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BAMENDA GRASSFIELDS CHIEFTAINCY IN MODERN GOVERNANCE, CA 1800-1996

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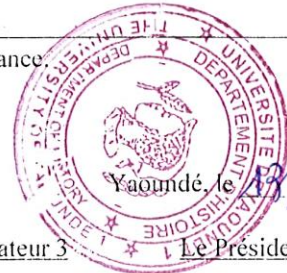
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Yaoundé, le _____
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My mother Cecilia IJANG NGWE and grandfather Peter TAMUTON NTANDA (of blessed memory).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
RÉSUMÉ	x
ILLUSTRATIONS	xi
MAPS	xi
TABLES	xi
FIGURES	xi
TEMPLATES	xi
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	xii
GLOSSARY	xiv
GENERAL INTRODUCTION	1
I. Content and Justification of the Study.....	1
II. Conceptual Framework.....	4
III. Conceptualizing Chieftaincy as a governance institution.....	4
V. Traditional Administrative Architecture.....	9
VI. Motivation for Choice of Topic.....	19
VII. Objectives of the Study.....	19
VIII. Statement of the Problem.....	20
IX. Delimitation of the Study.....	21
X. Significance of the Study.....	24
XI. Literature Review.....	25
XII. Theoretical Framework.....	39
XIII. Difficulties Encountered.....	41
XIV. Sources and Write-Up.....	42
XV. Organization of the Study.....	45
CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE BAMENDA GRASSFIELDS GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS 1800-1884	46
Section One: Traditional Governance Institutions in the Bamenda Grassfields	46
I. <i>Fonship</i> in the Bamenda Grassfields.....	47
i. Attributes of the <i>Fon</i> in the Bamenda Grassfields.....	48

ii. Funerary Protocol of Bamenda Grassfields <i>Fons</i>	52
iii. Task of the <i>Fon</i> in the Bamenda Grassfields.....	58
iv. Socio-political functions of the <i>Fon</i>	59
v. Military Functions	61
vi. Judicial functions.....	62
II. The Legislative; Institutions Regulatory	66
i. Quarter Councils.....	67
ii. The “ <i>ébéng</i> ” or “ <i>Nda Ala</i> ”	68
iii. The <i>Mekuum ébéng</i>	69
III. The Regulatory Institution.....	70
i. The <i>Majong, Megues and Njong</i>	72
ii. The masqueraders.....	74
iii. The Institutions of Divination	77
vi. The Queen-Mother	79
Section Two: Typology and Architecture of Traditional Governance	81
I. The Administrative Set-Up of the <i>Bamenda</i> Grassfields	82
i. Household and lineage	84
ii. The Quarter: Smallest Administrative Unit in the <i>Fondom</i>	85
iii. The Village: Second Administrative Unit in the <i>Fondom</i>	85
i. Centralized pyramidal governance systems	88
ii. Centralized medium <i>Fondoms</i>	89
II. Trade in Grassfields Governance Mechanism.....	90
i. Socio-political trajectory	90
ii. Buying and Marketing of Commodities.....	91
CHAPTER TWO: GERMAN GOVERNANCE SYSTEM IN THE BAMENDA GRASSFIELDS:	
1884-1916	96
Section One: German Governance Policy in the Bamenda Grassfields	96
I. Overview of German Colonial Philosophy	97
i. Arrival of Germans in Cameroon.....	100
ii. Germans imperialism in the <i>Bamenda</i> Grassfields	103
iii. The Berlin West African Conference of 1884-1885	105
vi. German Partnership with <i>Bamenda</i> Grassfields Chiefs	108
II. Operationalization of German Governance System in the Grassfields	109
i. German Administrative Architecture in the <i>Bamenda</i> Grassfields	113
ii. German Governance institutions	117

Section Two: Materialization of German Governance Policy in the Bamenda Grassfields	118
I. Socio-Economic Role of Chiefs In German Economy.....	120
i. Fons and the recruitment of workers in German plantations.....	121
ii. Fons and taxation in German administration.....	122
II. Chiefs and German Local Administration.....	123
i. The Germano-Bali Nyonga Collaboration for Effective Governance.....	124
ii. <i>Bamenda</i> Chiefs in the Management of Justice	128
III. Grassfields chiefs and German Social Policies	131
i. Chiefs and German colonial education	131
ii. Fons and religion in German administration	132
Section One: British Indirect Rule Policy and Local Government	137
I. Indirect Rule policy in the <i>Bamenda</i> Grassfields.....	137
i. Indirect Rule as Governance Policy	138
ii. Motivations for Indirect Rule as a Governance Policy	141
II. Architects and Actors of Indirect Rule System	142
i. Administrators.....	143
ii. Judicial System.....	145
iii. Native Authorities	146
III. Fons in the Indirect Rule System	151
i. Colonial categorization of Traditional Authorities in the <i>Bamenda</i> Grassfields.....	152
ii. Creation of Warrant Chiefs to ease governance	154
Section Two: Materialization of Indirect Rule	157
I. Native Authority and the Implementation of fiscal Policies	157
i. Native Authorities and the Maintenance of Law and Order in the Bamenda Grassfields.....	158
ii. Native authority and the management of justice	159
II. Implications of Indirect Rule on the Chieftaincy Institution.....	164
i. Initiation of <i>Fons</i> in Colonial Politics	164
ii. Contribution of <i>Fons</i> to Constitutional Development of BSC _s	171
iii. Southern Cameroon House of Chiefs as Governance Institution	177
iv. Implication of Bamenda <i>Fons</i> in immoral Practices	182
CHAPTER FOUR: THE FATE OF BAMENDA GRASSFIELDS TRADITIONAL RULERS IN INDEPENDENT GOVERNANCE SYSTEM:1961-1990	185
Section One: Implications of Chieftaincy in Independent Cameroons' governance policies	186
I. Influence of Colonial Governance on Grassfields <i>Fons</i> at Independence	186
i. Ethno-tribal balkanization of <i>Fondoms</i>	187

ii. Federation of diversified Polities in the <i>Bamenda</i> Grassfields	188
iii. Ambiguous Categorization of Grassfields <i>Fons</i>	189
iv. Initiation of Grassfields Chiefs in Partisan Politics.....	192
v. Judicial transformation in peacekeeping and maintenance of order.....	193
I. Grassfields Chiefs in Post-Independent Ecosystem 1961-1977	195
i. Chieftaincy and the new political elite	195
ii. <i>Bamenda</i> Grassfields Chieftaincy under MINAT	199
iii. The “Auxilliarization” of Traditional Authorities	200
II. Grassfield <i>Fons</i> in the Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs	201
i. The House of Chief in reviving the Chief’s Authority	203
ii. The House of Chiefs as an illusion in the revival of traditional authority.....	206
Section Two: Bamenda Grassfields Chieftaincy in the Democratization Era of 1990s’in Cameroon	210
I. Liberalization of the Political Scene in Cameroon.....	211
i. International Influence on Democratization in Cameroon	211
ii. Traditional Rulers in Party Politics	214
II. Chieftaincy in Modern Management Malpractices	219
i. Chiefs as Politician Proxies.....	222
ii. Emergence of a Progressive class of Fons	225
CHAPTER FIVE: RAMIFICATIONS OF THE CHIEFTAINCY INSTITUTION IN THE BAMENDA GRASSFIELDS FROM 1996 TILL PRESENT	229
Section One: Colonial Implications on Bamenda Traditional Governance Ecosystem	229
I. Changes in the Role of Chiefs (Traditional Authorities).....	230
i. Disintegration of the traditional system	232
ii. Grassfields Traditional Rulers in Regional Politics	234
iii. Fons in Constitutional Evolution of the <i>Bamenda</i> Grassfields.....	238
iv. Creation of Association of Fons.....	242
v. Multiplication of conflicts within the chieftaincy institution	246
Section Two: Impacts of Chiefs Role at Post-Independence Cameroon	247
I. Relegation of Traditional Authority to the Background of Governance	247
i. The Auxilliarization of Chiefs.....	251
ii. Politisation of Chieftaincy.....	252
iii. Chiefs and elected positions	260
CHAPTER SIX: TOUTING TRADITIONAL GOVERNANCE FOR EFFECTIVE MODERN GOVERNANCE IN CONTEMPORARY CAMEROON	270

Section One: Harnessing the Chieftaincy Institution for Sustainable Governance	271
I. Chieftaincy as a Territorial Identification	271
i. Sacredness of chieftaincy	272
ii. Traditional Legitimacy	273
II. Pre-Conditions of Traditional Governance Complementarity.....	274
i. The Constitutionalisation of the Chieftaincy Institution	274
ii. Regulations of Chiefs in Partisan Politics	277
iii. Conciliating Administrative Authorities towards Chieftaincy	281
iv. Optimizing the Integration of Chiefs in Modern Governance.....	282
Section Two: Traditional Governance in the Building of Modern Institutions in Cameroon	285
I. Universalism versus Cultural Relativism in the Cameroonian Context	286
II. Resolving the Conflict between formal and informal Institutions	290
III. The Cameroon Traditional Institutions and Adaptation to Modernism	291
IV. Defense of Cameroon’s legal pluralism	295
V. Traditional Leadership on the Concepts of the State, Sovereignty, and Legitimacy	298
VI. Political and Legal Pluralism in Cameroon.....	308
VII. Optimizing the Integration of Chiefs in Modern Governance	311
GENERAL CONCLUSION	316
APPENDIX	321
LIST OF APPENDICES	322
SOURCES CONSULTED	437
INDEX	464

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ABSTRACT

This study is about Bamenda Grassfields chieftaincy in modern governance. It examines the transition from traditional governance which predated the advent of colonial and post-independence in Cameroon. Bamenda Grassfields States as socio-political entities locally called Fondoms were structured and efficiently governed polities under the authority of local kings (locally referred to as Fons) and assisted by other Fondoms institutions such as the traditional council, the regulatory society and many other specialized bodies that had the task of ensuring the management of the Fendom. The advent of colonial rule and the post-independent state in Cameroon experienced the minimization of other institutions which constituted traditional governance by upholding just the Fon as an individual than the institution he incarnated. The central question posed in this study is to examine the contributing factors of transhumance of the Bamenda Grassfields chieftaincy institution into modern governance and the impacts it has created both for the traditional and modern administration. The study poses the question of the complementarity/ incompatibility of traditional and modern governance existing alongside Cameroon. This thesis finds that despite the infeudation and instrumentalization of traditional governance, first by the colonial rule and by the post independent state, traditional governance remains an efficient governance system if rationally exploited, then politicized as it has been the case since independence, it will potentially contribute to the effective establishment of administrative fabrics to development in Cameroon, especially in a context where modern governance is confronted with systematic grassroots and national challenges. To better appreciate the main problem posed, we adopted the historic deductive method that consists of a critical review of primary and secondary as well as oral sources. This embodied the identification of new sources in the form of books, articles, journals, oral traditions, and information. Which had a bearing on some of the aspects of the work. This study is an addition to the rich historiography on traditional authorities in Cameroon and contributes towards understanding how Fons rational implications in modern governance in Cameroon can effectively mediate between the people and the state in enhancing government developmental policies and provide an institutional safety valve for the often-inefficient state bureaucracies.

Keywords; Chieftaincy, traditional governance, post independent state, improvement.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude porte sur la chefferie des Bamenda Grassfields dans la gouvernance moderne. Elle examine la transition de la gouvernance traditionnelle qui a précédé l'avènement de la colonisation et de la post-indépendance au Cameroun. Les États Bamenda Grassfields, en tant qu'entités sociopolitiques appelées localement Fondoms, étaient des polities structurées et efficacement gouvernées sous l'autorité des rois locaux (appelés localement Fons) et assistées par d'autres institutions Fondoms telles que le conseil traditionnel, la société de régulation et bien d'autres organes spécialisés qui avaient pour tâche d'assurer la gestion du Fondom. L'avènement de la domination coloniale et de l'État postindépendant au Cameroun a entraîné la minimisation des autres institutions qui constituaient la gouvernance traditionnelle, en privilégiant le Fon en tant qu'individu plutôt que l'institution qu'il incarnait. La question centrale posée dans cette étude est d'examiner les facteurs contribuant à la transhumance de l'institution de la chefferie des Bamenda Grassfields vers la gouvernance moderne et les impacts qu'elle a créés à la fois pour l'administration traditionnelle et moderne. L'étude pose la question de la complémentarité/incompatibilité de la gouvernance traditionnelle et moderne existant au Cameroun. Cette thèse constate que malgré l'inféodation et l'instrumentalisation de la gouvernance traditionnelle, d'abord par le régime colonial et par l'État post-indépendant, la gouvernance traditionnelle reste un système de gouvernance efficace si elle est exploitée rationnellement, puis politisée comme c'est le cas depuis l'indépendance, elle contribuera potentiellement à la mise en place effective des tissus administratifs au développement du Cameroun, surtout dans un contexte où la gouvernance moderne est confrontée à des défis systématiques à la base et à l'échelon national. Pour mieux apprécier le problème principal posé, nous avons adopté la méthode historique déductive qui consiste en une revue critique des sources primaires et secondaires ainsi que des sources orales. Cela s'est traduit par l'identification de nouvelles sources sous la forme de livres, d'articles, de revues, de traditions orales et d'informations. Ce qui a eu une incidence sur certains aspects du travail. Cette étude s'ajoute à la riche historiographie sur les autorités traditionnelles au Cameroun et contribue à comprendre comment les implications rationnelles des Fons dans la gouvernance moderne au Cameroun peuvent efficacement servir de médiateur entre le peuple et l'État pour améliorer les politiques de développement du gouvernement et fournir une soupape de sécurité institutionnelle pour les bureaucraties d'État souvent inefficaces.

Mots-clés : chefferie, gouvernance traditionnelle, État post-indépendant, amélioration.

ILLUSTRATIONS

MAPS

Map 1 : Showing the Bamenda Grassfields Area.....	23
Map 2: British Native Authority Areas in the Bamenda Grassfields	150
Map 3: British <i>Bamenda</i> Grassfields Federated Native Authority Areas	163

TABLES

Table 1: Various Ethnic Groups, Population, and Number of Soldiers in some Grassfields Fondoms	89
Table 2: German Governors in Kamerun (1885-1916).....	115
Table 3: British Residents in British Southern Cameroons.....	143
Table 4: Native Authority Heads Quarters in the Bamenda Grassfields.....	148
Table 5: Federated Natives Authority Areas	163
Table 6: Thirteen Representatives from BSCs in the Eastern House of Assembly in Enugu	173

FIGURES

Figure 1: The Position of addressing the Fon.....	49
Figure 2: The Native Soldiers	73
Figure 3: Traditional Forecaster in Bafut	79
Figure 4: Tentative Typology of a hierarchical structure of Traditional Authority in the Bamenda Grassfields (Awing Fondom)	87
Figure 5: Dr. Eugene Zingraff Seat in Bali Nyonga.....	127
Figure 6: British Colonial Administrative Organigram in the Bamenda Grassfields	146
Figure 7: Achirimbi II Fon of Bafut in 1956.....	169
Figure 8: British Southern Cameroons Assembly Men.....	176
Figure 9: Interactive organigram of native and modern Administration.....	314

TEMPLATES

Template 1: Traditional injunction in the Widikum “Chatte”	69
Template 2: Eschum(Swearing Ground).....	76
Template 3: The “Keung” Plant in the Awing Palace	76
Template 4: Women with Peace Plant	81

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	: American Council of Education
ACLP	: Ascertainment and Codification Law Project
BC	: Before Christ
BDM	: Bafut Development Manjong
BRA	: <i>Bamenda</i> Regional Archives
BSC	: British Southern Cameroons
CDC	: Cameroon Development Co-operation
CEDECA	: Chup, Element and Cultural Development Association
CNU	: Cameroon National Union
CPDM	: Cameroon Peoples' Democratic Movement
CPP	: Conventional Peoples` Party
CWU	: Cameroon Welfare Union
CYL	: Cameroon Youth League
DO	: Divisional Officer
FHA	: Federal House of Assembly
FNNA	: Federated Native Authority Areas
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
GNK	: <i>Gesellschaft Nord West Kamerun</i>
HC	: House of Chiefs
HRM	: His Royal Majesty
IR	: Indirect Rule
KCA	: Kumbo Council Archives
Km	: Kilometer
KNC	: Kamerun National Congress
KNDP	: Kamerun National Democratic party
KPP	: Kamerun Peoples' Party
MECUDA	: Meta Element and Cultural Development Association
MEDINO	: North -West Development Authority

MINATD	: Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation
Mm	: Millimeter
NA	: Native Authorities
NAA	: Native Authority Areas
NAB	: National Archives Buea
NBC	: Native Baptist Church
NC	: Native Court
NCHRF	: National Commission on Human Right and Freedom
NCNC	: National Council for Nigeria and Cameroon
NCO	: Native Court Ordinance
NE	: North East
NOWEFA	: Northwest <i>Fons</i> ’ Association
NOWEFCO	: Northwest <i>Fons</i> Organization
NOWEFU	: Northwest <i>Fons</i> Union
NR	: Northern Regions
PM	: Prime Minister
SC	: Southern Cameroons
SCCC	: Southern Cameroons Chiefs’ Conference
SCHA	: Southern Cameroons House of Assembly
SCHC	: Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs
SDF	: Social Democratic Front
SDO	: Senior Divisional Officer
SW	: South-West
TA	: Traditional Authority
TIS	: Traditional Institutional Systems
TR	: Traditional Ruler
UNO	: United Nations Organisation
WAPV	: West <i>Afrikanishche Panzungsgesellschaft</i> Victoria
WCHA	: West Cameroon House of Assembly
WWI	: World War One
WWII	: World War Two

GLOSSARY

Grassfield Local appellations

English

<i>Anti-Njong</i>	Thorny tree
<i>Béréfu, efu</i>	Traditional Doctor
<i>Cha-Mfor</i>	The keeper of things
<i>Chatte</i>	Injunction
<i>Isubu, Douala, Mugaka, lamso, ngemba</i>	Languages
<i>Kueng/likeng</i>	Peace
<i>Kwifor, Menangn, Nwerong, Ngumba</i>	Legislative House
<i>Lum-Nyam</i>	King of all animals
<i>Mban, Efum, Ban, KoinuNtuloge, ban Etsham</i>	Shrine
<i>Mbumbi, Ntok, Fon, Nfo, Mbe, Ncha, Bio</i>	Chief/Leader
<i>Mendeme, Manjong, Megwes</i>	Soldiers
<i>Mobot, Teken, Takam</i>	Masquraders
<i>Nagangsoumkum, Mukuumsis Kwofor, Keum Agem</i>	Notables
<i>Nchinda</i>	Palace attendance
<i>Ndon</i>	Curse
<i>Nungubu</i>	Python
<i>Nwieghekoh</i>	Almighty God
<i>Nyambo</i>	Leopards cup
<i>Sam</i>	Dancing ground
<i>Tabiku</i>	Audience court
<i>Tadmanji</i>	Father of the road
<i>ta-nt, Bukum, nguma</i>	Quarter head
<i>Taw, ntoh</i>	Palace
<i>The Things of the Chief</i>	Leaders' belonging
<i>Travelled, journey</i>	Death of a king
<i>Vibia</i>	Great Lords
<i>ébeñi, Nda</i>	Country
<i>ébēñiñgũmbă, Nda Ala ,itshu 'esento, tali</i>	Quarter Council
<i>éfesti mbeng</i>	Community gathering

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I. Content and Justification of the Study

For more than six decades, the Bamenda Grassfields indigenous institutions and the States of Africa have been confronted with a series of challenges. Apart from civil wars and under-development that have characterized post independent Africa since the 1960s, one of the fundamental trials the States keep facing is that of poor governance. In fact, governance is at the center of every human development that has the propensity to curb civil wars, boost development, and promote social justice as well as instilling transparency and accountability in the management of state affairs for an enabling environment of nationhood.

Most societies that have attained a certain degree of development have succeeded partly as a result of good governance. The practice of governance (exercise of political authority and policy implementation) gives the wrong impression that the concept is new in the African context. In reality, the concept is as old as the African continent itself. In practical terms, governance existed in pre-colonial Africa and institutionalized by chieftaincy. The term Chieftaincy designates all those forms of social and political authority, which have their historical origin in “pre-colonial” states and societies. These societies were incorporated by colonial rule into what is now the “Modern State”.¹ They were generally referred to during the colonial period as traditional authority.

To J.K. Adjaye and Buba Misawa, traditional authority is synonymous with traditional rulership.² Anthropologically traditional leadership is defined as those political, socio-political and politico-religious structures that are rooted in the pre-colonial period, rather than in the creations of the colonial and post-colonial States.³

In fact, one of the fundamental characteristics of chieftaincy is that, it has its mode of governance that predates the advent of colonial rule. Chieftaincy as a governance institution is a distinguished feature in the landscape of contemporary Africa. In many African countries, traditional leadership within the domain of governance has remained an important institution in

¹ J.J.C. Anene, and G.N. Brown., (eds), *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Handbook for Teachers and Students*. Ibadan: University Press, 1966, pp.12-28.

²J.K. Adjaye, and B. Misawa, “Chieftaincy at the Confluence of Tradition and Modernity: Transforming African Rulership in Ghana and Nigeria”, *International Third World Studies Journal and Review*, Volume XVII, 2006, p.34

³C. Cheka, “Traditional Authority at the Crossroad of Governance in Republican Cameroon”, *African Development*, Vol. 33, No, 2008, p.68.

organizing the life of the people at the local level despite the state structures. The chieftaincy institution governance like the modern state today delivered essential services such grassroots development and justice that African state do not always succeed in delivering. The chieftaincy institution act as intermediaries between the government and their local population and are a political force to reckon with as they wield enormous electoral and general influence in their own communities due to their control over resources and their population⁴

Traditional authorities have itself imaged as a symbol of tradition while at the same time striving to serve as an agency of modern project. The post-colonial difficulties and mutation of traditional authorities of chiefdoms have indeed constituted the subject of vast scholarly interest and they have in the process served diverse purposes.⁵ A number of studies affirmed the resiliency, legitimacy and relevance of African Traditional institutions in the socio-cultural, economic and political lives' of African particularly in the rural areas.

Juxtaposed with the role of traditional leadership in the development of the communities is sometimes parallel to the role of modern governance of the "Modern State" as Africa seeks to build and strengthen capable states. The Bamenda Grassfields' is homogenous cultural and geographical entity, though with varied linguistic and socio-political organisations. Chilver and Kaberry brought to light the complexities of the societies of the Grassfields, which comprised a multiplicity of political communities predicated on heavily stressed linguistic singularity. There were also, the varying modes of centralization of powers and the seemingly parceling up in individual polities of elements from a common core of cultural forms and practices based on Traditional Institutions of Governance.⁶ This ethnically plural structure creates the opportunity for ethnic entrepreneur, youth associations, the educated elites and the traditional political leaders to provide collective actions which were done through the exploitation of local political order in history as well as social spaces network. Africans are founded on the explicit presupposition by their promoters that, the over-centralization of political decisions at the top of the state stifles local political and economic initiatives projected and controlled by Traditional governance. These institutions are equally considered as the symbol of the indigenous people's right, privileges, laws,

⁴ P. N. Nkwi, *Traditional Government and Social Changes, A study of the Traditional Institutions of Kom of the Cameroon Grassfields*, Fribourg, University Press, 1976, p. 45.

⁵ E. M'Bokolo, et al, *The Développement of Bureaucracy in the Ashanti*, Tom II XIX-XXe siècle, Hatier AUPELF "l'Afrique Noire Histoire et civilisation, Hatier, Paris décembre, 1992, pp. 12-19.

⁶P.N. Nkwi, and J.P. Warnier, *Elements for a History of the Western Grassfields*, University of Yaoundé, 1982, p.3

customs and traditions which included but not limited to the *Fon* and their Traditional Councils.⁷ These organs in the context are inclusive of the king, the secret societies and title holders who, in most cases are inherited and appointed based on their contributions to the development of the land and to whom, are attributed little or no executive, legislative and judicial powers. When one regards the real world of the global, national and local efforts to achieve peace, equality and prosperity, it is apparent that the way people conduct politics relies very significantly on values and norms that they believe and act upon. Such a palpable human context is often lost in academic renderings of politics, which increasingly rely on sterile formula of behaviors. This seem to render much social science alien to the choices of policy makers, civil society actors and others in the day to day arena of political actions which has substituted a narrow bend of explanatory power for relevancy.⁸

Two schools have argued on the relevance of the chieftaincy institution in the modern state today; the traditionalist and modernist schools. The traditionalist posits that, chieftaincy as the socio-political heritage of African cultural legacy should preserve in its natural state. In fact, they clamor that, this institution that has long being adulterated be by colonial and now the post - independent state, be reinstated into its original form. On the other hand, the modernists are of the opinion that, chieftaincy should function side by side with the “modern state” or better still it should be integrated into the modern governance system because of its historical relevance.

In Cameroon, much of the controversy over traditional institutions lies in the debate over the incorporation of the upper echelons of chiefs into the modern governance structures. Nevertheless, growing number of African countries including some of those that had previously attempted without success to strip chiefs off their power or to completely abolish traditional institutions, have realized the political currency that chiefs possess. As such, have integrated chieftaincy as one of the fundamental institution for development and not “vote-broking” in rural areas and exercise significant informal control over the State’s intervention in local affairs.

It is against this background that, this study sets out to historically investigate in what ways can the integration of traditional governance incarnated by the Chieftaincy institution could contribute towards the amelioration of Cameroons’ Modern Governance in the present context.

⁷N. Nkweke, “The Role of Traditional Institutions of Governance in Managing Social Conflicts in Nigeria oil-rich Niger Delta communities, Imperative Peace Building”, Ph.D. Dissertation in Political Science, University of Port Harcourt, 2012, p.20.

⁸ J. Thomas (ed)., *International law and International Relations: Bridging theories and Practice*, London, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, First pub; 2007, p.68.

Bamenda Grassfields chieftaincy institution is used as reference to illustrate the relevance of chieftaincy in modern governance and development in Cameroon.

II. Conceptual Framework

A number of studies⁹ have affirmed the resiliency, legitimacy and relevance of traditional rulers, especially in the socio-cultural, economic and political lives of African traditional societies in general and the *Bamenda* Grassfields in particular.

Human society from time immemorial, even under the most chaotic systems, has functioned under some form of co-ordinated machinery¹⁰. At the helm of this machinery are managers of public affairs who in our context are traditional rulers. According to Aborisade, a Nigerian educationist, a traditional ruler is the head of an ethnic unit or clan, who is for the time being the holder of the highest authority within the ethnic unit or clan and whose title as traditional ruler is recognised by the government of the state¹¹.

These public managers go by different appellations depending on the society, historical period, or cultural context. There have been emperors who ruled empires, in the medieval past, kings who managed kingdoms, emirs who sought control over emirates and chiefs and *Fons* who ruled their chiefdoms and *Fondoms* respectively¹². In the Grassfields societies, most of these public managers (traditional rulers,) ruled their various polities¹³, alongside well organised and powerful traditional institutions, which assisted them in executing their orders or tasks.

III. Conceptualizing Chieftaincy as a governance institution

The term chieftaincy is derived from the word “Chief” and refers to the office and the institution in which the main is the principal operator and stakeholder.¹⁴ Chieftaincy may, thus, comprise among other things the personnel holding offices such as chiefs, queen mothers, notables, counselors and staff- rituals, symbol and other paraphernalia. The Fondom is first and foremost a

⁹Studies on Chieftaincy and traditional or local administration in African societies have shown that the modern state cannot succeed totally in its mission without making use of traditional rulers.

¹⁰T. N. Kahjum., “Bum Leadership in the Bum dom. Ca 1870-1999: A Case Study of Intra-village Diplomacy in the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon”, M.A, Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2005, p.45.

¹¹O. Aborisade., (ed), *Local Government and Traditional rulers in Nigerian.*IfeUniversity, 1985 p.7.

¹²Kahjum, “Bum Leadership in the Bum Fondom”, p.1.

¹³Polity Microsoft © Encarta © [DVD] Microsoft Cooperation, 2008.

¹⁴P. A. Boakye., “Chieftaincy Conflicts in Ghana: A Case Study of Ga Mashie Chieftaincy Conflict under the Fourth Republic”, M.A. in Political Science, University of Calgary, Alberta, 2016, p.14.

political unit created out of a multitude of kin groups all centered on a leader¹⁵, the Chief or the traditional ruler or leader who may be known and called chief or some other variant of the word.

According to E. Aggrey-Darkoh and Bossman E. Asare, traditional authorities are the leaders of traditional communities¹⁶. The term “traditional” refers to historic roots of leadership, which legitimizes the execution of power. There are many existing forms of traditional leadership. In Europe, the rule of kings and nobles was the dominant governing force for a long time until it was gradually replaced by democratic structures.

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”.¹⁷ 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”. Thus, traditional leaders could include kings, other nobility holding offices, heads of extended families, and the office holders of decentralized polities whose offices are rooted in the pre-colonial states and other pre-colonial entities.

In Africa, Asia and Latin America, traditional authorities are mostly referred to as chiefs and elders. Traditional leadership is anthropologically defined as including those political, socio-political and politico-religious structures that are rooted in the pre-colonial period.¹⁸ Understood from this perspective, traditional leaders include kings, other aristocrats holding offices, heads of extended families, and office holders in decentralized polities, as long as their offices are rooted in pre-colonial states and other political entities¹⁹. In the Cameroonian context and in accordance with decree n°77/245 of 15 July 1977 chieftaincy is defined as;

La chefferie traditionnelle renvoie aux sociétés lignagères du Centre, du Sud et de l'Est où le chef traditionnel installé par la colonisation est un patriarche respecté, mais qui n'inspire pas la crainte. Elle renvoie aussi aux lamidats du grand Nord où les chefs peuls, les lamibé demeurent des potentats féodaux. Cette institution fait aussi incontestablement référence aux chefferies des Grassfields dont la particularité tient à ce qu'elles aient une légitimité rituelle accentuée et trouve ses origines dans l'époque précoloniale.²⁰

¹⁵G.M. Eyenga., “Crise de Succession Politique dans les Chefferies Bamiléké au Cameroun. Le cas de la Chefferie Banféko”, Master II en Science Politique, l'Université de Yaoundé 2, Soa, 2015, p.8.

¹⁶E. Aggrey-Darkoh, and B. E. Asare., “Understanding the Nexus between Traditional and Modern Political Orders in Ghana”, *Archives of Current Research International*, Vol.3, No.1, 2016, p.3.

¹⁷ D. I. Ray and G. Eizlini., “Chieftaincy, Sovereignty and Legitimacy and Development: A Pilot Newspaper Survey of the Role of Chiefs in Three Aspects of Development”, Unpublished paper, pp.1-3.

¹⁸Ibid, p.5.

¹⁹ D. Ray., “Ghana: Traditional Leadership and Rural Local Governance”, *Grassroots governance? Chiefs in Africa and the Afro-Caribbeans*, D.I. Ray and P.S. Reddy, Editors, Calgary: Calgary University Press; 2003.

²⁰ I. Mouiche., *Autorités Traditionnelles et Démocratisation au Cameroun : Entre centralité de l'Etat et logiques de terroir*, Munster, Lit Verlag, 2005, pp.13-14.

Evariste Fopoussi, former parliamentarian and traditionalist on his part define chieftaincy by situating it within the framework of a social order and organizational protocol with hierarchical instances founded on very precise values and norms. This attributes the Chief, to a clear position in the global geography and imagination of his community.²¹ To Fopoussi, chieftaincy is therefore, a veritable and well-structured administrative institution from the stand point a socio-symbolic universe dominated by the person of the chief without actually making him the alpha and omega of a traditional pyramid (chieftaincy institution), which is managed via imbrication of institutions with well-defined and specific roles²².

In Cameroon as elsewhere in Africa, traditional rule finds expression in forms such as religious leadership, extended family leadership and chieftaincy. It is interesting to note that; chieftaincy is however, the fullest expression of traditional rule in its institutionalized form.²³ It encompasses the critical characteristics of prescribed kingship and lineage succession to office. Also, respect and sacredness of office holders, specific form of contractual relationships between chiefs and their subjects, institutionalized procedure for decision making, and implementation at the local community. Again her community participation, sometimes rallying support for the central government.²⁴

It is worth mentioning that, the term “chief” did not exist in the socio-political lexicon of pre-colonial African societies.²⁵ It was coined and used administratively by the European colonizers to designate African indigenous rulers and collaborators.²⁶ In pre-colonial times, each society had its own term for the occupant of the royal office or traditional ruler, for instance, *Fon*²⁷, *nfor or mfaw and mfar* in the Grassfields and *Lamido* or *Sultan* among the Fulani of Northern Cameroon, just to name a few²⁸. However, the appellation of traditional rulers was later

²¹ E. Fopoussi., *Faut-il bruler les chefferies ?* Yaoundé, SOPECAM, 1991, p.23.

²² Ibid, p.37.

²³ B. K. Antwi-Boasiako, and O. Bonna., *Traditional Institutions and Public Administration in Democratic Africa*, Bloomington, Xlibris Corporation, 2009, p.89.

²⁴ Ibid, p.89.

²⁵ W.T.T. Samah., “Invention of Tradition: Chieftaincy, Adaptation and Change in the Forest Region of Cameroon”, *La Chefferie “Traditionnelle” dans les sociétés de la grande zone forestière du Sud-Cameroun (1850-2010)* (Ed) R. Kpwang Kpwang, Paris, Harmattan, 2011, p.71.

²⁶ M. Crowder, and I. Obaro (Eds.), *West African Chiefs: Their Changing Status under Colonial Rule and Independence*, New York, Africana Publishing, 1970, pp.9-10.

²⁷ *Fon*. This is the titlage title by customs and tradition bestowed on the highest representative personality in the politico-cultural and socio-economic indigenous governance of the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon. The title is attributed on an individual who has been ethroned as the “Father of the Nation”.

²⁸ Samah, “Invention of Tradition”, 2011, p.71.

denaturalized from its content and substance following colonial intrusion into African political systems, thus traditional rulers came to be addressed simply as chiefs.²⁹

To D.O. Omagu, the chieftaincy institution designates all those forms of social and political authority which have their historical origin in the “pre-colonial” states and societies, and which were incorporated by colonial rule into what is now the “modern state”.³⁰ In the same vein, Earle Timothy maintains that, chieftaincy is the Chief’s political body, a personalized network of supporters, who act as agents for his or her rule; they are the chief’s warriors, priests, managers, and others involved in the collection of revenues and support for power strategies.³¹

Timothy Earle stresses the fact that, the chiefdom is the society associated with the chief’s polity. The social forms of Fondoms can often be quite hierarchical, meaning that competing hierarchies and spheres of action exist, as between a political, religious, and social hierarchy, between the regional polity, constituent communities and kin groups, and between ethnic and gendered divisions.³² The Chief is involved in royal things, and could be expected to meddle with community and household activities in only quite specific ways that affect the operation of the chieftaincy.

This presupposes that the Fondom as a form of an entity of management, is highly variable based on conditions of household and community structure with their own histories.³³ Fondoms thus have little coherence as a type and are further interesting because of the flexible power strategies of Chiefs and their chieftaincies. Although often based on principles of kinship and rank, the chieftaincy institution was understood as personalized through patterns of fealty or loyalty somehow comparable to a lesser degree to the early stages of feudalism in Europe during the 8th Century.³⁴

Within the Ghanaian context, the chieftaincy Act of 2008, Act 759, defines a Chief as “a person who hailing from appropriate family and lineage, has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled or installed as a Chief or queen mother in accordance with the relevant

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ J. Nche., “The Negative Impacts of Foreign Influence on the Traditional Authority in Central Grass Field of Cameroon”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé 1, 1982,.

³¹T. Earle., *How chiefs Come to Power*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1997, p.22.

³²Ibid, p.33.

³³G. Feinman, and J. Neitzel., “Too Many Types: An Overview of Sedentary Pre-State Societies in the Americas”, *Archaeology Method and Theory*. Vol. 7, 1984, p. 44.

³⁴ Ibid, p.50.

customary law and usage”.³⁵ The Act further sets minimum qualification for a Chief; the candidate must be a person who has never been convicted of high treason and crime or for an offence dealing with the security of the State, fraud, dishonesty or moral turpitude.³⁶

By *traditional*, we refer to a form of governance understood and validated through narratives or procedures deemed “customary” by constituents. It is usually not codified, has been applied for quite some time, and refers to the past of an ethnic community³⁷. The term traditional is not equivalent to ancient or primordial. We are agnostic as to how old the “tradition” is, and whether it was invented” or not³⁸. The term mainly refers to a mode of legitimization of political institutions.

We choose the term *governance* implying the political function of steering a community that is the “ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services”, in the words of François Fukuyama³⁹. Governance refers to organizations and to rules aiming at regulating behavior and taking decisions for a collectivity.

The concept of *traditional authorities*, by contrast, denotes persons and organizations, whereas *indigenous political institutions* encompasses organizations and procedural rules, but not the substantial rules or services the political system generates⁴⁰. The term traditional governance thus captures a variety of traditional authorities such as chiefs, kings, headmen, queen mothers, councils of elders, etc. It also captures traditional procedural rules such as mechanisms for conflict resolution or leadership selection. Finally, it includes the substantial rules with respect to internal security, land and resource allocation, public health, or matters of marriages and inheritance.

Another appellation generally applied to traditional governance is indigenous governance. Indigenous governance relates to the variety of skills, teachings, wisdom, ideas, perceptions, experiences, capabilities and insights of people, applied to maintain or improve the governance of society. Such indigenous knowledge is seen to exist in a local context anchored to a particular

³⁵ I. Owusu-Mensah., “Politics, Chieftaincy and Customary Law in Ghana’s Fourth Republic”, *Journal of Pan African Studies*, Vol.6, No.7, 2014, p.262.

³⁶Ibid, p.265.

³⁷W. I. Zartman., *Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts. African Conflict “Medicine”*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000, p.7.

³⁸T. Ranger., “The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa.” In *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger, pp.211–62. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

³⁹F. Fukuyama., “What is Governance?”, *An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions* 26 (3): 2013,pp. 347–68.

⁴⁰ K. Holzinger., “The Dualism of Contemporary Traditional Governance and the State: Institutional Set-ups and Political Consequences”, *German Foundation for Peace Research (DSF)*, 2016, p.96-107.

social group in a particular setting and usually at a particular time frame⁴¹. Within this context, the African governance apparatus is essentially about how African societies were organized administratively and politically to manage public affairs before colonialism. Such governance arrangements were dependent on predetermined societal values, customs and beliefs, which every member of a particular society was expected to comply with.

Failure to comply with the agreed governance arrangements attracted harsh punishments. While indigenous knowledge is often portrayed as unscientific by Western scientists and considered backward, conservative, inefficient, and inferior based on ignorance or myths and that, it should be replaced by foreign efficient technologies,⁴² such knowledge has the potential to build a theory of African public administration.

Ghale and Upreti insist that, despite its perceived usefulness, indigenous knowledge is often ignored in favour of modern technical knowledge from the Western world⁴³. However, it is important to respect and understand people's indigenous knowledge systems and to build on such knowledge as a basis for understanding contemporary challenges⁴⁴.

Public administrators in the West tend to carry activities characterised of public's business such as building bridges and highways, encourages the collecting garbages, putting out fires incidents, ploughing of heavy falling of snow, providing insecticides for the spraying of mosquitoes and providing essential social services for the less fortunate.⁴⁵ The African public administrator also has a set of activities that do not necessarily represent the complexity portrayed by the Western examples of the activities of a public administrator.

V. Traditional Administrative Architecture

Traditional administrative systems have a wealth of knowledge scattered across many disciplines, and it is a challenge to African Public Administration scholars to document a common administrative theory. How can they assemble all this knowledge into a common body of knowledge that will form an African Public Administration theory? This challenge was posed

⁴¹ World Bank, Knowledge and skills for the Information Age. The first meeting of the Mediterranean Development Forum, 1997, available at: www.worldbank.org/afr/ik/basic.htm fpd/technet/mdf/objective/htm, accessed on 22nd August, 2020, p.120.

⁴² L.A. Thruppp., "Legitimizing local knowledge: from displacement to empowerment for Third World people", *Agriculture and Human Values*, 6 (3), 1989, pp.13-24.

⁴³Y. Ghale, & B.R. Upreti., "Indigenous knowledge, agricultural practices and food security in developing countries: Opportunities and challenges", unpublished Academic paper, 1994, p.60.

⁴⁴J. Twikirize., N. Asingwire, J. Omona, R. Lubanga, and A. Kafuko., *The role of social work in poverty Reduction and the realisation of Millenium Development Goals in Uganda*, Kampala, Fountain Publishers, 2013, p.65.

⁴⁵J. M. Shafritz, E.W. Russell and C.P. Borick, C.P., *Introducing public administration*. London: Pearson, 2011, p.70.

many years ago during the development of the discipline of Public Administration. There are unique practices within the African context that, when assembled, will generate a rich understanding of African Public Administration.

In 1947, Robert Dahl deflated the science of administration, a year after Simon Herbert in 1946, had effectively punctured the politics-administration dichotomy. Many European scholars quickly assembled themselves around a new theoretical paradigm they labeled Comparative Public Administration. Within the development administration, comparative administrationists argued in an attempt to address to sharp challenges put forth by Dahl against Public Administration. They insisted that, Public Administration would never qualify to be a science unless it took a comparative perspective. Global research on development administration remained dominated by western thoughts and ideas owing to the western origins of the sub-discipline; an easy development that demonstrated an unhealthy dominance by western ideas which effectively hampered scholarship on development administration among African intellectuals and academicians whose works were often dwarfed by their western counterparts, if such works existed.

African scholars demonstrated a total lack of rigour and commitment in documenting the unique features of African administrative systems, which were by modern standards, sophisticated (although they had some weaknesses). At its core, Africa's problem has remained that of underdevelopment where people are poor, resources are under-utilized, and the institutions established are ineffective in facilitating the individual and collective actions needed to resolve the problems of the society⁴⁶. It is such a state of affairs that possibly informed the views of Chanie⁴⁷ who wonders why so much is still unimposing in Africa, despite some modest help from western countries. It is possibly not out of context to insist that, the failure of these institutions cannot be divorce from the cultures, beliefs and customs that long provided a nuclear-power for the social governance infrastructure within the context of African values. An attempt at finding answers to the question, as to why Africa remains under developed should have its central unit of analysis focus on the nature of administrative systems that have driven African society over time.

Existing scholarship on Africa's administrative systems takes two major orientations. The first group of literature is bent on denying that, Africa had any system of governance before

⁴⁶J. Wunsch., *Decentralization, local governance and 'recentralization' in Africa*. USA: John Wiley and Sons, 2001, pp.60-80.

⁴⁷ P. Chanie., "The trajectory of Public Administration in Africa: Background". In P. Chanie, and P.B. Mihyo, (eds.) *Thirty years of public sector reforms in Africa: Selected country experiences*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2013, p.300.

colonialism⁴⁸. Amaeshi and Yavuz insist that it is very difficult, in the context of sub-Saharan African countries to conceptualize and identify indigenous approaches to the management or administration of its populace⁴⁹. This obviously is a position often taken by the advocates of colonial governance. The second school of thought on Africa's indigenous systems demonstrated the sophisticated nature of Pre-colonial African administrative systems.⁵⁰ Kottak ably demonstrates how it was not uncommon for Pre-colonial societies to establish a form of governance through tribes, chiefdoms and polities⁵¹.

The colonial administration, he states, introduced western management theories and practices, considered as the drivers and the panacea for the continent's socio-politico-economic development. Western scholarship and literature generally devalued and deprecated the astonishing management prowess and practices of early African civilizations.

Boone deplores how most political analysis assumes that African states have no organic links to indigenous societies. One consequence of this analysis is that, the issues of state formation have not been taken seriously, as many analysts tend to study the aggregate growth of the post-colonial state apparatus, or only describe similarities in the structure and processes of modern African governments, while effectively ignoring the social origins of cross-national differences in administrative practice and in the organizational configuration of state power.

Moreover, it is uncontested, as Vyas-Doorgapersad and Thombe⁵² articulately illustrate, that African communities had traditional leaders who were political heads with strong family orientation and imposed customary laws to maintain order among their people. Disregarding these facts, creates an uncalled-for knowledge deficit among the African academic community, thereby challenging the duty of African public administration scholars.

Contrary to what colonial architects advocate, Fashoyin⁵³ strongly posits that management in Africa existed and was rooted in the cultural beliefs and traditions of its diverse people. The cultures had evolved over thousands of years and represented successful attempts to integrate

⁴⁸L. Mair., *Primitive government*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962, p. 17.

⁴⁹T. J. Amaeshi and S. Yavuz., "Untangling African Indigenous Management: Multiple influences on the success of SMEs in Kenya". *Journal of World Business*, 43(3), 2008, pp. 400-16.

⁵⁰J.A. Njoh., *Tradition, Culture and Development in Africa: Historical Lessons for Modern Development Planning*. United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing, 2006, p.14.

⁵¹C. Kottak., *Cultural anthropology*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994, p.12.

⁵²S. Vyas-Doorgapersad, and L.M. Thombe., "Training Civil Servants in the Democratic Republic of Congo". In Peter Haruna and Vyas Doorgapersad, S. (eds), *Public Administration Training in Africa*. Florida, USA: CRC Press, Chapter 2, 2013, pp 27-40.

