the distribution of power. Instead, they focused their efforts on completely eliminating patriarchy by transforming

the entire structure of society. It is from this basis that we analyse this paper using radical feminism as the female characters in Makhowa's text want to get rid of traditional gender roles through their sexual deviancy, murdering of their husbands and economic independence.

Postmodernists or Social Deviants

Women's sexualities as history records have transcended the normal heterosexual relationship between a man and a woman. Postmodern works in contrast to other approaches, considers women's sexuality as neither a subversive sexual practice nor an inherently oppressive one. Some women, through lesbianism and prostitution rebel against social constructs as far as women's sexualities are concerned. By so doing, they free themselves from patriarchal and colonial bondage and frame themselves new identities. The freedom they obtain as far as their sexualities are concerned makes them not to live according to a predetermined script and makes them live a sexually happy life. Considering the above statements, women get to attain free sexualities. These free sexualities do not only make them to attain self-fulfillment but equally a symbol of their resistance because they go against the description of femininity prescribed by patriarchy and colonialism. From the deviant acts of these women they freely express their sexualities, by refusing to act like automats.

Also, Due to their unusual behaviors, the women in Makholwa's *Black Widow Society* can be termed "social deviants" by patriarchy because they decide to adopt a deviant sexual life. For Khumalo, Tallulah, Nomhle, Thami and Janine, the sexual liberty they express should not be perceived as deviant sexual attitudes because it is an expression of their empowerment and their resistance vis-à-vis the bondage that some men have subjected them to and a way to live a self-fulfilled existence. Women attain self-fulfillment through these sexual taboo acts because at a certain point in some of their lives, even their sexuality which is the only thing that belongs to them is regulated by the society. The above situation is represented in Makholwa's narrative where Tallulah's Husband often imposes the old missionary position when they make love which in turn leads to Tallulah's dissatisfaction. This instance depicts how Tallulah lives a sad marital sexual life. As she is not the only one in this situation, many other women in her situation go craving for sex when they realize they have not really enjoyed a happy and enticing sexual life with their partners. Thus, the women in this

novel are a representation of women who have unfulfilled and unsatisfied sexual lives. Trying to have sex in different positions allegorically represents breaking away with patriarchal norms and trying to achieve self-satisfaction. The sex imagery is used allegorically, women empower themselves through the free sexualities in a bid to attain self-fulfilment and resist against patriarchal norms. From Tallulah's marriage experience, she is always tied down emotionally, financially and sexually by Mphikeleli- her husband who has total control over her life. As far as her sexuality is concerned, she does not really enjoy a happy sexual life because her husband always handles everything on bed and never gives her that audacity to express herself during their sexual intercourses. Tallulah's sexual monotony is revealed when the narrator says:

Sex with Mphikeleli had always seemed quite perfunctory and mechanical; she'd married him when she was twenty years old and barely out of her school tunic so she'd merely gone along with whatever he wanted in the bedroom, which was usually just the boring old missionary position. It was only after he'd left the land of the living that she started experiencing the exciting variation that came with making love to more sexually experienced men. In time she began to understand what she liked, how she liked to be handled in bed, for this was after all the only domain where she could indeed 'be handled'. (Makholwa, 2013:107)

From the above citation, we realize that Tallulah lives a sad marriage life which is not only accompanied by emotionally frustrations through her husband's constant beatings but equally by sexual frustrations due to the dissatisfaction she feels during their love making. From this instance, the death of Tallulah's husband is equally seen as a blessing, because his death does not only symbolize her individual freedom, but also her sexual empowerment. This is duly because once he dies; she lives the sexual life she always desired as she now knows what she wants and what she does not want while in bed with a man. From this instance, it is also revealed to us that it is the only domain that she can be handled. This statement reveals how powerful Tallulah has become in all the spheres of life. Sexually, Tallulah has gained a lot of experience, she knows what pleases her and she also knows which sexual partner can suit her thereby making her feel younger. This situation is exposed when she begins to choose

more experienced men who can satisfy her libido. Tallulah's sexual freedom is revealed when the narrator says: "When she discovered how liberating it could be to allow that domination, for once to be free of responsibility, she revealed in it" (Makholwa, 2013:107). From the above, during her sexual intercourses, Tallulah gives up her authoritative trait to be handled in bed like a woman. By doing so, she fully enjoys her sexual intercourses there by making her attain sexual-fulfillment as far as her sexual life is concerned.

