



## The Cameroon Anglophone Conflict and its impact on the process of development of the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC)

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### Abstract

Cameroon today is trapped in crises of deteriorating economic conditions measured in terms of widespread unemployment, abject poverty, and insecurity in the two English speaking regions, exploitation and backwardness among others. The Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) has made a major contribution to regional economic development in the South West region of Cameroon where it is located. It has created employment for both men women, has constructed numerous roads, supplied water electricity, built and staffed schools, awarded a substantial number of scholarships, provided medical care for the large proportion of the local population and has stimulated the supply of goods and services to itself and its workers. The main findings of this research were to critically explore the origins of the Anglophone conflict and its impact on the process of development of the Cameroon Development Corporations (CDC). Following years of armed conflict in the North west and South west regions of Cameroon, from 2016-2024 there has been very little opportunity for development planners to formulate and implement suitable development plans due to constant fighting, destruction of both physical and economic infrastructure and migration of the people. This research used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to describe the existing situation. Purposive non-probability sample and stratified random sampling were employed in the selection of the study sample. The study reveal that the coping strategies employed by plantation workers of the CDC to curb the negative consequences of the Cameroon Anglophone conflict have failed to ameliorate their living and working conditions.

**Keywords:** Conflict and development

### Introduction

The Anglophone crisis in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon has imposed severe impacts on the process of development of the CDC in particular and on the economy of Cameroon in general. The conflict has killed people in different ways although it is often difficult to estimate how many. Civilians and soldiers are killed in sporadic attacks; people die because of a higher prevalence of diseases; and others are killed because of an increase in violent crimes in the two Anglophone regions. The conflict has led to force mass migration. The two Anglophone regions also face a high risk of renewed conflict. It has led to unemployment and loss of income owing to disruption of economic activity, destruction of infrastructure, uncertainty, increased cost of doing business, and capital flight. Furthermore, social spending has been cut to accommodate increased military spending, and the economy has undergone structural changes. The consequences of the Cameroon Anglophone conflict are not confined to the duration of the conflict and its immediate aftermath. Indeed, low levels of socio-economic development are important causes of the conflict in the first place. Low levels of socio-economic development inhibited the building of stable and strong political institutions capable of mediating and quelling the conflict efficiently. Low levels of development and especially a lack of employment opportunities also made individual decisions to join the rebellion relatively less costly. The war has also brought about a significant drop in the production capacity of the biggest agro-industry in Cameroon in the past eight years.

### Statement of the Problem

The CDC is the largest agro-industrial parastatal in the country that specializes in a variety of crops, the four major ones being rubber, palm oil, tea and bananas. The CDC has made a major contribution to regional economic development in the South West region of Cameroon where it is located. It has created employment for both men women, has constructed numerous roads, supplied water electricity, built and staffed schools, amongst others. Following years of armed conflict in the North west and South west regions of Cameroon, from 2016-2024 there has been very little opportunity for development planners to formulate and implement suitable development plans due to insecurity, destruction of both physical and economic infrastructure and migration of the people. The protracted armed conflicts degenerated into: insecurity (weak administration, disrespect for the rule of law), humanitarian crises (loss of lives and assets, population displacement, food insecurity), and socioeconomic conditions (poverty, and disruption of social service delivery). The outbreak of the Anglophone conflict has caused both serious material and human damages to the CDC.

### Research Question

What are the origins of the Cameroon Anglophone conflict and its impacts on the process of development of the CDC?

### Objective of the Study

To identify the origins of the Cameroon Anglophone conflict and its impacts on the process of development of the CDC.

### Research Hypothesis

**Ho:** The insecurity in the South west region has greatly affected the smooth functioning of the CDC

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The insecurity in the South west region has not greatly affected the smooth functioning of the CDC

### Literature Review

Yasin (2010:16) argued that: ‘Conflict is a normal, even healthy dynamic. A certain amount of conflict can be constructive, inspiring creativity in thought, communication, and action. Even violent revolutionary conflict that is viewed from longer perspectives of history maybe a force for progress. The American war of Independence and the civil war, India’s fight for independence from the British, and the struggle of the South African blacks against apartheid fall into this category. According to Christopher J Bakwesegha, “ethnicity therefore does not automatically lead to violent conflict transformation. Rather, it is the way power is exercised, especially in the process of allocating the resources of the state. This so called ethnic conflicts and wars are merely a reaction to bad governance, arrogance of power, insensitivity and egoism, and total disregard for the rule of law on the part of some leaders and politicians in Africa” (Bakwesegha, 2004:55) [3]. The apparent failure of the highly centralized unitary state to achieve economic development and national integration has given rise, during the second wave of democratization to renewed demands for the introduction of a federal state in several African countries (Basta and Ibrahim, 1999), (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 2003:18) [20]. Jwa (2017) highlights and acknowledges the importance of the corporate firm in economic development.

Public enterprises in Cameroon were established to propel socio-economic development and to guard against the control of the economy from foreign domination and exploitation. Governments establish public organizations purposely to offer public services. Public corporations are expected to pursue certain social objectives as diverse as redistributing income, subsidizing particular regions of the country and creating or maintain employment. Nzomo *et al*, (2007) affirms that SOEs also known as parastatal were established to solve problems of market failure, promote economic development and reduce mass unemployment with the view to ensure control over the economy. In spite of all the criticisms leveled at public corporations in recent years because of their poor performance and consequent campaign for privatization, they continue to be major channels of development efforts in developing countries.

