THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

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FACULTÉ DES ARTS, LETTRES ET SCIENCES HUMAINES
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DECENTRALISATION, CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH-WEST REGION OF CAMEROON: THE CASE STUDY OF MANKON

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY

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To

my lovely fathers, Akwah Neba George and Akwah Christopher Nji

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ABSTRACT

This research is entitled *Decentralisation, culture and development in the North West Region of Cameroon: case study Mankon. An anthropological study*. The objective of this research is to explore cultural decentralization in Mankon fondom in the era of decentralization in Cameroon and development via cultural artifacts. The nexus between decentralisation laws and cultural institutions is restraint by unsuitable policy design and implementation on the powers incarnated by the Fon which is used to consolidate national influence and governance in Cameroon. The effective politico-administrative organization of fondoms coupled with the traditional system of governance explains why they were co-opted as collaborators by national and government institutions. Therefore, in this research, we examine decentralization, culture, and development in the Mankon with the main research question: how has cultural decentralization in the Mankon fondom through arts has let to the development of the community? The main research hypothesis extrapolated from the main research question asserts that the cultural artifacts and elements of the Mankon fondom has led let the the development of the community. The main objective of this research is to investigate how cultural decentralization in Mankon has kindled development. The research approach and design are purely qualitative with the employment of documentary reviews and in-depth interviews. The local autonomy theory and functionalist theory were used to interpret our qualitative data. Themes were identified, described and interpreted. The findings of this study point out that before the introduction and operationalization of decentralization laws in Cameroon, the socio-political and administrative organization of the Mankon people were centered on a well-organized chieftaincy institution with the Fon at the helm. This reflects a practical decentralization policy framework being designed by the state. Which simply means, that the state can use these chiefs in the decentralization policies. In the Mankon society, political power is organized in such a way that the Fon who is at the apex of traditional administration delegats some powers and competences to other institutions that made up the administrative architecture of the localities within the fondom.

Keywords: Culture, Decentralisation, Development, cultural elements, and fondom.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette recherche s'intitule *Décentralisation, culture et développement dans la région du Nord-Ouest du Cameroun : cas de Mankon. L'etude Anthropologique.* L'objectif de cette recherche est d'explorer la décentralisation culturelle à Mankon fondom à l'ère de la décentralisation au Cameroun et du développement via les artefacts culturels. Le lien entre les lois de décentralisation et les institutions culturelles est contraint par une conception et une mise en œuvre inappropriées des politiques sur les pouvoirs incarnés par le Fon qui est utilisé pour consolider l'influence nationale et la gouvernance au Cameroun. L'organisation politico-administrative efficace des fondoms couplée au système traditionnel de gouvernance explique pourquoi ils ont été cooptés comme collaborateurs par les institutions nationales et gouvernementales. Par conséquent, dans cette recherche, nous examinons la décentralisation, la culture et le développement dans le Mankon avec la principale question de recherche : comment la décentralisation culturelle dans le Mankon à travers les arts a-t-elle contribué au développement de la communauté ? L'hypothèse de recherche principale extrapolée à partir de la question de recherche principale affirme que les artefacts culturels et les éléments du fond de Mankon ont permis le développement de la communauté. L'objectif principal de cette recherche est d'étudier comment la décentralisation culturelle à Mankon a déclenché le développement. L'approche et la conception de la recherche sont purement qualitatives avec l'utilisation de revues documentaires et d'entretiens approfondis. La théorie de l'autonomie locale et la théorie fonctionnaliste ont été utilisées pour interpréter nos données qualitatives. Les thèmes ont été identifiés, décrits et interprétés. Les résultats de cette étude soulignent qu'avant l'introduction et l'opérationnalisation des lois de décentralisation au Cameroun, l'organisation socio-politique et administrative du peuple Mankon était centrée sur une institution de chefferie bien organisée avec le Fon à la tête. Cela reflète un cadre pratique de politique de décentralisation en cours d'élaboration par l'État. Ce qui signifie simplement que l'Etat peut utiliser ces chefs dans les politiques de décentralisation. Dans la société Mankon, le pouvoir politique est organisé de telle manière que le Fon qui est au sommet de l'administration traditionnelle délègue certains pouvoirs et compétences à d'autres institutions qui composaient l'architecture administrative des localités au sein du fondom.

Mots clés : Culture, Décentralisation, Développement, éléments culturels, et chefferie.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS AND SINGLES

1. *Abbreviations*

CNU	:	Cameroon National Union
CPDM	:	Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement
CRTV	:	Cameroon Radio Television
FALSS	:	Faculty of Arts Letters and Social Sciences
GBHS	:	Government Billingual High School
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
SDGs	:	Sustainable Development Goals
UNO	:	United Nation Organisation
UNDP	:	United Nations for Development Programs.

2. *Accronyms*

FALSS	:	Faculty of Arts Letters and Social Sciences
MACUDA	:	Mankon Cultural and Development Association
MAYOCUDA	:	Mankon Yourth Cultural and Development Association
NOSO	:	North-west and South-West.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This research concentrates on decentralization, culture and development of Mankon. The general introduction is made up of several sections and sub-sections. The general introduction begins with the context of study, justifications, research problem, and statement of the problem, research questions, research hypothesis, objectives, research methodology, data analysis, data interpretation, research interest, research limitations and dissertation chapter layout. The general introduction gives a clear view and presentation of the study.

1. THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The concept of decentralization has evolved overtime and today it is used by Starts to relegate central powers to the local authorities to effectuate the development of local areas and also to ensure that the local authorities such as chiefs should contribute in decision making. This concept expressed as the transfer of authority or power sharing from the center to subordinate ends, it is important for both to be more effective in management of the areas outside the center of organization in public administration and for strengthening these areas in terms of democracy conception. The increasing interest all over the world in issues such as ensuring service-need agreement, the importance of decisions made by the closest unit to the public and the reduction of bureaucratization have made implementation of decentralized systems a necessity in local regions.

There is a generally and widely held belief that decentralization stimulates good governance and development because its policy interventions are closer, more responsive and effective in recognising and meeting the local needs of the citizens. Similarly, decentralisation is an important element of participatory democracy. Representing this view is Vansant (1997) who sees decentralisation as an important institutional setting that could enhance good governance. The Word Bank (2001) also supports the view that decentralisation is a global phenomenon that could no longer be ignored by any development minded country. However, scholars such as Prud'homme et al (1995), Turner and Hulme (1997), Manor (2001) and Smoke (2003) have pointed out that there are also some associated negative aspects of decentralisation. These include political elitism, the hijack of political power and financial resources of the state and inter-regional income, development disparities and an increase in corruption.

According to (Ozmen, 2014) Decentralization can be defined as the transfer of authority and responsibility of public functions from the central government to subordinate or quasi-

independent government organizations or the private sector. In the classical sense, this concept, which refers to the transfer of authority, responsibility and resources from central government to local governments, has a decisive role in central government local government relations. Several definitions have been offered for decentralization. One of the most general defines it as the transfer of responsibilities and authority from higher to lower levels of government. Decentralization seeks to create relationships of accountability among citizens, service providers, and subnational governments and between the local and central governments. (Falleti, 2004) maintains that decentralization is a process, a set of state reforms. It is a series of political reforms aiming for the transfer of responsibilities, resources and authority from higher level to lower levels of state. Decentralization does not include the transfer of authority among non-state actors. However, decentralization reforms may take place both in authoritarian and democratic environments, as decentralization and democratization do not have the same meaning. Even the political systems described as centralized and authoritarian can rearrange their structures and functions within the framework of decentralization. Decentralization has political, administrative and financial dimensions. The political dimension includes the transfer of state administration, legislative authority and judicial autonomy to local governments. The administrative dimension refers to the transferring of some classical functions of the state to autonomous public institutions (Kose, 2004). The fiscal dimension includes intergovernmental fiscal relations in countries where, constitutional and statutory powers of taxation, budget and expenditure rights are given to federal units within the Federal State.

Decentralization in its current form in Cameroon is based on the Constitution represented in Law No. 96/06 of 18 January 1996 (Cheka, 2007) Law No.2004-19/1 of 22 July 2004 on the General Orientation defines decentralization as, the devolution by the State of special and appropriate resources to regional and local authorities for their economic, social health, education, cultural and sports development. Considering decentralization or power-sharing in Cameroon, the Constitution of Cameroon lends a strong hand to decentralized local governance as key to achieving rural development and poverty reduction. Decentralization in Cameroon constitutes the legal, institutional, and financial means through which regional and local authorities operate to foster local development with the active involvement of the population.

Cameroon's constitutional law of 18 January 1996 enshrined decentralization as a fundamental principle of the organization of state governance, and subsequent implementing

legislation affirms the central government's commitment to transferring several powers to local authorities with a view to local management. Local and regional authorities then appear as an essential link in the implementation of public policies at the local level. Their genuine autonomy in financial and administrative matters is a necessary condition for achieving local development objectives. However, a review of the existing literature reveals that these communities do not have real autonomy in public decision-making, which is illustrated by mixed development at the local level. (Yombi et al, 2019). As a result of this, the Northwest and Southwest Regions were awarded the special status in 2019 based on their language specificity, historical heritage, educational system and the Anglo-Saxon legal system based on common laws.

Mankon is a Fondom in the North-West Region of Cameroon ruled by a Fon. The word 'Fondom' is a name given to the kingdoms or chiefdoms of the Northwest Region that has preserved their culture and tradition. The traditional ruler of each Fondom in the Northwest Region is called a *'Fon'*. The Fon governs his subjects according to the customs and tradition of the land. Africanist political anthropologists limited themselves for a long time to the analysis of " traditional structures of power (that is lineage systems, chieftainships, more or less sacred kingdoms) and left analysis of the modern state and its apparatus to political science (De Sardan, 2007). Our research work focuses on the cultural elements of the fondom, which shows that they are decentralized.

2. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The justification of this study passes through two phases. The personal motivation of the study is first well explained and then the scientific justification of the study. The justification of the study indicates the passion and the contribution of the study to the scientific world.

2.1. Personal motivation

Decentralization in my viewpoint is one of the major peaceful methods which can be used to solve the ongoing socio-political crises alongside preserving the culture of the people. Looking at the ongoing socio-political crisis plaguing the two English-speaking regions of the country for the past 5 years, decentralization is a peaceful method of solving the crisis as compared to federalism and separation. Also, the outcome of the 2019 national dialogue which was held in Yaoundé let to the decentralization procedure. Authority and power sharing from

the central bodies to the local bodies to promote development while maintaining the culture of the people. My research topic was formulated from the ongoing socio-political crisis and the national dialogue which was held in 2019. Moreover, this research is a lens to examine the cultural elements of the Mankon tradition and to show what they represent and how they are being decentralized.

2.2. Scientific justification

The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) number 11 which is (sustainable cities and communities) which aim is to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. The Fon of Mankon governs the people according to the norms and tradition of the land, through decentralization, the community is safe and resilient. The 17 SDGs take into account that action in one area will affect outcomes in other areas as well, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Some organizations like African Union, United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG AFRICA)) encourage developing African countries to implement decentralization to develop the continent. In Cameroon decentralization is adopted but it is not fully implemented despite the Ministry of Decentralization and local Government. The actors are not fully in charge of authority. In the Mankon, Fondom, the Fon has authority in his community but not totally. Decentralization does not only exist in political levels, the Mankon Fondom has a very rich Cultural artifacts which are not only used for ritual purposes but also shows that they are decentralized, and which is the focus of the research.

3. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

During the era of colonialism in Cameroon, the English-speaking regions were ruled by the British while the French ruled the Eastern part of the territory. The British used the policy of indirect rule which was aimed at governing their colonies through their chiefs. While the French govern their colonies using the policy of Assimilation. The British established decentralization in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon, as a result the customs and traditions of the people were sacred. With the new political era, the implementation of the decentralization policy is not fully applied. The actors of decentralization especially at the local levels are not given total or full powers to participate in decision making. In the Mankon

fondom the Fon has the power of taking decisions in relation to the customs and tradition of the land.

Chieftaincy institutions in Africa and particularly in Cameroon represents the oldest political administrative institution of governance that predates the colonial intrusion. Even with the advent of the colonial rule, this institution incarnated by the chief was used to consolidate colonial influence and governance in Cameroon. The effective political administrative organization of chieftaincy coupled with the traditional system governance explains why they were chosen as collaborators by the colonial administrators. However, at independence chiefs and the chieftaincy institution were demoted by the new political elites.

4. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In most African traditional societies notably in Cameroon, traditional rulers enjoy both sacred and secular authority. In the Grass-field of Cameroon for example, by virtue of ritual of coronation, traditional leaders undergo a remarkable transformation and became virtually invincible and untouchable people. In fact, the newly made traditional leader or chief changed in status and was elevated and kept in a respectful distance from the ordinary man. He is at the apex of the visible hierarchy and his ritual of installation made him a sacred person and conferred on him a few attributes and said to be endowed with divine powers and the incarnate of the political and religious life of their people.

Once a prince had been enthroned as chief and undergone all prescribed rites, it is believed that the life force of his ancestors has automatically been transmitted to him. If the transfer of power did not follow the custom and tradition dictated by the ancestors, the usurper, after sitting on the ancestral stool automatically suffered a serious ailment such as sterility, madness or even death (Aletum, 1980). As a matter of fact, immediately the chief assumed his ritual functions from his people, he automatically became the divine symbol of his people's health and welfare as it is believed that the life force of his ancestors is automatically transmitted to him (Nkwi, 1977). All of these characteristics gave the traditional leader a certain authority before his people. This explains why traditional leaders were feared and revered and their orders executed with diligence. Traditional leaders inspired traditional patriotism and the desire of belonging within their subjects. That is why in some instances in Cameroon, the local population respects orders from the traditional authorities than state authorities. In some circumstances, state authorities are obliged to always collaborate with

traditional leaders to better exercise their duties, even though it has not always been an easy task.

The office of the traditional rulers in some traditional societies in Cameroon and specifically the Grassfields was a composite one having many duties, responsibilities, and obligations. In the Grass-fields, traditional society traditional leaders were considered head of the traditional government. They incarnat the function of the chief executive, chief judge, army chief as well as high priest of his community. This is so because in the Grass-fields traditional societies, like in most African traditional societies, the power and authority of the chief is not considered separate or divisible. They were the guarantors of the traditional order or system in terms of political, security, justice, socio-cultural development of their chiefdoms.

Today the structure of state architecture and functioning in Cameroon is fundamentally based on the western model of state organization with very little consideration on local realities in a country with a plethora of ethnic/cultural groups, two main cultural identities (English and French) and two main religions (Christianity and Islam) and at the grassroots level, thousands of traditional societies who in effect one of the most noticeable features of the socio-cultural heritage of Cameroon. Throughout history chiefs in Cameroon have been at the center of the political, socio-economic, and cultural life of their respective societies. Although chiefs are referred to by various appellations depending on the ethnic group, the core content and significance of chieftaincy and the functions of chiefs have lots of things in common.

Based on all these, it is quite clear that the role of the Mankon Fondom in the effective implementation of decentralization policy notably at grassroots level is very crucial. Above all, the rational valorization of the chieftaincy institution in Cameroon could potentially consolidate state administration and boost development at grassroots level. Thus, this research aimed at exploring decentralization in the Mankon culture and how it contributes to local development.

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

We have one principal research question and three secondary questions.

5.1. The principal research question

- How has cultural decentralization in the Mankon Fondom through arts let to development of the community?

5.2. Secondary research questions

- How has the decentralization law\policy impacted the different segments of the local government as far as power sharing is concerned in Mankon?
- What are the main cultural elements of the Mankon community that shows decentralization?
- What are the symbolic meaning of the cultural artifacts of the Mankon Fondom that portrays decentralization?

6. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

It is a statement of expectation or prediction that will be tested by research.

6.1. The main research hypothesis

- The cultural artifacts and elements of the Mankon Culture Fondom portrays decentralization and has let to the development of the community.

6.2. Specific research hypothesis

We have three specific hypotheses.

- The decentralization law\policy in Mankon has impacted the different segments of the local government as far as power sharing is concerned in Mankon.

- The Mankon Fondom is decentralized through clans and some main cultural elements like religion, polygamous marriage, political organization, Kinship.

- Cultural decentralization in the Mankon Fondom via cultural artifacts such as royal chair, drum, royal staff, and the Fon's traditional regalia, royal stool, royal bed, flute, claypot, has let to the development of the community.

7. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

We have one principal research objective and three secondary objectives.

7.1. Principal objective

- To investigate cultural decentralization in the Mankon Fondom.

7.2. Secondary objectives

- To examine how the decentralization law\policy has impacted the different segments of the local government as far as power sharing is concerned in Mankon?

- To examine the main cultural elements such as kinship, religion, political organization, marriage, clans and how they are decentralized.

- To examine the functions of cultural artifacts and how they are decentralized.

8. METHODOLOGY

According to (Sarantakos, 1998) research methodology is the theory of methods, it is the way in which one makes sense of the object of enquiry. It is the theoretical, political, and philosophical backgrounds to social research and their implications for research practice and for the use of particular research methods (Robson, 2002).

8.1. Research approach and design

According to Morvarid (2005) the most prevalent methodologies in social sciences and humanities research are quantitative and qualitative research. In this research work, qualitative method of research is used in data collection and data analyses. Moreover, (Sarantakos, 2005) argues that social science can be conducted within a quantitative or qualitative context depending on the data available for use.

8.1.1. Sampling

Sampling is the selection of a subset of individuals from within a statistical population to estimate characteristics of the whole population (Lance and Hattori, 2016). A purposive sample allows the researcher to choose the population carefully based on features that are of interest (Silverman, 2005). The purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques was used for our study. Purposive sampling, which involves choosing informantswho can offer closely guarded information, was employed because not all notables and queen mothers were able to give the required information.

8.1.2. Sampling procedure

The aim was to include those who were knowledgeable about the subject matter which is decentralization, culture and development in the Mankon community.

8.1.3. Sample seize

A total of 14 informants were intervieved in the course of data collection through semi structured and structured interview and focus group discussion. It should be noted that, the focus group discussion was carried out with four persons, this is due to the unavailability of

some of the informants as regards to the ungoing socio-political crisis in the Northwest region of Cameroon.

8.2. Documentary research

The highest illiteracy in the 21st century is to proceed with a research work without reading to uncover knowledge that has been written and stored by various authors in the related domain of research. It is in this light that, a wide range of texts, journals, conference papers, published and unpublished documents, reports, dissertations and PhD theses were consulted to build a rich and befitting literature to proceed with this study. This permitted the researcher to have some additional ideas on decentralisation, culture, and development in Mankon and equally to avoid the duplication of work that has already been carried out elsewhere. These documented works have divergent points of views concerning the topic which focuses on decentralisation, culture, and development in Mankon.

8.2.1. Bibliographic Records

During the literature review, I exploited 150 references. Under which we had general books exploited (50). Specific works we have 35 books, scientific articles exploited 3 and 3 legislative texts consulted. Dissertation consulted were 5 in number, dictionaries exploited 2 and encyclopedia 1. Number of websites consulted 5. This opened the gate way to understand and master a series of things concerning the research.

8.2.2. Reading Sheet

I came up with a reading sheet in which i was reading and summarizing, also each specific reference made up the subject of the study. We had a total number of 35 reading sheets which has three main terms which are as follows: decentralization, culture and development.

8.2.3. Spatial coordinates

In other for our literature review to be realized, I consulted the following libraries; the central library at the University of Yaoundé 1 which I exploited for one month, the FALSS library I exploited for two weeks, library at the Ministry of Scientific Research which I exploited for one-week, British council one week of consultation and the J and A Oben foundation library which was also exploited for over two months. I also consulted the internet Google Scholar and websites such as amazon.com, mankonkingdom.org, Wikipedia, jstore YouTube and other social media platforms and television channels like CRTV to obtain credible information and data for the research. And it was done done for two months.

8.2.4. Time coordinates

The central library at the University of Yaoundé 1 which I exploited for one month, the FALSS library I exploited for two weeks, library at the Ministry of Scientific Research which I exploited for one-week, British council one week of consultation and the J and A Oben foundation library which was also exploited for a week. I also consulted the internet within a month.

8.3. Field work

Field work was conducted on ground in Mankon and Yaounde. The field activities were much and diversify. All the techniques employed in the field were to obtain data for the write-up of this work. Field work was one of the most important activities in this research because most of the data was gotten from the field especially primary data. It is important therefore that, the credible place should be accorded to the field. Places visited during field studies were the Mankon Palace, the Mankon council, here administrative texts were exploited in the council data base in view of decentralization. Cultural elements were well perceived, exploited and inspected of decentralization taken note of.

8.3.1. Spatial coordinates

Due to the ongoing socio-political crisis in the North-West Region which has led to the high level of insecurity, the people there were displaced and found themselves in the other regions. Some of Mankon people displaced themselves for Yaounde. Data was collected from the Mankon people living at Obili, Simbok and Nkolbison and Damas.

8.3.2. Time coordinates

At Obili I spend three weeks collecting data that is from mid-December 2021 to January 2022. At Nkolbison, I went collecting data for two weeks. Simbock, I went collecting data for 3 days. Mankon was the place where a lot of data was collected though mostly via mail and other social media platforms since the socio-political conditions were unbearable at certain times that limited field trips. Only 3 field trips were made to Mankon each lasting only for 3-4 days. However, field informants were helping the situation of collecting the data and sending to me in Yaoundé for analysis.

a. Sources of data

There are many sources of data but basically, we had primary data sources and secondary data sources. The secondary data sources were basically concerned with documentary works

in libraries and exploitation of published works online on some relevant websites. The collection of these data was done using. We also find some a block note to take down some relevant points to exploit in the work. The primary data sources which provide raw information and first-hand evidence which include; the use of informants, interviewees, observations.

b. Types of informants

Former secretary of the Mankon museum, villagers, notables, princess, prince. Custodians at the Mankon museum, villagers, quarter head, teachers. These informants were very instrumental in that the provided the study with first hand data and clarified in all cases or incidences of doubts. They also contributed to giving us the insights about cultural and political decentralisation of the Makon people. In fact, key informants contributed immensely to the realisation of this piece of scientific work.

c. Interview guide

The interview guide was typically made up of questions and open-ended questions. The use of the guide was very important because it is very easy to administer to them, practical, more comfortable, and have a quick and brief response which facilitates the work of the researcher.

ln this research, the interviews were pilot tested to evaluate its feasibility from the study and the validity and note if the answers obtained are relative to research objectives (Fink, 2005). Few changes were made to the questions after the initial pilot-run to obtain data relevant to the research set aim and objectives, prior to carrying out the main study process. This enhances the validity of the questions used (British Dental Journal, 2003). Double-barreled, double-negative, and unclear questions were rephrased; also, questions which were vague, out of context.

8.4. Types of Data

Thematic data was used in the research. We have iconographic (images) data, and we have conceptual (words) data.

8.4.1. Data collection

It is a method or a path in which a researcher adopts to collect information from various sources to attend his goal. (Mbonji, 2005) defines method as the path to follow by the human

spirit to describe or elaborate a coherent discourse, to attend the truth of the subject to analyse. To collect our data, we used primary and secondary data collection.

8.4.2. Technics of data collection

Data collected is qualitative data and which was done through interviews and observation.

- **An interview** is a structured conversation where one participant asks questions and the other provides answers. Semi-structured interview was used alongside the interview guide to be sure of the sources of information. An interview guide was mounted with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore themes and answers in relation to the research topic. This technic helped to better understand the symbolic meaning of the cultural artifacts of the Mankon people.

- **Case-history**: it is a technique which consists in recounting the causes, manifestations, and consequences of an event for which the informant is key. This technique helps to better understand the history of the Mankon people and the importance of the Mankon cultural elements or artifacts which enables the analysis of the the research topic.

- **Focus group**: It is a qualitative research method which was used to better understand the research topic. This technic was carried out only with four participants due to the ongoing socio-political crisis. And the focus group discussion gave way to a more suitable comprehension of the culture of the people and the importance of the cultural artifacts. This technic was carried out in Bamenda at the Mankon palace.

8.4.3. Data collection tools

It refers to the devices, instruments used to collect data.

- **Interview guide:** it is a tool of structured questions which permits the researcher to undergo a discussion with the informant.

- **Telephone surveys:** it is a tool which permits the researcher to record information gotten from the informants.

- **A digital Camera:** it is a tool which permits the researcher to take pictures.

- **Notebook:** it is a tool which permits a researcher to take down information.

- **Pen and pencil;** they are tools which permits the researcher write out the information gotten from the informant.

8.5. Data analysis

The analysis is the breaking down or the decomposition of a whole into its components or essential features. Qualitative data analysis is defined as the process of understanding the cognitive process, that is the way they speak their language and the possible terms they apply to things as said (Mbonji, 2005). In other words, this was used through thematic analysis to bring out the anthropological explanation and symbolic meaning of the data collected from the field.

8.6. Techniques of data analysis

Data analysis technics are the various forms which the data was collected. Data analysis depends on the type of data collected. We have two types of data collected which are as follows; Conceptual data (words); this is data collected in the form of words during interview with the informants and during our research. The treatment of qualitative data began with data coding where the Strauss method of open system data coding was used. In this case, categories of responses from respondents and the major themes were identified, assigned and classified. These categories were manually recorded on a prepared block note as per objective of the study that enabled the formation of *constructive codes* from *in vivo* codes obtained during interviews and focus group discussions. The *in vivo* codes laid emphasis on the participants' actual spoken words. This type of data coding method championed because of its usefulness in highlighting the voices of the participants themselves during interviews and focus group discussions which was done only with four participants. The *in vivo* coding method was also used because it was thought to be very reliant to pass across the message using the direct words of the participants. The codes obtained as per objective of the study included Iconographic data (images); this is data collected in the form of images or pictures.

Data analysis is a key element in any scientific work. Our analysis was purely based on the ethnic approach. Data analyses for the qualitative data obtained were validated through an effective feedback method, as well as appropriate interpretation. Data obtained from the questionnaire-based interviews was analysed using content analysis method. These data were extracted, and type-set based on named themes of study for easier review using MS Access/ Word applications (Neill, 2006). A list of coded categories was drawn up and each segment

of transcribed data was subsequently sieved into one of these categories accordingly (Gall et al, 2003).

As concerns obtaining quantitative data, surveys using self-administered semi-structured interviews were utilized to determine demographic, educational, and socio-economic status. In summary, the raw data obtained from the pre-coded interviews was obtained and decoded using Microsoft Excel 2010. Field notes obtained by the researcher were subsequently analysed and important descriptive categories were identified accordingly. The sample of five respondents was obtained by non-probability convenient sampling, and the inclusion/exclusion criterion was used to obtain the required sample for the study (Brink et al, 2006; Neuman, 2006).

All recorded interviews were transcribed into the computer, we read through the field's notes, transcripts, site documents and other information obtained in the field. Becoming used to the data, marking or coding that were based on connections, similarities, contrastive points, and points that stood out uniquely. We proceeded by searching for emerging themes and looking for local categories techniques of collection and applied to see if a point or explanation holds across.