Additionally, another instance where women possess sexual power is revealed through Janine. Her life as a stripper, a prostitute and a paralegal exposes Janine's liberal sexual life and the power she possesses. Alex Delaware employs her as a secretary to boom his dying law firm. Janine's sexual power here is revealed as she is able to revive Delaware's law firm. Though she is exploited for financial gains, the indispensability of Janine's sexuality is revealed thus depicting the power her sexuality has in the revival of Delaware's firm as it is portrayed in the following lines.

[She] had been working for six years, and in that time, aside from sleeping with him intermittently, she managed to study and train as a real paralegal and had also managed to study and train as a real paralegal and had also managed to triple the number of clients in Alex's pathetic little one-man outfit or law firm as he called it. He always bragged that it was a strategic move on his side to hire her in the first place. (Makholwa, 2013: 8)

From the above instance, though Janine might be perceived as a prostitute, the power of her sexuality has led to the salvation of Alex's law firm. The salvation of his law firm by Janine reveals Janine's sexual prowess. This is duly because the more the clients she sleeps with, the higher the gains of Alex's law firm. As a result, apart from being Janine's clients, they automatically become the clients of Alex Delaware. Also, her liberal sexual life makes her to live a self-fulfilled existence as a woman. The sexual independence Janine enjoys no more makes her a victim in the hands of patriarchy as she lives according her own code of life. She does not depend on gender roles prescribed by patriarchy which often censors what a woman should do and what not to do behaviourally. Moreover, her job as a paralegal also helps her to amass enough

money to further her studies in law. Through the power of her sexuality, Janine is able to attain whatever she wants in life and be wherever she desires to.

Also, Janine's sexual life as a prostitute makes her succeed in belonging to the South Africa's high class society. Through her introduction to Max Cameron by Delaware, she is able to get a pass to the class of elites in South Africa. Delaware's introduction of Janine to Max is revealed in the following lines, "Janine finally agreed to meet Max Cameron for a dinner that had been casually arranged by Alex... Max Cameron was a multi-millionaire widower who had been single for almost five years" (Makholwa, 2013:10). From the above lines, Alex does not only introduce Janine to rich men for her own benefit, but he also does this because he knows he will gain from Janine's relations with men. Delaware can be perceived here as a worthless man who relies on a woman's sexuality to make himself a name in society. Janine's sexual power does not only change Alex's life but also her own life as she is able to have a flamboyant lifestyle through Max Cameron. Furthermore, Janine's sexual power is exposed when Alex threatens to blackmail her when she changes her mind on their deal to kill Max and be bequeathed all his riches. From Alex's threats, Janine's sexual promiscuous life is revealed as the narrator indicates:

You and me are 50/50 partners in this scheme all the way. Don't think I've forgotten that all you were was a two-rand whore and don't ever think I'd hesitate to use that information against you anytime you start to piss me off. So you better be a good little whore and spread your legs for a fucking couple million...and like a good pimp I will make sure this operation goes nice and smooth. And listen', he said, pointing his finger at her', don't forget I still have those pictures from back '99-the ones with you and those two rugby players fucking the bloody life out of you! I don't think that's the kind of image befitting a millionaire's wife. (Makholwa, 2013: 69-79)

From the passage, Janine's sexual power is further revealed as she no more agrees on the deal her and Alex earlier decided. As well, Alex knows that it is only through her sexual prowess that he can get Cameron's money; he threatens to blackmail her by exposing her promiscuous sexual life. The exposure of her love making scene with the

two rugby players goes further to expose Janine's sexual power. Despite the fact that such an active sexual life is prohibited by patriarchy on women, Janine does not abide to such constraints, and lives an active sexual life which does not only make her live independently but equally makes her attain a certain social status through her sexuality. Janine here can also be compared to Ewudu in Sone Dipoko's *Because of Women* where Ewudu lives a sexually free life and does not want to be attached to any man as she has many amorous relations with many of the village men before being entrusted to a husband. Also, her body is perceived by many of the village men as a sexually gratifying body. Thus, her refusal to be attached to one man makes her to be perceived as a prostitute in her society. Though she is perceived as a prostitute she is an allegorical representation of those women who believe patriarchal culture is now archaic and defies it as a postmodernist or a social deviant. Although Janine views prostitution as a sort of sexual freedom, Shelia Jeffries (1997) in her book takes a different stand. In this work, she argues that prostitution is the ultimate act that instead reduces the woman to sexual objects that can be bought and sold in the market of sexual slavery, she posits:

(Prostitution is) male sexual behavior characterised by three elements variously combined: barter, promiscuity and emotional indifference. Any man is a prostitution abuser who, for the purpose of his sexual satisfaction, habitually or intermittently reduces another human being into a sexual object by the use of money or other mercenary consideration. (Jeffries, 1997:4)

From the above quotation, Jeffries views prostitution as violence against the human liberty of women. Violence not only in the practice of prostitution but more fundamentally, in the very idea of 'buying sex' which is considered so inextricably linked to the absolute embodiment of patriarchal male privilege that lies at the foundation of women's oppression. Gail Pateson [1983] shares this opinion as he believes prostitution "...remains morally undesirable because it is one of those most graphic examples of men's domination over the woman" (56).

Besides, women further exercise sexual power through Nohmle, Thami's cousin. Nohmle snatches away Lloyd, Thami's husband from her. Despite the fact that it is

because of her promising political affiliations that Lloyd marries her, Nohmle's sexual power is also exposed and her abnormal character revealed as she goes against moral ethics by seizing her cousin's husband. From Nohmle's character, some of the women in the text are ready to undertake anything even if it is at the risk of their lives or against moral ethics. Some transgress all conventions and morality in order to attain their endeavours. From the behaviours of the above mentioned women, they can be defined by patriarchy as "Sex radicals" because they are women that do not abide to the definition of a woman by patriarchy. Thus, their behaviour coincides with radical feminist goals because its main aim is to defy patriarchy and the subversion of patriarchy is done by these women through their sexual acts of taboo. Though their acts are considered as offensive, it is one of the only ways through which these women live an expected fulfilled existence. In Makholwa's *Black Widow Society*, the women might not think they are defying patriarchy because the only thing they search for through these acts of taboo is their own happiness. Unfortunately, patriarchy might perceive their behaviours as an insult to the code of ethics that women ought to follow and respect in the society. Sarah Hoagland [1995] greatly lambasts heterosexualism as she opines:

Heterosexualism has certain similarities to colonialism, particularly in its maintenance through force when paternalism is rejected (that is, the stepping up of male predation when the women reject male protection) and in its portrayal of domination as natural (men are to dominate women as naturally as colonisers are to dominate the colonised, and without any sense of themselves as opposing those they dominate except during times of overt aggression) and in de-skilling of women. And just as colonisers who cannot survive as colonisers without the colonised, so it is the men who cannot survive as men (protectors and predators). (Hoagland, 1995:178)

Based on such an outlook, Thami possesses the conviction that it is right for her to eliminate Lloyd because it's through her efforts that he has become successful in politics. Lloyd thus acted as a protector when he needed her help, once he achieved his ambitions he is now acting like a predator by requesting for divorce. This malevolent act by Lloyd later leads to his assassination orchestrated by Thami. A

similar situation is exposed in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* where Adah flirts with the Doctor who has to confirm her pregnancy. Though this attitude is prohibited in the Ibo society, Adah does this in order to be employed as a Librarian. As a woman and black in a racist English society, she indulges herself in an act of taboo to be able to survive. Thus, bad girls are used, discarded because they don't deserve better and they are not better enough to bear a man's children (Tyson, 2006:90). Though these women are termed as 'bad girls' by patriarchy, their attitude, goes in line with radical feminist goals which are that of defying patriarchy and all its norms. The sexual behaviour adopted by these women does not only make them to defy patriarchy but equally to change the status quo and transform the societal order. Thami and Adah's behaviours fall in line with black radical feminist concerns where black women interrogate why they are judged by the colour of their skin but not by the content of their character.

Sexual Politics of the New Right

Women as history records had greatly involved themselves in the political history of their nations. The engagement of women in these political struggles had been an acclaiming success because their presence had been left unnoticed. Talcot Sparsons [1969] argues that "political power has to do with the capacity of persons or collectivities to get things done effectively, in particular when their goals are obstructed by some kind of human resistance or opposition" (232). Thus, when women empower themselves politically, they break the traditional notions that are attached to femininity. Engaging in political activities does not only make them stronger before the men who dominate the political field but is also to create a space of their own. Women through their dynamic political activities have greatly participated in the political histories of their nations. Through their dynamism, the women have left no stone unturned. The above analysis coincide with Kathleen Newland [1979] that