### Theoretical Review

Several theories have been used to critically explore the origins of the Cameroon Anglophone conflict and its impacts on the process of development of the CDC. Theories that have been used in this study include the Conflict theory, the economic development theory, and Development theories (the modernization and dependency theories). Conflict theory, first developed by Karl Marx is a theory that society is in a state of perpetual conflict because of competition for limited resources. Many Sociologists have contributed to the development of Conflict theory including Max Gluckman, Pareto Vilfredo, George Simmels... However, Karl Marx is often credited as being the father of conflict theory. Conflict theory seeks to scientifically explain the general contours of conflict in

society; how conflict starts and varies, and effects it brings. The central concerns of conflict theory are the unequal distribution of scarce resources and power. The conflict theory and economic development focuses on the structural changes that are required to implement development efforts thereby preventing conflict while at the same time managed conflict in the event that it erupted. The conflict theory is important in the study of the Cameroon Anglophone conflict and its effects on the process of development of the CDC.

The Economic Development theory was founded by Joseph A. Schumpeter (1883-1950) who was an Austrian economist and Political Scientist. Schumpeter’s main findings are business cycle theory. This theory defends the idea that economic development is possible only in cycles based on the creation and use of new knowledge and innovations. Schumpeter's theory of development is the key element of a dynamic process that consists of new resource combinations, so-called innovations, or technological changes. The entrepreneur is the key figure in Schumpeter’s analysis of the process of development. Development theories emphasize on development and underdevelopment. Its major exponents include Gabriel Almond, Bingham Powell, David Coleman and Lucian Pye amongst others. The modernization theorists see development from the prism of western civilization. For them, development means industrialization and modernity or westernization. They argued that the west is developed because it has certain socio-political and economic attributes that are amenable to positive change and development. The underdeveloped states don’t possess such attributes; thus, they lack development. But they can achieve development by trying to be like the west via the imbueement of western culture. On the other hand, the dependency theory came as a direct response to the short-comings of the Modernization theory in explaining why the core is developed, while the periphery is underdeveloped. Its proponents include; Andre Gunder Frank, Walter Rodney, Frantz Fanon, Samir Amin, Claude Ake, et cetera. The theory classified the world into two; the Core or Centre (which is made up of the industrialized capitalist nations), and the Periphery or satellite (which is made up of the colonized and poor countries of the world). Dependency theory argues that the export of capitalism by the West to other parts of the World and its resultant colonialism is responsible for the underdevelopment and dependency of the Third World.

### Data Set and Methodology

The study was carried out using a descriptive survey design. Using a descriptive historical methodology, the research draws economic, social and political data from existing studies, institutional reports, and literature on Cameroon as well as from the mass media. The study offers an empirical analysis applying the Cameroon case to illustrate several theories on how ethnic conflicts have emerged, developed, and manifested themselves as well as how ethnic conflict has affected the process of development of the CDC. Primary data was obtained through the use of interviews, questionnaires and observation. This data was supplemented by secondary data obtained through books, journals and the internet. The theme for the interviews was drawn from the reviewed literature and guided by the research question. The population of the study was 250 drawn from workers of the CDC in the conflict-hit South west region of Cameroon. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire

structured in a Likert 5-point scale and validated with content validity of face to face approach. The reliability test was done using a test-retest method. The result gave a reliability coefficient of 0.90, indicating a high degree of consistency.

### Findings and Discussion

Data derived from interviews and documents analyzed were included in the data presentation and analysis. The findings of the study were effectively rich accounts of people's realities, consisting of the factors shaping them and how they act within them and supplemented by descriptive statistical data analysis. The parameters of some of the frameworks were used to guide this study inquiry, summarize data and information into an orderly manner during the data analysis and interpretation exercises.

### Analysis of Data

Data is presented according to the main themes of the study; the origin of insecurity in Anglophone Cameroon and the impacts on the process of development of the CDC.

### Historical roots of the Anglophone conflict

Colonial legacy is the sum total of the political structure, culture and general polity handed over to the elite nationalist rulers or that which was left behind by the colonial administrators, "neo-colonial" nationalist leadership, which affected post-independent Cameroon and still has an impact on its contemporary politics. The colonial ruling style of oppression of the colonial administration that was imposed on Cameroon by the new nationalist rulers was not based on the choice, consent, will and purpose of the Cameroonian people. According to Shillington (1989:356), the colonial masters emphasized the distinctions between the different ethnic groups, thereby strengthening tribal differences and rivalries between these groups and preventing them from forming a united opposition against the colonizers. The emergence of Anglophone secessionist movements in Cameroon during the current process of political liberalization cannot be explained without reference to the so-called 'Anglophone Problem' (Konings & Nyamnjoh 1997, 2003; Eyoh 1998; Jua 2003) [22]. Its roots can be traced back to the partitioning between the French and British of the German Kamerun Protectorate (1884-1916) after the First World War, first as mandates under the League of Nations and then as trusts under the United Nations.

As Susungi (1991) aptly observed, reunification was far from being the reunion of two prodigal sons who had been unjustly separated at birth but was more like a loveless UN-arranged marriage between two people who hardly knew each other. While integration and reunification options had some support from Southern Cameroonians, the option of secession was arguably the most popular and supported by a cross section of Southern Cameroonians including traditional rulers. For instance, Fon Achirimbi II of Bafut who doubled as Chairman of the Chiefs' Conference argued that; we [traditional rulers] believed on two points during a conference in Bamenda in which Dr. Endeley and Mr. Foncha were present. I was Chairman of that conference. We rejected Dr. Endeley because he wanted to take us to Nigeria. If Mr. Foncha tries to take us to French Cameroon we shall also run away from him. To me French Cameroon is 'fire' and Nigeria is 'water'. ...I support secession

without reunification (Kale, 1967:69. cited in Chem-Langhee, 2004:119). By reuniting with the former French Cameroon, the Anglophone elite had hoped to enter a loose federal union as a way of protecting their territory's minority status and cultural heritage (Konings & Nyamnjoh 2003).

