



A Historical Snapshot of the Anglophone Impasse in Cameroon

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Abstract

The paper labeled: A Historical Snapshot of the Anglophone Impasse in Cameroon is a critical review of the asymmetric economic, socio-cultural and political systems established by the former East Cameroon (hereafter known as the Republic of Cameroon) leaders to accentuate their control over the populations of the former West Cameroon (hereafter known as the Northwest and Southwest regions) hence giving rise to what many level-headed critics and scholars of Cameroon's socio-cultural, economic and political history have coined the Anglophone problem. This paper attempts to give a historical and political overview of what we have described in all its ramifications as exacerbated levels of marginalization in every sphere of human life, by the dominant regimes of former East Cameroon against the Anglophones. Anchored within the paradigm of centralization and assimilation, we argue that the current socio-political impasse destabilizing the Northwest and the Southwest regions of Cameroon can only be resolved if sufficient attention is given to the country's historical underpinnings. Succinctly put, the current Anglophone stalemate can attain a watermark negotiation level only if the incumbent regime revisits the founding document that established marriage between the two Cameroons. We are talking about Article 47 of the 1961 Federal Constitution which many Anglophone critics contend, guaranteed perpetuity of status even outside the power of a referendum and that abolishing federalism allowed them to proclaim sovereignty from the union.

Keywords: Historical; Anglophone; Impasse; Cameroon; Centralisation; Political.

1. Introduction

Cameroon under the German administration was one territory until the end of WWI in 1918. Britain and France under the League of Nations mandate took over from Germany following their defeat in the first global confrontation. The country's bilingual status could be traced from the mandatory period. It is assumed that the main dividing line of the nation is socio-cultural. Cultural diversity which could have been exploited at its best to benefit the entire nation has instead turned to be the main bone of contention as far as political, judicial and socio-economic governance is concerned.

A historical and political snapshot of Cameroon enjoins her to have experienced a series of transformations. These transformations began with a two-state federation in 1961. By 20th May 1972, federalism was suppressed by Amadou Ahidjo thus giving way to a united republic. It then moved to a republic in 1984 by President Paul Biya. These developments went along with some constitutional alterations fostered by the leaders of the regimes in place. Hence, the Anglophone problem dates back to its 1961 independence period (albeit through amalgamation with La Republic). Debates on re-unification which were viciously driven, and presumably poorly conducted with a disguised agenda of centralization and assimilation, had prompted the Anglophone minority to have a sense of political, economic and socio-cultural marginalization (Takougang and Amin, 2018).

What therefore is the Anglophone impasse? Anchored within the paradigm of centralization and assimilation, the Anglophone problem, simply put, is centered on exacerbated levels of marginalization in every sphere of life. At the level of the state (which is the formulation end of politics), there is a sense of imbalance in terms of political representation in decision-making circles, as evidenced in ministerial portfolios. This unevenness still applies to positions of secretary of states and secretary generals in ministries, regional governors, divisional and sub-divisional officers, Supreme Court judges, magistrates and directors in public corporations. The two regimes have been using tendencies of centralization and assimilation as the main tool to ensure absolute power rest within the frontiers of Yaoundé and making it even worst in the two Anglophone regions, where the French language is considered the language of preference in the ranks and files of the administration and public service system. The bias political system has engendered the notion of socioeconomic relegation among Anglophone Cameroonians.

In the education sector, the regime claims to implement a disguised policy of harmonization of the two subsystems of education. This, for the Anglophone educational leaders, is considered a political guise to swallow up the Anglo-Saxon subsystem of education with evidence of Francophone teachers transferred to Anglophone colleges and primary schools to teach pupils and students in English – a language which Francophone teachers do not have a mastery of. The same thing is evident in the courts, where Francophone magistrates without English Common Law knowledge are transferred to Anglophone regions to work as legal officers in the courts where English Common

Law is said to be the parameters of legal jurisprudence. The evidence and reoccurrences of marginalization are many and cannot be fully exhausted here.