An examination of some other revolutionary regimes reveals a mixed record of achievements in the field of politics. Women have been active participants in the struggles of all modern national liberation movements. Women made the Long March in China; they joined in Mozambique's FRELIMO, in Algeria's FLN, and in the Russian Revolution from its earliest beginnings, and in the

militant nationalist movements of dozens of now-independent nations. (Newland, 1979:111)

From the above, one can claim that women's involvement in the political life and in the national struggle has not let many of the now independent nations indifferent. Thus, women's participation in the political life of their nations has been accompanied with a lot of success. This success in politics due to women's involvement is the case of Makholwa's text. In South Africa, the massive participation of women in politics has massively been felt. The feminist scholar Gay Seidman [1989] asserts that women played a dynamic role in the liberation movement and that 7500 women fought during the conflict (232). This report on women's participation reflects the immense contribution of women in politics. Women's political participation is also revealed in Makholwa's text respectively.

Furthermore, in Makholwa's *Black Widow Society* we are presented to another politically active woman. As a politician and woman, she demarcates herself from all the women of her generation through her political activism. Though the offspring of tough politicians, she makes her own way in the field of politics without relying on her family's credentials to succeed in that field. Nohmle's dynamism as a cub politician is recounted:

She made her way up the party structures and was well positioned to be a key player in the newly formed ANC government. By 1994, when the ANC finally came to power, she was one of the young people who were poised to play a key role in the ANC YOUTH League. She immediately established a relationship with some of the high-ranking cadres in the party, and was greatly appreciated for her sharp mind and intellect...in her twenties, she was given the role of Chief Director at the Department of Education. (Makholwa, 2013: 43)

From the above instance, we realize that Nohmle is very dynamic as far as politics is concerned. This is because she successfully paves her way in the world of politics in South Africa. Her dynamism is seen with the confidence the government has on her

by offering her a post of responsibility which she perfectly handles. Her political abilities at a certain point make Lloyd her brother-in-law to have a relationship with her as he dumps her cousin Thami. One can claim that the relationship that Lloyd knots with Nohmle to Thami's detriment is surely partly because he appreciates her successful political life and the power she demonstrates before the other women. Nohmle contrastively to Thami is a political activist and very dynamic woman while Thami is more mundane because she is attracted to material things. Also the fact they work in the same domain make Lloyd to appreciate Nohmle and her competence in politics. Besides, Nohmle's political dynamism greatly contradicts with the wide believe that women are not socialized to be comfortable with power, and that women lack the same driving ambition to acquire top posts of responsibility as men and that they are in low positions because of their natural inferiority (Nana-Fabu, 2007:25). The above statement contradicts with Nohmle's experiences because though her family's credentials are important, she succeeds in climbing the political ladder. Due to her professional competence, she is able to lead the Youth League of the ANC which is one of the most influential league of the most important branches of the party. Additionally, Nohmle's political dynamism has helped transcend the clichéd believe which the society has on some women.

In addition, a similar situation of a political activist woman is revealed in Ola Rotimi's *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* where Sikira one of Leoka-Brown wife's decides to create a political party. Sikira's aim of creating a political party is to fully represent women. The political party she wants to create symbolizes Sikira's freedom from a polygamous marriage where she has no voice and from a nagging husband who constantly oppresses her psychologically. Therefore having access to an important political post will imply that she will first of all change the situation of Women from the top before giving them a voice in the different households. From this instance, she also implies the politics of a country greatly oppress the woman and if women get in control of the country's politics, their situation will change. The above analysis greatly ties with Kathleen Newland's [1979] assumption where she declares that:

The law that has the greatest impact on women's daily lives is the civil law, specifically marriage and family laws. Whether customary or codify; it is civil

law that sets the conditions for when and how a woman may marry, how and if her marriage may be dissolved, how far her authority over her children extends, what she can inherit if widowed, what support she is entitled to if divorced...Civil law in modern states is not a single, monolithic entity. Its components are legislation, constitutions, statutes, court decisions, executive decrees and administrative regulations. (10)

From the above, we realise that it is the politics of a country that increases women's suffering apart from being oppressed by their husbands; the law comes in to reinforce their oppression through the sometimes partial law instituted in many countries. For instance, men are supposed to have more than one wife while women should not. From the above analysis, the keenness of Sikira is exposed here because she wants to head a party and once she is Prime Minister, and in position of power, she will amend all the unjust laws that are instituted against the women in the society. Politics is one of the domains through which women get access to power. The women in this text exhibit a lot of dynamism in their political activities. The political participation of these women also puts to question the notions of femininity like fragility, weakness and emotionality that is attached to women. The political involvement of these women reveals how successful and competent women can be in the different spheres of life. Thus, the political activism of women in the politics of their country greatly changes the destiny of their countries.