8.7. Data interpretation

It comes from the Latin word *interpretare* which signifies giving meaning to or explaining. Interpretation is giving meaning or explaining the phenomenon under studies. In other to interpret our data collected I used the functionalism theory. The starting point of the qualitative data analysis is usually data as text. Since we will use a recorder during interviews, the data will be transcribed in the form of text. The purpose of this is to enable the researcher to understand the content and play the purpose of validating information during the interviews. Later, I will used the software ATLAS-ti to analyse the transcribed data.

8.8. Types of sampling used in our research

In this research the researcher conducted research about a group of people. It is usually very difficult to collect data from every person in each population. Instead, he or she selects a sample. To draw a valid conclusion from the results, you must carefully decide how you will select a sample that is representative of the group. There are two types of sampling methods that were used in this research:

- Probability sampling involves random selection, allowing you to make strong statistical inferences about the whole group.

- Non-probability sampling involves non-random selection based on convenience or other criteria, allowing you to easily collect data.

Here we made use of a purposive sampling technique to achieve a convenient sample of herbalists who were knowledgeable on the subject matter.

8.8.1. Interest of the study

This work has theoretical interest, practical interest who explains and shows the extent to which the work was interested. It is therefore important to first show the theoretical interest of the work and then the practical interest of the work.

8.8.2. Theoretical interest

This research will permit us to bring out contribution to our domain of study which is anthropology. It will be a plus on developmental anthropology because with it we are going to show how the Mankon cultural elements are decentralized. The work can also be used as a reference for other authors in the domain of cultural decentralization in Mankon.

8.8.3. Practical interest

This research will permit us to identify the different Mankon cultural elements which show decentralization, and it can also permit other Fondoms to identify their cultural elements which show decentralization. Also, it will be a medium for people to know that decentralization is not only political but its cultural through cultural artifacts.

Ministry of Arts and Culture can use this as reference in the National mesuem to showcase the rich cultural artifacts of the Mankon fondom.

9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics refers to well based standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues. In ever day life such as standards include those, which impose the sensible responsibilities to human of refraining from rape, stealing, slander, murder, assault, cheating and fraud. Ethical standards support the virtues of honesty, compassion and loyalty and

include standards relating to rights, such as the right to life, the right to freedom from injury, and the right to privacy.

Ethical and administrative authorisation was sought and obtained from the Department of Anthropology. Both oral and written individual informed consents were obtained from the participants after a thorough explanation of the study aims, procedure, expected benefits, risks, and expected responsibility of the participants which was done in local language. The consent forms which were written English language were given to them to read and oral explanation were letter given to them (*Appendix N°4,* pp.131-134). Participants were informed of their freedom to quit at any time during the interviews if they feel so.

Anonymity and confidentiality of participants were ensured through depersonalization of data during data collection, limiting who had access to the data and stored in a password secured computer. During the interviews participants were asked not to mention their names. All consent forms with their signatures were kept separately from their transcripts so that no connection could be made in anyway. Participants were informed and assured that digital audio recorded information was not for broadcast and no quotes would bear their names. During the FGDs, participants were informed that whatever was discussed in the group needed to remain confidential among themselves.

The use of tape recorders in interviews and the FGD was approved by all participants after a thorough explanation of the purpose for its use was given. The participants were informed that the tape recording was required to minimize time for the interview and to accurately capture all their views. Participants were informed that they were free to request the researcher to turn off the recorder at any time if they felt uncomfortable with its use. Even though participant approved the use of their descriptions to explain findings, no names or addresses were used in the presentation of the findings to ensure complete anonymity. Also important is the fact that our informants were not prejudiced or coerced in anyway and the pictures that will be taken came after prior consent seeking and notification on the form that we will be going to collect.

As concerns data analysis and interpretation, data was carefully presented in a manner that did not implicate our research participants and, in a way, we used to unveil some of the secrets that local institutions in place embodied. Here, names of persons and places were replaced with pseudonyms when citing them in delicate cases.

At the level of our dissertation writing, practically the same precautions were taken during data analysis and interpretation. Here, attention was focused only on the prominent issues in our research topic. Hence, dissociating ourselves from unnecessary and cheap polemics. All of these was a way to be in harmony with the society under research and the scientific community. However, our young and hard-won scientific spirit will jealously preserve, to talk like Bachelard (1980).

10. RESEARCH LIMITATION AND CHALLENGES FACED IN THE FIELD

Our research topic is Decentralization, culture and development in the North West Region of Cameroon; case-study Mankon. Our first limitation is the North West Region where the Mankon Fondom is found alongside the ongoing socio-political crisis which is not secured. We also faced difficulties accessing libraries due to the COVID-19 Pandemic which I worked from home using internet. Unavailability of some informants. Handling the amount (bulk) of information by reduction, Possibility of communication difficulties, Accessibility of the area of study.

11. DISSERTATION CHAPTER LAYOUT

Our research is composed of five chapters.

Before the chapter layout, we have a general introduction which is composed of the background study, justifications, the research problem, the statement of the research problem, research questions, we have the hypothesis, the research objectives, research methodology, types of data, technics, and interpretation, then we have ethical considerations and research limitations.

- Chapter one is composed of the presentation of study area, physical environment, and human activities of the population.

- Chapter two is made up of literature review which is in relation to our research topic. The literature review was carried out according to terms that are the three main terms of our research topic. Also we have theories and concepts.

- Chapter three cames out with Decentralization in Cameroon. It outlines the 2019 decentralization policy adopted by the government.

- Chapter four talks about the elements of the Mankon culture. This chapter shows how the elements of the Mankon culture are decentralized using diagrams.

- Chapter five is composed of decentralization and culture in the Mankon community. Cultural decentralization is portrayed using the Mankon cultural artifacts.

CHAPTER ONE

PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY AREA

This chapter is all about the description of the research site. This is according to the characteristics found in the study area. It addresses the historical background, the physical and the human aspects around the research topic. It will vividly elaborate links between the research topic and the environment in which this is done. The human and physical aspects of the of the study area (Mankon) are well spelled out and defined to clarify the background of this study. This also enable the proper understanding of the geography of the Mankon and its people. Socio-economic and cultural elements of the Mankon people are given a detailed insight to bring out the Anthropology in it.

1. THE SETTING OF THE RESEARCH

Mankon, also known as Ala'ah Mankon is a village in the North West region of Cameroon. It is the host village of the capital of the North West region, Bamenda. Historically spelled Mankong, it is a geo-historic community constituting a large part of Bamenda in Cameroon, formed as an amalgamation of about five different ethnic groups. The Mankon fondom (kingdom) represents one of the oldest monarchies of the grassfield people of the Northwest Province. The fondom is ruled by a Fon (king) with rights to kinghood acquired by birth. The crowned Fon is usually a designated son of the deceased king, a child who was born only during his reign. (mankonkingdom.org).

2. GEOGRAPHICAL PRESENTATION OF MANKON

Mankon is a prominent first class Fondom (Kingdom) strategically located at the heart of Bamenda City Council in Mezam Division, North West Region of Cameroon.

Map 1 : Location of North West region in Cameroon
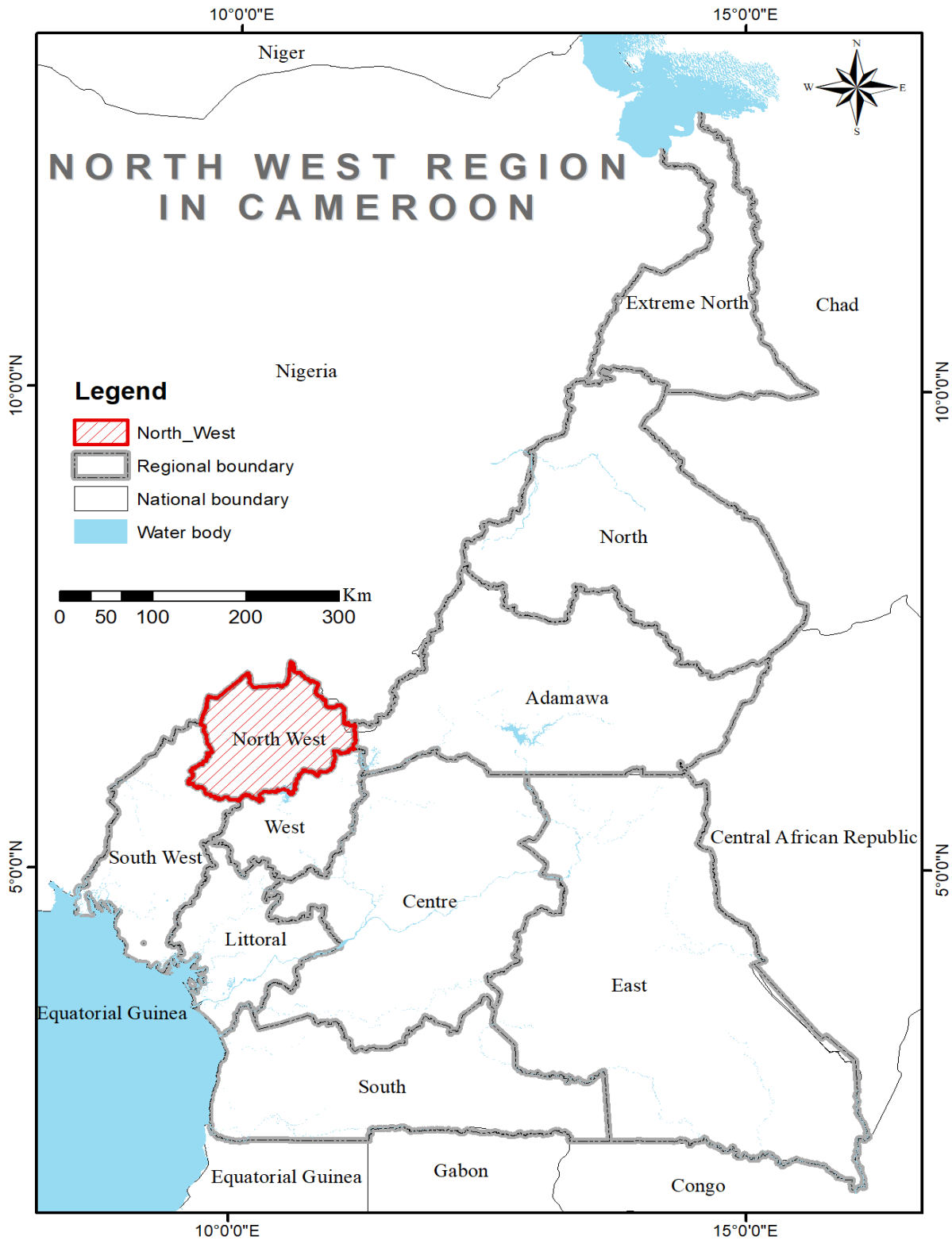
Source : National Institute of Catography (NIC), 2022.

Map 2 : Location of Mankon in the North-West Region Cameroon
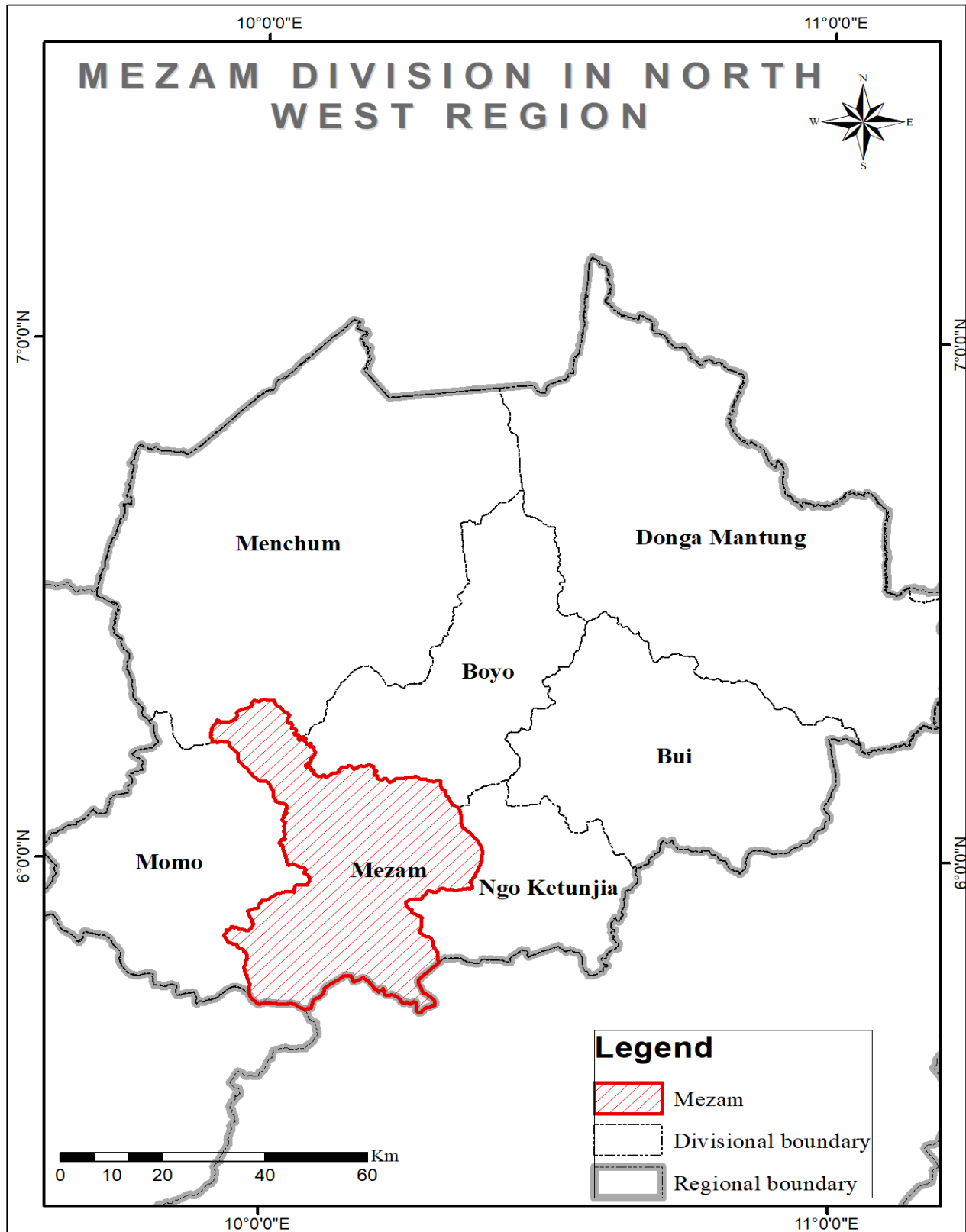
Source : National Institute of Catography (NIC), 2022.

Map 3 : The spartial layout of Mankon and environs

Source: National Institute of Catography (NIC), 2022.

The Mankon Fondom lies between longitude 6° 0' 0" east of Greenwich Meridian and latitude 10°0'0" north of the Equator. It is situated about 1000 meters above sea level with an estimated surface area of 315 square kilometers and a population of about 250.000 inhabitants, this fondom is bounded in the North by Bafut, East by Bamendankwe and Nkwen, West by Ngymbu, Meta and Bali and South by Mbatu and Nsongwa fondoms.www. mankon.org
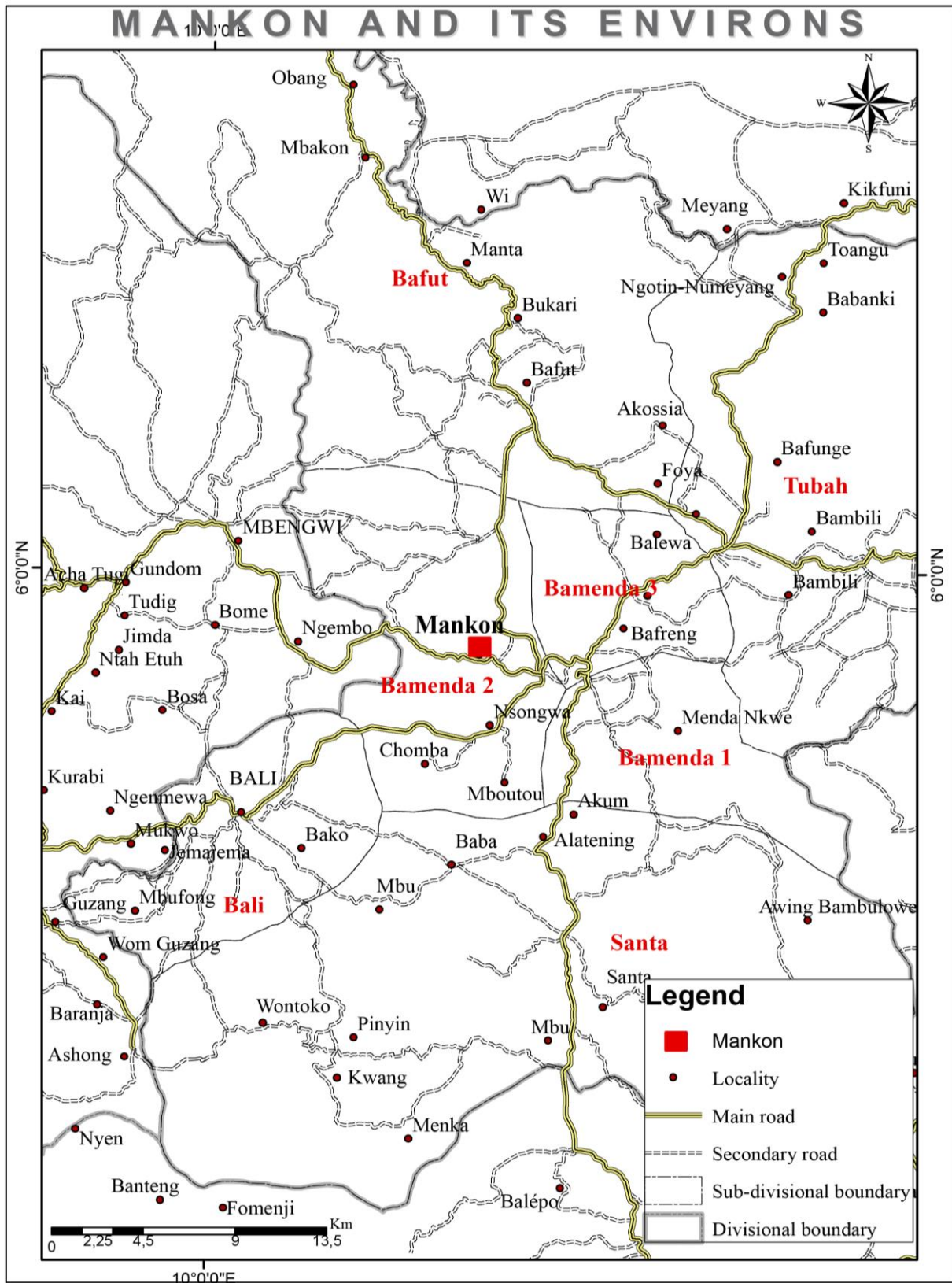
2.1. Climate

Mankon has two main seasons. That is, the dry season that runs from mid-October to mid-March and the rainy season which then covers the rest of the year. Fresh temperatures of about 21°C on the average marks these seasons. The hottest and driest seasons lasts for about three months, between December and February, this period is called *aboob*. This is the time for building houses, repairing roofs, hunting and land clearance by bush fires as well as a time for ceremonies and the fon (king)'s annual dance *abungafo*. The short rainy season *ntsoobmboeng*, lasts from February until May. This is mainly the time for cultivating the soil, sowing seeds or planting crops.   During *mugham,* the main rainy season between May and August, the first crops are harvested and new crops are sown; at this time of year, vegetation is lush and rivers are full. Usan is the period between September and December. It is the short dry season: rain is scarce, the rivers are nearly empty and the soil is arid. Before the bush fires commence, dry grass is harvested and used to repair roofs (Bi, 2008).

Table 1 : Climate data for Bamenda

Table 1:						Climate data for Bamenda						
Month	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Year**
Average high °C (°F)	25.9 (78.6)	26.8 (80.2)	26.3 (79.3)	25.6 (78.1)	24.8 (76.6)	23.9 (75.0)	22.1 (71.8)	22.1 (71.8)	23.9 (75.0)	23.4 (74.1)	24.2 (75.6)	25.5 (77.9)	24.5 (76.1)
Average low °C (°F)	13.2 (55.8)	14.5 (58.1)	16.4 (61.5)	16.7 (62.1)	16.7 (62.1)	16.0 (60.8)	15.4 (59.7)	15.5 (59.9)	15.5 (59.9)	15.8 (60.4)	14.7 (58.5)	13.1 (55.6)	15.3 (59.5)
Average rainfall mm (inches)	11.6 (0.46)	29.4 (1.16)	118.9 (4.68)	178.1 (7.01)	175.3 (6.90)	266.7 (10.50)	410.0 (16.14)	411.9 (16.22)	389.7 (15.34)	227.8 (8.97)	31.6 (1.24)	9.1 (0.36)	2,260.1 (88.98)
Average rainy days (≥ 0.1 mm)	2	3	12	19	21	24	27	27	27	23	6	1	192
Source : World Meteorological Organization, 2021.													

2.2. The relief of Mankon

The kingdom or chiefdom or fondom of Mankon is at an average altitude of 1000 meters. It is an elevated area of plateau and small hills, which make up part of Cameroon Grassfields or Grassland (prairies). Each hill has its own name, which may be that of its location or that of the prominent local vegetation. The hills may also be named after a resident notable or even after a memorable event. For example, *nta'ngoow* is the name given to the hill on which the inhabitants accused of witchcraft were tried. The name *nta'titon* means a hill which cannot be burned or conquered due to the strength of its people.

The Mezam River and its numerous tributaries bring abundant water to man, the land and animals. Humid south-westerly winds bring rain and humidity whilst the harmattan, the desert wind, brings dust and drought (mankonkingdom.org).

3. HUMAN POPULATION

Mankon village has some sixty-three quarters and includes an urban area that is part of Bamenda. Mankon has an estimated land area of about 315 square kilometers and an estimated population of about 50,000 inhabitants (estimate made in 1984). On the average, therefore, the population density is about 158 persons per square km (Nkwi & Warnier, 1982).

3.1. Languages

The Mankon language is one of the Ngemba languages spoken by the Mankon natives in the North Western part of Cameroon. According to field research, English is the main official language of communication, French (as one of the two official languages in the country) is also spoken. Pidgin English is the lingua franca and is widely spoken alongside the Mankon language which is widely spoken.

3.2. Tourism

The fondom is endow with tremendous tourism potentials and has rightly been described as a microcosm of Grassfield culture. The Mankon Royal Palace is one of Cameroon's major attractions and an important center of traditional African art. It is indeed the epicenter of all expressions of the art and culture of the people. The palace has gained fame through the hosting of grandiose cultural events as well as fascinating traditional performances and festivals like the famous *Abeug-afo* now transformed to the all-embracing biennial Mankon Grand Cultural Festival *Mbomala*. Mankon Palace also hosts a unique and venerated age-old traditional architecture, Atsum, a large sacred palace temple and the monumental Mankon Museum (museumcam.org). According to field research, the Mankon Sacred Forest which is the largest and well conserved forest in the region with over 123 identified interesting bird species. It is a seductive ecotourism destination. Also, the old palatial capital of Mankon with amazing tombs and shrines of 7 Fons (kings) and a palatial rest house are of great interest to tourists. All these blends with the beautiful landscape embellished by enticing vegetation to make Mankon a veritable touristic destination. The above is complemented with imposing and superb hotels in Mankon Town, restaurants, snacks, numerous transport agencies, good communication network, health facilities and above all, a generally friendly, hospitable and law- abiding population.

3.3. Historical evolution

According to the oral source (queen mother, age 65, female, royal palace, 18/12/20), about fifteen different ethnic groups contributed to the foundation of Mankon. They came from all directions and in particular from the Mbam valley and the Widekum region. According to one of the many oral traditions, which are at times contradictory, several of the Mankon groups were originally based in the Mbam Valley, the land of the Tikar, situated north-east of Foumban. As a result of wars, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries these groups emigrated to the west, towards the region now known as Wimbum, situated on the Nkambe Plateau. This is believed to have been the most important of the numerous migratory waves originating in this region. Renewed conflicts with other populations made these groups migrate south to Bamunkumbit in the Ndop Plain, where they stayed for some time before crossing the Bamileke region from Babadjou to Bangwa-Fontem via Dschang. They then reached the Ntarikon Forest in the Widekum region where they stayed for a short time. Widekum appears, therefore, to have been a temporary home for the Mankon people during their travels from the east, known as sa'nyom (where the sun rises), rather than their original home. This is why the Mankon language resembles that of the Bamumkumbit, Babadjou, Dschang and Bangwa, but differs from that of the original Widekum peeple. The Ntarikon Forest was hostile: there were too many mosquitoes and no rich hunting grounds. The Mankon people then moved on towards the east reaching Ala'nkyi, "the waterlogged land", a very fertile area, also rich in game. Their chief was Fon Ndemaghah VI, also called Mbangnuzhiy, a courageous fighter and a good leader. As time went on, the Mankon people, still looking for a safe area to settle, migrated again towards Fumndvu and finally to Fo Zan, the land they have occupied for four centuries right up to the present day.

The site had advantages: it was rich in game, the soil was fertile, the Mezam River to the south and the west, the Mili River to the north and a large swampy area to the east all made good natural defenses. To ensure security and occupational rights the Mankon people dug out trenches at several strategic points. The group was originally made up of seven main clans, utsey, and other smaller sub-clans, all under the same ruler. Due to widespread insecurity and wars, they organized themselves into stronger political groups, forming a militarily well-protected and economically strong confederation, which was joined by the Mbu' families. Within the confederation ruled by the Fon of Mankon, the clans or sub-clans enjoyed a degree of independence and could manage their own affairs. Their chiefs participated in the central administration of the kingdom, whilst recognizing the uncontested leadership of the Fon of

Mankon. Their overlord. They could organize hunting expeditions provided they paid tribute to the Fon by giving him the captured royal animals or their hides or, in the case of the elephant, the tusks. They could freely undertake commercial activities and marry within the community. There was a commercial center around the present palace and a network of well-kept footpaths connected it to the neighbouring chiefdoms. The confederation dissolved in January 1891 following an attack brought against Mankon by Eugen Zintgraff, the German explorer and trader. At that time the Germans were competing with the English and the French for the control of Cameroon, which was turning out to be an ideal ground for plantations. Thanks to his experience as an explorer, Zintgraff became a protagonist of the German penetration into Cameroon. In 1887 he presented a project to the German government with the objective of creating a series of commercial establishments within the country, particularly on the high plateau on the other side of Mount Cameroon. He thought that a road could be built which would develop trade between inland Cameroon and the coast. The cost of the operation was very high and the German government only gave Zintgraff the authorization to build one trading post at Barombi, not far from the Mungo River. Later on, in 1889, Zintgraff set up another trading post at Bali, where he had a "blood pact" with King Galega, who also promised him labour and soldiers when needed. Zintgraff's decision to conquer Mankon and Bafut, both considered by the Germans as "two large enemy tribes", was based upon his conviction that by controlling these two powerful chiefdoms the entire Bamenda region would fall under German colonial control. This would mean access to very cheap manual labour and primary materials, to the benefit of German industry and commerce.