This paper attempts to give more focus to the Anglophone impasse from a historical dimension while throwing light on the ongoing crisis. The paper moves with the assumption that the ongoing socio-political crisis rocking the Northwest and the Southwest regions of Cameroon can only be resolved if resonance is given to its historical underpinnings. That is to say, if and only if the incumbent regime revisits the terms and conditions that were agreed upon during the period of the reunification talks in 1961. Thus for the purpose of coherence, the paper has been structured to address the following issues. Part one introduces the topic. Part two tackles the remote causes of the Anglophone problem by focusing on the colonial inheritance, the impact of centralization, and issues around sovereignties and reunion. Part three discusses centralization and the advent of the Anglophone crisis within the prescribed period of Amadou Ahidjo's tenure as president (1960-1982), and Paul Biya's era which began since 1982. Part four recapitulates on the ongoing Anglophone crisis and part five handles the conclusion and implications.

2. What are the Remote Causes of the Anglophone Problem?

Some of the remote causes of the Anglophone problem include its colonial inheritance, issues around its sovereignties and reunion which was scheduled to occur at Fomuban and the supposed Constitutional talks and Ahidjo's manipulation.

2.1. Colonial Inheritance and the Impact of Centralisation

The traditional Douala chiefs (King Nduembe Lobe Bell and King Akwa) and the German colonial representations (Adolph Woemann and Jantzen and Thormalen firms) signed an accord known as the Germano-Duala treaty on the 12th July 1884, setting up a protectorate with the appellation Kamerun (Kuma, 2005). The treaty gave full sovereign rights, legislation, and administration to the German firms that represented their colonial interests in Kamerun. Following the defeat of Germany at the end of WWI, Kamerun then became a League of Nations mandate and was to be controlled by Britain and France respectively.

Because of Britain's disinterest and her intention to maximize (Amoako, 2019) cost, she decided to take only one-third of the territory while allowing the rest to France. The British Cameroon territory was administered by indirect rule, where authority was vested in the traditional chiefs to govern the natives. Meanwhile, French Cameroon was administered by a strong centralized system of government. The British and French control continued right up till the period of independence (1960 for French Cameroon and 1961 for British Cameroons by joining the Republic of Cameroon). The Anglophone dilemma and a whole lot of other burning issues have their roots during the period in question (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 1997; Rudin, 2018).

From 1918 to 1961 (that is, the period of mandate and trusteeship), the two Cameroons were shaped differently by their colonial masters. This led to differences in how the territories were governed politically, socially, economically and legally. As mentioned elsewhere, the indirect rule by the British colonial administration bestowed some powers on traditional chiefdoms and encouraged the emergence of some form of self-government which in a way created an atmosphere of freedom of the press, political pluralism and democratic change of power even before independence in 1961. In the legal sphere, the British colonial administration applied the English Common Law on the justice system. The English Language was used as the language of instruction in every domain of life. The currency, the educational system, and other social norms followed the British model. Nonetheless, due to fear of high administrative cost, the territory was governed as if it was part of Nigeria under the Enugu Eastern House of Assembly, with some Anglophone elites working in the Nigerian government in the 1950s (Ngoh, 1979).

On the contrary, the French Colonial administration applied the direct rule in the Francophone territory with exceptions in the Northern part of Cameroon which was also under the British colonial administration. French was the language of instruction, and France's political, social and legal systems were enforced through a strong policy of assimilation and centralization which became evident in subsequent regimes, hence making the Francophone territory less democratic (Ngoh, 1979).

2.2. Sovereignties and Reunion: Opposing Views on the Same Subject

The crux of the Anglophone dilemma revolves around the reunification agenda of the two Cameroons. The French Cameroon territory had its independence on January 1, 1960, becoming the Republic of Cameroon. The British territories were comprised of the Northern and Southern Cameroons. A referendum was held on 11 February 1961 to decide the fate of the British Cameroons, on whether to join Nigeria or the Republic of Cameroon. British Northern Cameroon voted to join Nigeria while British Southern Cameroon voted to join the Republic of Cameroon. British Southern Cameroon became independent on the 1st of October 1961 when it joined the Republic of Cameroon (International Crisis Group Report, 2017); see also Njeuma (1995).