To begin, Tallulah, the head of the black widow society creates the sect with the aim of empowering women that are oppressed by their husbands. This empowerment is done through the elimination of their husbands. As a dynamic woman, many women, adhere to this sect to free themselves from bondage. From the onset Tallulah is constantly physically and psychologically oppressed by her husband. Tallulah's abuse by her husband is what leads her to create such a sect which will not only lead to her liberation but to that of other women. Tallulah's marriage can be compared to hell because her husband constantly abuses her physically and psychologically thereby making her live an unhappy marriage life. Tallulah's physical and emotional oppression is revealed thus:

He used to call her his child bride, and treated her like a precious germ...until he paid her *lobola* and set her up in her dream house. The first year of their marriage was blissful; exactly as she imagined life with Mphikeleli Ntuli would be. Then she fell pregnant with their first child, everything changed. It had started out as taunts about her physical appearance; then the cheating began and, with it, the beatings ensued. Her marriage is an albatross which tightens its noose around her neck with each passing year. (Makholwa, 2013:2)

From the above citation, Tallulah's marriage has been transformed from a bed of roses to a nightmare. The happiness she experiences in the early years of her marriage suddenly vanishes making her the voiceless in her marital home. Due to repetitive abuses, she decides to take away her husband's life. The killing of her husband is very symbolical because it is only after his death that she experiences freedom and selfhood. One can claim that these women are high profile criminals because though they give themselves a reason by claiming to stop the oppression they go through in their relationships, some of these women also kill for materialistic tendencies as most of the women are bequeathed their husbands properties. Also when they believe they will not really gain financially from the murder of a husband, they prefer not to engage in a non-profitting case. They kill because these men obstruct them from living a happy and fulfilled existence as far as their sexual economic and social freedom and happiness is concerned. Thus, they find themselves obliged to kill them because they cannot forever live with all the constraints that their partners put on their way. Besides, Edna Whitehead also finds herself with the obligation of killing her husband because of what she endures while married to him. She does not only suffer from emotional abuse but also from financial exploitation as she owns only twenty percent of the business estate she built together with her husband. Edna's financial and psychological abuse by her husband is revealed in the following lines

The ever calculating Jake had urged Edna to dilute some of her shareholding by bringing in a black woman with strong business credentials so that his firm will have BEE representation. Edna resisted the idea, as she already owned only 20 twenty percent of the company, she finally conceded as Jake was the

dominant force in their relationship. Little did she know that by allowing Tallulah into their lives, she had only agreed to a clever business decision but that the alliance would serve her in her personal life. Edna told Tallulah of the humiliating 'cookie jar' that had been a feature of her marriage since her husband's vocal disappointment at her inability to bear him a heir...The cookie jar was a troop of sexually available secretaries who had been a constant in her more than two decade marriage. (Makholwa, 2013:39)

From the above passage, Edna throughout her marital life is abused financially and emotionally by her husband as everything is imposed on her by the latter. This situation might have also lasted forever if she did not sought ways to eliminate him. Edna seems to suffer a lot from this marriage seen with the way she is about to commit suicide. According to her, she believes committing suicide will clear off her problems. Edna's tragic end is avoided by Tallulah who brings back her feet on the ground. Through the Black widow society, she finds her space as a woman, and finally enjoys an emotional stability. She also gets the sole access of the business empire she built with her husband, which almost belonged to him alone. If Edna through Tallulah's help did not react radically against Jake Whitehead, Edna's life would have been miserable because her oppressive husband's attitude will not have ended. Due to this marital turmoil she is about to take away her life. Consequently, the elimination of her husband is a way to revive her and to enjoy a peaceful emotional life which was unattainable before. Jake is therefore a thorn in Edna's flesh which she has to get rid of. Thus, she orchestrates his death with no hesitation.