⁵³T. Fashoyin., "Management in Africa", *Lagos Organization Review*, 1(1), 2005, pp. 43-45.

themselves with their environment. African institutions were marked by interrelatedness, yet they also exhibited a wide range of diversity. In this lane, facts on Africa ought to be told by Africans. However, Martin warns that to suggest that the history of African political ideas is a neglected field of study is a major understatement, as Africa is replete with examples of excellent practices of public administration as they existed before the advent of colonialism⁵⁴. He recommends that an instructor wishing to put together a collection of readings on the subject needs to delve into an extremely broad range of sources and materials widely scattered in many books, articles and primary sources dealing with African history, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, politics, biography and literature.

We learn from the works of Osei-Hwedie that, before colonialism, Sub-Saharan African societies were organized around friends and relations, with authority exercised through a system of chieftaincy, clan elders and heads of households⁵⁵. As long as such an arrangement created harmony and a sense of unity among the communities where it existed, the governance apparatus brought about social transformation as understood from the periodic lens of time. Several other practices existed as well. For example, the medical history of Africa, though vital, remains a neglected field. Patterson reports how disease has been a significant factor throughout African history, and attempts to control endemic and epidemic afflictions have been an important aspect of change in the twentieth century⁵⁶. Unfortunately, historians have rarely paid more than cursory attention to issues involving human health; yet they are central to the effectiveness of any governance mechanism.

Politics is one of the oldest activities of humanity and, as soon as people began to live in organized groups, the need to devise ways of governing themselves emerged⁵⁷ as a broader strategy to create social order. Njoh gives a comprehensive description of the governance apparatus that existed in pre-colonial Africa and that African scholars should proudly espouse in the teachings of their Public Administration system⁵⁸. Pre-colonial African societies had sound administrative systems that featured a variety of polities including the city-states, empire-states, as well as conquest states. The continent is known to have had a great deal of accomplishments in

⁵⁴G. Martin., *African political thought*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p.100.

⁵⁵ K. Osei-Hwedie., *Afrocentrism: The challenge of social development*. A paper presented at the ASASWEI Conference. 6-7 September, South Africa: Stellenbosch University, 1993-2005, pp.30-98.

⁵⁶D.K. Patterson., *Disease and medicine in African History: A bibliographical essay*: *History in Africa*, 1: 141-148 Published, 1974, p.58.

⁵⁷A.R. Ball and G.B.Peters., *Modern Politics and Government*, New York: Plagrave Macmillan, 2005, p.302.

⁵⁸J.A. Njoh., *Tradition, culture and development in Africa: Historical lessons for modern development planning*. *United Kingdom*: Ashgate Publishing, 2006, pp.18-38.

the areas of political and social organization, architecture, city building, arts and crafts, commerce and trade, tax administration, grievance-handling and discipline as well as democratic arrangements⁵⁹. This pre-colonial governance apparatus was based on communalism, which revolved around the *Ubuntu* ideology.

Ubuntu means humanness or being human.⁶⁰ Within its philosophy is the community ownership and respect of society as opposed to individualistic tendencies characterized most by pre-colonial governance frameworks. The family, clan and tribal orientations were a common bond that provided unity.

It was common for family members to scatter geographically for better occupation prospects and in the process, establish new territorial authorities.⁶¹ As Ifechukwu posits, the core values of African communities involved the extended family, human relations orientation, co-prosperity or social mutual concern, respect for elders and tradition, consensus, competition and hero-worship⁶².

Pre-colonial political governance arrangements guided power and authority distribution as exercised by the various elements of the government put in place.⁶³ The political systems were brought together by acceptable common norms, institutions and cultures of people and had a common language in a territorially delineated space or in different situations. While many different types of governance systems existed, three political categories can be identified namely, (1) centralized kingdoms and empires; (2) centralized small kingdoms and city-states and (3) decentralized or stateless political societies summarized the systems. In each of these political systems, trade and strong military forces were important factors in the development and maintenance of social order⁶⁴. Ukpabi elaborates, for example, how kingdoms and empires elaborately evolved and often with complex military organizations to ensure adequate protection of the royal court and the safety of the rulers⁶⁵. They had a group of professional warriors charged with this responsibility and whose qualification for office included unquestioned loyalty to the government in power.

⁵⁹ Njoh., *Tradition, culture and development in Africa*, p.44.

⁶⁰ R. Khoza., *Let Africa lead: African transformational leadership for 21st century Business*. Johannesburg: Vesubuntu Publishing, 2006, p.56.

⁶¹ A.R. Ball and G.B. Peters., *Modern politics and government*, New York: Plagrave Macmillan, 2005, p.96

⁶² J.A.O. Ifechukwu., "African approach to management: Notes toward a theory", *Lagos International Journal of Business and Social Science*, vol 3. No 21, November, 2012, pp 34-56

⁶³ Njoh, *Tradition, culture and development in Africa*, p.89

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p.90.

⁶⁵ S.C. Ukpabi., "The Military in Traditional African Societies", *Africa Spectrum*, 9(2), 1974, pp. 200-217.

Public administrators perform legal duties within the societies. Indeed, leaders of the pre-colonial period had a regulatory function which covers the legal definition of public administration. Njoh documents on how leaders of that time were pre-occupied with discipline and administering punishment to those who went against the established rules of the societies. These systems ensured harmony and discipline, an indication of a well-organized society. Mazrui also explains how the fragmented or highly decentralized systems were the majority, while the highly centralized polities were few and included the well-known kingdoms such as the Songhai Empire, Ashanti Kingdom, the City-State of Benin, all in West Africa, the Bakongo Kingdom in Central Africa and the Buganda Kingdom in East Africa⁶⁶. African societies, throughout the centuries were organized on the basis of a social contract.

On the same subject, Jarret has done a fine job of describing the governance apparatus of pre-colonial African polities that typically comprised three major elements⁶⁷. In their hierarchy, the administrative bodies included (1) the council of elders, (2) chief priests and moral elders and (3) chiefs; all capable of executing functions ranging from mundane tasks, such as using the talking drum to summon a meeting of the king's aides, to complex undertakings such as planning and executing wars. Each body was placed in charge of a well-defined set of activities. The council of elders had the responsibility of conceiving, planning, implementing and managing the community's development projects, which were critical undertakings expected by members of the society. Projects such as public infrastructure building and maintenance, building and maintaining the chief's palace as well as building and maintaining weekly markets fell under the jurisdiction of the council of elders. The idea of crime as an anti-social act certainly existed and it was the concern of those entrusted with authority in the society to restore and promote social relationships.

Reconciliation and the restoration of social harmony were the objectives of judicial proceedings rather than retribution. Hence, the importance attributed to compensation and even ritual feasting as the outcome of a process of reconciliation was great. The chief priests who were people endowed with special spiritual powers and or/skills that were often inherited rather than learnt, had important governance responsibilities.

⁶⁶A. Mazrui., *The Africans: A triple heritage*, Boston, Massachusetts, USA: Little, Brown and Company, 1986, pp. 100-103.

⁶⁷ A.A. Jarrett., *The underdevelopment of Africa: Colonialism, neo-colonialism and socialism*. New York: University Press of America, 1996, p.60.

As Jarret points out, these people functioned as religious authorities and acted as a bridge between members of the communities and their ancestors⁶⁸. The belief in ancestral powers was a common practice in pre-colonial societies and a special body of administrators had to be responsible for such spiritual matters. The chief priests were also charged with the responsibility of educating the community on African spiritual laws, religious doctrines and principles.

In this regard, they provided knowledge on the importance of living in harmony with the natural environment, including land, rivers, lakes, forests and why members of the community must see themselves as custodians and not owners of the natural resources. The Chief priests further performed the role of modern day health officials or medical practitioners as they were responsible for healing the sick.

The moral elders (who were similar to the officials responsible for ethics and integrity in most contemporary systems), were responsible for teaching moral conduct and upholding moral standards throughout the community. They were also responsible for recording all major events that took place in their communities. In this case, they served as community historians. The fact that most pre-colonial African societies did not boast a written culture does not mean they were incapable of recording information. This task was often accomplished through two main strategies:

- 1) The most common involved story telling. These stories were then passed on from one generation to another until they became legendary.
- 2) Through drawings or sketches. Such drawings and sketches have surfaced in caves, and other artifacts have been uncovered through archaeological and other discoveries.

Example of the Songhai's empire, whose governance apparatus comprised, among other units, several ministerial bodies as Njoh reports, helps us to understand the pre-colonial governance apparatus⁶⁹. Prominent in the empire was a ministerial body in charge of agriculture, headed by an inspector of agriculture which is an equivalent of contemporary ministries of agriculture. There was also a ministerial body in charge of etiquette headed by a chief of etiquette and protocol.

Another elaborated attempt at demonstrating how pre-colonial African societies were organized politically, Ndlovu-Gatsheni gives an account of the governance apparatus in the Ndebele polity which had elaborated mechanisms with checks and balances that significantly

⁶⁸ Jarrett., *The underdevelopment of Africa*, p.60.

⁶⁹ Njoh, *Tradition, culture and development in Africa*, p.95.

regulated the power of the king⁷⁰. The hierarchy of power facilitated communication between the leaders and the ordinary people, the lesser chiefs and the senior leaders up to the king. Governance structure which demonstrates that, the king was at the apex of a power hierarchy and had no absolute powers as several layers of officials existed to check the king. The king was the head of state, head of government, religious commander-in-chief of the armed forces and the supreme judge of all criminal cases. Below the king were layers of powerful officials who played an active role in the governance of the state as well as checking on the absolute dictatorship of the king⁷¹.

The first layer of the administrative officials in the Ndebele kingdom was the prime minister called *indunankulu yesizwe* and he acted as the head of government. This compares effectively to the ancient Greek society arrangement where; the prime minister occupied the top hierarchy position and a number of gods (ministers) below him were responsible for specialized functions. The Ndebele king did not rule by decree as state policies were subjected to serious debate and meetings were considered important in deciding the future of the state. The king's personal confidants comprising inner advisers collectively termed *umphakathi* played a crucial role in determining state policy and they effectively made difficult judicial decisions.

Another set of advisers of the king were a large group of the state's prominent men collectively termed *izikhulu*. It was through these two councils that the ordinary Ndebele people were able to participate in the government of their country. This has a resemblance to our contemporary governance apparatus where elected representatives represent the people's views. *Umpakathi* and *izikhulu* in the Ndebele society operated as representative councils. Like the commercialized politics of modern African societies before colonialism, the members of these representative councils were mainly rich people rather than ordinary persons.

They were not freely chosen by the people; their positions were largely hereditary. *Ndlovu-Gatsheni* further reports how the Ndebele king tried to keep as much power in his hands as possible, but the leaders of *izigaba* worked tirelessly to gain more and more power and increasing influence in state affairs⁷². It was these people who practically commanded the armed forces during military assignments. They also determined outcomes of difficult judicial decisions. While the king could differ with the views of his advisers on a number of issues, he was often forced to

⁷⁰ S.J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni., "Who Ruled by the Spear, Rethinking the form of Governance in the Ndebele State", *African Studies Quarterly*, 10 (2 & 3), 2008, pp.71-94.

⁷¹ Ibid, p.8.

⁷² Ibid, p.60.

endorse the popular views of his advisers. The leaders of *izigaba*, rather than the king, were the practical representatives of *amahlabezulu* (the ordinary population).

The king had to listen to their views in order to keep in touch with the popular sentiments of his people. Chiefs of *izigaba* were initially appointed by the king, especially during the inception of the state and the formation of specific *izigaba* as the state grew. Provincial chiefs, however, had to work hard to cultivate the allegiance of the people within the territorial area of their rule⁷³. Upon the death of an appointed chief, the king's power to appoint another chief fell away, as the deceased chief was to be succeeded by his eldest son from his senior wife (*indluenkulu*). If the senior wife failed to produce a son, other sons from junior wives were accepted as successors.

Similar societies in Pre-colonial Africa exhibited a well-organized governance mechanism based on common societal beliefs. Tosh, while writing from the contexts of the Uganda Protectorate, reports how in both centralized and *acephalous* societies, the British ruled through a uniform system of native administration⁷⁴. This arrangement was found prudent to align the British system to the indigenous structures through what is popularly known as indirect rule. The indigenous administrative governance structure had on its apex the district, which usually corresponded to the territory of one tribe, or a combination of related tribes. With few exceptions, local people did not occupy executive positions at District level, as such was the preserve of European officials⁷⁵.

The internal administration of the District was carried out by locally recruited chiefs, appointed from above, and distributed over four grades according to the territory they ruled: county, sub-county, parish and village. Each of these constituted an administrative unit. At each of the administrative levels, the chief had responsibility for maintaining law and order, tax collection, the mobilization of labor for public works and the enforcement of administrative orders from his superiors. In the senior grades of county and sub-county, the chief also exercised judicial authority: his court settled the vast majority of civil and petty criminal cases, and he could use a small detachment of armed police to make arrests. This system appealed to British officials, because it was endowed with some traditional legitimacy. The system was derived from the Pre-colonial *Buganda* where the basic principle of graded administrative posts was a common administrative governance mechanism among the *Bakungu* hierarchy of nineteenth-century

⁷³ Ndlovu-Gatsheni., "Who Ruled by the Spear, p.100.

⁷⁴ J. Tosh, "Colonial Chiefs in a Stateless Society: A Case-Study from Northern Uganda", *The Journal of African History*, 14(3): 473-490, 1973, p.200.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p.210.

Buganda. Politics and economics have historically been hostile partners although their outright "divorce" has not yet materialized.

The two have a symbiotic relationship although such a relationship is largely ignored in most discourses. By its nature, politics shapes the economics of any society. However, the economics also determine the kind of politics by those who are in charge of managing society affairs. Some economic decisions are political mechanisms to control the affairs of the state. Africa's economy, in the Pre-colonial period, was diverse and in a large measure was driven by extensive trade routes that developed between cities and kingdoms.

While African political systems had all the trappings of government, with the consent of the governed and a balance between centralized and decentralized power to prevent the misuse of authority by one person,⁷⁶ there were some weaknesses worth noting in our effort to develop an African Public Administration theory. While indigenous systems had a governance apparatus with checks and balances as well as an accountability mechanism, they had some degree of exclusion. Secondly, indigenous societies survived on wars, conquests, raids, kidnappings and the collection of tribute payments, which led to the enslavement and sale of millions of men, women and children as *Falola* and *Warnock* demonstrate⁷⁷. In primitive societies, fighting was recognized as a legitimate means of obtaining a redress for an injury, though not a means of dominating others.⁷⁸

Certain African rulers used slave soldiers as the means of creating a centralized administration aimed at enhancing the authority of the monarchs against the competition of their subordinate Chiefs. The *Kabaka Kalema* of Buganda, in the late nineteenth century, when he found himself losing popular support, relied on the Arabs and their bands of slaves for his safety.⁷⁹

Ndlovu Gatsheni tells us how the Ndebele system of governance was not fully based on consensual politics. It was characterized by a mixture of democratic tendencies, on the one hand, and aristocratic, autocratic and/or militaristic tendencies on the other. Tension, competition, jealousies, and violence also characterized Ndebele systems of governance. Kinship was one major ideology, in the Ndebele state, that was a source of both strength and weakness

⁷⁶D.T. Osabu-Kle., *Compatible cultural democracy: the key to development in Africa*. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2000, pp.48-106.

⁷⁷F. Talor and A. Warnock., "Introduction". In Toyin Falola and Amanda Warnock (eds) *Encyclopedia of the middle passage*. Westport-London: Greenwood Press: xv-xxvii, 2007, p.98.

⁷⁸L. Mair., *Primitive Government*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962, p.89.

⁷⁹S.C. Ukpabi., "The Military in Traditional African Societies." *Africa Spectrum*, 9(2), 1974, pp. 200-217.

VI. Motivation for Choice of Topic

It is a truism that the chieftaincy institution in Cameroon and particularly in the Bamenda Grassfields is the oldest socio-political institution that predates the modern state. Its resilient nature is clear proof that the institution is legitimate and strongly rooted in the social fabrics that constitute the basis of all diverse and varied ethnic and tribal entities in Cameroon.

For the past decades in Cameroon, traditional rulers have increasingly been associated with the political dynamics of the country. They have gradually been given the opportunity to become mayors, parliamentarians, senators and recently members of the regional council.⁸⁰ This can be viewed as an attempt by political authorities to integrate traditional rulers in the management machinery of the nation. However, the integration of traditional rulers in the modern governance architecture can be interpreted as politically motivated. This is illustrated by the fact that, most chiefs holding elective positions are from the ruling party (CPDM).

In fact, chiefs belonging to other parties apart from the CPDM are rare. The administrative territory of Cameroon is so vast that the role and implication of traditional rulers is important so as to play the primary administrative role of notably maintaining law and order and development. But with the integration of traditional rulers in modern governance from the perspective of political affinities or affiliation, it becomes difficult for them to effectively play their role as actors of modern governance. This study is therefore motivated by our curiosity as researcher to investigate how chiefs as partisan actors in national politics could effectively contribute to modern governance in Cameroon.

VII. Objectives of the Study

In historical research, one of the main goals is often to expand existing knowledge on a particular subject⁸¹. A lot of studies exist on African chieftaincy and more specifically on the Bamenda Grassfields chieftaincy institution. This of course gives the impression that research has been exhausted in the field of chieftaincy, whereas emerging events and evolution of chieftaincy over time proves the contrary. In reality chieftaincy is still a fertile area for varied research in related fields like conflicts, governance and development. The main objective of this study is to investigate into the changing scope of traditional authority and establish how it can sustainably

⁸⁰ See *annexe 19*, Law on the organization and functioning of decentralization of 2004, completed by decree no 2020/526 of 02 September 2020 fixing the number of regional councilors by division and categories.

⁸¹M. Bloch., *Apologie pour L'Histoire ou Metier D'Historien*, cahier des Annales, 3 Library Armand Colin, Paris, 2^e édition, 1952, p. 18.

contribute to efficient modern governance as a complementary and not a rival institution with state institutions. Besides the main objective, this study is specifically geared at:

1. Exploring traditional governance system in the Bamenda Grassfields;
2. Assess the changing nature and form of traditional governance under German colonial rule in the Bamenda Grassfields from 1884-1916;
3. Underscore the role of British colonial authorities in the transformation of traditional governance in the Bamenda Grassfields after the ousting of the Germans from Cameroon and particularly from the Bamenda Grassfields of Kamerun;
4. Determine the fate of Bamenda Grassfields traditional governance in post-independence Cameroon;
5. Examine the ambiguous situation of traditional governance in the context of political plurality in Cameroon.
6. Assess the impacts of the changing nature, resilience, and relevance of traditional governance in a complex socio-political arena dominated by foreign cultural determinants.

VIII. Statement of the Problem

Before the advent of colonial rule in the Bamenda Grassfields, all communities or polities were organized around the socio-political institution known as chieftaincy. This institution regulated society and the behavior of the members living within such a polity. It had a peculiar and well organized decentralized governing system with powers and functions stemming from the highest political office (palace) down to the lowest level (households). The advent of colonial rule witnessed a distortion of this system even though it did not fundamentally affect the structures of traditional governance.

At independence, the conception and functioning of the modern state in Cameroon, like in other African states, was purely the importation of the Western system of governance which had nothing to do with the local realities of the various communities that constituted the nation-state in independent Cameroon⁸². Contrarily the modern state had rather carried out reforms seemingly geared towards colonizing and controlling the traditional institutions and its leaders. The colonizing of the chieftaincy institution is not in itself negative, but the motivation for which they are being colonized leaves much to be desired⁸³.

⁸² Ball and Peters., *Modern politics and government*.p.90

⁸³ O. Roland and J.D. Fage., *Africa; A Short History of Africa*, Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1962, pp,23-90

The challenges faced by most African states today can be attributed, among other factors, to governance. The resilient and efficient nature of traditional governance in the midst of the various historical adversities since the pre-colonial times is clear evidence that traditional governance is essential for the development of the modern state. This study therefore, seeks to show how the historical evolution of the Bamenda Grassfields traditional governance system can effectively contribute to the governance system in Cameroon. Persay, this study is guided by a main research question and secondary questions.

Main Research Question;

In light of the statement of the problem, the study seeks to answer the question whether or not the historical resilience of Bamenda Grassfields traditional institutions could sustainably contribute as a complementary governance institution to good governance and development in Cameroon?

Secondary Questions

1. What were the historical features of traditional governance in pre-colonial Bamenda Grassfields?
2. How did German colonial rule influence the traditional governance system in the Bamenda Grassfields?
3. How did British colonial policy influence the traditional governance system in the Bamenda Grassfields?
4. To what extent did independent policy appropriate the Bamenda Grassfields traditional governance system in the consolidation of the modern state in Cameroon?
5. What has been the impact of traditional governance in the consolidation of the modern state in Cameroon?
6. What is the relevance of traditional governance in the contemporary state of Cameroon?

IX. Delimitation of the Study

Almost all African pre-colonial traditional polities come into existence following migration from somewhere. This led to the formation of kingdoms and chiefdoms in various settlements as a result of one reason or the other. The settlement preceded the creation of the governance system to regulate and manage society. To corroborate this assertion, Herbert S. Lewis maintains that, the problem of the origin of African kingdoms is closely linked to the general theoretical problem of

state formation and governance⁸⁴. In the course of state formation, one of the major points of disagreement that generally arose was the problem of leadership and government. It has been widely held that most traditional socio-political entities in Africa were formed by conquests in which one cultural group subjugated others by imposing a particular governing system, thus producing societies with sharply divided classes of rulers and subjects⁸⁵.

The Bamenda Grassfields was not an exception. Given that, chieftaincy and its traditional governance system are the remarkable socio-cultural heritages of the Bamenda Grassfields people, a historical inquiry into the study of this civilization requires the need to present the spatial location of the latter. This is because the environment within which the traditional governance institution in the Bamenda Grassfields evolved cannot be dissociated from its evolution. The geographical location of the study is limited to the Bamenda Grassfields situated within the administrative region of the North West region of Cameroon.

The region under study is situated in the geographic area that has come to be referred in ethnographic literature as the Western Grassfields, an appellation derived from the savannah vegetation that covers the Western highlands of Cameroon. In pre-colonial times it was inhabited by a mosaic of centralized political units ranging from small chiefdoms of around a thousand persons to petty conquest states that could number several tens of thousands. These state-like structures were generally organized into a hierarchy comprising sacred kings, nobility and commoner categories, although the degree of complexity varied considerably depending on the size of the group⁸⁶.

The Bamenda Grassfields Country, today known as the North-West Region of Cameroon, has as capital in the city of Bamenda. It is subdivided into seven administrative divisions (Mezam, Momo, Bui, Donga-Mantug, Menchum, Boyo and Ngo-ketujia). The area is located some 314 kilometers away from Yaoundé the capital city of Cameroon. This region lies between 6°20' and 6°10' North latitude, and 10°30' and 40°2' East latitude. This covers about 291,385 square meters of surface land. The terrain is mountainous with valleys and parts thickly forested⁸⁷. The mountain formed the watershed of the tributaries. "Truly the natural beauty of the rugged hills demands the admiration of even the most unappreciated of mortals the artist would gaze spell bound gorgeous

⁸⁴Roland and Fage., *Africa; A Short History of Africa*, pp,95-100.

⁸⁵ H. S. Lewis., "The Origins of African Kingdoms", *Cahiers d 'etudes Africaines*, vol.6, no 23, 1966, pp.402-407.

⁸⁶E.M Chilver, and P.M. Kaberry., "Notes on the Pre-Colonial History and Ethnography of Bamenda Grassfields: An Expansion Version of Draft Section of the History of the Peoples and Civilizations of Cameroon", Buea, 1966,p.34 .

⁸⁷M.W. Che., "Bamenda Division under the British Administration, 1916-1961. From Administration to local Government" M A Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé, 1980, pp.2-10

Source: Adapted from E.M. Chilver and P.M. Kabbery., *Traditional Bamenda*, p.112.

Regarding the chronological lane, the study is situated between 19th and 21st Centuries. The starting point of the study is the period of the establishment of the governance system to regulate societies, which precede migration, peopling and the formation of polities in the Bamenda Grassfields up to the beginning of the 19th Century. The upper limit of the study is 1996, which corresponds with the constitutional modifications that make Cameroon a decentralized Unitary State. The modification created Regional Councils that included amongst others a House of Chiefs in the governance process. These limits facilitate the examination of the historical trajectory of traditional governance and its transformation throughout different historical periods in the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon.⁹⁰

X. Significance of the Study

One of the fundamental aspects of research is ethical. This suggests that results of the research should be capable of contributing significantly towards the amelioration of existent and incomplete knowledge on a specific question. But also, research results could contribute in building society and fostering development.⁹¹ As such, the significance of this study is both scientific and practical.⁹² Academically, this study is a modest and innovative contribution to the existent literature of chieftaincy history in Cameroon. This study questions the past in its own unique way by attempting to establish in a chronological manner the evolution of traditional governance and its degree of integration and adaptation in the modern state.

The study is classed under the discipline of political and social history which has used the traditional governance system in the Bamenda Grassfields to explain the resilience of the chieftaincy institution and the potential role it can play as a complimentary governance institution alongside modern state institutions. It seeks to argue that, despite the various threats and transformation witnessed by the chieftaincy including its traditional governance system, it has remained resilient. This historical resilience makes traditional governance a legitimate institution that the modern state should appropriate than combatting it.

Practically, this study is susceptible of contributing towards a better policy formulation by decision makers in Cameroon. This is because the traditional governance institution has played an

⁹⁰V.B.Amzee., *Historiography and Historical Method*, Bamenda, Patron Publishing House, 2002,p.27.

⁹¹D.W. Katina., "The Importance of Ethical Appraisal in Social Science Research", Reviewing Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics Committee, Spring Science, 2010, p.56.

important role in the socio-political and economic development of some African countries such as the case of Ghana and South Africa, and if well-organized could provide positive results in Cameroon.

This study is an advocacy to the scientific community and policy makers of the need to consider the relevance and potential contribution of traditional governance to effective governance and development. Therefore putting in place a sound and credible policy for chiefs that takes into account the traditional governance system by the state just as other African countries have done will be a good idea as chiefs who are considered to be auxiliaries of the administration are more or less influential vis-a-vis decision making in Cameroon.

Also, imperatively, Chiefs can greatly assist the state to foster developmental projects in their communities, maintain social peace at grassroots levels and also contribute in easing the decentralization process, there is need to revalorize the institution. Thus, it becomes a matter of course that this study dwells among other factors on the responsibility of the state and that of the population towards the chieftaincy institution in nation-building.

XI. Literature Review

Chieftaincy study is one of the most researched fields in Cameroon and notably that of the Bamenda Grassfields. This gives the impression that everything has been researched on the subject. However, a critical and keen perusal reveals a lot of gaps on the subject. Chieftaincy continues to fascinate scholars from all fields of social sciences. To better appreciate the question of traditional governance incarnated by the chieftaincy institution, this section of the study strives to examine preceding studies on the question. As such, this study adopts a thematic and chronological approach to examine the literature review. The first part of examines studies on traditional governance while the second dwells on chieftaincy in Cameroon.

Review of Literature on the notion of Traditional Governance

Examining the resurgence of traditional institutions of governance, Oni *Samuel* and *Segun* Joshua argued that, the question of the rights-based institutions of governance capable of facilitating the consolidation of state-building and democratic governance in Africa remains critical. As most African countries, continue to experience widespread disintegration of their institutions of governance despite the demise of colonialism and autocracy in the continent⁹³.

⁹³S. Oni and J. Segun., "Resurgence of Traditional Institutions of Governance: Imperative for State-Building in Africa", *Slovenská politologická revue Číslo 3, ročník X.*, 2010, pp. 2-15.

While some scholars argued for selective application of some traditional African political models of governance as solutions to African deepening crises, others however doubt the relevance of such models in the 21st Century demands of governance. By examining the traditional African system of state legitimacy and civil obedience, the authors argued that, though the viability of institutions cannot be necessarily determined by whether they are imported or indigenous, the present African political and economic crisis is unlikely to be reversed under the existing contradictory duality of institutions. It recommends among others, the dynamic interplay and harmonization of Africa's cultural ideological heritage and the agencies of the modern state.

In the same vein, Jo Beall and Mduduzi Ngonyama using the traditional governance system of South Africa to establish its significance, the authors posit that, in many parts of the world, and especially post-colonial states, customary forms of governance remain salient, being deeply rooted in local institutions⁹⁴. Indigenous institutions are not immutable and have been connected with, and been engaged by colonial powers and western states in a range of ways and varied effects over many decades. Yet it is increasingly recognized that institutional multiplicity and competing claims to social and political legitimacy need to be taken seriously within hybrid political orders. State making and peace building in post-apartheid South Africa was made possible by the creation of administrative machinery that could contain customary authority structures within a broader polity. Political structures and processes that channeled the ambitions and grievances of traditional leaders, a system of local government that drew on the presence and experience of chieftaincies to bring development to hard-to-reach areas.

This was a contested process as it was by no means over and it had mixed results. Yet pockets of success have emerged out of the transitional period, especially in the city of Durban, where inclusive elite coalitions have promoted developmental outcomes. The key ingredient for success was the commitment to the development of influential political leaders with local links into *ubukhosi* (the institution of chieftaincy), as well as strong connections to the ruling African National Congress (ANC) both locally and nationally. From this core, they were able to forge broader coalitions that included traditional leaders, elected councilors, businessmen, social activists and the church. In some instances, they were successful in breaking down political boundaries and antagonisms in the interest of inclusive developmental strategies.

⁹⁴J. Beall and Ngonyama., *Indigenous Institutions, Traditional Leaders and Elite Coalitions for Development: The case of Greater Durban, South Africa*, London, Crisis State Research center, 2009, p.60.

Still within the scope of South Africa, Phindi Patronella Tlou notes that, the relationship between traditional leaders and modern system of government is possible only if, the functions of traditional leaders and of municipal councils are outlined and understood by both parties in South Africa⁹⁵. For instance, where traditional leaders could make an impact in ordinary lives of rural communities, the leaders need to continue to provide the services required without any constraints and share the ideas with their municipal councils.

She further remarks that Traditional Leaders play an important role in their communities in dealing with epidemic diseases such as, HIV/AIDS. They assisted in lobbying in order to influence service delivery prioritization. In addition, they have a unique role in traditional courts; their role is to repair relationships between the wrong doers and the community. Furthermore, the traditional leaders in courts ensure that, the defendant and aggrieved come to terms with the ills they have committed. Traditional leaders are also responsible for advising the government and legislators on issues pertaining to tradition and customs. However, the leaders do not have powers to reject or amend legislation. These literatures are very imperative to this study as the researcher will make reverence to them in *chapter 6* of the study in the course of presenting the complex duality of both customary and modern governance structures in Cameroon. In fact, not only did the institutions function in complementarity, traditional institutions faced a lot of problems within the modern governance scope.

Benon C. Basheka researched on the challenges of the African continent following different historical epochs like shadows of colonialism, conquest, neo-colonialism, global capitalism and foisting upon the western organizational management/leadership practices⁹⁶. The indigenous systems of governance are so much neglected that they hardly receive the significant scholarly attention they deserve in most public administration write-ups and curricula in African universities. This author sheds light on Africa's indigenous administrative systems, which have been portrayed as rather troubled, chaotic and biased in the literature, especially where western ideas are portrayed as superior to indigenous systems. He suggests that, African scholars have as primarily duty bound to portray a better picture of the administrative structures. The tendency, by the architects of the colonial enterprise, to believe that Africa had no administration worthy of the name needs to be rejected, while compelling facts and examples to solidify the robustness of the

⁹⁵ P. Tlou., "Traditional Leadership and Governance in Contemporary South Africa", *Anthropology*, Vol. 8 Iss, 5 No: 217, 2020, pp.1-4

⁹⁶ B.C. Basheka, "Indigenous Africa's Governance Architecture: A Need for African Public Administration Theory?", *Journal of Public Administration* , Volume 50 , Number 3 , 2015, pp.466-484.

pre-colonial governance apparatus. Basheka advocates for a deeper understanding of the indigenous governance, administration and management systems. He concluded by ascertaining that, African practices should be well documented and by extensions informs a theory of African public administration. This will help to curb the challenges faced by traditional institutions within the modern governance structures. His interest is important to this study as the researcher will make reference to the understanding of the influence of the different historical epoch in the study on traditional administrations as well as be able to propose attempted restoration and reviving of indigenous governance.

Review of Literature on the Nature and functioning of Chieftaincy

Bongfen Chem-Langée in “The Transfer of power and authority in *Nto' nkar*” took interest in the transfer of power in *Nto' Nkar* and *Nso*, which to him is exercised through the traditional institutions functionaries and secretes societies (*nwerong, manjong*). Formerly military bodies which have been transformed into modern realities of social bodies responsible for communal work. They take instructions from the *Fon* to function in every corner of the Fondoms and were from the functionaries who are the sub-chiefs and quarter heads⁹⁷. To him, the transfer of power and authority in the said area is highly structuralized and planned through distinctive processes from the incapacitation of the missing *Fon*, his burial, the selection of the would be *Fon*, his enthronement and final installation over his populations.⁹⁸ The author ascertained that, the *Fon* death is officially announced to few selected and his corpse is prepared for burial before midday which equally involved long and special process as he is not an ordinary person. He cited the funeral paraphernalia which are a ladle of palm wine, the hoe, royal cap, bamboo, thatches of grass, and tins of oils, calabashes, dogs, and goat and ram.⁹⁹. This work is relevant to the study, particularly, in chapter I where the researches must make reference to as she presents the background of Traditional governance architecture.

Chem-langee,¹⁰⁰ in another text, examines the traditional political organizations and institutions of the *Nso* palace. This work studies the history of origins and migration of the *Nso* people, thereby giving the classification within the “*Ngwerong*” in the lower and upper lodges in the *Nso* palace. In this work, he makes us to understand that, the “*Ngwerong*” is a highly respected

⁹⁷B. Chem-Langée., “The Transfer of power and authority in *Nto' nkar*”, *Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences Series* , vol. 3 N° 1, jan 1987, p.9.

⁹⁸Ibid, p.20.

⁹⁹ Ibid p. 30.

¹⁰⁰B. Chem- Langhee., “The Road to the Unitary State of Cameroon 1959-1972’’, *Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Science Series*, vol. IV n° 1 and 2, Yaoundé, January-July 1990, p.45.

institution in the *Nso Fandom* when it comes to decision making and decision taking. These works are very important to our study because it facilitate the understanding of the traditional institutions of Nso which is similar to those of the Grassfields made such as the “*Munang*”, “*kwifor*, *Nguumba* and the “*Megues*”.

E.M. Chilver and P.M. Kabbery¹⁰¹ just like Chem- langhee vividly provide valuable information on the different traditional institutions in the *Tikar* and *Widikum* tribes mentioned by the above authors. But they went further to identify the regulatory society amongst the *Tikar* as the judicial arm of the traditional governing body made up of seven hereditary members headed by the *Fon*. They also made mention of the “*Ngumba*” institution amongst the *Bali* chambers. To them, these institutions were answerable to the villagers as they represented the supreme authority and derived their functions from the culmination of several sacred societies which were strictly founded by oath of secrecy and customary rights. These institutions performed both the functions of the executive, judiciary and religious role in the traditional government of the different villages of the *Widikum* and *Tikar* tribes. This is very important to our study because, the researcher will make reference to it in examining the judicial arm of customary laws as secrets society or retainers’ societies had the power to apprehend criminals, levy fines to defaulters, exile recalcitrant criminals, execute punishment impose by the traditional councils.

Kwei Diddymus Chin¹⁰² is not deviating from Chilver and Kaberry as he analyses the origin of political traditional institutions in Oku. He invoked the different institutions that existed in Oku Fandom as well as presenting some duties of the *Fon*. The *Fon* is called “*Mbumbi*” or “*Ntok*” and rules hand in glove with the traditional council and the “*Kwifor*”. He identifies the functions of the “*Ntok*” who was both a political and a socio-cultural leader. He awarded meritorial titles such as “*Bantek*” and “*Tantoh*” to persons who were able to serve and differentiate themselves from others. He used the military society of the “*Manjong*” to execute certain discipline upon consultation with the secret house of the Oku people known as the “*Ndaa*.” He furthers criss -crossed the presentation and the involvement of the “*Mbumbi*” or *Fon* active participation in conflict management and resolution between *Oku* and *Nso*, whereby *Fon* Nsetieh with *Fon* Diné met at Mbessa together with a representative from Kom palace to settle their boundary dispute. At Mbessa

¹⁰¹E. M. Chilver and P.M. Kabbery., *Traditional Bamenda: The Pre-colonial History and Ethnography of the Bamenda Grass field*, Vol. II Buea, Government Press, 1967, p.47.

¹⁰²D.C. Kwei., “The Origin and Development of Traditional Political Institutions and Authority in Oku from Pre-colonial Period to 2006”, DIPSS II Dissertation in History, The University of Yaounde I, 2009, p.67.

under a symbolic tree libations were poured by the *Fon* never to revoke dispute over the demarcated piece of land in future, demonstrating inter-chiefdom diplomacy.

Closely linked to Kwei is Nkwi Paul¹⁰³ who examines the traditional government in Kom, one of the Grassfields kingdoms. His work treats traditional Administrative Organizations and the functioning of the Kom traditional Government which include the village government, the administration of justice and the respect of traditional values in Kom kingdom. For instance the identification of the *Fon* and political integration between Kom and her vassal states. The traditional government of the Kom kingdom has responsibility to manage conflicts and make sure that, the traditional institutions have a future. He went further to examine the traditional methods of administering justice in Kom.

According to him each community in Kom had its head, court and justice. The village court-maintained law and order and those who tried cases were senior officials of the regulatory society such as “*Nagangsoumkum*.” The village courts in the Kom Fodom are responsible for solving minor disputes and equally maintaining peace and order in their communities. The aforementioned authors elaborated on traditional governing bodies which were subunits of traditional authorities. It will be of interest to examine vividly some indigenous assemblies found in traditional settings that were equally responsible in resolving dispute in the communities.

Another interesting work is G.N. Wande¹⁰⁴ study on secret societies in the *Moghamo* clan. He provides valuable information on the role of secret societies in handling conflicts. He began by identifying types of conflicts which necessitate the services of secret societies. To him, issues of rape, adultery, murder and stealing were major crimes that needed special units of the village to handle by the institutions of the *Mennang*, *Ishim*, *KwiFon* and *Awaign*. The examinations done by him on the above media will help the researcher particularly when handling the role of secret oath grounds, a traditional instrument used to ensure that, guilty persons were identified and punished in the Bamenda Grassfields.

Halidou Bouba¹⁰⁵ in examining traditional power or authority in the Lamidat of Bogo in the Extreme North of Cameroon presented the Faada which is an assembly of the Bogo notables and

¹⁰³P. N. Nkwi., *Traditional Government and Social Changes, A study of the Traditional Institutions of Kom of the Cameroon Grassfields*, Fribourg, University Press, 1976, p.36.

¹⁰⁴G.N. Wande., “Secret Societies in Moghamo Clan from Pre-colonial Times to 1984”, MA Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde I, 2008, p.14.

¹⁰⁵H. Bouba., “le Pouvoir Traditionnel et les Mutations Sociales dans le Lamidat de Bogo (Extrême Nord)” Mémoire en Maîtrise de Sociologie, Université de Yaounde, 1988, p.58.

elders. This assembly formed part of the traditional administrative government of the Bogo community. Not only was the Faada an instrument of inspiration and suggestion to the heir to the throne; it was equally an advisory council to the Lamido. It plays the role of a judiciary, legislative and executive body of the traditional governance.

Heirs to the throne were decided and elected in the assembly of Faada. It was also responsible for checks and balances of the Lamidos done by the dignitaries of the organ. As such, it was a political council headed by the senior dignitary known as Sarki Faada. To this Assembly, the Lamido was *“le Gouvernant, juge suprême, gardien du droit, chef suprême de l’armée et guide religieuse”*. Debates and conflict issues were done in this assembly despite the fact that the verdicts were finally passed by the senior dignitaries, *“Le verdict d’un procès à la cour du Laamido est toujours celui des dignitaires”*¹⁰⁶. The above authors took interest in the administrative stratum of traditional governances and their duties which are aspect very relevant to the study. In this perspective, the researcher will understand better the legitimacy of the indigenous institutions and how they facilitated the implantations of colonial administrations.

Review of Colonial literature on chieftaincy

P. B. Meyene Ongolo¹⁰⁷ dwells on the relationships between traditional rulers and the French Administration in Nyong and Sanaga. He posits that traditional rulers together with their institutions were the basis of political strength and played the role of guaranteeing peace and social cohesions amongst their communities. By demonstrating their role, they were integrating social cohabitations together with their transcendent values. It was rather unfortunate that, they did not longer exercise the above functions within the colonial administration. The French colonial authorities re-organized the decentralized society of Nyong and Sanaga by creating puppets chiefs who ruled over the four circumscriptions to facilitate colonial administration. With the balkanization of the area, there were conflicts between traditional rulers and their population who henceforth pay allegiance to colonial masters and not to the traditional indigenous rulers. This statusquo, led to the deprivation of legitimate legacies due to the existence of many stooge leaders without any portfolio. He concludes by acknowledging the fact that, despite the division in the area, the Beti of Nyong and Sanaga managed their differences by supporting Chief Christophe Dzomo Nkomo whose action program united them. Under him, he gained their communal

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷P.B. Meyene Ongolo., “Les Relations entre la Chefferie Traditionnelle et l’administration Colonial Française dans le Nyong et Sanaga de 1935-1960”, Mémoire de DIPES II en Histoire, ENS Annex Bambili, 2010, p.25.

consciousness and he was able to represent them in the National Assembly thanks to the unity of the population of Nyong and Sanaga.

Still in the same domain, Abai Mbongong Edwin¹⁰⁸ analyses the causes of chieftaincy dispute in the chiefdom of Oshie and its impacts on the Oshie community in general and the Njikwa Sub Division in particular in the North West Region of Cameroon. To him, colonialism created boundary disputes by creating puppets leaders who claimed autonomy of jurisdiction like in the case of Nyong and Sanaga. Division in Oshie Fondom was not void of conflicts and the appointment of regents/absentee Fons such as the case of Ericyrol Anyangwe led to the crisis in Oshie whereby, home based chiefs struggled amongst themselves to fill the vacancy of the throne. An aftermath of the conflict was degenerating and stagnant economic and social development in Njikwa Sub Division. These works on conflicting role on indigenous leaders, put in place by the colonial masters in the above communities, perpetually, put Fons/Chiefs at loggerhead with their populace which, lead to numerous chieftaincy disputes, there by disintegrating the seat of traditional governance in Cameroon. The conflict perpetuated by alien rule within our fondoms is a colonial legacy on our indigenous governance. This must be a concern to the researcher to study, as chapter 5 examines the problems of Traditional governance from within and without.

Tabi C. Egbe,¹⁰⁹ on his part provides valuable information on the role of courts of law in the management of the Mamfe Division during the British Mandate. He bases his discussions on Native Courts and in doing this, he mentions the courts comprised of the President, the messengers and the ordinary members. In the course of his analyses, he however did not mention the type of cases handled and how the judgments were done and announced. Given that, traditional methods of judiciary is part of this present study, it will be the researcher's interest to make reference to the use of the Native Courts in putting in place peace and justice during the colonial era.

Paul Nchoji Nkwi, ponders on the German presence in the Bamenda Grassfields.¹¹⁰ In the study, the author describes German penetration and establishment in the Grassfields region, and the reaction of chiefs and their people to this penetration. The welcome and reception given to the Germans by the Bali community acted as a stepping stone for the subjugation and dethronement of some chiefs who were their enemies. A good example is Fon Abumbi II of Bafut who with the

¹⁰⁸M.E. Abai., "Chieftaincy Crisis in Oshie: A Historical perspective 1922-2009", DIPES II Dissertation in History, ENS Annex-Bambili 2011, p.18.

¹⁰⁹T.C. Egbe., "Native Courts in Mamfe Division 1922-1961", Master Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde I, 2005, p.68.

¹¹⁰P.N. Nkwi., *The German Presence in the Western Grassfields, 1891-1913, A German Colonial Account*, Leiden, African Studies Centre, 1987, p.100.

complicity of the Fon of Bali Nyonga was dethroned, exiled and his kingdom reduced to flames. In fact some traditional rulers in the Bamenda Grassfields, who were in conflict with Bali Nyonga, were poorly treated. This work ties with our study as it suggest colonial rule as being one of the factors responsible for the abuse of traditional rulers and their authority in the Bamenda Grassfields our area of study.

In another study, Nkwi focuses on the Pre-colonial inter-chiefdom relation, what he describes as “Traditional Diplomacy”.¹¹¹ Nkwi shows how exchange of gifts between traditional rulers, marriage alliances and visits constituted the core of Pre-colonial inter-chiefdom diplomacy aimed at promoting, peace within the region. Nkwi further examines the pattern of warfare, it causes and impacts. However, the author limits his work on the Pre-colonial interaction among traditional authorities in the Bamenda Grassfields. His work gives us an indebt of the relations that existed between traditional authorities in Pre-colonial Bamenda Grassfields. In this study, we shall extent to the colonial and post-colonial era to show how the coming of colonialism affected traditional authorities in the Bamenda Grassfields. This is because a misunderstanding between colonial administrators and the traditional ruler could lead to the removal and even the exile of a chief from his position and replaced with a loyal one which is an abuse to the traditional authority.