In January 1891, with five German officers and about five thousand soldiers recruited from the Bali, Bakongwa and Meta' tribes, Zintgraff attacked the Mankon people. The latter had received information about the German's plan and had taken appropriate counter-measures. Fon Angwafo II had ordered the women, children and elders to evacuate the village and to stay several kilometres away. The soldiers in hiding were to occupy the strategic points in a semi-circle around the village. When Zintgraff's troops entered the capital of Mankon, they found it empty and thought that the inhabitants had flown in fear or as a sign of surrender. Whilst concentrating on destroying and burning everything, including the royal palace, the sacred house atsum and the market, a massive and unexpected counter-attack wiped them out. Four of the five European officers were killed in the battle. Zintgraff, himself badly hurt, had to flee: his life was saved by Fon Saingi of Babungo with whom he took refuge. The emissaries of Angwafo II, the Fon of Mankon, went to look for Zintgraff in Babungo. Standing in front
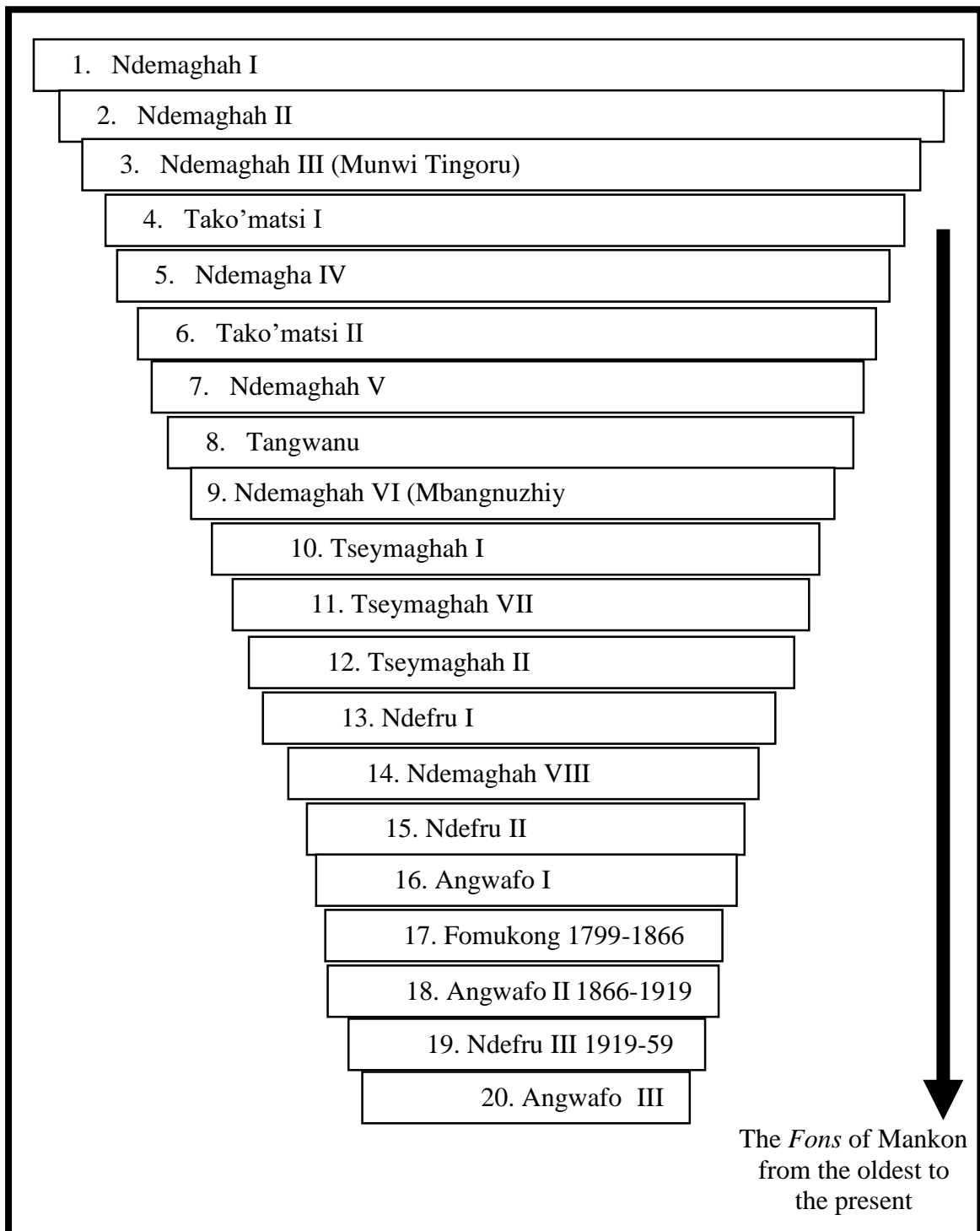
of his palace, Saingi gave them a message for Angwafo II. In the name of the friendship that united the two sovereigns, Saingi asked the Fon of Mankon to spare the life of the man who had sought refuge with him. Fon Agwafo II chose to honour the plea made by Fon Saingi.

The Mankon people then tried to re-establish amicable relations with their neighbours following the dissolution of the confederation. To avoid the massacre of the entire population in case of war, the area was rebuilt following a scattered pattern. All the inhabitants rebuilt their houses on their own land, far from the others; this is how most of the areas we now see in Mankon were established. The royal city was destroyed but its original site still the traditional capital and cultural Centre of the Mankon people today. The Germans had established their protectorate over Cameroon in July 1884. Defeated in the First World War, they lost all their colonies, which in the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919 were placed under the mandate of the League of Nations, with Cameroon under the British and French mandate. The country was divided into two sectors: the east, under French administration, and the west under the British. This part included the South where Mankon lies administered as an area of eastern Nigeria, whilst the north was considered as a region of northern Nigeria. Due to the division of the country, numerous Cameroonians from the French sector took refuge in Mankon to escape the forced labour imposed by the French colonial administration. The successor to Angwafo II, Fon Ndefru III, who ruled during the British colonial period from 1919 to 1959, resisted efforts to repatriate these refugees, arguing that, by being in his kingdom, they were under his protection. In 1992 the indirect system of administration was established. The British administration in South Cameroon decided to use the existing traditional political institutions, therefore admitting their efficiency and developing a relationship of co-operation with traditional chiefs. The Fons were named the chiefs of the customary tribunals, the Native administrative Courts, which dealt with civil affairs, whereas the Magistrates' Courts ruled over criminal affairs. The part of Cameroon under French mandate was proclaimed the Republic of Cameroon in 1960. In a plebiscite on 1 January 1961, the other part, under the British, voted in favour of joining (Notué, 2005).

3.3.1. The genealogy of the Mankon fons

Mankon is one of the larges tribes in the North West Region of Cameroon. The tribe is being ruled by a Fon and at the moment 21 Fons have ruled Mankon since its creation as presented below in the figure.

Graphic 1 : Royal genealogy of Mankon Fons

1. Ndemaghah I
2. Ndemaghah II
3. Ndemaghah III (Munwi Tingoru)
4. Tako'matsi I
5. Ndemagha IV
6. Tako'matsi II
7. Ndemaghah V
8. Tangwanu
9. Ndemaghah VI (Mbangnuzhiy
10. Tseymaghah I
11. Tseymaghah VII
12. Tseymaghah II
13. Ndefru I
14. Ndemaghah VIII
15. Ndefru II
16. Angwafo I
17. Fomukong 1799-1866
18. Angwafo II 1866-1919
19. Ndefru III 1919-59
20. Angwafo III

The *Fons* of Mankon from the oldest to the present

Source : Notué : 2005, p.39.

3.3.2. Arbitration

The quarter head points out that the Mankon people have a traditional way of resolving arguments. Five different levels of arbitration are contemplated: the head of the family judges
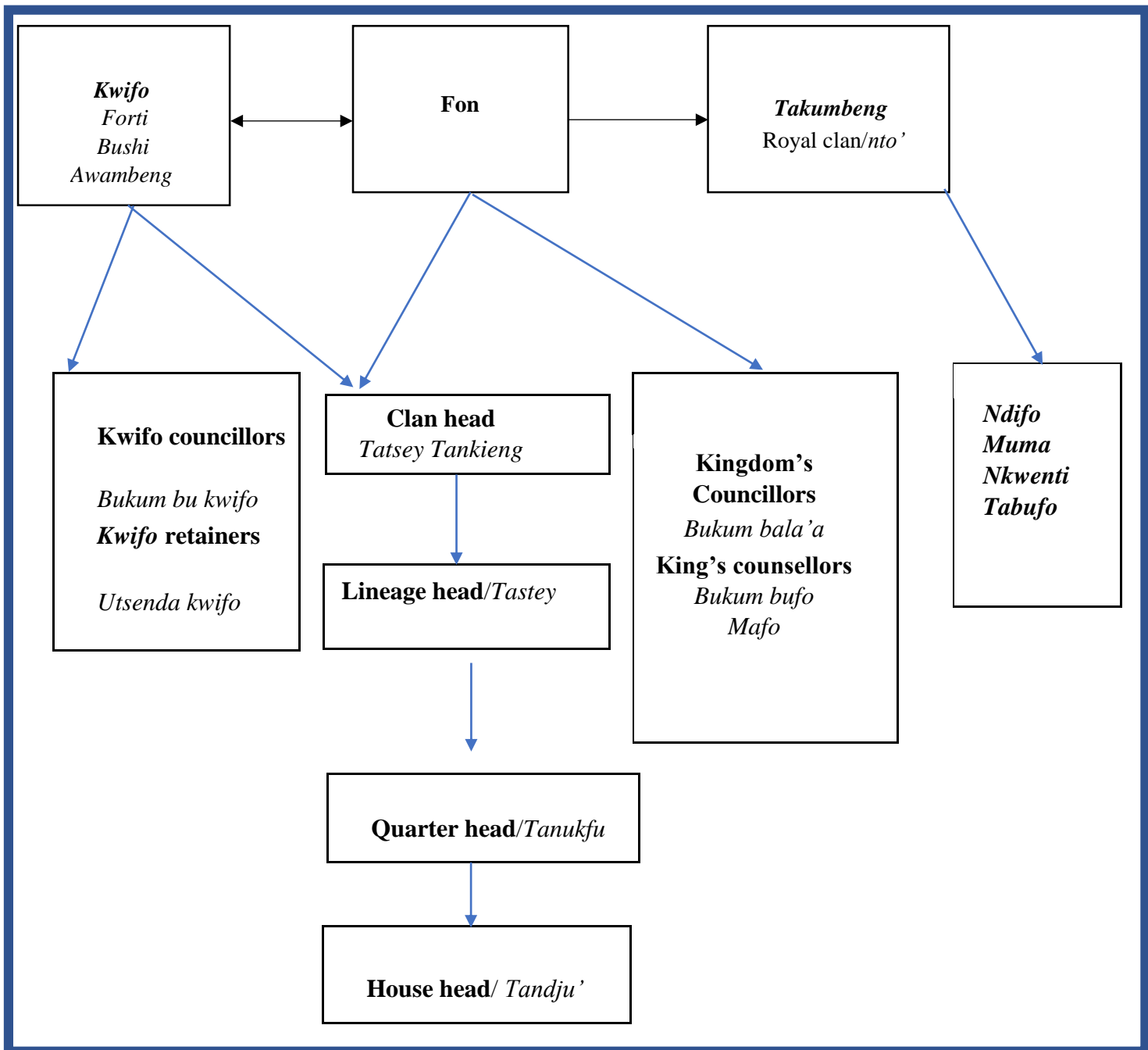
minor cases; the quarter council judges appeals. Problems concerning clan members are submitted to the *tatsey* or the clan head, serious cases are submitted to the fon's court or to the *bukum* council; nowadays the civil administration and the courts of justice deals with criminal cases. The *kwifo* is only involved to the traditional ceremonies to purify the people implicated in crimes, which are intended to prevent their repetition and avoid serious social consequences.

4. SOCIAL ORGANISATION

The *kwifo- or ngumba-* and the Fon are at the head of Mankon social organisation. The Fon is the secular and spiritual leader of the Mankon people and at the same time the *tatsey*, head of *nto',* the royal clan. He presides over religious rituals, the war council, and the council of *bukum,* consisting of notables chosen by the King himself, as determined by their lineage. The Fon is the highest magistrate in Mankon; he rules over every case, apart from those involving murder and high treason, which are judged by the state judiciary institutions. He is also the chief of all the traditional societies that rule community life. Succession to the throne is passed down from father to son; only when a Fon dies can his son succeed him. Once enthroned, the Fon can never abdicate; the eldest son cannot succeed his father. This can happen only if he has no brothers.

The *mafo* performs a very important role. She is the Fon's mother or one of his sisters if his mother is deceased. She is responsible for the wellbeing of the people, and she is responsible for the Fon's wives, the princes and princesses. She is also the Fon's counsellor and watches over the palace in his absence. She resolves disputes between the royal wives, organizes them and is hostess to palace guests. Lastly, she is responsible for the education of the Fon's new wives. The mafo acquires all the privileges of a clan head and, at the time of her death, she has the right to certain rituals normally reserved for the Fon.

Graphic 2 : Social Organisation

Kwifo *Forti* *Bushi* *Awambeng*	**Fon**	**Takumbeng** Royal clan/*nto'*

Kwifo councillors *Bukum bu kwifo* **Kwifo** **retainers** *Utsenda kwifo*	**Clan head** *Tatsey Tankieng*	**Kingdom's Councillors** *Bukum bala'a* **King's counsellors** *Bukum bufo* *Mafo*	***Ndifo*** ***Muma*** ***Nkwenti*** ***Tabufo***

Lineage head/*Tastey*

Quarter head/*Tanukfu*

House head/ *Tandju'*

Source: Concieved by the author, 2021.

Official titles are attributed to the members of the fon's family and his entourage in the Mankon palace. *Ndomu* is the official title of the fon's eldest son; *muma* is one of his brothers; tabufo is the father of the fon; *ndifo*, "guardian"; n*kwenti*, head of protocol and *atangtso*, head of the council of war.

Utsenda kwifo is the title of common servants working in the *kwifo* quarter. They are recruited from ordinary families or within the royal family after the fourth generation. At the

age of about ten they are taken to the palace by their father and entrusted to the older servants who become their tutors. The youths are taught to obey and serve the fon correctly. When they are about twenty years old, the *utsenda kwifo* receive a new name during a ceremony which marks the completion of their training, then they leave the palace, returning occasionally to serve.

Utsenda nushwim is the title of royal servants residing in the fon's quarters. Children chosen amongst families of royal or noble origin, they must serve in the palace and after spending ten years there, they officially leave with a wife. During a night-time ceremony called *afege*, friends and colleagues accompany them to their new dwellings. On this occasion in the nushwim, the royal cemetery where the fons' tombs are found, the naked bodies of the *utsenda nushwim* are coated with a special balm made from red camwood powder mixed with palm oil or palm wine in a container called *azo'bu.* interview, (notable, age 71, male, royal palace).

4.1. The Most Important Traditional Ceremonies

There exist a series of traditional and cultural ceremonies among the people of Mankon people that are celebrated either annually, or monthly or during ceremonies such as births, deaths among others.

4.1.1. Burials

According to a villager, Mankon, traditional burial rituals are still commonplace. When a notable dies, on the first day the mourning is presided over by the kwifo and the fon. On the eighth day (nowadays, the third day) the funeral ceremonies end with all the members of the deceased's family having their heads shaved and libations made by the heads of the family. The successor of the late notable is taken to the palace to receive the fons blessing. After having been coated with camwood powder, he returns to his dwelling, his neck decorated with a climbing herb called *ndoru* as a sign of the gods' blessings and protection. The family elders also bless the successor by allowing him to drink from their ritual horns and to sit on his father's stool. They also give him the personal items that belonged to the deceased: clothing, guns, knife, machete, hat and drinking horn.

4.1.2. Marriages

As far as marriage is concerned according to a villager, there are three types. Consensual marriage (ngoo *mangyie)* is celebrated after the dowry for the future bride has been paid by

the suitor. The bride is then taken to her fiancé's house at night, accompanied by a group of family members holding bamboo torches.

Elopement, usa' mangyie, is celebrated solely by the bride and groom. The man meets the girl, and they negotiate and come to an agreement. She then flees the family home to take refuge at her fiancé's house, where the wedding is celebrated. The dowry is paid when the couple live together.

The third type of marriage is a mixture of the first two. Either after having paid a large portion of the dowry, the girl and boy, as they are impatient, decide to live together without a ceremony, or the boy abducts the girl, if her mother did not have a wedding ceremony either. Bachelor's are not respected and are not given any important roles in the village.

4.1.3. Childbirth

According to a villager (teacher) The birth of a child is an important event. The members of the two families meet, eat and drink together. Having many children is a sign of power and happiness. The birth of twins is given great consideration and respect: the mother may even enter the palace and have the privilege of talking to the fon. According to tradition, presents must be given to the parents before seeing the twins when they are born. During the first five years (nowadays reduced to six months) the twins and their mother are kept isolated and only leave their home for important celebrations. The mother is given a place of honour at the royal palace. A female twin can become a royal wife whereas a male twin can become an *utsenda*, a royal servant.

4.1.4. Customs and Rituals of Birth

A village mechanic points out that, women who generally fail to bear children, no matter what good qualities they might possess, are treated with scorn because her line of descent will come to an end. Although the fault might not be hers, the husband can remedy the situation by fathering children with another wife or other wives, which, of course, ensures succession and continuity of the family line. It has always been the custom, especially during the pre-colonial and colonial periods, for women to carry their babies in a baby-carrier (üzü) made from antelope pelt. Usually, if it rained while they were outdoors, the child's nurse (ndimon) or mother would normally shelter herself and the baby from the showers with a raffia umbrella (*akongø ala'a or akongø assandze).* Pregnant women (*mabvue)* observe certain taboos to protect themselves and their children from harm and adversities. For instance, they are not

supposed to watch certain masqueraders (*mükomø*), for fear that the babies they are carrying will be deformed. In most cases, miscarriages are the result of some malediction that needed the intervention of a medicine man (*nwo ngang*). Indeed, the customs and rituals relating to birth have always varied, depending on whether it is normal or not. Normal births are those in which delivery is with cephalic presentation, whereas abnormal ones are those resulting in deformed children, albinos and so on. In the past, when a child was strange in appearance, it was taken to the forest, where it was abandoned to the gods. After this, special purification rites were performed on the woman to avert further reoccurrence and to lift the malediction that had befallen the family. The birth of deformed children in a family is believed to be the result of witchcraft, misfortune or divine punishment for wrongs committed. Unlike deformed children and albinos, twin children (*müfagø or bü nwi*) have always been beings from the other world. In addition, because they are rare, any family that has them is held in high esteem.

As regards the royal family, tradition holds that when a prince or princess is born, the child is not brought into the presence of the king unless its first hair has been shaved. Palm oil from an open-mouth calabash (*azo'nütong*) is used to anoint the baby's navel *(nütong)*.

Furthermore, another calabash with an open mouth (*azo'shwigünø*) containing a mixture of camwood powder and palm oil, with a sponge made from raffia leaves, is also used by the other wives of the king who come in to carry the baby of their husband. This cosmetic mixture is collected from the calabash by means of the raffia sponge, with which they anoint their bodies. This act is an expression of joy and happiness for the arrival of the newborn baby. (Awasom et al 2005)

4.1.5. Birth of Twin

In Mankon as well as in the Grassland as a whole, twin children are generally regarded as a blessing for the family that has them. It is a custom that, as soon as a woman gives birth to twins, she acquires the title *Maa ngyie*, while her husband is given that of *Taa ngyie*. Thus, if the woman's name is Ngum, she is known as Maa ngyie Ngum, and if the man's name is Awah, he is called *Taa ngyie* Awah. The birth of twins changes the status of the parents, in fact, the mother of the twin children can enter the palace without performing the *myie* ritual, which grants anyone the privilege of clapping and speaking directly to the king. (Awasom et al, 2005).

4.2. Economic organization of the mankon

The way in which the means of production and distribution of goods and services are organized. Mankon is the economic or commercial capital of the North West Region. The Mankon Commercial Avenue and its environs is not only host to regional head offices of most big companies in the country but also an area of intense economic activity. Here, numerous shops and supermarkets are readily available to offer all what one needs. The Mankon Main Market and Azire Food Market are the largest markets in the region thereby confirming Mankon as the economic hub of the region the main economic activity of the indigenous population is agriculture. The people grow food crops like beans, maize, cassava, cocoyam, plantains, peanuts, potatoes, and a variety of vegetables and tap raffia wine for their own consumption and marketing (mankonkingdom.org).

Table 2 : Activities and types of items

ACTIVITIES AND PERSONS	TYPES OF ITEMS
Agriculture [women and men] Animal farming [men]	Beans, maize, cassava, cocoyam, plantains, yams, sweet potatoes, groundnuts, pumpkin Chickens, goats, pigs, cows
Tapping [men]	Palm wine
Handicraft; weaving, needling [women] carving [musical instruments]	Weaving; chairs, baskets. Needling Togho traditional wears, bags. Carving; drums, clay pots and calabash
Architecture [men]	Houses
Hunting [men]	Rabbit, snakes, monkeys, squirrels

Source : Interview data, 2020.

4.3. Religion of the Mankon people

In Mankon, there is freedom of worship. We have Christian denominations, Muslims, and traditional religion coexists. Many individuals combine beliefs and practices of Christian religion with traditional religion. Traditional religion here involves the veneration of ancestors and the belief that people, animals and natural objects are invested with spiritual powers. Sacred sites as well as ritualistic objects that accompanied ceremonies are respected. Holy places or shrines often include forests, streams, trees, or groves, stones, burial places of ancestors and sacred house in compounds of clan and lineage heads. Most of these ritual sites or sacred places are usually enclosed and access is generally forbidden to the public because there are certain conditions and traditional rights which need to be performed before you go

there. Ritualist performances depend on the situation at hand and the type of traditional rites and incantation to be done. Ritual knives, baskets, statues, and statuettes are used for performances in those special shrines fowl, goats, rams, are also sacrificed. Camwood, salt, palm oil, raffia wine and water are also important components of ritual performances. These ritual performances are done to commune with the ancestors, and ask for strength, good health, peace, and fertility. It is also a request for forgiveness if they have done wrong within a certain period. There is therefore a permanent link between those the living, the dead and those yet to be born (Zee et al, 2005).

4.3.1. Traditional religion

For the Mankon people, the traditional religion still has an important role in the protection of their activities, environment, and themselves. Sacred sites, as well as the ritual objects that accompany ceremonies and celebrations are, therefore, respected.

Nusa' is a ritual where the people guided by the fon and the quarter heads use prayer blocks that they scratch with knives, placing them over different kinds of leaves and herbs brought by the citizens present and asking their gods to chase away evil spirits, diseases and enemies and to foster fertility.

As far as the ala'nkyi rituals are concerned, the fon and his notables perform them, when necessary, to thank the gods for blessings received, to ask for protection, strength and abundant harvests from the sources of Ala'nkyi. On these occasions the fon prays and sacrifices goats and chickens. The kwifo libations are celebrated on or next to certain large stone blades standing like pillars placed in a special area of the Ala'nkyi shrine, especially during times of hardship (Zee et al, 2005).

4.4. Education and enterprises

Mankon is the educational nerve center of the North West Region. A considerable number of nursery, primary, secondary, and high schools including tertiary and professional institutions are found in Mankon. These institutions are owned either by the government, Christian mission bodies or private individuals. After colonialism, the Europeans mission bodies established mission schools in the North West under the Presbyterian and Catholic Church. Interesting to note that a good number of prominent schools in the country with outstanding performance are in Mankon. These include Presbyterian Secondary School Mankon, Sacred Heart College Mankon, Our Lady of Lourdes College Mankon, G.B.H.S

Bamenda just to mention a few. In Mankon town you have some many enterprises and commercial centers, banks, credit unions like the Azire Credit Cooperation, Western Union, Money Gram. The fondom abounds with commercial banks, micro financial institutions, and co-operative credit unions Azire Credit Unions. National and international money transfer services are generally carried out in Mankon with ease (mankon kingdom.org).

4.5. Health care system

According to research, health care centers in Mankon consists of biomedical treatment and traditional practices. Biomedical health care facilities are provided by the government, Christian missions as well as by private physicians. There are health centers, private clinics, a Sub Divisional hospital, and a regional hospital. Drugs are sold in established pharmacies as well as medicine stores. Traditional medicine practitioners include herbalist, diviners, and bone setters. Most of them now adapt to changing conditions by incorporating new ideas and medicines in their practices.

4.6. Transportation network and communication

There are as follows.

4.6.1. Network, transport, and communication

The road network in Mankon is relatively good. Roads in Mankon Town are paved and tarred. Though roads in Mankon rural are largely earth roads, they remain practicable throughout the year.

There are a good number of intercity bus stations and travel agencies in Mankon rendering both day and night transport services. There also exist an airport in Mankon, the Bamenda Airport. However, it has not been functional for the past years.

Efficient telecommunication services exist in Mankon especially in urban Mankon. There is the Mankon Post office, telephone, fax, and internet facilities offered by CAMTEL, MTN, ORANGE Cameroun, NEXTEL and other internet service providers. Computer services are also offered in most parts of the town. There are equally radio and TV stations in Mankon, including newspaper bureaus and printing press (mankonkingdom.org).

4.6.2. Food and Etiquette

According to field research, the Mankon population is basically self-sufficient in food and drinks. Meals consist of cooked cereal or root staple accompanied by sauce or stew.

Dishes like *achu* which is the main traditional meal of the people, is composed of pounded cocoyams and served in a plate or a leave in a circular form or shape. This circle signifies the unity and strength of the Mankon people and it is accompanied with "yellow" or "black" soup, which is eaten with one finger which means one and indivisible. The *achu* is a meal which shows the strong bond of the Mankon people. Water fufu, garri and eru, porridge plantains, cornfufu, cornchaff, rice and koki are a delicacy depending on the seasons. These dishes alongside other African and European dishes are served in both and homes and restaurants.

Picture 1 : *Achu*, a traditional meal of the people of Mankon

Source: Bih Henritta, June 2022.

Picture 2 : Rafia nuts (ankop)

Source : Bih Henritta, June 2022.

In the Mankon community, the *ankop* is considered as a chewable and kola. It is used to welcome very important personalities and guests. It is also used as traditional medicine, also, pregnant women suffering from nausea can use it as an anti-nausea agent. It is used during ceremonies like marriages and burials. So, it is a symbol of hospitality. The fondom is also rich in fruits such as pawpaw, bananas, avocados, mangoes, pineapples, and vegetables. We also have raffia wine as well as bottled carbonated drinks, beer and wine are readily available and heavily consumed during the visit of an honoured quest, a wedding, funerals, festivals, or other celebrations. Sharing of food and drinks are some of the major ways to cement social relationships and express the high value on human company in this community.