During the constitutional talks at Fouban in July 1961, the Francophone elite were only prepared to accept a highly centralized federation, which was regarded merely as a transitional phase towards the formation of a unitary state. Such a federation demanded relatively few amendments to the 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon. Lack of unity and severe repression precluded the Anglophone elite from openly expressing its grievances about Francophone domination until 1982 when Paul Biya took power. Following the limited degree of liberalization introduced by the new president (Takougang & Krieger 1998), the Anglophone elite began to voice their long-standing grievances (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003). There was vehement Anglophone protest when the new president changed the country's official name from the 'United Republic of Cameroon' to simply the 'Republic of Cameroon' in February 1984. The new name was not only similar to that of independent Francophone Cameroon prior to reunification but also appeared to ignore the fact that the Cameroonian state was composed of two distinct entities. Some Anglophones considered this action as the boldest step yet taken towards their assimilation and disappearance as a distinct founding community. On 10 March 1985, Dinka addressed a memorandum to Paul Biya entitled 'The New Social Order', in which he declared the Biya government to be unconstitutional and called for Southern Cameroons to become independent and be renamed the Republic of Ambazonia.

### The emergence of Anglophone grievances

The feeling of being marginalized, exploited and treated as second class citizens and constantly violating constitutional rights ascribed to the Anglophone community. These constitutional provisions were made to serve as the basis for the preservation of the Anglophone inherited identity. This consistent disregard and mistreatment is what has climaxed into the Anglophone Problem today (Konings & Nyamnjoh 1997) [22]. According to a Briefing Paper of the United Kingdom House of Commons (2019), the Anglophone "Problem" is the rise of Anglophones against the denial to offer them the right to self-determination in 1961 and also their marginalization within the confines of the present state of Cameroon (Lunn and Brooke-Holland, 2019:5). The Anglophone grievances against the government of Cameroon stemmed from the inability of the Ahidjo and Biya governments to sustain measures to safeguard their identity. This state of affairs has generally left Anglophones with a well-founded feeling of marginalization coupled with attempts to assimilate or annex the latter into the majority French. This has generally led to the treatment of Anglophones as second-class citizens in the country. According to Konings (2005), the decision by Southern Cameroonians to vote in favor of establishing a union with the French Cameroon during the 1961 plebiscite was because of the prevailing discontentment of the people toward the British indirect administrative system and the influence of Nigerians in the region.

### Political Marginalization

Frustrations in West Cameroon have continued in the post-unification era when Francophone leadership has been alleged to dominate the government leaving minimal representation for the marginalized Anglophones (Caxton, 2017:21) [8]. Before the 1972 referendum which abolished the federal structures, Anglophone Cameroon had a political system where the people could hold their leaders accountable. With the centralization of powers, the political rights and freedoms enjoyed by citizens of former West Cameroon were lost. These grievances range from the non-respect of constitutional clauses such as the limitation of presidential mandates, which are modified to enable a stay in power, to the failure to respect constitutional clauses regarding accountability (for example, Article 66, related to the declaration of property before and after leaving office); and the *laissez-faire* attitude on abuses related to human and democratic rights. These issues of governance added to the marginalization of Anglophones where, in matters of effective political leadership in the country, no Anglophone holds and wields real political power. This situation has been imposed on a group of people who, before the 1972 referendum, had a system of some public accountability and political power (Enonchong, 2021).

In 1962, President Ahidjo with the intention to cloud and handicap the federal system, signed a presidential decree that split the federation into six administrative units and each placed under a federal inspector. West Cameroon comprised one of the administrative units. The powers of the Prime Ministers and the authority of the federated states were therefore undermined, particularly that of West Cameroon as the Federal Inspector answered directly to Ahidjo (Fanso, 2012:10). Again, constitutional changes effected by the Yaounde regimes to centralize political powers were also decried by the Anglophones. In 1972, President Ahidjo following a referendum whose legality has been severely put to question by the Anglophones (Fanso, 2012, Konings, 1999:303), abolished the federation in favor of a unitary state, called the United Republic of Cameroon. West Cameroon was divided into two, to form the North West and South West Provinces (today Regions). Ahidjo then appointed Governors and local administrators who were not accountable to the people they governed (Tembon, 2018:5) [38]. One of the prime impacts of the abrogation of the federation was the loss of the cherished Anglophone autonomy which they had enjoyed since 1954 when Southern Cameroons was given a quasi-regional autonomy and granted full autonomy in 1958 within the Federation of Nigeria.

The Anglophones also complained that Anglophones were never appointed to head strategic ministries like Finance etc. Anglophones at best were appointed only as deputies/assistants with little or no administrative powers as the Francophones who headed such ministries had full authority. The successive regimes of Cameroon reneged on the reunification agreement that granted some degree of political autonomy to the Anglophones through the federal system. When Paul Biya took over power in 1982, all influential administrative positions in the national government were reserved for the Francophone Cameroonians. According to Takougang (1993), the President, Speaker of the National Assembly, Minister for Justice and Legal Affairs, Keeper of the Seal, the Chief Justice, and the Minister for Finance were all Francophone

Cameroonians. It was the same scenario with Directors and General Managers of state parastatals as three-quarters were always Francophones. So too was with the appointment of high-ranking bureaucrats in the newly created office of Prime Minister (Takougang and Krieger, 1998:94-96).

A major challenge to the Francophone-dominated state was the AAC (All Anglophone Conference) that was held in Buea, the former capital of Southern Cameroons, on 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> April 1993 'for the purpose of adopting a common Anglophone stand on constitutional reform and of examining several other matters relating to its welfare of ourselves, our posterity, our territory and the entire Cameroon nation' (AAC,1993:8). The AAC became the main Anglophone association and its mouthpiece was responsible for the representation of Anglophone interests in general. In the Bamenda Proclamation adopted by the Second AAC (AAC II), which was held in Bamenda from 29<sup>th</sup> April to 1<sup>st</sup> May 1994, it was stipulated that 'should the government either persist in its refusal to engage in meaningful constitutional talks or fail to engage in such talks within a reasonable time', the Anglophone Council should 'proclaim the revival of the independence and sovereignty of the Anglophone territory and take all measures necessary to secure, defend and preserve the independence, sovereignty and integrity of the said country' (All Anglophone Conference, 1994). The Biya government's continued refusal to entertain its federal proposal pushed the SCNC to consider the possibility of outright secession.