Nkwi and J.P. Warnier in a co-authored study, handles almost all aspects of the Bamenda Grassfields history from the Pre-colonial to the post independent era.¹¹² Their work treats some of the issues mentioned in the above works. The authors lay special emphasis in handling the concept of traditional rulers in the Bamenda Grassfields from the colonial to the post-colonial period. From their argument it is very clear that traditional rulers have lost most of Pre-colonial and post-colonial source of power, and if they do not remain at their rightful place in Cameroon, they may face serious trouble. According to Nkwi and Warnier, traditional rulers in the Bamenda Grassfields could only enjoy some amount of power and influence, if they accept to play the role assigned to them by the ruling class that is, doing what they want even if they do not like it¹¹³. As such, this has contributed to the dethronement of some chiefs in the Grassfields which is a total abuse to the traditional institution. This work is imperative to the study as the researcher would make references

¹¹¹P. N. Nkwi., *Traditional Diplomacy.A Study of Inter-Chiefdom Relation in the Western Grassfields, North West Province*, Yaoundé, Department of Sociology, University of Yaoundé, 1987, p.102.

¹¹²P.N. Nkwi and J.P. Warnier., *Elements for a History of the Western Grassfields*, University of Yaoundé, 1982, p.200.

¹¹³Ibid, pp.226-267.

to it on problems faced by traditional administration in the course of integrating modern governance facts.

Claude Tardits in his work titled the *Contribution of Ethnological Research to the History of Cameroon Cultures* highlighted the structure of traditional political institutions at the point of their encounter with the colonial governments'¹¹⁴. Above all, he shows the centrality and paramountcy of chiefs in their polities. His central pre-occupation was, Africans have evolved their own system of governance in a specific nature. For example, an anthropologist Jean Pierre Warnier used a metaphor to show the paramount position of the Grassfields chiefs among their subjects. To him, the chief is like a “container” that brings his subjects together. As such, the *Fon* is like a unifier, a protector of his people from malevolent forces pouring out blessings, providing for them and is like a symbol of life in the community¹¹⁵. The study is important to this research as it identifies the chieftain mechanisms which were used by the European for the implementation of their rule.

Review of Literature on Chieftaincy and its transformation at Independence

*Njikang Metuge Divine*¹¹⁶ took interest in presenting the Cameroons judicial systems and its prerogatives. In presenting its prerogative and functions, he integrated the role of traditional rulers. To him, traditional ruler played an important role in the governance of rural community in Cameroon. They are identified as heads of groups with particularity of the clan or tribe. They worked hand in hand with local signatories of chiefs/*Fons* in decision making and daily aspects of village circumscription. Such as land disputes, to marital and family problems.

Enthroned Traditional Authorities and appointed traditional rulers by government, have the same legal status in all the regions with enormous variations of authority amongst different regions and ethnic groups. He affirmed the view that, traditional rulers are cultural authorities and auxiliary of the administration in the remote areas where the central government does not have strong presence. The indigenous ruler takes the tasks to control and gives account to the central government. The interest of this work enriches the research study as it identifies traditional governance in respect to their functions as custodian of indigenous customs and values. Thus, bringing her indigenous power of authority system in the governance machinery, an aspect of this research work.

¹¹⁴ C. Tardits (ed.), *The Contribution of Ethnological Research to the History of Cameroon Cultures*, Paris, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1981, p.106.

¹¹⁵ J. P. Warnier., “The King as a Container in the Cameroon Grassfields”, *Paideuma*, 1993, pp.19-38.

¹¹⁶ Egbe, “Native Courts in Mamfe Division”, p.65.

Paul Nchoji Nkwi joined Soh in examining the enthronement of the *Fon* in the Grassfields. He is particularly interested in “Becoming a king in Kom” as he explained that, the rulers of *Kom* are selected from the royal Ekwu clan that founded the Kom dynasty by the 18th century. This was based on a matrilineal system which permits only one’s sister son to succeed unlike the patrilineal system practiced by other Tikar groups of the western Grassfields. According to him, succession rules stipulate that, when the king dies, his most senior brother succeed him, if not, the most senior from his sister’s sons becomes king. He also agreed with Soh on the fact that the apparent heir to the throne is kept secret when the reigning *Fon* is sick. Reason being that, he is kept a distance and not to soil his name with negative and fraudulent practices and accusations till the disappearance of the king. He further substantiated that when the *Fon* finally dies, a palace retainer was sent to Bofull to report the death. The apparent heir is taken from Bofull to Laikom their ancestral ground where rituals are done to confirm him as the next king. The corpse of the deceased is ritually prepared and made to lay in-state in *Koinu* a palace chamber facing the court of audience (*Wae-fujang*) where all the princes and the children of the palace paid their last respects to the deceased *Fon* while waiting for the apparent heir of the throne¹¹⁷.

When the apparent heir arrives, he unties the ritual ceremonial beads around the deceased’s neck and dressed in the chief mourner white lion cloth around his waist and white cap on his head, the corpse of the late *Fon* is taken to the burial shrine, efum and royals and senior notables pay their last tribute. He is then buried after which celebrations begin with all the palace associations displaying masquerades. From the day of the burial, the would-be-king played a minimal role in administering the tribe as the princes and princesses select a prince who is installed as a *Fon* to act during the three days of mourning while the would-be *Fon* is entirely controlled by a secret society the *kwifoyn*¹¹⁸.

On the day of the installation of the *Fon*, the author affirmed everyone; *Kwifoyn* members, notables and three king makers all assembled in front of the *Ntuloge* which he said was the first hut built by the Kom royal immigrants on their arrival in Liakom and where the first ancestresses of their clan were buried.¹¹⁹ This historical sites and the enthronization process of the *Fon* or the indigenous leaders of the *Nso Fon*, bring to time light the justification that chieftain governance is given not only to any ordinary person in the Grassfields society but to an aspect being. This special being is very important to this study as the seat of chieftain is on aspect of interest to the researcher.

Aletum Tabuwe took interest in the enthronement of the *Fon* of Bafut by asserting that unlike other tribe in the *Tikar* group, succession in Bafut is similar to that of the *Ngemba* in the *Widikum*

¹¹⁷Nkwi and Warnier., *Elements for a History of the Western Grassfields*, p.223

¹¹⁸Tarditts, *The Contribution of Ethnological Research*, p.109.

¹¹⁹Ibid, p.112.

tribe¹²⁰. To him, one of the princes born of the late *Fon* succeeds him. He affirmed that, unlike other *Tikar* and *Ngemba* from the *Widikum* tribe, *Bafut* has a paramount *Fon* under him sub-chiefs who administered groups of quarters and recognized by the government as second class chief. During the reign of the *Fon* in power, he observed his son very carefully and studies their characters. When the king become elderly and thinks he may soon die, he convenes a few members of the *Kwifon* and confides his choice of succeeds to them.

To him unlike in Ndu and elsewhere, nobody has the right to object and there after took an oath promising not to release the secret until the *Fon* dies. Just as in other *Tikar* group, the *Fon* goes on a journey or is missing. To him, the news of his death is not announced but the indigenes are informed as farming activities are halted for about two or three days when is he being prepared for burial and his sub-Chiefs and secret societies such as the *Kwifon* is convened. He added that, as burial is ongoing, kingmakers who are special installation priest, do everything to get the heir either within the environment of the village or far from the chieftdom. He is then hidden somewhere especially in his maternal relations compound and the death of the *Fon* is announced by gun firing and a period of mourning is declared. Illustrating the sacrosanct of the process of enthronement in the Bamenda Grassfields, Aletum remarks thus:

A few days later, the kingmakers enthroned the new *Fon* also secretly in the presence of all nobles...gives him all his regalia including a staff, a chair, a drinking cup; preferable that of his father, the tiger skin and elephant tusk. The village is then informed on when he would appear the public and everybody assemble at the palace ground. Most people come along with small stones... Throw stones on him. To him this is an act of democracy as those who do not throw the stones simply displayed their content practiced in the olden days¹²¹.

To him, mourning of the late *Fon* continue for weeks as the new *Fon* is in firm control of the Fondom and with the advice of his immediate collaborators, he can take decisions. The first is for him to choose a date for the celebration of his predecessors' death celebration. At this point in time he goes for seclusion where he is taught his main functions, initiated into certain leagues and morality no matter his age and he came out and talks maturely. There after a day is chosen and fixed on which he can address his people for the first time as their new *Fon*. His assertion further explained the view that, the chieftain which is a sacreleje institution of indigenous governance is carefully envoted with special attributes and functions ascribe to be spiritual leaders. This will opine the researcher analyses the sacrelese features of an indigenous administration.

¹²⁰M. T. Aletum., "The Place of Traditional Institution in the modern Political System", *Cameroon law Review*, No 9,1976.

¹²¹Aletum., "The Place of Traditional Institution in the modern Political System",p.69.

Ndobengang Michael Mbapndah in “Grassfields Chiefs and Political change in Cameroon, is interested in the active participation of the Grassfields chiefs and their traditional institutional structures in colonial and post-colonial state of Cameroon. He identified the Grassfields polities as chiefdoms or Fondoms were ruled by Nfor or Fon whose content and legitimacy of office was accepted by all in the Fondom. This was due to the fact that he was the nucleus of power and authority which also varied in the different chiefdoms of the Grassfields; some epitomized power and had executive and judicial functions while others exercised power in close consultation and collaboration with other indigenous officials making his office a symbol of cohesion and unity in any event in the Grassfields chiefdoms To him, chief in Pre-colonial Grassfields were apex of administrative, military and judicial hierarchies but were assisted by array of subordinates officials such as the sub-chiefs, ward heads and other title officials.¹²² Administrative issues were jointly handled by both the chief, council of close advisers and important notables who went through some procedural processes to get membership. The fact that, the author identifies the structures and membership of the traditional governance indicates that, it was highly structuralized and instrumental of the administrative machinery. The researcher will be obliged to make reference to the above structuralized institution and be able to understand why the institution has remained resilient and legitimate to modern governance.

Amazee V Bong¹²³ did not close his eyes as he cross examined the role of traditional rulers in politics by drawing his inspiration from the old-aged debate which holds that, whether or not should traditional rulers be participants and partisans in politics? He therefore, looked at the role of traditional rulers in politics through colonial to post Independent Cameroon. He ascertained the fact that, they were pillars of nation building and was able to induce into the grassroots populace the sense of oneness under their control. This was instituted through the indigenous councils within the obligation and responsibility to maintain law and order and to mobilize human and material resources for the realization of common objectives. The colonialists used them for effective occupation and management of the territory Cameroon from 1984-1960. To the author, traditional rulers took part in the political evolution of Cameroon as the house of chiefs was created in 1962 to get their voices heard in decisions making.

¹²²M.M. Ndobengang., “Grassfields Chiefs and Political change in Cameroon, 1884-1966”, PhD in History, Boston University Graduate School, 1985, p.67

¹²³V.B. Amazee., *Traditional Rulers/ Chiefs and Politics in Cameroon History*, Yaoundé, Presses Universitaire de Yaoundé, 2002, p.88.

This was comfortable for them, he ascertained that, as they were able to with-held some authority, served and were answerable to one leadership of Cameroon. However, they became in-secured by 1972 throughout the 80s as they lost self -confidence as participants in party politics in 1990. They got involved by forming associations and unions in order to benefit from the ruling party and a check on other Traditional Rulers Unions. This work is important to the researcher because, that may opposed their news and interests examine, it presented the evolution of the Chieftaincy institutions and her involvement in politics in Cameroons history which, is core interest in this study on the facets of party politics and traditional administration.

Tata Mbuy¹²⁴ just like Amazee and Ndobegang in his work titled, “*Fons* of “Traditional Bamnda” and Partisan Politics in contemporary Cameroon”, took interest in the participation of *Fons* in partisan politics. He presents the view that, *Fons* within the domain of public relations rolled with divine authority and also for and on behalf of his people, seeking neither self-centeredness nor the private gain. By joining his voice with the above two authors, he affirmed that, *Fons* have effectively evolved together with the political evolution of Cameroon and have experienced changes both on the seat of Fonship as well as on the individual. This encounter was equally felt by their populations as they developed mixed feelings regarding the role of their leaders in part-politics. He affirmed that, Fons role in colonial administration was an anchored to the effective management of state affairs. He went further to present the *Fons*’ political actions as stools for elite’s politics during the period of Nationalism.

However, to him, *Fons* became active participants for one reason or the other in party-politics during independent and contemporary Cameroon. The consequences of their actions became a concern to the *Fons* in particular and the seat of authority in general. The need to revamp the institution as the author coined in of the chapters of his text “Reconstructing identity and cultural Meaning of the cherished ancestorship. The author concludes by ascertaining that, the situation can be regressed by involving both the communities and the state of Cameroon in the restoration of the dignity of the *Fon* provide financial supports to them and the Traditional rulers should work for the common good of all. The researcher therefore, in suggesting way forward in this study most take into consideration the proposals above.

¹²⁴ H.M. Tata., *Fons of “Traditional Bamenda” and Partisan Politics in Contemporary Cameroon: Reconstructing identity and Meaning*, CENC, Mvolyé, Yaounde,2021, pp.23-116.

Richard G. Dillon¹²⁵ in “Ranking and Resistance” in chapter 3, took interest in the examination of the Bamenda plateau as a regional system, identified the four large chiefdoms which included *Bafut*, *Mankon*, *Bali* and *Nkwen* who were the leading polities of the area and had an elaborate developed chief ship and ranking systems. This ranking system has at its apex the *Fon* “Chief” who was the focus of a large complex palace staffed by many royal wives and retainers and he could possess more than one hundred of each dependent. The *Fon* sitting as the head of the centralized administrative structure in the institution of leadership was the supreme ruler of militaristic polity and constituted the organization of his traditional governance by personal appointment (*Bali*). He was responsible for the controlled of the chiefdoms war programming as well as management with the sole right to dispose and relinquish prisoners of wars and properties such as elephant tusks and slain leopards¹²⁶.

He reiterated that in the other three chiefdoms, the *Fons* were powerful and possessed councils with constitutionally established prerogatives and complex systems of titled palace officials and equally gave prominent role to secret societies that fulfilled political and legal functions by extension, attached great importance to the public cult of the *Fons* ancestors. The three chiefdoms were greatly involved in commerce and had mechanisms of regulating trading activities of slaves through the slave rope licenses.

However, the chiefs were not directly practicing trade activities as they did not impose substantial taxes on open commerce transactions and in a majority of the polities. There were no also exclusive royal trading monopolies, but they had the authority and the power to control and divert the wealth of the trade championed by inter-polities traders. They were successful as they imposed by heavy payments from disputants and aspirants to honors, secret societies memberships, chiefdoms level office and fees paid by license slave’s dealers. The consequences of the sources of revenues were seen on the political ranking of their societies as the capitals were used by chiefs and notables in their personal trading ventures. This further increased their affluence leading to the birth of semi hereditary oligarchies in which wealth and political power were mutually reinforcing.¹²⁷

XII. Theoretical Framework

¹²⁵R.G. Dillon., *Ranking and Resistance: A Precolonial Polity in Regional Perspective*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990, pp.25-30.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Dillon., *Ranking and Resistance*, p.48

Contrary to claims for a long time in Eurocentric histories, which infantilized Africans and doubted their innovative ability, there is now a general consensus that, state formation in Africa is not a post-colonial development. For instance, functional states like the Ashanti kingdom, the Zulu kingdom and the Great Zimbabwe existed in pre-colonial Africa. Recent historical and sociological publications on the Bamenda Grassfields prove that pre-colonial polities were innovative and had well-organized political institutions of power.

Consistent with the communalist nature of traditional society, at the basis of traditional governance during this period was the institution of the family and kinship, which defined the social and economic positions, especially access to land of members of society. The heads of these dynastic families often used their control over resources like land, cattle, and the bride price through strategic political marriage alliances, to establish themselves as a privileged economic and social stratum. Moreover, religious beliefs and practices, which at this time were family based in the form of ancestral reverences, were used by the family to mobilize and discipline members in the process of state formation. Despite the resilience of traditional governance structures and the fact that they vary greatly from highly centralized to decentralized systems, there is still no consensus on the desirability of integrating them into modern democratic governance structures.

The neo-traditionalist and neo-liberal arguments

Essentially, two main divergent views are discernible in the existing literature, namely, those who contend that traditional leadership is compatible with modern democratic governance because it possesses certain democratic elements and those who hold the view. For example, commenting on the organization of African societies around traditional leadership structures and the religious, legislative, administrative, and judicial roles they played in pre-colonial times, those holding the first view observed that:

Traditional leaders once held a firm grip on the social, economic, and political system that governed society. There were systems and in place to regulate behaviour and rules were well enforced to ensure a safe and orderly society. They had adequate revenue through taxes and other donations and royalties to support families and meet their societal obligations¹²⁸.

For these and other holding the same view, while the hierarchy characteristic of most traditional governance structures was only a means to maintain order and stability in society, they upheld democratic principles in the sense that everything was done in the open¹²⁹. Mokgoro admits

¹²⁸E.K. Sakyi, "Gone but not forgotten: Chieftaincy, Accountability and State Audit in Ghana, 1993-99", *African Sociological Review*, vol. 7 (1): 2003, pp.131-145.

¹²⁹K.A. Busia., *The position of the chief in the modern political system of Ashanti*. London: OUP, 1951.

that although African traditional leadership has always been hereditary and therefore not subjected to the electoral process that characterizes modern governance, power was traditionally exercised only through the Council which helped to negate absolutism¹³⁰. Thus, according to this view; traditional leaders helped to maintain a system of government based on accountability, consultation and decentralization. Supporting Mokgoro's view, Williams has noted that,

The democratic aspects of traditional leadership and authority systems were instrumental in mediating the autocracy of the kingdom but were undermined by colonialism. "Physical force" as the means by which African leaders exerted their authority was apparently exceptional before colonialism¹³¹. Potentially, highly exploitative practices such as polygamy and taxation were possible because of citizen deference to kingly authority and via specific ceremonial procedures and limitations.

To this group of scholars therefore, the two structures of governance can and must be integrated. The observations about the democratic nature of traditional governance notwithstanding, some scholars with neo-liberal views have argued against the involvement of traditional governance structures in modern administration because, to them, by its very nature, traditional authority compromises the democratic project underway in many African countries¹³². Those holding this view, argue that, chieftaincy was corrupted by the colonial state and by the clientelism of the Post-colonial mode of governance; the populations under traditional authorities lived as "subjects" rather than as "citizens" of the state and democratic governance would not be achieved while such systems continue to exist; and that traditional institutions impede the pace of development as they reduce the relevance of the state in the areas of social services and, moreover heighten primordial loyalties.¹³³ This group therefore rejects any notion of accommodating traditional leadership in a modern democracy.

XIII. Difficulties Encountered

Researching on a topic like traditional governance in the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon was not an easy task. In the course of researching and writing of this thesis, the researcher encountered a series of difficulties. First and foremost, field investigation on this study was carried out at a moment when most potentials informants had been displaced from their homes and localities of residence because of the socio-political violent situation existent in the North West region. Despite braving the insecurity challenges and travelling to some areas in the North West

¹³⁰Y. Mokgoro., 'Traditional Authority and Democracy in the Interim South African Constitution', Occasional Papers, Johannesburg, 1994.

¹³¹ A. Williams., On the subject of Kings and Queens: Traditional African leadership and the Diaspora imagination. *African Studies Quarterly*, 6(4): 1, 2002. [online] URL: <http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v6/v6i3a1.htm>, accessed on July 23, 2020.

¹³²M. Mamdani., *Citizen and Subject*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, pp.34-56.

¹³³L. Ntsebeza., *Democracy Compromised*, Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2005, p 23.

region, the few informants found were too old to provide us with the necessary information. To palliate this challenge, the researcher had to contact informants who had fled violence from their villages and resident in towns. As such we travelled to Bafoussam, Yaoundé, Douala and Nkongsamba.

In addition to the problem of informants, was the nature of most national, regional, divisional and palace archives consulted by the researcher. Most of these documentary centers lacked organizational skills and the nature of the preservation of precious historical data were half ruined and covered with dust in the dry season and muddy in the rainy season. Worst still some precious pages of available documents were slashed off by some ill-intentioned persons. In addition to this, some of the archives in the palaces were destroyed by the ravaging war in the region.

Finally, another problem faced by the researcher was that of a psychological nature as the theme was of a sensible frame of the research topic being an issue link to chieftaincy and again coming from a woman was a difficult task. Many indigenes and kinsmen, knowledgeable and familiar with her mission, took her for a government official. All of these greatly slow the work and despite the challenges, the researcher successfully carried out the study thanks to personal determination and the support received from acknowledge. Whatever errors that are found in this work, the researcher is solely responsible for and she submit her apology for these errors.

XIV. Sources and Write-Up

This work was realized through a critical review of primary and secondary sources. This embodied the identification of new sources in the form of books, articles and journals, which had a bearing on some of the aspects in our topic. We began by a critical review of secondary sources handling broader themes of traditional governance and the politics of management of African traditional states, including those in the Bamenda Grassfields. We equally identified and criticized a good number of secondary materials dealing with traditional governance in the Bamenda Grassfields from the University of Yaoundé I, Central library, *Cercle Histoire Geographie et archeologie* and the British Council Libraries where we were able to identify other important sources in form of articles. In this connection, we sought and graciously received a number of articles dealing with the traditional Bamenda Grassfields generalities from the Thomas Aquinas major seminary in Bambui.

Our secondary sources were complemented with a number of unpublished materials in form of theses, dissertations, long essays and unpublished manuscripts. There was a rich deal of these

materials in the libraries of the Department of History and the Faculty of Arts, Letter and Social Sciences of the University of Yaounde I (*See appendix 2*). We also got pertinent issues on some of the aspects developed in our work from the University of Buea, University of Bamenda and the University of Yaounde II-Soa.

The above sources were reinforced by archival materials from the National Archives Buea and the Provincial (Now Regional) Archives Bamenda and Archives of MINATD (*See appendixes 3 and 4*). We also acquired information from private archives as well as a number of correspondences, memoranda and minutes of traditional matters from the *Widukuum, Mankon, Nso* and *Bafut* Palaces. The personal archives of Dr. Kaze Tindo Narcisse equally enriched our sources. This was further reinforced by a number of oral information collected through a wide range of interviews. Our choice of informants was based on seniority in age, title and position within the traditional hierarchy as well as the respondent relations to the issues invoke.

Though we attempted to maintain a balance in the informant age, sex and position ratio, a good number of our informants were identified and interviewed in most palaces and in the city of Bamenda¹³⁴. A few were interviewed in Bamenda and Yaounde. Our interview approach was qualitative with keen attention paid on in-depth interviews. We introduced broad themes to guide the informants and proceeded by constant probing for emphasis and clarification. Some of our informants were even approached twice.

In the write-up, we adopted a blend of the thematic and chronological approaches. While the former performed the main function of describing themes and aspects of governance with regards to its adaptation to change the latter situated the issues on discourse according to historical time frame. The framework employed embodied the narrative, explanatory and descriptive approaches. We made an attempt to assure that each of these approaches employed, suited the theme or themes developed. In certain sections, the approaches were used interchangeably with the overall aim of assuring clarity in our expressions in the interpretation of our evidences.

The sources exploited have been variedly acknowledged in the footnotes and bibliographical references. Where the explanation or description of some issues warranted a detailed understanding but seen to be capable of disturbing the consistent comprehension of our prose construction, we tried as much as possible to provide explanatory footnotes. We have throughout the construction phase, a varied use of direct quotations with the hope of sustaining our arguments

¹³⁴ *See Appendix 1, Questions.*

with empirical evidences. This notwithstanding, in the course of our research and construction, we encountered a number of problems.

XV. Organization of the Study

This study is made up of six chapters. It starts with a general introduction and closes with a general conclusion. The general introduction handles the research protocol including the review of general and specific literature and the conceptual and theoretical considerations.

Chapter one presents the fundamentals of traditional governance in the Bamenda Grassfields Pre-colonial society. It examines the functioning of the chieftaincy institution in line with principles that characterizes governance. Simply put, this chapter seeks to expose the characteristics of governance in the functioning of the traditional institution known as chieftaincy. Section one of this chapter focuses on the chieftaincy institution per se and with the attributes and functions assigned to the various organs that constitute the chieftaincy institution, the second deals with the territorial and administrative set-up. The goal here was to project aspects of governance in the functioning of traditional leadership.

Chapter Two presents the advent of the German colonial administration in Cameroon and specifically in the Bamenda Grassfields and how their colonial policies consciously significantly influence traditional governance. It dwelt on how the Germans impacted traditional governance via their direct rule policy wooed and made traditional rulers part and parcel of their governance apparatus¹³⁵. Even though this modified the prior traditional governance system that existed before their coming, some chiefs appropriated the new governance system imposed by the Germans made economic and political gains.

Chapter three examines the British colonial influence on Traditional Governance in the Bamenda Grassfields from 1916 -1961. It questions how the operationalization of the British colonial rule shaped the traditional governance system in the Bamenda Grassfields, thereby continuing the progressive integration process of wooing the chieftaincy institutions for a modern system of governance. This system first established by the Germans was appropriated by the British at Independence in British Southern Cameroon. The main objective in this chapter is to analyze how British colonial rule through their interaction with the traditional system laid the grounds for effective governance.

Chapter four is about the fate of Bamenda Grassfields Traditional rulers at Independence. It deals with the challenges faced by traditional authorities to be integrated in the Post-Independent modern governance system despite the rich experience they had acquired during colonial rule.

¹³⁵ Aletum., “The Place of Traditional Institution in the modern Political System”,p.80.

Traditional rulers in the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon played a fundamental role in the political, economic and socio-cultural life of the area under the German and British colonial administrations¹³⁶. Their role in the planning and execution of colonial policies was capital. Its therefore, examines the challenges faced by Bamenda Grassfields traditional rulers at Post-Independent Cameroon especially as far as their integration and participation in modern governance was concerned.

Chapter five discusses the ramifications of the changing perspective of traditional governance in chieftaincy in the Bamenda Grassfields from colonial to contemporary times in Cameroon with focus on the impacts of the mutations on traditional governance system in the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon underwent during the German, the British colonial rules and Post-Independent era in Cameroon.

Finally, chapter six throws light on how the socio-political traditional governance incarnated by the chieftaincy institution can effectively function in dualistic manner with modern institution of governance within the Cameroons' system of Administration. To better examine the chapter, it has been shared into two principal domains; starting with part one, which constitute the identification of some problems faced by the modern democratic governance structures of Cameroons Nations-State and the second part will examine the possible contributions by traditional governance for the effective advancement of Cameroons nations building.

¹³⁶ Aletum., "The Place of Traditional Institution in the modern Political System",p.100.

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE BAMENDA GRASSFIELDS GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS 1800-1884

Pre-colonial Bamenda Grassfields refers to the period before the arrival of the colonial masters and the subsequent annexation of Kamerun by the Germans on July 12th, 1884. This period also marked the migration, peopling, settlement and formation of socio-political entities (locally called Fondoms) of the studied area. Historically, the migration and peopling of the Bamenda Grassfields was partly occasioned by the 19th century Jihads. It is worth noting that, all entities created in the Bamenda Grassfields had almost the same administrative, political, economic and socio-cultural organization.¹ This was also same for the mechanisms and conditionality regulating access to the chieftaincy position. This chapter dwells on the Bamenda Grassfields chieftaincy institution of as a governance, with emphasis on the organization, functioning mechanisms as well as on the decision-making procedures. The main objective in this chapter is presenting the functionality of the chieftaincy institution in line with the principles that characterized indigenous governance. Simply put, the chapter seeks to expose the characteristics of the traditional institution of governance known as the chieftaincy. To better appreciate governance within the framework of the Bamenda Grassfields traditional institution of chieftaincy, the chapter is organized in two main sections. The first section handles the chieftaincy institution per se with the attributes and functions assigned to the various organs that constitute the institution. The second deals with the territorial and administrative set-up of the institution. The goal here is to project aspects of governance in the functioning of traditional leadership.

Section One: Traditional Governance Institutions in the Bamenda Grassfields

Traditional institutions are “those bodies whose authorities have the scope of enforcing law and order in the society by making use only of those sanctions authorized by the customs and traditions of the people over whom the authority is exercised”². The governance institutions stemmed from the palace which was the seat of the Fondom’s traditional establishments from the top down to the level of the family. The chieftaincy institution is one of the cultural assets and peculiarities of the Grassfields people.

¹ C. Kottak., *Cultural Anthropology*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994, p.34

²Aletum., *Political Sociology*, p.20

This institution, constituted an important root of the relationship and co-existence among the Bamenda Grassfields kingdoms, especially during the Pre-colonial times. As an indigenous system of governance with executive, judicial, religious and legislative powers, it represented and globed some fundamental institutions of the socio-political organization of Grassfields kingdoms. This is because conflict could either emanate from within the chieftaincy organs or from deconcentrated organs of the kingdoms such as “sub-chiefs” or lineages that constituted the kingdom.

This part of the chapter discusses the various palace institutions with varied examples in the Bamenda Grassfields. It starts with the Fonship followed by regulatory and legislative institutions. These palace institutions together with the Traditional Council helped the Chief to manage the realm. One common characteristic of Grassfields palace institutions was that, most of their moral essence and legal authority were enveloped in mystic and religious connotations. The main organs that constituted the chieftaincy institution were the Chief and his palace and the legislative and judicial branches commonly known as Traditional Council and the Regulatory Institution.

I. *Fonship* in the Bamenda Grassfields

Tradition is meaningless without the authority of Fon as it is the traditional authority and other levels of traditional leadership system structure that gives meaning to tradition. According to Kaberry, three main political chieftaincy models occurred in the Bamenda Grassfields Tikar area represented by Nso, Bamunka and Bafut.³ At the center of each system stood the sacred king (traditional ruler) who through his ritual installation took on certain attributes of immortality describing the extra ordinary nature of a chieftaincy. Joining Kaberry, and using an example of a Grassfields chieftaincy institution, Bongfen Chem-langee holds that;

The power and authority of the *Fon* of Nkar can be discerned from the way his subjects perceive him and from his functions and prerogatives. He is seen by his subjects, who sometimes equate him to God, as a special person, because he mediates between them, the gods and royal ancestors on behalf of his subjects.⁴

The ritual powers of Grassfields *Fon* were believed to be associated with the fertility of the land and its people as they were considered as chief priest of the cults of the royal ancestors and gods sometimes identified with the earth. However, if their intercession between the ancestors did not make the kingdom prosper, then it means they have been rejected by the ancestors. Per se, other palace institutions responsible for the enforcement of order and the maintenance of the palace

³P.M. Kaberry., “Retainers and Royal Households in the Cameroons Grassfields”, *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, Vol. 3 N°10, 1962. p.287.

⁴ B. Chem-Langhee., “The Transfer of power and authority in Nto’ nkar”, *Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences, Series*, Vol. 3, No 1, 1987, p.9.

could possibly refuse their services to the rejected *Fon*⁵ and thus the beginning of conflicts. In fact, the fundamental element of the chieftaincy institution in the Bamenda Grassfields was characterized by its attributes and structures.

M.T. Aletum maintains that, the chieftaincy institution in the Bamenda Grassfields designates the sum of traditional organs, institutions, bodies, agents and personalities whose source of strength emanated directly from a system of governance, which had as goal the maintenance of law and order, the wellbeing of the society and its external relations with other societies.⁶ It was overseen by the chief alongside other palace institutions who was considered as the main guarantor and protector of the kingdom.

i. Attributes of the *Fon* in the Bamenda Grassfields

The Fonship incarnated by the *Fon* was and is the highest traditional institutional office with sacred authority banded by the customs and tradition of the people. This institution comprised of all secular and religious functions of the socio-political and socio-cultural features of the village. It is equally a divine institution because it epitomizes the beliefs, customs and values of the Grassfields people. It had at its helm the *Fon* who played the role of a moderator and the supervising of important rituals and the seat of the Fonship is in the palace⁷. This institution functioned by linking their society with the ancestral world and putting social order in the village.

It was equally responsible for protecting the village religiously and blessing the villagers with abundant agricultural harvest. A majority of *Fons* of centralized Fondoms made sacrificial rituals aimed at protecting the village from any evil or epidemics invading the community. This office was equally responsible for the settlement of dispute because the *Fon* had the ultimate power to pass final decisions on conflicts as traditions demand.

The *Fon* in the Bamenda Grassfields was considered as an extraordinary human being. This was as a result of elements that characterized the access and quitting of this position. The chief was the spiritual symbol of his people and the representative of the ancestors.

Grassfields chiefs propitiated the spirits of the land by offering sacrifices to the gods and ancestors. The sacrifice he offered and the rituals he performed were believed to nourish the

⁵ .Chem-Langhee., “The Transfer of power and authority”, p.289.

⁶ M.T. Aletum., “The Place of Traditional Institution in the modern Political System”, *Cameroon law Review, No 9*, 1976, p.65

⁷ L.A. Keng., “Traditional Institutional Systems in Chup Chieftaincy Dispute:1961-1999”, M A in Dissertation, History, University of Yaounde I, 2014,p.35.

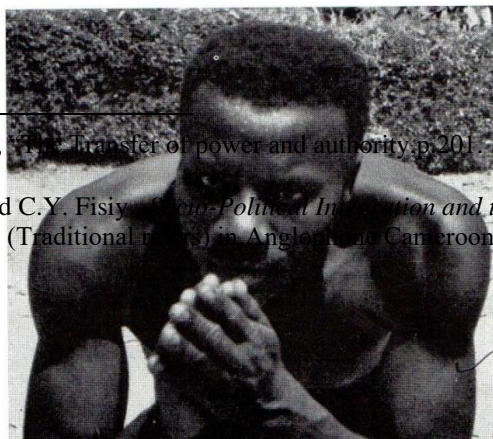
people's relationship with the gods and assured continuity⁸. Owing to his divine function, they were looked upon with reverence and respected as such. No wonder that, he went with praise names such as *anti-njong* (*cha-mfor* (the kicker of things), *lum-nyam* (king of all animals) *nyambo* (leopards cup) *nungubu* (python) and thorny tree)⁹. Elucidating with the attributes of the Fon of Nso, Aletum and Fisiy held that the *Nso* praise-singers called their *Fons* “the sun shine of *Nso*” “father of the Land”, “the Lion”. This grandiose way of thinking led most Grassfields societies to believe that the “Fons were immortal.”¹⁰ As a result, everything about the *Fon* was special, his life as well as his death.

Grassfields Chiefs had a number of rights, attributes and prerogatives. They had an exalted personality with a mystical office and his person was sacrosanct. This sort of spiritualization of the *Fon*'s office enforced his powers. Tradition did not permit the disrespect of chiefs in anyway whatsoever. Among the Chief's many prerogatives, the Chief, and by tradition, he was the sole trustee and distributor of all the land in his chiefdom. He also enjoyed free labor from his people on his farms, plantations and for the construction of his palace.

Apart from this, he received from his people gifts of tribute and harvest and as such all this puts him in a very powerful economic position, which indeed made him apparently the wealthiest person in his society. But this was just in principle because the Chief was expected to be benevolent as much of the wealth the Chief accumulated was redistributed to the people especially the poor.¹¹

Once a *Fon* was “chosen” and initiated into office, the relationships between him and the subjects changed as honour were also done in a special way. This was notably in the way he was greeted by the subjects. This is through the clapping of hands (held horizontally) three times with bowed head and in a crouched position as in the picture on the next page.

Figure 1: The Position of addressing the *Fon*



⁸ Chem-Langhee., *Yaka: Transfer of power and authority*, p.201

⁹Ibid, p.213.

¹⁰M.T Aletum, and C.Y. Fisiy., *State-Political Institution and the Nso Institutions*, Yaoundé, Sopecam, 1989 p.35.

¹¹Samah., “Chiefs (Traditional rulers) in Anglophone Cameroon”, p.77.

Source: R. Ritzenthaler, and P. Ritzenthaler, *Cameroons Village: Ethnography of the Bafut*, Milwaukee: Milwaukee, Public Museum, in *Anthropology*, 1962. p.34

At the same time, he became at once a judge, a commander-in-chief, a legislator, and the executive and administrative head of his community¹². The Fon in the Grassfields did not have single posts as such, but a single composite office to which various duties and activities, rights and obligations were attached.¹³ As demonstrated earlier, the Fon had the power to raise taxes or exact tributes, or ask his people to work on his farm, or even call them to take up arms to defend the chiefdom. The Fon had the corresponding obligation to dispense justice or to protect the interest of his people or ensure their welfare by certain ritual acts and observance.¹⁴

Once a prince was enthroned Fon and had undergone all prescribed rites, it was believed that the life force of their ancestors has automatically been transmitted to him. If the transfer of power did not follow the custom and tradition put in place by tradition, the usurper, after sitting on the ancestral stool automatically suffered a serious ailment such as sterility, madness or even death.¹⁵ Traditions in the Bamenda Grassfields Fondoms held that, immediately a Fon assumed his ritual functions from the people, he automatically became the divine symbol of his people's health and welfare as it was believed that, the life force of his ancestors was automatically transmitted to him.¹⁶

Selection of a new leader is the processes of choosing a prince or a person of nobility who will eventually become a new leader when the reigning old chief or *Fon* travels. This is a common

¹² Interview with Fonjo Cyprien, age, 69 years, carpenters, 8th November, 2014, Bui Division.

¹³ K. A. Busia., *Africa in search of Democracy*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967, p.12.

¹⁴Ibid, p.45.

¹⁵M.T. Aletum., *The One-Party System and the African Traditional Institutions*, Yaoundé, SOPECAM, 1980, p.24

¹⁶ P. N. Nkwi., "Grassfields Kings and Chiefs and Modern Politics", University of Yaoundé, 1977, p.3

characteristic of the Bamenda grassland inhabitants and was commonly seen within the ruling class of the royalty effectuated by the reigning *Fon* or at times by the king-makers or members of the *kwiFon*. It was also and was based on matrilineal and patrilineal linkages depending on the ethnic group. The rulers of *Kom* are selected from the royal *Ekwu* clan that founded the *Kom* dynasty by the 18th century based on a matrilineal system which permits only one's sister son to succeed unlike the patrilineal system practiced by other *Tikar* groups of the western Grassfields. Succession rules equally stipulated and guided the procedure of selection, for instance, when the king dies, his most senior brother succeed him if not, the most senior from his sisters' sons become king¹⁷.

On the other governance in the functioning of hand, we had the patrilineal system in which it was the reigning *Fon*'s heir or brother who succeed him and can be rotatory amongst the royal families in the *Bafut*, *Mankon* and the *Ngembas*¹⁸. It is generally agreed in the grasslands also that, the apparent heir to the throne is kept secret when the reigning *Fon* is sick. Reason being that, he is kept a distance and not to soil his name with negative, fraudulent practices and accusations till the disappearance of the king. The selection of the new *Fon* who is chosen from the first generation of princes and who might not have been born when his father mounted the throne or governance in the functioning of not, he must be mentally and physically fit. There are materials needed for the installation of the new *Fon*, which are the royal belt, royal bracelet and royal cloth in both communities¹⁹.

The incumbent *Fon* power and authority are recognized as he is introduced in the palace premises and beyond to the sub-chiefs and quarter heads²⁰. Within the process of the *Fons* installation, there is equally the installation of the queen mother²¹, heads of the *nwerong* and other secrets societies as well as the *Fons* pages. This selection is credited as in some ethnic groups it is during the reign of the *Fon* in power as one of the princes born of the *Fon* succeeds him and the new *Fon* most is a direct descendant or son of the late or present *Fon*²². He observed his son very carefully and studies their characters. This was under the view that the *Fon* himself has the closer opportunity of watching always the moral and general behavior of his children especially the male

¹⁷P.N. Nkwi., *Becoming a king in Kom*, Paris, polytechnique, Paris 1989, p.32

¹⁸Awason, N. F., "The vicissitudes of twentieth-century Mankon Fons in Cameroon's Changing Social order", in Van Binsbergen, W. Pelgrim, R(eds). *The dynamics of power and the rule of law: Essays on Africa and Beyond, in Honour of Emile Adriaan B. Van Rouveray Van Nieuwaal*, Leiden, the Netherland, LIT Verlage/African Study Centre, 2003, pp.134-200.

¹⁹ T. Mac Akam, age, 67, *Fon*, 08th March, 2016, interviewed in Kai.

²⁰Nkwi., "Grassfields Kings and Chiefs and Modern Politics", p.10

²¹ The queen mother in this context refers to a princess from the palace who is coroneted alongside with the incumbent *Fon*. Eventhough focus and attention is generally tilted towards the *Fon* during the coronation ceremony.

²²Nkwi., "Grassfields Kings and Chiefs and Modern Politics", p.20

children, he as the *Fon* and parent of the biological child is in a better position to know who of his sons can best handle or rule his people.

It is of interest to know that; it is the absolute prerogative of the reigning *Fon* in consultation with the *privy* council to select a prince to succeed him upon his any health challenges. He therefore decided to meticulously examine the conducts of all the princes who are eligible to be next of kin to the throne. To reiterate on the fact that only princes born on the leopard skin that is after the reigning acceded to the throne are qualified to be selected²³.

The qualified princes according to the Grassfields customs and tradition, most have a sound moral background, are generous, loyal to institutions of their chiefdoms and have a recent sound educational background. The chief nominates his successor in agreement with the king makers while alive and keep the king-makers constantly well informed in confidence of his would-be successor in case of any eventuality. When the king become elderly and thinks he may soon die, he convenes a few members of the *kwifon* and confides his choice to them.

It is equally confirmed further that, after the selection of the- would- be *Fon*, the reigning *Fon* proceed to inform either one or two of his brothers and a number of quarter heads who solemnly promise to keep his choice a secret thereby avoiding conflict and to ensure that the heir apparent is not eliminated. Unlike in Wimbun Fondoms and elsewhere in the Bamenda Grassfields, king-makers had the prerogative and right to contest and reject the choice of heir to the throne. This was generally when he did not meet the criteria that regulated access to *Fonship*. However, they were always exception as for instance, in Bafut, nobody had the right to contest the reigning *Fon's* choice of heir and there after members of the *KwiFon* who are responsible for executing decisions of installation of the- would-be leader took an oath promising not to release the secret until the *Fon* dies²⁴.

ii. Funerary Protocol of Bamenda Grassfields *Fons*

When the *Fon* fell sick and there were no signs of survival, he was secluded by the *Bukum* or *nguma* houses until his departure to the world of no return and laid to rest in secret in a special grave²⁵. According to the traditions and customs of the people, the ill-health, eventual death or “missing” of the *Fon* is not thought of as natural as he is not a natural being. His illness is referred

²³Ibid,p.36

²⁴P.N. Mzeka., *Four Fons of Nso' (Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Kingship in the Western Grassfields of Cameroon)*, Bamenda, 1990, p.55.

²⁵ T.N.S. Kaze., “The Dynamics of Chieftaincy Succession Conflicts in the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon ca 1800-2013. A Historical Investigation”, PhD Thesis in History, University of Yaounde I, 2020, p.57.

to as “the wind is passing or blowing” and is highly kept secret and disclosed only to few notables, his wives, personal pages, some state councilors who are lineage heads, traditional and modern doctors.²⁶

It is interesting to note that, the death of the *Fon* is not made public because the *Fon* is for the people and by the people and the saying that the chief is “missing and hidden” not dead and buried it is called so because the chiefdom is for the people by the people. In other words, when the *Fon* dies or disappears or goes on a journey; the expressions used instead of die indicate that the *Fon* is an institution which does not die so long as the society continues to exist. The throne is also ever present and the Chief power that belongs to all remains intact as well so that the individual dies but the *Fon* remains on the throne and *Fon* power is inherited at once²⁷.

The demise of the *Fon* in the Bamenda Grassfields was also considered as an extraordinary phenomenon. This was because news of his poor health nor of his death was never made public until he was traditionally prepared and laid to rest in a sacred place called *mban* among the Widikum people²⁸. As a matter of fact, *Fons* are not buried in the Bamenda Grassfields rather they are conserved in a sacred place in the palace where they are eventually considered as divinities. Just like in the *Fondoms* of the Bali Chamba, Mankon, Nso and Bafut, the demise of a *Fon* in these areas was considered as “going on a journey”. Information of his death was not made public however; some traditional restrictions were imposed on the population without necessarily explaining to them the reason for such.

For instance, farming activities were halted pending the official announcement while the corpse was secretly prepared for burial by some important lords of the palace. In the Widikum *Fondoms* for example, some members of the *KwiFon* were generally convened in the mortuary protocol of demise *Fon*. The *KwiFons* is tasked with the role of informing the subjects and neighboring *Fondoms*.

Burial is the act of a ceremony involving the burying of a death person and in this case we are examining the burial of a Grassfields ruler or the disappearances of the reigning *Fon* which was exercised through the use of traditional institutions, functionaries and secret societies of the *nwerong*, *Manjong* and *Kwifor* and equally involved processes. The functionaries who are the sub-

²⁶M. T. Aletum., *Appraisal of culture, Social Customs and Traditions of the Bafut West Cameroon*, Rome Pontifical Urban University, 1971, p.45.

²⁷Interview with Vincent Yuh II, age, 69, *Fon*, 03rd March, 2017, Yaounde.

²⁸ The *Mban* is a sacred place where the mortal remains of precedents are conserved in Grassfields palaces.

chiefs and quarter heads led the ceremony²⁹. His death is officially announced to few selected and his corpse is prepared for burial before midday which equally involved long and special process as he is not an ordinary person. This ordinarily is seen also in the digging of his grave and subsequent burial. His wives began the process by preparing him for burial and the group of sages continued in the process by performing ritual activities and final burial.