During the period up to 1961, the political scenario of British Southern Cameroon was vibrant. Credible historians of Cameroon history such as Fanso (2009); Chem-Langhee (1995); Ebune (1992) affirms that, during the period in question, the majority of Southern Cameroon population hoped for self-independence. Unfortunately, this option was refused by the British on the grounds that Southern Cameroon was not economically strong to survive on its own. The United Nations then took off the third option and allowed only the options to either choose to join Nigeria or to reunite with the Republic of Cameroon (International Crisis Group Report, 2017).

The front liners of Southern Cameroon politics during the said period were Emmanuel Mbella Lifafe Endeley, Solomon Tandeng Muna, John Ngu Foncha and Augustine Ngom Jua. They bargained to no avail at the UN for an independent state of Southern Cameroon and even went as far as negotiating for a temporal independent status which

could enable the territory to pursue reunification from an improved dimension (Awasom, 1998). Two opposing camps on the referendum issue emerged due to the UN rejection of the independence option. Endeley who led the Kamerun National Congress Party campaigned in favor of joining Nigeria. While Foncha (who break away from the KNC in 1955), Muna and Ngom Jua campaigned in favor of a reunion with the Republic of Cameroon. Because of the fear not to be swallowed up by giant Nigeria, the leaders influenced many to vote in favor of reunification with the Republic of Cameroon (Awasom, 2000). Thus, it was necessary for the leaders of both sides of the divide to agree on how the country was to be governed, and this decision was scheduled to take place in Foumban.

2.2.1. Why was Foumban Chosen as the Venue for Constitutional Talks?

As noted by Ebune (2016), historians have given very little or no account as to why Foumban was chosen as a location for the constitutional talks. He recounts that throughout Cameroon's colonial history Foumban was neither a center of political activity nor a social attraction to other ethnic groups, not even to mention any significant economic role. According to him, the choice of Foumban for constitutional talks might have been due to its stable traditional political system under the Njoyas. The relative stability enjoyed in the Kingdom with Foumban as its headquarters was recognized by all NAB (1961). Foumban was not a political hotspot compared to centers of political vibrancy like Yaoundé, Buea, Edea, Bamenda, Kumba and Victoria with considerable populations opposed to Ahidjo's administration. It is even more worthwhile to note that Ahidjo's choice of Foumban was for his personal relaxation considering the ties he had with Sultans Arouna and Njoya. In an article published in the Times and Post Match Magazine in 1961, it is noted that "Foumban was an Island of peace in an atmosphere where fear was recurrent in the midst of armed rebellion." In the words of Ebune, "whatever these considerations might have been, it was at Foumban that the political destiny of Southern Cameroonians was decided," (Ebune, 2016).

2.2.2. The Supposed Constitutional Talks and Ahidjo's Manipulation

Political representatives of the Southern Cameroons and the president of the Republic of Cameroon – Amadou Ahidjo converged in a meeting at Foumban from the 17th to the 21st of July 1961 to discuss the terms of the reunification question. The Foumban conference was understood by Anglophone representatives as a forum to discuss constitutional matters. They thought the forum was meant to discuss the drafting of a constitution that would guarantee equivalent federalism and a considerable level of autonomy to the federated states (International Crisis Group Report, 2017). Ahidjo rather came to the conference ground with a ready-made constitution that gave exclusive powers to the chief executive of the federal state to the disadvantage of the two federated states. The Anglophone representatives and the territory as a whole, still under the British trusteeship by this time was in a weak position and had no option than to accept Ahidjo's constitution. There was a pertinent clause in the constitution that was not discussed by the Southern Cameroon delegation. It was how federated states were to be governed in the constitution of the Republic of Cameroon. This left the Southern Cameroon delegates with some air of disappointment. In August 1961, the national assembly of the Republic of Cameroon approved the constitution and Ahidjo officialized it on September 1, 1961, while Southern Cameroon was still under British trusteeship. The process of reunification and the manner in which the British abandoned the Southern Cameroon at a critical moment of their quest for a balanced or an egalitarian constitution, left them with the impression of having been manipulated by the Francophones. This also explains the animosity of Anglophone militants towards the United Kingdom (Ebune, 2004;2016; Ekali, 2004; Ngoh, 2004).