Furthermore, in Makholwa's text we are further presented to Salome who is married to Scott O'Leary an Irish Casanova. Scott O'Leary does not only tour around the world abandoning Salome to herself but he also infects her with HIV which he vehemently denies. The O'Leary's situation greatly coincides with the South African reality as far as their sexual lives are concerned. Pettifor, Measham and Nancy Padian in their article titled "Sexual Power and HIV Risk in South Africa" assume that gender inequalities play a key role in the HIV pandemic through their effects on sexual relationships. In South Africa, multiple relationships are condoned and even encouraged for men while women are expected to be monogamous and

unquestioning towards their partner's behaviour. Here, we better understand why Scott multiplies his sexual partners without adhering to his wife's advice also, due to his multiple sexual partners, he easily contracts HIV AIDS. Moreover, his bankruptcy is due to his flirtatious life style. Salome here finds herself in a dilemma as she is not only pregnant with his child but also infected with HIV and abandoned by her husband. The impasse in which she finds herself almost leads her to depression. Salome's desperate situation is revealed in the narrator's voice.

Scott had told her in no uncertain terms that she was not to share this news with anyone because all this talk about the disease was a mere figment of her imagination. He instructed her to terminate the baby because they already had enough with their two offspring. She knew that based on the prenuptial agreement she had agreed to sign during the heady days of her romance, she was not entitled to inherit any of his wealth. However, the truth gnawed at her on daily basis. She was beginning to behave erratically and feared she would plummet into depression. How could one live with such unbearable secret? When the strain tore at her, she finally confided in one of her clients at the beauty salon. (Makholwa, 2013: 50)

Salome thus finds herself in a dead end, the joining of the black widow society seem to be her only solution. Through the help of Khumalo, she joins the sect which relieves her of her pain and guarantees her future and that of her children. The society after the killing, assures the life of the widow and her children financially. Salome through the murder of her husband is portrayed as somebody who has not killed for pleasure but who has done it to relieve her pain and assuring her future and that of her children, given what Scott's death will bring to them financially. Thus, Scott is therefore a thorn in Salome's flesh which could prevent her to live happily, after the turmoil she had gone, through her unsuccessful marriage. Thus, Women in the text do not kill their husbands out of convenience, they kill them to be able to gain their own space and voice which have long been obstructed by patriarchy. By killing their husbands, they are able to have a satisfied existence.

As a result, women have to be politically active in order to be more independent because the politics of a society or a country is what also ties women down at the mercy of the men and the society at large. Apart from the society that oppresses her, the society in synergy with the men contributes to the oppression of some women. The politics of a country to a great extent helps in the oppression of some women. To topple some of the injustices felt by women in the society, the women have to be politically active in order to modify the discriminatory laws against women.

Developing Feminist Materialism

Makholwa's *Black Widow Society*, is a depiction of economically reliable women who do not rely on their husbands efforts to make themselves a name in the field of business. The economic activities they undertake do not only make them independent financially, but, it also leads to the economic welfare of their respective families. Economic power is defined as having sufficient productive resources at command that give the capacity to make and enforce economic decisions such as allocation of resources and apportioning of goods and services (*Business Dictionary.Com*). The economic power these women enjoy helps them to attain create their own space. Some of the women who succeed economically are Tallulah, Salome, Edna Whitehead, and amongst others. By indulging in economic activities, the women are no more dependent on the man, but equally change their destinies. In most cases, the counterparts of these oppressed women believe the destinies of their wives depend on them. In order for us to better understand this section, our attention turns to Katharine Bartlett's [1987] where she states:

Men have power over everything of value in society, even the power to decide what has value and what does not. Men use this power systematically to shape and define the social beings we call men and women in ways which enhance the power of men, and keep women subordinate to men. How men have constructed the relationship between the men and women in turn shapes and constructs society as a whole such that each of its constitutive parts-its laws, its institutions, the private relationships it fosters-is hierarchically, by sex. Women, in short, have been and will continue to be in every sense until we

understand our trap, seize the power to control our own lives and get men's feet "off our necks". (Bartlett, 1987:1560)

Bartlett thus rejects the prevailing legal strategies for improving the inferior position in which women find themselves. She finds the "equal treatment" approach of liberal feminists, which minimises differences between a man and woman as a basis for demanding equal treatment, but prefers the "dismantling of the status quo" approach by radical feminists, which highlights the female standards and values from which difference is measured and respected.