The *Fons* wives seat the corpse on a wooden throne in the *Fons* bed chamber and wash it with palm wine instead of water. The sages cloth it with rare and very expensive hand-made royal cloth, rather than with a blanket or simple white cloth, and capped him it with special royal cap decorated with cowries...As it seats on the throne, those persons who were apprised of the *Fons* illness and death continue to treat it as if it were alive, until it is taken to the royal grave yard for burial, after the digging and preparation of the grave for that purpose.³⁰

The *Fons* grave in most Fondoms have another long wall terraced symbolizing the fore court and audiences court of the palace proper which, is dug by royal cadet upon the sacrifice of the ram while the princes, retainers and lineage heads are responsible for digging the grave. governance in the functioning of Again, there is the use of medicinal charcoal powder as protection against the evil of the royal graveyard while in other Fondoms is a slimy pollution removing herbal concoction of palm wine and water in the hands of assistant deputy high priest. The *Fon* body in the community was carried to the royal graveyard and set on the special bamboo throne by a group of special palace retainers (Power brokers and important functionaries). This was done in a quiet procession³¹. The Chief priest played the *ngong*³² in the procession. The dog and the ram buried together with the king represent both the male and female slaves. This is replaced in by two hind legs of a ram or he-goat representing the Fons share of the funeral sacrifices and the Fon is made to rest it feet on the dog or ram or the leopard skin. The roof and fire place is provided and a bamboo is put in the mouth of the royal corpse before filling of the grave and is pulled out after one year which can be replaced in some areas by an Indian bamboo put in a royal cup.³³

It is of primary imperative to note that, not every person can be present during the burial of a Fon as it is restricted only to the king-makers or *kwifons* including other Fons, quarter heads and the head of the administrative units concerned and security unit heads. His grave is dug in the house which is reserved as an important place for traditional remembrance and blessings are given

²⁹Chem-Langée., "The Transfer of Power and Authority in *Nto 'nkar*", p.20

³⁰Aletum, *Appraisal of culture, Social Customs and Traditions of the Bafut*, p.60

³¹*Ngong*. This is a traditional musical instrument, which was used in pre-colonial Grassfields societies by both indigenous musicians as well secret organization. The playing of the instrument communicates information to the indigenous populace.

³²Chem-Langée., "The Transfer of Power and Authority in *Nto 'nkar*", p.89

to future deserving citizens in the name of the Fon. They also buried in the house as an inherited tradition in view of protecting the chief even after death and they are not buried in the same way like ordinary people³⁴. When his grave is 6th feet deep another corner is stepped inwards to the right so that there should be no direct pressure when filling the grave by burials. It equally depends on the particular tradition of the people concern. Some dead Fons are kept sitting in the grave while others are buried lying sideward. At death, Bamenda Grassfields traditional rulers are dressed up and equipped with royal paraphilia before being transferred to the conservation chambers where other deceased *Fons* had been buried. As a matter of fact, just like Aletum notes: they are laid to rest in the royal graveyard³⁵.

The grave is six feet deep but a special compartment is dug vertically in which they put one of the thrones (chairs) on which he is sitting while alive. After certain magical rituals he is seated on it. Still in the special grave, the author indicate that a number of articles are also put inside the grave such as one of his pipes if he was a smoker, a calabash filled with wine, a cup and a living dog instead of a slave as in the olden days³⁶.

In most Bamenda Grassfields Fondoms notably among the Ngemba and the Widikum Fondoms, when the Fon “disappeared”, a palace retainer was sent to report the death to other Fondoms and lineage heads. The apparent heir is taken to their ancestral ground where rituals are done to confirm him as the next king. In the Meta Fondom, the corpse of the deceased is ritually prepared and laid in-state in the palace sacred house, *Efum, Ban, Koinu* a palace chamber facing the court of audience where all the princes and the children of the palace paid their last respects to the deceased *Fon* while waiting for the apparent heir of the throne³⁷. Following a close discussion with the President of the Bafut development Association, the latter notes that:

When the apparent heir arrives, he unites the ritual ceremonial beads around the deceased’s neck and dressed in the chief mourner white lion cloth around his waist and white cap on his head, the corpse of the late *Fon* is taken to the burial shrine, and royals and senior notables pay their last tribute. He is then buried after which celebrations begin with all the palace associations displaying masquerades. From the day of the burial, the-would-be-king played a minimal role in administering the tribe as the princes and princesses select a princess who is installed as a *Fon* to act during the three days of mourning while the- would -be *Fon* is entirely controlled by a secret society the *kwifoyn*³⁸.

Minang opines that at the grave shrine, the heir or successor to the deceased was presented to some few palace dignitaries present in the grave yard to witness the official beginning of the

³⁴Ibid, p.90

³⁵Aletum., *Appraisal of culture, Social Customs and Traditions of the Bafut*, p.67

³⁶J.W. Minang., “The Bambili Chiefdom and its Institutions: A Historical Perspective”, DIPES II Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde, 1986, p.12.

³⁷Ibid, p.23.

³⁸Ibid p.30.

³⁸Interview with Ambe Ngwa George Atonah, age, 45, National Chairman of Bafut Development Manjong, 12th April, 2018, Yaoundé.

coronation ceremony. Meantime, the mother of the incumbent Fon is also invited to witness the process. The objective is to symbolically mark the ordinary relation she had with the son. Once the coronation ceremony begins, two kingmakers rose and began searching for him and when got hold of him, he is slapped and buffeted for the last time by the king-makers. After this, it is reiterating he is seated on a ritual stone and after which he is taken to the grave of his immediate predecessor and bathed. The said ritual is meant to clean him of his past faults which should then be buried with the dead king³⁹.

As the burial is taking place, kingmakers who special and crowning priest, do everything to get the heir either within the environment of the village or far from the Fondom. He is then hidden somewhere especially in his maternal relations compound and the death of the Fon is announced by gun firing and the period of mourning is declared. Thereafter, the king makers must have gone for the new *Fon* who was kept at *imbe'wi* (uncle's compound) or taken to a neighboring friendly *Fondom* for his safety. A few days later, the new Fon is brought, some fresh leaves symbolizing peace are wrapped round his neck and the first king maker puts him on the throne. This is followed by a speech in which he implores his late father to give him wisdom so that he can rule his people well. He is then introduced to the people in front of the palace where small stones or fruits are thrown on him.

With his exposure to the public, the mourning of the late *Fon* ceases and gives way to jubilation for about a month. A date is equally fixed for the death celebration of the late *Fon* which is done through the shooting of guns, dancing and friendly villages in relationship are informed and invited to participate in the grand ceremonies⁴⁰. Worth noting is the view that the burial of the *Fon* is highly secret as well as the enthronement of the new *Fon* before his official installation. To further expatiate on the burial protocol of the *Fon* Chem langee writes that:

A few days later, the kingmakers enthroned the new *Fon* also secretly in the presence of all nobles...gives him all his regalia including a staff, a chair, a drinking cup; preferable that of his father, the tiger skin and elephant tusk. The villages are then informed on when he would appear in the public and everybody assembles at the palace ground. Most people come along with small stones and throw them on him. To him this is an act of democracy as those who do not throw the stones, simply displayed their content practiced in the olden days⁴¹.

The mourning of the late *Fon* continue for weeks as the new *Fon* is in firm control of the Fondom and with the advice of his immediate collaborators he can take decisions. The first is for

³⁹ Minang, "The Bambili Chieftdom and its Institutions", p.49.

⁴⁰S. Bejeng., The case of Moghamo in "How are Traditional Rulers Enthroned in the Grassfields of Cameroon", Seminar organised by Grass field working group, Bamenda, Dec 19/1985), p.3.

⁴¹ Chem-Langée., "The Transfer of Power and Authority in *Nto' nkar*", p.89

him to choose a date for the celebration of his predecessors' death celebration. At this point in time, he goes for seclusion where he is taught his main functions, initiated into certain leagues and morality no matter his age and he came out he talks maturely. There after a day is chosen and fixed on which he can address his people for the first time as their new *Fon*.

The installation of the *Fon* here, was the act of placing the new *Fon* in authority which is often coloured or characterized by ceremonial activities in the presence of the administrative authority, security as well as the entire *Fondom* and neighboring *Fon* together with their populations. The *Fon* is at the apex of the political structure of his community together with his social and political structures which surpasses that of any individual within the society. On the day of the installation of the *Fon*, it affirmed everyone; kwifoyn members, notables and three king makers all assembled in front of the Ntuloge, or Mban in the *Nso* on community ban, which he said was the first hut built by the royal immigrants on their arrival and where the first ancestresses of their clan were buried. It is cited that, prior to the selection of the new *Fon*, a place is cleared up the hill near a stream east of the capital in which sacrifices are offered in the morning of the installation in the presence of the new *Fon*. That same morning, the priest preceding over the ceremony make prayers emphasizing on the rule of justice, the protection of fertility and prosperity of their nation. After this, the party returns to the palace through different paths not the sacrificial one, the python tract that brought the founding ancestors⁴².

The senior quarter's heads, sub-Fon who form the *kwifon* enthroned the *Fon*. The members are not all the relatives of the *Fon*. But at least one of the key members must be of necessity come within the *Fon*'s eldest children or otherwise such an elderly Prince is called the Princes/Princesses representative or quarter head. The king-maker arrest the new *Fon* and present him to the crowd before the hierarchical administrative unit head concerned and the crowd shout in traditional language and the *Fon* is stoned by the public⁴³. Their offer, he runs to the palace and officiate his meeting with the king-makers whom after that, adore him as a *Fon*. To conclude the secrete installation of the *Fon*, as it is confirmed, the *Fon* is secluded for eight days during which kingmakers, hereditary priests and other notables tell him how to rule and the wishes of his late predecessor. He is also introduced to certain shrines, the Achat spring. He then comes out and princes pledge their filial respects to their new father and he acceded to the throne. Upon enthronement, the following words are addressed to the incumbent *Fon*:

⁴²Nkwi, "Becoming a king in Kom", p.55.

⁴³Interviewed with Forch Musi John, age, 78, Regent of Ku palace, 11st Aug. 2017, Momo Division.

You are today enthroned a Fon in charge of people and they shall be loyal to you in all aspect and you shall be kind, forgiving and prompt to solving problems without any favor. These words pronounced by the traditional leader of the king makers, and the rest of kingmakers laid their hands on the Fon. The Fon drinks water and wine from in the traditional cup as an oath to be honest and diligent in his rule without favor or hatred and may God almighty help him. The-would-be Fon on his own response to the king-makers in the presence of the public security respectively. The young man to be Fon remove his clothes before the kingmakers and the governance in the functioning of prince's presence have right of such clothes and they can take them away. The secret enthronement which is part of the undressing and redressing the new chief is done secretly by king-makers only before presentation to the public.⁴⁴

The *Fon* has been officially and legally installed into his functions and from this day he is honored and obliged to rule and manages his people socio- economic and politically for their betterment together with all the other institutions incarnating the indigenous populations. Paramount *Fon* or Fon under him is sub-Fons who administered groups of quarters and recognized by the government as a First class, Second class or Third class Fon.

iii. Task of the *Fon* in the Bamenda Grassfields

The role of the *Fon* in the Bamenda Grassfields was a complex one as he played several functions at the same time. This could partly explain why some scholars considered *Fon* in the Bamenda Grassfields as despots. In most Bamenda Grassfields polities, the *Fon* jointly played the socio-political, economic, judico-spiritual and military role.

In traditional Africa, it was the chief who ensures that the public goals of the society are delivered. The chief is the center and pivot of all cooperation, and resolution of conflicts through the use of political authority and if necessary, coercion. The traditional rulers acquired authority over their subjects from sources as propounded by Max Weber. According to him, the right to direct and command others emanates from three sources; tradition, charisma and legacy. Tradition is the right to rule resulting from the continuous exercise of political power, as with hereditary rule. Charisma involves no skill or knowledge and recognizes no rules or traditions but results from the exceptional strength of personality of a leader. A charismatic leader obtains widespread support because of his ideas and dynamism. Legality is attached to the authority of a political office when the duties are performed in a legal and constitutional manner⁴⁵. Africa and Cameroon inclusive in varying degrees recognizes and accepts tradition, charisma and legality in the traditional rulers. The recognition and acceptance determined the influence which Chief wields over their subjects.

⁴⁴Bejeng, "How are Traditional Rulers Enthroned", p.65.

⁴⁵ C.A. Leeds., *Political Studies*, London: MacDonald and Evans, 1975, p.4.

iv. Socio-political functions of the *Fon*

The termed sociopolitical because of the then duality functions of their role; firstly, they served as socializing institutions either preserving the culture or proving for entertainments and secondly their decisions are considered final and as a result have been used as tools of political decisions. Traditional Government includes the village Government, the administration of justice and the respect of traditional values in kingdoms.⁴⁶ Chiefs served as political integration between populations and her vassal state. The traditional government of the kingdoms has a responsibility to manage conflicts and make sure the traditional institutions have a future. Traditional methods of administering justice, is done in a process wherein each community in the Grassfields had its head, court and justice under the overall supervision of the Chief. Each village had its own court which settled dispute brought to it. The village court-maintained law and order and those who tried cases were senior officials of the regulatory society such as *Nagangsoumkum*, *Nda kwifor*, *Mukuumsis*.⁴⁷

Grassfields polities as chiefdoms or Fondoms were ruled by *Nfor* or *Fon* whose content and legitimacy of office was accepted by all in the Fondom. This was due to the fact that he was the nucleus of power and authority which also varied in the different chiefdoms of the Grassfields; some epitomized power and had executive and judicial functions while others exercised power in close consultation and collaboration with other indigenous officials making his office a symbol of cohesion and unity in any event in the Grassfields chiefdoms. *Fon* in Pre-colonial Grassfields were apex of administrative, military and judicial hierarchies but were assisted by array of subordinate's officials such as the sub Chiefs, ward heads and other title officials.⁴⁸ Administrative issues were jointly handled by both the Chief, council of close advisers and important notables who went through some procedural processes to get membership as mentioned in part of this work. The *Fon* who is generally accepted as a paramount chief having his authority prevailed over that of a sub chief⁴⁹.

This society, which has centralized authority of administrative machinery and judicial institutions in a government and in which, cleavages of wealth, privileges and status correspond to the distribution of power and authority. M. Fortes and EE Evans Pritchard holds that, traditional

⁴⁶P. N. Nkwi., *Traditional Government and Social Changes: A study of the Traditional Institutions of Kom of the Cameroon Grassfields*. Fribourg, University Press, 1976, p.36

⁴⁷E.M. Chilver and P.M Kabbery., *Traditional Bamenda: The Pre-colonial History and Ethnography of the Bamenda Grassfield*, Vol II, Buea, Government Press, 1967,p.47

⁴⁸M. M. Ndobengang., "Grassfield Chiefs and Political change in Cameroon, 1884-1966", PhD Dissertation in History, Boston University, 1985, p.34.

⁴⁹Ibid, p.45.

governance is shared between the central and regional organs or institutions exercising duties between the quasi autonomous and sub *Fondoms*.

The central administration had an elaborate bureaucratic system assisted by a council of ministers. King was head of government, head of state and supreme commander of the arm forces.⁵⁰ The *Fon* residence and the heart of the chiefdom organizational structure is the Palace which is the central place of rituals, political life and seat of most important regulatory societies. The king organized an efficient and effective government in the *Fondoms* by uniting many petty states under the centralized system of administration.

Migrating groups that arrived in the Grassfields during the migration and settlement in the area and who were absorbed and subjugated by the Paramount *Fon* of the areas constituted sub villages under his authority. As a paramount *Fon*, he is the head of the traditional government and holds as well as keeps all the interest and values of his people, honorable member of his *Kwofor* and has a sort of veto powers. He is also the head of all traditional institutions in most of the *Fondoms*. He is the head of renewal of oath taking because upon his enthronement ceremony began the process of royal oath taken and faithfulness. This is then done also by other members of his government such as the nobles and the royal who together with the Paramount *Fon* swears to be faithful to the customs, its people and paid allegiance to them in war and peace by drinking wine poured into their hands after the *Fon* who most have drank from the ancestral cup.

As head of the government, he is the chairman of every traditional meeting he attends but cannot take final decisions which are done through a series of deliberations in a consultative manner by members of the Privy Council. The quarters are made up of a number of compounds grouped together under an appointed quarter head and are (members of the policy council) is linked up with sub-chiefdoms were directly under the Paramountcy of the *Fon*. He was equally privileged to define the duties of quarter heads and important notables (*Keum*) also are appointed by the *Fon*. As quarter heads, they are descendants who most have accompanied the original founders of the village. When they are appointed, they sent gifts of palm wine and fowl to the *Fon* as sign of royal patronage. The sub *Fon* equally worked in collaboration with the *Fon* who plant *Agem* in the Centre of the compound and pour palm wine mixed with camwood and salt to recognize his nobility⁵¹. He was the head of the *Kwifor* and had the monopoly of the title *Mbe*” or “*Ncha*” “*Bio*” (he who is above all kings).

⁵⁰F.V. Afomboh., *Traditional Government in Awing-Cameroon*, Yaounde, KUTAMAX, Tencam Press Ltd, 1998, p.2.

⁵¹Bejeng, “How are Traditional Rulers Enthroned in the Grassfields of Cameroon”, p.68

In other Fondoms, the *Fons* were powerful and possessed councils with constitutionally established prerogatives and complex systems of titled palace officials. He equally gave prominent role to secret societies that fulfilled political and legal functions and by extension, attached great importance to the public cult of the *Fons* ancestors. Decisions taken in *Nde-kwofor* are confirmed in *Nde-Mopuh* before the decisions can become binding to the awing people. For instance, the paramount *Fon* of Awing is an ethnic group member of the house in which kingmakers come from and are responsible for the purification of the *Fon* or the society from any impurities. They are vested the priestly powers for ancestral and village ceremonies⁵².

Administratively he appointed and dismissed quarter heads as well as he installed nobles and has the right to choose and send his representatives to other lands. He consults with the kingmakers in order to authorize *Manjong* to work in his fields in the trapping down of unwanted persons in his community. He also received and entertained visitors daily in his palace in which he is not authorized to sell the numerous animals kept in the palace. He as an executive is assisted in his governmental duties by the legislative arm known as the *Nde-Kwofor* an institution specialized in the making of laws of the land.⁵³ In a nutshell, he maintained law and orders in the *Fondom* and equally supervises the activities of the sub *Fons*. The village head controlled public works and presided over meetings that handled disputes. *Fon* or *Ndatut* controlled affairs, protect fertility, and head of the people and livestock. Heads of institutions are appointed by the Chief who assist him in executing his duty.

v. Military Functions

The *Fon* sitting as the head of the centralized administrative structure in the institution of leadership was the supreme ruler of militaristic structures. The *Fon* called “*Mbumbi*” or “*Ntok*” in other areas ruled hand in glove with the traditional council and the “*Kwifor*”⁵⁴ The “*Ntok*” who was both a political and a socio-cultural leader awarded meritorial titles such as “*Bantek*” and “*Tantoh*” to persons who were able to serve and differentiate themselves from others. The *Fon* had the titles of the “Chief” indicating he was the commander-in-Chief of the arm force. Ancient kings had courage and martial ability as they were braved warrior and had wisdom. The army was used in maintaining order in the empire.

⁵²Ibid, p.38

⁵³ Ibid, p.49.

⁵⁴D.C. Kwei., “The Origin and the Development of Traditional Political Institutions and Authority in Oku from Pre-colonial Period to 2006”, DIPES II Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2009,p.45.

He used the military society of the “*Manjong*” to execute certain discipline upon consultation with the secret house of the people known as the *Ndaa*, *Megue*, the “*KwiFon*” and *EFon* who worked in a collective manner to serve their people. The kings had vassal states which were not heavily taxed provided they paid their tributes regularly; contributed soldiers to the imperial army, were allowed a measure of freedom and were also permitted to administer certain villages on behalf of the king. They had government structures as well as state-controlled institutions, and equally soldiers or the Calvary and a standing army loyal to the king. They were also infantry as well as Calvary troops equipped with bows and arrows. Much attention was paid to the army as they were used to undertake military conquests to expand their *Fondoms*⁵⁵.

He was responsible for the controlled of the *chiefdoms* war programming as well as management with the sole right to dispose and relinquished prisoners of wars and properties such as elephant’s tucks and slain leopards⁵⁶. He could not make decisions pertaining to war or peace. Theses military houses (*Mendeme*, *Manjong*, *Megwes*) which belong to the *Fon* is lunched into warfare when other have been defeated and the fought both physically and spiritually at the war battles in wars of the sun, the hill and those fought with elephant stems. The case of an absence of a formal constitutional legislative body in *Bali*, the *Fon* received advice from a war council of trusted personal retainers. He equally exercised legal authority very directly by appointing judges in an adhoc fashion to decide cases that could not be resolved at the ward level.

The *Fon* was a military leader and commander of the arm forces despite the fact that he occasional involved himself in active battles. He was responsible for the declaration of wars on an identified enemy upon consultation, mobilization and advice from his advisory council which in most cases was made up of his sub Chiefs and important notables and who in return most have mobilized their populations for prompt military actions. The chiefs equally supervised the distribution of war booty among their followers and kept portion of ammunitions for them. It is worth noting that the outcome of wars provided opportunity for the expansion of territories and increased in both wealth and populations under the control of Chiefs.

vi. Judicial functions

States and *kingdoms* possessed a system of ranked officials often with prescribed duties, a judicial system and provided security for its members. Some of the large state who expanded

⁵⁵D. Nkweti., “Age-sets in Social Change.A study of Age-group in Awing Village”, Hovard University, Washintong DC, 1974, pp.5-65.

⁵⁶Dillon., *Ranking and Resistance*, pp.25-30

through the peaceful absorption and conquest contained sub-chiefs which recognized the paramountcy of the central ruler while at the same time retaining their hereditary dynasties. Other large states absorbed completely their conquered *chiefdoms* into the central dynasty⁵⁷. Traditional council as the judicial arm of the *Fondom* is headed by the Paramount *Fon* assisted by the Privy Council. If the quarter head can't resolve the dispute, it is forwarded to the common and land dispute Division of the Traditional council for the quarters directly ruled by the Paramount *Fon*.⁵⁸

While accidental homicide, the weapon used is confiscated by the *Fon* and the slayer is purified by traditional ritual and the family of the dead person are told to keep peace and not to make trouble on the account of their dead relatives despite the fact that there is no compensation. Together with the council and as religious head, they make laws and try cases. The regulatory societies like *Kwifon* and *Nwerong* played the role of modern-day constitutional council that ensures the constitutionality of the law in the country. He is the head of the executive and the council of elders combining the functions of the parliament and judiciary as in the modern day. The judiciary power is exercised by the Traditional Council.⁵⁹ The *Fon* exercised executive power and is assisted by the kingmakers; *Keum-Nepua, mukuum*. The *Fon* was the head of the executive and the judiciary and is present and participates in the activities of important state cults such of the *Mandere* in *Mbatu*.

He was the head of the *Kwifor* and had the monopoly of the title *Mbe* or *Ncha Bio* (he who is above all kings). The “*Mbumbi*” or *Fon* was very active participating in conflict management and resolution between *Oku* and *Nso*. The boundary dispute between *Oku* and *Nso* whereby *Fon* Nsetieh with *Fon* Diné met at *Mbessa* together with a representative from *Kom palace* to settle their boundary dispute. At *Mbessa* under a symbolic tree libation were poured by the *Fon* never to revoke dispute over the demarcated piece of land in future. As a result, there has been peace over this area as could be seen through the movement of family members, celebration of annual festivals, death ceremonies and inter-marriages across the demarcated piece of land.

The village is divided administratively for the purpose of effective governance into wards. Looking at this division from the political stance, the stratifications indicate the absence of ambiguity in power and authority distributions as each administrator knows exactly what amount of power he is due and accorded to his social status. The council convened regularly at the palace

⁵⁷ Dillon., *Ranking and Resistance*, p.65.

⁵⁸Afomboh, *Traditional Government in Awing-Cameroon*, p.45.

⁵⁹Ibid, p.48.

premises to deliberate on issues concerning the welfare of the indigenes. This is indicative that, decision making is a collective responsibility as different departments are involved thereby making absolute power and authority to be solely handed by the chief out of question in the grassland chiefdoms of Cameroon. This was equally an indication of the view that, local governance is an ancient practice in this region of Cameroon. Quarter heads, district and village councils as well as family heads also performed clear judicial functions at their levels. Appeal could be made from lower to the higher courts all the way from the compound to the imperial capital.

At the apex of the political pyramid was the *Fon* who is also a natural ruler of the people⁶⁰ He is the highest priest of traditional sacrifices and actively present, He was a senior religious leader and God representative on earth of “founding ancestors” and was the embodiment of the state making the *Fondoms* having a sacred monarchy in which their king was considered “Divine human”. The *Fon* is surrounded by a cloud of mysticism. He is assisted in his functions by religious personalities who are much dreaded due to his spiritual ability to communicate with the invisible world and his ancestors.⁶¹ To justify this, Warnier notes:

Le chef politico-religieux, parti intégrante de la communauté à la vitalité de quoi il sert, en quelque sorte, de baromètre, est souvent intermédiaire entre les membres vivants de la communauté d'une part, les morts et les forces naturelles de l'autre... C'est ainsi que dans son déplacement hors de son palais, et afin d'éviter que les esprits malins ne s'en servent à des fins nuisibles, il est interdit au chef de faire ses besoins, petits ou grands, n'importe où : une partie de sa suite est expressément équipée pour recueillir ces augustes déchets et les déverser en des doigts surs⁶²

Libations were made to achieve materials and spiritual successes in life which were offered to the lesser god to appease the Ancestral worship was central as domestic animals such as goats, pigs, fowls any sheep were used for sacrifices. In some *Fondom*, he was in charge of performing petit sacrifices and pouring of libations to both their ancestors and god (*nwing-ko*). The hierarchical socio-cultural structure depicts the considerable power exercised by the king⁶³. Increased economic resources of the subjects of the victor as well as the resources seized were being protected from neighboring communities. After wars, inter-chiefdom diplomacy was negotiated and commercial agreements concretized with neighbor chiefdoms for peaceful relations and commercial activities.⁶⁴

⁶⁰Afomboh., Traditional Government in Awing-Cameroon, p.50

⁶¹M.N. Oyono., Colonisation et Rivalités Ethniques au Cameroun, Préface de Professeur Jean Emmanuel Pondi, 2011, p.34

⁶²J.P. Warnier., "Archéologie et histoire du Cameroun le cas de l'Ouest", Cahiers de Sociologie, Département de Sociologie, Université de Yaoundé, N°.1, 1983, p. 41

⁶³V.G. Fanson., *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges: The Colonial and Post-colonial Periods*, vol. 2, Macmillan publishers Ltd, Cameroon, Limbe, 1989, p.1

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 7

Bamenda Grassfields *Fons* were directly involved in Pre-colonial land tenure systems as any new land or territory acquired by conquests and expansion under the directions and supervision of the chiefs, became in theory the property of the Chief who was the only guidance and custodian of the land in the said chiefdom. Therefore, justifying the fact that the Chief did not have absolute right of land ownership as the de facto of land control rested with the sub chiefs. The quarter heads and even lineage heads were those responsible for the sharing and distribution of land for cultivation and settlements⁶⁵. However, the healthiest yields from the subjects' farms were given to the Chief as gifts for his role of overall landlord. As keeper of the land, he protected the chiefdom's land from trespassing by strangers and could go to war in its defense.

Also areas not cultivated or inhabited were under the control of the chiefs and could be used by the councils and other notables under his supervision to solve problems arising from land shortages and population boom. Within this perspective the *Fon* had surpluses both in wealth and in human resources which directed their generosity as customs and tradition demand. The large quantities of food and gifts from the people given to *Fons* in return were redistributed by the *Fons* to the needy subjects and some were used for the entertainment of palace visitors and also during festivals. The *Fon* provided entertainment for his subjects who renewed their loyalty to their *Fon*. The large quantities and accumulation of wealth as surpluses from gifts and tributes owned by the grass field's *Fon*, gave them remarkable powerful influence in power and authority over their populations.⁶⁶

It is important to note that, the positions occupied by the Pre-colonial *Fon* were not static but dynamic as *Fon* frequently exploited opportunities to consolidate and expand the control over their population and resources. These possessions reinforced their *Fon*ly power, control and prestige. Thereby making whatever challenges faced by the central *Fon* in his position as a *Fon*, his leading role and *Fon*taincy as an institution was not threatened. The *Fon* controlled exports and imports and organized trade and keep good relations with neighboring countries. He had the minister of finance and justice.

There was the establishment of civil services; market inspectorates who were appointed to supervise the markets and settled commercial disputes. There was also the introduction of a unified system of weights and measures throughout the *Fondoms* and chiefdoms with the use of iron, gold, cowry shells as money to reduce the inconveniences of trade by barter, built state prison yard for

⁶⁵Ndobengang., "Grassfields Chiefs and Political change in Cameroon", p.61

⁶⁶Interview with Tembe N. Christopher, age, 60, Notable in Awing, 1st July 2016, Mezem Division.

⁶⁶Dillon., *Ranking and Resistance*, p. 37.

condemned offenders. Law and order judges were appointed who applied customary laws in decision making and the council of ministers were members of the royal family. *Fondoms* were greatly involved in commerce and had mechanisms of regulating trading activities of slaves through the slave rope licenses.

However, the *Fons* were not directly practicing trade activities as they did not imposed substantial taxes on open commerce transactions and in a majority of the polities, there were no exclusive royal trading monopolies, but they had the authority and the power to control and divert the wealth of the trade championed by inter-polities traders. They were successful as they imposed by exerting heavy payments on disputants and aspirants to honors, secret societies memberships, *chiefdoms* level office and fees paid by license slave dealers⁶⁷. The consequences of the sources of revenue were seen on the political ranking of their societies as the capital were used by chiefs and notables in their personal trading ventures to further increased their affluence, leading to the birth of semi hereditary oligarchies in which wealth and political power were mutually reinforcing⁶⁸. Under the theme land and tenure, land tenure is defined as the relationship of a person or a group of persons to an area of land no matter the form it took. In Pre-colonial Cameroon, all land in the community was vested under the control of the clan head who acted as trustee. Traditional rulers were responsible for the allocating land to member of his community to be used at his will.

The kings were equally the custodian of the land like in the case of *Nso* who vested their land to the Fon as the only titular owner as in the *Kom* community. The use of the land either for farming or residential was exercised by the village and lineage head. He concluded that land in Pre-colonial Cameroon was no one's personal property but that of the entire community. As land could not be alienated from the community without its consents. Consequently, land in Cameroon remained the basis for the people's existence and one might acquire tendency rights but never outright ownership as supported by mayors.

II. The Legislative; Institutions Regulatory

Bamenda Grassfields legislative institutions as such as the regulatory society, other wise known as the Traditional Councils constituted part of the palace institutions. It embodied the preservation of culture, traditions, customs and values of the people, while also representing the

⁶⁷Interview with Tembe N. Christopher, age, 60, Notable in Awing, 1st July 2018, Mezem Divison.

⁶⁸Dillon., *Ranking and Resistance*, p. 37

early forms of societal organization and governance.⁶⁹ These two institutions represented more or less the legislative and the judicial organs of the modern state today. In recognition of the fact that human beings by nature entrusted with power are capable of political tyranny. John Emerich Edward Dahlberg justifies this assertion when he opines that “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely, great men are almost always bad men”⁷⁰. Within the chieftaincy structure the traditional council provided efficient checks and balances on a chief’s functions and power to safeguard against abuse of power.

The quest for peace induces humanity into developing techniques of normalization with the objectives of improving socializations of his citizens. Traditional governance in the study area was vibrant and composites organs that fulfill grassroots administrative and political functions which cannot be ignored in building the political system of modern Cameroon. As the power and the exercise of authority in our villages especially in the centralized kingdoms of the Bamenda Grassfields in Cameroon is still residing in the hands of traditional rulers and their governing institutions.⁷¹ As consequently the governance system of traditional institutions are not an anachronism, mere relics of the past or mere rituals which are bound to disappear with the passage of time. In every political system of the world, constitutional organs are differently organized following their different cultural backgrounds. These constitutional organs also assumed different forms and names in relation to the different regimes of the individual states. Therefore, the constitutional organs of the Grassfields of Bamenda political system should be understood within the context of the people culture which forms the basis of their traditional constitutions. This constitution is reflected on the different offices of the royal blood and officials of non-royal blood who assist the administrative functions of the *Fon*. Effective governance began from its smallest unit to the highest authority of the societies.

i. Quarter Councils

The “*ébbã ñgǒmbã*” “*bukum*” (quarter council in Meta) was the smallest administrative unit within the Fodom. The quarter councils in villages are made up of quarter heads “*tanefru*”, elders and compound heads. These councils were and are under the leadership of a quarter head. They are functional units of the village traditional administration. They managed and resolve minor

⁶⁹ Department of justice and constitutional development, Policy Framework on the Traditional Justice System under the Constitution, Justice and constitutional development department: Republic of South Africa. <http://www.info.gov>, consulted on July 17, 2016.

⁷⁰D.O. Omagu., “African Cultures and Tradition at the Crossroad: The institution of Chieftaincy and the Paradox of Modernity in Bakwarra”, *Canadian Social Science*, Vol. 9, No 6, 2013, p.3

⁷¹Afomboh., *Traditional Government in Awing-Cameroon*, p.14

dispute of family squabbles, non-participation in community works, and destruction of farm products by domestic animals and minor land dispute could be presented to these councils for investigation and resolutions⁷². The role of the quarter council in villages was very important because they gave sources of investigation of conflict matters, masters the quarter's milieu and particularly maintained peace and order in the quarters. It was upon the reports and appeals forwarded by unsatisfied complaint and plaintiffs that the village council could continue the investigations and possible resolutions.

ii. The “*ébéng*” or “*Nda Ala*”

The village administration was held by a local leader known as Fon. Below the village were compound heads of extended families lead by heads of families. This council “*ébéng*” or “*Nda Ala*” also known as Village Traditional Council in the *Widikum* and *Ngemba* languages, was unique because it began functioning from the founding of the village in the 17th as close collaborators of the *Fon* and functioned within the customs and values of the Grassfields people. Membership was opened to all with the evolution of the *Fondoms* and chiefdoms history. The *Fon* was and is still the chairperson of the council, elders, quarter head (*Ukum* or *Mekum*), kingmakers formed part of its composition. There is equally an elective bureau made up of the president, vice president, secretaries, treasurers, messengers, works masters and high-ranking elites of Grassfields village. The V.T.C. could be said to be the general assembly of the people just as the Ngondo of the *Sawa* people which began as an *Assemblée Traditionnelle du peuple Sawa*⁷³. The V.T.C. ensures that customs, traditions and honors are respected and preserved. The council settled major dispute particularly land and family succession disputes which affect the good customs of peace and to provide evidence in the court. Maintain peace and order through the assistance of quarter heads. The council had served meetings depending on the ordinary council meeting were held during day set aside for which farming activities were forbidden, commonly called “Country Sunday”. Equally there existed extra-ordinary council sessions whenever something urgent aroused. Quarter heads played the role of the eye of the chief and regulatory society.⁷⁴

They also call the attention of the Fon to the related matters. The V.T.C. meet to plan development projects in the village such as the water project and the maintenance of their roads, footpaths and bridges which are possible by community works⁷⁵. The council attempt to

⁷²BRA, File: No C.29/3/29 NW/Ia/a. “Village Traditional Council”, 1960, p.11.

⁷³M.D. Moulongo., *Le Ngondo : Assemblée Traditionnelle du Peuple Douala*, Yaoundé, SOPECAM, 2000, p.24

⁷⁴Interview with Che Gideon, 60 years, Plumber, 6th March 2016, Bafut.

⁷⁵L. Ayissi., “Les problèmes de topologie et de sens que pose la chefferie traditionnelle dans la gouvernance Cameroun actuelle”, in R.K. Kpwang, (ed)., *La “Chefferie Traditionnelle ‘dans les sociétés de la grande zone forestière du Sud-Cameroun*, Paris, L’Harmattan, 2011, p.62.

discourage all family disputes as they tend to hinder progress by looking for better and effective means of encouraging high degree of harmony among the people that live within the village and the diaspora⁷⁶. The council encouraged best economic use of land for agriculture and village planning. It equally fights against bribery and corruption in the village. Finally, the V.T.C. fights illiteracy campaign in the village by encouraging children and adult education. The above judiciary and socio-cultural functions of the V.T.C. brought to limelight one of the objectives of the council to maintain peace and security within family circle and its environs.

iii. The *Mekuum ébeṅg*

The supreme council also known as *Mekuum ébeṅg*, was made up of king makers, notables, elders, quarter heads and was chaired by the *Fon*. It possessed a supreme court called “*Mekuum ébeṅg*” in Widikum Fondoms also called Restricted Palace Council was the highest law making institution in the villages. Ascendency to this council was hereditary and royal than popularity. The council principally played three important roles: As far as constitutional role was concerned; it was responsible for the chosen of a successor to the throne upon the missing of the *Fon*. It monitored the good functioning of other palace institutions and as well as other deconcentrated institutions such as quarter heads, clan heads and village heads. The *Mekuum ébeṅg* received and heard civil and other matters brought before it by the village traditional council either on appeal or the matter is beyond the V.T.C. This supreme Tribunal judges the *Fon* and pronounced death sentences on important dignitaries and their meeting points were made secretes. They had the responsibilities to enact the laws that govern the Grassfields communities in consultations with proposals from the V.T.C and the *kwifor*. Developmental projects in the village were initiated and ratified by this council. It is of interest to know that when cases brought to this court could not be given a proper solution, it was the *Fons* responsibly to handlg and pass the final decision or judgments. Unfortunately, with the dispute and transformation of our customs and tradition due to alien influence, this court has become weaken and defunct and forgotten in ethnic groups such as the *Widikum Fondoms*.

Template 1: Traditional injunction in the *Widikum “Chatte”*⁷⁷

⁷⁶Ibid, p.67.

⁷⁷*Chatte* is a “traditional injunction” which is made up of dry elephant grass use for the purpose of putting an embargo to uses on a disputed land in the traditional setting. This injunction is placed on the disputed land by the Members of the traditional Council as one of the procedure of investigation of conflict and subsequent resolution. With the presence of an injunction on a piece of land, nobody is authorized to use the land till the dispute is resolved.



Source:Arthors' Photographic collection, 18th March, 2018

III. The Regulatory Institution

The regulatory institution represented the executive and law enforcement organ of the chieftaincy institution in the Bamenda Grassfields. This institution is very significant as far as the ecosystem of traditional governance is concerned in the Grassfields administrative architecture. The institution was variedly called Ngwerong in the *Nso Fondom*, *Menang* among the Widikum, *Kwifor* in *Bafut*, *Kom* and *Mankon Fondoms* and *Ngumba* in the *Bali Chamba Fondoms*, to name only a few. It was the regulatory body that served as part of the traditional government of the *Fondom*. It also exercised consultative, judicial and ritual functions. In fact, it was the most important traditional political institution in the centralized chiefdoms of the Grassfields.

Like the *Faadas* in the *Lamidat* of *Bogo* in the Northern Regions of Cameroon, the regulatory society is a palace institution that checked and regulated the actions of the *Fon*. Its secular, legislative, and judicial habilitation (which is the knowledge and skills that enable the fulfillment of the functions of justice) conferred on her the powers of regulation under the supervision of the *Fon*. It is of interest to note that, the institution borrowed both its functionality and appellation from the *Tikari* ethnic group to replace the *Menang* and *Lakoeng*, which originally carried the functions of the *Kwifon*.

Later in the 18th and 19th centuries it was named the *Kwifon* in some ethnic groups as mentioned above and its members called *Kwifon*⁷⁸. The *kwifor* society was headed by the most senior king-maker with the *Fon* leading and executing the decisions of the *kwifon*. There is the existence of two types of *Kwifon*. The two types of *kwifor* are; the *Day Kwifor* and the *Night Kwifon*. The “*Day kwifon*” worked only during the day and was less powerful than the *Night Kwifor*. The *kwifor* was composed of all males, except the princes and women of the Fondoms. Their principal functions were ‘crying important death people’s and promoting members to the first-class rank in the *Kwifor*.⁷⁹

The *Night Kwifor*, which operated in the night and was the most powerful instrument, was used by the government for the application of capital punishment on adulterers and murderers. Due to acculturation of other *Widikum* tribes such as the Bafut and *Mankon*, the *Kwifon* was borrowed from *Ngemba* word which signifies “*The Things of the Fon*”. In precolonial times, members of the *Kwifor* were mostly the king makers, elders, notables and quarter heads. By the 1860s, any young and inspired man could be admitted into this society after going through the initiation procedures. Membership was also most often not allowed to princes because during succession disputes the house of the *Kwifon* would risk splitting into opposing parties.⁸⁰ They are supposed to be neutral and make quick decisions if need be.

The *Kwifor* society played the role of checks and balances in the traditional administration of Grassfields community at large. Together with the *Fon* they possessed ritual powers of protecting the village, ensuring fertility of the population, fields and livestock. They equally had the power to remove pollution and kept the symbols of sovereignty. The *Kwifor* was responsible for the settlement and the execution of internal and external disputes without appeals from the plaintiffs. *Kwifor* checked witchcraft, treasonable murder and treasonable adultery. This institution which was also the highest conflict resolution organ, took the final decision regarding the succession disputes to the chieftaincy by inviting the disputants through the traditional police and palace messengers to present themselves before the traditional authority for a possible solution. The deliberations of the *Kwifor* were followed by an oath taken in the secrete house of “*Eshum*”, “*Fum*” to prove the conflict of evidence. Attempts therefore made by the *Kwifor*

⁷⁸ B.P. Soh., “The History and Social Institutions of the Ngembe chiefdoms of Mbatu, Akum, Nsongwa, Chomba and Ndzong”, ONAREST-Yaoundé Centre De Recherché sur les Langues et Traditions orders Africaines (CERE LTA), 1988, p.56

⁷⁹T.M. Aletum and P. Ngam., “The Social and Political structure of Power in the Traditional Society”, *Science and Technology Review* vol. VI, No 1-2 January to June, 1989, p.23

⁸⁰Ibid.p.76

through the oath shrine and the failures of all other Traditional institutions to manage and resolve the dispute leading to the pronouncement of the divine retributive justice of “*Ndon*” (in some Fondom) on the guilt⁸¹.

For instance, in the case of arson the people compelled the offender to pay the equivalent of the articles destroyed. A person charged with manslaughter was made to pay a fine of seven goats; a murderer was either killed or banished from the community and all his property forfeited. Adultery with a commoner’s wife was a serious crime and that with the Fon’s wife, were crimes that, deserved death or banishment and during the slave trade the criminal was sold into slavery to the *Bayang*⁸². Where the suspect of the committed crime was in doubt an ordeal was administered on him by the people. Corroborating this assertion Akeh *Linda Keng* remarks that:

...a pot of boiling wax was prepared with the aid of some local herbs and a piece of iron rod was placed inside the boiling wax and the suspected people were made to remove the rod with their hands...Another type of ordeal was the pepper prepared with some medicine ingredients that was put into the eye of the suspect. If the suspect was guilty, the pepper produced very severe pain and if he was not guilty he would feel no pain.⁸³

Today, the institution functioned principally in dislodging any evil medicine in the society, celebrating the death of important personalities of political ranking and constituted the *Fons* entorage during the celebrations of cultural festivals.

i. The *Majong*, *Megues* and *Njong*

The Native military institution is called by the *Bamenda* Grassfields’ languages as “*Megues*” or “*Manjong*”, “*njong*”. This was a Traditional institution constituting of both physical, spiritual defense and security forces. Membership into the house of physical defense and security was opened only to strong men who are the best and experienced shooters. Their shooting capabilities and abilities were measured in the hunting of dangerous animals such as elephants, lions and tigers and their practicing grounds are dangerous forests inhabiting dangerous animals. These members were obliged to be shooters of good shooting strategies who never missed their targeted animals. Any failure in shooting was a curse to the house which was immediately purified by some traditional rituals or the members were suspended definitely from the secret society⁸⁴. Worth noting is the fact that their activities were often noticed by the public during final death celebrations of its members.

⁸¹ Aletum and Ngam., “The Social and Political structure of Power in the Traditional Society, p.64.

⁸²M. A. Seino., *The Widikum Ethnic Group*, Yaounde, SOPECAM,1986, p.55

⁸³Keng., “Traditional Institutional Systems in Chup Chieftaincy Dispute”, p. 58.

⁸⁴Afomboh., *Traditional Government in Awing-Cameroon*, p.32

Its members were selected from all the constituent administrative jurisdiction of the *Fondom*. With the advent of a war, warriors and soldiers into this house were the palace guards who fought alongside with the *Fons Manjong* who were commanders of traditional combat groups and most have gone for offensive warfare. Their activities are supported by another house known as the *Manjong* with their strategy areas being all the routes into the village.⁸⁵ The *Megues* and *Manjong* formed the native army of the communities while the *Megues* were the skilled and professional soldiers, the *Manjong* were territorial soldiers all under the leadership of *Fongue*. Membership into the *Megue* society is compulsory to any man who had the physical strength, skilled with native weapons and has sense of cunningness. The *Manjong* on the other hand was made up of able-bodied men.