### Economic Marginalization

Economic marginalization continues to be a significant driving factor for the call to secession of Ambazonia. The residents of Anglophone Cameroon singled out the absence of significant development projects in the region such as good schools, hospitals, accessible roads, or market centers despite the region being a key contributor to the Cameroonian economy through the oil wells under government control in their region. The SONARA (Societe Nationale de Raffinage/National Refining Company) oil refinery with an estimated annual output of 2.1 million tons of crude oil (Reuters 2019) has been cited by Anglophone Cameroonians as one among other state-owned companies in which they are marginalized in terms of employment. Another source of economic grievance is imbalance in allocation of opportunities. According to Chereji and Lohkoko (2012) [9], high-ranking officials in the corporation are from Francophone regions while Anglophones have been relegated to lower employment cadres to work as security guards and drivers. Additionally, in another major factory called the CDC banana Plantation in Tiko, the top management is drawn entirely from the Francophone regions while the Anglophone Cameroonians are relegated to work as manual laborers with low remuneration and very poor working conditions (Chereji and Lohkoko, 2012) [9].

The Cameroon government has not encouraged the private sector to provide stable and reasonable salaries for citizens. Consequently, Cameroonians look to the state to provide the necessary jobs. However, Anglophone Cameroonians often do not find it easy to access these jobs on a competitive basis with French-speaking citizens. Anglophone economic institutions like Cameroon bank, West Cameroon Electricity Corporation, Wum Area Development Authority, Santa Coffee Estate, West Cameroon Development Agency, West

Cameroon Produce Marketing Board, Powercam etc were dissolved or closed without justification. West Cameroon also lost its Tiko, Bali, Weh and Besongabang airports as a consequence of the creation of the unitary state. It also led to the collapse of private business ventures in Anglophone Cameroon like Fomenky's Direct Suppliers, Niba Automobile, Kilo Brothers, Nangah Company, Boyo Company. The Yaounde regimes were held responsible by the Anglophones for the extinction of these institutions (Mukong, 1990:56; Ndobegang, 2009:4). Generally, some Anglophones elite attributed that the emergence of what could be termed regionalism and the lack of economic development was rather the hegemonic tendencies of the Francophones. The resignation of the Anglophone architect of a federal state in his resignation letter, Foncha complained that the Anglophones were referred to as enemies and traitors. Foncha 's resignation in 1990, created awareness across the Anglophone territories (Ngoh, 2018:301)<sup>[25]</sup>.

### Socio-cultural Marginalization

Feeling victimized by dominant sociocultural groups often establishes a strong sense of identity amongst minority groups who may then develop coping mechanisms to facilitate their breakaway from such circumstances. Attempts by the government to reform the Anglo-Saxon cultural legacy in West Cameroon through the system of education are strongly resented. At the national level, students from Anglophone areas have often decried bias and discrimination in the admission processes at the higher institutions of learning (Chereji and Lohkoko, 2012:13)<sup>[9]</sup>. Historically, the Republic of Cameroon was established as a bilingual state. From reunification in 1961, the country opted to use the two official languages under what is today known as official language bilingualism. This political and sociolinguistic policy aimed to maintain the cultural diversity of the nation and preserve national unity (Kiwoh, 2021). This official bilingualism was confirmed in the 1996 Constitution (Article 3): The official languages of the Republic of Cameroon shall be English and French, both languages having the same status. According to Reader (2009:31), identity can lead to conflict when there is pursuit of competing needs and values within different groups or identities. Nfor (2000) and Anyangwe (2014) argue that residents of Cameroon Anglophone have protested against the attempt by the central government to marginalize their language and culture.

During the Fouban Conference, in a statement in defense for the federal system of government, President Ahidjo intimated that; Linguistic, administrative and economic differences do not permit us to envisage seriously and reasonably a state of the unitary and centralized type. It was because a confederal system on the other hand, being too loose, would not favour the close coming together and the intimate connection which we desire (Ngoh, 2018:233)<sup>[25]</sup>. At the same Conference, Foncha who led the twenty-five-man Southern Cameroons Delegation also submitted that; In our previous discussions...we have kept in mind that in our desire to rebuild the Kamerun nation we must not however, forget the existence of the two cultures. We have, therefore, proposed a form of government which will keep the two cultures in the areas where they now operate and to blend them in the Centre. The Centre is, therefore, deliberately