In Makholwa's *Black Widow Society*, Tallulah is said to be a successful business woman due to her success in the business field. As a result, she is not only admired, but also wants to be emulated by people who surround her. One of her admirers is the prominent attorney of the women's association who has succeeded to climb the judiciary ladder through the support given to her by the society. Definitely, she is one of Tallulah's admirers because Tallulah is one of those who give her a chance as far as her profession is concerned. Khumalo's admiration for Tallulah is revealed in the following narrator's voice: "She and Tallulah grew up together in the same Township in the East Rand...They were neighbours who were not particularly close due to their age difference but Tallulah became a role model to those who grew up with her when she made a name for herself in the business world" (38). This reveals how Tallulah's success does not only benefit her but also, she is a source of inspiration to young women in her community. Tallulah's economic independence makes her not rely on her husband financially but also to help out young women to get on with their lives. As someone who inspires women, and a militant of the economic independence of women, she employs Khumalo as the attorney of the society because she sees her as a hard working lady. Consequently, as a radical feminist, she does not only inspire them, but also employs them if necessary. The economic power that Tallulah enjoys boosts the young women around her to work harder and be successful in business like her. Her success is depicted when she makes a lot of profit during the world cup in South Africa. Her successful business exploit is revealed thus:

Years ago after she started expanding her business interests following Mphikeleli's death, a friend of hers had sold her a promotions company that produces marketing materials for sporting and corporate events. Ever the shrewd businesswoman, Tallulah had acquired a FIFA license to brand car decals during the World Cup and her promotions company had never enjoyed such high profit margins over a short period. She often heard people bemoan the fact that the World Cup had not been profitable for their business but what did they expect. (Makholwa, 2013:104-106)

This excerpt is a succinct proof that Tallulah's successful business life portrays her as an astute business woman. Because, she knows what to sell at a given season in order to make high profits; she does not produce and sell her products carelessly. Furthermore, Tallulah sets up a secret cult that is The Black Widow Society which is apparently an association which disentangles women from men's bondage but keenly looking at the association, it is a profit making association. Though the primary objective is to free women from marital bondage, the aim of the association is also to make sure the widows after killing their husbands will face no major financial problem so the husband's money is bequeathed to the widow. From Tallulah's firm and her parallel economic activities in the Black Widow society, she spurs her economic success thereby making her a role model in her society and an example worth emulating. The lack of financial reward concerning the China Gumede's case greatly exposes the profit making nature of their association as they are disturbed with the fiasco with which the murder of China is conducted. Despite this fiasco, they are quickly relieved of its failures as Salome's case presents itself and from which they wish they will reap a lot of benefits. Also, Tallulah's success as a business woman is also exposed through her residence. She lives in a luxurious neighborhood and the description of her house leaves the reader with the impression that she is a millionaire. Tallulah's prestigious life is envisaged as the narrator says: "Tallulah's house in Hyde Park...Tastefully furnished in fine antiques, crystal and white drapes, Persian rugs and an eclectic collection of modern and classic art pieces, Tallulah's home embodied perfection and bore testimony of her impeccable taste" (35). This exposes Tallulah as a financially wealthy woman as the description of her house leaves us with no doubt of her wealth. From the butler who manages her house to the eighteenth year, the

whisky she drinks and the cigar she often smokes depict her as a 'black diamond' in the South African society. Apparently, she is a woman who lacks nothing and is fully accomplished as a business woman.

In addition Edna Whitehead one of the members of the triumvirate after her husband's death also enjoys economic power. Before her husband's death, she is a shadow of the latter as she is simply the house keeper because of her meaningless nature in his economic and emotional life. Her meaninglessness in Jake Whitehead's life goes from the number of secretaries who are his mistresses and the insignificant twenty percent shares she has in the family estate. All this makes her a mere shadow in her husband's life. With the death of her husband, Edna metamorphoses into an emotionally strong and wealthier woman because the family's property is bequeath to her all alone due to the absence of a legitimate child. Edna's rise to economic welfare through sisterhood is exhibited by Tallulah and the association at large. Tallulah's supporting attitude towards Edna is revealed in the following lines. "They not only managed to eliminate Jake Whitehead forever, but they also birthed an emotionally stronger and considerably wealthier Edna Whitehead. When Jake Whiteheads' insurance paid out and the estate wound up, all parties were reimbursed for their contribution" (40). Thus, the solidarity that exists between Edna and the members of the society brings Edna's feet back to the ground. Though Edna has become emotionally and financially strong because of the black widow society, she is not the only one who has profited from her husband's death because the society at large too has profited from Jake's murder. Besides, the death of Jake is not only emotionally beneficial but equally financially advantageous to Tallulah, Khumalo and Mhzwake as they will have their share of Jakes' estate. From the above, we realize that in most cases, these women get access to economic welfare through uncouth ways like murder. Tallulah and the members of the triumvirate have made the death of their husbands a business wherein the more they have nagging husbands, the more they witness an increase in their business and an increase in the profits of the association. From another perspective, the economic welfare of the women in Makholwa's text is portrayed through Khumalo the attorney of the secret cult. As the attorney of the black widow society, she is more concerned with the fiscal and financial matters of the association. Thus, she has to make sure that the secret cult makes much profit as the