The *Manjong* was equipped with dane guns, cutlasses, spears and shields for the protection and defense of the *Fondom* in case of any external aggression notably between the 16th and 17th centuries⁸⁶. During war with neighbors, they were sent as spies to investigate and get the war plans strategies of their enemies. With the evolution of time, the *Mandjong* was eventually transformed to a festive group as illustrated in the plate below among the *Bafut*.

Today, with the scarce outbreak of inter-tribal wars and Colonial contacts not leaving out the subsequent Governments of Cameroon, native police as seen in the picture below have drastically transformed their activities. 1945 till date, the principal activities of this society have become the catching and the enthronement of the *Fon*⁸⁷. They played the role of jesters and appeared in tarter clothing during important ceremonies in the palace such as the installation of a *Fon* and his journey to the ancestor. They bark, grunt, eat off the ground and jostle the *Fon*'s wives as they mourn their late husband. They equally "steal" the royal wine and bar red the way to visiting notables during palace ceremonies⁸⁸. The *Megues* and the *Manjong* societies as seen on the photo below began as the defenders of the community during conflicts within and without, they took part in the cleansing and the execution of perpetrators during ritual performances and today they are palace clowns and jesters.

Figure 2: The Native Soldiers

⁸⁵Ibid, p.43

⁸⁶I. Fowler & D. Zeitlyn., "The Grassfields and the Tikar", in I. Fowler & D. Zeitlyn, (eds), *African Crossroads: Intersections between History and Anthropology in Cameroon*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1996, pp. 1-15.

⁸⁷ Interview with Tayong God love, age, 90, Notable 17th Oct. 2017, Mankon Palace.

⁸⁸C. Geary, "Notes on the Kingdom of Kom (Cameroon)", *Paideuma*, (ed), Ludwig Brandl's, 1980, pp.41-77.



Sources: Abumbi II, the *Fon* of Bafut, *Traditions and Customs of Bafut*, Press book PLC, Limbe, 2016, p.32



Source: Abumbi II, the *Fon* of Bafut, *Traditions and Customs of Bafut*, Press book PLC, Limbe, 2016, p.32

ii. The masqueraders

Masquerades or “*jujus*” “*mobot*” and “*Teken*” or “*Takam, Nde- Keum- Uwing*” and “*Keum- Ngong*” formed part of the native police and the *Kwifor* secret society. They are institutions of cultural heritages responsible for discipline and taking part in war plan strategies. These “*jujus*” with the absent of wars have become in the 19th and 20th centuries mechanisms for social controls and order within the communities. The *Mobot* which is always running fast was the first “*juju*” of the *Kwifor* society. He is always disguised in feathery long robe that comes over his head and down below his knees. The “*juju*” is accompanied by a young man who runs after him announcing his appearance with the sound of a twin iron *gong*. The “*juju*” heralded the coming of

the *Fon* into the *Sam* together with his entourage⁸⁹, the royal ceremonial ground of the Widikum ethnic group.

The “*Teken*” or the “*Takam*” is the second most important “juju” who was a stranger or “bought man” to the Fondom in pre-colonial history of the *Menema* people. He was responsible for the death sentences ordered by the *Kwifor* regulatory society. After swearing oaths have been performed by perpetrator or criminals at the swearing ground of *Etshum*, “the “*Teken*” was now responsible for the execution of the act in the night. The “*Takam*” may arrest persistent criminals and take them into slavery, unearth a corpse of bad man who is haunting a compound and dispose of it in a river, kill a witch at night and clubbing him”⁹⁰

The “*Teken*” always appeared masked, wears sackcloth of colored chicken feathers that goes down to the knees. A rope is tied to his waist to restrain him from causing havoc to persons during dangerous outing from the *kwifor* house. The “*mobot*” and “*Teken*” as sub unit of the *kwifor*, enforces the laws of the land especially as criminal cases were concerned or serious matter such as the Fontaincy dispute which threatened the security of the people. The “*mobot*” who were responsible for the catching of enemies during war battles and the “*Teken*” responsible for death execution due to their violence and strange blood and capable of disposing corpses, have all today become part of the *Fon*’s ceremonial catching and enthronement activities. It is of interest to note that, the young *Manjong* are those who fought the contemporary wars of the UPC against the government of Cameroon.

The *Fon* as direct commander of this arm force council invite them to work on his farm. Another important institution is that of spiritual defense and security (*Nde-Manji*) of the *Awing* people made up of old men and specialist in the spiritual defense of the village. They are responsible in the purification of the village from spiritual threats as well as protecting the fertility of the peoples farming soils as they go out for farm purifications before the planting seasons. They equally fight spiritually during war fare and protect the *Fon* as well as his soldiers. Their activities are reinforced by the *Nde-Afumbangifor* another spiritual house. They fought spiritual offences and counter offences of warfare. Its creation was aimed for the recovery of ceased properties taken from the village during warfare which was done invisibly and included the recovery of *Awing* women and children taken away forcefully by the enemy. This institution has evolved with time in the invisible fighting strategies of destroying targeted palaces of their opponents, market places

⁸⁹ Keng., “Traditional Institutional Systems in Chup Chieftaincy Dispute”, p.100.

⁹⁰Dillon, *Ranking and Resistance*, p.68.

and the invisible kidnapping of enemies of *Fons* and chiefs⁹¹. They also spiritually protect the central palace and important targets of the village during peace and warfare moments.

Template 2: *Eschum*⁹²(Swearing Ground)



Source: Author's photographic collection, 6th March, 2016

The Picture above is an example of a traditional shrine of the *Bamenda Grassfields Fondoms*. This was a sacred site located behind or inside or at a far distant area from the Palaces.⁹³ Oral tradition revealed that, often it was the original location of their ancestors and people before the 19th Centuries migrations. This site is believed to be the burial ground of passed *Fons* “travelled” *Fons* and the-would-be. The stone identified in the hurt, linked their Fon and the indigenous populations with the ancestral world. Worth noting that, only the Fon priest and at times the *Fon* in some communities of the Grassfields can have access into the hurt for spiritual activities and guides on governance and management of their societies.

Template 3: The “*Keung*” Plant in the Awing Palace

⁹¹Interview with Tayong God love, age, 90, notable in Mankon, 17th October, 2017, Mezam Division.

⁹² The *Eschum*. This is an example of a Traditional Swearing Ground in the *Meta* Clan. It is a cone-shaped grass house with a round stone place in the middle of the shrine. The black stone is believed to represent the ancestors and the gods of the land. The cone-shaped House is surrounded and carpeted by the *keung* plant which symbolizes peace. Requests, sacrifices and incarnations are often done here by the Fon and at times the Chief Priest.

⁹³Ibid



Source: Authors' photographic collection 15th August 2016

A tool and a peace plant of conflict resolution and peacekeeping. This is the “*Keung*” plant otherwise called the peace plant. This plant in Pre-colonial communities of the Grassfields was used during peace negotiation in dispute and stringed into the mouth of soldiers at war battles swearing in for peace. When a judgment has pronounced between disputants, they were obliged to provide a peace plant each⁹⁴. After presenting their peace plants, they drank palm wine from the same cup and then embraced themselves to show that the dispute is ended⁹⁵. Today the functions of this plant have drifted to indicate peace between twin babies who may involve themselves in fighting as well as for medicinal purposes⁹⁶.

iii. The Institutions of Divination

This was another arm of the *kwifor* society made up of either an individual or a group of very old kingmakers and notables. *Kwap* is a native name for fortune tellers while *Berefu* were traditional priest who had the responsibility of protecting the village from misfortune with leaf medicine. Majority of wrongs punished by the *kwifor* was done upon consultation of the *Kwap* doctors and traditional medicine performances of the *Berefu*. This institution equally used its super

⁹⁴G.N. Wandeh., “Secret Societies in Moghamo Clan from Pre-colonial Times to 1984”, MA Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde I, 1999, p.23

⁹⁵Keng., “Traditional Institutional Systems in Chup Chieftaincy Dispute”, p.78

⁹⁶Interview with Njom Muna Ephraim, age 57, National President of CEDECA, 5th September, 2015, Douala.

natural eyes and medicine performances to survey the routes of victories, predict where the enemies were and invoked the intervention of the ancestors in wars period. With the evolution of history, the *Berefu* prepared medicine for the protection of the village indigenes and its community, Both the Fon and his dignitaries consulted the *Kwap* doctors and *Berefu* for protection and healing. The institution in the modern and contemporary history played the role of religious inclination of culture as many consultants visited these societies for one reason or the other⁹⁷. The traditional priest locally called the *Nde-Keum-Uwing* and *Keum-Ngong Awing*, were responsible for the many ancestral cults and the progress of the people traditional religion⁹⁸.

The community religious activities stemmed from the fact that, just like ancient African states, there was the existence of many beliefs as they believed in god, in divinities, spiritual beings, ancestors and above all the practice of magic and medicine. God to them was supreme creator as well as controller of the universe. Despite God invisibilities, their religion believed he maintained contact with the universe either directly through his personal intervention or indirectly through his personal intermediaries, the divinities and the ancestors. The divinities to them stand next in relation to god in the hierarchy of powers and they are god's ministers with divine powers who have as main duty of being intermediary between god and man. They equally believed of the ancestral world in which there is the continuity of living together of dead persons with the ancestors in the ancestral world. Thus, as members of the *Keum-Uwung* who performed annual rituals at the *Awing Lake*. According to *Afomboh*, rituals are performed at the Lake Awing at the end of each calendar year and during these rituals, its members slaughtered a white ram, butcher it, smeared the pieces with salt and camwood and throw them into the lake calling the names of the various quarters and sub-villages. In the course of this worship, they asked for peace, security, children, abundant crops and many other things⁹⁹

Apart from worshipping the lake, other rituals are performed in the village such as the *Nemo* ritual performed during the enthronement of the First Paramount chief of *Awing* and he was and is still the chief priest of all rituals. The house of princes and princesses or *Nde-Poputoh* is made up only of royal blood and is put in place to protect the interest of royals within the political systems of the village. It is not equally opened to commoners and the *Fon* has no confidence to this house as he feared the usurpation of his throne by this institution. It has its members and was later

⁹⁷ Wandeh., "Secret Societies in Moghamo Clan from Pre-colonial Times,p.45.

⁹⁸Afomboh., *Traditional Government in Awing-Cameroon*, p.44

⁹⁹Ibid, p. 56.

abolished by the *Nde-Kwofor* because of its dangerous activities detrimental to the population. They are also highly respected and are expected to be humble and full of generosity magnanimity.

Figure 3: Traditional Forecaster in *Bafut*



Source: HRM Abumbi II, the *Fon* of Bafut, *Traditions and Customs of Bafut*, Press book PLC, Limbe, 2016, p.44

The *kwap* doctors or traditional diviners, who formed part of the socio-cultural institutions of Grassfields Traditional Governance, performed the duties of a diviner and was often consulted by both the village authorities as well as the villagers for one reason or the other¹⁰⁰. Sometimes he was used in the traditional courts for judgment procedures as through his divinity, he could say whether the culprit was guilty or not. Again, he was equally consulted on the peace as well as on the seasons for good and bad harvest of the community. Some well consulted on the views of their ancestors. In a nutshell they contributed to shape both the behaviors and happenings of their communities.

vi. The Queen-Mother

The institution of the Queen-Mother known in *Bafut* as “*Mamfo*” and in *Bandjoun* as “*Mafo*” is a good counter force in the traditional political institutions. In many traditional societies, the Queen-Mother may be the biological mother of the ruler or his daughter. The queen mother is

¹⁰⁰Abumbi II., *Traditions and Customs of Bafut*, Limbe, Press book PLC, 2016, p.49

always present in the framework of the traditional government not just to cater for women's affairs, but mostly to be consulted on all matters concerning the secret organizations. Her functions includes the settlement of disputes among litigant women and her great ability to intercede on behalf of dissatisfied litigants and have their cases reviewed and she at times might be reputed for the exercise of her authority over women's affairs.¹⁰¹ African women from time immemorial have participated in peacekeeping activities within the perspective of gender equality by making their voices heard in political decisions, the creations and heading of states lodger in war, spy, peace negotiator and mediators

Within the domain of political decisions, prejudices of she, is an inferior woman, oppressed, exploited without freedom of actions and passing through history without one for she was questioned and claimed not to have memory encouraged her to join politics. As a result, she became very involved in public affairs thanks to her maternal instincts, devotedness; sacrifices of a wife presented her as a redemptory and Salvatore actor. This pushed into the might of engaging in wars of conquest in order to create regions and states. "It was always a woman who chose the site of implanting the future city as if the woman is the generator of children of the society had to give birth to their environment" Egg Maintop Dario was the founder of *Katina* and *katou*, she extended her influence into *Nupe*, built multiple towns and received tributes after a series of war, she became director of her Town.¹⁰²

Women were equally active participants in wars either indirectly or directly as they led revandication through their vigilance in war front. For instance, the *Bandjoun* queen mother of ancient time was a soldier in the wars of conquest of the Bandjoun expansion and conquest in part of the West region. The women forged the morals of the warriors by distracting them through poetic songs and with much significance valorizing and encouraging their men by sending death behind "Are there no more men in the village are our ancestors' death?"¹⁰³ They sang folkloric songs and dancing styles with virtue of sending all impurities of the village. This attracted the arms of the fighters towards the father land. They equally served soldiers with food and married women on war front remained faithful during the period because infidelity bring bad ordeals to the husband foot notes.

¹⁰¹Aletum, *Appraisal of our Culture. Social Customs and Traditions of the Bafut*, p.213

¹⁰² C.Coqery-Vidrovitch., *Les Africaines, Hisoire des femmes d'Afrique noire du XIXè au XXè siècle*, Paris, Desjonqueres, 1994, pp.36-81.

¹⁰³ Abumbi II, *The Customs and Traditions of Bafut*, Press book PLC, Limbe, 2016, p.39

Women played the courageous role of lodging by guiding the ammunition, military ways and the evacuation of victims. They went further to spy on neighboring chiefdoms during wars, create friendship with opposing camps to stay and better penetrate the enemy. They equally negotiated peace among wary nations as she exercised her natural show and right to defend all what was signed ensuring peace, unity and the life of all to live. The *magne* and *Nguissi* of the Bamileke land always walk with peace plant in their hands, which were equally used in the signing of peace and amnesty¹⁰⁴ as seen on the template in the next page.

Template 4: Women with Peace Plant



Source: G. Mbarkwa., “Enthronement of *Fon* Tabi Teghenichia X and a celebration of *Meta*”, 22nd December, 2012, Yaounde, Printer, 2012, p.34.

Section Two: Typology and Architecture of Traditional Governance

Organized power exertion enables actors to perform collective activities and achieve common goals. Administration which is the management of affairs could equally be referred to the body of people who look, direct and control the affairs of the nation. The *Grassfields* States were managed and directed by a body of persons who were equally referred to as those-who-matter in villages under the leadership of a *Fon*.¹⁰⁵ The *Grassfields* have a complicated and a confused territorial administration of their states and villages as they had quasi-autonomous villages that were answerable to both the central and external administration. Some conquered States refused to subjugate themselves totally to the *Fons* or chiefs after the wars of conquest.

¹⁰⁴Coqery-Vidrovitch, *Les Africaines*, p .95.

¹⁰⁵Dillon, *Ranking and Resistance*, p.55.

It is important to note that, the villages that make up the *Bamenda* Grassfields have a similar traditional administration and government despite their slight differences due to neighboring influences from paramount *Fondoms* of *Mankon*, *Bafut*, *Nso* and the *Balis*¹⁰⁶. Nevertheless, the traditional administration and government of the study area have maintained their functionality and preserved its administrative organigram since the occupation of the site till date. They have consecrated settlements, which have become sub villages and organized themselves administratively through a fundamental Government in order to accurately provide accountability in the management and functionalism of their states¹⁰⁷.

I. The Administrative Set-Up of the *Bamenda* Grassfields

According to some varied sources, the formation of *Fondoms* in the *Bamenda* Grassfields was sharply linked to the people's origin and migration.¹⁰⁸ This explains the mixed composition of the politico-social units in being when the German began to manage the area in 1902.¹⁰⁹ Studies by German explorers have proven the existence of king-lists in some Grassfields *Fondoms* to support the existence of royal burials right to the seventeenth century as evidence of the origin of the formation of *Fondoms* in the Grassfields by the various groups of people.¹¹⁰

A closer examination of the process of *Fondom* formation and settlement in the *Bamenda* Grassfields was motivated among other factors by chieftaincy conflicts. For instance, the *Meta Fondoms* were divided into at least three clans, *Mezang*, *Menyen* and *Meku*, looking towards important oath swearing sites superintended by particular village.¹¹¹ These *Meta Fondoms* were also claimants to a rival site which was later sheathed by *Bali* conquest. Assumably, the *Meta Fondom's* had to split into clans due to the fight to head the group at the time of *Fondoms* formation. This separation to an extent influenced the territorial organization of the *Meta* clans.

Furthermore, in the course of migrating and seeking to create settlements (*Fondoms*), major groups that earlier started migrating together suddenly split with each leader leading his group of people to create his own *Fondoms*. This was generally caused by the fight for leadership in some migrating groups. For instance, the present location and composition of villages in the south west

¹⁰⁶ M.T. Azang., "Political Development in the *Meta* Country, 1800-1936", "Long Essay, University of Buea, 1997, p.23.

¹⁰⁷ J.N. Acha., "The History and Traditional Organization of *Meta*", Paper presented at the MECUDA Annual general meeting in Tugi village, April, 1994, p.23.

¹⁰⁸ BRA, File: No NW/AC 1/BK, Historical Notes on the *Bamenda* Grassfields, 1960, p.13

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

and south of the *Bamenda* Grassfields was affected by the early *Bali Chamba* raids whose area of origin was *Koncha-Tignere*.¹¹² The *Bali Chambas* left *Koncha-Tignere* as a group but later split into different groups under different leaders. It was obvious that the leadership struggle on who to lead the major *Bali Chamba* group erupted and the group split under the command of the various contestants.¹¹³

Archival sources hold that, the *Bali Chamba* southward movement appeared to have been under the several leaders; one group led, according to western *chamba* tradition, by *Gyando* and his son *Kumboshi* of the *Dagha* clan, appeared to have moved west from *Banyo-Tibati* area with *Buti* and *Tikar* allies.¹¹⁴ Another group led by *Gawolbe*, son of *Ga Gangsin* is said to have moved into the *Bamenda* Grassfields from the north-east accompanied by *Mudi*.¹¹⁵ Even the contingent under *Gawolbe*, later broke-up in the *Bamenda* Grassfields with the *Mudi* contingent under *Ganyama* moving north towards the *Benue Chamba*. After having failed to reduce the *Bafut* and *Mankon*. Therefore, the multitude *Fondoms* like the *Nso*, *Kedjom Keku* and the *Bafut* in the *Bamenda* Grassfields could be attributed to the numerous dynastic conflicts that were characteristic of the early settlers of the *Bamenda* Grassfields Cameroon. After creating the various *Fondoms*, each had to organize its territory and secured its frontiers.

In another case, the nine family heads of the *Awing* people that arrived *Alameti* in the *Bamenda* Grassfields claimed to have supernatural bangles that were used to wield power.¹¹⁶ Consequently an “*Awume’e*” began, that is power struggle among the various leaders, even though the group stayed together.¹¹⁷ However the nine clan heads then decided to get a supreme head among them by submitting all the magical bangles to him. The question that loomed in the air was who, where and from which of the nine clans was to be made the superior leader of the nine clans. *Awing* oral tradition holds that a certain *Pa Mbangwashi* suggested that a hut be constructed and all the nine magical bangles put in it, and the next day the person found wearing all the nine bangles was to be made the paramount king of the *Awing* people.¹¹⁸ *Awing* oral sources further reveals that *Mbangwashi* surreptitiously went and kept his son in the hut who automatically became the paramount *Fon* of *Awing*. Even though the legitimacy of the *Fon* was highly contested, the most

¹¹² E. M. Chilver., “The Bali-Chamba of West Cameroon, (Origins, Migration and Composition)”, Report to the Bali Chamba Historical and Cultural Society, 1964, p.17.

¹¹³ Nkwi, and Warnier., *Elements for a History of the Western Grassfields*, p.82

¹¹⁴ BRA, File: No NW/AC 1/BK, Historical Notes on the Bamenda Grassfields, 1960, p.18

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ *Awing*, Cultural Festival Magazine, p.10.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ *Awing*, Cultural Festival Magazine, p.76.

radical contestant, *Mbankadtnmbi* who threatened to split away and create his own *Fondom* was calmed and compensated with the title of *Ndi* which warranted not to clap before the Fon and to run the palace in his absence and *Ndi* became second in command in the *Awing Fondom* till today.¹¹⁹

The migration and settlement of various groups in the Grassfields gave way to the establishment of *kingdoms* and their socio-political organizations. Here, lineages and clans formed part and parcel of traditional institutions on the paraphernalia of each territorial unit. Clan heads had a lot of authority. As Paulo Brown observed;

Legal authority [legitimate power] was commonly held by heads of African lineages and clans [...] they settled conflicts between members, mainly by arbitration and punished some offences committed by members. Small fines were usually imposed in such cases but some lineage or clan heads had the extensive right to pawn, enslave, expel and dispossess member.¹²⁰

Bamenda Grassfields *Fondoms* were heterogeneous polities. They fitted broadly into the class of an African “incorporative *kingdom*”.¹²¹ Such *kingdoms* like *Bafut* and *Nso* were consisted of conquest *kingdoms* which started from a nucleus and the impetus for conquest was given by an immigrant group. At the head of this “incorporate *kingdom*” was the *Fon* or traditional ruler.

Administratively *Bamenda* Grassfields *Fondoms* were politically and administratively well organized and structured. Territorially, all *Fondoms* in the *Bamenda* Grassfields were made up of households, compounds, and villages or quarters. At the level of the household, authority was vested in the hands of the lineage head. He exercised both spiritual and temporal functions and his authority was derived from family-heads forming the lineage.¹²²

i. Household and lineage

The household was the first stage of territorial organisation in the Grassfields traditional society. This was so because members looked at their patrilineal or matrilineal head as the political representative of the society. The lineage head co-ordinate the activities of the different members of their family. He took charge of traditional religious ceremonies, initiations and the pouring of libations. In traditional politics, he represented the highest traditional hierarchy in most lineages in the *Bamenda* Grassfields.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p.18.

¹²⁰ L. Markovis., *African Politics and Society*, New York, The free Press, 1970, p.14.

¹²¹ Ngwa, and Kah., “Cameroon: Power Politics, Land Conflicts and Controversy”, p.4.

¹²²I. Schapera., *Government and Politics in Tribal Societies*, London, C.A. Watts and C.O 1937, p.3.

¹²³Aletum., “African Politics Yesterday and Tomorrow”, pp.25-26.

ii. The Quarter: Smallest Administrative Unit in the *Fondom*

The smallest territorial unit in the *Bamenda* Grassfields is the quarter. The quarter was made up of all the lineages forming this political unit. The leader of the quarter was the quarter head. The name of the quarter head changes according to the culture of the group. They were usually the ones who represented the Fon of the tribe in their various quarters. For instance, the Bafut of the *Bamenda* Grassfields address their quarter head as “*Sankuru*”.¹²⁴ The role of the quarter head is similar to that of the village lineage head, but more demanding because the quarter head has to co-ordinate the activities of many lineages which are not necessarily known to him. At the level of the quarter, there is the institution of the quarter council made up of heads of the various lineages that make up the quarter and the council is usually presided over by the quarter head.

iii. The Village: Second Administrative Unit in the *Fondom*

The largest territorial unit in the *Bamenda* Grassfields traditional society is the village. It is within the village that all the traditional institutions are found. At this level of traditional rule, the leader must be from the royal family. Generally, in most Grassfields Fondoms, he was referred to as the Fon. The title by which *Bamenda* Grassfields Chiefs were bound had meaning only within a given culturally defined group that varied from one ethnic group to another. The chief was a singular ruler, and the incarnation of the customs and traditions of the group. He presided over all major rituals of the *Fondoms*. The Fon could confer on his territorial agents (clan, quarter and village heads) titles, powers and privileges of owning associations having corresponding functions at village level.

Titles were conferred upon persons either because of their lineage affiliation, social rank or wealth.¹²⁵ But then the question was at times on the legitimacy of these titles awarded. To somebody was wealthy, could it be a criterion to award him a title. This could forcefully generate conflict among other people in the lineage who have rendered service to the lineage but are not very wealthy to be awarded a title.

For instance, in the *Bafut kingdom*, family units lived close to one another. However, some moved further apart, either in search of fertile farmlands or because of some calamity. A number of compounds constituted a ward. A number of wards made up a quarter (*nukuru*), and a group of quarters constituted a village (*nke*). The villages made up the *Bafut Fondom* (*Ala'a Bafu*). The

¹²⁴Aletum., “African Politics Yesterday and Tomorrow”, p.26.

¹²⁵Nkwi., *Traditional Diplomacy*, pp. 39-40.

number and size of component settlements was determined by population coupled with spatial limitations such as natural barriers and available farmland and water. According to the reports of E.G Hawkesworth, they were twenty-three villages in *Bafut*.¹²⁶ *Bafut* had two types of settlements. First there were the semi-autonomous villages each with its own chief (*atangchuo* – war planner).¹²⁷ The villages were linked to the center under various conditions governing their relationship. According to Ngwa and Kah, seventeen villages fell in this category.¹²⁸ They were: *Bawum, Mambu, Mankaa, Mankwi, Banji, Akofunguba (south in the ntare area), Beno, Buwi, Manta, Tingo, Mbekong, Butang, Bugiri, Aba and Bukabunano (Obang)*.¹²⁹ Most of them were located to the north in the upper *Menchum* valley. There were *Bukari* and *Buwe* which are among the oldest villages in *Bafut*. These are located to the northeast of the capital of *Bafut*.¹³⁰

The second type of settlements in *Bafut* was constituted of those villages clustered around the palace, and ruled directly by the *Fon*. These were: *Mbebali, Mbebeli, Manji, Njibujang, Bujong, Njinteh, Niko, Mankaha, and Nchum*.¹³¹ The inhabitants here consisted mostly of the Tikari immigrants, who were closely allied to the *Fon*. These villages had no chiefs with any hereditary title as such but an appointed head (*tanukuru* - father of the quarter) existed. He was appointed by the *Fon* among the *bukum* of the village, that was, any one of them whom he deemed competent. In some cases, a prince was appointed. That was one way the *Fon* involved his relations in the administration. The *tanukuru*, along with the other elders of the village constituted a governing council (*butabenukuru*), which met often to deliberate on matters of immediate concern to their village.

The matters might be the implementation of the *Fon*'s directives, collecting and transmitting their own tribute to the palace and arranging for community projects. Further, it was also the prerogative of the *Fon* in the *Bamenda* Grassfields to create new villages, by appointing heads to new settlements. It was by doing so that, he had more villages under his direct control. However, this did not imply that the exercise of power in the *Fondom* was smooth.

There were areas of conflict within the political structure of most Grassfields *Fondom* as were noticed in other African *kingdoms*.¹³² This could partly explain because of the multiple and

¹²⁶ NAB, E.G. Hawkesworth, Assessment Report on the Bafut Tribal Area of the Bamenda Division, 1926,p.23.

¹²⁷Ngwa and Kah., “Cameroon: Power Politics, Land Conflicts and Controversy”,p.6

¹²⁸ Ibid

¹²⁹J. R. Hook., An Intelligence Report on the Associated Village Groups Occupying Bafut Native Authority Area of the Bamenda Division of Cameroons Province, 1934, p.8.

¹³⁰Ibid.

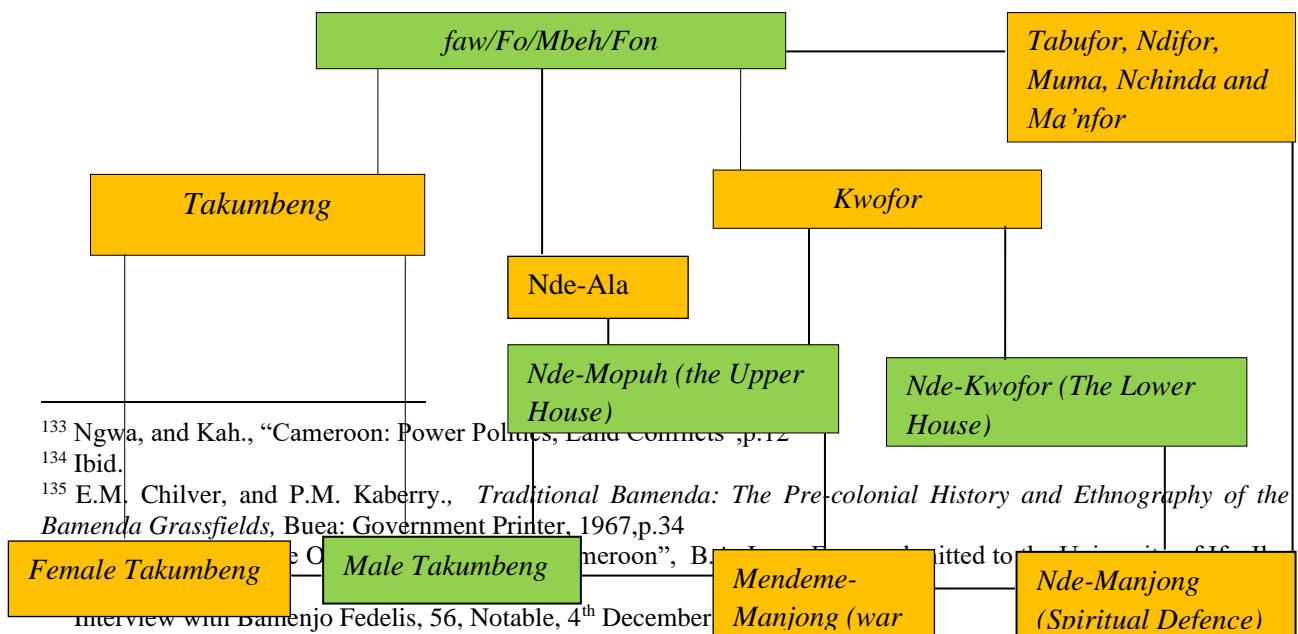
¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³²L. Mair., *African Kingdoms*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977,p.23

varies stand disagreement and conflict between the Fon of *Bafut* and *Ntoh* of *Bawum*, which cannot accurately be ascertained. But from available evidence, there appeared to have been a deliberate effort on the part of Bafut to suppress the fact that, the *Bawum* ruler was around when Filu came, and therefore should not have laid any claim to special treatment. This seems to have been done in order to neutralize a dangerous rival to the *Bafut* dynasty.¹³³ These contrasting claims resulted in conflict between the descendants of the two rulers that have continued even to the present day.¹³⁴

According to evidence from both sides, this conflict once led to bloodshed.¹³⁵ The *Bafut* palace and, by implication, the central government of the kingdom remained in *Mbebeli* for some time. Later, one of Filu’s successors moved it from the rocky and hilly location of *Mbebeli* to its present location at *Mumalaa*.¹³⁶ In another example, the sub-Fon (*Mbiki*) of *Tang* and *Rookijih* lineages in the *Nso Fondom* legitimacies were contested by lineage members.¹³⁷ It was thanks to the intervention of the *Ngwerong* on the instruction of the *Fon* that these conflicts were resolved. This to an extent justifies the role of Fontaincy institution in the regulation of social peace in the Bamenda Grassfields. Equally in the *Nso Fondom*, was the *TeV-Nkar*. The Fon of *Nkar* undermined the authority of the Fon of *Tev* whose legitimacy was affirmed and confirmed by the paramount Fon of *Nso*. This conflict thrived for too long until, it was only resolved during the post-independent era.¹³⁸ Among the personalities that constituted the Chieftaincy hierarchy in Fondom, the position of the *Fon* was a special one characterized by its unique way of accession to the throne.

Figure 4: Tentative Typology of a hierarchical structure of Traditional Authority in the Bamenda Grassfields (*Awing Fondom*)



¹³³ Ngwa, and Kah., “Cameroon: Power Politics, Land Conflicts”, p.12
¹³⁴ Ibid.
¹³⁵ E.M. Chilver, and P.M. Kaberry., *Traditional Bamenda: The Pre-colonial History and Ethnography of the Bamenda Grassfields*, Buea: Government Printer, 1967,p.34
¹³⁶ Interview with Damienjo Fedelis, 56, Notable, 4th December 2016, Buea, Cameroon”, Buea, Cameroon, submitted to the author.
¹³⁸ Interview with Lee Bens Syracuse, 55 years, Farmer, 6th November, 2016, Nso.

Source: Drawn by the Author

The diagram above is a tentative typology of a hierarchical structure of traditional authority in the Bamenda Grassfields (*Awing Fondom*). It depicts how authority and power is shared in the governance structures of the Bamenda Grassfields Fondoms. The political systems, structures and processes in pre-colonial Bamenda Grassfields as well as the norms, rules and traditions that underpin them were rooted in diverse historical contexts. Scholars have identified three broad governance systems in pre-colonial Africa in the dominant patterns of contemporary governance systems¹³⁹. In the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon, three types similar to the description of R.W Hull could be identified¹⁴⁰. They include (a); large centralized Fondoms; (b) centralized medium-size Fondoms; and (c) widely dispersed empires and Fondoms.

i. Centralized pyramidal governance systems

These were large *Fondoms* governed by *Fons* with absolute powers. They were pyramidal governance architecture, akin in several significant respects to their European and Asian counterparts. The *Fons* operated vast court systems with a lot of grandeur. Court officials, bureaucrats and vassal heads held their positions in trust for the *Fon* and security of tenure and life depended on loyalty to *Fons*, the supreme leader. Examples of such *Fondoms* in the *Bamenda* Grassfields include; *Nso*, *Kom*, *Bafut*, *Bali Nyonga* and *Mankon*. There was no separation of powers because the *Fon* and his court performed executive, legislative and judicial functions. They had sophisticated bureaucracies and tax systems that brought in valuable economic and financial resources¹⁴¹.

Pre-colonial *Bamenda* Grassfields *Fondoms* and their African counterparts shared striking similarities with the Roman and Greek Empires in Europe and with the *Mogul* or *Siam* Empires in Asia, because they were all absolute monarchs, for instance *Mansa Musa* of *Mali* just like some

¹³⁹ J. Vassina., *Kingdoms of the Savannah*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 200, pp.20-67.

¹⁴⁰ R. W. Hull., *African Cities and Towns before European Conquest*, New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1976,p.84.

¹⁴¹ Vassina., *Kingdoms of the Savannah*, Madison, p.200.

Bamenda Grassfields polities, *Sundiata Keita* and *Sonni Ali* of the *Shonghai* empire claimed divine right to kingship just like some of their counterparts in Europe. Finally, and perhaps most instructively, large centralized *Bamenda* Grassfields governance systems did not last forever. Indeed, most of them succumbed to either protracted succession competitions, or because incumbents failed to consolidate their grip on power and control due to the sheer expansiveness of their territories and the ambitions of vassal Fons.

ii. Centralized medium *Fondoms*

Several pre-colonial *Bamenda* Grassfields societies were organized into medium sized city-states with centralized and pyramidal structures of authority. The most important distinction between medium and large pre-colonial *Fondoms* in the *Bamenda* Grassfields was their territorial size, military might and population.

Table 1: Various Ethnic Groups, Population, and Number of Soldiers in some Grassfields *Fondoms*

Ethnic group	Population	Number of soldiers
<i>BaliKumbat</i>	5000	1500
<i>Mankon</i>	6000	1500
<i>Bafut</i>	8000	3000-4000
<i>Bali-Nyonga</i>	6000	500
<i>Bikom</i>	5000	1500

Source: Nkwi, *Traditional Diplomacy*, p.13.

The table above indicated that, the medium-sized *Fondoms* were relatively populated with a standing army more or less efficient vis-à-vis larger *Fondoms*. Some examples of centralized medium-sized governance systems were among others; *Nkwen*, *Bambili*, *Nkar*, and *Kedjom keku* just to name a few. Fons in these *Fondoms* also wielded immense powers, which they shared only with trusted cliques or allies. Law making, implementation and adjudication powers were concentrated in the *Fon's-in-council*¹⁴². Royal elite monopolized access to vital economic resources such as land and revenue from taxes, and also controlled the military and security agencies.

iii. Widely Dispersed *Fondoms*

The third and final category of governance systems in Pre-colonial *Bamenda* Grassfields were the 'stateless' or acephalous societies that had well-organized and centralized administrative

¹⁴² Chilver, and Kaberry, *Traditional Bamenda*.,p.59.

structures. Without *Fons* or clearly identifiable centralized ruling elite, these societies were perceived as ‘stateless.’ However, the absence of centralized structures of authority does not necessarily imply statelessness, because there was law and order as well as sanctions for deviant behavior. Widely dispersed Fondoms had governance systems that operated at village level.

Leadership was rotational rather than hereditary, with emphasis on collective decision making and implementation processes. Unlike the other two systems, age played an important part in the choice of leaders and chiefs in the community. Because leaders were appointed, they were expected to engage in wide ranging consultations before decisions were made. Moreover, executive, legislative and judicial functions were diffused among various centres of power such as the village councils of elders, age grades, secret societies, etc. The system also enshrined and utilized the principle of checks and balances so that power was not concentrated in the hands of a single individual or group. Examples of these governance systems were; *Widikum* and *Ahgems*.

II. Trade in Grassfields Governance Mechanism

Before the onset of scientific management, the organization of society, polity, and economy developed within the realm of traditional culture. African and notably Bamenda Grassfields societies were no different from other ancient societies in Asia, the Americas, or Europe. Societies were organized according to a hierarchical social system involving distinct classes of royal and ordinary people, an elite or aristocracy/nobles, free persons, occupational casts, or classes (such as jewelers, blacksmiths, tanners, tailors, workers, and unfree persons/slaves)¹⁴³.

i. Socio-political trajectory

The history of governance in the *Bamenda* Grassfields of Cameroon was an extension of the socio-political trajectory of its people. The earliest management of society of the studied area was same as in other parts of the world, in the hands of a *Fon*. This position depended on wealth, which evolved from the ability to organize, manage, and control resources and ultimately lead her/his subjects to sustain and improve their existence under her/his authority. As illustrated vividly in the early history of the Egyptian and subsequent indigenous black African societies, centralized sociopolitical power was directly linked to the mobilization of natural resources and human. In different form and substance, power resided in a single person, irrespective of the title.

¹⁴³ A.J. Andrea, J.H. Overfield., *The human record Sources of global History since 1500*, 4th edition, Volume 2: New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001, pp.18-70.

As well as guided the enthronements of would-be leading various succession paradigms with existed hereditary, paternal ancestor, and maternal ancestry.

In most *Bamenda* Grassfields societies, kinship relations determined social position, either in political management, economic management, or military and bureaucratic management. The history of Africa and notably that of the Cameroon Grassfields shows the inherent stratified nature of society and the prolonged perpetuation of privilege, inequality, and power.

The inherent instability caused by military power to defend authority meant repeated challenges to power, succession insecurity, and, as described in the history, succession of *kingdoms* or Fondoms.

While traditional societies in the *Bamenda* Grassfields were organized around a social kinship nucleus, the leader managed society, polity and economy. Management was concentrated centrally and functions delegated according to the prerogative of the individual leader. Traditional Grassfields societies were essentially communal, which does not imply collective decision-making. The undisputed authority of the traditional ruler or the *Fon* translated into the management decisions of the entity. In the absence of codified law, both domestically and internationally, the *Fon's* power was curtailed only by the degree of adherence to tribal customs alongside regulatory institutions variously known as *kwifor*, *Ngumba*, *ngweroon*, just to name a few.

ii. Buying and Marketing of Commodities

The organization of the polity was integrated with the mobilization of economic resources. At no stage in the history of the *Bamenda* Grassfields can be contended that, there were no markets as site of trade activities always existed. Exchange was in the form of barter and actively pursued with neighboring villages and Fondoms. Extended markets existed for natural resources, such as salt, gold, iron, copper, kola nuts, food, etc. The merchant exchanges were planned, organized, and controlled by the political authority sanctioning trade. Macroeconomic management was part of the central state function, and micromanagement of merchants, traders, or producers was simply the extension of the authority of the king or emperor¹⁴⁴.

In most *Bamenda* Grassfields Fondoms, especially powerful ones like the *Kom*, *Bafut* and *Kom*, the traditional ruler exercised oversight control over the caravans. Close collaborators of the *Fon* were charged with the duty of organizing the collection of commodities for exchange, the

¹⁴⁴ Chilver, and Kaberry, *Traditional Bamenda*, p.102.

routes of travel, the conditions of exchange, and control over the finances by a systematic book keeping. In some cases, *Fons* put at the disposal of merchant's warriors, to accompany the caravan on behalf of the owner. These caravans were sometimes organized in a firm-like business structure, with owner of the assets, and employees engaged in the actual business of exchange or barter¹⁴⁵.

As a matter of fact, *Bamenda* Grassfields *Fons* exercised direct control over the core economic activities - production and trade, but private individual merchants were allowed to compete with the royal enterprises. Authorized by traditional rulers, private businessmen operated as middlemen between producers and the Fendom. Management of economic activities in the *Bamenda* Grassfields therefore operated on three levels: overall macro-management on the *Fendom* level by the ruler, intermediation as middlemen by strategically thinking entrepreneurial merchants, and on the lowest level of kinship and the tribe, where the *Fon's* subordinate or ministers managed peasant production and delivery. The management of the production function fell within the responsibility of the *Fons*. They also organized localized market exchange or the so-called petty trading in communities.

Local merchants organized the trade expeditions in *Fondoms*. These merchants appointed transport agents to accompany the trade expedition in return for commission. The merchants were typically rich, influential members from respected families, private owners of the trading business, operating under state sanction in ways that complemented state business/trading operations. The merchants also depended on the military protection of the *Fendom* to engage successfully in inter-*Fendom* trade. Historically, *Fendom* formation in the *Bamenda* Grassfields just like in most African Pre-colonial states and trade development were mutually reinforcing and not competing processes¹⁴⁶. Despite central state authority, albeit sometimes weak, multilayer management of commercial activities existed. The organization of the lucrative salt trade offered a case in point of *Fendom* management of a key economic activity in some *Bamenda* Grassfields polities. Salt production was a family enterprise, but the trade depended on the permission of the Fendom head.

Again, merchants facilitated the acquisition of the salt, organized the trade on routes they managed, earned commission on their endeavors, and the state collected the taxes on the salt production¹⁴⁷. The extensive organization of trade in humans (slaves) in Africa including the

¹⁴⁵ A.J. Andrea, J.H. Overfield., *The human record Sources*, p.100.

¹⁴⁶ R.A. Austen., *African economic history*. Heinemann, London, 1987, pp.30-58.

¹⁴⁷ P.E. Lovejoy., *Salt of the desert sun: A History of salt production and trade in the Central Sudan*, University of Wisconsin, Madison Press, 1986, pp.65-72.

Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon during the nineteenth century, illustrated the importance of strategic management of trade by indigenous traditional rulers. The permission of the *Fon* was required for the selling of slaves. He also determined the numbers of slaves to be offered on exchange, and thereby he could manipulate the price. Slaves were gotten from wars of conquest and raids in other *Fondoms*, but the *Fon* had preemptive rights on offering the sale of his slaves. During the days of the transatlantic slave trade, kings and their military structures dominated that specific trade¹⁴⁸.

A significant dynamic in management appears at this juncture in Africa's history. The king/state's unchallenged power to plan the state economy, that is, to decide on organizational goals and devise a strategy to achieve the plan, remained his/her sole right. The right was exercised in collaboration with lower levels of management i.e., the merchants and chiefs. The organization of the task (manufacturing salt, extracting, selling, or extracting slaves, determine price, exchange the slaves), constituted her/his sole authority but was again exercised through mutual input. The king depended on the lower levels of management for success in realizing organizational goals. Leadership in execution was not limited to the king, but actually in most cases more dependent on the skills, professionalism and competency of the merchants. The final dimension of management, namely, control, was primarily exercised by lower levels of management merchants, the military, and bureaucracy. Despite changes in the political authority, be that Muslim caliphate of indigenous African *kingdom*, the relation between producers and merchants remained the same¹⁴⁹.

A significant phenomenon in the management of African economic activity is the hierarchy of management. The ruler, irrespective of her/his source of power, managed with varying degrees of intensity on the macrolevel. On the operational level, a middle order of management exercised managerial control. Delegate As the massively lucrative slave trade came to an end (with Britain's abolition of slave trade in 1833 slave ownership remained legal), an interest developed in the exchange of other commodities. While the Grassfields traditional rulers exercised almost monopoly control over the slave trade, the trade in other goods was opened¹⁵⁰. An interesting example was the development in palm oil around the *Widikum* area.

¹⁴⁸R. Law., "Royal monopoly and private enterprise in the Atlantic trade: the case of Dahomey". *Journal of African History* 4, 1997, pp.555-577

¹⁴⁹ Lovejoy, *Salt of the desert sun*, p.78.

¹⁵⁰A.G. Hopkins., *An economic history of West Africa*. Longman, London, 1973, p.100.