2.3. Centralization and the advent of Anglophone grievances

2.3.1. The Era of Amadou Ahidjo (1960-1982)

Unification and centralization have been the political principles of the Ahidjo (1961 -1982) and Biya (1982 – till present) administrations. The culmination of reunification on 1 October 1961 paved the way for Cameroon's new status as a federal republic, albeit without equal power distribution between the two federated states in the federal assembly and in the government (Egoh, 2019).

At the time of reunification, Ahidjo demonstrated some form of political monopoly in East Cameroon. He concentrated political power against a form of political institutions inspired by the colonial state, a regime that was more or less close to a classic parliamentary regime. Mokam (2012), recounts that, very rapidly, "he unified all the political parties of the country into one." He distanced himself from the parliamentary model by adopting a system dominated by the stature of the head of state and president of the unified national party. Meanwhile, the Cameroon National Union (CNU) political map affirms (thesis no. 10) that Cameroon was a presidential republic. During the said period, West Cameroon was the only serious hindrance to Ahidjo's domineering political tendencies.

Nonetheless, Ahidjo resorted to bringing west Cameroon under control by means of imposition and manipulation of the splits that had already started between Anglophones. French was used as the language of preference in the administration contrary to the federal constitutional provisions that stipulated the usage of the two languages at the federal level. Ahidjo passed a ruling on 20 October 1961 reshaping the federal territory into six administrative zones including West Cameroon (International Crisis Group Report, 2017). He further assigned a federal inspector to all the regions, who in terms of authority was answerable only to him. This implied that more power was vested in the federal inspector than the elected West Cameroon prime minister – who was also the vice president of the country. In addition, discontentment arose among the Anglophones who felt relegated constitutionally because west Cameroon could not be a federated state and an administrative region by decree at the same time (Chem-Langhee, 1997).

Ahidjo signed a series of decrees prohibiting public freedoms in 1962. This was evident in subjective detentions and illogical trials of trade unionists, political opponents and persons the regime suspected had links with the UPC party. Even though these indiscriminate arrests took place basically in East Cameroon, Anglophone leaders became conscious about the domineering course that the federal executive was taking. Progressively, political parties of West Cameroon were dissolved and, on September 1, 1966, the Cameroon National Union, the sole political party was formed, Ahidjo's dream was realized (Mokam, 2012). Moreover, during the 1960s, supplementary measures were put in place, such as the abolition of driving on the left-hand side of the road, enforcement of the metric system and the introduction of FCFA as the new currency. Ahidjo further demonstrated his centralist model by denouncing all links that West Cameroon had with the United Kingdom including the banning of the British Sterling, the transfer, crumbling and abolition of the National Produce Marketing Board (NPMB), the disappearance of the Southern Cameroon Electricity Company (POWERCAM), the demise of the Cameroon Air Transport Company and the transfer and subsequent abolition of the Cameroon Bank (Cameroon Postline, 2010).

The principle of centralization of political power did not leave out the control of finance. Financial autonomy was a far dream for the federated states as they depended on grants from the federal state. Due to leadership aspirations and competition for positions among Anglophone political elites at the federal government level, they preoccupied themselves more with ways trying to please Ahidjo than defending the Anglophone course. Ahidjo gained hold of the situation and negatively influenced the atmosphere of rivalry among Anglophone elites. He further took advantage of the ethnic and cultural divisions between the Grass fields in the northwest, which share common cultural and linguistic traits with the Bamileke of the west Francophone region, and the Sawa of the Southwest having cultural and linguistic commonalities with those on the other side of the River Wouri (Francophone Coast). The resultant effect of such conspiracy was political turmoil in West Cameroon, comprising a split between Foncha and Muna, who in 1965 stepped out from the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) to form the Cameroon United Congress (CUC) Ebune (1992).