Verbal greetings and handshakes are important part of daily etiquette, epitomizing hospitality, and trust. Mindful of the fact that Mankon has a hierarchically organized culture, there is much protocol regarding speaking and seating during an audience with the Fon (king), the venerated traditional authority of the fondom. Much respect is also accorded to elders, notable's clan and lineage heads.

4.7. Cultural associations

The Mankon community has different groups which include MACUDA which is mostly meant for the adults and MAYOCUDA which is meant for the youths. These associations are found out of the Mankon community. Their objectives are as follows; Reinforce unity ties between its members as well as with other peoples, through discussion cooperation, social integration, and tolerance. Furthermore, promote the economic, social, political, and cultural development of the Mankon people and ameliorating their standard of living. Also, any form of cooperation with any person, individual or cooperation with any person, individual or corporate, which can help in the realization of the Associations, aims objectives. Enhance the protection and promotion of the rights of the indigenous Mankon people and promote development of the community. (source: member of the association).

Conclusion

The presentation of the physical and human factors of the study area, has enable gain insight about Mankon, its relief features and human activities and many other facts about the area. This will help in the understanding of subsequent chapters and appreciation of the study area. The next chapter dwells on literature review, concepts, and theories.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW, THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The aim of this chapter is to acknowledge previous scientific studies that have been done on decentralization, culture and development in the Northwest Region, case study Mankon. This chapter begins with a review of existing literature on our topic, with key interest on the work of others followed by the presentation of theoretical and conceptual framework. It closes with the definition the key concepts of our study. A literature review is a comprehensive summary of previous research on a particular topic. The literature review surveys scholarly articles, books, and other sources relevant to a particular area of research. It should enumerate, describe, summarize, objectively evaluate, and clarify this previous research. Moreover, it gives a theoretical base for the research helps the author determine the nature of the research. Literature review acknowledges the work of previous researchers and in so doing assures the reader that the researcher's work has been well conceived.

1. HISTORY OF CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION

We cannot talk of decentralization without mentioning centralization. Centralization of authority is defined as the systematic and consistent concentration of authority or power in the central government at the expense of local self-government. The idea was first introduced in the Qin Dynasty of China. The Qin government was highly bureaucratic and was administered by a hierarchy of officials, all serving the first Emperor, Qin Shi Huang. The Quin Dynasty practiced all the things that Han Feizi taught, allowing Qin Shi Huang to own and control all his territories, including those conquered from other countries. Zheng and his advisers ended feudalism in China by setting up new laws and regulations under a centralized and bureaucratic government with a rigid centralization of authority. The term attracted attention in the 1950s and 1960s when British and French colonial administrations prepared colonies for independence by devolving responsibilities for certain programs to local authorities. In the 1980s decentralization came to the forefront of the development agenda alongside the renewed global emphasis on governance and human-centered approaches to human development. Today both developed and developing countries are pursing decentralization policies.

As Robert Ebel points out in his overview of decentralization: "The western world sees decentralization as an alternative to provide public services in a more cost-effective way". Developing countries are pursing decentralization reforms to counter economic inefficiencies, macroeconomic instability, and ineffective governance. Post-communist transition countries are embracing decentralization as a natural step in the shift to market economies and

democracy. Latin America is decentralizing because of political pressure to democratize. African states view decentralization as a path to national unity. There are many different reasons why governments pursue decentralization and there are numerous forms and degrees that decentralization can take on.

Decentralization is closely linked to the concept of subsidiarity, which proposes that functions (Or tasks) be devolved to the lowest level of social order that can complete them. As the UNDP states: "Decentralizing governance is the restructuring of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional and local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity, thus increasing the overall quality and effectiveness of the system of governance, while increasing the authority and capabilities of sub-national levels." There are three broad types of decentralization: political, administrative and fiscal.

- Political decentralization, which is generally defined as the extent to which political institutions track and collect citizen interests and turn them into policy decisions.
- Administrative decentralization: concerns how political institutions turn policy decisions into allocative outcomes through fiscal and regulatory actions.
- Fiscal decentralization regards the extent to which local entities collect taxes, undertake expenditures, and rectify imbalances. The main objective of decentralization is to create the most efficient and accountable form of government possible. Decentralization is often introduced to offset a problem that has caused dissatisfaction with a centralized system. (Stacey White, 2011)

There are three major forms of decentralization which are devolution, de-concentration, and delegation.

- Devolution refers to the full transfer of responsibility, decision-making, resources and revenue generation to a local level public authority that is autonomous and fully independent of the devolving authority. Units that are devolved are usually recognized as independent legal entities and are ideally elected (although not necessarily).
- De-concentration refers to the transfer of authority and responsibility from one level of the central government to another while maintaining the same hierarchical level of accountability from the local units to the central government ministry or agency, which has been decentralized. De-concentration can be seen as the first step in a newly decentralizing government to improve service delivery.

- Delegation redistributes authority and responsibility to local units of government or agencies that are not always necessarily branches or local offices of the delegating authority. While some transfer of accountability to the sub-national level units to which power is being delegated takes place, the bulk of accountability is still vertical and to the delegating central unit.

1.1. Decentralisation in Africa

Africa's encounter with various forms of local governance as has been argued, pre-dates colonialism (OlOWU and Wunsch 2004). Commentators point out that Africa's encounter with modes of social formations and indigenous governance systems which are associated with modern day decentralized governance such as markets, self-help community organization, farmers unions, and local interest groups has always been part of African societies.

Notwithstanding the above, formal attempts to institutionalized decentralized local governance in African only became perceptible with colonialist efforts. According to Crook and Manor (1998), historically, experimentations with decentralization in African dates to the colonial reforms of the 1950s; however, it must be noted that this experience differs from country to country, with the occurrence of local government in some countries stretching beyond colonial days.

Faced with mostly vast and difficult to traverse terrain, with fewer than is necessary colonial administrators, Africa's colonizers are believed to have initiated and implemented a form of decentralized local governance. The colonizer's primary tactic was helped by existing traditional rulers who became a preferred way to reach the hinterland. To achieve this mode of local governance therefore, colonizers are said to have created traditional chiefdoms where there were none and empowered them to carry out what can best be described in today's terms as a de-concentrated system mostly by way of implementing directives from central colonial governors (Olowu, 2004). The literature also confirms that, this form of local governance, often referred to as 'indirect rule' first appeared in Asian states, particularly in India in the early 1950s, and reached Africa by the 1960s (Mamdani, 1996; OlOWU and Wunsch, 2004). Comparatively, however, the objective of indirect rule differed completely from present day decentralized local governance. Although the administrative principle it adopted provided the impetus for decentralization as it is today.

At independence many African states, probably for their hatred of the colonial system quickly abolished any form of indirect rule. Further, it might have been realized that indirect rule merely served colonial interest to expand a cheap coverage of the territory, rather than to provide an opportunity neither for popular political participation and expression nor serve as a structure of accountability to the public as envisaged in tenets of modern decentralization and especially serve the interest of a growing numbers of educated elite. In addition, it did little to spearhead political, social, and economic development. As the literature has it, the traditional rulers favoured by indirect rule, were mostly illiterate, change averse, and variously appropriated the power and authority to acquire personal wealth to the chagrin of the growing educated elite (Firmin-Sellers and Sellers, 1999).

One of the major findings of the Fifth African Governance Forum, is that the fundamental challenge for good governance in Africa is to strengthen the political will in support of decentralization. The first step in this direction would be for leaders of the African countries to show their real commitment to decentralize. In many African countries, clear constitutional principles as well as legislative and regulatory frameworks, which are key for decentralization, are not yet in place. Other major constraints to effective political participation by the citizenry include: scarcity of resources, poorly trained cadres at the local government level, intra-partisan rivalries and non-responsive political parties, weak governance structures to control corruption and to promote accountability and transparency, and inadequate attention of local authorities to the importance of decentralisation.

But if we analyse the situation in Africa, most of the important prerequisites for successful decentralization are almost non-existent or in the very early stages of development, especially considering that some countries are emerging or have just emerged from conflict or crisis. Which are then the imperatives and reasons for decentralization in Africa?

For a long time, worsening poverty levels in Africa were explained in terms of poor economic performance. Emerging evidence, however, shows that economic growth alone is not sufficient to bring about, in a sustainable way, the needed reduction in poverty. In fact, for some African countries, GDP growth has come hand in hand with worsening social indicators, validating an established fact that while economic growth is important for poverty alleviation, particularly in the medium and long term, it is not sufficient by itself. In the African context, the lack of responsiveness of poverty to the economic stimulus is attributed in part to problems with governance, especially at the local level.

In pro-poor interventions, one of the primary hurdles is how to effectively target the poor. Proper targeting has generally proved to be elusive. The other challenge is how best to ensure that there is local ownership of the interventions. These considerations bring to the fore the issues of local governance. One of the lessons from past failures of poverty-focused interventions is the importance of avoiding a 'top down' approach to project design and implementation as this invariably results in ineffectiveness of the interventions.

Also, concerns regarding central administrative capacity, fiscal constraints, and the limited accountability at all levels of government have led African leaders to place increased emphasis on the importance of decentralization and developing local governance capacities. The other supporting argument for decentralization is the need for improved government effectiveness in the delivery of goods and services and revenue collection. External pressure by funding agencies like the World Bank, U.N. have also been important motivations for decentralization in many countries.

Furthermore, a good number of African countries see decentralization as a solution not only to the enhancement of the state's capacity to accelerate local development but also to enhance the voice and power of the poor in the continuing fight against poverty. On the political side, decentralization has been opted for as a solution to political challenges that seem to threaten national cohesion. Countries with a history of tensions (linguistic, ethnic/tribal, religious) have often found the federal approach to national governance as most suitable. Central politicians also tend to support decentralization to appeal to voters and win elections as a means of undercutting the power base of rivals.

However, despite the political and developmental motivations, decentralization is perhaps much more of a challenge in Africa than elsewhere in the world. It is, therefore, important that there is consensus on the decentralization policy, which is not centrally, or donor driven, and which has a holistic framework, focusing on all levels of government and civil society simultaneously. It should be based on improving the enabling environment and building capacities and not on projects. The need for immediate success and quick results can lead to quick fixes, which are unsustainable. As such, it is important that decentralization is viewed with a long-term perspective. African leadership will have to demonstrate patience and uninterrupted and determined commitment for the successful implementation of decentralization in the continent.

1.2. Decentralization in Cameroon

Cameroon is a Francophone country that practice decentralization to delegate power to the rural areas or local communities to effectuate development. This is a practice very common to French countries in Africa especially central African countries including Cameroon.

1.2.1. Historical evolution of decentralization in Cameroon

The concept of decentralization refers to decentralized, directed from center to periphery, organized around and such. This concept, expressed as the transfer of authority from the center to subordinate ends, is important both for more effective and productive management of the areas outside the center organization in public administration and for strengthening these areas in terms of democracy conception. Because of the increasing interest all over the world in issues such as ensuring service– need compliance, the importance of decisions made by the closest unit to the public and the reduction of bureaucratization have made implementation of decentralized systems a necessity in local regions?

According to Ozmen (2014) Decentralization can be defined as the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to subordinate or quasiindependent government organizations or the private sector. In the classical sense, this concept, which refers to the transfer of authority, responsibility, and resources from central government to local governments, has a decisive role in central government local government relations. Several definitions have been offered for decentralization. One of the most general defines it as the transfer of responsibilities and authority from higher to lower levels of government. Decentralization seeks to create relationships of accountability among citizens, service providers, and subnational governments and between the local and central governments.

Falleti (2004) maintains that decentralization is a process, a set of state reforms. It is a series of political reforms aiming for the transfer of responsibilities, resources and authority from higher level to lower levels of state. Decentralization does not include the transfer of authority among non-state actors. However, decentralization reforms may take place both in authoritarian and democratic environments, as decentralization and democratization do not have the same meaning. Even the political systems described as centralized and authoritarian can rearrange their structures and functions within the framework of decentralization.

Decentralization has political, administrative, and financial dimensions. The political dimension includes the transfer of state administration, legislative authority, and judicial autonomy to local governments. The administrative dimension refers to the transferring of some classical functions of the state to autonomous public institutions (Kose, 2004). The fiscal dimension includes intergovernmental fiscal relations in countries where, constitutional, and statutory powers of taxation, budget and expenditure rights are given to federal units within the federal state. Decentralization in its current form in Cameroon is based on the Constitution embodied in Law No. 96/06 of 18 January 1996 (Cheka, 2007) Law No.2004/17 of 22 July 2004 on the General Orientation defines decentralization as, the devolution by the State of special and appropriate resources to regional and local authorities for their economic, social health, education, cultural and sports development.

The history of decentralization in Cameroon from a historical perspective can be examine under three major historical periods; the pre-colonial period and the traditional system of political organization, the colonial period with reference to the various colonial policies with a devolutionary tendency that involved traditional authorities in socio-political administration. Finally, decentralization in the post independent era determined by exogenous and endogenous political forces.

The constitutional revision of 18 January 1996 defines the legal regime and sets out the general principles of the decentralization in Cameroon. Also, Cameroon is a unitary state and decentralized. The law of orientation of the decentralization promulgated on 22 July 2004 is clarified in the institutional context of decentralization in Cameroon. In its second article, it defines the decentralization as a transfer by the state to the decentralized territorial communities of skills and appropriate means; this transfer obeys the principles of subsidiarity, progressivity, and complementarity. For the Cameroonian legislature, decentralization must constitute the fundamental axis of promotion of development, democracy, and good governance at the local level. In the specific, it is question :

- In the area of promotion of local development: the achievement (increase, improvement) of basic social infrastructure. It also induces the improvement of incomes of the population at the base, thanks to the promotion and financing of income generating activities, for an improvement in the quality of life of populations and of their being.
- Regarding the strengthening of local democracy: the designation, either by consensus or by vote, by local populations of their representatives in the decision-making bodies.

- Regarding the promotion of good governance at the local level: the organization and functioning of communities through the exercise of power and the involvement of all the local actors (NGOs, organizations at the base, local population.). The control of the local administration in the community of the inhabitants of the community is a pledge of the local governance.

As far back as 1986, the President of Cameroon acknowledged the need to introduce decentralization in order to "make the people aware of their responsibilities and develop their sense of participation". From 2000 onwards international institutions urged the government of Cameroon to implement decentralization as part of its efforts to achieve the cancellation of its international debts. The government responded with the introduction of the Laws on Decentralization in 2004, which can only empower local authorities to become active players once financial and human resources are put at their disposal (Soren David). The 2004 Bill on the orientation of the decentralization process provides a number of essential objectives to include enabling concerned inhabitants to become resolutely involved in defining and managing affairs of their regional and local authorities, fostering and promoting the harmonious development of regional and local authorities on the basis of national solidarity, regional potential and inter-regional balance, and to place Cameroon in line with constitutional and international requirements in the area of decentralization (Cheka, 2007).

The bill presents 4 (four) major parts as follows, the principle of devolution powers (which lays down the procedure under which resources are devolved to the local and regional authorities for their socio-economic welfare); the organization and functioning of regional and local authorities (defines the functional mechanisms of the recipient authorities); supervision of regional and local authorities (which indicates the central authorities and constituted bodies which supervise the institutions); and monitoring organs of the decentralization process indicating the bodies in charge of supervision (Cheka, 2007).

The government of Cameroon views decentralization as the devolution by the state of special powers and appropriate resources to regional and local authorities which constitute the basic driving force for the promotion of development, democracy, and good governance at the local level. (Cheka, 2007). In general, local government only fulfils functions which the Ministry of Decentralization and Local Government assigns them to if deem appropriate. This is since the local authorities lack financial and human resources, so they are only able to take actions in limited areas if they receive support from the national government to perform

specific services. For example, local authorities are responsible for keeping registers relating to the civil status of inhabitants. They issue birth and death certificates and mayors have the power to perform marriages. (Soren David)

The relationship between local government and traditional authorities, which play an important role in most parts of Cameroon, has neither been clarified nor legalized. Thus, where informal cooperation between these two authorities is not intact, local government cannot fulfil its functions properly (Soren David).

1.2.2. Decentralization in Mankon

The term chieftaincy or traditional authority today is the relics of the multiple socio-political organizations that characterized pre-colonial African states before the advent of colonial rule. Chieftaincy is first and foremost a political unit created out of a multitude of kin groups all centered on a leader (Eyenga, 2015). Traditional authorities are the leaders of traditional communities. The word "traditional" refers to historic roots of leadership, which legitimizes the execution of power. There are many existing forms of traditional leadership.

"Traditional leadership" is anthropologically defined as including "those political, sociopolitical, and politico-religious structures that are rooted in the pre-colonial period, rather than in the creations of the colonial and post-colonial states. By these key considerations, traditional leaders can include kings, other aristocrats holding offices, heads of extended families, and office holders in decentralized polities, if their offices are rooted in precolonial states and other political entities (Donald, 2003).

Traditional leaders are the monarchs and aristocracies of Africa who have pre-colonial roots and their African language titles are often translated into English as "chiefs", "traditional leaders", "traditional authorities", "traditional rulers", "kings" and "natural rulers". Chieftaincy includes those political, socio-political, and politico-religious structures that are rooted in the pre-colonial period rather than in the creation of the colonial and post-colonial states, these offices we would consider to be "neo-traditional".

It should be noted that before the advent of colonialism to Africa and Cameroon in particular, the socio-political and administrative organization of the Cameroonian traditional societies was centered on a well-organized chieftaincy institution with the chief at the helm. In most African Traditional societies, political power was organized in such a way that the

chief who was at the apex of traditional administration delegated some powers and competences to other institutions that made up the administrative architecture of the village.

Using the case of the Grassfields of Cameroon, power structure was organized from family lineage head which was the smallest political unit, passing through the quarter head that coordinated quarter activities, the village head managed activities and finally the Fon was at the head of several villages that constituted Fondom. The Mankon fondom through its rich cultural heritage is segmented or decentralized culturally, that is we have the social organization, traditional organization, and the cultural elements of the fondom which are segmented. In the fondom, instructions flow from the highest governing body which is the fon to the smallest political unit known as the house head. In this power structure each institution has its role to play and its specific responsibilities for the smooth functioning of the Fondom.

2. DECENTRALISATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Decentralization can address poverty, gender inequality, environmental concerns, and the improvement of healthcare, education, and access to technology. Moreover, decentralization does not only affect government and civil service, but is conditional on the involvement of community organizations, stakeholders in the private sector, international aid organizations and citizens. Community participation and boosting grass roots development plays a key role in the sustainability of programs and quality of life improvements. Decentralization brings decision-making closer to the people and therefore yields programs and services that better address local needs. The challenge is to ensure that all stakeholders can and will voice their opinions. As part of the decentralization process, policy makers and politicians are integrating programs to address citizen participation, promote advocacy groups, incorporate women and the poor in policy decisions, aid in poverty reduction and environmental initiatives at the local level, and encourage subnational autonomy and creativity in addressing local needs.

Development, in this study is conceived of as a multi-dimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, reduction of inequality, eradication of absolute poverty, provision of employment and the necessities of life – water, food, clothing and shelter – without which life becomes impossible. Development is also characterized by a general movement away from those conditions of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory towards a situation or condition regarded as materially and spiritually better (Todaro Michael 1985).

In concrete terms, development involves such social goals as improved conditions of health and nutrition, augmented educational opportunities, expanded social welfare services, and increased mobility, as well as such economic ones like raised incomes, higher agricultural production, and increased employment opportunities (Owusu-Ansah 1976).

Tanzi (1996), Litvack et al. (1998) Wunsch (2001), Peterson (2001) and Smoke (2003) who emphasised that the structure of government and the design of the decentralization arrangement reflective of such design are vital factors to the success or failure of any form of decentralization. This being the case the peculiarity of each country will determine the mode of its decentralisation (Brancatti, 2005) so that decentralization is not a monolithic concept Smoke (2003). To this extent the context of the state, the rationale for the adoption of decentralisation, the structure of government and the environment and the political network remain critical factors in any decentralisation design so that decentralisation becomes a difficult phenomenon to study especially when a 'grand design' approach is adopted by the study nation.

2.1. Advantages of decentralisation

Local authorities tend to act more in line with local preferences and conditions, and their response to local needs is more expeditious. Decentralization provides opportunities to marginalized sectors of the community, like women in some countries, minorities etc., to participate at the local level, enabling a more sensitive approach to policy formulation and implementation. Because decentralization tends to enhance transparency and accountability, the amount of money wrongfully diverted away from development often declines. The Human Development Report (2003), underlines that in 55 countries, decentralization of government spending was closely associated with lower corruption among bureaucrats and reduced rent seeking by private parties - leaving more money to spend on basic services for poor people.

Decentralization increases effectiveness in service delivery, like reducing absenteeism among government employees, for example, in local schools and health clinics because elected officials receive complaints from their constituents and can improve discipline. Decentralization provides bureaucrats with early warnings of potential disasters, enabling quick remedial action.

Decentralization makes development projects more sustainable and cost effective because local people are more likely to be involved in their design, execution, and monitoring. Decentralization encourages communities to find solutions to their everyday problems,

yielding innovative ideas, which are more attuned to local conditions. Decentralization provides opportunities for more people, including the under-represented groups (like women in some countries, the poor, minorities etc.) to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

2.2. Disadvatages of decentralization

Decentralization requires co-ordination between levels of government and more regulation not less- to ensure basic transparency, accountability, and representation. The state also must raise adequate fiscal resources to support decentralization. For the above to be achieved, effective state capacity is necessary. Furthermore, to ensure that the decentralization effort is not hijacked by the local elites, and there is broad based participation, both a strong state and a mobilized civil society are required.

Decentralization is influenced by a country's size, population, its political and institutional inheritance, and diversity. These attributes have an important effect on the design and modalities of decentralization, which are crucial for its success. Appropriateness of functions to be decentralized, adequacy of fiscal resources to be transferred to the sub-national government, efficacy of administrative and legal setups and sufficiency of technical/skilled personnel at all levels of government are important ingredients for successful decentralization.

However, politicians have often used the slogan of decentralization as rhetoric to strengthen their own power base rather than improve governance. In practice, the lack of willingness of the center to relinquish or share power has been a major impediment to effective decentralization. In fact, the inability to make the transition to a people-centered governance, with its commensurate implications for participation and empowerment is perhaps a bigger bottleneck in the process of decentralization than legislative changes, which are also crucial.

Finally, lack of public awareness and an absence of a culture of participation and a weak "voice" of particularly the poor and marginalized sections of the population has inhibited the development of: firstly, a two way accountability system whereby local governments are not only supervised by an effective state government from above but also a strong civil society from below; secondly, a local government system which is responsive to the needs of all sections of populations, particularly the poor and the marginalized. As a matter of fact, the decision-making process is dominated by local elites and government functionaries with little, if any, participation by the masses.

3. DECENTRALIZATION AND CULTURE

However, after the paradoxical introduction of centralization in the transition period, the cultural and overall decentralization in the Macedonian public discourse gains greater and greater importance. Why is decentralization important? According to the recently published Expert Report of the European Council for Macedonia, the current system of cultural policy is strongly centralized and administratively managed. Being such, it is highly unsuitable to enable the release of the creative potentials existing in the cultural sector. The development has been hindered by the reshuffle of the personnel on higher positions, as well as a large part of the administrative personnel, depending on the schemes pertaining to the ruling party. It is precisely because of this that we should be thinking of decentralized decision making, thus being in favour of more structures essentially motivated for an unhindered cultural development.

To put it simply, ideological centralization does not correspond with democracy. Macedonia is terribly centralized. The national culture is closed in one (its own) ethno-cultural matrix, kept, and arbitrated by small circle of people and institutions. These institutions are most often situated in the capital, hence the gravity towards it. This situation poses a huge gap between the center and the peripheries. Only the capital of Macedonia can create a quality cultural product. The budget has monopolistic rights in the procurement of financial means for the cultural sector, with a small percentage of foreign finances, and the non-budget funds, due to a complete lack of effective mechanisms, have been disabled and discriminated against. The total power for decision-making is concentrated in the infamous commissions and Ministry Councilors, and in that, according to the valid current law for culture, the Minister plays the role of an absolute monarch. Nothing can be done without his/her signature.

Centralization, strict hierarchy, patriarchal subordination, "the firm hand", best expressed by the notorious motto – one God, one Nation, one Führer – is typical of the totalitarian, autocratic regimes. Centralization that embraces only one truth, one elite, great power concentrated in only a few people, not only is undesirable, it is also impossible in this contemporary modus vivendi. Pluralistic society in which we live in, different opportunities for emancipation and development of different cultural and ideologic sites, in time, starts to put pressure on the centralized structures, elites, stories, aesthetics, in the struggle to achieve their own interests, and that, in consequence, asks for additional means for pressure on the part of the privileged minority to retain the power. Let alone the fact that the one and centric

truth, in time, starts to wear out its aesthetic and semantic opportunities, and all it comes down to is just an empty meaningless phrase.

Decentralization is the most adequate form for today's post-secular society. According to the German erudite Jürgen Habermas, the post-secular society, i.e., the ideologically neutral state, does not prejudice its political decisions in any direction in the conflict between the rivalling claims. Regardless of the traumatic way it entered it, Macedonia, with the Ohrid Framework Agreement, has already become a post-secular society. However, for this society to work well, the aspirants belonging to different truths, faiths, ideologies, cultures, aesthetics, need to handle the meeting with the others, on a rational level and discard the use of violence as a means for propagating the truths about their religion. It's the minimal consensus, the necessary integrating moment without which decentralized stories disintegrate into anarchy and chaos. Without decentralization but also without the minimal netting, tangent, compromising, negotiated surfaces, we are again bound to fail, with only an exhausting, bloody battle ahead of us; a battle to centralize one dominant "truth", story, against all the others, that after a time, because of their "military" defeat shall have to step aside as subdued.

Cultural decentralization must mean reducing the power of the Minister and the Ministry. The arbitration for the distribution of the cultural goods must be transferred to several funds that will divide the money based on various criteria and program assignments. Instead of the strict division of means to the privileged national institutions as opposed to all the others, there should be equal conditions for accessing these cultural goods, between the national, local, public, private and the non-government cultural institutions. Strong local councils will autonomously distribute their funds based on criteria containing in them the particulars of every local cultural site.

The mayor of Veles, Ace Kocevski thinks that with the decentralization of government better conditions will emerge for cultural decentralization. In his opinion, the municipalities being the closest government to the citizens will be more interested than the centralized government to create better conditions for the cultural development on a local level. Decentralization will better the efficiency of the cultural institutions, having a better insight than the centralized managing organs into the everyday problems they are facing. Each municipality will have the chance to contribute to the affirmation and the development of its own cultural life, and the results will only be its own success or failure. The priorities for

investing in culture will be determined by the local government according to its needs, and it will provide a rational expenditure of the financial means in possession of the municipalities.

4. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

A theoretical framework is the result work of the researcher whereby concepts are selected from theories to help him/her to better understand and interpret data. An appropriate theoretical framework enables the researcher to situate and integrate the problem of the research (Mbonji, 2005). This gives room for clarity and better analysis of the data. This thus led us to use two theories: local autonomy.

4.1. The theory of local authonomy

The theory of local autonomy is the ability of local governments to have an independent impact on the well-being of their citizens. The authors also consider that local autonomy is a potential for local government, constrained by a central set laws and political factors as well as socio-economic conditions. Regarded from this point of view, the principle of local autonomy involves determining the tasks of local public administration authorities through the establishment of competence in solving problems of local interest as well as exclusion of the intervention of other authorities in the local administration. Pimentel is acknowledged as the father of local autonomy.

4.2. The theory of functionalism

The theory of functionalism is a theory which was first used by Bronislaw Malinowski in his long participant observation research conducted in the Trobiand Islands and published his book on Argonauts of the Western Pacific in 1922. According to Malinowski, the people of an institution perform certain tasks using physical equipment under the norms and rules of the institution. The effect of this work is called function, this effect is the fulfilment of human needs. Malinowski suggested that individuals have physiological needs (reproduction, food, shelter) and these needs are fulfilled by the social institutions. He talked about four basic instrumental needs (economics, social control, education, and political organization), that require institutional devices to get fulfilled.

The British anthropologist Radcliffe-Brown, suggested that a society is a system of relationships maintaining itself through cybernetic feedback, while institutions are orderly sets of relationships whose function is to maintain the society as a system. Traditional societies are

societies that are stable without conflicts, naturally aiming for a balance by means of institutions capable of satisfying the needs of man. This is why in this theme we have decided to use this theory.It is a theory based on the premise that all aspects of a society institutions, roles, norms serve a purpose and that all are indispensable for the long-term survival of the society.

5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this study highlights the relation between the variables in this study how the independent variables relate to the dependent variable (Decentralization, Culture and Development) which is our subject of interest. Independent variables are mainly the factors surrounding the occurrence of decentralization in this community. The independent variables include socio-demographic and socioeconomic indicators which might influence the occurrence indirectly while on the other hand we have sexual behaviour and sex education that could be a direct reason for adolescent pregnancy and later we have the outcome variables which are represented by their experiences and coping strategies which could also depend on the socio-demographic characteristics of participants as shown below.

5.1. The concept of decentralization

Decentralization according to the UNDP, or decentralizing governance, refers to the restructuring or reorganization of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional, and local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity, thus increasing the overall quality and effectiveness of the system of governance, while increasing the authority and capacities of sub-national levels. … Decentralization could also be expected to contribute to key elements of good governance, such as increasing people's opportunities for participation in economic, social, and political decisions; assisting in developing people's capacities; and enhancing government responsiveness, transparency and accountability."

5.2. The concpt of development

According to the UN Charter, "Development is related not only with the material needs of people but also with the improvement in social conditions. Hence, development does not mean economic development only. It is also social, cultural, and institutional progress".

The Cambridge Advanced Learners sees development as growth, change and more advancement. From the above perspectives, development can be in the political, cultural, economic, social and many other dimensions.

In another light, development can be understood as an improvement, growth or a positive change in the society. It involves social, technological, and economic transformation focusing on economic prosperity. If a community or people have the capacity to satisfy the basic needs of a larger portion of its people or population, we talk of a developed society.

According to Irish Aid (2006), development refers to the actions and activities in which individuals and communities participate. It occurs in the social, economic, political, and geographical and cultural areas where these individuals and communities exist. The local population of any given geographical area influences the outcome of development of that area. The local nature defines who participate and does what and at which level. In order to clearly define the concept of development, we spell out the level where this development is taking place which in the context of our study is in the socio-economic and cultural domains induced decentralisation.

The term development can equally be defined from two view points: from the view point of the local community and their needs and from the view point of changes taking place within the local, Alicia (2002). In the context of our study, we will take the two aspects into consideration. According to the Basic Needs approach, economic development is defined in terms of progress towards reducing the incidences of poverty, unemployment, and income inequalities. According to Human Development Report, (1996 p.1), economic development is the measurement of life expectancy, adult literacy, access to all levels of education as well as people's average incomes which creates freedom of choice. According to the Copenhagen Social Summit, (1995), social development is defined in three terms: poverty reduction, employment generation, and social and cultural harmony.

5.3. The concept of culture

Culture according to Mbonji Edjenguele is a set of solutions put in place by a community in other to solve their problem. Anthropologist Edward B. Taylor offered a broad definition, stating that culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

Conclusion

Literature review, exploiration of concepts and theories has help identify knowledge gaps gather more insights, which has helped in the better comprehension the subject and to understand the research topic in detail. The use of concepts and theories has also contributed to the comprehension of the work and to circumscribe the work into a scientific base. The next chapter of this study handles the findings of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

DECENTRALIZATION AND POLICY FRAMEWORK IN CAMEROON

This chapter dwells on the decentralization law of 2019 in Cameroon which was adopted due to the ongoing Socio-political crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, the Northwest and South West regions of Cameroon. This law was adopted in November 2019 because of the national dialogue convened in Yaounde to address principally the ongoing *Nord Ouest et Sud Ouest* (NOSO) crisis. The chapter brings out the main policies of the perception and laws of the States view of decentralization in Cameroon. It presents at each stage from the higher level to the local levels not neglecting the place of local authorities which is very fundamental in developmental and administrative issues. This chapter therefore paints a vivid picture of the decentralization policies in Cameroon.

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE DECENTRALIZATION POLICY/LAW

This law institutes the general code of regional and local authorities referred to hereinafter as "local authorities". It sets out: the common provisions applicable to local authorities, the status of local elected officials, the rules governing the organization and functioning of local authorities, the financial regime of local authorities, and special regulations applicable to certain local authorities. This first provision points out the place of the traditional authorities as key elements of the central administration in their different respective constituencies. The local authorities of the Republic shall be regions and councils. They shall carry out their activities with due respect for national unity and solidarity, territorial integrity, and the primacy of the State. Local authorities shall have equal status. No local authority may establish or exercise control over another. Any other such local authority shall be created by law.

The North-West and South-West Regions shall have a special status based on their language specificity and historical heritage. The special status referred to above shall be reflected regarding decentralization, in specificities in the organization and functioning of these two regions. The special status shall also entail respect for the peculiarity of the Anglophone education system and consideration of the specificities of the Anglo-Saxon legal system based on common law. The content of the specificities and peculiarities referred to in above shall be specified in separate instruments. Where necessary, tax and economic incentives may be granted through separate instruments to some regions, depending on their context. The general provision followed by book which provides the general framework of the decentralization law.

1.1. General Framework of Decentralization

- Decentralization shall consist of devolution by the State of special powers and appropriate resources to local authorities.

- Decentralization shall constitute the basic driving force for promotion of development, democracy, and good governance at the local level.

1.2. Part I: Free Administration of Local Authorities

Local authorities shall be administered freely by elected organs, under conditions laid down by law. The deliberative and executive organs of local authorities shall derive their power through universal suffrage. Local authorities may exceptionally be administered by unelected organs, in particular, pursuant to the provisions relating to the establishment of a special delegation.

❖ Administrative and Financial Autonomy of Local Authorities

Local authorities shall be public law legal persons. They shall have administrative and· financial ·autonomy in the management of regional and local interests and shall, by deliberation, address matters falling within their sphere of competence.

❖ **Administrative Autonomy of Local Authorities**

Local authorities shall have their own assets separate from those of the State and other public bodies and may execute projects in partnership with one another, the state, public, semi-public, and private enterprises under the terms and conditions provided by the regulations in place.

❖ **Financial Autonomy of Local Authorities**

Local authorities shall have their own budgets and resources for the management of regional and local interests.

The resources shall be freely managed by regional and local authorities under the conditions laid down by law.

❖ **Liability of Local Authorities**

Local authorities shall be solely liable for the timeliness of their decisions, in compliance with laws and regulations.

1.3. PART II: Devolution of Powers to Local Authorities Chapter I Principle of Devolution of power

The State shall devolve to local authorities the powers necessary for their economy, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development. Human and Material Resources Inherent in the Devolution of Powers.

❖ Human resources

Local authorities shall freely recruit and manage the staff needed for the purposes of their mandate, in accordance wi.th the laws and regulations in force.

❖ Material Resources

Devolution of power shall automatically entail the handover to the beneficiary local authority of all movable and immovable property in use, at the devolution date, for the exercise of such power. Each year, the Finance Law shall determine the fraction of State revenue to be allocated to the Common Decentralization Fund. The fraction may not be less than fifteen percent (15%). Expenditure corresponding to the exercise of devolved powers shall be assessed prior to devolution of such powers.

1.4. PART III: Mmanagement and use of the Private domain of the State, the Public Domain and the National Domain by Local Authorities

Projects or operations initiated by a region or council shall be established in accordance with the land laws and regulations in force. The State may transfer to local authorities all or part of its movable or immovable property within its private domain or conclude agreements with them relating to the use of such property. Projects or operations initiated by a local authority shall be implemented in accordance with the land laws and regulations in force.

1.5. Part IV

1.5.1. Legality of Actions of Councils and Regions

Local authorities shall carry out their missions in accordance with the Constitution as well as laws and regulations in force. No local authority may deliberate ·outside its statutory meetings, or on matters outside its jurisdiction or which undermine State security, law and order, national unity, or territorial integrity.

1.5.2. Participation of Citizens in the Actions of Councils and Regions

Any natural or legal person may propose to the council or regional executive any measures aimed at fostering the development and/or improving the functioning of the local authority concerned. Any inhabitant or taxpayer of a local authority may, at his expense, request the disclosure or obtain a complete or partial copy of the reports of deliberative organs, the budget, draft and annual performance reports, ·development plans, accounts, or orders, under the conditions laid down by regulation.

2. MANAGEMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

2.1. Public management

Public management shall consist in the direct management of a service by a local authority as laid down by regulation. Local public services directly managed by councils shall operate in accordance with the ordinary law applicable to State public services. For a local authority, delegated management shall consist in transferring the management of a public service to another corporate body. The different types of delegated management include concession, leasing, outsourcing, and mixed enterprise.

2.1.1. Local Public Establishments and Public Enterprises and shareholding in Public Semi-public and Private Entities

Local authorities may, by resolution of their deliberative organs, either acquire shares or bonds of companies responsible for operating local services, or receive as a royalty contribution or start up shares issued by the said companies, upon the prior approval of the State supervisory authority, following the maximum ·participation level set under this law.

2.1.2. Property of Local Authorities

The public and private property of a local authority shall comprise all movable and immovable property acquired either free of charge or against payment.

2.1.3. Contracts Concluded by Local Authorities

Members of the executive and the treasurer of a local authority may not, in any form whatsoever, either directly or iridirectly, bid for or be awarded contracts, under pain of cancellation of such contracts by the representative of the State. Private law contracts of ·local authorities shall be concluded in accordance with ordinary law.

2.1.4. Gifts and Legacies to Local Authorities

Resolutions of a local authority relating to the acceptance of gifts and legacies that entail expenses or conditions may be enforced only upon the approval 'of the minister in charge of local authorities. Plans and estimates shall be made available to the council or board of the local authority before any new construction or reconstruction work is executed on behalf of the local authority concerned.

2.2. Part V: Supervision and Support and Advice

The State shall provide support and advice for the effective exercise of the powers devolved and ensure the balanced development of local authorities based on national solidarity, regional and council potentials and interregional and inter-council balance. Under the authority of the President of ·the Republic, the minister in charge of local authorities and the representative of the State in the local authority shall exercise State control over local authorities and their establishments.

2.2.1. Control Mechanism

The decisions of local authorities shall be forwarded to the representative of the State in the said local authority, by registered letter or delivery at the competent service, against an acknowledgement of receipt. Electronic transmission of documents by local authorities to the representative of the State shall be admitted wnder the conditions laid dawn by the laws and regulations in force.

2.2.2. Effects of Control

The representative of the State shall, in writing, inform the chief of the council or regional executive of any illegalities noted in any document submitted to him.

The State and its agencies shall provide advice and support to local authorities. The support and advice shall consist in offering advice, opinions, suggestions, and information to local authorities in the exercise of their powers. A National Decentralization Board shall be setup. It shall be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of decentralization. An Inter-Ministerial committee on Local Services shall be set up. It shall be responsible for preparing and monitoring the devolution of powers and resources to local authorities.

2.3. PART VI : Decentralized Cooperation, Groupings and Partnerships

Decentralized cooperation shall mean any partnership between two or more local authorities, or their groupings established for the purpose of achieving common objectives. It may be carried out between Cameroonian local authorities or between the latter and foreign local authorities, under the terms and conditions laid down by the laws and regulations in force and in accordance with the international commitments of the State. The performance of their duties, local authorities may form or join various groupings to exercise common interest powers, by setting up public cooperation bodies through agreements, in accordance with the laws applicable in each case. Two or more regions may, on the initiative of their respective presidents, reach an understanding between themselves on matters of common regional interest included in their missions. The understanding shall be the subject of agreements authorized by the respective boards, signed by their presidents; and approved by order of the minister in charge of local authorities.

2.3.1. Status of Council Unions

Councils within the same division or region may, by a decision of at least a twothirds (2/3) Majority of members of each municipal council form a union for the purpose of implementing operations of inter-council interest. The council union shall be formed by an agreement signed by the mayors of the councils concerned. The said agreement shall set out the terms and conditions for the functioning and management of the union, as provided for in this law.

2.3.2. Organization and Functioning of the Council Union

Council union organs shall be:

- ❖ The council union board.
- ❖ The council union chairperson.

The union board provided for above shall comprise mayors, each assisted by 2 (two) councilors designated in each member council. It shall be headed by a chairperson elected from among the members of the union board for a one-year renewable term.

2.3.3. Status of Elected Officials

For the purposes of this law, "a local elected ·official" shall be any person holding an elective office in a local authority such as: municipal councillor; regional councillor; city

councilor, union board member; member of local authority bodies representing traditional rulers and designated ex officio.

2.4. Part I : Status and Attributes of a Local Elected Official

The status of a local elected official shall be ·acquired ·and lost in accordance with the laws and regulations governing the office concerned. The status of member of the local authority executive shall be established by order of the minister in charge of local authorities. The status of a local elected official shall entitle the elected person to a local elected official's card. During official ceremonies and in the solemn discharge of his duties within the territory of his local authority, the local elected official shall wear protocol attributes and insignia. It shall be mandatory for the local elected official to wear attributes and insignia during official events and ceremonies; official visits by Government authorities and important personalities to the local authority; marriage solemnizations; funeral of a local elected official in his local authority. Also, it shall be recommended wear insignia during sessions of the deliberative organ, all other meetings and public events.

2.5. Part II : Rights of Local Elected Officials

In the discharge of his duties, the local elected official shall enjoy the following rights; Right to Participation; Right to Session Allowance; Right to training and information ; Right to health ; Right to protection ; Right to means of transport and funeral ; Right to a funeral

2.5.1. Right to Participation

Local elected officials shall attend meetings, events and consultations organized in the local authority or in connection therewith. Every local elected official shall be entitled to a session allowance during the holding of a deliberative organ session or meeting, the amount of which shall be fixed by regulation.

2.5.2. Right to training and information

Local elected officials shall be entitled to training adapted to their office. Within 3 (three) months from its election, the deliberative organ of the local authority shall adopt a training plan for local elected officials. The plan shall lay down the guidelines, priorities and appropriations opened in this respect. The local authority may take out an insurance policy to cover cases of accident and illness involving a local elected official in the performance of his duties.

2.5.3. Right to protection

The local elected official shall be protected in accordance with the chimerical law in force and special laws against threats; contempt, violence, insults, or defamation committed against him in the exercise or because of his duties.

3. SPECIAL RIGHTS FOR ELECTED MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVES

In the discharge of his duties, the local elected official who is member of the executive of a local authority shall enjoy the following rights: Rights to Remuneration and Allowances; Right to Housing; Right to Leave; Right to Means of Transport; Right to Pension Benefits. Members of the executive of a local authority shall be entitled to a monthly remuneration, a duty allowance and an entertainment allowance, the payment terms and conditions of which shall be laid down by regulation.

3.1. Right to Pension Benefits

Members of the executive of a local authority shall be eligible for pension benefits in case of cessation of duty, under conditions laid down by the regulations in force. The abovementioned pension benefits shall be charged to the State budget.

3.2. Part III: Obligations of Local Elected Officials

The mayor, deputy mayors, the president, the first vice-president, the vice-presidents or members of the regional council executive shall devote themselves to the full exercise of their duties. The local elected official shall participate diligently in the meetings of the deliberative organ and the bodies to which he has been assigned. Members of the executive of a local authority shall be bound to reside in the local authority's chief town. Where a member of the executive does. not reside in the territory of his local authority, the minister in charge of local authorities may, after an unheeded formal notice by the representative of the State; suspend the remuneration of such member. ln case of repeated violation of the obligation of residency, the minister in charge of local authorities shall suspend such member of the executive from his duties: After 90 (ninety) days following the suspension, the member of the executive may be dismissed by decree of the President of the Republic. In the discharge of his duties, the local elected official shall pursue the general interest, to the exclusion of any direct or indirect personal interest, or any particular interest. The local elected official shall be bound by the obligations of confidentiality and reserve. To this end, he shall abstain from using; for his

personal interest or that of his relatives and friends or disclosing facts and information to which he became privy in the discharge or in connection with the discharge of his duties.

4. BOOK THREE : PART I : GENERAL PROVISIONS

The council shall be the basic local authority. Its overall objective shall be to ensure local development and improve the living environment and conditions of its inhabitants. The council shall be created .by decree of the President of the Republic which shall state its name, territorial jurisdiction, and headquarters. The President of the Republic may, by decree, as and when necessary, alter the name geographical boundaries and chief town of the council. He may also order the dissolution of a council by decree. The decree ordering dissolution shall decide on its attachment to one or more councils. Instruments to alter the territorial boundaries of one or more councils shall lay down the terms and conditions of such amendments, particularly those relating to the devolution of property.

4.1. PART II : Economic Development

The following powers shall be devolved to councils: Promotion of council agricultural, pastoral, artisanal and fish farming activities; Development and management of council tourist sites; Construction, equipping, management and maintenance of markets, motor parks and slaughterhouses; Organization of local trade fairs.

4.2. Environment and Management of Natural Resources

The following powers shall be devolved to councils:

- Drinking water supply.
- Cleaning of streets, roads, and council public areas.
- Industrial waste management, monitoring and control.
- Reforestation and creation of council woodlands.
- The fight against squalor; pollution and nuisances.

4.3. Spatial Planning, Regional Development, Town Planning and Housing

The following powers shall be devolved to councils:

- Creation and development of urban spaces.
- Preparation and implementation of council investment plans.

- Signing in conjunction with the State or the region, of performance contracts for the achievement of development goals.
- Preparation of land use plans, town planning, concerted development, land consolidation and urban renovation documents.
- Organization and management of urban public transport.

5. HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The following powers shall be devolved to councils:

5.1. Health and population

- Civil status registration ;
- Setting up, equipping, and managing the council health centers, in keeping with the health map.

5.2. Social welfare

- Participating in the upkeep and management, where necessary, of social advancement and reintegration centres;
- Creating, maintaining, and managing public cemeteries.
- Organizing and coordinating relief operations for the needy.

5.3. Educational, Sports and Cultural Development

5.3.1. Education, Literacy and Vocational Training the following powers shall be devolved to councils

5.3.2. Education:

- Setting up, managing, equipping, tending, and maintaining council nursery and primary schools as well as preschool establishments, in keeping with the school map; - Recruiting and managing the teaching and support staff of the said schools.

5.3.3. Literacy:

- Executing plans to eradicate illiteracy in conjunction with the regional administration,
- Participating in the setting-up and management of educational infrastructure and equipment.

5.3.4. Technical and vocational training:

- Preparing a local training and retraining forward plan.
- Drawing up a council plan for professional integration and reintegration.

5.4. Youth Affairs, Sports and Leisure

The following powers shall be devolved to councils : Promoting and coordinating sports and youth activities; Supporting sports associations.

5.4.1. Culture and Promotion of National Languages

The following powers shall be devolved to councils: **Culture:** Organizing cultural days, traditional cultural events, and literary and artistic competitions at local level.

5.4.2. Functioning of the Council Board

The council board shall meet in the council hall or the premises of the mayor's office. However, the mayor may exceptionally convene the council board on any appropriate premises located within the council's territory, where circumstances so require. In this case, he shall inform the representative of the State and the municipal councilors at least (7) seven days prior to the holding of the session. The council board shall be chaired by the mayor or, where he is unavoidably absent, by a deputy mayor in order of precedence.

Suspension, Dissolution, Termination of Duty and Replacement of the Council Board

The council board may be suspended by reasoned order of the minister in charge of local authorities in the event of :

- Commision of acts in violation of the Constitution.
- Breach of State security or public order.
- Jeopardizing other integrity of the national territorial.
- Prolonged impossibility to function normally.

The suspension provided for above may not exceed two (2) months. The President of the Republic may, by decree, dissolve a council board:

- In one of the cases provided for above.
- In case of persistence or impossibility to restore the situation that prevailed before, at the expiry of the time limit provided above.

5.5. PART IV : Special regime applicable to urban centres

- Because of their peculiarity, some urban centres may be raised to city councils by decree of the President of the Republic which shall determine their seats about territorial jurisdiction.

- The city council shall be alcohol authority composed of at least 2 (two) councils.

- The councils that make up the city council shall be referred to as sub-divislonal councils.

- The city council shall be referred to « city.... », immediately preceded by the name of the urban centre concerned.

5.5.1. Powers of the City Council

The city council shall have jurisdiction over any action pertaining to inter-council collaboration, major works, and structuring projects.

Accordingly, the following activities shall fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of the city council:

5.5.2. Organization and Functioning of the City Council

The city council shall function in accordance with the rules applicable of the council as provided for by this law. The city council deliberative organ shall be the city council board. The executive organ of the city council shall comprise the mayor of the city and deputy mayors. The city council board shall comprise mayors of sub-divisional councils and representatives designated from among sub-divisional councils. Its members shall be referred to as councilors. The city council board shall deliberate on all matters falling within its jurisdiction. Senators of the city council of attachment shall take part in the proceedings of the city council in an advisory capacity.

5.5.3. Powers of the Sub-divisional Council

The provisions of this law relating to councils shall be applicable to city councils and Sub-divisional councils. Sub-divisional councils shall exercise all the powers devolved to councils by this law, save for those explicitly devolved to city councils earlier mentioned.

5.5.4. Organization and Functioning of the Sub-divisional Council

The President of the Republic may by decree, subject any council to the provisions of this Part on account of its status and its level of development. The terms and conditions for transferring the assets and liabilities of the urban centre split into sub-divisional councils shall be laid down by order of the minister in charge of local authorities. The order provided for above shall be published within a maximum period 3 (three) months following the date of creation of the city council.

5.6. Book four : Rules applicable to regions

General Provisions

The region shall be a local authority composed of several divisions. It shall cover the same territorial boundaries of the region which is an administrative unit. The region shall have a general duty to promote economic development and social progress. As such, it shall contribute to harmonious, balanced, supportive and sustainable territorial development. The creation of regions, the modification of their names and their demarcation shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions of Article 61 of the Constitution. The chief town of the region as a local authority shall be the headquarters of the region as an administrative unit.

6. EDUCATIONAL, SPORTS AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The following powers shall be devolved upon regions:

6.1. Education

Participating in drawing up and implementing the regional portion of the national school map.

Creating, equipping, managing, and maintaining government secondary and high schools as well as colleges in the region.

6.2. Literacy

- Formulating and implementing regional plans to eliminate illiteracy.
- Preparing annual summary reports on the implementation of literacy campaign plans.

6.3. Vocational training

- Carrying out a comprehensive census of the region's trades and preparing a directory of existing vocational training courses with an indication of the required skills and training profiles.
- Participating in drawing up the regional portion of the school rnap relating to technical education arid vocational training.

6.4. Youth Affairs, Sports and Leisure

The following powers shall be devolved upon regions:

- Issuing authorisations to open educational centres duly approved by the representative of the state;
- Assist regional sport associations.

6.5. Culture and Promotion of National Languages

The following powers shall be devolved upon regions:

- Promoting and developing cultural activities.
- Contributirig to the surveillance and monitoring of the conservation status of historical sites and monuments and discovery of prehistoric vestiges.
- Promotion of national langages
- Encouraging functional command of national languages and producing the regional linguistic map.
- Participating in the promotion of publishing in national languages.

The Regional council shall be the deliberative organ of the region. It shall be composed of 90 (ninety) regional councilors whose term of office shall be five years. The regional Council shall comprise: Divisional representatives elected by indirect universal suffrage; Representatives of traditional rulers elected by their peers.

6.5.1. Duties of the Regional Council

The Regional Council shall settle regional matters by deliberation. It shall express an opinion whenever it is required by the laws and regulations or at the request of the representative of the State. It may express wishes through deliberations on all matters of regional interest. The Regional Council shall deliberate, on: Development plans and programs; Budgets and administrative and management accounts.

6.5.2. Functioning of the Regional Council

The Regional council shall meet in ordinary session once every quarter when convened by its President who shall establish the agenda thereof. The duration of each session may not exceed 8 (eight) days, save for the budget session, which may last 15 (fifteen) days. During the election of new regional councilors and during the initial establishment of Regional Councils the first session shall be convened as of right on the second following the proclamation of results. In this case, the session shall be convened by the representative of the state. The President of the Regional Council shall be the executive of the region. He shall be assisted by a regional bureau elected at the same time as him within the council. The regional bureau must reflect the sociological composition of the region.

6.5.3. Election of the President and the Regional Bureau

- During its maiden session the regional council shall elect from among its members a President assisted by a bureau comprising a senior Vice-president, a Vice-president, two questers and two secretaries.
- The President of the Regional Council shall be a native personality of the region elected from among members of the Council for the duration of the term of the Council - During the session referred to above, the regional council shall be chaired by its eldest member while the youngest member shall sit as session secretary.
- Election shall be by secret ballot and by an absolute majority of members of the regional council present and voting.

6.6. PART IV : Relations between Organs of the Region and the Representative of the State

The representative of the State or his duly mandated delegate shall, as of right, take part in regional council meetings. Whenever he so requests, the representative of the State or his delegate shall take the floor but shall not vote or chair the Regional Council meeting. His statements shall be recorded in the minutes of proceedings. At the first session of the year following the end of the representative of the State shall present a special report on the activities of State services in the region to the Regional Council. The special report shall be discussed in his presence.