given only very limited subjects, while the States are left to continue largely as they are now (Ngoh, 2018:234)<sup>[25]</sup>. Socially, the English language and the Anglophone values were relegated to the background and the French language was systematically and subtly imposed on the Anglophones and their institutions as a means to assimilate them (Musah, 2020). Identity has social and cultural ramifications. Gloria Anzaldúa (cited in Gonzales 2006: xix) affirms, 'I am my language,' and '[T]o speak of language is to speak of our "Selves"'. The language spoken by an individual identifies him or her and gives that individual a sociocultural belonging. This is because there are some mannerisms that only people who use a language habitually can understand. Since the emergence of the unitary state in 1972, the Anglophones claimed that they were relegated to a second-class position. The Anglophones were allegedly, systematically marginalized while the Francophone enjoyed some privileges such as job opportunities, ministerial appointments and, others. Note that the Anglophone were not given the opportunity to share with their Commonwealth brothers until 1995 (Ngoh, 1996), while the Francophones sometimes referred to France as their second home and the Anglophones had no second home. However, the practice of language equality and bilingualism, as stipulated by the Constitution, has been difficult to achieve. The French language has had dominance over the English language from the very beginning. This was justified by the population factor, and by a clause in the 1961 Federal Constitution which gave French a lot of prominence. With the passage of Liberty Laws in December 1990, more Anglophone pressure groups and associations emerged either to reminisce relics of Anglophone identity or to defend the plight of same in Cameroon. Foremost, in 2016, thousands of teachers and lawyers in the Anglophone regions took to the streets to protest what they termed as a systematic marginalization by the Cameroon government. Government teachers deployed to the Anglophone regions were also faulted for not being able to speak in English. This led to the creation of a Consortium of Anglophone Teachers and Common Law Lawyers but which was eventually banned by government on grounds of illegality and subsequently arresting some of its members including Agbor Bala and Fontem Neba. The demonstrating Anglophone lawyers also claimed to have been subjected to brutal treatment and humiliation including the confiscation of their professional attires such as gowns and wigs by the security forces. These events organized by Anglophone Cameroonians to show their defiance to the francophone-dominated central government and the response of the government through brutal force led to the open declaration of independence on 1st October 2017. In typical fashion, the government responded and a reportedly 122 Anglophone Cameroonians who were celebrating the declaration of independence in the region were killed by government security forces (BBC Africa, 2017; International Crisis Group, 2017). On the 21st November 2016, a local radio newscaster called Mancho in Bamenda sparked a movement popularly referred to as the Coffin Revolution when he went to one of the busiest roundabouts in the city and stood inside a coffin to castigate the Cameroon government (Voice of Africa, 26 May 2018). This event was soon followed by another protest by students from the University of Buea in the Anglophone region on the 28th November 2016. However, the stage for armed confrontation was actually set

with the popular demonstration on September 22, 2017 and events of October 1, 2017.

### **Impacts of the Anglophone conflict on the smooth functioning of the CDC**

The CDC is an agro-industrial enterprise created in 1946 to acquire, develop and operate extensive plantations of tropical crops. In the course of the crisis, the separatist fighters ensured the permanent closure of the CDC in a bid to cripple the government economically. The economy of the two Anglophone regions lost about 269 billion francs CFA (400 million Euros) in the following sectors; agro-food industries, local agro-industries, telecommunications, cocoa, coffee, banana, tea, palm oil and rubber. Despite the use of the army to secure storage sites as well as packaging and processing stations, attacks on certain installations are still recorded. In November 2018, some CDC workers saw their fingers chopped off in Tiko (Cameroon Daily Journal, November, 2018), and on February 19, 2019, at least six others had their fingers chopped off still in Tiko, South West region (Journal du Cameroun, February 19, 2019).

### **Loss of human capital and equipment**

The CDC, with an initial work-force of 20,000 workers, (...) almost 12,500 workers were jobless. Only 7,500 workers were effectively working and this number included clerical worker (Ngoh, 2018:429) <sup>[25]</sup>. Thousands of workers have left the agro-industrial company either forcefully or unexpectedly as a result of the Anglophone crisis. The situation with the CDC was not sustainable as workers were consistently put under pressure and in many cases attacked by separatist fighters. Some of the laborers were abducted, some assassinated and others had either their hands or fingers cut off. The brewery industries, which operated in the two Anglophone regions especially Les Brasseries du Cameroun and Source du Pays, were heavily affected as their trucks transporting drinks and mineral waters to their warehouses for delivering, were attacked and vandalized. In some cases, some of these trucks drivers were assassinated (Ngoh, 2018) <sup>[25]</sup>. The aim of the separatist fighters was to prevent other CDC workers going to work, an attempt to harm the government, creating chaos and gain more power and support from the society and thus, led to the reduction of government revenue (Ngoh, 2019).

The CDC, the second largest employer, next to the government, grows and processes rubber, palm-oil and bananas on about 42,000 hectares (104,000 acres). Most of its plantations are in the crisis-stricken South-west of Cameroon but had to halt production in some areas as a result of attacks by some separatist groups (Moki Edwin, 2019). The SONARA oil refinery which produces 42,000 barrel-per-day in Limbe was forced to close down for a while due to a tank explosion on the 3rd of June 2019. The explosion burnt four of its thirteen production units and caused an acute shortage of oil for a few days before the supply was supplemented with imports. Thousands of the corporation's workers have escaped for safety and abandoned palm, rubber and banana plantations in affected areas in the South West region to seek refuge in other regions like Douala, Yaounde etc. CDC workers have also deliberately escaped from many plantations in the South West region simply because of insecurity that reigns throughout affected areas where the corporation has plantations such as: Ekona, Lobe and many parts of the

Ndian and Manyu divisions of the South West region. There have been cases of kidnappings of plantation staff especially top managerial staff and huge ransoms have been demanded. In some cases, the kidnapped personnel didn't receive any assistance from the administration of the corporation in terms of paying ransoms. Some families were forced to pay huge sums as ransoms to kidnappers before they were freed.

The CDC has also incurred many material damages due to the armed conflict that has been plaguing the English-speaking regions of Cameroon since 2017. Findings from the field indicate that more than 90% of respondents supported the fact the CDC has incurred material damages due to the conflict. The outbreak of the Anglophone crisis has caused serious material damages to the CDC. In response to the security situation, CDC was forced to reduce its activities. Vehicles have been vandalized and destroyed by separatists who attack workers in their attempt to prevent them from operating because they consider that the CDC is under the control of the government of 'la Republique du Cameroun' a country they claim not to belong to any longer. Some palm, rubber and banana processing plants have been deliberately abandoned by workers of the corporation for fear of being attacked by separatist fighters. Some of the abandoned equipment's have remained in the bushes for long and are beyond repairs.