In 1965 Ahidjo's move to further showcase dominance and division among Anglophone elites was noticeable when he side-lined Foncha, who he believed was a stauncher proponent of the Anglophone issue. He attempted to use his constitutional prerogatives to appoint Muna as the prime minister instead of Augustine Ngom Jua, who was Foncha's ostensible successor in the KNDP - the majority party in the west Cameroon parliament. Due to fierce opposition from the federated parliament, this move was aborted. But after a year, taking advantage of the existing political rupture among Anglophone elites, and under the pretext of national unity, Ahidjo called for the creation of a single party in the two Cameroons. He succeeded in this move because of the support he had from some Anglophone leaders (for example Endeley and Muna) who were harboring plans to unseat Foncha. In 1966, Ahidjo formed the Cameroon National Union (CNU) and, denied the existence and creation of any other political party. With the formation of a single party, it now became difficult for the Anglophones to chart their course following the loss of all institutional platforms to act upon (Bayart, 1973). Initially, Foncha, Ngom Jua and Bernard Forlon (assistant secretary-general at the presidency) were contrary to all these moves but later became silent for fear of losing their positions in the federal government. In 1968, Ahidjo appointed Muna as the Prime Minister (Ibid).

The establishment of a single party was ensued with increasing levels of centralization by Ahidjo. He went as far as suppressing federalism on 20 May 1972 when Cameroon became a united republic following a referendum (Bayart, 1978). This change was opposed by Anglophones on the grounds of the 1961 constitutional legality, which did not make provisions for any such alteration in the form of the state except through the powers vested in parliament. Further, Anglophones refuted the change because the referendum was not supposed to be held nationally, as it mostly concerned the political destiny of West Cameroon and that the circumstances under which the voting took place were marred by irregularities. International Crisis Group Report (2017), recounts that real challenge against Anglophone marginalization attained watermark levels in 1972 when Bernard Fonlon openly criticized the creation of a unitary state. Other frontline Anglophones elites such as Albert Mukong and Gorji Dinka were also opponents of the unitary republic. Foncha and Ngom Jua wrote privately to Ahidjo and publicly displayed their resentment in the official media. Nonetheless, Ahidjo's onslaught to reunite Cameroon was unstoppable by any means.

2.3.2. Paul Biya's Era 1982 –

Just like his predecessor, (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 2003) asserts that "President Paul Biya implemented strategies aimed at the trivialization and demonization of the 'Anglophone problem' through divide and rule, and the establishment of direct and indirect control of the mass media and repression." This policy aimed at weakening the Anglophone unity and solidarity. In 1984, he signed a decree creating 10 provinces in Cameroon from which he carved out the Northwest and Southwest provinces which further deepened the fault lines within the Anglophone community. In addition, he changed the country's official appellation from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon (the name former east Cameroon was bearing) and took off the second star from the flag that symbolized the Anglophone part of the country.

Resistant Movements were formed by Anglophones to challenge their assimilation. In 1994, they protested to no avail when the government was pressurized by International Monetary Fund (IMF) to privatize the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC), which was of high economic and social importance to the Anglophone part of the country (Van de Walle and Bratton, 1992). That same year, the government faced fierce resistance from Anglophone Teacher's Union and parents of pupils following an attempt to harmonize the Francophone and Anglophone education system. This resistance gave way to the creation of an independent General Certificate of Education (GCE) Board by a presidential decree.

As previously mentioned, unification caused Anglophones to have the impression that their territory was facing economic regression because it implied centralization and/or disbanding of West Cameroon's economic structures such as the West Cameroon Marketing Board, the Cameroon Bank, the Power Camp and several abandoned projects like the Victoria Sea Port - just to mention a few. Meanwhile, investments were taking place in the Francophone part of the country ([International Crisis Group Report, 2017](#); [Ngoh, 2004](#)).