The demand for other raw materials from Africa after the period of active slave trade offered an opportunity for trade in palm oil. This developed into a successful enterprise and finally the Dahomey king declared a royal monopoly on palm oil. The king appointed the private merchants in that market as his agents. The royal monopoly secured the king control over the trade as well as the proceeds, but private business was still permitted alongside the royal operations. The private entrepreneurs were more successful, since they had experience and skills acquired through their development and organization of the industry¹⁵¹. The royal appointment of experienced merchants as agents and permission to other merchants to operate independently resulted in a dynamic coexistence between the royal monopoly and independent merchants. It was apparent that the king acknowledged the efficient and successful managerial expertise that had developed on the operational level of business.

When Frederick Taylor developed his theory of the scientific management of business during the late 1890s¹⁵², indigenous *Bamenda* Grassfields managers generally considered their managerial functions as an extension of the political system. Management was centralized and authoritarian, an outcome that reflected traditional *Bamenda* Grassfields cultures, as well as a perception of authority at the time. That was the “culture” of the time. European powers decided at the Conference of Berlin in 1884 on a framework for the division of Africa. From the last decade of the nineteenth century, European colonial powers systematically “scrambled” for control over parts of Africa which were considered in the interest of the metropolitan nation. Prior to this, international commercial enterprises commenced a new era of global expansion during the seventeenth century.

The fundamental goal in this chapter was to expose the indigenous background of traditional governance in the *Bamenda* Grassfields including all its components. The chapter reveals that the *Bamenda* Grassfields governance system in the various socio-political entities that made up Pre-colonial *Bamenda* Grassfields were clustered or anchored on the chieftaincy institution. By chieftaincy institution the study made reference to the politico-administrative architecture and the various personalities occupying various strategic positions. The objective here was to demonstrate the fact the *Fon* was not the sole personality of the chieftaincy institution, but rather he was only a component of a sophisticated and efficient traditional government ecosystem charge with the task of ensuring social order and regulation. Simply put, the argument, this chapter tries to examine

¹⁵¹C. Coquery-Vidrovitch., *Le “Congo Français” au Temps des Grandes Compagnies Concessionnaires, 1898–1930*. Mouton, Paris, 1972, p.45.

¹⁵² J.D Fage, and W. Tordoff., *A history of Africa*, London, Routledge, 2002, pp.56-75.

the fact that governance is as old as the *Bamenda* Grassfields traditional governance institutions. It was not therefore the western world through colonial rule that introduced governance in Africa; it has existed prior to their advent.

The advent of colonial rule in Cameroon and precisely in the *Bamenda* Grassfields only undermined and modified the Pre-colonial governance system and its institutions. In as much as the colonial authorities undermined the traditional governance system in the *Bamenda* Grassfields, it was on these sophisticated traditional institutions that colonial authorities notably the Germans and British colonial powers laid the foundation of their administration as illustrated in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER TWO: GERMAN GOVERNANCE SYSTEM IN THE BAMENDA GRASSFIELDS: 1884-1916

The imposition of colonial rule in Cameroon after 1884, precisely in the *Bamenda Grassfields* significantly influenced the socio-political and cultural set-up of the entities that existed before its advent. The chieftaincy institution notably its governance system was greatly affected as a result of colonial intrusion. In many instances colonial rule attempted to restructure the mechanisms of the traditional powers. The authority of these rulers (traditional rulers) was equally transformed. In reality, the Germans on arrival in the *Bamenda Grassfields* were very impressed with the existing socio-political and administrative organization under the leadership of the *Fons*, who played a vital role in the development of their communities as political and spiritual leaders. The reverence and legitimacy *Fons*¹ convinced the Germans of the important role they will play in the new administration. This explains why the Germans made chiefs part and parcel of their administration and the execution of their colonial policies. The choice of chiefs was done at the detriment of other traditional organs that constituted the chieftaincy institution².

This chapter deals with the advent of German colonial rule in the *Bamenda Grassfields* and its impacts on the traditional governance that already existent before its advent. The objective in the chapter is to expose how German colonial policy influenced the traditional governance system in the *Bamenda Grassfields*. The chapter is therefore organized in two main sections. The first deals with the introduction of German colonial system in the *Bamenda Grassfields* and the second dwells on the materialization of German colonial rule on the traditional governance institution in the region.

Section One: German Governance Policy in the Bamenda Grassfields

Prior to the advent of colonialism in Cameroon in general and the *Bamenda Grassfields* in particular, traditional authorities played a vital role in the development of their communities as political and spiritual leaders of their polities. The advent of colonialism was in many instances attempt to restructure both the agents and mechanisms of the powers and authorities of these

¹Reverence legitimacy Traditional Rulers. These were Traditional Rulers of the *Bamenda Grassfields* who were enthroned following the customary laws and were considered great because of their population political influence.

²M. Crowder, "The White Chiefs of Tropical Africa", in *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960, vol II: The History and Politics of Colonialism 1914-1960*, L.H. Gann and P. Guigan (eds), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970, pp.320-350.

traditional rulers as was the case in other colonial establishments. The colonial masters, notably the Germans in our study of this part of the work, were charged with restructuring the institution of chieftaincy in the hope that traditional rulers would become largely less significant and irrelevant in their functions thereafter. This however was not the case with those chieftains whose composition retained the legitimacy and resilience of its complex tradition³.

After the treaty of annexation of 12th July, 1884 by the Germans, it was stipulated that the German firms that bought the territory from the traditional rulers should receive all the rights of sovereignty, legislation and administration in the said area. Thus, by extension the chiefs who had the local sovereignty transferred their sovereignty to the Germans⁴. Notwithstanding, the Germans embarked on a mighty mission to penetrate and conquer the hinterland of Cameroon.

I. Overview of German Colonial Philosophy

Following the invasion and conquest of the so-called resistant *Fondoms* of the *Bamenda* Grassfields, it was time for the Germans to entrench their presence so as to attain the objective for which they had penetrated the hinterland. It should be noted that the main motivation of the Germans getting into the *Bamenda* Grassfields was mainly for economic reasons such as search for the supply of human labor to work in coastal plantations, the desire to override the middle man monopoly that was existent and above all the need of collaborators to help govern the vast territory they had just conquered.

As such the Germans adopted a policy and administrative system to effectively keep the *Bamenda* Grassfields under their control. Consequently, German colonial policy anchored on divide and rule principles.

German colonial policy in Cameroon and elsewhere was based on the *Herrenvolk* or master race theory which, among other racial theories believed German culture together with other Europeans powers was superior to Africans and Cameroonian indigenous cultures in particular. By extension, the “whites” had the “Divine Power” to rule the “Blacks”. This aimed at imposing German superiority tendencies in all its constituted features on Cameroonians, whom from all social classes were taught to regard their German masters as superior beings and general and particularly in the *Bamenda Grassfields* of the National territory. Thus it was the “Whiteman” burden to help educate and civilize the less fortunate elsewhere. Africans as well as the populace

³M.M. Ndobegang, “Grassfields Chiefs and Political Change in Cameroon, ca 1884-1966”, Ph. D. Thesis in History, Boston University, 1985, p.18.

⁴ Ibid, p.23.

of the *Bamenda Grassfields* were considered to be dark, barbaric and with valueless political institutions. The “*Whiteman*” also came to combat slave trading activities, famine, misery, reduce illiteracy and to introduce good alien governance systems in the studied area, thereby constituting the replacement and relegation of traditional chieftaincy governance institutions at the background of colonial administration together with all its functional compositions⁵.

German used both the system of divide-and- rule and indirect rule to govern their spheres of interest. They began the system of indirect rule which was different from the British in the fact that, the Germans combined it with divide and rule in which they exploited the conflicts between traditional authorities to effectively administer the indigenes. The Germans, in order to carry home, the seriousness of their colonial administration, they didn’t hesitate to deport defaulters in the clans⁶. The policies maintained as well as bred the divisions that existed among the chiefs of Cameroons with the examples of the Grassfields’ areas⁷. In 1901 under the leadership of Lieutenant colonel Von Pavel during his wars of conquest and expansions into the hinterland captured and subdued the thirteen *Bafut* villages which were eventually placed under the direct control of the *Bamenda* military post.⁸

Traditional rulers so recognized were instructed not to interfere in German trade in their district, but supply workers for plantations and other projects. Assisted by the Fon of *Bali Nyonga* who acted as scout, the *Babungo* who were carriers and more than 200 *Bamum* auxiliary troops, 11 Europeans and some 200 via soldiers under Captain *Hans Glauning* mounted a two-month punitive expedition and war of conquest against the *Nso* from April to June 1906.⁹ Despite the forceful resistance put forth by the *Nso*, the Germans were able to defeat the *Nso* people thanks to their sophisticated weapons and the surrender of *Fon Sehm II* to his white enemies in order to save his people from total annihilation. As a consequent, he was forced to perform public act of submission to the German *Kaiser*, pay ransom of seventy ivories for the release of his men in German custody, supply free labor for the road linking *Bamenda* and *Banyo* and 150 men for work in the South.

The German Kamerun map, drawn after negotiations with the French and British by 1890 indicating German influence in Cameroon, in reality was nothing as extensive or as effective as

⁵ Temgoua., “Impact de la Présence Alleman”, p.70.

⁶ Ibid, p.76.

⁷ Ibid, p.76.

⁸ NAB, File No. 6qfb(1).2, “An Intelligent Report on the Associated Village Groups Occupying the Bafut Native Authority Area of Bamenda Division of Cameroon Province”, R.J. Hook, 1957, p.23.

⁹ Ibid, p.60.

shown on map 1 (*Showing the Bamenda Grassfields Area*). Her claim to the greater part of the territory shown as being under their rule or protection was limited only at the coast with the coastal chiefs and their populations. As such, the step taken by Germany to convince other European powers that they were effectively occupying the areas claimed by them were not always sufficient to secure the submission to their authority of the inhabitants of the territories in questions¹⁰.

Under the German rule or protection where in fact no European had ever been, or where the traditional rulers were unaware of the implications or even the meaning of the protectorate treaties of Preliminary and Annexation signed. In this perspective, it was a condition sine-qua non for the Germans to secure Cameroonians recognition of their authority throughout their national territory as most rulers in the interior were unwilling to allow real power in their states to pass from their hands to the Europeans (Germans) without struggle. Many too were unwilling to stop the trade in slaves on which they depended for much of their wealth and some claimed German firms signed trade treaties with the coastal chiefs and not treaty of colonization. The Germans saw this as an obstacle to effectively implement the principle of notification and effective occupation as agreed in the Berlin Act of 1884-1885 in Germany.

European powers had claimed at the Berlin and Brussels Conferences that, they had a twofold duty, or dual mandate as it came to be called, to extent their rule in Africa: on the one hand, to stop the slave trade and to bring in its instead the material and moral benefits of European civilization. On the other hand, to make the trade and resources of Africa available to the rest of the world, perhaps for the benefits of their own nations in particular. But the slave trade could not be stopped and orderly conditions for the development of peaceful trade, material and moral progress could not be secured, unless the Europeans establish administrative officers and police forces throughout the vast areas in which their coming had upset the authority of the native rulers.¹¹

Besides, German traders along the coast of Cameroon were at the peak of trade and commercial competitions which were stiff from both French and British traders with the Cameroon coastal chiefs. They equally wanted to break the middleman monopoly of trade that was enjoyed by the *Douala* chiefs and by extensions opened plantations both at the coast and in the hinterland of Cameroon. They had the objective of being the principal controller and to expand shipping links along the coast of Cameroon and the Atlantic Coast of West Africa in particular. Cameroon with her strategic lucrative position along the coast of the West hemisphere of the Atlantic Ocean with

¹⁰J.D. Fage., *A History of West Africa: An Introductory survey*, 4th edition, Cambridge University Press, 1969, pp.175-179.

¹¹ Fage, *A History of West Africa*, p.182.

the availability of abundant natural resources spurred the annexation of the territory. This was profitable to the Germans as well as will facilitate the recovery of high debts owed by the coastal middlemen.

Never the less the German colonial society founded in 1882 and later joined by the Pan-German League and Navy League founded in 1890 and 1899 glamour and fought for the acquisition of the territory of Cameroon. Among other colonies in Africa for German to have “*a place in the sun*” and be proud of her self; will equally serve as a settlement area for her increasing population. Her home population faced challenges of the industrial revolution which created limited resources on her economy thereby creating a largely dependent Nation (Germany) on her overseas supplies¹².

i. Arrival of Germans in Cameroon

The advent and occupation of the *Bamenda* Grassfields of Cameroon by the Germans started from the coastal and forest areas where in Germany in the course of materializing their policy, created and fueled chieftaincy succession conflicts as well as resistances and collaborations from Cameroonians indigenous ethnic groups and chiefdoms. The Germans arrived in what is today known as the Cameroonian coast in the 19th century.¹³ Upon arrival, they found out that other European countries notably the British and the French, had already established a noticeable commercial influence along the coast of Cameroon. Determined not to be left out of this rich trade in this area and following what V.J. Ngoh described as “the German coup”¹⁴, Germany successfully outwitted Britain and France by signing secret deals with traditional authorities of the coast and thus became the first European power to claim colonial control over the coastal area of Cameroon.¹⁵

Before the advent of colonialism to Africa and Cameroon in particular, the socio-political and administrative organization of Cameroonian traditional societies was centered on a well-organized chieftaincy institution with the chief at the helm of each sovereign traditional polity. To corroborate the assertion, Owona Joseph writes ; ‘*Au Cameroun, les sociétés précoloniales du centre, de l’est et du littoral s’apparenteraient aux sociétés anétatiques et les chefferies de l’ouest,*

¹²V.J. Ngoh., *History of Cameroon since 1800*, Pressbook Limbe, 1996, p.59.

¹³M.M. Ndobegang and T.W. Samah., “German Colonialism and the Cameroonian Chieftaincy Institution, 1884-1916, *Lagos Historical Review*, 2009, p.12.

¹⁴Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, p.60.

¹⁵H.R. Rudin., *The Germans in Cameroons 1884-1914: A case study in Modern Imperialism*, New York, Yali University Press, 1938, p.23.

du nord-ouest et du septentrion se rapprocheraient de la catégorie dites états distingue les gouvernements des type monarchique, des gouvernements anarcho-démocratique''.¹⁶

This describes the orderly nature and functioning of a multitude of autonomous traditional societies or what Peter Skalnik and Henri J.M. Claessen called the “Early State”¹⁷ was based fundamentally on the chieftaincy institution.

The Germans upon annexation collectively named these “micro-states” Kamerun on the 14th July 1884 thanks to the diplomatic tactics of the German consul general Nachtigal that culminated with the annexation of Kamerun. This diplomatic action was marked by the signing of the Germano-Douala treaty. The treaty preceded the formal Annexation of the territory Kamerun in which traditional rulers of the coastal area of Kamerun handed their sovereignty, right of legislation and administration to the Germans. A treaty which affected the chieftaincy institutions that even lay beyond the coast of Cameroon. Illustrating this moment, the Historian Engelbert Mveng described this loss of traditional sovereignty in the following terms;

*‘‘Nous soussigné, rois, et chefs du territoire nommé Cameroun, situé le long du fleuve Cameroun entre les fleuves Bimbia au nord et Kwakwa au sud, et jusqu’au 4•10’, degré de longitude nord... avons aujourd’hui, au cours d’une assemblée tenue en la factorerie allemande sur le rivage du roi Akwa, volontairement décidé que : Nous abandonnons totalement aujourd’hui nos droits concernant la souveraineté ,la législation et l’administration de notre territoire a MM Edouard Schmidt, agissant pour le compte de la firme C. Woermann et Johannes Voss, agissant pour la firme Jantzen et Thormahlen, tous deux à Hambourg et commerçant depuis des années dans ces fleuve.*¹⁸

When the Germans concluded this treaty with the *Douala* chiefs, they named the new territory, Kamerun which they presented at the Berlin Conference as a German protectorate. This later inspired the first act of Cameroonian nationalism, as well as the chieftaincy institution.¹⁹ The Germano-*Douala* treaty marked the effective German occupation and penetration which was going to adversely affect the traditional governance system institution existent before German arrival.

The Germans first had to encounter chiefs of the coastal and forest area notably *Douala* and *Beti* Chiefs before moving to the *Bamenda* Grassfields. The German attitude towards these coastal chiefs was examined to find out how the Germans alleviated or programmed chieftaincy governance within its colonial administration. It is therefore in this perspective a continual necessity to present German policy towards Chiefs in Cameroon. German penetration into the interior of Cameroon was harsh and rude as they forcefully advanced into the interior of the

¹⁶ J. Owona., *Les systèmes politiques précoloniaux au Cameroun*, Paris, Harmattan, 2015, pp.8-9.

¹⁷ P. Skalnik, and H.J.M. Claessen., *The Early State*, New York, Mouton Publishers, 1978, p.597.

¹⁸E. Mveng., *Histoire du Cameroun*, Yaoundé, CEPER, 1985, p.43.

¹⁹D. Abwa., *Cameroun, Histoire d’un Nationalisme 1884-1961*, Yaoundé, Editions CLE, 2010, p.55.

territory seizing land and crushing all opposition with military force.²⁰ As Albert-Pascal Temgoua writes “*war and victory was synonymous of destruction*”.²¹ The chieftaincy institution did not escape this destruction, especially as contest for the position of chieftaincy in various *kingdoms* emerged due to “European created chiefs” against customary and traditionally established chiefs.

The fast rate at which the Germans were engaged in the conquest of Cameroon did not even allow chiefs and their communities to prepare against war, even though chiefs and their communities managed to resist the Germans to protect their sovereignty. Daniel Abwa described the capacity of some Cameroonian chiefs to defend sovereignty as the first acts of Cameroons nationalism²² during which one of the major impact was the deposition and deportation of some traditional rulers from their villages and replacing them against traditionally established norms. By so doing, they created the ground for chieftaincy succession disputes.

Furthermore, the establishment of German colonial system of administration in Cameroon aggravated and gave rise to new ethnic rivalries which fueled chieftaincy succession disputes. Corroborating this view, Marcel Ngbwa Oyono holds that : “En même temps que l’organisation civile et militaire du pays se faisait, il y avait les relations entre l’administration coloniale et les chefs traditionnels. Sur la cote, les Allemands profitèrent de la situation conflictuelle régnant chez les *Douala*”.²³

In other terms, this simply suggests that the Germans were capable of even provoking chieftaincy conflicts and exploiting existing ones to better destabilize the traditional system in order to establish their rule in Cameroon. In some areas of the present Northern Regions of Cameroon, some chiefs whom the Germans noticed of being jealous of their sovereignty were simply dethroned and their authority given to persons who were ready to collaborate with the Germans.

Mveng confirms that, the German colonial army in order to help and support the lamibes crushed the *Falis*, *Niam-Niam*, the *Margi* and the *Galims* and placed their communities under these lamibes.²⁴ By so doing, the Germans were creating the avenue for Fontaincy succession conflicts

²⁰ M.M. Ndobegang, “Encounter and Heritage in the Colonial History of Cameroon: An Appraisal of the Bakweri Land Question, CA 1895-2002”, *African Journal of Social Science*, Vol.2, No.2, p.26.

²¹ A.P. Temgoua., “Impact de la conquête militaire allemande sur l’économie du Cameroun, 1884-1906’’, *Epasa Moto*, Vol.4, No. 1, March 2009, p.78.

²² Ibid, p .55.

²³ M.N. Oyono., *Colonisation et rivalités ethniques au Cameroun*, Yaoundé, Presse des Universités Protestantes d’Afrique centrale, 2012, p.90.

²⁴ Ibid, p.96.

because at one given point the conquered people stood up to reclaim their sovereignty and Fontaincy. That is why the Germans did not hesitate to create paramount chiefs chieftaincies where they did not exist prior to their coming.²⁵ To concretize this tactic, the Germans on 10th March 1910, following the recommendation of Major Hans Dominik, the German Government appointed Charles Atangana Ntsama as the paramount Chief of all the Ewondos'

Prior to his appointment, he was first of all the Chief of the Ewondo who manages and governed his polity.²⁶ Since Charles Atangana from the *Ewondo* ethnic group, accepted and collaborated with the Germans, he gained favour under the canopy of the Germans. He was made the Paramount chief on all other *Beti* who refused to acknowledge his superiority or paramountcy over them.²⁷ The impact was a series of fontaincy succession conflicts in the *Beti* land. In fact, German colonization of the coastal areas of Kamerun in 1884 paved the way for the occupation of the entire territory. This was made possible also by the movements of German explorers into the hinterlands.²⁸

ii. Germans imperialism in the *Bamenda* Grassfields

The Germans eventually arrived Cameroon Western Grassfields at the dawn of the 19th century when polities in the area were well organized with a certain degree of stability.²⁹ Before the invasion and occupation of the *Bamenda* Grassfields, the area was organized into *Fondoms* with sovereign leaders. The invasion and occupation of the *Bamenda* Grassfields did not only witness the destabilization of the harmony and cordial diplomatic ties that existed among *Fondoms*, but also fashioned succession conflicts. There is no gainsaying on the impact of German invasion and occupation of the *Bamenda* Grassfields which among other factors laid the basis and fueled chieftaincy succession clashes.

This section successively discusses, the advent of the Germans to Cameroon notably into the *Bamenda* Grassfields, German military, punitive and conquest expeditions and the loss of the

²⁵W.T.T. Samah., "Invention of Tradition: Chieftaincy, Adaptation and Change in the Forest Region in Cameroon", *La Chefferie "Traditionnelle" dans les sociétés de la grande zone forestière du Sud-Cameroun (1850-2010)*, in R. K. Kpwang (ed), Paris, Harmattan, 2011, p.75.

²⁶Samah., "Invention of Tradition, p.75.

²⁷ Ibid, p.92.

²⁸ P.M. Tem, and M.B. Gwanfogbe., "German Colonial Interests Lubricating Friendship and Cementing Hatred with Chiefs of the Wum Area, German Kamerun 1904-1916", *Africa Journal of Social Science*, vol 1, no 2, 1999, pp.15-60.

²⁹E.S.D. Fomin., "The German Colonialists and Lingering Ethnic Conflicts in Cameroon 1890-1990", *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume VIII, No II. *Quarter, II*, 2017, p.12.

constitutive elements of “*Fondomhood*”³⁰ of *Bamenda* Grassfields polities³¹. The essence is to establish through historical factors, how the operationalization of German colonial policy contributed to chieftaincy progression in modern administration in the *Bamenda* Grassfields. As such, the advent of the Germans in the *Bamenda* Grassfields through her expeditionary wars of conquests in the area and the destabilization of *Fondomhood* of its socio-political entities are examined.

The Germans reached the Grassfields in 1889 and found out that the area was a distinct region in all their exploration series. They made this judgment on the basis of the material culture, architecture and political forms they encountered.³² The area was not culturally homogeneous but was perceptibly different both from its Southern forest neighbors and from northern groups on the Adamawa Plateau.³³ The kind of human groupings that the Germans found included individual Fondoms ranging in size from 200 to 60,000 inhabitants often physically bounded by large-scale earthworks and fixed in dynastic time by lengthy chief-lists.³⁴ The Germans encountered chiefs, palaces, elaborate forms of retainerdom and secret male associations with political functions. Nonetheless, these communities varied considerably in the degree of centralization of political powers, which correlated inversely with population density so that the largest and most centralized polity indeed demonstrated the importance of the people manning such societies.

Noticing that traditional rulers had a stronghold on their people, the German decided to collaborate with the chiefs by recognizing their authority as a means to subdue the people. Their preference was on those chiefs who could adapt to their laws and could easily be manipulated in order to accomplish their exploitative ambition.³⁵ To be sure of their collaborators, the Germans adopted both hard and soft power technics.

Hard power consisted of dethroning and hanging chiefs they considered as “radicals or recalcitrant” simply because they were not willingly to cede their sovereignty and governing authority to the Germans. In some instances they adopted soft power diplomacy in which peaceful

³⁰*Fonhood*, it is the act of belonging, honouring, respecting and upholding to the *Fondom* and all that it incarnated. Meaning both her leadership status, her socio-political, socio-cultural and economic institutions

³¹Oyono., *Colonisation et rivalités ethniques*, p.55.

³²I. Fowler, and D. Zeitlyn., “Introduction: the Grassfields and the Tikar”, in *African crossroads: Intersection between History and Anthropology on Cameroon*, I. Fowler and D. Zeitlyn (Eds), Berghahn, Oxford, 1996, pp.3.

³³P.N. Nkwi., *Germans Presence in the Western Grassfields: 1891-1913: A German Colonial Account* in African studies Centre, Leiden (Collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education Computer Services and Scientific Research, Yaoundé, Cameroon), Neatherlands, 37, 1989, p.21.

³⁴Fage, *A History of West Africa*, pp.175-179.

³⁵A.N. Ngale., “Chieftaincy Dispute in Central Ejagham, Eyumojock Sub-Division of the Manyu Division: Case of Kembong 1972 to 1996. A Historical Study”, DIPES II in History, University of Yaoundé 1, 2001, p.67.

negotiations and friendship treaties were signed by appointing some chiefs who were purportedly enlightened, loyal and cooperative who were later called official, imposed or warrant chiefs.³⁶ This was the case with *Fon Chenafaw of Bamali* who because of his rejection to submit his Fondom and authority to the Germans was captured and hanged.³⁷ A man named *Mungaw* who did not belong to the royal family but seemingly loyal to the Germans was appointed to take over the throne and wives of his predecessor.³⁸ As a matter of fact, the German administration in the *Bamenda Grassfields* largely depended on the chieftaincy institution. *Bamenda Grassfields* chiefs dreaded the arrival of the Germans for their brutality. The Germans in some instances used such hard power diplomacy to impose their rule and by so doing sowed seeds of discord in chieftaincies.

From 1889 until 1916 when the Germans were defeated and ousted from the *Bamenda Grassfields*, effective control was only achieved through hard and soft power diplomacy. Historical facts have proven that the Germans made use of more of hard power diplomacy which involve among others; punitive expeditions, arbitrary dethronement and deportation of “recalcitrant chiefs” and in some cases some of them were simply killed. Reports of such efforts were usually published in the German Colonial Journal (*Deutsches Kolonialblatt. W.*) and on reports of their expeditions in Cameroon. These reports recounted the methods used to win over hostile chiefs and how “Pax Germanica” was established. After the declaration of Cameroon as a German protectorate, the rest of the country except the coastal regions remained undisturbed.³⁹

iii. The Berlin West African Conference of 1884-1885

After grasping the territory of Cameroons from the British noticing British lukewarm attitude and attempt to annex part of Cameroon Coast, within a time frame of barely 4 months after Otto Von Bismarck whimsically intrigued Jules Ferry the then Premier of France to join him organized the Berlin conference of 15th November, 1884 to 30th January 1885 in the capital city of Germany at his residence at Wilemstrasse Palace chaired by Bismack himself. A conference aimed at the peaceful sharing of Africa’s’ territory. They also wish to work in partnership with other European powers carrying activities in the continent Africa. They equally faced economic, political and socio-cultural rivalries among themselves. It was also an opportunity for Germany to

³⁶ J.A. Crowder., *Colonial West Africa, Collected essays*, London, Frank Cass & Co Ltd, 1978, p.213.

³⁷ E.M Chilver., “The Bamali (Bichop) Chieftaincy (Mezam Division, N.W. Province, Cameroon)”, *Grassfields Working Notes*, 1992, pp.303-314.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p.323.

³⁹ P. N. Nkwi, *The German Presence in the Western Grassfields 1891-1913: A German Colonial Account*, African Studies Centre, Leiden, In Collaboration With The Ministry of Higher Education, Computer Services and Scientific Research. Yaoundé, Cameroon, 1989, p.38.

effectively carve her spheres of influence and to consolidate her acquisition of the territory Cameroons.⁴⁰

The resolutions which were ratified in documents called “*The Berlin Act*” signed on the 26th February 1885 had among other resolutions the effective occupation and the Hinterland theory which stated that “any power in control of the coast had the right to occupy the hinterland for export and export trade”. Also, an African territory which is of interest to a European nation who also claimed ownership most notified other European powers. Effective occupation was done through the effective establishment of an administration and the hoisting of her flag over the territory occupied⁴¹.

Slavery practice still in the interior of Africa according to Article 6 of the Berlin Act stated that the European traders and missionaries should have access into the interior of Africa to suppress slavery practices that were still being done in the interior and security of other agents be guaranteed⁴². The outcome of the conference were significant as it consolidate and confirm German Annexation of the Cameroon territory by recognizing firstly the Germano-*Douala* treaty. This contributed in ending the Anglo-German rivalry thereby bringing peace and safety Cameroonians from human and material destructions by Europeans.

The hinterland theory one of its major acts paved the way for the effective occupation of Cameroon by the Germans as they established commercial plantations, expanded trading centers, missionary activities, constructed roads, railways and opened administrative units. Again through the theory, the Germans were obliged to penetrate the interior from the coast in order to suppress the slave trade and slavery as well as other inhuman practices done by the indigenes as well as reducing inter-tribal wars and promoted peace and stability among Cameroonians.⁴³ In line with her objective of civilizing Cameroon, it permitted her to open German schools which reduced illiteracy and ignorance, German hospitals reduced sleeping sickness, malaria and filarial thereby reducing the death rate of Cameroonians.⁴⁴

In a nutshell, German signed numerous and varied treaties were contracted between 1883 and 1907 with the chiefs of Cameroon who were the direct representatives of their people. This

⁴⁰J. Nche, “The Negative Impacts of Foreign Influence on the Traditional Authority in Central Grassfields of Cameroon”, M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé, 1982, p.45.

⁴¹Ibid, p.56.

⁴²Fage, *A History of West Africa*, pp.175-179

⁴³J.C. Anene, And G.N. Brown, (eds)., *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Handbook for Teachers and Students*. Ibadan: University Press, 1966, p.34.

⁴⁴Ibid, p.56.

was to effectively control, manage and implement her policies gearing to the attainment of her colonial objectives⁴⁵. Sale contracts treaties which generally involved the granting of territory over, sovereignty, legislations and the administrations of the said territory was exercised in exchange for a sum of money between the German firms' representatives and the coastal chiefs. A case in point was the contracted treaty signed on the 11th of July 1884 between Eduard *Woermann, Schmidt and Schultz*, representing the *Woermann* firm and King William of Bimbia (not a focus in this study). The explorers and heads of institutions were authorized to sign treaties with the native rulers, give them German flags and other symbols of authority which were indicators urging the traditional rulers to recognize and accept German rule. The treaties signed were equally indicators on the German administrative head to recognize the position of the local rulers in the traditional society.⁴⁶

Apart of sale contracts, the Germans also negotiated treaties with the Natives which were generally concluded by two equal parties reserving certain rights. Cases of negotiated treaties between the German traders, Cameroons kings and chiefs were the 29th October 1883, treaty negotiated signed between the Germans and the people of Yoko at Benito River as well as the *Germano-Douala* Treaty of Annexation of 12th July 1884 just to name a few which is not equally a major study of this thesis which focuses on the Bamenda Grassfields.

The last but not the least type of treaty signed by the Germans to effectively implement her authority in the Cameroons was peace treaties contracted at the end of forceful wars and confrontations with the *Bamenda* Grassfields' Fons who resisted the Germans in their Fondoms.⁴⁷ These treaties under the auspices of the German military campaigns were concluded at the end of wars between the victors and the vanquished and the terms of the treaties were dictated by the victor. Cases in points were the treaties signed in 1894 after the joint *Bafut/Mankon* resistance in 1891 against the combined *Bali*/German military conquest of the Northern Bamenda grasslands.

The *Nso* resistance in the Western⁴⁸ *Bamenda* Grassfields against the joined *Bamum*/German military forces conquered the *Nso* land in 1906 just to mention these few. Worth noting is the fact that the combined forces of *Bamum* and *Bali* with the Germans to fight the neighbors indicated

⁴⁵V.G. Fanso., *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, vol 2, *The Colonial and Post-colonial Periods*, Cameroon, Limbe, Macmillian publishers Ltd, 1989, p.60.

⁴⁶ Fanso., *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges* ,p. 64.

⁴⁷C. Geary., "Cameroon Grassfields Studies", *Paideuma*, 1979, p.23.

⁴⁸Y. Eballa., *Some Notes On Zintgraft's 'Punitive Expedition' against the Mankon People* (Excerpts), Translation and comments" in Y. Eballa and E. Aloangamo Aka (eds), 1984, p.12.

that the Germans treaties of friendship with the above collaborators were indispensable in human resources. This also boosted the moral of German forces for military supports in the process of German expansion and occupation of the area. Thanks to their unconditional and brotherhood fraternity, the Germans effectively attained their objectives of controlling the Grassfields' lands and their traditional leaders by 1894 through the application of their colonial policies⁴⁹.

vi. **German Partnership with *Bamenda* Grassfields Chiefs**

The Germans connived and collaborated with friendly chiefs to govern their populations and by extension her friends played a German card against their neighbors (*Fons* and Chiefs) as well as with those few in numbers to govern their populace like the small and weak states such as the *Ngambe* (*Nkambe*) and *Ndu* in the central Grassfields accepted German friendship against Fulbe domination of their area. But great, more significant larger and powerful states mentioned above, who were in position to resist realized the futility of confronting the Germans and instead chose to collaborate for security, economic and political reasons⁵⁰ as *Fon Galega* of *Bali* cooperated by playing his card against the neighboring *Fons* and chiefs which gave birth to the 1891 Blood Pact Treaty between Zintgraff and him.

This was the forceful method of colonial rule through the suppressions of native resistances which constituted the last stage of the evolution of colonial conquest for over ten years from 1893 and several expeditions under different military commanders of the *Bamenda* Grassfields of Cameroon. This stage involved the exploration, expansion and occupation of the hinterland. It took ten years from 1893 and several expeditions under different military officers to bring the extensive region of Cameroon and the *Bamenda* Grassfields in particular under German Authority. This was as a result of major resistance encountered from the local forces who however did not defeat the German military forces thanks to her technological advancement in warfare's and supports from some indigenous leaders and populations mentioned above which eventually induced several vanquished rulers to sign treaties of forceful acceptance, subordinations through recognizing and surrendering total sovereignty, legitimately and their administrations to Germans as well as recognizing her total rights in their *Fondoms* and chiefdoms.⁵¹

⁴⁹Eballa and Aka, *Focus on Nukwi Nu Ndefru III: Mankon Cultural Festival*, Yaounde, SOPECAM, 1984, p.34.

⁵⁰Fanso., *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p.70.

⁵¹C. Tardits., "Rapport de Synthèse, Colloque International du CNRS" in C. Tardit (ed.), *Contribution de la recherche ethnographique à l'histoire du Cameroun*, Paris, Edition du CNRS, 1981, p.23.

These Peace treaties were the last type of treaty signed between the Germans and the kings and chiefs of Cameroon often signed after military victory expressed at the end of the war of resistances faced in Cameroon during her conquest, expansion and the penetration of the hinterland. The terms of these treaties time and again were dictated by the victor. The contributions of the German soldiers⁵² on the battle fields during the indigenous wars of resistances lead to the defeat of Native populations and the eventual signing of defeat treaties.⁵³

II. Operationalization of German Governance System in the Grassfields

When Germany first acquired colonies in West Africa and Cameroon inclusive, her government and people possessed no previous experience of ruling Africa and the Bamenda Grassfields in particular. Initially, power was concentrated in the hands of the officials in each colony with little or no checks on their use. By and large these officials took little accounts of African institutions, and customs and established a highly authoritarian form of administration. This was a system of government opened to abuse by high-handed or unscrupulous administrators.

The activities of German officials arouse criticisms in 1907 from German parliament and press. To them, German ways of handling matters in the Cameroons' coast and the interior of Cameroon had reached a pitch that German organization for handling colonial affairs was changed and considerably a program for colonial administration was structured.⁵⁴ Thus, attention was paid to the ways in which African societies were organized and by which they had govern themselves. The Germans in due course to ameliorate colonial governance also began to take note of the methods of colonial administration adopted by other European powers, such as Britain who developed an evolutionary pattern of governance (The Indirect Rule).

The evolution of German colonial administration in Cameroon was the gradual process of effectively controlled and managed the territory Cameroon to the effective implantations of administrative structures and machinery of governance of the local indigenes. This ran in three stages, from the time of Governor Von Soden till the end of German rule in Cameroon⁵⁵. The first stage considered as the early years were characterized by the exploitation, expansion, occupation

⁵²*Shutztruppe* was a name for the German colonial army that was formed in 1891 and championed the German military campaigns in the Cameroons until 1916.

⁵³Ibid, p.32.

⁵⁴E.M. Chilver & P. M. Kaberry., *Traditional Bamenda. The Pre-colonial History and Ethnography of the Bamenda Grassfields*, Vol, 1963, p.401.

⁵⁵H.R. Rudins., *Germans in Cameroon, 1884-1914, A Case Study in Modern Imperialism*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968, p.10

by explorers and heads of expeditions. They were authorized to sign treaties with Native rulers⁵⁶. The German gave our *Fons* and chiefs flags, canes and other symbols of German authority. This to an extent urged the traditional rulers to recognize and accept German rule. It was equally indicative that, the German authority recognized the position of local rulers in the indigenous societies and the traditional rulers recognized were equally instructed not to interfere in German trade in their districts⁵⁷.

They were also required to supply workers for the plantation, other projects and any disputes occurrence if any were to be solved by the German officials. After having infiltrated and won the friendship of the local authorities and their populace, German rule and administration gained effective implementations. Subsequently, there was the influx of German officials and population into the Coast of Cameroon, which led to white settlement under the leadership of the Resident commissioner.⁵⁸ The resident commissioner therefore administered the region in order to maintain peace indirectly through the traditional authorities who were to be treated by respect, prevent anyone opposed to the German from coming to power, give as much attention as possible to the economic life of the region, refrain from the use of military force without the government approval⁵⁹.

The German colonial authorities began their administration in *Douala* by attempting to unite the various groups in *Douala* in order to reduce the number of chiefs in the area. On July 17th 1885, Von Soden presided over a meeting in *Douala* in which fourteen *Douala* Fons participated. The aim was equally to reduce the number of chiefs with whom he had to deal with but the plan failed as it never materializes due to the fact that neither the chiefs nor the German government supported the project⁶⁰.

The second stage in her administrative evolution was aimed at protecting the whites' settlement, controlled trade and to suppress rebellions from the natives. A German principle to better manage and control the territory thereby dividing the Cameroons and the Grassfields into residences or stations with captain features which were directed from military barracks⁶¹. From the Resident in Buea and the seat of Buea military post, he was able to command the military

⁵⁶Ibid, pp.15-20.

⁵⁷Nche., "The Negative Impacts", p.45.

⁵⁸Fanso., *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p.36.

⁵⁹J.C. Anene, and G.N. Brown, (eds), *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Handbook for Teachers and Students*. Ibadan : University Press, 1966, p.34.

⁶⁰Geary., "Cameroon Grassfields", p.23.

⁶¹J. M. Zang-Atangana., *Les Forces Politiques au Cameroun Réunifié*, Tome 1, les partis politiques avant la réunification, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1989, p.42.

station in *Bali* (*Bamenda Grassfields*) together with other military stations run by heads of stations. These heads exercised military, administrative and judicial functions.

The Residents together with their military posts received directives from the German government at home to execute their Functions. They had the duties and obligations to effectively manage traditional rulers by directing them towards the effective production of cash crops to serve the German economy. The increase in prices on German finished products encouraged forced labor, social and humanitarian development as affirmed by J-M. Zang-Atangana;

Conseiller et éclairer les chefs et sultans, veiller à l'application des mesures agricoles prescrits, améliorations des cultures anciennes et introduction des nouvelles, développer la production des denrées exportables et augmenter le pouvoir d'achat des indigènes. Diminuer autant que possible le nombre d'hommes employés à dos d'hommes par l'emploi des bœufs et chameaux. Tendre d'une façon générale, à substituer le travail libre au régime des captifs. Généraliser l'emploi de la monnaie allemande et insister avec persévérance pour que même sur les petits marchés et aux endroits les plus éloignés, il n'y ait pas d'autres moyens d'échange. Enfin, de préoccuper de l'hygiène publique, de la mise en pratique des mesures sanitaires utiles, et en ce qui concerne le bétail, combattre les « épizooties »⁶²

The above was German colonial doctrine in which all aspects of her objectivity to acquire colonies in Africa and the Cameroons Grassfields was not neglected. The mercantile feature to humanitarian domain was a characteristic identified by the German populace as a doctrine which needed to be applicable however, faced challenges in its effective realization. The military heads had legal jurisdictions in cases involving Cameroons as well as those involving blacks and whites. Worth noting is the fact that, if the white was unsatisfied with the judgment of a conflict, he could make an appeal to the District Commissioner based in Victoria⁶³. Death penalties imposed on the Natives required the approval of the Governor. The heads of military stations had the functions of;

To supply the administration with information concerning the geography and the climate of the area, local productions, road conditions, missionary, school works, health and commerce. He also advised the administration on the recruitment of labor for the government and plantation work in the area under his control. The heads of stations were equally required to put an end to the smuggling of local products out of and foreign goods into the territory. They were to impose and collect taxes on non-German goods and on native products exported neighboring foreign territories⁶⁴.

Civilian administrators known as Station Masters were appointed to make sure peace reigned in the area, which was followed by the police taking over from the military officers. The German authority observed and gradually took hold of the Cameroons fatherland with the help of the

⁶² Zang-Atangana., *Les Forces Politiques au Cameroun Réunifié*, p.44.

⁶³Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p.60.

⁶⁴Eballa, *Some Notes on Zintgrafft's 'Punitive Expeditions*, p.12.

military. Consequently, they progressively integrated the civilians and the police force to ensure the respect of law and order by putting in place administrative Districts.

This was the last stage of German administrative evolutionary process put in place for effective control of Kamerun. There was the creation of administrative Districts headed by District Commissioners. The District Commissioner had as duty to advise heads of stations and local rulers in areas where the authority of such rulers was strong and extensive. He was also to protect the enslaved group or people in his district and to use them as a source of labor supply for the government and plantation works. Amongst other administrative Districts in Cameroon was the Bamenda Administrative District covering the geographical area of the Bamenda Grassfields our area of study which had at its heads a Civilian Administrator. He was handed a telegraph, telephone and postal services were introduced and a network of roads serving the out stations were developed.

Summarily, Germans began the organization of Colonial Administrations in twofold; the first lasted just for 6 years from 1884-1890 and was a period of commercial colonization. Reason being that Bismack refused to copy from the French approach of annexing her territories before appointing, installing garrisons and the employability of civil servants. Consequently, commercial activities were relegated at the tail of its colonial exploitations. To Bismack, commerce was the first step and was followed by the establishment of military installations a formula for effective colonization used by chartered company during the early phases of Imperialisms. Big companies negotiated trade treaties with Africans as well as Cameroonians and were responsible in ensuring assistance and the protections of the indigenes a method which was a fiasco.

The outcome was the adaptation of the new method; that of the valorization of colonies by granting its existences to giants' concessionaries societies such as South Kamerun or North Kamerun. These companies aimed at the development and encouragement of plantations enterprises which equally failed⁶⁵ and Bismack was forced to copy from the French systems of colonial administration mentioned above in this work which guided the administration of the Cameroons and the Grassfields in particular till 1916⁶⁶. The evolutionary administrative process led to the eventual establishment of effective structural administrative organization under the leadership of a Governor⁶⁷.

⁶⁵Eballa and Aka, *Focus on Nukwi Nu Ndefru III*, p.34.

⁶⁶Zang - Atangana; *Les Forces Politiques*, p.45.

⁶⁷Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p.70.

i. German Administrative Architecture in the *Bamenda* Grassfields

The Germans arrival in the Bamenda Grassfields and immediately began strategized and developed an effective mechanism which facilitated the effective administration and management of the people and their natural resources. Thus, they decided to put in place an administrative structure which stemmed from the central administration to the local authorities answerable to the German oversea territorial representative of the Governor.

The Governor

Bismack approved the annexations of Cameroon with the hope that the administrative machinery will be run and financed by the German business companies of Carl Woermann and the Jantzen and Thormahlen firms. These representatives refused to run the administration and to contribute towards the course of running it. The rejection led to the appointment of Max Buchner an Imperial commissioner to take over from Nachtigal as the representative of German Government in Cameroon. He tried to establish a form of government in the territory for a year but failed and the following year a colonial administration with a governor at its head was formed leading to the introduction and the implementation of the German colonial constitution of 1886-1888 to direct and guide the German administration in Cameroon.⁶⁸

The most senior, powerful and the supreme authority was the governor who received his authority from the Kaiser and German chancellor. He ruled by issuing decrees which touched upon every phase of colonial activities. He was authorized to decree general administration, taxes and tariffs, controlled state properties despite the fact that he equally delegated powers to local administration due to poor communication and the vast nature of the territory⁶⁹.

German colonial administration advised German administrators in Cameroon in general to have different approaches of governance and to limit their interference in administration of the Northern District by acting as protectorates and advisers. As such, in 1885 Julius von Soden was the first German colonial governor of the German protectorate and had the authority to establish a government and appointed administrative officials on the territory of the *Douala* estuary confined to him which was a small strip of land on both sides of the river Wouri in the *Douala* Township. It did not pass without him realizing his authority could not be felt in the interior without him using the warship diplomacy to suppress sporadic resistances.

⁶⁸Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p.81.

⁶⁹ V.J. Ngoh., *Cameroon History 1884-1985, A Hundred Years of History*, Buea, Navy-Group Publication, 1988, p.56.