### **Drop in banana, rubber and palm oil productions**

According to the general manager of CDC over the famous CRTV radio program Cameroon Calling on Sunday August 5th, 2018, out of 11 estates in operation prior to the crisis, none is working normally. The report further suggests that all the rubber estates have been shut down, leading to the loss of 7000 direct jobs in rubber, over 5000 job loss in Banana and 4500 lost jobs in the Palm sector. This has resulted in a drastic drop in production, increased indebtedness, as well as losses. Despite a rather timid recovery thanks to State security efforts, CDC future could be much brighter with the project to rehabilitate 520 hectares of banana plantations in the South-West Region. Rehabilitating these plantations which were abandoned because of the Anglophone crisis should help, in the short term, boost both banana production and exports by the CDC. In the Meme and Ndian divisions where the corporation has palm plantations; most of the plantations have been abandoned due to the insecurity situation imposed by the war in the area. The drop in the quantity of production for banana, rubber and palm products has severely affected the company financially.

PAMOL and other enterprises or businesses, were badly affected by the imposed ghost towns, implemented by the Ambazonian defense force. The shutdown of internet operations in the two Anglophone regions hindered a lot of businesses, which were depending on internet connections for productivity. It also hampered communication, dissemination of information and educational system. As an example, the internet connection was suspended from January to March, 2018 by the Cameroon government. The idea of the government to shut down the internet operations was to prevent the separatist to post articles, videos and pictures on social media, and also to prevent the separatists based overseas to have contact with the Ambazonian fighters. But, this did not work, many Anglophones before 2018 had already fled to Douala, the economic capital of Cameroon

(Ngoh, 2018) [25]. The government received pressure from private investors to restore the internet communication in the two regions (Ngoh, 2018) [25]. The impact and means around the ghost towns were strong. As mentioned, some private business owners chose to stay open. Some of these businesses were attacked by armed men, which later were identified as members of the Ambazonia defense forces. The situation of the CDC was alarming. According to Franklin Ngoni Ikome Njie, the general manager of the operation, “by December 2018, out of seven (7) palm estates in the oil-palm sector, only two were operational and, in fact, only partially. In the rubber sector, out of eleven (11) rubber estates, only four (4) were operational, and, once more, only patiently.

Former flagships of the agri-business sector in the Anglophone region, Pamol Plantations PLC and CDC have partially ceased their activities. Such is the gloomy state in which Cameroon’s Anglophone region is currently plunged. Some parts of the corporation’s banana plantations in Tiko and Mutenguene have been abandoned in the bushes for long without any major activities of maintenance by workers of the plantation. Some banana farms remained in bushes because the usual periodic clearing of the farms was no longer being carried out because the farms have been deserted for longer periods. Banana plantations no longer receive the attention as was the case before the crisis. Plantain plants are not trimmed as a result they don’t produce well any longer. The regular spraying of plantations with insecticides no longer happen since there is no work due to the war in the area and workers have escaped for safety leaving the plantations in the wild. Workers are also not available to harvest bananas that are ready for processing, packaging and marketing. The banana’s finally gets ripe and served as food for fighters on both camps including separatist fighters and the national defense forces as they fight in and around the fields. The abandoned banana’s also serves as food for birds and other animals who have now found a new home in some abandoned banana plantations in crisis affected areas of the South West region.

Palm plantations of the CDC in the South West region have also come under serious attack from separatist fighters on the one hand while plantations have also fled from crisis affected areas for safety reasons. In the Ekondo-Titi area and the Ndian division in general, most CDC palm plantations have been abandoned. Plantations are no longer being regularly cleared as it was usually done when there was no war. Palm trees are not trimmed so the trees also do not produce as much as they should have when properly taken care of, consequently there is the drop-in production of nuts. The palm nuts finally get ripe and ready for harvest but cannot be harvested because of the absence of plantation workers to harvest them. The palms nuts end up being abandoned in the bushes and are consumed by birds, animals and a few courageous persons who have taken the courage to brave the odds despite the war to remain in their communities. Faced with this situation, the agro-industrial company cannot reach its targeted palm oil production objectives. The quantity of palm oil produced is less because palms didn’t produce well, the available quantity of palms produced is not harvested. Consequently, the corporation ends up not milling the required quantity of oil because palm nuts from crisis affected plantations were not harvested and not milled. The quantity of palm oil produced

drops and the impact on the financial benefits of the company from the palm oil sector is huge. At the end of the day, the national economy which depends to a greater extent on exports from the agro-industrial sector is seriously affected.

Rubber is one of the key products of the CDC that has also been affected by the armed conflict in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon. Rubber is one of the industrial products of the CDC that demands close attention. Like the situation witnessed with the banana and palm plantations discussed above, rubber plantations have also been abandoned by the company’s workers who have escaped for safety to other parts of the country where there is no war. There are no rubber tappers to regularly tap, hence, the quantity of raw rubber produced by the corporation is less than before in a warless situation. Consequently, the quantity of rubber processed by the company for exportation drops significantly hence the national economy is affected. As reported by the International Crisis Group, in July 2018, the Cameroon Employers Association (GICAM) estimated the value of losses incurred by the CDC at FCFA 269 billion (€410 million), (International Crisis group, May 2, 2019). This was achieved via brutal treatment of the plantation workers. As such, in reaction to the downward shoot of the CDC, Ayaba Cho Lucas intimated; “... we have stopped one of the greatest corporations [CDC] they [Cameroon] have been generating money from to feed their army against Ambazonia...” (Ayaba Cho Lucas, August 25, 2019).

#### **Drop in financial benefits and retrenchment of staff due to financial constraints**

The crisis in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon has brought the CDC to its knees financially. The quantity of banana produced by the CDC has dropped to the extent that the national demand is not met and the supply to foreign markets is far less than the annual quantities produced in the past before the armed conflict. This has led to a drop in the financial benefits to the company from the sales of banana. The production of raw rubber for the international market has witnessed a significant drop also, causing the company to sell less quantities of rubber than before. The drop in the quantity of palm oil produced by the company doesn’t support the high demand by pharmaceutical companies and other companies that rely on palm oil, kernel oil and residue from the production of oil for their companies. Because the company supplies less, it sells just the minimum quantities produced and the financial returns to the company drops significantly.