Anglophones had the notion that unification has basically caused them serious democratic hold-up, cultural assimilation, and a declining political reputation. Many Anglophones still share the view that the Francophone part of the country adhered to a long term plan to marginalize the Southern Cameroons and are not however well conscious of the grievous repercussions the economic crisis of the 1980s also had on many Francophone regions. When pluralistic politics resurfaced in the 1990s, the Anglophone grabbed the chance to air out their worries. On 26 May 1990, the Social Democratic Front – a frontline opposition party in Cameroon with pro-federalism as its fundamental principle but with a solid base of Anglophones was formed in Bamenda. The party became popular across the national territory and took part in the October 1992 presidential elections. Public opinion about the election's outcome had it that its victory was hijacked by the incumbent regime ([Konings and Nyamnjoh, 1997](#)).

In 1993 the All Anglophone Conference (AAC) was organized in Buea as a response to a return for federalism and prospects to revise the constitution to suit a multi-party system. The constitutional review committee refused the option of federalism in favor of decentralization. Foncha and Muna, former rivals - reacted by stepping out of the constitutional review committee in 1994 after having resigned in 1990 from the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), the name adopted by the single party in 1985. They openly detested the assimilation of Anglophones. Another AAC was held in Bamenda that same year and most of its participants advocated for two-state federalism. <https://www.martinjumbam.net/2018/04/the-all-anglophone-conference-april-2-3-1993-.html>.

In a bid to reconcile their opposing views, and for the quest of the Anglophone political trajectory, Foncha and Muna launched diplomatic onslaughts at the UN to request the independence of the Southern Cameroons ([Konings and Nyamnjoh, 2003](#)). Against the backdrop of the SDF's Francophone opposition to a two state-federal system, the SDF resorted to a four state-federal system. This caused some Anglophone militants of the party to view it as ambiguous. Prominent amongst them were those who went ahead to form the Southern Cameroon National Council (SCNC) in 1995 calling for two-state federalism at best and, secession at worst. From henceforth, the SCNC has been launching diplomatic offensives at the UN, the Commonwealth, the African Court of Banjul and national embassies.

According to [Egoh \(2019\)](#), "political resentment slowed down after the golden age of the 1990s." There was a change of approach to the Anglophone diaspora's activism in the international sphere via the education system, where Anglophone consciousness had gained grounds in the 2000s through intellectual writings, the petition to churches and debates in foreign and local media. Nevertheless, the SCNC continued with their political onslaughts through organized protests every 1 October in the Anglophone regions. An example of such protests was the 1999/2009 proclamations of independence by the Ambazonia Republic on radio Buea. Even with the advent of Anglophone movements, the centralist model of governance persisted making the Anglophones lose more political vigor at the national level. Thus leading to sequential expression of socio-economic and political marginalization by Anglophones. Next, we briefly examine the immediate cause of the current Anglophone dilemma.

Though the current crisis is not the main focus of this paper, it is, however, imperative to have a sense of what it constitutes. This is because the current socio-political crisis rocking the Northwest and the Southwest regions had its roots from the history and political evolution of the country. What therefore has prompted the resurgence of the Anglophone socio-political impasse? What were the steps that were taken to address the stalemate, and who were the frontline actors? How did the government respond to the problem? What has been the international community's response to the issue? These are some of the fundamental issues one can ask but are not all tailored for the purpose of this paper.

3. A Recapitulation of the Current Crisis

3.1. What has, therefore Prompted the Resurgence of the Anglophone Socio-Political Impasse?

The resurgence of the Anglophone impasse was prompted by sectoral mobilization of Anglophone Teachers and Lawyers' demands for policy reforms from the government. Anglophone Teacher's trade unions complained of the government's policy of standardizing the educational subsystems of the Anglophones and Francophone. According to the ICG 2017 report, the Anglophone teachers saw this government policy drive as a means to completely swallow up and/or wipe off the Anglophone sub system of education considering the fact that Francophone teachers constitute the majority. The Francophone teachers were transferred to Anglophone public schools, colleges, and tertiary institutions to teach students of Anglophone origin in a language (English) they don't have mastery of. In particular, this drive has left many Anglophone Cameroonians with the impression of educational marginalization by the incumbent regime ([Business in Cameroon, 2017](#)).