Consequently, he decided to appoint law officials, a ‘chancellor’ to handle legal matters, and an advisory council of three members to give him advice in all administrative matters. Powers were equally delegated to heads of exploratory and military expeditions, heads of administrative stations and districts, administrative commissioners and residents.⁷⁰ He also set up a court composed of three persons including himself as president to replace the abolished British court of Equity and all official appointed were responsible to him. He extended German administration from the coast to the immediate surroundings of the interior in a gradual process over his six years of reign.

The courts were under the governor who was also the highest judge in the territory. Although, the imperial chancellor also examined the appeals of criminal against sentences of the governor. He was also the head of the military force as in 1895-1906; Jesko Von Puttkamer conquered the inland parts by the territory step of step using a military force known as “Protective Force” made up of African mercenaries recruited particularly from the Grassfields of Cameroons.⁷¹

This notwithstanding the Governor encouraged local administration in which traditional authorities were used alongside the Civil Administrators and military personnel to administer the territory. By extension, they were able to ensure the smooth functioning of German colonial rule for the interest of the Germans. The governor was equally the manager of both exports and imports trade of the territory. They opened large parts of the interior of Cameroon to German trade and administration specially to protect the interest of German traders and firms of C. Woermann and Jentzen & Thormahlen who played a major role for German request to annex Cameroon. Governor Von Puttkamer in realizing his country’s interest of economic exploitation became instrumental in building a large scale of plantations agriculture. Consequently, in 1898 and 1899, he created two private trading corporations, *Gesellschaft Sudkamerun* and *Gesellschaft Nordwest - Kamerun* which succeeded in monopolizing German trade in rubber and ivory and also control the recruitment of forced labor in the plantations.⁷²

Socio-culturally, the governor was responsible in making sure inhabitants of the territory especially the whites rehabilitated. Indigenous land was seized from the *Douala* chiefs and their population driven for the settlement of Europeans along the coast and other parts of the territory Schools and hospitals together with administrative buildings such as the *schloss* in *Buea* were

⁷⁰ Tardit., “Rapport de Synthèse”, p.23.

⁷¹ Tardit., “Rapport de Synthèse”, p.40.

⁷² Temgoua., “Impact de la Présence Allemande ”, p.51.

under the direct supervision of the governors. German reigned in Kamerun was under the leadership of the six Governors on the table below.

Table 2: German Governors in Kamerun (1885-1916)

N°	GOVERNORS	PERIODS
01	Julius Von Soden	1885-1891
02	Eugen Von Zimmerer	1891-1895
03	Jesco Von Puttkmer	1895-1907
04	Theodore Seitz	1907-1910
05	Otto Glein	1910-1912
06	Karl Ebermaier	1912-1916

Source: Ngoh., *Cameroon History 1884-1985, A Hundred Years of History*, pp. 34-40.

However, the governor could not single handedly conceived and executed the above-mentioned projects without the brainstorming of proposals and ideas from his immediate body who were not other than the councilors. Coupled with the existence of inadequate staff necessitated the collaborative proposals of all. Thus, by 1914 the number of Administrative Officials under the German governorship in Cameroon a mere handful included chancellors, secretaries and excluding the office of military were about 240 with age variations from 25 to 30 with relatively low administrative experiences and training. It was only in 1908 that the Hamburg Institute was created with the aim of training people for colonial services.⁷³

The advisory council

Colonial administration was organized in the form of an advisory council with the first two formed by the governor in 1885 and 1903. He was responsible in selecting its members from the trading firms in the colonies. It was only in 1903 that a decree in Germany officially created the Advisory councils in the German colonies to be composed of both official and non-official members who were traders, planters, missionaries.⁷⁴ The members were equally to be named by the governors among German settlers near the administrative centers. This council effectively officiate its functions on 14th November 1904. It handled issues on budget laid by the governor as

⁷³ NAB, File No. 6qfb (1).2, "An Intelligent Report on the Associated Village Groups Occupying the *Bafut* Native Authority Area of *Bamenda* Division of Cameroon Province", R.J. Hook, 1957, p.25.

⁷⁴ Chilver and Kaberry, *Traditional Bamenda*, p.41.

well as decreed to be issued by him. He was not also bound by the advice of the council even if it was given unanimously on administration, transportation, communication and native commercial competition with “whites”.

The *Koloniarat* or Colonial Council issued a decree replacing the advisory council with a new council (*Schiedsgericht*).⁷⁵ It was regarded as a fore-runner of the mixed Courts; note that, no Cameroonian was represented in this court as it constituted three traders, two planters, one catholic, protestant missionary and some administrative officials without the native being represented. Under the over lordship of the governor making it an all -white council despite the fact that it seat was in *Buea*.

This in fact in theory, it was only an advisory body; it became more and more a legislative body which met several times in year with each session lasting for three to four days touching on all the domain of colonial activities. Both the advisory and the new advisory councils created in 1903 and 1904 respectively in order to facilitate German colonial administration of the political, economic and socio-cultural development of their Districts. This was against a background of challenges⁷⁶. The difficulties faced by the colonial administrators to send enough officials for administrative work forced the colonial administrators to rely on traditional authority of their territories for certain services. As a result, Cameroonians were recruited and used as interpreters and increasingly in minor administrative positions⁷⁷.

The District Commissioner

The *Bezirksantmann*⁷⁸ controlled the hinterland of German Kamerun which was the interior of the territory highly conquered by the military that later put in place military stations under their administration. By 1894 the military stations were handed to civilians’ administrators who became district administrative officers or Commissioners under the watchful eyes of the military as there was relative calmness from rebellious population of the 26 Districts by 1914 who were assisted by

⁷⁵P.N. Nkwi and J.P. Warnier, *Elements for a History of the Western Grassfields*, Yaounde, SOPECAM, 1982,p.90

⁷⁶E. M. Chilver., "Paramoutcy and Protection in the Cameroons: the Bali and the Germans, 1889-1913", in P. Gifford & W. R. Louis, eds, *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule*, New Haven Yale University Press, 1969,pp. 479-511.

⁷⁷Zang-Atangana, *Les Forces Politiques au Cameroun Réunifié*, p.46.

⁷⁸The *Bezirksantmann* was a German name for District Commissioners in German Kamerun.

local rulers. The District commissioners were responsible to the governors in the Division and implemented government policies there.

ii. German Governance institutions

The German governance institutions were bodies responsible for the effective implementation and enforcement of German laws and rules. These organizations were equally an arm of the government that has as duty to regulate the social order and the keeping of peace in the area as well as check the management of state resources.

The judicial system

After the German Annexation of Cameroon, there was the appointment of a governor who had to manage judicial activities of the occupied territory by putting in place specific organs of German legal systems to replace that of the British. The earliest and famous courts of justice; the *Douala* court of equity and the Victoria court of justice ran by the English traders and missionaries respectively were abolished and both German law, local customs and practices replaced the mentioned institutions as consideration in settling Europeans and African disputes⁷⁹. Historians identified and recognized the putting in place and the implementation of the German judicial system in Cameroon divided into two distinct spheres; Europeans and Africans or blacks and whites for the fear that whites would lose respect among the blacks, fines were the commonest punishment imposed on Europeans and any jail sentences were served in Germany rather than in the colony⁸⁰.

The system had four courts which were the District court of *Douala*, *Kribi* and *Lomie* and the Supreme Court of *Buea*. Only these courts had jurisdiction over Europeans, civil law applicable to Europeans was the civil code of Germany and German criminal code was adapted to Cameroon despite the fact that Africans and European had separate Courts. The *Bezirksgericht* was the Court for Europeans and was also the Court of First instance presided over by professional judges who were assisted by two or four assistants. The court of Second instance was equally put in place for Europeans and comprised of a high judge and four lay assistants who equally had the final judgment.

After 1890, during the administration of the German governor Zimmermerer, the Colonial authority used the *Matctchberschiedsgericht*, a judicial institution to inter the veins of local

⁷⁹ Nkwi and Warnier, *Elements for a History of the Western Grassfields*, p.71.

⁸⁰ Fanso., *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, pp.32-34.

political affairs which equally manipulated the traditional rulers⁸¹. It is important to note that during the early years Blacks were adjudicated by German officials who were assisted by interpreters so that local languages could be used and local customs considered. Chiefs therefore, played an important role as they were incorporated and authorized to render justice according to customary laws under the background of an authorized notes issued on March 20, 1890 from Zimmerer to king Bell giving him right to settle quarrels amongst his subjects⁸².

Worth noting is the fact that the Court of First instance was established for Africans in Douala in 1892 and kept in the hands of traditional rulers. The chiefs were to be adjudicated according to native laws and customs in civil cases where the objects of contention were valued at not more than 100marks and in criminal cases where the penalty for the crime was not more than 300marks or six months imprisonment. Appeals from the Court of First instance could be made to the second tribunal composed of chiefs appointed by the governor or a judge appointed by him⁸³. Appeals from the Second Tribunal as well as cases like murder and manslaughter which were beyond the powers of the two courts were heard by the governor or judge appointed by him. Penalties inflicted on convicted Africans included whipping, jail sentences and death penalties with the consent of the governors⁸⁴.

The Police

Colonial police also known as the *polizeieigewour* or *polizeitruppe* maintained law, order and peace. The police force was composed of Cameroonians, Dahomeans, Hausas, Sudanese and Togolese and in 1895 the regular colonial troop *Schutztruppe* was created. They gave assistance to the chiefs in order for them to effectively rule their areas for the interest of the Germans.⁸⁵

Section Two: Materialization of German Governance Policy in the Bamenda Grassfields

The implication of the indigenous population in the development of their territories was manifested in the administrative organization of German-Kamerun and its economic and socio-cultural policy. It should however be noted, once more that traditional rulers were the pillars of German administration. From the beginning of their colonial mission in Cameroon, the Germans recognized the need to use the local traditional institutions as agencies on which to anchor their

⁸¹Ibid, p.35.

⁸²Ngoh, *Cameroon History*, p.54.

⁸³J. Bridgeman and D. E. Clark., *German Africa*; Hoover Institution, Stanford, 1965, p.34.

⁸⁴E. Lewis., *The Germans in Africa*, Cassell, New York, 1915, p.54.

⁸⁵E.M. Chilver., *Zintgraffs Exploration in Bamenda, Adamawa and the Benue lands 1889-1893*, Buea, Government Press, 1966, p.40.

rule. As a matter of fact, even before effective colonial occupation took place, representatives of German commercial houses and other trading concerns that were present in the territory sought the collaboration of traditional rulers for the purpose of striking trade deals and, later, obtaining labor for plantations that were opened at the coast.

Setting up an administrative apparatus that relied heavily on European administrators would have been enormously expensive as a result the Germans decided to use Traditional rulers as part of their administrative machinery. They wrested the sovereignty of these ethnic communities from their sovereign Traditional rulers through bogus treaties of protection and friendship, mentioned earlier. Thereafter, the Germans merged these different ethnicities into an entity called Kamerun over which the colonial masters exercised superior sovereignty⁸⁶. Once a chief was recognized (for those who were accepted to be recognized) by the colonial authorities, they were given official papers, booklets or *Hauptlingsbuch*, a cane, hats, flags and uniforms.

The *Hauptlingsbuch* contained various information for the Germans, which included the name of the chief and the distance of his village from the nearest administrative station. They classified chiefs in a hierarchal manner as *Hauptlingen* (ordinary) and *Oberhauptlingen* (paramount). This classification greatly influenced the administrative organization in the colony as not all chiefs had the same powers and functions. However, a day for all ordinary chiefs or *Hauptlingstagen* was declared at the level of each district.

In the coastal area, for example, the day for the ordinary chiefs was on each Wednesday on the Joss Plateau.⁸⁷ These chiefs constituted the human resource for local governance like the mayors today. They were charged with the implementation of the economic and socio-political policies of the Germans in the colony. Even though this policy was geared purposely towards the exploitation of the territory for benefits of the Germans, it initiated nevertheless the chiefs into modern administration under the strict supervision of colonial administration. In order to facilitate and ensure effective implementation of the German colonial policy, Chiefs became agents of the administration and were obliged to facilitate the socio-economic exploitation of their areas in favor of the colonial enterprise.

The Germans in this perspective realized that, the survival of a nation depended on the total exploitation of the man power available and the material resources therein. The Germans seemed

⁸⁶P.N. Nkwi., *Traditional Diplomacy: a Study of Inter-Chiefdom Relations in the Western Grassfields, North West Province of Cameroon*, Yaoundé, University of Yaoundé, 1986, p.62.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

to have exploited this theory so well that the establishment of the German administration opened up the area to human and economic exploitation that came to dominate the socio-economic arena. This was because the German Parliament saw it much cheaper in using African Fons in the administration of their colonial empire for it would have been too expensive using Europeans. Since it was not ready to incur much expense in the administration of the territory, it was therefore natural that chiefs be part of the administration.⁸⁸

Although the Chiefs remained only subordinate agents and partners in the new dispensations, they nevertheless remained participants in governance of their peoples as they were the immediate custodians and incarnate the communities' indigenous leaders and unity. Both from the coast to the Grassfields hinterlands of the Kamerun as chief were still needed by Dr. Zintgraff who was an explorer and German commissioner in the process of effective German occupation of the National territory particularly in the Hinterland of the Bamenda Grassfields⁸⁹ This cooperation of both the traditional rulers together with their seats of power and their authority into the German colonial administration was an additional facilitator for German colonial government to effectively attain her objectives of socio-economic, political and cultural domination of the Bamenda Grassfields' areas⁹⁰. Thus, Grassfields aFons and chiefs became highly instrumental in combining both traditional mechanisms and German tools of administration in serving the populations at the greater benefits of German colonial Government.

I. Socio-Economic Role of Chiefs In German Economy

The economy of Cameroon under the German colonial administration was controlled by German commercial firm of Hamburg which wanted to establish a commercial colony (*Handelskolonie*), Thus, Kameruns and her economic policy was determined by German colonial administration and the German market. This was because the German Government was reluctant to spend large sum of moneys on colonial enterprises. With the foundation of the colonial Economic committee in 1898 a child of the committee of important products from German colonies decided to collect and experiment plants over the world in the botanical garden with increased interest. The Germans decided to establish plantation agriculture as they realized that, certain crops like cocoa, rubber and bananas could be grown in Kamerun. At the start of colonial

⁸⁸M.D.W Jefferey., "Some Notes on the Customs of the Grassfields Bali of Northwest Cameroons" In *Afrika und Uebersee*, May, 1962, p.59

⁸⁹ A.W.Ndifor., "Colonial Impacts on Indigenous Political Institutions: A case study of Nweh Politics", DIPES II Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde, 1981, p.32.

⁹⁰M.A. Sieno., "The History of Cameroon for the G.C.E Examinations, Kumbo", 1980, p.302.

economic activities, they faced the challenges of willful workers supplied locally and which was limited at the coast⁹¹. The need for strong men from the Grassfields, became a necessity for the roles of indigenous rulers in the acquisition of man labor was imperative.

i. Fons and the recruitment of workers in German plantations

Prior to this innovation to the German colonization of Kamerun, rubber, palm oil and palm kernels, were the main crops cultivated by the natives. As far as labor was concerned, it was necessary for the operation of plantations which the Germans had established in the Coastal regions. According to the Germans, “*Man power was the only exploitable commodity*” in the Grassfields. As early as 1896, the West *Afrikanische Panzungsgesellschaft* Victoria (WAPV) had arranged contract with Galega I in which he supplied labor to the company. In 1900, another company, the *Gesellschaft Nord West* (GNK) contracted a similar arrangement with Galega I a process that was continued and practiced by successive Bali Fons. In this process, *Fonyonga* co-opted thousands of young men from *Bali* Empire and equally obtained laborers through volunteers and punitive expeditions in the Hinterland of the Grassfields. *Fonyonga* carried out this task so proficiently that by 1912, only a little over 4000 men could be counted in his kingdom.⁹²

Fons as important participants in the colonial administration, recruited laborers for German plantations as stated in German economy policies. They were the main actors and played the role of recruiting plantation laborers. Workers for the various plantations were usually recruited in the locality where the plantations were found as well as in the Grassfields with the example of Fon Galega of Bali providing workers for the plantations in Victoria and for this service he received a yearly gift of 300 marks⁹³. He also demanded capitation from the workers he sent down south as a result the plantation workers were exploited twice; firstly they received meager monthly salary of about eight marks and secondly Fon Galega exploited them again on the return to Bali since they had to give him some of their hard-earnings.⁹⁴. This exploitative attitude of the chiefs were equally seen as some plantation workers paid two marks to the chiefs for each worker recruited by them.

⁹¹S.N.T. Kaze., “The Dethronement of Traditional chiefs in the Bamenda Grassfields; A Historical study of the Kedjom Keku Chieftaincy Crisis 1982-2006”, MA Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde 1, 2012, p,61.

⁹²L. N. Tam., “Relations between the Bali and the Non-Bali Chiefdoms in Bali Nyonga from Pre-colonial Times to Colonial Times”, M A in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2000, p34..

⁹³Ibid, p.69.

⁹⁴NAB, File: Ba/3. P.47 ,“Reports on Indigenous Tax Collection From the *Bali* Native Area”, 1916,p.34.

Failing that, the colonial master resorted to forced labor especially as chief were often reminded of their obligations in serving the regime. *Bali* took up their responsibilities seriously and exploited the subject chiefdoms to the fullest. The head tax for example, was arbitrary distributed to the disadvantage of vassal states whose chiefs did not share in the collection. The chief of *Bali* entrusted the responsibility of the administration of the vassal states such as the *Widikum* to “*Tadmanji*” (father of the road) and they became military governors of conquered villages installed by the *Fon* of *Bali*. They later played the role of intermediary between the villages and the *Fon* of *Bali* as they kept him informed of what was going on in the vassal territories. *Tadmanji* had the power to punish and exact tributes as they were very oppressive.

They also controlled the food collections from the vassal states and in due course, enriched themselves by confiscating from the vassal states and eventually even become richer than *Fonyonga II* himself. Last but not the least carriers and laborers demands were also arbitrarily handed by the vassal governors⁹⁵. Governor von Puttkamer, the German then gave a sound warning by passing a decree of non- escape of labor recruitment and that if the chiefs don’t played their role as active actors in the recruitment of laborers for the plantations, an entire village could be burnt into arches together with its leader for insubordination especially when recruiting officers call round.⁹⁶

ii. Fons and taxation in German administration

The *Fon* played the role of tax collectors in order to facilitate the management of their territorial affairs of the colonial masters. This finance had as sources from taxes, licenses, sales and leases of Crown land and from imperial grants in aid. Notwithstanding the main source of taxes coming from the custom and native poll tax. The native poll tax was fixed at 10 marks for each adult able-bodied male which was often paid in cash but could also be paid in kind by working for a given numbers of days. Also, a native who married more than one wife was levied an additional tax. The chiefs or village heads were responsible for the collection of the poll tax and were entitled to retain ten percent of the amount for the services.⁹⁷

The conception of land as a source of indirect profit of the control over land as a means of increasing one’s material wealth by making others pay for use of it is necessarily absent in a non-

⁹⁵P.M. Kaberry and E.M. Chilver., “An outline of the Traditional Political System of Bali-Nyonga, Southern Cameroons”, 1961, p.379.

⁹⁶O.H. Fieldstad., “Taxation, coercion and donors: Local government tax enforcement in Tanzania”, *Journal of Modern African Studies* 39(2): 289-306, 2001, p. 381.

⁹⁷Ngoh., *Cameroon History*, p.45.

commercial society. In such societies where people meet nearly all their needs by directly exploiting the natural resources of their own environment, the right to land is a condition of existence, and the land of a group whether a whole people or a Subdivision of it. Commonly conceived as a patrimony to be jealously preserved, and is often the focus of religious beliefs and practices.⁹⁸ As compensations, they were paid small percentages of the Government taxes they collected.

II. Chiefs and German Local Administration

Germans colonial administration in the *Bamenda* Grassfields carried out the policy of protecting the paramountcy of the Bali chief at the expense of the other chiefdoms from both the *Widikum* and *Ngemba* tribes. These peaceful transition was as a result of the sacred values of the traditional institution such as the chief who incarnate the head of close communities, village setting, the tribe or a nation and who possessed both the temporal and spiritual powers within the concept power in the African context, he is divine as he represents the ancestors the path to a glorious family, the tribe or the nation⁹⁹. The explorers and head of institutions were authorized to sign treaties with the native rulers which was effectively implemented by Dr. *Zintgraff* the German explorer signing treaties of friendship and protection with Fon Galega I of the Bali Fondom in July 1891 “The Blood Pact” as mentioned above together with other traditional rulers, were given German flags and other symbols of authority which were indicators urging the traditional rulers to recognize and accept German rule¹⁰⁰.

The treaties signed were equally indicators on the German administrative head to recognize the position of the local rulers in the traditional society. *Fon Galega* of Bali and other Fons were recognized and accepted officially by the Germans by giving them the official papers, a booklet (*Hauptlingsbuch*), a cane, hats, flag and uniform. The booklet contained information for German administrators such as the name of the Fon, and the distance of his village from the nearest administrative station. In order to work closely with the chiefs a “day for chiefs” was declared at the level of each district. The *Douala* day for chiefs was on every Wednesday in Joss plateau. On this, chiefs were reminded by German administrators of their duties to the regime while the chiefs on their part presented a report on the activities and happenings of their respective areas of

⁹⁸L.P. Mair., “Native Land Tenure in East Africa”, *Africa*, vol. IV. N^o.1, 1931, p.314.

⁹⁹V.K. Ngwoh., “The Relevance of Indigenous, core cultural values to Decentralisation in Cameroon: The case of Traditional Chieftaincy”, in *African Journal of Social Sciences*, vol 2, No 3, 2011, p.142.

¹⁰⁰T. Eyongetah and T. Brain., *A History of Cameroon*, Longmans, 1974, p.192.

jurisdiction¹⁰¹. The constitutive elements of friendship and protection treaties signed were in the domains of political rights, social as well as economic rights of the people. Fon transferred their chiefs' sovereignty exercised over their land, the right over life, limb and the final decisions as to war and peace. Fons and chiefs undertook orders given by the Commissioner in the interest of their population (Bali) and secure the acceptance. Likewise, to carry out penalties inflicted by Dr. *Zingraff* himself or to comply loyally with the execution by other means and finally to hold his forces in unconditional readiness for any war.

The Commissioner may consider necessary and not to undertake war for his own advantages without Dr. *Zintgraff* concurrence¹⁰². As traditional rulers, so recognized were instructed not to interfere in German trade in their district, supply workers for plantations and other projects. The entire local administration was in the hands of Fons who equally ran traditional courts, collected the administration taxes when they were introduced and advised on the recruitment of labor. As such from 1891-1908, the Bali chief was considered by the Germans the main stay of the German government in the grass land areas. In *Bali Nyonga*, the German Administrative Centre was created which served as the capital of the *Bamenda* Grasslands and it was necessary for the Germans to support the Bali Fon and made Bali her springboard for the conquest and control of the interior of the Grassfields as well as for the effective exploitation of both their natural and human resources¹⁰³.

Consequently, with the alliance systems between Dr. *Zintgraff* and the *Fon* of *Bali*, their combined forces were used for the launching of punitive military conquests and subduing the chiefdoms of the *Pinyin*, 17 neighboring *Menemo*, *Moghamo* and *Ngemba* speaking chiefdoms were brought under the leaderships of the *Fon* of Bali¹⁰⁴. The Bali jurisdictions served as the central government of German colonial administrations from where the German conquered chiefdoms which were vassal states and answerable to the combined German and Bali authority in the Grassfields.

i. The Germano-Bali Nyonga Collaboration for Effective Governance

¹⁰¹T.J. Tazifor and J.N. Tabi., *Cameroon History in the 19th and 20th centuries*, South West region Cameroon, Book Centre Buea, 2009, p. 69.

¹⁰²V. B. Amaze., *Traditional Rulers (chiefs) and Politics in Cameroon History*, University Presse, Yaounde, October 2002, p.17.

¹⁰³Ibid, p.20.

¹⁰⁴P.N. Nkwi., *The German Presence in the Western Grassfields, 1891-1913*, *A German Colonial Account*, Leiden, African Studies Centre, 1987,p.75-86.

This Paramountcy of Bali was officially recognized and inaugurated in 1905 by Captain Hands of the German station in *Bamenda*, as the German government publicly presented *Fonyonga II of Bali* as the paramount *Fon* of the Grassfields population through a letter of protection handed to the paramount *Fon* in which the suzerainty of the 33 chiefs were officially under his control, dominancy and management¹⁰⁵. Traditional rulers in the *Bamenda* grasslands of Cameroon, just as in other parts of the centralized administration within the national territory played a larger part in local affairs.

In response to the German law of 1901 they decreed the respect of local administrative functions of the local traditional rulers. Governor Seitz therefore directed local officials to show proper respect for native chiefs and warned administrators against whipping chiefs or weakening their authority over tribes in any way. Which according to the decree of 1913, no chief was to be removed from his post and no native was to be appointed chief without the Governors authorization¹⁰⁶. Chiefs were therefore under German supervision as they organized and collected taxes which were paid in cash and kind imposed by the administration and many places adjudicated disputes in the Native courts according to the customary laws.¹⁰⁷

Just as in the regions of Adamawa and other areas of the North, the entire local administration of the Grassfields was in the hands of chiefs (*Bali Fon*) who ran traditional courts, collected the administrative taxes when they were introduced and advised on the recruitment of labor. The introduction of the head tax in 1909 was equally assisted by the traditional rulers. *Fon Fonyonga* assisted the Germans to collect the required money from their subjects on the basis of ability to pay upon German administration. They issued tax tickets in numbers which bore no close relation to the number of taxable males. The rulers were required to pay tributes to the government treasury instead of a general head-tax on their subject's¹⁰⁸.

In the Bali area, a form of currency was in use called the "Tchang" or brass rod. This brass rod was of the length of an arm and pencil thin, which was formed into a spiral ring. It was worth 25marks in the German currency. It was used in all commercial transactions for the purchase of slaves, goats, sheep hen and weapons. Apart from the use of the brass rod, the Grassfields' people also paid their taxes in palm oil¹⁰⁹

Mr. Hunt attested that the Bali chief received encouraging compensations for his job and as such the German colonial Government gave him a rebate of 10% of the taxes he collected from the first eleven of the chiefdoms placed under him in 1905. These areas were likely to be vassal

¹⁰⁵L. N. Tam., "Relations between the *Bali* and the Non-Bali Chiefdoms in *Bali Nyonga* from Pre-colonial Times to Colonial Times", Post-Graduate Diploma in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2000, pp.33-46.

¹⁰⁶ Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons*, p.213.

¹⁰⁷Chilver., *Zintgraffs' Exploration in Bamenda*, p.40.

¹⁰⁸ Ngoh, *Cameroon history*, p.45.

¹⁰⁹Ibid, p.61.

states which have been assimilated by the *Fon* of *Bali* due to their small population size and the rest were only attached to *Bali* domination by the colonial administration thanks to *Fonyonga* abilities at tax collection. This was also very impressive as well as tickets for all the chiefdoms under him were given to him. He then distributed them through the *Tadmanji* to the various vassal states. Those of non-*Bali* Fonsdoms were given either through *Tadmanji* or directly to their chiefs and 3% of the taxes paid by the rest¹¹⁰.

The city of *Bali* as a central administration became the Centre of diplomatic activities to both the German administration as well with the vassal and dominated territories. Firstly, it served as a home for Dr. *Zintgraff* as the *Fon* showed hospitality by sending messengers with refreshment to bring him from Ashong village to *Bali* Town and gave him his living house quite close to the *Bali* chiefs' palace. Several festivals were organized to welcome the Whiteman as the war scene dances were displayed and dramatized to impress the visitor on the might of the *Bali* people. Seeing the august guest carriers, the *Fon* was convinced they were slaves and he might have come into the interior to get more slaves and horses which he was ready to supply if the guest stays in *Bali* Town. He gave wives to *Zintgraff* carriers and herdsmen as a way of inducing them remain in *Bali*, he offered to build the German Station free of charge by taking an oath in the customary fashion in which after the killing of goat they rubbed each other with camwood and repeated with *Zintgraff* herdsmen"¹¹¹.

As a consequence, he fought wars with neighboring villages just to get materials for the construction of the station in *Bali*. He did not also allow *Zintgraff* to visit neighboring villages rather people from other chiefdoms who desired to see the Whiteman come to *Bali* and got permission from the *Fon* to see the white man. People brought gifts and news of his friendship spread to other Fonsdoms and palaces such as *Nkwen*, *Menemo* and *Mendakwe* who sent diplomats to *Bali* with gift and to report to their *Fondoms*. This relation with the "Whiteman" helped to avert any possible attacks from neighboring *Fondoms*¹¹².

Under the reign of the Germans, there was a double transformation of the chieftaincy; the local hierarchy and governance was transformed for the interest of other chiefdoms consequently *Zintgraff* had the project to unify all the Grassfields chiefdoms under the supremacy of the *Bali* while the *Bali* submitted themselves to the colonial masters through the blood packed signed agreement of 1891 within the content of the

¹¹⁰BRA, File No AB5./2/3b, "Assessment Report on the *Bali* Clan in the *Bamenda* Division of Cameroon", Hunt, W.E., 1925, p.34.

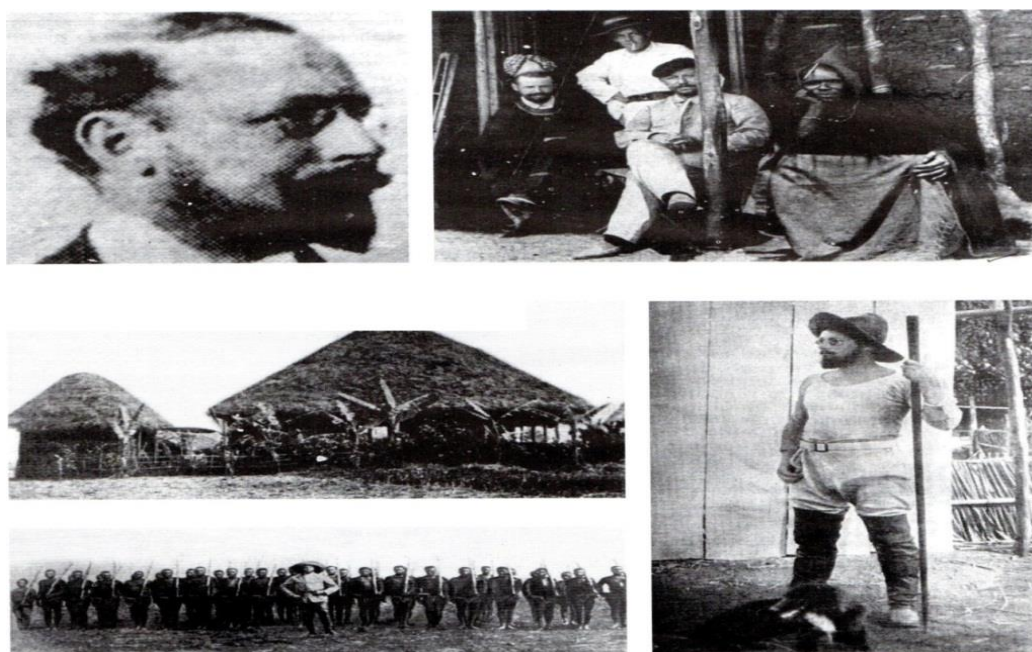
¹¹¹J.M. Essomba., (ed) "Archéologie et peuplement ancien sur les hauts plateaux de l'Ouest Camerounais", in J.M Essomba, *L'archéologie au Cameroun: actes du premier colloque international de Yaoundé, (6-9 Janvier, 1986)*, Paris, Karthala, 1992, pp, 329-342.

¹¹² Chilver, "Zintgraff 's Exploration in the *Bamenda*",p.23.

Imperial Government. The outcome was *Fon Galega* of *Bali* became the Paramount Chief of the *Bamenda* region (interior Grassfields)¹¹³

In 1892 and 1893 respectively, *Bali* received *Rittmerister von Stetten* who lived in Bali for 15 days and identified the surroundings of Bali. Bali was made up of numerous enemies and Conrau attested that *Bali* was weakened internally by a chieftaincy succession dispute between her sons Tita Nji and Tita Mbo. This was a situation not suitable for the establishment of German administrative Centre in the Grassfields, while Brockner in a newspaper attested that *Bali* received all the arms and weapons directed towards anti-slaves' movement for her personal engagement of subjugating her *Widikum* enemies. In 1891 Bali had a military patrol of 150 soldiers trained on the spot in the military Barrack of *Bali Town* by German officer *Hutter* and there over 100 breech loaders handed to Bali military¹¹⁴.

Figure 5: Dr. Eugene Zingraff Seat in *Bali Nyonga*



Source: Chilver, E.M., *Zintgraffs, Exploration in Bamenda, Adamawoua and the Benue lands 1889-1893*, Buea, Government Press 1966, p.65.

The picture above summarizes German implantation of colonial her rule in the *Bamenda* Grassfields in particular and Cameroon. The fact that *Fon Gali 1* accepted colonial rule by collaborating with the German Authority and sited side by side sealed the Brotherhood relation of trust and confident. This harmonious bonding indicated the dual management of Governance of

¹¹³J. Bridgeman and D.E. Clark, *German Africa*; Hoover Institution, Stanford, 1965, p. 34 .

¹¹⁴ Tam., "Relations between the *Bali* and the Non-Bali Chiefdoms, p,81.

both the traditional and Modern Administrations of the Chieftaincy. In this perspective, things were never the same because the seat of the chieftain became disfunctioning with a system of a dualistic administrative system very new to both the populations and other Grassfields *Fondoms*.

Notwithstanding, the capital city of Bali served as protective town of German traders, missionaries, security of caravan routes both in the *Bamenda* Grassfields and her environs. It also inhabited the highest Court among natives and a unification Centre of divided tribes under the authority of Galega¹¹⁵. Bali became the center of economic, political, social and a military station in the Grassfields. It was only in 1893 that the military station was moved from Bali to Bamendakwe after gaining their Independence from the *Bali* and German favor. With the death of Zingraff in 1904, the *Fon* resorted in recruiting workers in both German public and private firms. In the same year, *Bali* was weakened in his control of her allied who believed they were forcefully captured by the *Bali's* with the help of the Germans such as the pinyin and others followed sooth. *Bali* by 1910 became the sole recruiter and agent of administration in the Grassfields¹¹⁶.

ii. *Bamenda* Chiefs in the Management of Justice

The Germans decided to raise the social status of indigenous institutions together with their rulers whom will be highly respected. Germans felt it was imperative to work with the chiefs in order to penetrate their traditions in accuracy and the efficient applications of their colonial rule. They therefore decided and determined to accord greater privileges and larger financial rewards to the chiefs such as Galega who received honorary distinctions. He was also allowed to recruit workers for his own benefits as a substitute for tributes formally collected from his subjects and in exchanged for traditional sources of income such as a toll on caravans, he received fixed annual dash of varying amount as mentioned above in part of this work¹¹⁷.

The above opportunities were conditions necessary for traditional rulers to carry their actions responsible in supervising the collection of taxes, report to the administration diseases found in their areas of jurisdictions, maintain local paths, recruit labors for German plantations and offer hospitalities to German and European visitors. A practical duty carried by the *Fons* of *Bali* in 1891-1916 which were however challenging as conflicts developed leading to absolute implementation

¹¹⁵Interview with Chemuta Divine Banda, aged, 64, Chairman of NCHRF in Cameroon, 2nd October, 2018, Yaounde.

¹¹⁶P.M. Kaberry and E.M. Chilver, "An outline of the Traditional Political System of *Bali-Nyonga*, Southern Cameroons" *Africa*, vol. XXXI; N° 4, 1961, pp. 355-371.

¹¹⁷L.H. Gann and P. Duignan., *The Rulers of German Africa 1884-1914*, Standford, California: Standford University Press, 1977, p,81.

of the role of law, order and the maintenance of peace and security which could not be solely single handed by the colonial administration¹¹⁸.

Africans had a Native Court and the Africans could appeal against the decisions of the chief. The district officer also had jurisdiction in native matters. The *Fon*'s judicial powers were however limited to solely domestic affairs. The Chief's preceded over civil cases if the penalty was not above 300 marks or six months imprisonment. The Grassfields *Fon* for instance were relegated at the background in favor of the district officer who dealt with all native cases which were taken to the *Fon*'s¹¹⁹. While in the *Widikum* clan, cases first heard by African judicial clerk who later wrote his report on the list of cases and decisions taken before submitting it to the European clerk who on his part sent important cases to the Assessor. Worth noting is the fact that, Fons were not allowed to judge cases punishable by death.¹²⁰

The Fons were equally assigned the competence to adjudicated according to native laws and customs in civil cases where the objects of contention was valued at not more tan 100marks and in criminal cases where the penalty for the crimes were not more than 300marks or six months imprisonment. From the court of First instance appeals could be made to the second tribunal composed of chiefs appointed by the governor or a judge¹²¹

Fonyonga as the paramount chief of the Grassfields exercised judicial functions in order to forcefully recruit laborers for plantations. He used the imperial military to subjugate the vassals States chiefs for refusing to pay their taxes to him¹²². The subjugated chiefs did not know the position of Fonyonga as the administration of the Grassfields was concern because the *Fon* of Bali deceived them to believe that there was no question of subjugation to the *Bali* yoke in the negro sense of the word as he tricked them that he was appointed as a mediator between the Grassfields tribes and the German colonial government. As the vassal chiefs began to question and opposed the domination of *Bali*, the stationary army was used on them through military punitive expeditions punishing insubordinates states leading to loss of lives and properties destroyed.¹²³

Consequently, in 1906 the *Widikum* chiefdoms of Anong and Mbunjie were punished for their insubordination towards *Bali* and between April and May 1907 the *Bamumbu* and *Ashong*

¹¹⁸Interview with Joseph Mbah-Ndam, aged, 55, late Barrister/Honourable, 16th April, 2016, Yaounde.

¹¹⁹NAB, File: N0 Ba /3, "Report on various matters relating to the Cameroons", 1916, p.12.

¹²⁰E. Lewis, *The Germans in Africa*, Cassell, New York, 1915, p.54.

¹²¹ Nkwi., *Traditional Diplomacy*, p.60.

¹²² Kaberry and Chilver, "An outline of the Traditional Political System", p 394.

¹²³ Kaberry and Chilver, "An outline of the Traditional Political System", p.403.

chiefdoms were raided under the auspices of the German government by the *Balis*. As a result, chiefs were favored in the administrative set up of the territory and they were concerned with the administration of Justice. They kept the peace and maintained law and order. Germans hardly interfered in the administration of justice as the chiefs continued to dispense it while the German authorities supervised them. The German colonial officials maintained friendly and good relations with chiefs as they came visiting the chiefs' compounds on monthly bases where cases were heard. In this exercise, the chiefs sat side by side with the German officials who consulted them before any judgment could be adjusted, passed or amended.¹²⁴

Some chiefs as well as individuals had to use this friendship to carry out their private agenda. It was therefore their policy to strive as much as possible not to interfere in Native Courts. They did as much as they could to respect customs and traditions governing the people and those Native Courts manned by chiefs.¹²⁵

Though it may seem glorifying, this only worked effectively where the chief or natural ruler was a collaborator or remain a comrade to the German colonial machinery. As companions to the German colonial administration, Fons were also useful in the economic sphere. They became the official tax collectors in 1909 when direct taxation was introduced. In turn, they received five to ten percent of the collected sums as stipends.¹²⁶ What should be noted with German colonization was the introduction of local administration even though it was not actually named municipal administration. This is because municipal administration presupposes the existence and responsibility of State decentralized structures, in charge of the management of local affairs by local authorities.¹²⁷

Initially the Germans were not out to develop Cameroon within the social, economic and political needs of indigenous inhabitants but were more interested to exploit the territory for its home government¹²⁸. The administrative policy put in practice by the Germans was Indirect Rule with a strong grip on the indigenous administrative machinery. According to Engelbert Mveng, decentralization in Africa and Cameroon in particular is not new because even German settlers in

¹²⁴K. Holzinger., *The Dualism of Contemporary Traditional Governance and the State: Institutional Setups and Political Consequences*, German Foundation for Peace Research (DSF), 2016, pp.102-120.

¹²⁵ Rudins, *Germans in Cameroon*, p. 50.

¹²⁶NAB, File No 5/21, cf no 27 of 20/10/57“Southern Cameroons Report, 1957, p.19.

¹²⁷M.T. Aletum., “African Politics Yesterday and Tomorrow”, *Science and Technology Review*, vol. III, No 3-4, July-December,1985,p.56.

¹²⁸R.O'Neil, "Imperialisms at the Century's End: Moghamo Relationships with Bali, Nyonga and Germany, 1889-1908", in I. Fowler & D. Zeitlyn, eds, *African Crossroads: Intersections between History and Anthropology in Cameroon* (Oxford: Beghahn Books), 1996,pp.80-100.

Cameroon were concerned with getting indigenous people to manage their own affairs through the policy of Indirect Rule¹²⁹.

III. Grassfields chiefs and German Social Policies

German social policies in the *Bamenda* Grassfields varied from the provision of education with primary objective of teaching the German language, Arithmetics, Reading and religion, commonly known as (3Rs) The evangelization of the territory was done with the help of the Basel to Christianized both Kamerunians and the customary institutions.

i. Chiefs and German colonial education

During the early years of German colonization, the colonial administration was not really interested in opening schools, besides. Following the Annexation of Kamerun, all the English Mission schools on the coast were closed by 1886. Under Governor Von Soden, German teachers were sent to Cameroon and schools were opened from the coast to other parts of the territory on experimental basis. The elementary school program applied in which the 3R's (Arithmetic's, Reading and Writing) that were taught and some religious instructions and Agriculture were also given.¹³⁰

By 1887, Theodore Christaller was the first German teacher in Cameroon who began the establishment of schools. He came to his peak with the educational conference of 1907 under the auspices of Governor Seitz aimed at reviewing the educational system in colony. He drew a standard curriculum for the colony educations. Amongst other resolutions from the conference, school attendance was made a condition indispensable to parents, pupils and their chiefs¹³¹.

Fons, who requested the creation of schools such as *Fonyonga*, gave land for the opening of a mission school in *Bali* and he made sure there was regular attendance and enrollment especially from the *Widikum* tribes and *Bafut*. He equally went as far as punishing pupils who took absence from classes and their parents were asked to pay additional taxes for not allowing their children to go to school. The Fons' children were exemplary pupils who attended and business

¹²⁹Ibid, p.105.

¹³⁰N.B. Nyamndi., *The Bali Chamba of Cameroon: A Political History*, Paris: CAPE, 1988,p.56.

¹³¹Interview with Ndassi Franka, age, 84, Counselor in Bali Nyonga, 12th August, 2016, Mezam Division.

men also sent their children to school. After the fifth year, children had the opportunity to attend school for less than 150 days to become employed under the German administration.¹³²

ii. Fons and religion in German administration

When Cameroon became a German protectorate in 1884, the English Baptist found difficulties to work under the German authority as they faced conflicts between the Native Baptists Mission in religious practices with the German authority leading to its replacement by the activities of the Basel mission which had its headquarters in Switzerland. The Basel Mission did not hesitate to enroot itself as they decided to purify the activities of the Native Baptist Church (NBC) by dismissing teachers who did not use German language as the official language of evangelization under the leadership of Pastor Josuah Dibundu of NBC. This was equally the earliest missionary body of Germans origin which extended its influence as far as into the hinterland of the Cameroons and they also believed in the power of evangelization. Their activities equally went on with relative ease because they enjoyed a favored position with the German colonial administration and their stations were opened in *Nyassoso*, *Bonaberi*, *Buea* and *Bali* in the Grassfields just to name a few.

Upon the arrival of Dr. Zintgraft in the Grassfields and friendship treaties signed with the *Balis*, the *Fon* of *Bali* requested for a missionary station in his kingdom. Consequently, the first missionary station in the Grassfields was established in November 17th 1902 in *Bali* followed by the first Basel missionary; preaching sermons in the Bamenda Grassfield areas. As the Bali indigenes proved confidence of embracing the new religion and the believe in Christianity, the first Basel missionary Ernest and a builder were sent to *Bali* in 1903 which eventually led to the creation of a missionary station in Bali and its became the center of missionary activities in the *Bamenda* Grassfields¹³³.

This Centre point, Christianity under the leadership of the Basel mission spread to other parts of the Grassfields of *Bamenda* as in *Bafut* a mission was opened as well as in the *Metta* country of the *Menemo* speaking people. It is alleged that, apart from humanitarian and evangelical services, the Basel mission was involved in the policy of maintaining the chief of *Bali* paramountcy of the grass field area as in 1909, the missionary intervned in a dispute between two chiefdoms in the

¹³²E.T. Tichia., "Conflicts and Conflicts Resolution in the Western Grass field of Cameroon: The Study of Political relations of the Bali and the Meta from Pre-colonial times to 1977", MA Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2011, p.38.

¹³³E.M.Chilver., "Paramoutcy and Protection in the Cameroons: the *Bali* and the Germans, 1889-1913", P. Gifford & W. R. Louis, (eds)., *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969, pp.479-511.

Bali jurisdictional area in a way to provoke fears of *Bali* entry force as their reasons were understandable. The Basel mission with their first missionary stationed in *Bali* used it as their head quarter from where Christianity and evangelical activities were planned and spread to other tribes of the *Widikum* and *Ngembas*¹³⁴.