7. SPECIAL STATUS OF THE NORTH-WEST AND SOUTH-WEST REGIONS

General Provisions

The North-West and South-West Regions shall have a special status in accordance with the provisions of Article 62 of the Constitution. The special status referred to above shall confer on the North-West and South-West Regions, a specific organizational and operational regime, based on the historical, social, and cultural values of these regions, with due respect for the primacy of the State and national unity and solidarity. In addition to the powers devolved on regions by this law, the North-West and South-West Regions shall exercise the following powers: Participating in the formulation of national public policies relating to the Anglophone education sub-subsystem; Setting up and managing regional development ta authorities; Participatihg in defining the status of traditional chiefdoms.

7.1. House of Chiefs

The House of Chiefs shall comprise 20 (twenty) members from among traditional rulers elected in accordance with the laws in force. The House of Chiefs shall rule on all matters falling within the powers of the Regional Assembly. It shall give its opinion on the following issues. The status of the traditional chiefdom. The management and conservation of historical sites, monuments, and vestiges. The organization of cultural and traditional events in the region. The collection and translation of elements of oral tradition.

7.2. Functioning of the Regional Assembly

Regional Executive Council members -shall be elected during the as of right session from among the regional councilors of the region and for the duration of the term of the council - The President and Vice-President of the North-West Regional Executive Council shall be native personalities elected from among members of the Regional Assembly for the duration of their term of office. The President and Vice-President of the South-West Regional Executive Council shall be native personalities elected from among members of the Regional Assembly for the duration of their term of office.

7.2.1. President and Vice-President of the Regional Executive Council

The President of the Regional Executive Council shall be the Chief Executive of the Region. As such, he shall: Be the interlocutor of the representative of the State; Represent the region in all civil matters and before the law courts. The President of the Regional Executive

Council shall come from the category of divisional representatives. The Vice-President of the Regional Executive Council shall come from the category of traditional rulers.

7.2.2. Regional Commissionner

The Commissioner for Economic development shall be responsible for implementing the policy of the region on the exercise of devolved powers in the fields of economic action, environmental and natural resources management, planning and territorial development, public works, town planning and housing.

The Commissioner for Health and Social Development shall be responsible for implementing the policy of the region on the exercise of devolved powers in the fields of health and social action.

7.2.3. Secretaries

Secretaries shall perform secretarial duties within each of the houses of the Regional Assembly. The duties of secretary and quester shall be laid down by the standing orders of the Regional Assembly of the North-West and south-West Regions.

7.2.4. Regional Administration

The rules relating to regional administration, in accordance with the provisions earlier mentioned above, shall apply equally to the North-West and South-West regions.

7.3. Status and Duties of the Public Independent Conciliator

The Public Independent Conciliator in the North-West and South-West Regions shall be responsible for: Examining and amicably settling disputes between users and regional and council administrations; Defending and protecting rights and freedom about the relationship between citizens and the region or the councils thereof.

7.4. Referrals to the Public Independent Conciliator

A complaint may be submitted to the Public independent Conciliator by any natural or legal person who considers that, his rights and freedoms have been infringed by the functioning of the regional or council administration or regional or council public institutions. A complaint may also be submitted to the Public independent Conciliator by any person who considers himself to be a victim of direct or indirect discrimination prohibited by law or by an international commitment duly ratified or approved by Cameroon.

8. BOOK FIVE : GENERAL PROVISIONS

The financial regime of regional and local authorities shall lay down all the rules relating to the nature, content, presentation, preparation, adoption, execution, and control of the execution of budgets of regions councils, city councils, council unions, regional and council public establishments and any other local authority set up by law.

8.1. Budget framework

Each year, the deliberative organ of the local authority shall establish a medium-term budget framework defining based on realistic economic assumptions, the trends over a minimum period of three(3) years, in : All expenditure and revenue of the local authority and its public establishments, including funding from the state, national and international donors, decentralized cooperation and all other partners ; The financing need or capacity of the local authority and its public establishments ; The financing components, as well as the overall level of financial debt of the local authority and its public establishments.

8.2. Part II

The financial year shall cover one calendar year. However, a supplementary period running from 1 to 31 January of the following year shall be granted to local authorities for the settlement of command operations at the close of the financial year. The full amount of expected revenue and expenditure to be incurred shall be indicated in the budget.

8.3. Part III : Budget of Local Authorities

The budget shall describe the local authority's resources and expenses authorized by the deliberative organ presented in the form of revenue and expenditure for a financial year.

The budget shall present all the programs that contribute to the economic, social, health, cultural and sports development of the local authority. The budget and programs of the local authority shall be consistent with the economic and financial objectives of the state.

8.4. Initial and Amending Budgets

The initial budget shall be voted by the deliberative organ and implemented at the beginning of the financical year. The amending budget shall, where appropriate, be voted by the deliberative organ during the financial year. The budget shall comprise: 2(two) parts: the first part shall be devoted to revenue and the second part to expenditure. All revenue shall be used to execute all expenditure.

8.4.1. Revenue

The revenue of local authorities described according to their type, shall comprise tax revenue, proceeds from the use of property and provision of services, allocations and subsidies, and cash and financing resources.

8.4.2. Tax revenue

The tax revenue of local authorities shall consist of all the taxes levied by State tax services or other relevant services or the local authority for the latter. All these levies shall be referred to as « local taxes » Local taxes shall comprise Council taxes; Additional council tax on state taxes and duties; Council levies;

8.4.3. Proceeds from the Use of Property and Provision of services

Proceeds from the use of regional or council property and services shall comprise: Revenue from regional or council public property; Revenue from regional or council private property; Revenue from provision of services.

8.4.4. Allocations and Subsidies

Local authorities shall receive allocations and subsidies from the State for the discharge of their duties. A general operating allocation shall be granted to sub-divisiorial councils by their city council of attachment.

8.5. Part IV : Preparation, Adoption and Approval of the Budget of Local Authorities

The budget of local authorities shall be prepared, adopted, and approved according to schedule and under the conditions laid down by a joint order of the Minister in Charge of regional and local authorities and the Minister in charge of Finance. - The schedule shall be consistent with the budget schedule of the state**.** The chief executive shall prepare the budget of local authorities. The budget estimates referred to in above shall be prepared based on the following: The joint circular letter of the Minister in charge of local authorities and the Minister in charge finance. The results of citizen. Consultations: The medium-term framework adopted following the budget orientation debate**.** The deliberative organ shall adopt the budget of the local authority no later than 15 December of each year, subject to the provisions outlined below. The deliberative organ shall be convened at least 15 (fifteen) days prior to the holding of the budgetary session during which the budget shall be adopted. This period may be reduced to 3 (three) days in case of emergency.

8.6. Part V : Execution of the Budget of Local Authorities

Authorizing officers, finance controllers and accounting officers shall be responsible for budget execution operations under the conditions laid down by regulations in force. - The duties of authorizing officer and accounting officer are and shall remain separate and incompatible regarding the execution of revenue and expenditure. The president of the regional council and the president of the regional executive council shall respectively be the authorizing officer of the budget of the region and the authorizing officer of the budget of the special status region. The mayor shall be the authorizing officer of the budgets of the council, city council and sub-divisional council.

8.7. Part VI : Accounting System of Local Authorities

Authorizing officers shall be bound to report on the implementation of programs and projects. They shall order the execution of the budget. In that capacity, they shall; Certify expenditure and validate revenue; Commit, validate, and authorise expenditure. The accounting officers of local authorities shall be State employees duly assigned as such and/or responsible for collecting, keeping, and handling funds and values. Each year they shall report on their management actions in accordance with the regulations in force.

8.7.1. Stores accounting

The chief executive shall be the stores authorizing officer of the local authority. He may be assisted by a state employee with the required qualifications. The stores authorizing officer shall be responsible for the consistency of records.

8.8. Part VII : Control of the Budget and Management of Local Authorities

Operations relating to the execution of the budget shall be subject to judicial control, administrative control, control by the deliberative organ and audits. The control operations referred to above shall cover the regularity of management actions and performance in the execution of programs.

8.8.1. Judicial control

The judicial control of the accounts of local authorities shall be conducted by the audit bench in accordance with the laws and regluations in force. Administrative control shall consist of The control exercised by the State control institutions and bodies; Financial and accounting control as defined by the financial regime of the state and other public entities; Internal audit conducted by the local authority executive. During the review of the draft budget

or the administrative account, the deliberative organ shall control the execution of the budget, as well as the related programs and projects. The deliberative organ may set up ad hoc committees on matters relating to the financial management of the local authority. The reports of these committees shall be submitted to the deliberative organ for consideration. Audits may be carried out at the request of the representative of the State, the deliberative organ, or the executive.

8.9. Book Six : Transitional, Miscellaneous and Final Provisions

As from 1st January 2023 the following shall be mandatory: Management of external financing. Budgeting of items; Cost analysis accounting; - Accrual-based accounting Revenue. When the mayor, the president of the regional council, the members of the regional bureau, the members of the regional executives, and the chairperson of a council union or any other regional or municipal councilor is convicted of a felony, his forfeiture shall be automatic. iii. Before the effective transfer of services and the establishment of the local public service, the conditions for the use of each State service by local authorities and the procedures for managing staff shall be governed by the regulations in force. iv. All previous provisions repugnant hereto are hereby repealed, notably: Law No. 2004/17 of 22 July 2004 on the orientation of decentralization.

Law No. 2004/18 of 22 July 2004 to lay down rules applicable to councils.

Law No. 2004/19 of 22 July 2004 to lay down rules applicable to regions; Law No. 2009/11 of 10 July 2009 on the financial regime of regional and local authorities.

This law shall be registered, published according to the procedure of urgency, and inserted in the Official Gazette in English and French.

Conclution

This chapter brings out the various resolutions that were apprehended after the 2019 national dialogue held in Yaounde because of the ongoing sociopolitical crisis in the two English speaking regions of Cameroon. Based on the decentralization law/policy which presents the various elements, which gives power to local authorities as a sub body of the government has gone a long way to promote development. Though it is not very effective but, in some areas, but to some extend it has been implemented in some areas. Taking the case of Mankon, it is alittle bit different because it is not only the state decentralization policy, but it involves the decentralization of cultural elements and cultural artifacts of the Fondom. These

cultural elements impact the culture of the people and development. All these cultural elements are presented in the following chapter.
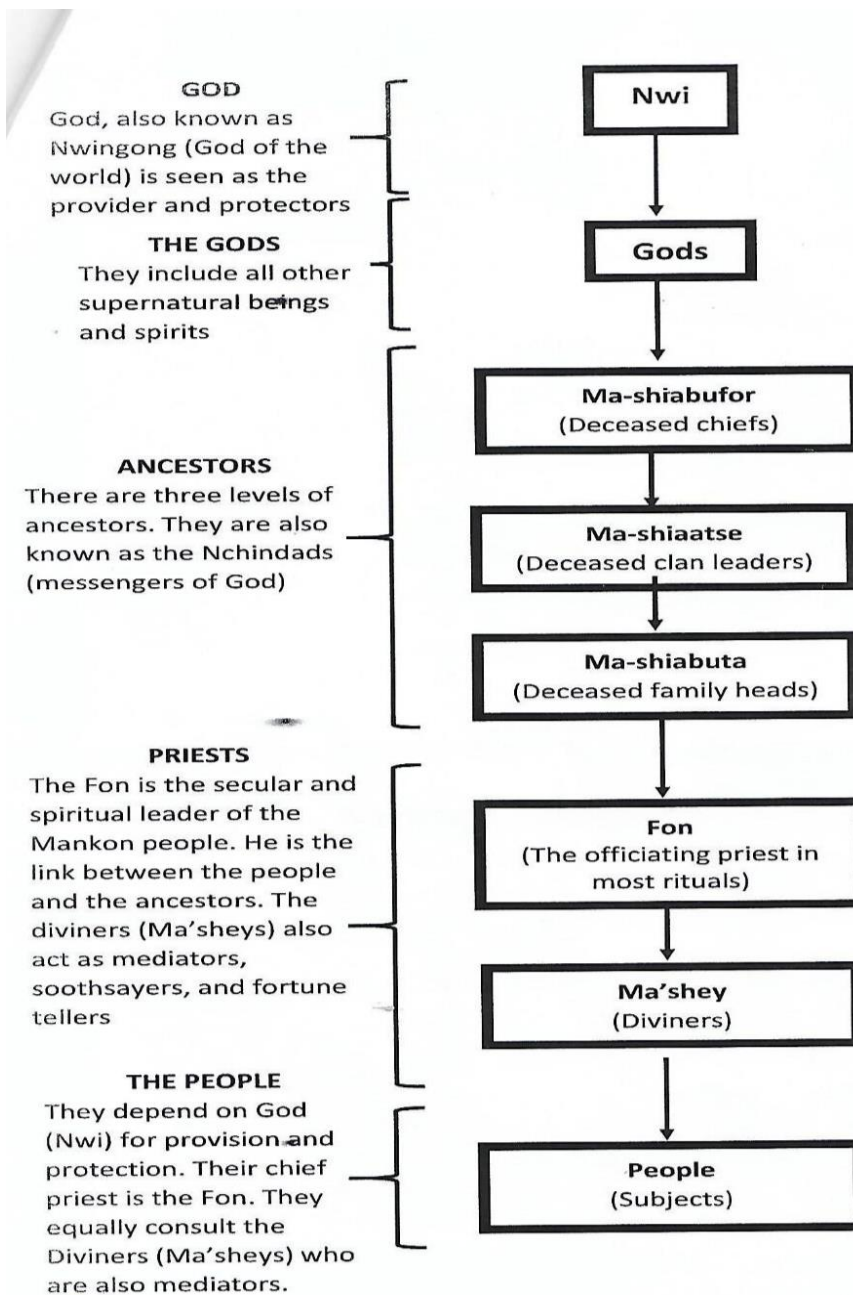
CHAPTER FOUR

MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE MANKON CULTURE

This chapter concentrates on the main elements of the Mankon Fondom and how they are operated. The chapter is important in that it portrays very important elements that shows the Anthropological setting of the the Mankon. It also shows how decentralized these structures are. The elements include Religion, political organization, kinship and marriage, and clans.

1.   RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE MANKON PEOPLE

According to the former Mankon Curator, Mankon has established norms, values and a system of beliefs just like other organized societies. Religion in Mankon can be considered as all the means (prayers, sacrifices, offerings, ceremonies) through which man asks for help from supernatural beings. The Mankon believe in the existence of a supernatural being or force that shapes and controls their lives, seen as the provider, giver and protector of life, this being is venerated through their ancestors, so that ancestral worship is very important in the fondom. T he Fondom has three main rituals which are The *Ala'nkyi* rituals are given special honour and importance because of the long existence of the Mankon people at the site, the *Nushwim* rituals includes the slaughtering of Rams and fowls, water and camwood are also used. Lastly, *Nusa* rituals, this ritual purifies the entire kingdom by sending away evil spirits, prayers are offered for fertility, abundance in harvest and deliverance from the plague of famine. The use camwood signifies peace, palm oil signifies fertility and water symbolizes purity. In terms of form, traditional rituals are the most important, while secret shrines are usually identified with streams, forests, trees and stones. Access to these sites is generally forbidden to the public, especially women, with only initiated members, chief priests and diviners being allowed to enter them. The importance of religion in Mankon is such that major events and festivities in the fondom are linked to and determined by it. The culture of the people is, therefore, inherent in their religion; consequently, in order to ensure continuity from one generation to another initiation rites, oral history, tradition, and participant methods of observation are used to transmit and preserve this religion. It should be noted that the Mankon people go to their shrines and go to church (Christianity). (Oral source, Zii, former Curator of the Mankon Meseum, female, age 41).

Graphic 3 : Religion in the decentralised Mankon

GOD
God, also known as Nwingong (God of the world) is seen as the provider and protectors

Nwi

THE GODS
They include all other supernatural beings and spirits

Gods

ANCESTORS
There are three levels of ancestors. They are also known as the Nchindads (messengers of God)

Ma-shiabufor
(Deceased chiefs)

Ma-shiaatse
(Deceased clan leaders)

Ma-shiabuta
(Deceased family heads)

PRIESTS
The Fon is the secular and spiritual leader of the Mankon people. He is the link between the people and the ancestors. The diviners (Ma'sheys) also act as mediators, soothsayers, and fortune tellers

Fon
(The officiating priest in most rituals)

Ma'shey
(Diviners)

THE PEOPLE
They depend on God (Nwi) for provision and protection. Their chief priest is the Fon. They equally consult the Diviners (Ma'sheys) who are also mediators.

People
(Subjects)

Source : Adopted and modified from Monji, (2001).

Talking about how Relgion in the Mankon Fondom potrays division from top to bottom. The figure above shows how the aspect of Religion is segmented or is decentralized within the Mankon culture.

1.1. Political organisation

Anthropologists identify political systems as human groups which have developed ways in which public decision-making, leadership, maintenance of social cohesion and order,

protection of group rights, and safety from external threats are handled (wikieducator.org, 2020). In the beginning the Mankon people had three *ùtséy* (clan) and three *bù tà butséy* (clan heads). The clans later increased to eight and with their clan heads. These clans split as a result of insecurity and treats from neighbouring villages. There are eight main clans of the Mankon kingdom. These clans are made up of lineages.

1.1.1. The Fon

- He is the head of the royal clan of the village. The Fon presides over rituals, the war council, and the council of notables whose members are chosen according to lineage.
- The Fon has a lot of power and is an authority above all other governing institutions in the land. He is the highest magistrate in Mankon, he takes decisions over every case except those involving murder and high treason, which are judged by the state judiciary institutions (Bi, 2008).
- The Fon sees into the problem of his subjects and finds solution following the customs and tradition of Mankon.
- He is also the chief of all the traditional societies that rule community life.
- The Fon acts as an intermediary between the villagers and the ancestors.

1.1.2.   Kwi'fo and Utsenda kwifo

- It is the highest governing secret society body of the land.
- It represents the whole land in spiritual matters
- They oversee the decision of the land while the fon is there to execute them
- The utsenda kwifo are the common servants working in the kwifo quarter, they oversee training youths to serve and obey the Fon correctly.

1.1.3. *Takumbeng* (Princes' society)

Together with the kwifo, the takumbeng members ensure maintenance of peace and good health, fertility and abundance harvest, protection from famine and disease. It is the body in charge of the affairs of the land.

1.1.4. Notables (*Bukum*)

- They give advice to the Fon concerning matters of the community
- They oversee crowning a new king
- They are the nobles appointed by the Fon by virtue of their birth and responsibilities.
- They are drawn from the kwifo and takumbeng lodges

- The bukum can impeach the ruler if he deviates from the customs and traditions of the people.

1.1.5. Quarter councils

Every quarter in Mankon has its own council that governs the day-to-day welfare of the people. It is the Fon who appoints these quarter heads and once appointed can only be replaced by someone from the same lineage.

1.1.6. *Ngangfo* (healers)

The members of this group are made up of healers and herbalists in Mankon. They are the spiritual leaders of the community whose responsibility is to prevent misfortunes in the land. They oversee good harvest and fertility through their prayers in the land.

2. REGULATORY SOCIETIES OF THE MANKON PEOPLE

The administration of Mankon is entrusted to people named by the Fon, depending on their status as clan chiefs or by their membership of one of the palace lodges. These people belong to regulatory societies, which assist and advise the Fon in order to rule and govern the Fondom. Amongst the most important of these societies are the *kwifo*, the highest authority in Mankon. It is the keeper of traditions and ensures order, it has very important judiciary and ritual functions and its judgements are definitive, without appeal. The *kwifo* participates in the administration of the kingdom, the enthronement and initiation of a king and burials of chiefs. Its executive members are exclusively male members of the land, and which includes the Fon, who is also part of the *takumbeng* of the royal clan. The *kwifo* members have no right to the throne, the Fon is the only prince who sees *kwifo* and is therefore, called the son of *kwifo*. Being the only member informed of events in the *takumbeng* and *kwifo*, his opinion is often decisive and respected by the two lodges when affairs of state are discussed (Forngang, 2005).

The *kwifo* is an institution that regulates social life rather than a secret society, as it is often said, although, like every government, it maintains a certain degree of secrecy in some affairs. It has the function of purifying people involved in certain crimes such as murder, suicide, arson and treason; it carries out protective libations when serious situations arise, or disasters threaten to exterminate the population. The symbol of this society, and therefore of authority, is two U-shaped iron gongs. The heads of the *kwifo* are three notables of common birth whose titles are forti, the chief bushi, the assistant chief: and awambeng, second assistant.

Official symbols of authority such as masks, instruments and objects of the sacred orchestra used during *kwifo* rituals, are entrusted to the forti and are kept in the societies' quarters in the palace, out of sight of the non-initiated. Not a monolithic group, the *kwifo* is made up of several independent lodges specialised in specific domains justice and policing, medicine, customary laws and religion and agricultural rites.

Kwifo tuntsu includes two types of people: those who are not descendants of the royal family or have lost their royal lineage (that is when the royal descent reaches the fifth generation) and those of shared birth or who are naturalised Mankon people. The members of the *kwifo tuntsu* meet most often in a special part of the palace called *Numo nu kwifo*, where they take decisions concerning the political and socio-cultural life of the kingdom. All decisions are then submitted to the Fon for approval. The *kwifo tuntso* members make announcements, usually in the main square and at the marketplace; their role is also to purify society from all that could degrade it.

Mankwakunkfung or *nkukom* are symbolic kwifo owned by each *tatsey* (clan chief). Their role is to reinforce kwifo decisions and to participate in the burial ceremonies of a chief or notable.

Kwifo adjwang is open to all men, including those of royal descent, provided they are after the fourth generation. Membership is by initiation. The members meet to discuss social issues; they are responsible for the funerals of princes, princesses, the king's wives, nobles and members of the society itself.

Takumbeng of the royal clan is the society of princes, whose title can be traced back to the fourth generation. Its role is ritual that of asking the gods to provide the Mankon people with good health, fertility, abundant harvests, peace and protection from famine and disease. Its symbols are *ndoeru takumbeng* and *ntsaru*: a small bamboo house with walls covered in torn young raffia leaves and housing a talking drum played as the *takumbeng* members perform their sacrifices.

Nushwim is a lodge whose members are male descendants from the king up to the fourth generation. The young princes, aged between ten and twelve, stay in the royal palace until they are old enough to be married and then they leave with an offficial title. During this period, they serve the Fon and learn Mankon customs. The *utsenda nushwim*, royal servants ending their service when they are about twenty, help the young princes in their work.

Bukum is a society made up of nobles belonging to the *kwifo* or *takumbeng*. One can belong to the society by inheritance or by direct nomination by the Fon. The *Bukum* council meets the Fon to discuss public affairs and take important decisions concerning the survival of the kingdom. The council also has the power to impeach the Fon if he does not respect the people's traditions or if he commits abomidable errors. In such a case he must apologies and pay a fine in kind: goats or palm wine, or both.

The members of the *ngangfo* society are chosen from the herbalists of all the Mankon clans. Their ritual role is to protect people from diseases, foster fertility and the well-being of the citizens as well as the fertility of the nation. They produce herbal remedies to heal the Fon and their fellow citizens. (Interview, Notable, male, age 56, palace).

Graphic 4 : The Mankon traditional administration
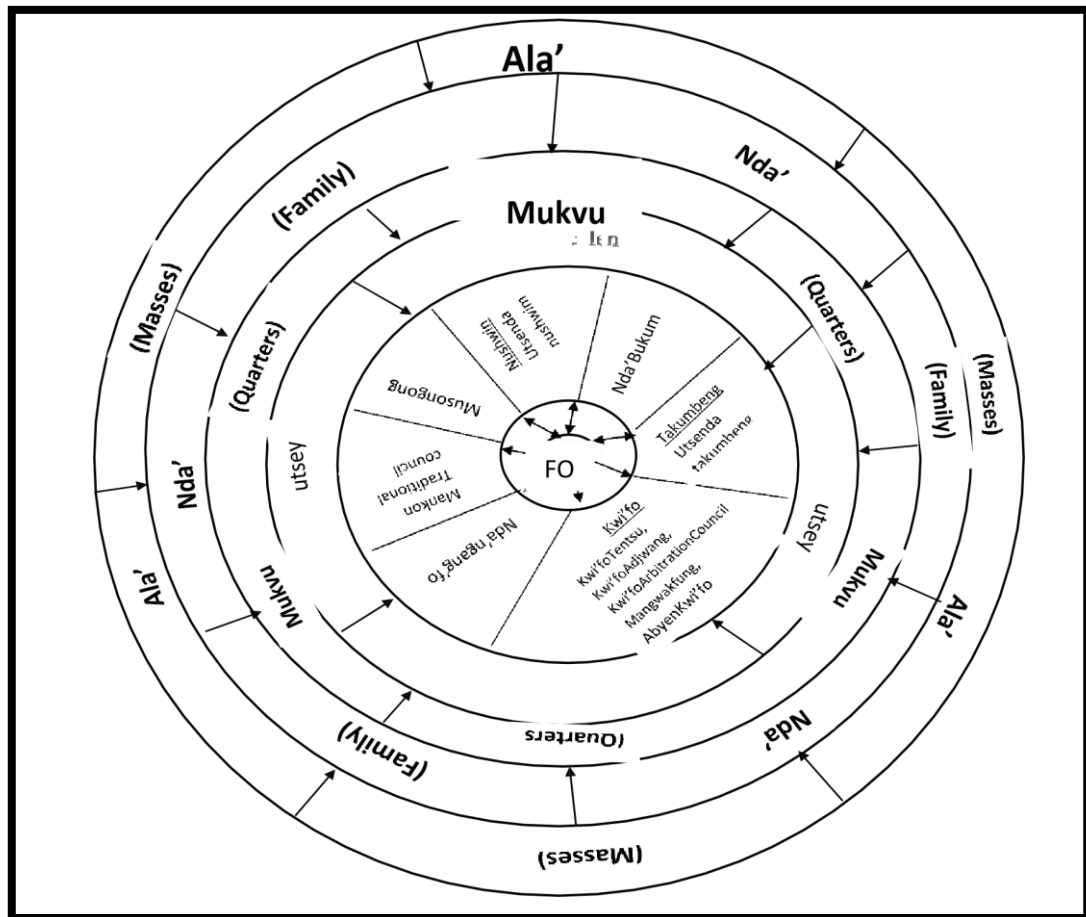
Source : Hanah Bi Nju, 2008.

⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯ Reciprocal actions

⎯⎯⎯⎯▶ Single actions

The above figure shows how the Mankon Fondom is structured or decentralized from the highest hierarchy to the lowest and their functions in the community.

3. THE KINGSHIP SYSTEM

Kinship system is the system of social relationships connecting people in a culture who are or are held to be related and defining and regulating their reciprocal obligations. According to (Gladwin, 1948), kinship systems vary in different forms of social organization respect of three characters (1) the extent to which genealogical relationships are recognized for social purposes, (2) the way in which relatives are classified and grouped, (3) the customs by which the behavior of relatives, as so recognized, classified and grouped, is regulated in their dealings with each other. In Mankon, kinship is regarded as family ties as seen below.

3.1. Father (*Tà*)

The father is the head of the family; he continues the lineage of his father through his name and position. He makes decision for the family and provides the needs of each and everyone in the house. He also protects the image of his family and represent his family anywhere if need be. In the Mankon community, fathers are the most respected personalities.