In the legal domain, the Anglophone Lawyers' union complained about the usage of the English Common Law in the two Anglophone regions. They also demanded the translation of the Code of the Organisation for the Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) into English and other legal texts. They further raised criticisms on how the Common Law jurisdictions have been raided by francophone magistrates appointed by the government to work in the Anglophone zones. In addition, they criticized the appointment of notaries in the Anglophone regions to carry out professional duties supposedly done by Lawyers under the Common Law System. Francophone magistrates and notaries neither have an understanding of the English language nor a mastery of the

applicability and interpretation of the English Common Law. The government's reluctance to grant concessions to Anglophone Lawyers' demands culminated in strike action by lawyers in the Southwest and Northwest regions on October 10, 2016. The brutality of government security forces on lawyers intensified the problem and radicalized the public. Mobilization of the public gathered momentum and lawyers' demands extended to the full applicability of the English Common Law as it was originally practiced during the era of federalism. <https://www.businessincameroon.com/public-management/0910-7455-the-anglophone-crisis-what-history-remembers>

Anglophone teachers' grievances on government's appointments of teachers who did not have a good command of the English language and government's failure to uphold the values of Anglo-Saxon schools and universities also led to strike action on 21 November 2016. Briefly, the government's delayed response to the demands of Anglophone Lawyers and Teachers, and enforced brutality by government security forces evident in arbitrary arrest and torture of some frontline activists and ordinary demonstrators led to the resurgence of the Anglophone problem (International Crisis Group Report, 2017).

4. Conclusion and Implications

In this article, we have argued that the rudimentary cause of the Anglophone problem is rooted in its colonial history that culminated in a treacherously oriented reunification that was anchored within the frames of centralization and assimilation – entrenched by socio-economic and administrative marginalization. The rivalry between ethnic groups and ambition between prominent Anglophone statesmen did not help to advance the course. The idea of a common front has never been successfully pursued to defend a progressively diverse Anglophone cause. The Anglophone impasse has profoundly caused division in society since the 1960s and recurrent in the 2000s. Some Anglophone and Francophone citizens have negative perceptions about the authenticity of the Anglophone question and therefore see no reason for a return to either two-state federalism or secession. While others see the crisis as real and are in support of its legitimate stance. The ongoing crisis epitomizes a typically challenging re-emergence of an old problem. The re-emergence of the Anglophone problem has manifested itself with tremendous intensity than any time in history. The crisis had caused divergent views among intellectuals, government bureaucrats, and the business class across the national territory and beyond (especially Cameroonians in the diaspora). It has affected the body politic of the nation with debilitating political, social and economic repercussions evident since the advent of the crisis. The government, on its part, has proven its unreliability and distrust and, to an extent lack of political will to seriously engage constructive dialogue with the Anglophone civil society actors. The Anglophone protesters now face the double challenge of pressing hard for the release of detainees and, crafting out plans on how to re-launch their subsequent offensives on the Anglophone issue. No one can tell with clarity and conviction what the future holds as far as this issue is concerned taking into consideration the fact that it is an old problem and also that, this time it has amassed massive support than ever before. School closure for a complete academic year in the two Anglophone regions and continuous ghost towns have seemed to be unstoppable by any means. What remains “undone” by any of the parties to reinstate public tranquillity and to consequently put an end to the Anglophone problem “must be done.” If nothing crucial happens to address the current impasse, something catastrophic can occur and if something crucial happens to address the situation, public tranquillity would prevail giving way to a better political atmosphere in post-February 2020 Parliamentary and Municipal elections. The onus to arrive at a positive end of the crisis rest upon the shoulders of the major stakeholders locally, and to an extent internationally.

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