The deteriorating financial situation of the agro-industrial company due to the armed conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon has seriously affected the proper functioning of the corporation. As a result of the bad financial situation, company workers even in areas that have not been affected by the war have been retrenched because the company is unable to support the wages of its workers especially field workers. Hundreds of CDC workers have lost their jobs not because they have escaped from the conflict to safe areas, but because they have been temporarily retrenched because of lack of financial means by the company which makes it impossible to regularly pay its workers. The already bad livelihood situation of CDC workers has worsened not only for retrenched staff, but also for their families and school age children in particular.

### **Other Impacts of the Cameroon Anglophone conflict on the economy of Cameroon**

Violence is the primary cause of forced migration globally. Wars create more refugees (those who are forced to flee the country) than IDPs. Forced migration patterns are often determined by a complex web of factors, including policy, ease of movement, and economic considerations. Over 750,000 people now live as either IDPs or refugees in neighboring countries. Both the Cameroonian army and separatist fighters burnt civilian homes and villages as a counterinsurgency tactic, forcing entire families to flee into the jungle, some hiding for weeks at a time, in search of shelter and safety. One of the most notable effects of a conflict is its death toll. The Cameroon Anglophone conflict has left more than six thousand deaths and wounded many, with psychological trauma, and huge amounts of financial losses due to damage of private and government property, infrastructure and crops, among other effects. Conflict can also increase mortality indirectly. For example, destroyed health infrastructure and degraded living conditions have led to increased deaths from disease and hunger. Of the 4.4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Cameroon, 1.6 million are children under the age of eighteen. A majority of those displaced in 2020 were women and children, including many unaccompanied and separated children.

The conflict has severely triggered capital flight and stifled investment causing the economic stagnation of the two regions to contract instead of expanding. Damage to infrastructure has affected various aspects of economic and human development by raising the cost of production, delaying movement of goods in the two regions, and, in the case of water and sanitation infrastructure, fomenting the spread of communicable diseases. Construction works are halted while investment stalled, putting planned improvements on hold. Military spending has inevitably increased as the government attempts to enhance its capacity to resist rebellion in the two Anglophone regions. High military spending since the advent of the conflict in 2017 is hard to reverse. The Anglophone crisis is characterized by human rights violations. Government security forces have been accused of using excessive force, extrajudicial killings, torture, and ill treatment of suspected separatists and detainees. They have also razed and burnt property including houses in more than 170 villages in the Anglophone region. A notable case is the alleged massacre of 21 unarmed civilians in Ngarbuh village (North West Region) on February 14, 2020. Accusations have also been levied against armed separatists for abductions and killing of security forces, administrators, and civilians perceived to be colluding with the government (Ajumane 2018; Craig 2020; Egeland 2019; HRW 2018, 2020; GRID 2019; ICG 2019).

Education is the sector that has suffered the most from the conflict as the separatists from the onset used education as a political tool to mount pressure on the state for political reform. All the seven legalized Anglophone teachers' trade unions launched a campaign to abolish the unfair treatment of the English/ Anglo-Saxon education sub-system in Cameroon. Schools have been destroyed and their teachers/students threatened, abducted, and/or killed. In response, most educational institutions have been abandoned, keeping over 780,000 children out of school. Indeed, over 80% of schools have been closed in the restive

region (UNICEF 2019). In 2017, enrolment for the General Certificate of Education Ordinary and Advanced Levels dropped by 28% increasing to 75% in 2019, some students have relocated to study in the crisis-free regions. The domino effect of non-school attendance is social ills like child exploitation and child labour, early marriages, teenage pregnancies, juvenile delinquencies, increased teenage alcohol consumption and drug use, and more stealing/robbery (UNOCHA 2018; Egeland 2019; Journal du Cameroun 2019a; ICG 2019; Craig 2020; Ludovica 2016; UNICEF 2019). These issues have long-term implications for increased illiteracy and poverty.

### **Government measures**

When manifestations arose in October 2016, spearheaded particularly by lawyers and teachers, the Cameroonian government took some steps to address the situation. While the manifestations were heavily stifled by security forces, a commission led by the Prime Minister, Mr. Philemon Yang was dispatched by President Paul Biya on the 25th November 2017 to Bamenda to dialogue specifically with the leaders of the Teachers and Lawyers' Association of the Anglophone Regions with regards to their tabled grievances (Nfor 2017). While some heralded this initiative as a good step towards resolution, it ended up failing primarily because most of the demands made by the various groups such as releasing those who were arrested unjustly were rejected. The crowning failure of this initiative came on the 17th January 2017 when the same leaders who had been called to dialogue were arrested by the regime and brandished as terrorists. Decree No. 2017/013 of 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 on the National Commission on Bilingualism and Multiculturalism was issued by the President. This decree was to lay down the institutional structure for the National Commission on Bilingualism and Multiculturalism which was charged with the responsibility of regulating the linguistic and cultural imbalances with the purpose of maintaining peace and promoting national unity within the country.

The next approach was directed towards the Common law system. On the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017, the Minister of Justice and Keeper of Seals announced that the parliament had endorsed the President's bill which recommended the creation of a Common Law Bench at the Supreme Court and a Department of Common Law at the National School of Magistracy and Administration (ENAM). This initiative was heralded by some Lawyers who remarked that it showed good faith but it ultimately failed in pacifying the Anglophone crisis and convincing the lawyers to return to work (Kometa 2017). Unfortunately, these attempts have fallen short at resolving the crisis primarily because all of these attempted solutions are cosmetic specific issues. Another most pertinent political measure initiated by the Cameroonian government was the Major National Dialogue realized in October 2019. According to Mehler (2021), state-organized dialogues in Africa often serve a primarily symbolic purpose and rarely result in significant political change. The Major National Dialogue did not bring about the much hoped-for political change nor did it contribute to reducing violence in the Anglophone regions.