3.2. Mother (*Mà*)

She is the wife and assistance of the family when the husband is not around. She also takes after the name of her husband because she is married to that family. She works in collaboration with the husband so as consolidate a strong family tie. Women are the backbone of the family, and they are also considered as peace makers in the community. She cares for the family especially the children and ensures they have a solid fundamental doctrine of both the society and the community. She in charge of food and any domestic chores at home.

3.3. Grandfather (*Njumdama*)

He is the father to the mother or the father. He orientates his children and not forgetting the culture of the community because it's his duty to do so. He gives his blessing to his children during marriages or ceremonies. He settles disputes amongst his children and grandchildren. Generally, the role of grandfathers in the Mankon community is to see that their children and grandchildren learn and acquire the rich culture of the community to live happily.

3.4. Grandmother (*Nimu Njumdama*)

She is the mother to the father or the mother. She acts like assistance when the husband is not around. She ensures the unity of the family and passes her experience mother skills to her daughter and granddaughter. She visits her daughter and granddaughters when she is pregnant and puts to birth; this is to teach her them how to take care of a newborn babies.

3.5. Uncle (*Ntamah*)

He is the brother to the mother or the father. He is also considered as the father to the children.

He cares for his nieces and nephew. He intervenes in any external family matters.

3.6. Aunty (*Mumateuh*)

She is the sister to the father or mother. She acts like the mother to the children. She cares for her nephews and nieces. She helps as a comfort zone, protector and a support system.

3.7. Cousins (*Ebohboh*)

They are the children to the brother or sister of your parents. During childhood, they are not close as siblings, but their presence, whenever they appear brings maximum pleasure.in adult life some cousins are closer and more supportive than siblings.

3.8. Nephews (Mumuma Wumbaneh)

He is the son of one's brother or sister. They are sometimes very close to the children because they were raised differently. They add to the largeness of the family.

3.9. Nieces (Mumuma wumagia)

They are the daughters to the brother or sister. They add to the large nature of the family.

3.10. Stepfamily (*Ndim Ngwegaé*)

A family that is formed on the remarriage of a divorced or widowed person and that includes child or children. Stepfamilies or relative can be due to polygamy. In Mankon, the stepfamily has family ties as a member such families cannot marry each other because of the family ties in Mankon. (Interview, teacher, female, age 42, Yaoundé).

Graphic 5 : Kinship

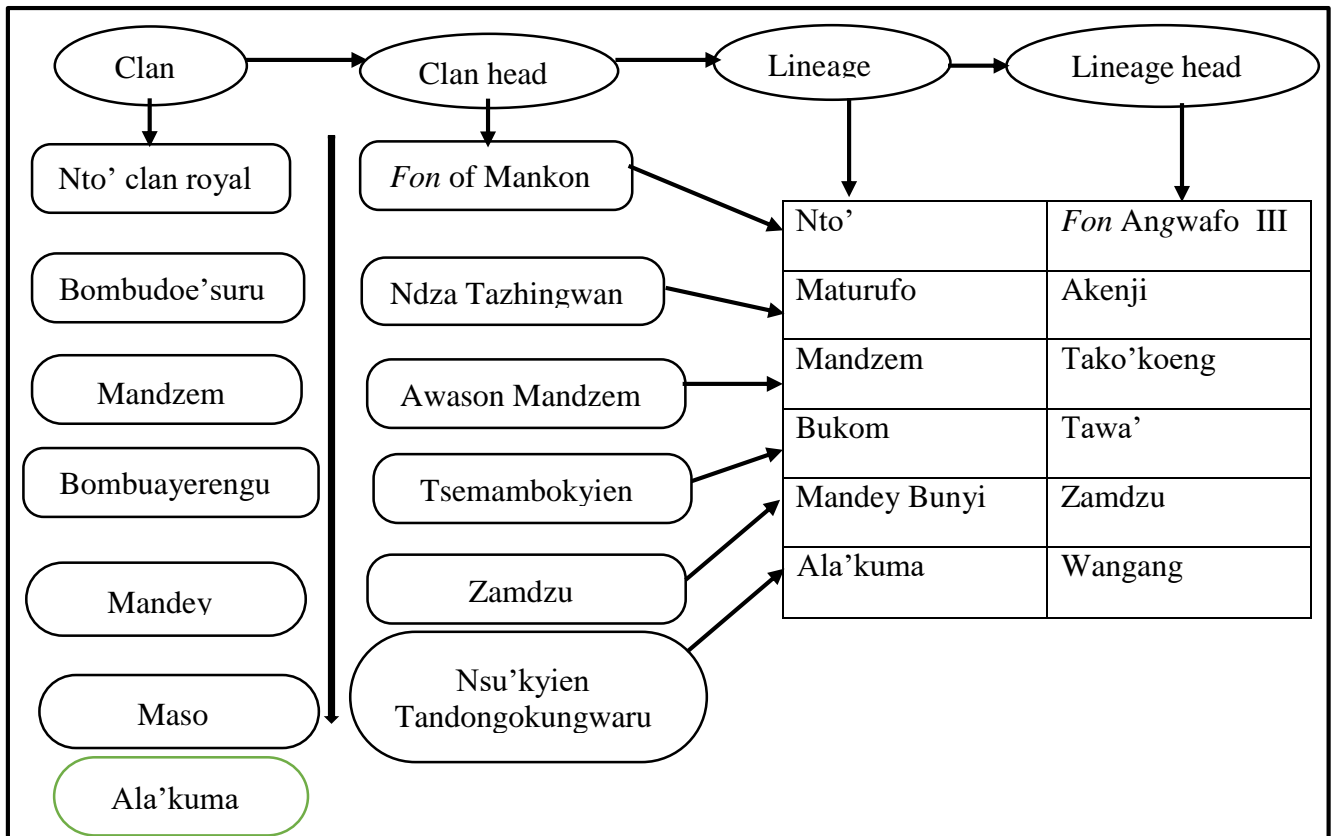|			
Grand father		Grand mother	
Father	Mother	Uncle	Aunt
Sister	Brother	Cousin	Nice/Nephew
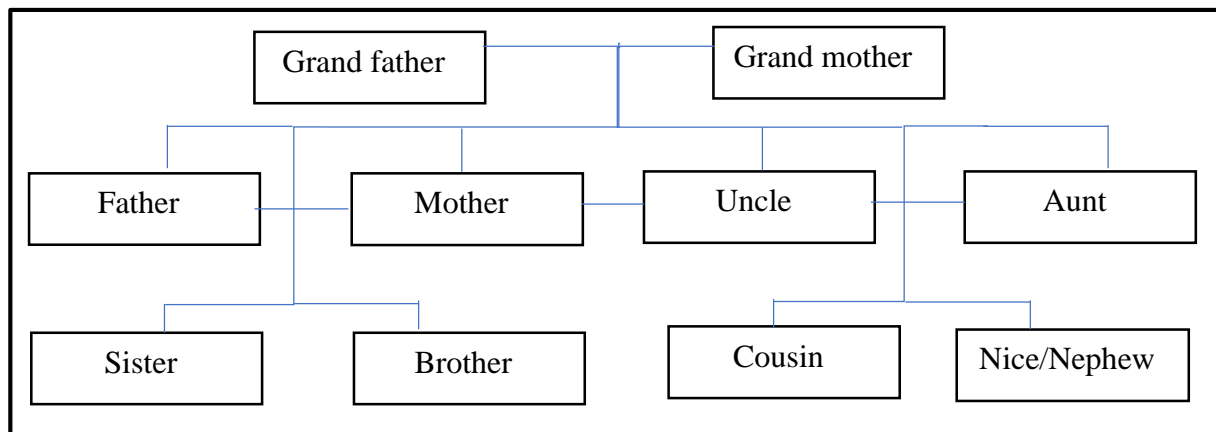
Source: Interview data, 2021.

The above figure above shows how the family ties or Kinship in Mankon is decentralized, from the Parents, Grandparents and the children. The Mankon people are so attached when it comes to family or relatives.

4. CLANS IN MANKON

The Mankon Fondom is divided into seven clans, these clans grew in terms of people and the clan heads or notables who administered them relied on power from the Fon. Clans eventually became very large and started to form lineages through the process of segmentation and scission. The Mankon community is linked to a group, which has experienced the immigration and emigration of people due to both internal and external dynamics of varying magnitudes at different times [Cho, 2005]. According to field work, the group started as three families, the roots of which are still an enigma for historians and anthropologists. These families grew and number through the open-door policy, allowing them to marry several wives, war captives and so on. Such large families became clans and lineages, consisting of descent groups, segmentations, and households, with each having a head. The original "group heads", who were former family heads, kept important functional objects and had the prerogative to use special symbols that protected its members: these were the clan heads. The term "clan" in the context of Mankon, where there are several groups with different backgrounds, also includes situations where people are incorporated into one clan from another one. In order to enable continuity and make the clans perpetual, outsiders were assimilated in all the activities and life events of a given clan, including the clan rituals. As

such, the incorporated or assimilated in all the activities and life events of a given clan, including the clan rituals. As such, the incorporated or assimilated persons are believed to be descendants of the clan ancestor.

Graphic 6 : **Clans in the Mankon kingdom**

| Clan | → | Clan head | → | Lineage | → | Lineage head |

	Nto'	Fon Angwafo III
Nto' clan royal	Fon of Mankon	
	Maturufo	Akenji
Bombudoe'suru	Ndza Tazhingwan	
	Mandzem	Tako'koeng
Mandzem	Awason Mandzem	
	Bukom	Tawa'
Bombuayerengu	Tsemambokyien	
	Mandey Bunyi	Zamdzu
Mandev	Zamdzu	
	Ala'kuma	Wangang
Maso	Nsu'kyien Tandongokungwaru	
Ala'kuma		

Source: Adapted and modified from Jean-Paul, 2005, page 73.

The above figure shows how the Mankon clans are decentralized and who heads each clan. We also have the lineages and their heads. Important aspects in the life of the community were marked by the production of objects and symbols that enabled their commemoration. This formed the basis of the customs and beliefs of the people.

5. MARRIAGE (*NUZO'O)*

In Mankon, marriage is generally regarded as an important accomplishment in life (Monikang, 1977). The idea is often expressed by the question *"a tsi na key, mbong ku'zo'o",* meaning "what do people have when they are not married?" Thus, an adult who is unmarried is generally looked on with contempt. Marriage in Mankon focuses on the customs associated with its traditional system of marriage, paying close attention to the values, taboos, characteristic events, objects used and the people that ensure its continuity. According to a

villager, *marriage (nuzo'o) is considered as one of the most significant elements in the kingdom's social life.* Nevertheless, according to the customs related to connubial arrangements, the union of a couple without the traditional marriage rites is, by and large regarded as hollow and incomplete. Also, marriage in Mankon influences, economics and prestige also situated the *raison d'etre* of conjugal practices, especially in pre-colonial and colonial days. A man who had many wives was said to be well-to-do, given that affluence was reckoned in terms of the number of wives and progeny a man had. Thus, polygamy was widely practised in the Mankon kingdom, particularly in pre-colonial times, whereas, with the coming of Christianity, monogamy started gaining ground there. With the practice of polygamy, a man's wives and children normally all lived in the same compound, sharing domestic responsibilities. In fact, polygamy is highly regarded since it was based on economic necessity and helped to increase the number of births or to make up for the shortage of men resulting from inter-tribal wars, witchcraft or health hazards (Popenoe, Jersey 2000). To some extent, polygamy is still practiced   today alongside monogamy.

Ordinarily, traditional marriage arrangements are not only the business of both spouses but also the concern of their respective families or lineages and even that of the community at large. Marriage is also considered as one of many close, personal relationships in an extended family. And in this extended family system, the selection of the son's or daughter's partner is of prime importance to the entire family and is normally the responsibility of the parents of the   two families. Furthermore, since marriage plays a significant role in establishing the entire family's economic and social standing, mate selection is a way of making connections between kinship groups. As such, mate selection is considered too important to be left to the individuals involved. Consequently, mate selection, marriage negotiations and rituals are usually handled by the titleholders of the kingdom, especially lineage heads *(butabutsey).* However, today these activities are also organised by minor descent group heads, household heads and parents, while the *mafo* (queen mother) handles those of princes and princesses. Although, at times, arranged marriages may violate the freedom of choice of the spouses, it should be noted here that mate selection is regulated in order to provide an orderly way of passing on property to the next generation (Popenoe, 2000). In times of war, particularly in the past, men gave female war captives and even slaves as wives to their sons. In such cases, no traditional marriage rites were performed (Awasom, 2005).

Graphic 7 : A polygamous family of Makon

TYPICAL ORGANIZATION AND LAYOUT OF
POLYGAMOUS FAMILY COMPOUNDS IN MANKON

HUSBAND'S HOUSE

In most polygamous marriages in Mankon, the husband who is the family head often builds a house for each of his wives and her children (according to his means), while he lives in the biggest house of the compound. In cases where the husband's resources are limited, the entire family can share the same house (building), with each wife having a room for herself and the husband owning his too.

FIRST WIFE'S HOUSE

Regularly, the first wife is the most privileged of all the wives in the compound and equally plays the role of advisor to the other wives. Her house is often the biggest among all the wives should there be any differentiation. In some cases, her house is closest to the husband's.

OTHER WIFE

Every wife lives in her house with her children. The family is organized in such a way that the wives are the ones who go to the husband's house for their matrimonial needs.

OTHER WIFE

The last or youngest wife respects all the other wives and gets advice from them.

YARD

OTHER WIFE

Each wife has her night to spend with the husband as arranged by the latter.

OTHER WIFE

In some situations, wives can share the same house should there not be available houses for each of them, depending on the husband's means.

Source: Retrieved from the archives of Mankon, 2022.

The figure above shows the layout of a polygamous marriage in the Mankon community and how it is decentralized. The husband's house is detached from his wives houses and each wife has a day which she renders services to the husband or perform her wifely duties.

Conclusion

Chapter four shows how the main cultural elements of the Mankon community are decentralized. These main cultural elements are Religion, Political Organization, Kinship, Clans and Marriage. These cultural elements portray decentralization through diagrams for a better comprehension.

CHAPTER FIVE

DECENTRALISATION AND CULTURE IN MANKON

This chapter examines and points the most relevant aspects of the Mankon cultural artifacts as far as decentralization is concern. It shows how the cultural aspects are being decentralized and the implications on the development of the Mankon Community. This brings out the Anthropological perception of the work illustrating all the cultural elements of the Maknon and how they are decentralized. This chapter also shows the different forms and meanings of artistic representation in the fondom.

1. CULTURAL DECENTRALIZATION OF MANKON

The Mankon Fondom practice decentralization not only through state institutions, but through their major cultural works of arts. These works of arts are endowed with symbolic meanings and various functions in their daily lives and ceremonies. Below are some cultural objects with symbolic meanings in the Mankon culture.

Picture 3 : Ritual clay port (teru)
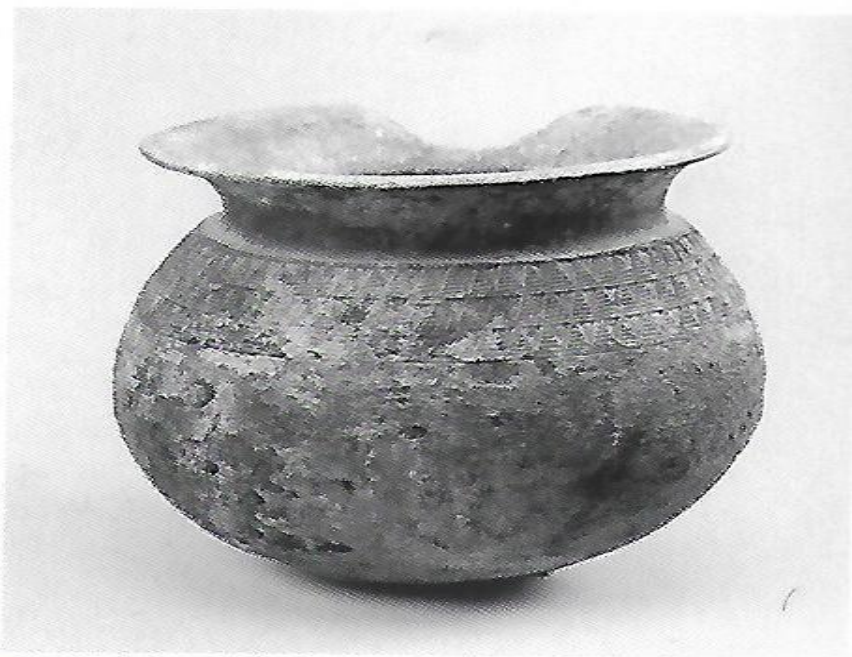
Source: Mankon "Arts, Heritage and culture from the mankon kingdom"

The ritual clay pot portrays decentralization through its carved designs as explained below.

> *This big semi-spherical baked clay pot has a round bottom and a smooth circular mouth that curves outward. A section of it broken leaving a V-shaped opening. Three rows of engraved triangles, arranged in quincunx*

pattern, form a frieze round the pot slightly below the curved mouth. The triangles are decorated with dots and short lines. This object is used in the nusa' ritual. During this ritual, the people guided by the king, clan, lineage and ward heads use prayer tablets which they scrape with knives over different kinds of leaves and herbs brought it by citizens present at the ceremony. By so doing, the people ask their gods for fertility, good yields and protection against evil spirits, diseases and enemies. In preparation for this event, palm oil is poured into this pot in advance so that it can coagulate. Towards the end of the event, the coagulated palm oil is shared out to all participants according to quarters as a sign of blessing. This pot is highly priced by the people as a result of the important role it plays in the wellbeing of the kingdom. (Imterview, custodian, male, 62 years,)

Picture 4 : Double gong (nkoem)

Source*: Mankon "Arts, Heritage and culture from the mankon kingdom"*

Decentralization is portrayed on the gong through its carvings, the describtion and uses are explained below.

The object consists of two hallow cone-shaped metal gongs of nearly equal size, each having flattened edges. They are connected to one another by an arched metal handle that is decorated with plated cane. The gong has always been used when the king is about to address his subjects in the palace

square. It is usually carried by one of the king's retainers standing behind him when he is seated on the rostrum in the palace square during important ceremonies such as the annual dance. The retainer calls for silence from the crowd gathered in front of the king by playing it with a wooden clapper when the king is about to address his people. In fact, this type of double gong was formerly widely used in Mankon to make announcements by both the clan lineage heads to the members of their respective communities. But today, though this tradition still continues, this type of gong is commonly used as a musical accompaniment by various dance groups in the Mankon kingdom. **(Princess, 41 years, Mankon Palace)**

**Picture 5 : WOODEN FLUTE (*nubang nughag)*

Source *: Mankon "Arts, Heritage and culture from the mankon kingdom"*

The wooden flute portrays decentralization through its carved designs as explained below**.**

The wooden flute shows the dexterously sculpted wooden flute (nubang nughag) is divided into two main parts. The first part is made up of a flat, semi-circular hollow element resembling the pincers of a crab. Two small tubular projections jut out horizontally on both sides of a smooth oval structure ending in a round neck that is decorated with three superimposed rings carved in relief. The second part of the instrument, stretching from the

round slender neck down to the flat base, constitutes a handle characterized by a long vertical stripe in relief that runs from the neck to the bottom from the bottom along the central axes of each side. Before it is played, both the vertical and horizontal cavities that run through the upper part of the instrument must be moistened with some liquid, preferably water or raffia wine. When playing it, the flutist grips the handle with the right hand, blocks both openings of the horizontal tabular projections of the instrument with his thumb and index, places the semicircular mouthpiece against its lips and blows air into the vertical cavity while releasing his index finger intermittently in order to produce varied tunes. The flute is generally used by men for three main purposes. Firstly, it is a means of communication between the mandzong miliament to send signals, especially during a skirmish, battle or war. Secondly, it is of vital importance for communication between hunters individually or teams during hunting expeditions. Lastly, it is commonly used nowadays to usher a dance into an area and to enhance the music of dance groups, especially at the height of their performance. In Mankon, the popularity of this kind of flute is said to date back as far as the foundation of the kingdom. (Palace wife, 39years)

**Picture 6 : Royal beaded dance headdress** *(ma komngang).*

Source*: Mankon "Arts, Heritage and culture from the mankon kingdom"*

The royal beaded dance headdress portrays decentralization through its designs as explained below.

This royal beaded dance headdress is made up of wood and the bark of raffia palm stalks. It comprises a small cylindrical wooden cap decorated with beads and cowries. An open-work sphere entirely covered with multi-colored beads. Surmount the cap. This glob is made up of 12 vertical bands, which are united at both poles and supported by two horizontal walls. The biggest being decorated with 12 leopard heads. A cylindrical wooden column covered with cloth is placed between the two poles thus supporting the entire structure. A beaded chameleon surmounts the top of the head-dress. King Angwafo III who has been ruling since his enthronement in 1959, used it in 1984 during the commemoration of the dead of his father king Ndefru III. This ceremony is known as nukwi. Literally, nukwi in the Mankon language means attainment of the age of maturity and it is in fact an important cultural festival held only once during the reign of each mankon king. (Interview, Notable, age 56)

Picture 7 : Ndop ritual costume *(ako'so komngang)*

Source*: Mankon "Arts, Heritage and culture from the mankon kingdom"*

Decentralization can be portrayed through the signs and symbols found on the Ndop ritual costume. It should be noted that the Fon has several types of costumes and each custome carry signs and symbols which has different meanings.

This sleeveless rectangular ritual costume (ako'so komngang) is produced from an indigenous indigo fabric. (Nop [ndop] nwa). The edges

of the neck, the sleeveless openings and the hem are all decorated with single rows of cowries while both sides of the costume are adorned with white geometric motifs representing the stars, the sun, the moon and simplified animal forms. This costume was acquired by king Angwafo III during the preparatory phase of the 1984 nukwi festival to replace the old one which had been completely ruined from this event. The king himself confirmed that he bought this fabric from a trader who came from the Benue region in Nigeria. The ndop fabric has symbolic values in the Mankon kingdom; it is used as a shroud for the king; as a loincloth for notables and as decorative elements during the funeral rites of the King, the queen mother (mafo') and certain notables. The cowries represent royal authority and wealth. **(Quarter head, 70 years).**

Picture 8 : Wooden royal bed *(az'to)*
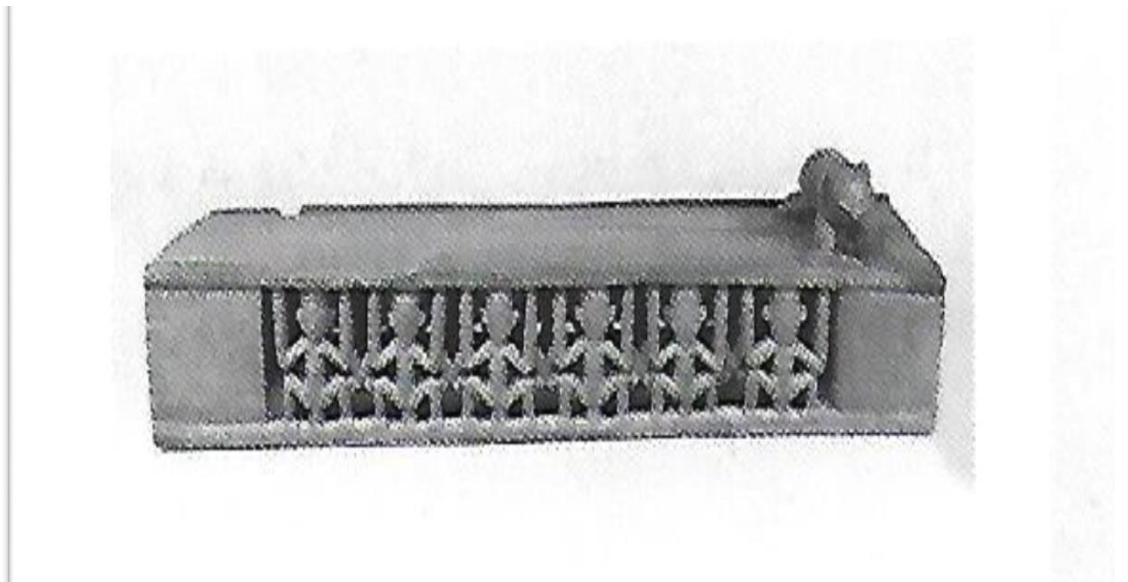
Source*: Mankon "Arts, Heritage and culture from the mankon kingdom"*

The wooden royal bed of the fon portrays decentralization through its animal and human figures which signifies the following.

This carved royal bed is decorated with anthropomorphic and zoomorphic motives. A crouching leopard figure is sculpted in a relief at one end of the smooth rectangular top of the bed, serving as a headrest; both sides of the bed are decorated with open human and animal figures. It is one of the symbolic objects of the kingdom that survived the German punitive war against Mankon led by lieutenant Pavel in 1901 **(Notable, 56 years)**

Picture 9 : The royal beaded stool (aboeru munyi)

Source *: Mankon "Arts,Heritage and culture from the Mankon kingdom"*

The royal beaded stool portrays decentralization through its carved designs, the significance of the designs is outlined below.

> *The stool is completely covered with jute cloth embroidered with multicolored glass beads of varying sizes. On top of each leopard head, there is a carved human head supporting the seat while the entire structure rest on a round pedestal. This is one of the stools on which newly enthroned Mankon kings sit during the period when they are introduced to the general public. This event usually takes place in the palace court yard (sangto). Associated with political and judicial authority, the leopard motive on the throne symbolizes the strength, prestige and the greatness of royalty. The king is known as 'the leopard' and his children are regarded as being those of this animal* (**Notable, 56 years**).