number of murdered husbands increase. The role played by Khumalo in the association is defined and precised in the following lines “Nkosazana’s focus tended to be more on fiscal matters; how much the BWS made and how much more potential it had become a highly profitable organization” (38). From the above lines, Khumalo has to make sure the association is to be highly profitable despite its philanthropic goals. She is so well off that her old time friend that is Alex who earlier helped her in the past wishes to know where her wealth as an attorney comes from. Despite the fact that he is Nkosazana’s mentor, he has never succeeded to be up to his former protégé’s level. Alex’s puzzled nature over Khumalo’s wealth is revealed in the following narrator’s voice.

They’d kept in contact over the years with sporadic encounters conducted mostly over the phone. The few times they managed to meet, she was always decked out in the latest designer gear...And the cars! My word, this woman seemed to be upgraded her cars with every new model on the market! What got Alex’s goat was how in the world an NGO could afford to finance such a lofty existence? These black people sure knew how to cream a scheme, that’s for sure. (Makholwa, 2013:115)

From the above excerpt, Nkosazana lives a very luxurious life; the brand of cars she uses is a clear depiction that she is financially viable. The wealthy nature she reveals makes Alex to seek for her help as he is in a financial mess as far as his life is concerned. Though an old attorney, he has not succeeded to live the type of life Nkosazana lives or make much money as she has made from her profession as an attorney. Also, Khumalo further reveals the lucrative aspect of the association due to her refusal to handle Salome’s case because she believes it will not bring them a lot of profit. This instance reveals Khumalo’s main aim which is that of making profit and upgrading her life style instead of helping out the desperate women faced with abusive husbands. Khumalo’s materialistic actions are revealed when she complains about Scott’s bankruptcy due to his philandering life style. Scott’s situation is expressed in the subsequent lines:

Nkosazana picked up her briefcase and took out a blue arch-lever file containing a batch of documents. These are his financials...or at least what I could gather from Salome. Look at his list of assets then counter that against his liabilities...the man's estate is in shambles. With his playboy lifestyle, who knows what wealth he has left, if any. At first I was quite excited by the prospect of adopting Salome's case, especially after the China Gumede debacle but on closer inspection, things look a bit thin in foreign banks. Not sure if this case is worth taking up. (Makholwa, 2013: 52)

From the passage above, Nkosazana is exposed as a very professional lawyer. Since she is concerned with the financial and fiscal matters, she perfectly knows which case will bring them a lot of money and which case will not. Consequently, she warns the members of the triumvirate of a non-profit making case. Therefore, the dexterity with which she handles the different cases they are faced with and her professionalism unavoidably makes her an economically well-to-do woman. Thus, we realize that Nkosazana is very money-minded and less concerned with the problems faced by the women because she is a lesbian and has never had an experience of an emotionally, financially and physically abusive relationship. Her state as a lesbian makes her almost insensitive to the plight of the women.

Conclusion

Thus,

the solidarity of the group does not only assure their physical and emotional happiness but also guarantees them of financial gains which some of them have been deprived of while married to their oppressive husbands. Furthermore, as far as Makholwa's narrative is concerned, the women also empower themselves through their silent voices. From the above analysis, we realize that South African women are very dynamic in all the activities they indulge themselves into. From the political, economic and social sphere, the women in this text demarcate themselves through the way they excel in their different endeavours. Besides, the power these women enjoy here is solely to attain create their own space. Thus, they indulge in the most dubious and radical means in order to attain their goals. They use unorthodox means to obtain what they desire. The radicalism and violence they use goes in line with Fanon's assertion

when he says "decolonization is a violent phenomenon" (Fanon, 1973:12). From the lives of these women, we realize that if they did not make use of violence, they would not have put an end to the master-slave relationship they have with the men. Additionally, some of the women here tend to put aside the morality the society imposes on them to get along with their lives. Some get on with their lives faithfully, while some do not only murder those who can impede on their way to freedom but also kill for money, and use their bodies to climb the social ladder.

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