### Interview Analysis

The researcher analyses the issues raised in the process of data collection on the field. These issues are analysed with regards to substantive reality on the ground.

### Perception of the impact of the Anglophone conflict on the process of development of the CDC

The company faces enormous difficulties to transform the quantity of farm produce coming from unaffected plantations due to the lack of sufficient drilling plants for the drilling of oil. The shortage in transformation equipment has severely reduced the production capacity of the agro-industrial company, hence, sales of the company have dropped and consequently, the financial returns of the company have witnessed a significant drop in the last seven years of the armed conflict.

### R14 stipulated that

The financial strength of the CDC has weakened due to the conflict as it can no longer pay its workers on a regular basis. Workers are owed several months of arrears. Government should immediately assist in order to prevent the CDC from collapse (Interview, August 13, 2024).

As the conflict persisted and things deteriorated, the radicals, popularly known as 'Amba Boys' resorted to physical abuse, intimidation and the kidnapping of students, teachers and headmasters who tried to go contrary to their dictates and continue operating schools.

### R12 did mentioned that

The Cameroon Anglophone conflict has led to high cost of living, drop in scholarization through school boycott within the two regions, increase in (sexual) promiscuity with a rise in teenage unwanted pregnancies, and an increase in the cost of building land in safe towns/villages (Interview, August 13, 2024).

### R5 insisted on the fact that

The conflict has widely opened the mistrust of Francophones as many who pretended not to be aware of the Anglophone problem through effective marginalization were taken aback when President Biya openly confessed the alleged assimilation of Anglophones himself (Interview, July 09, 2024).

While many of the displaced would like to return home, insecurity remains a major barrier in the two Anglophone regions. In fact, many of the displaced have been displaced more than once.

### According to R13

There is a lot of migration from the conflict zones to other regions not familial with many premature deaths caused by separatists. The conflict has led to mass population exodus from the two affected regions, separation of families, abduction and payment of ransoms, total frustration and broken-down homes. Most people have run away from their comfort zones to become IDPs in other regions while others have moved to neighboring Nigeria as refugees (Interview, August 13, 2024).

However, many sources suggest that indirect mortality has been considerable, as evidenced by increased child mortality and famine-related deaths.

### According to R17

The crisis has led to thousand deaths and reduced the standard of living in a drastic way with permanent poverty and the fear of the unknown as people are forced to flee their homes. This has increased the prices of basic goods, increase state of bad roads, high crime wave and unauthorized cash extortion leading to financial stagnation with retards economic development (Interview, August 20, 2024).

### Hypotheses Testing

1. **H<sub>0</sub>**: The insecurity in the South west region has greatly affected the smooth functioning of the CDC
2. **H<sub>1</sub>**: The insecurity in the South west region has not greatly affected the smooth functioning of the CDC

### STEP 1 State the hypothesis and identify the Claim

**H<sub>0</sub>**:  $\mu = 39.997$ , and **H<sub>1</sub>**:  $\mu \neq 39.997$  (claim)

### STEP 2: Find the critical value

Since  $\alpha = 0.005$  and  $df = (r - 1)(c - 1) = (3-1)(10 - 1) = 18$ . Thus, the critical value is 37.997

### STEP 3 Compute the test value

$X^2 = 1, 178, .807$

### Step 4 Make the Decision

Do not reject the  $H_0$ , since the test value falls in the non-critical region.  $1, 178, .807 > 39.997$

### STEP 5 Summarize the result

There is not enough evidence to support the claim that the insecurity in the South west region has not significantly affected the smooth functioning of the CDC

### Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The public sector of an economy is responsible for basic services like infrastructure, public education, health care, and security services like the military & police. Public corporations as we saw are pillared on three objectives which include: service oriented, problem oriented and as offspring of public policy. Despite the lingering security crisis in the South-West Region in 2024, CDC's activities slightly resumed, thanks to measures taken by the State to ensure the pursuit of the company's operations. These include securing its facilities (farms and factories) and granting of a 3.5 billion subsidy for the payment of employees' salaries. Moreover, in June 2020, CDC was registered back to the list of banana exporters in Cameroon, by exporting 9,521 tonnes of bananas. In order to create an enabling environment for the CDC to function properly and regain its full operational capacity, the government of Cameroon can do more by accepting the organization of a real, genuine and inclusive dialogue between representatives of the separatist camp identified by separatists themselves, representatives of the Cameroon government and the negotiated dialogue can be moderated by an independent external party. It is only in a peaceful and warless environment that the CDC can successfully and smoothly carry on with its activities. Thousands of workers have left the agro-industrial company either forcefully or unexpectedly as a result of the Cameroon Anglophone conflict. Qualified and efficient staff should be employed into the corporation. This will be guaranteed if merit-based recruitment process is initiated without patrimonial or

clientele influence. When staff are employed to do the job, they involve professionalism and skillfully get the job done. This will promote the quality of service and products which come from the public corporation and enable staff perform their roles effectively.

**Appendix**

The impacts of the insecurity on the process of development of the CDC and attempted measures to save it from collapse

Questions	SA	A	D	SD	Neutral	Total
1	125	58	9	6	2	200
2	111	69	11	6	3	200
3	120	70	6	1	3	200
4	128	67	1	1	3	200
5	144	52	0	0	4	200
6	116	65	6	7	6	200
7	51	99	21	10	19	200
8	30	85	35	39	11	200
9	80	82	10	10	18	200
10	97	60	8	2	33	200
Total	1002	707	107	82	102	2000
%	50.	35.	6	4	5	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

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