**Picture 10 : Wooden royal staff (*fumban)*
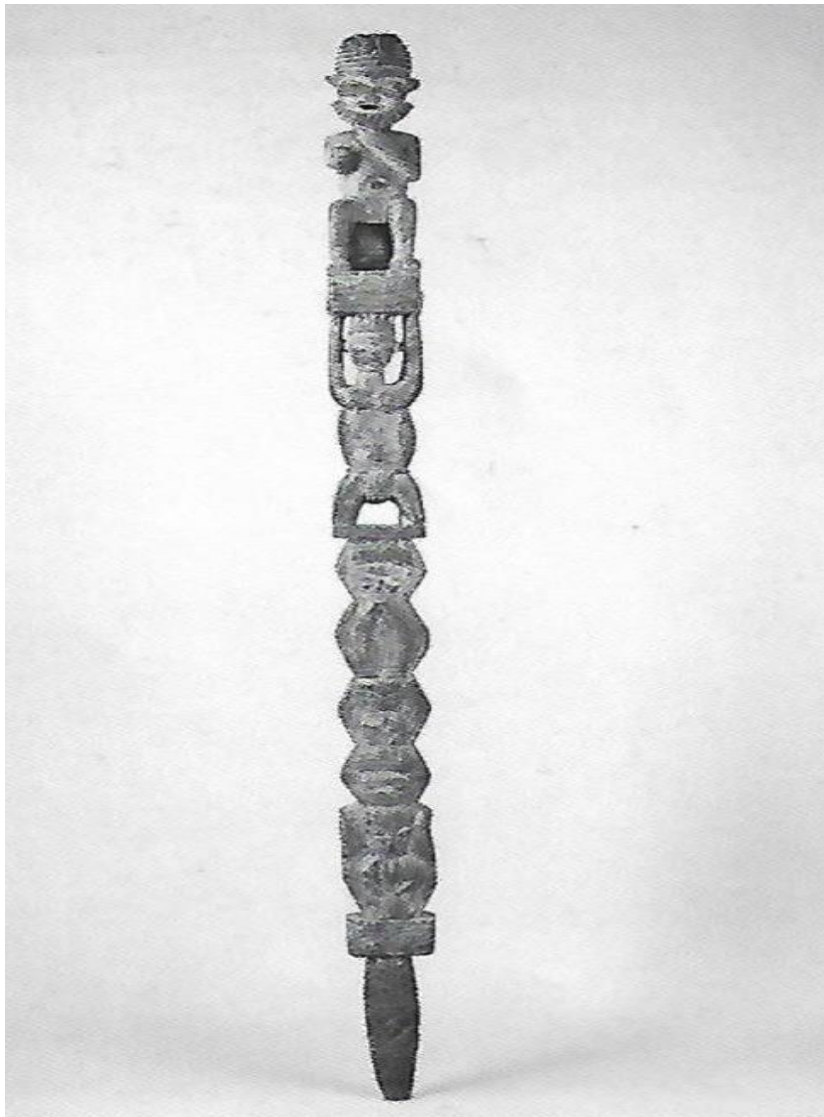
Source *: Mankon "Arts,Heritage and culture from the mankon kingdom"*

The wooden royal staff portrays decentralization through its human and animal figures as highlighted below;

> *This royal staff is adorned with human and animal motives; at the top is a figure representing the king seated on a stool. This object forms part of the kings' paraphernalia when he is official seated during important occasions like commemorative festivals (nukwi) and during the annual dance feasts. The human figure on the staff carried by the king symbolizes the authority of the latter over his people. The buffalo, two-headed snake and the elephant motive symbolizes strength, abundance, authority and prestige.* (**Interview, Princess, 46 years**)

Picture 11 : Royal wooden stool with human heads *(ndala')*

Source*: Mankon "Arts, Heritage and culture from the Mankon kingdom"*

Decentralization is potrayed through its carved designs of this royal wooden stool. The significance of the designs are explained below.

> *The circular top of this royal wooden stool is supported by three roles of 11 human heads arranged in a quincunx pattern. Each head has a flat face, two protruding oval eyes, a flat nose, bulging cheeks and an open mouth exposing its teeth. It is one of such stools on which the king seats when he goes to the ndala, the first lodge to which he is taken for counseling for matters regarding his new office by notables of this society. A Mankon sitting on a stool adorned with human heads presents himself as a triumphant ruler. The human head motives on this stool represents war trophies. The arrangement of the three superimposed rows of heads is also said to be indicatives of the three main ranks of the Mankon society. The heads in the upper row symbolize the highest officials in the traditional hierarchy, such as important notables and king makers with legislative powers: those in the middle row depict the clan and lineage heads: those in the lower row represent minor decent-group heads.* (**Interview, Notable, age 56 years**)

Picture 12 : Wooden throne (aboeru afungo)

Source *: Mankon "Arts,Heritage and culture from the mankon kingdom"*

A long two-headed snake forms the arms of the throne and separates the first row from two others above. On which are represented two heads of superimposed leopards.

Picture 13: Wooden Royal chair

Source *: Mankon "Arts,Heritage and culture from the mankon kingdom"*

The wooden throne (*nyo tutsum*) is embellished with both animal and human figures which shows that the wooden royal chair is decentralized or segmented with the help of its cultural designs. The meaning of the carved designs of the wooden royal chair as explained below;

> *On the upper edge of the backrest, emerge part of the body and head of two crossed snakes. Two other snakes disposed vertically, are engraved on both edges of the rear part of the backrest. The center comprises of two pairs of openwork leopards. The flat rectangular seat rest on a stout leopard placed longitudinally: its large head is surmounted by a small human face, while its large curved tail supports the weight of the seat which is also supported by four figures of notables standing at each corner of the seat. The fact that he seats on thrones decorated with animals and human figures underlines his supremacy over all others in the kingdom.* (**Interview**, **Custodian, 62 years**)

Picture 14 **: Male drum *Fuka***   Picture 15 : **Female drum**

Source *: Mankon "Arts,Heritage and culture from the mankon kingdom"*

The aspect of the drum: the drum of the royal collection are of different types slit drums and membrane drums. The smaller ones are either talking drums or instruments for dances,

beaten with appropriate sticks, the larger ones are monumental drums for ritual war. The male and female drums have different designs and meanings as highlighted below.

> *Membrane drums are richly decorated with zoomorphic, anthropomorphic and geometric motifs which are divided into two groups; The male (fûka), a slim vertical wooden drum with a single membrane decorated with five rows of bas-reliefs, from the top: four heads, three lizards, two mirrored rows of five gongs each, six lizards. It is played as a prelude to dances. It is used during dances, funerals and other social activities. The female (nkag). A vertical short wooden membrane drum with feet, squatter in shape. The body and the three feet are decorated with geometric patterns. Very often, animal, geometric forms, colours and plants represented in art symbolizes man or represent certain aspects of his destiny. For example, the triangle, rhombus, carved or non-carved cowry, symbolizes the female organs and fertility; the drum (nkag) is said to be female because it has a female voice, while the drum fûka is said to be male because the sound it produces evokes a male human being.* (**Interview**, **Custodian, 62years).**

The two drums both male and female are decentralized due to the segmented nature of the designs on each drum. These drums are used during ceremonies as musical instuments for dances and as a talking drum.

2. FORMS AND MEANINGS OF ARTISTIC REPRESENTATION IN THE MANKON FONDOM

This section presents the different signs and meanings in artistic works produce in Mankon. The marks or signs have significant socio-cultural meanings to the people of this community.

2.1. Animal Representation

According to field research, the animal is the motif or decorative element forming part of the composition, frieze or scene decorating seats, beds, fabrics, emblems, masks, pipes and drums. As the specific creature crystallizes some of the community ideas, the artist therefore brings out its characteristics. Its behaviour is important as its morphology. Countless animals are represented in the palace works, leopard, elephant, buffalo, snake, bat, lizard, chameleon, ram, crocodile, chimpanzee, antelope, fish, bird, spider, and toad. We have limited ourselves here to a few characteristics.

2.2. Representation of a leopard or panther

According to the notable, the leopard or panther is a large elegant and powerful feline, with elongated forms. Thanks to its cunning attitude, power and ferocity, it is one of the most feared animals and, as such one of the most respected in the African jungle. Mankon people's beliefs give this creature many powers. It is the perfect symbol of royalty and is associated with political and judicial authority as well as symbolizing strength, the power of the Fon prestige and the greatness of royalty. Besides, the Fon is indeed called the ''leopard'' and his children those of this animal. The Fon is associated with totemic animals, in particular the leopard. The motifs of the panther are found on various articles used in the celebration of enthronement and succession rites or during ancestral and fertility cults, for the prestige of the Fon; in a nutshell, for everything related to maintaining political authority and social cohesion. Not only does the panther appear in the form of figurative motifs, but its hide and teeth are used for symbolic objects or ornamentation.

2.3. Representation of the elephant

According to the notable, among the animal representations associated with the idea of power, command and plenty, those of the elephant play a leading role in Mankon. The elephant like the leopard is a symbol of royalty. In addition, it is also used as a symbol in many rituals and cults of powerful secret societies which use various objects on which the beast appears (receptacles, pipes, drums, masks, seats). When this animal is represented on masks and pipes, it incarnates, in a symbolic synthesis, the indomitable forces of nature that can be harnessed and used for various profitable purposes by an individual or community. Moreover, in Mankon as in general in the grassfields, men (and especially the Fon) form an alliance with animals in order to have a double, triple or multiple existences, and to have all the qualities, strengths as weaknesses of the chosen animals to act in life efficiently? The Fon of Mankon is supposed to be able to become an elephant and vice versa. The ownership and the use of elephant tusks during ceremonies symbolize nobility, authority and abundance. During important festivals, the Fon of Mankon sits on a carved throne with his feet on one or two elephant tusks laid on a leopard skin.

2.4. Representation of a Buffalo

According to the notable, the buffalo has the representation of a dangerous animal. It has two curved and tapering horns. The buffalo evokes strength, courage and vitality. Like the elephant, it is a royal animal. That is why its body belonged to the right of the Fon of Mankon

who also rewarded the hunter. The animal representation is limited to the head, the center of vital forces, and sometimes the neck. The artist is particularly interested in its horns, muzzle and eyes. Buffalos also appear on drums, pipes and architectural elements as well as on masks and thrones. The libation horn (reserved for the Fon or an important notable) is not only a matter of prestige but also a cultural function because it contains the scared palm wine used in ancestral cults. Its pointed end phallic shape also symbolizes latent energy and overflowing of the forces of nature. When filled with magic portion, it has a real power and can be used in various rituals during divination.

3. HUMAN REPRESENTATION

According to the carver, looking at the articles in Mankon palace that support artistic representations, humans appear art (both in the round and in relief) in the form of both male and female sexes and in numerous functions. The human figure is either isolated forming an independent article (masks, statues), or is a decorative element forming part of a composition of an ornamental scene or various objects, and describing deeds and events of a political, symbolic, social, philosophical or religious nature. Conversely, the themes of the ancestor or human head are very common in the decoration of articles from the Mankon palace. In fact, the human head is identified with the person it represents in a few essential lines. The skull of the deceased is conversed for the ancestral cults. In order to make his power legitimate and to enjoy all succession rights, the Fon's heir or the notable's successor must have his predecessor's skull or, failing that, its representation. The authority and power of the fon and notables depend on the strength and power of the founding fathers of the kingdom and their lineage, which they inherit during initiation, enthronement and the great annual dance, *abinafo*, in December and which also sometimes become concrete in works of arts (throne, mask, cup, bracelet, statue, drum, pipe, material). The ancestors, who wield their action on the living, see to the observance of customs. The human head is also kept as a war trophy. It symbolizes strength and prowess in war of the enemy, considered to have been added to that of winner.

3.1. Geometric figures

According to the carver, Mankon and grassland in general, the artist tends to exploit the aesthetic, expressive symbolic power of geometric figures in artistic creation. And the very simplified motif of the toad is made up of rhombus, symbolizing fertility. Stylized spiders are

transformed into simple dots, circles, or small cylinders laid out in various ways to form the decoration of several pieces. Sometimes objects (receptacles, cup, bracelet, statue, drum, pipe, coweries) become artistic objects and enter compositions after stylization. And so, the hunting net or trap becomes part of the decoration of seats in the form of rhombus in a harmonious arrangement, recalling the motifs of spider. The copper bracelet, which is an attribute of royal power, is a circular motif used in the decoration of stools. The tendency to reduce symbols to geometric forms sometimes affects the design of a genuine plastic writing which in some cases, is made up of ideograms that convey knowledge (embroidery with beads, decoration of the ndob frabric). Geometric figures (dots, lines, triangles, rhombuses, circles, squares, rectangles). may remain isolated on a plain background, be repeated in a frieze, alternate in combination with other decorative elements or reproduced indefinitely on a whole surface, well-spaced out at times tightly knit, totally enveloping the work of art, but always forming a harmonious creation which is not the result of a whim but an intellectual work of creation. There is a precise order in Mankon decorative art. Besides, the arrangement of geometric figures are indeed, of all artistic creation, according to several studies, is based on rhythmic laws related to African music.

Conclusion

This chapter shows how some cultural artifacts in the Mankon Fondom are decentralized. The symbolic nature of the cultural artifacts are segmented and as such, it implies that they are decentralized. These works of arts or cultural artifacts are a sign of development to the Mankon people because they use them for their activites such as ceremonies.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Our study, titled *Decentralisation, culture and development in the North West Region of Cameroon: Case study, Mankon,* was carried out from December 2021 to February 2022 in Mankon Bamenda, North West Region of Cameroon. To begin this study, an over view was made on decentralization, narrowing it down to Africa and finally Cameroon. So from this general perspective, a research problem was expounded. Hence, to present the existing situation, this work was intended to explore decentralization in the Mankon culture and how it contributes to local development. It also contributes to an understanding of this reality in a Cameroonian setting in order to inform the development of social policy and practice geared towards local and national development.

In order to attempt a comprehensive study of the problem identified, the following theories were used for data analysis and interpretation; the local autonomy theory and the functionalist theory. Firstly, the principal reason that motivated us to choose these theories was because local autonomy allowed us to focus on determining the tasks of local public administration authorities through the establishment of competence in solving problems of local interest as well as exclusion of the intervention of other authorities in the local administration. The functionalist approach illustrates how a social institution can work at two different levels - both fulfilling the needs of each individual and meeting the needs of the whole society at the same time. Further, it shows how each of the parts of society are interrelated, each contributing to the well-being of society. Besides, there is no written anthropological document on culture and decentralisation in the Mankon community; thus, this work is certainly very original.

As guide for data collection, we had a key research question which was expanded with four secondary questions. The main research question states; how has decentralization in the Mankon culture contributed to the development of the Fondom? While as secondary research questions we had; what are the main cultural elements of the Mankon community that show decentralisation? How is decentralisation practised in the Mankon Fondom? What are the key functions of the decentralised elements of the Mankon culture? How does cultural decentralisation promote development in the Mankon Fondom?

However, tentative answers were proposed, verified, and proven to be true on the field during and after data collection. The main research hypothesis extrapolated from the main research question asserts that decentralising in the Mankon Fondom through their cultural elements and political organization has led to the development of the Fondom. Meanwhile,

the three specific hypotheses postulated are the following; the first hypothesis states that, the Mankon Fondom is decentralized through clans and some cultural elements. The second holds that, cultural elements are the royal chair, drum, royal staff, and the Fon's traditional regalia while the third hypothesis illustrates that, these cultural elements carry symbolic meaning which holds the customs and tradition of the Fondom.

In the same vein, the objective of our study included the main and secondary objectives. Our main objective was is to explore decentralization in the Mankon culture and how it contributes to local development. Our specific objectives were; to examine the main cultural elements of the Mankon community that show decentralisation, to explore how decentralisation is practised in the Mankon Fondom, to determine the key functions of the decentralised elements of the Mankon culture. The fourth objective was to understand how cultural decentralisation promotes development in the Mankon Fondom. Our study was realised under a given circumstance and the elements elaborated in this dissertation are the following; the background of study, justification of choice of topic, research problem, and statement of problem, research questions, research hypothesis, research objectives, and the methodology.

Methodologically, we used a qualitative research approach tradition popular in the social and behavioural sciences. A literature review of previously published works on this topic was done. It enabled us to find out what research has already been done and identify what is unknown within your topic. During the literature review we exploited 150 references. Under which we had general books exploited; Specific works; scientific articles, legislative texts, dissertations, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and a number of websites. We came up with a reading sheet in which we were reading and summarizing also each specific reference made up the subject of the study. We had a total number of 35 reading sheets which has three main terms which are as follows; decentralization, culture and development. Accompanying these techniques were the following tools used for data collection on the field; interview guides, direct observation, recorders, notebooks.

Our study outline presents a preliminary section, a general introduction, the body of the work made up of five chapters, and a general conclusion. Chapter one introduces the researcher into the research proper through a clear presentation of the ethnography of the Mankon people. More so, it lays emphasis on the geographical landscape, historical, economic, and sociopolitical life of the people. In chapter two, we begin with the definition

of key concepts of our study, followed by the review of existing literature on our topic with key interest on the work of others. This chapter closes with the presentation of the theoretical and conceptual framework used in our study. Chapter three uses a review-based method to explore literature on the decentralisation laws in Cameroon. Subsequently, in chapter four we identify the major elements of the Mankon culture meanwhile chapter fives explores culture and decentralisation among the Mankon people. The conclusion of this study constitutes both the summary and an assessment of the research work. It also makes suggestions for further research in the domain of culture and decentralisation.

Conclusively, the findings of this study point out that before the introduction and operationalization of decentralization laws in Cameroon, the socio-political and administrative organization of the Mankon people was centred on a well-organized chieftaincy institution with the Fon at the helm. In this society, political power is organized in such a way that the Fon who was at the apex of traditional administration delegated some powers and competences to other institutions that made up the administrative architecture of the village. More so, power structure is organized from family lineage head which is the smallest political unit, passing through the quarter head that coordinates quarter activities, the village head managed activities and finally the Fon is at the head of several villages that constituted Fondom. In such architecture, instructions flow from the highest and largest institution which is the Fondom to the smallest political unit known as the lineage. In this power structure each institution has its role to play and its specific responsibilities.

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6. ORAL SOURCES: LIST OF INFORMANTS

N°	NAMES	STATUS	AGE	SEX
01	Djoumen Adel	Curator	45	Female
02	Akwah Christopher Nji	Mechanic	44	Male
03	Angwafo Bih	Princess	46	Female
04	Lum Geraldine Chi	Teacher	41	Female
05	Akwah Gladys Njwen	Farmer	44	Female
06	Akwah Odette	villager	30	Female
07	Akwah Neba George	Environmentalist	50	Male
08	Ntunifor Richard	Custodian	62	Male
09	Ngwa Junior	Accountant	38	Male
10	Nchang Trinity	Secretary	34	Female
11	Joe Titus Fru	Quarter head/notable	70	Male
12	Fru Ngwa	Notable	42	Male
13	Ester Siri	Farmer	57	Female
14	Che Summerset	A villager	49	Male
15	Ngum Pricilia	carver	51	female

APPENDICES

APENDIX 1 : RESEARCH AUTHORISATION

UNIVERSITÉ DE YAOUNDÉ I
THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

FACULTE DES ARTS, LETTRES ET SCIENCES HUMAINES

FACULTY OF ARTS, LETTERS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTEMENT D'ANTHROPOLOGIE

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Yaoundé, le ..... 2 2 DEC 2020 .....

AUTORISATION DE RECHERCHE

Je soussigné, Professeur **Paschal KUM AWAH**, Chef du Département d'Anthropologie de la Faculté des Arts, Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université de Yaoundé I, atteste que l'étudiant **BIH Henritta**, Matricule **16A335** est inscrit en Master dans ledit département. Il mène ses travaux universitaires sur le thème : «*Decentralization, culture and development in the North West and South West Region of Cameroon. Case study Mankon Anthropological study* » sous la direction du **Pr Abouna Paul.**

A cet effet, je vous saurais gré des efforts que vous voudriez bien faire afin de fournir à l'intéressé toute information en mesure de l'aider.

En foi de quoi la présente autorisation de recherche lui est délivrée pour servir et valoir ce que de droit.

Le Chef de Département

Pr Paschal Kum Awah

APENDIX 2 : INTERVIEW GUIDE

FAMILY

- Organization of a family (polygamous)
- Layout of the family compound
- Succession of the family.
- How a polygamous family is decentralized

RELIGION

- Types of shrines/spirits
- Functions of shrines/spirit
- How is religion decentralized

TRADITIONAL REGALIA

- Types of outfit
- Significance

ROYAL STAFF

- Symbolic nature and designs of the royal staff
- functions
- Significance of signs and marks

CLANS

- Organization of clans and lineages
- Layout of clans

DRUMS

- Types and symbolic nature of drums
- Functions of drums
- Significance of design

ROYAL CHAIR

- Types of royal chair

- Functions of royal chair
- Significance of symbolic nature

ROYAL BED

- Symbolic nature
- Functions of a royal bed
- Significance of design
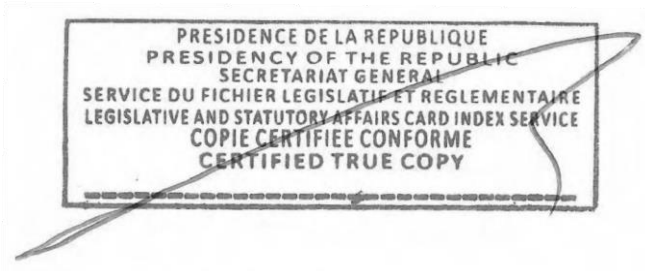
ROYAL WOODEN STOOL

- Types of wooden stool

- Functions and symbolic nature

- Significance.

Flute

Functions and symbolic nature

Significance

APENDIX 3 : GENERAL CODE OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

PEACE – WORK – FATHERLAND

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PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE
PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC
SECRETARIAT GENERAL
SERVICE DU FICHIER LEGISLATIF ET REGLEMENTAIRE
LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY AFFAIRS CARD INDEX SERVICE
COPIE CERTIFIEE CONFORME
CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
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LAW N₀ __2019/024__ OF __2 4 DEC 2019__

BILL TO INSTITUTE THE GENERAL CODE OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

1 and 2 above shall be made available to the region, council or sub-divisional council, as the case may be.

(4) The staff referred to in sub-section 3 above shall remain governed by the rules and regulations applicable to them at the entry into force of this law.

(5) A decree of the President of the Republic shall set out the terms and conditions for transfer, assignment or provision under this Section, depending on whether the devolution of powers is complete or partial.

Section 498: Before the effective transfer of services and the establishment of the local public service, the conditions for the use of each State service by local authorities and the procedures for managing staff shall be governed by the regulations in force.

Section 499: Where Book Four, Part V is silent, the common provisions relating to the organization and functioning of regions as provided for under Book Four, Parts I to III shall apply.

Section 500: All previous provisions repugnant hereto are hereby repealed, notably:

- Law No. 2004/17 of 22 July 2004 on the orientation of decentralization;
- Law No. 2004/18 of 22 July 2004 to lay down rules applicable to councils;
- Law No. 2004/19 of 22 July 2004 to lay down rules applicable to regions;
- Law No. 2009/11 of 10 July 2009 on the financial regime of regional and local authorities.

Section 501: This law shall be registered, published according to the procedure of urgency, and inserted in the Official Gazette in English and French./-

YAOUNDE, 2 4 DEC 2019

PAUL BIYA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
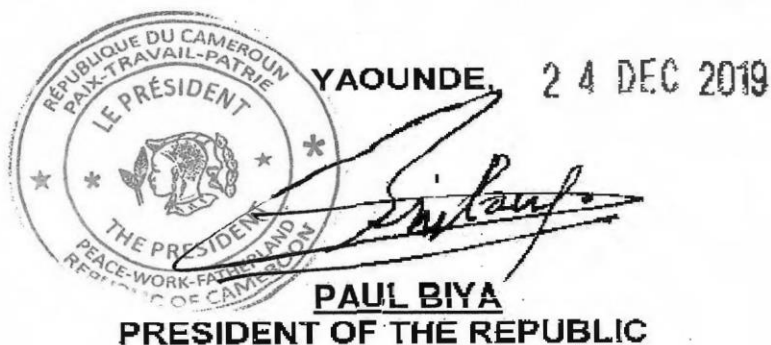
APENDIX 4 : INFORM CONSENT FORM

Topic: "DECENTRALIZATION, CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON. CASE   STUDY OF MANKON. A CONTRIBUTION TO ANTHROPOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT "

PART I

INTRODUCTION

I am **BIH HENRITTA** a Masters II student from the University of Yaoundé I, department of Anthropology, specialized in Anthropology of development. My research topic is entitled decentralization, culture and development in the North West region of Cameroon; Case   study of Mankon. A contribution to Anthropology of development. Your presence and participation will be of great contribution and very important to this study. This work is mostly comprised of interviews. With your permission, I will like to ask certain questions which will help in attaining the research objectives of this work.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

 This research will permit us to bring out contribution to our domain of study which is anthropology. It will be a plus on developmental anthropology because with it we are going to show how the Mankon cultural elements are decentralized. The work can also be used as a reference for other authors in the domain of cultural decentralization in Mankon. Also, this research will permit us to identify the different Mankon cultural elements which show decentralization and it can also permit other Fondoms to identify their cultural elements which show decentralization. Also, it will be a medium for people to know that decentralization is not only political but its cultural through cultural artifacts.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

The notables, queen mothers, quarter heads and villagers I choose you all because you fall under the category of key informants who can provide me with the information needed to achieve the objectives of this research project.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this research is voluntary. It is your choice to participate or not. Whether you participate or not your status will not change in this community. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

PROCEDURE

Information that will be collected from you will be through the use of notebook, tape recorder, and camera for pictures. This research work will be carried out in two months. At the end of this exercise the data collected will be transcript for analysis and interpretation and where there is doubt, we I will come back for verification.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS

Before I start collecting data from you, we will first meet and keep an appointment on where and when to meet to discuss on the questions concerning the research topic entitled decentralization, culture and development in the North West region of Cameroon; case study Mankon.

DURATION

This research project will take two months with your time and contribution and other informants so in order not to interrupt your programs I will like our meeting up and discussion to be on arrangements.

RISK

Your willingness to be present and to contribute to this research work, and your efforts to provide answers to my questions, to satisfy me is an unexplained satisfaction on my part. Your worries on confidentiality and that of the community is taken into consideration. It should be noted that risk as far as this research is concerned is academic research the chances and possibility of risk will be very low.

BENEFITS

You and the community may not benefit now but your contribution will help me to attain my research objectives. However, given the value and importance of this research the inhabitants and the community at large will benefit in the future.

REIMBURSEMENT

This is just to obtain information but if need be, for financial assistance to attain the objectives of this research they maybe or not be financial assistance.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information that will collect during the research from you, will be kept confidential. The information will be accessible only by me, participant, supervisor and the university of Yaoundé 1 and the information will be coded so that those out of the university milieu will be unable to understand the information.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

Your presence, contribution and participation in this research will determine on your Yes or No. If you make up your mind not to take part in this research no one will impose you to do and if you do want to take part no one will refuse. So you are free to and no to participate for your rights and decisions will be respected.

WHO TO CONTACT

If you are not sure and you want to ask questions, you can contact the following persons:

My supervisor Pr. Abouna Paul

The head of department of Anthropology Pr. Paschal Kum Awah

PART II

CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT

I have read the forgoing information read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and the questions have been answered voluntarily and to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to take part as a participant in this research.

Name of the Participant……………………………………………………

Signature of Participant…………………………………………………....

Date…………………………………………………………………………..

WHO TO CONTACT

If you have any doubt and questions to ask and you want to ask the questions now or later, you may ask any of the following:

Department of anthropology

University of Yaoundé I

Date………………………………………………………………..

IF ILLITERATE

I have witness the accurate reading of the consent form the potential participant, the individual has had the opportunity to asked questions I confirm that the individual has given his or her consent freely

Name of the witness………………………………………………..

Signature of the witness…………………………………………….

Date……………………………………………………………………

STATEMENT BY THE RESEARCHER OR PERSON TAKING CONSENT

To the best of my abilities, I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participants and I have made sure that the participants should understand and know that in-depth interviews, recording, note taking, pictures be taken.

Thank You !!!

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