Therefore, through peaceful methods *Bali* welcomed the Basel mission and helped through forceful methods to expand the missionary's activities to her vassal and dominated areas. Just as the "*Isubu*" and "*Douala*" languages were used by the early missionaries at the coast to evangelize and carry humanitarian activities, the Basel mission in addition to the German language made the *Bali* Language *Mugaka* to be used as the official language of evangelization in the *Bamenda* Grassfields and the Bible was equally translated in to *Mugaka*. *Bali* also became a Centre of lay training for Basel missionary pastors from other ethnic groups of the *Bamenda* Grassfields¹³⁵.

It is important to note that the Basel mission went into an agreement with the German government in 1886 on condition of their missionary activities as they were solely responsible for the regulation of the activities of the church in the communities without government interference. Consequently, the missionaries directly connected themselves with the Chiefs who provided them with land for the building of God's house. They called on the banning of importation of liquor highly consumed by the traditional rulers in areas considered their spheres of influence¹³⁶. In *Bali*, *Fonyonga* nominated missionaries as members of his local councils and land commissions whenever the met. Also some Cameroonian representative were authorized in the local administration to control mission works and equally served as interpreters, some of them became judges on cases between natives and some defended the interest of the indigenes as well as trying to maintain peace between chiefdoms as mentioned above.

Germany effectively administered the Cameroons and particularly the *Bamenda* Grassfields between 1886-1914 when she was ousted by the French and the British after the First World War of 1914.¹³⁷ Before her departure in 1916, she effectively administered Cameroons in general and the *Bamenda* Grassfields in particular. Through the putting in place of administrative structures she used the indigenous rulers as actors of her colonial administration. This was possible due to the historical experiences of traditional governance system which was already organized by the

¹³⁴ Chilver., "Paramoutcy and Protection in the Cameroons: the *Bali* and the Germans, p.534 .

¹³⁵ Rudins, *Germans in Cameroon*, p.43.

¹³⁶ Interview with Titatang Kingsly, age, 51, Revrend PCC Simbock, 4th April, 2018, Yaounde.

¹³⁷ NAB, File, No. 2270/Cb1, *Bamenda* Division: Annual Report and League of Nations Report, 1937, p.34.

community settings of leadership¹³⁸ Thus if the German administration was able to achieve its mission of colonial supremacy, booming economic exploitations and civilizing missions, it was thanks to the traditional rulers who for one reason or the other decided to connive with the German colonial administrators for selfish reasons which did not to a greater extent, distort the indigenous stratification of the Grassfields population.

However, the utilization of the chieftaincy and its indigenous institutions by the German colonial master exposed the Grassfields' Chiefs to local administrative governance, modern economy and the God of the whites at the neglect of their own practices and customs¹³⁹. However, the dream of a German Empire in Central Africa notably the Grassfields of *Bamenda*, and the careers of a generation of German speaking Cameroonians was destroyed by the outbreak of the First World War. Following WWI, the British and the French took over the German colony of Cameroon, partitioned it 1916 with each power introducing its administrative system which will be seen in the subsequent chapters.¹⁴⁰

Historically the Germans were the first colonial authorities who officially established their presence in Kamerun after the Berlin West African Conference. Prior to their arrival, Cameroon traditional societies notably Bamenda Grassfields Fondoms had a well-organized traditional governance system. Upon their arrival, the Germans noticing the well organized and coordinated traditional governance system in this area decided to establish their colonial administrative colonial policy on the existent traditional governance system even though with a significant change at the level of objectives, nature and philosophy of governance.

The main idea that emerges in this chapter is that even though the Germans anchored their colonial governance system on the traditional system existent before their arrival. They however, went further to change and orientate the content, actors and philosophy of governance to exclusively suit their colonial objectives. Corroborating Michael Ndobegang's thesis, the German colonial governance system was solely geared at satisfying their interest. Nevertheless, local actors (Fons) who were part of the German governance profited from this system to consolidate their personal interest.

¹³⁸T.M. Aletum, and N.P., "The Social and Political structure of Power in the Traditional Society" in *Science and Technology Review* vol. VI, No 1-2, January - June, 1989, p.45.

¹³⁹ Amaazee, *Traditional Rulers (Chiefs)*, p.44.

¹⁴⁰W.T.S. , Tohji "Chiefs (Traditional Rulers) in Anglophone Cameroon and Modern Governance 1961-2000", PhD Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé 1, 2006, p .23.

CHAPTER THREE: IMPLEMENTATION OF BRITISH GOVERNANCE SYSTEM IN THE BAMENDA GRASSFIELDS 1916-1961

This chapter deals with British colonial influence on traditional governance structures in the *Bamenda* Grassfields from 1916 to 1961. It questions how the operationalization of the British rule shaped the traditional governance system in the Bamenda Grassfields in the modern system of administration. This system first established by the Germans, was appropriated by the British by 1922 in the Southern Cameroons. The dream of a German colonial empire in Central Africa and specifically in Cameroon, and the fortunes of a generation of German speaking Cameroonians and trained traditional rulers were seriously compromised with the outbreak of the First World War.¹ Following the outbreak of that war, the British and the French forces invaded and defeated the German troops in Kamerun. This was followed by the partition of Kamerun between Britain and France in 1916 with each power introducing in its own sphere of control a specific policy.

The French introduced an assimilative tendency in her own territory of Cameroon, which was a direct system of administration. The British employed the Indirect-Rule style governance.² The partition of Kamerun was confirmed by the Treaty of Versailles of 1919, which gave the two spheres to Britain and France as “mandates” under the loose supervision of the League of Nations. During the next years, “East” (French) and “West” (British) Cameroon would have separate histories, local administrative organizations and functioning. The British section of Cameroon consisted of what came to be known North-West and South-West provinces, later regions, while the French sphere (East Cameroon) covered the country’s remaining eight regions.³

The main objective in this chapter is to explain how the British colonial rule through their interaction with the traditional system laid the grounds for effective governance. The chapter is structurally organized in two sections. The first section deals with British indirect rule policy and local government in the Bamenda Grassfields. It also examines traditional governance in the context of transition from German to British Rule, the question of Warrant Chiefs and the new function of *Fons* in the *Bamenda* Grassfields as tax collectors. The second section has to do with chiefs effective participation in local governance.

¹A. Lee, and K. A. Schultz., “Comparing British and French Colonial Legacies: A Discontinuity Analysis of Cameroon”, *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 2012, p.7.

²Ibid,p.12.

³I. Brownlie., *African Boundaries: A Legal and Diplomatic Encyclopedia*, London/Berkeley: C. Hurst University of California Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1979, p.558.

Section One: British Indirect Rule Policy and Local Government

This part of the chapter examines British colonial policy in the *Bamenda* Grassfields. It dwells on Indirect Rule policy as a governance system used by the British to administer the region.

I. Indirect Rule policy in the *Bamenda* Grassfields

Following the partition of Kamerun between Britain and France in 1916, the British took 1/5 of the territory which became known as the British Cameroons. Two sections of Cameroon that came under British administration was known as British Northern and Southern Cameroons. The latter, of which the *Bamenda* Grassfields was a part, was initially administered as an integral part of Southern and later Eastern Nigeria. Under the British, the *Bamenda* Grassfields was administered through the system of Indirect Rule. It was a colonial administrative policy whereby the government of the colony was entirely directed by a few European officials, with only minor posts such as clerkships and messengers allocated to the natives.⁴

According to Nantang Ben Jua, the effective occupation by British authorities required a form of governance with which the Cameroonians would comply willingly, rather than coercively.⁵ This imperatively led to the indigenization of the colonial state through the adoption of the system of Indirect Rule. The main navigators of the Indirect Rule system of governance were traditional authorities or Chiefs. According to the British, it was easier to break a Chief than to make one⁶, thus the need to make chiefs the pillars of their colonial rule.

Although indirect rule recognized the existing political institutions in the *Bamenda* Grassfields as in their other colonies, the aim of the system was to gradually destroy the traditional institutions in order that European institutions would become the model.⁷ The two types of administration (direct and indirect) had the same intention, except that the direct system was too revolutionary towards the traditional institutions. Somehow the British convinced themselves that

⁴ M.T. Aletum., *Political Conflict within the Traditional and the Modern Institutions of the Bafut-Cameroon*, Louvain, Belgium, Vander, 1974, pp.90-134.

⁵ N.B. Jua., "Indirect Rule in Colonial and Post-Colonial Cameroon", Centre for Social Anthropology and Computing, 1986, p.34.

⁶ E.M. Chiabi, "Traditional Rulers in National Politics", *Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences, Serie Science Humaine*, Vol. VI, no's 1 & 2, Janvier- Julliet 1990, p.27.

⁷ Aletum, *Political Conflict*, p.91.

the best method was to "purify" African institutions and govern Africans through them.⁸ Practices like human sacrifices, slave dealings, murder of twins and secret societies, were to be suppressed.

i. Indirect Rule as Governance Policy

Between 1922 and 1945, the British implemented the policy of Indirect Rule thought to be the best rule in British Southern Cameroons. During this period, the British created Native authorities through whom they administered the people of British Cameroons.⁹ The Indirect Rule policy introduced by the British favored the devolution of competence to local authorities. They lorded over local council's administration, an administrative system which was called Native Authorities Administration and was guided by the policy of Indirect Rule. Through Indirect Rule, the British colonial authorities believed that the appropriation of the traditional politico-administrative institution incarnated by the chieftaincy in the *Bamenda* Grassfields was going to help in putting in place an efficient organ of "Modern Government"¹⁰ The NAs were to be the rudiment or embryo of local government and through this a Post-colonial system would eventually emerge.

The British also thought that, natural feelings would be raised through the NAs and Chiefs were to learn from these institutions the technics in the running and management of regional affairs. With this experience, products from these Local Authorities' Areas could be able to serve in the executive and legislative organs of their administration¹¹. In order to make this dream come true, the British worked hard to maintain the political divisions or natural boundaries they met and this could only be readjusted to fit the present dispensation. In segmented societies, like was the case in the Southern Cameroons Province, warrant chiefs were appointed to make sure that colonial realities confirm to colonial theory.

With this, the reforms organized Local Authority units into a two-tier system of administration. There was the Divisional and Subordinate Native Authorities or Village Councils. While the Divisional Council deliberated and legislated for the Division, the Subordinate Councils' Authority was limited to the Clan areas. This was the lowest tier and had no legal status but exerted a lot of influence over a lot of purely narrow affairs. Though imbued with legislative

⁸E.A Ayandele et Al., *The Growth of African Civilization: The Making of Modern Africa*, Vol. 2, London, Longman, 1971, pp.152-53.

⁹Aletum, *Political Conflict*, p.96.

¹⁰ Anene, J.C. et Al., *Southern Nigeria in Transition*, Cambridge University Press, 1966, pp.67-92.

¹¹ Y.E. Sobseh., *Global Conflicts and International Relations: The Uncertain Future*, Bamenda, Global Press, 2011,p.46.

and deliberative powers like the latter, their functions were purely consultative and electoral¹². Elections to the Divisional Council were indirect and came from the Clan or Subordinate Councils.

Villages constituted electoral units to the Clan Councils and special interest groups deemed underprivileged like the Hausa, Fulani and women were granted special representations. The British therefore made use of “Traditional” African rulers at local government level but they raised the practice to a “theory” of colonial administration as they called it “Indirect Rule” This was a type of administration in theory well formulated by Lord Lugard in 1922, the then Governor General of Nigeria in his book; *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, published in 1922¹³.

This was a policy meant to develop morally and materially the BSCs so as to prepare it indigenes together with their traditional rulers for eventual self-government. He also augured that Dual Mandate was important because to him, no European power in Africa and in the Grassfields of Bamenda was for purely altruistic motives and that in practice one side of the “dual mandate” which Britain and other colonial powers had undertaken in Africa was apt to success at the expense of the other. Therefore, the desire of Britain and other European countries to exploit Africans and Cameroonians trade and resources was apt to be a stronger force than the feeling of obligation to help Africans in general and the people of the Bamenda Grassfields to advance.

In this perspectives, the advent of European trade and administration, especially that of the British in the *Bamenda* Grassfields was destroying the old African society and doing little to help build new ones¹⁴. Conclusively, ruling the Africans indirectly through their traditional chiefs and to train the latter for their new responsibilities made IR the best means of achieving the dual mandate. Based on the above argument, reasons and its introduction in Northern Nigeria after experimentation in India, it was recommended by Lugard due to its successes in Northern *Nigeria*.

The fame and influence of Sir Frederick as an expert on colonial administration led to the application and adoption of “IR” in all British territories in tropical Africa or West Africa and the Bamenda Grassfields in 1922. The principle underlying the organization of administrative units within the Indirect Rule was Lord Lugard's request that "care should be taken to write a concise historical and ethnological account of the people"¹⁵ As such, Hal Cadman was sent from Northern

¹²P. Geschiere., “Chiefs and Colonial Rule in Cameroon: Inventing Chieftaincy, French and British Style”, *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger (eds), Africa 63, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp.75-151.

¹³Ibid, pp, 132-80.

¹⁴M. Crowder., *West Africa under Colonial Rule*, London, Hutchison and Co Ltd, 1968, p. 235.

¹⁵W. Che-Mfombong., “*Bamenda* Division under British Administration 1916-1961.From Native Administration to Local Government”, M.A. Dissertation in History University of Yaounde, 1980, p.45.

Nigeria with the task of preparing such a report on the Pre-colonial history and models of political organization in the Cameroon Province “as a guideline for administrative officers”¹⁶

This type of report was therefore to combine two concepts derived from the practice of anthropology and historiography at the time and linked to filiation; kinship and descent, all terminologies intimately associated with the concept of ethnicity¹⁷ The use of these twin concepts could have eased the task of geographical demarcation but resulted in a "gross oversimplification of the diversities and complexities"¹⁸ that characterized the area. At times, this practice also led to a distortion of historical and social anthropological facts to suit the demands of the Indirect Rule framework. This resulted as much from the difficulty of adapting this principle to a culturally diverse area as from the attitude of local chiefs to the issue of sharing administrative units with peoples with whom they had defined and flexible contacts during the Pre-colonial period¹⁹.

“Indirect Rule” was believed by the British to be the cheapest and most effective way of administering large populations stretched over even vaster territories with the minimum of European personnel. But it was far from being a clear-cut system as its application varied enormously from colony to colony and from the coast of Cameroon to the *Bamenda* Grassfields of the North West of Cameroon²⁰.

British used “traditional” African rulers to carry out the basic functions of local government in particular in the collection of taxes, the recruiting of labor and the controlling of potential African unrest. Uncooperative chiefs were dismissed and suitable replacements were found making the British to pay more attention to a candidate’s “legitimate” claim to the chieftaincy. Under the system, the British authorities avoided intervening in the running of the local affairs. They however intervene to stop what they considered as uncivilized practices; such as slavery and slave trade, human sacrifices and twin murder²¹. By this system also, local rulers helped the colonial administration as they guided Native Authorities or local governments to put in place IR in action and practice.

IR was introduced in order for the British to easily administered the territory, to preserve indigenous culture, to reduce cost of administration and to help the people help themselves, thus

¹⁶Ibid, p.67.

¹⁷ Ibid, pp.71-82.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹E.M. Chilver and P.M. Kaberry., “Chronology of the *Bamenda* Grassfields”, *Journal of African History*”, 1970, pp.249-258.

²⁰ Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial*, p. 245.

²¹ Fage, *History of West Africa*, p.183.

it was a system wherein the British colonial authorities were using African chiefs (Native Authorities) rule their subject or administered African people through their local or traditional rulers. It was adopted in centralized societies headed by recognized existing local rulers or chiefs and appointed in communities of no chiefs or where the chiefs were not respected. The British appointed the “Warrant chiefs’ ‘or artificial chiefs who acted under the IR system as transmission belts, carrying information to their subjects and from their subjects to the administrator²². Principally, they functioned as auxiliary government to enforce law and order, collected taxes and supervised public works such as the construction of roads. As such, there was the devolution of certain powers to local chiefs²³ which in the administration of the territory was done through the indigenous political and social institutions. The enforcement of law by the NAs was done through their local courts where in offenders of the system were judged as affirmed by K. Shillington;

The British made greater use of African “customary law’. Chiefs were allowed to judge local civil disputes and to try minor criminal cases, though they were never allowed to try serious criminal cases or disputes involving the European. British attention to “customary law’ however, was not because of any particular respect for African chiefs, but rather because of its administrative convenience. The chief performed a whole range of legal duties which would otherwise have been costly and inconvenient to the colonial administration and retaining the chief as the mediator between ruler and the ruled, helped blunt the impact of colonial over-rule. When the chief was presented with unpopular colonial laws to enforce; it was the chief who received the full weight of African hospitality and at the same time, British colonial administrators did not hesitate to adapt, change and if necessary, invent African “customary laws’ when it suited their purpose²⁴

i. Motivations for Indirect Rule as a Governance Policy

The poor climates in the interior of Africa and particularly in the *Bamenda* Grassfields led to the death of early Europeans contributing to the refusal of subsequent whites to settled and work in the in Cameroons in general and the Grassfields in particular. This challenge led to the insufficient trained personnel and shortages of colonial administrators as well as the relatively densely populated areas of the Bamenda Grassfields obliges the British to use the local chiefs²⁵ who were found in the interior of the territory with a reasonable knowledge of those inhabiting their areas of jurisdiction. To the British the services of the traditional rulers were relatively cheaper and couple with inadequate sufficient funds to enable direct administration than that of the British officials thereby reducing their cost of administration and to effectively maximize their profit and exploitation of both human and natural resources one of the main reason of colonialism.

²²T.J. Tazifor. & J. N. Tabi., *Cameroon History in the 19th & 20th centuries*, Buea, Education book Centre, 2009, p.90.

²³Ibid, p183.

²⁴K. Shillington., *History of Africa*, New York, USA, St Martin press, revised edition, 1995, p.357.

²⁵ Ngoh., *Cameroon history*, p. 168.

More so, the British were impressed as they found a well-organized traditional political governance with established and structuralized institutions of a hierarchical societies under the respectable leaderships of chiefs and Muslims leaders. With the possession of officials, for the administration of justice and the maintenance of order as well as the collection of taxes which the British could recognize even if they might not always think them sufficiently efficient or impartial in some of their practical application. It was never the less an additional advantage for her to effectively implement her policies through their natural leaders²⁶.

Again Britain could remember the resistance put forth by Africans during early European contacts with Africans at the coast which was very challenging as the indigenes rallied behind their leaders to fight wars than with Europeans was a lesson to recognize with. Therefore, it was natural to use the native leaders especially as they commanded obedient and respect from their indigenes. By extension, the British hoped not to be pointed a finger at by the indigenes for any negative acts committed in the effective administration of the people and if any occurred, the native rulers will be answerable to their populations and not the colonial masters. Last but not the least; the British claimed that by using the traditional rulers in administering the indigenes, they were effectively preparing the population for eventual self-rule and independence.

II. Architects and Actors of Indirect Rule System

Administratively, the British administered Cameroons as an integral part of *Nigeria* under the supervision of the League of Nations permanent mandates commission and she divided the territory into two for administrative conveniences; Northern Cameroon with its head quarter at *Dikwa* which was ruled as part of the Northern Region of Nigeria and particularly part of each of the Northern regions of Nigeria; Benue, Adamawa and Borno while Southern Cameroons which today comprises of South West North West regions with its headquarter at Buea was ruled as part of the Southern Nigeria and later as part of the Eastern Region of Nigeria²⁷.

The League of Nations permitted the administration of the British Cameroons portion as an integral part of *Nigeria* among other factors of British Cameroons was an elongated small narrow disjointed territory which was probably going to make administration difficult as a unique territory. To the British, administering British Cameroons as part of Nigeria will certainly accelerate both

²⁶D.E. Garnier., "The British in the Cameroons, 1919-1939" in *Britain and Germany in Africa-Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule*, P. Gifford and W.R. Lewis, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1967, pp.513-556.

²⁷N.F. Awasom. , "The vicissitudes of twentieth-century Mankon s in Cameroon's changing social order", " *The dynamics of power and the rule of law: Essays on Africa and beyond*, in honor of Emile Adrian B. Van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal, African Studies Centre, Leiden, the Netherlands, 2003, p .45.

social and economic development with the resources in Nigeria and beside British faced the challenge of inadequate colonial officials and her reluctances to deploy more colonial staff in Tropical Africa made her to administer Cameroon as an integral part of *Nigeria*²⁸.

i. Administrators

The British, in order to better organize and manage the affairs of its colony, decided to put a structuralized department headed by officials who played the roles of administrator for the effective governance of the said territory. These administrators constituted of both the British officials as well as the indigenous authority. The administrators had specific duties and at different levels within the governance structure.

The Governor- General

He was at the peak of British colonial administration who ruled British Cameroons from his resident in *Nigeria* at Lagos. He was assisted by Lieutenant Governor of Northern Kaduna and Southern *Nigeria* of Enugu respectively.

Resident

There were two Resident, in Northern and Southern Cameroons who resident in *Dikwa* and *Buea* respectively. Important to note that 7 resident served Cameroon during the mandate period. These Residents supervised the administration of the people through their indigenous leaders by being attached to each Native Courts and interfered in traditional governance to check abuses on them especially as far as the traditional methods of tax collection were concerned. This was relatively complicated, complex and reliable to abuses were replaced by a single tax levied on the villages and chiefdoms of the *Bamenda* Grassfields and Cameroon inclusive. They reported to the commissioner who worked directly with the *Nigerian* Government. The residents were assisted by district and assistant district officer.²⁹

Table 3: British Residents in British Southern Cameroons

No	NAMES OF RESIDENT	DURATION IN SERVICE
1	Major F.H. Ruxton	1921-1925
2	Mr. E.J. Arnett	1925-1928

²⁸ Fage, *History of West Africa*, p.183.

²⁹Ngoh, *Cameroon History*, p.167.

3	Mr. H.G. Aveling	1928-1929
4	Mr. E.J; Arnett	1929-1932
5	Mr. J.W.C. Rutherford	1933-1934
6	Mr. O.W. Firth	1936-1938
7	Mr. A/E/F/Murray	1939-1942

Source: Tazifor and Tabi., *Cameroon History*, p.66

District Officer

These were civil administrators and heads of Districts representing the President or local governor in *Buea or Dikwa*. They were in charge of the District or Divisions and there were four Divisions in southern Cameroon; *Victoria, Kumba, Mamfe* and *Bamenda* Division which was later on made a province in 1948. A Division which was joined with other newly created Divisions of *Wum, Mamfe*, constituted the Grassfields' area of study as seen on the map above. The recommended the appointment of Native Authorities, advised and supervised them. As magistrates, they heard important civil and criminal cases. They controlled other administrative personnel and supervised the constructions of roads and bridges. They equally played the role of pay masters by receiving and pay out salaries and wages to government employees³⁰. They also acted as intermediary between the Native Authorities and the residents by carrying information from the Resident to the local authorities and in return carried the problems of the natives through the native authorities to the resident and as such acted the role of transmission belts³¹.

Police Force

The police force or civil police constituted an element of British colonial administration of British Southern Cameroons and the *Bamenda* Grassfields inclusive was established in 1916 by the British and was initially composed of those who served in the German police. This force under the British was controlled by the commissioner of police with an assistant commissioner of the Police cord. This force as the years go by, was made up of indigenes of the *Hausa, Bamileke, Bamum* and from Yolo were recruited, trained and equipped in the Southern province of Nigeria. They served over the national territory with the Grassfields having 10 out of the 150 police

³⁰T. Earle., "Chiefs, Chieftaincies, Chiefdoms, and Chiefly Confederacies: Power in the Evolution of Political Systems", *Social Evolution & History*, Vol. 10 No. 1, Uchitel' Publishing House, 6th March, 2011, p.29.

³¹Ngoh, *Cameroon History*, p.168.

recruited in 1920. In 1938, British Cameroons registered a police force of 136 including one European officer, one clerk, one armorer and one African Inspector and had 49 officers of non-commissioned stationed in Buea, constables and staff. The District officer was responsible for the detachment³².

ii. Judicial System

The British judiciary and imprisonment constituted the legal system which gradually replaced the Imperial German legal system in 1922. Despite the fact that, certain parts of the territory were still using the German Imperial code. The criminals could be imprisoned for up to a year by the Senior District Officers while the Assistant District Officers were empowered to imprison criminals for duration of up to three months.³³ More to this, at the end of each month, a summary of minor cases were sent to the Supreme Court in Lagos as well as procedure of cases of serious magnitude. The Supreme Court judge was bestowed the power to confirm, amend and the retry cases. The Chiefs were empowered to punish defaulters according to the norms of their societies where Courts did not exist. It is worth noting that, four government prisons were established in the headquarters of the four Divisions which could detain prisoners for up to two years as stated by V.J. Ngoh;

Kumba prison could, however, not detain prisoners for more than six months. The prisoners were employed on grass cutting and general sanitary work. The average totals of prisoners in the various divisional prisons in 1936 were 98 for *Buea*, 58 prisoners for *Kumba*, 54 for *Mamfe* and 157.22 for *Bamenda*. The situation of the prisoners was deployable and a few died in prison. For instance in 1919 some prisoners died in the *Buea* prison; four died in the *Mamfe* prison; 43 died in the *Bamenda* prison and non in *Kumba* prison³⁴.

Through the IR, modern justice was tested in Cameroon by the application of the Native Authority Ordinance which defined and regulated the functions of the chiefs. There was also the creation of 4 Courts of different grades; Grade “A” courts had full jurisdiction in civil and criminal cases except death sentences which were only authorized by the governors. Grade “B” Courts tried civil matters not exceeding 50 criminal matters or punishment not more than 7 years imprisonment. Fines were not more than 50 or 24 lashes or strokes. Grade “C” Courts had civil jurisdiction with fines not more than 10 and claims of the same amount³⁵. It had criminal jurisdiction with

³²M.Z. Njeuma. , *Introduction to the History of Cameroon in the 19th Centuries*, London; Macmillan publisher, 1989, p.67.

³³Ngoh., *Cameroon History 1884-1985*, p. 173.

³⁴Ngoh., *Cameroon History 1884-1985*, p.175.

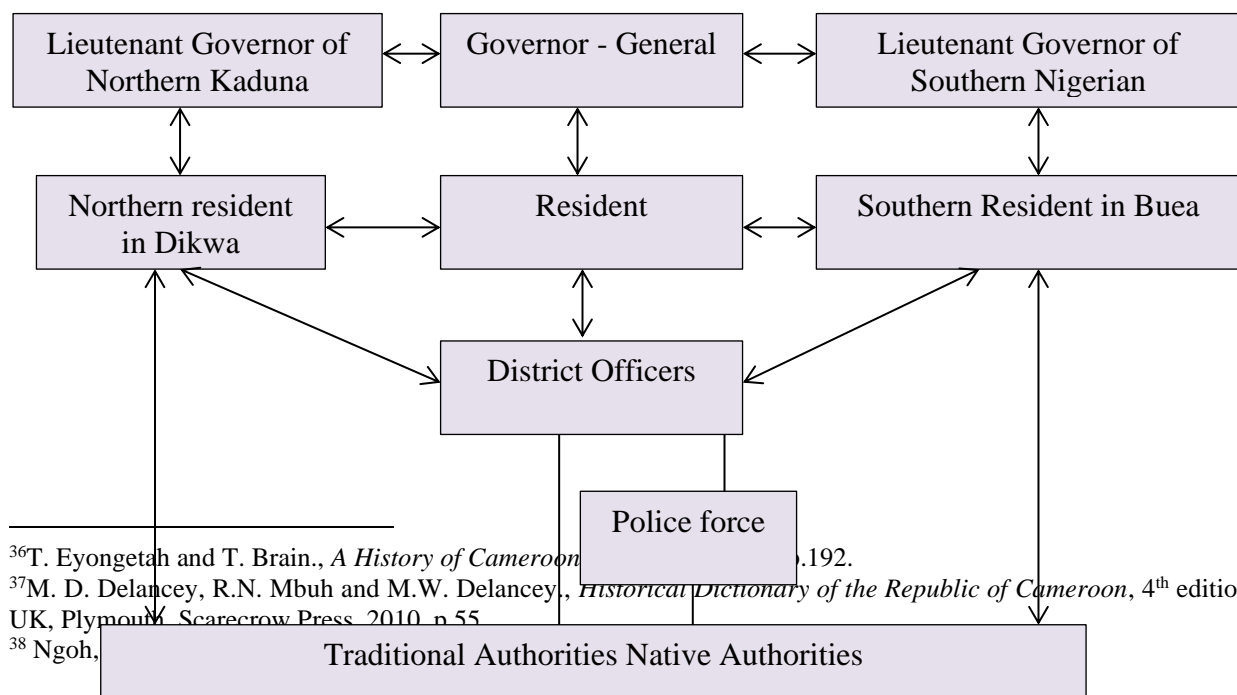
³⁵C. E. Tabi., “Native Courts in *Mamfe* Division 1922-1961”, MA Dissertation in History University of Yaoundé 1,2005, p.67.

imprisonment of not less than 6 months and grade “D” Courts could impose fines of between 5 to 10 pounds and could imprison for up to 3 months or gives 12 larches or strokes³⁶.

iii. Native Authorities

Native Authorities were indigenous representatives of various ethnic groups recognized or created by the British administration in Southern Cameroons. The creation came as a result of practical necessity rather than any trust or interest in the Native Authorities³⁷. These were local governments created under the system of Indirect Rule and made up of prominent chiefs duly recognized by the government advisory councils that had a native police force for the purpose of administration. At the local level, the system of Indirect Rule was instituted wherein local chiefs were accorded considerable powers in the administration of their areas. The policy of IR required among other things the designation of chiefs or headmen through whom it could control "lesser members of their tribes". Native Authorities were the conglomeration of villages that spoke related languages for the effective administration of areas, for example the *Ngemba* under the leadership of Fon Nehru of Mankon who was considered to be the most powerful leader. The heads of Native Authority ruled their areas together with other chiefs who were designated or appointed by the D.O and who equally constituted the native council and a native court with the chief judge being the head of the Native Authority Areas. There was the existence of a Native Treasury in which tax deposits were kept and money withdrawn for the payment of workers and other personnel³⁸.

Figure 6: British Colonial Administrative Organigram in the Bamenda Grassfields



³⁶T. Eyongetah and T. Brain., *A History of Cameroon*, p.192.

³⁷M. D. Delancey, R.N. Mbuh and M.W. Delancey., *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Cameroon*, 4th edition, UK, Plymouth, Scarecrow Press, 2010, p.55.

³⁸Ngoh,

Source: Drawn by the author

In order to effectively implement and attained the objectives of British colonial interest, it was a necessary evil put in place an administrative structure ease governance and management of Bamenda grassfields both human and natural resources as seen on the diagram below.

The British administration used chiefs as mentioned above who ruled principal tribes, namely, the *Fons* of *Bali*, *Bafut*, *Kom*, *Bum*, *Nso* and *Bangwa*. These Fons served Native Authorities with courts where they meted out punishment according to modified native customs and had both a Native Court and a Native Treasury responsible for judicial and fiscal matters respectively.³⁹ The NAs were responsible for the maintenance of law and order, justice through the settlements of disputes, collected taxes, recruited labor, organized community development projects, ensured the payment of taxes and were responsible for elementary education and health of their people. They were also responsible for the provision of social amenities such as roads, building of schools for both government and mission.

Native Authorities were equally responsible for the recruitment and payment of teachers in schools. Notwithstanding, they also trained their teachers and granted scholarships to deserving students, particularly in the medical and health services.⁴⁰ Between 1920 and 1930 the administration established and classified the following as NA chiefs; Chief of Bimbria, Chief of *Victoria*, *Bangwa*, *Bafut*, *Nso*, *Kom* and *Bali* in the British Cameroon. There were all together 3 NAs in the Victoria Division, 19 in Kumba Division, 8 in Mamfe and 15 in the *Bamenda* Division⁴¹. As mentioned earlier, Lord Lugard the chief proponent of the system wrote in 1900s, thank the chiefs who were “an integral part of the machinery of administration”. They were to be seen as “*a single government*”, working in cooperation with the British as a single government in which the chiefs had clearly defined duties and acknowledged status with British officials. This was equally made mentioned of by the S.D.O. of *Bamenda* IV, years later on the importance of

³⁹Ibid , p.169.

⁴⁰Tazifor and Tabi., *Cameroon History in the 19th*, pp.110-117.

⁴¹Ibid, p.178.

chiefs as instruments of importance in Bamenda “*A Chief can be broken in twenty minutes but it takes twenty years to make one*”⁴².

Traditional rulers collected taxes and paid into the Native Treasuries. The chiefs got revenues in which, a fine proportion of the chief’s income which was at first $\frac{1}{4}$ and then $\frac{1}{2}$ was transferred to the central British administration. The Money transferred, was used to finance the specialized services of health, agriculture and railways. The money was also use to pay for the technical know-how received from the British experts. The rest of the revenue remained at the disposal of the traditional government. However, IR faced financial problems, as it was realized by the British administration that, the chiefs of the *Bamenda* Grassfields could not be expected to develop without acquiring responsibility for the collections and disbursement of increasingly large sums of money. Inorder for them to be paid regular salaries, prepared proper budget and present account for audit, and for the Native Authorities to use their incomes more or less as they wish, they were subjected to the guidance and the advice of the Resident⁴³.

Because of the recognition of Native Administration and the functional role of the chiefs, the preamble to the British administration advised that “careful regard shall always be paid to indigenous laws and customs. Based on this, the colonial administration decided to embark upon fact-finding missions that culminated in the well-known intelligence and assessment reports forming the basis of indigenous law and customs as well as helping the colonial administrators to determine those leaders who were best suited to engage in the new administrative systems⁴⁴. This new administrators from the indigenous populations of the Grassfields, were leaders in the demarcated areas and place under 21 administrative quarters as enlisted below on the table as well as on the map.

Table 4: Native Authority Heads Quarters in the Bamenda Grassfields

N°	Native Authority Heads Quarters	N°	Native Authority Heads Quarters
01	Aghem	12	Mbaw
02	Bali	13	Mbembe
03	Beba	14	Mbem
04	Bafut	15	Mfunte
05	Befang	16	Misaje

⁴²E.M Chilver and P.M Kabbery., *Traditional Bamenda: The Pre-Colonial History and Ethnography of the Bamenda Grassfields*, vol. I,1967, p.45.

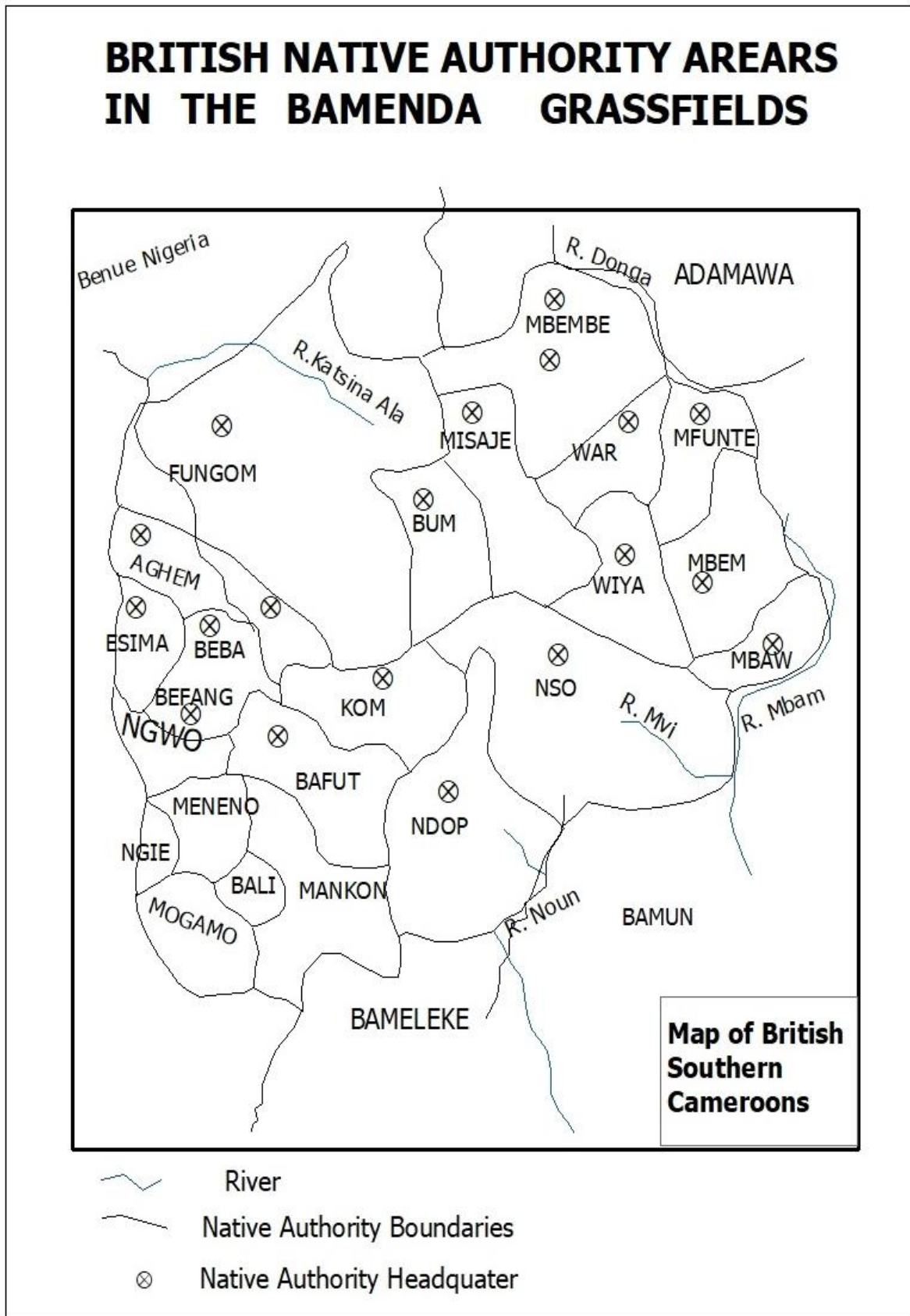
⁴³W. Che-Mfombong., “Bamenda Division under British Administration 1916-1961: From Native Administration to Local Government” M.A. Dissertation, University of Yaoundé 1, History Department, 1980, p.118.

⁴⁴Chiabi, “Chieftaincy: Traditional Rulers”, p.27.

06	Bum	17	Moghamo
07	Esima	28	Ndop
08	Fongom	18	Ngie
09	Kom	19	Nso
10	Mankon	20	War
11	Menemo	21	Wiya

Source: Map 2 below

Map 2: British Native Authority Areas in the Bamenda Grassfields



Source: Drawn by the Author

III. Fons in the Indirect Rule System

The intelligence investigations revealed that, resilient traditional values and institutions with numerous seasoned traditional rulers known as chiefs⁴⁵ had councilors which was a dominant feature of the Grassfields. This made the British to easily detect who was in command for the implementation of her policy. The strong values and rulership existed within ethnic jurisdictions making the *Fons* to be supreme in their jurisdiction. Indeed each of the traditional groups considered itself as “world”. The situation was challenging for the British who needed to introduce a new system of colonial administration.⁴⁶ They called for the control of the “world” beyond the small traditional entities, beyond individual or ethnic jurisdictions. To this end, the creation of Native Authorities which in many instances amalgamated numerous ethnic jurisdictions as already mentioned became a necessary evil for the British.

The investigations also revealed that in the decentralized coastal and forest regions where traditional values have long been rocked by the Europeans influence, amalgamation was even more important. This was also going to facilitate the creation of Native Authority couple with the absence of a resilient culture. The British were confident with the status-quo as they made use of indigenous rulers in the forest, the grass field and the coastal regions to introduce the system of Native Administration. The British went ahead in the Grassfield to co-opt the still very traditional rulers as they had done in the semi-traditional and semi-westernized coastal regions. The British administrators understood that it was easier to break a chief than to make one. Thus mindful of this, the British colonial administrators judiciously employed the existing traditional rulers while previewing the education of their sons as eventual replacements to their fathers⁴⁷

The British opined that a good initiative which scrupulously panned by the IR system disappointed them as the “replacements” of Native Authorities prepared in the 1930s, 40s and 50s. were more interested in pursuing their higher education. Their involvement in colonial administrative services and some educated sons of Chiefs became too radical for the colonial Masters. The educated sons of the chiefs did not therefore replace their traditional fathers as the colonial administrators envisaged. This was attested by Chilver and Kaberry;

This being the case, the semi-educated and semi-westernized chiefs of both regions not only continued their dominant role in the politics of the colonial era but also wielded more power, traditional rulers have become

⁴⁵ W. Che-Mfombong., “Bamenda Division under British Administration 1916-1961”, p.90.

⁴⁶ H.B. Markus., “A chief is a Chief by the people Exploring the legitimacy of the Mzinyathi chieftaincy in Thekwini, KwaZulu-Natal”, M. A Dissertation in Political Science, University of Oslo, 2017, pp.100-118.

⁴⁷ D. Anunalezi., “Milestone in the History of the Ndzong, Santa, North-west Cameroon, 1916-1970”, M.A. in Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé 1, 2006, p.29.

suzerain, the distributors of rewards, the dispenser of honored, heads of associations of royal and commoners, the control of the web of political communication and supreme judges.⁴⁸

Indeed, all over the British territory, the powers of the traditional rulers were extended as the colonial masters gave them more responsibilities and remuneration on the basis of their importance. Regardless of their previous status in their society, the chiefs were co-opted into new colonial systems of governance (Native Administration). Some changed to rule over their circumscribed group to a broader and larger jurisdiction. *Fon Galegal* of the Fondom of Bali and traditional leader of the first category would now be playing a similar role like *Fons Manga Williams* of the decentralized Victoria division⁴⁹. These changes suggested that the Fons had indeed become instruments of Native Administration and confirmed that their jurisdictions had changed in the domain of economy, peacekeeping and security as well as justice.

i. Colonial categorization of Traditional Authorities in the *Bamenda* Grassfields

Pre-colonial tribes were an agglomeration of mini-states headed by traditional rulers, variously called *Fon*, *Foy* and *Mbe* depending on the tribe that were mostly constituted and enlarged through conquest⁵⁰. This was the case with *Nso*, *Kom*, *Bafut* and *Bali* who later were to be known as first class socio-political entities otherwise recognized afterwards as Fondoms. This was because these Fondoms had a population of about 6000 and above and others later known as second and third class Fondoms has less than 300 people in terms of population. The colonial administration only came and recognized this organization⁵¹.

P. N. Nkwi maintained that, although the grading of chiefs/ Fons was new colonial idea, one must admit that in the Pre-colonial era, Fons recognized the ranking among themselves, though the stratification was not so elaborated⁵². The four paramount Fons of the *Bamenda* Grassfields considered and treated themselves as equals, minor Fons accepted this and gave them the due respect and they manifested their inferiority when they were in the presence of the paramount and as well as in their diplomatic relations⁵³.

In reality, the selection of the four Grassfields kings of the *Bamenda* Grassfields or what can be transliterated as the “Super Powers” of *Bamenda* Grassfields chieftaincy institution (*Nso*, *Bafut*,

⁴⁸Chilver and Kaberry, *Traditional Bamenda*, p.45.

⁴⁹P. Geschiere., “Chiefs and Colonial Rule in Cameroon: Inventing Chieftaincy, French and British Style”, *Africa* 63, 3, 1993, pp.151-175.

⁵⁰ P. N Nkwi., “Cameroon Grassfields Chiefs and Modern Politics”, *Paideuma*, No. 25, 1979, p.99.

⁵¹Rudin, *The Germans in Cameroons*, p.23.

⁵²Nkwi, “Cameroon Grassfields Chiefs”, p.100.

⁵³ NAB, File No. N. N. A. 160/66, “Chieftaincy and its re-structuralization”, July, 1944, p.6.

Kom and *Bali*) by the colonial administration was rather subjective. This was because, there existed at this period wide differences in terms of power between the so called “Super Powers” and so-called “Small Fondoms” who in their immense majority could be transliterated as the general assembly of the United Nations Organization today.

Bamenda Grassfields Fons were classified on the basis of the role they played at the time of colonial penetration and occupation, and the prestige most of them enjoyed around this time. In the *Bamenda* Grassfields and in reference to Lugard's Political Memoranda, Fons were divided according to grade: First, Second and Third. The fourth and fifth grades were reserved for remote head-quarters or head-men of an area⁵⁴. The First and Second grade Fons were notified and sworn into office by the Governor of the region or his Lieutenant, and announced in the Government Gazette. The First grade Fons was to be given a staff of office surmounted in silver as an insignia of office, and he was allowed to fly the Union Jack at his residence⁵⁵. The first category comprised paramount Fons who ruled over large areas. These included the chiefs or *Fons* of *Nso*, *Kom*, *Mankon*, *Bali Nyonga Bafut*, and *Bum*⁵⁶.

Aware that these *Fons* always commanded great influence (albeit in different degrees), the British expanded their responsibilities. Some, like the *Fon* of *Nso*, was permitted to enact rules as long as the rules compiled with the Native Authority ordinance. In 1932, it was again the *Fon* of *Nso* who became the first Native Authority in the British Cameroons to receive control of his native treasury⁵⁷. Control of the native treasury was not only important because an African was «trusted» to take charge of the treasury but also because from the perspective of the colonial administration and the subject of this paper, it was a means through which the administrators hoped to instruct African chiefs in modern forms of financial management.

The example of *Nso* demonstrates that the chiefs' role and jurisdiction were being extended or broadened. However, only the chiefs in the first category enjoyed this «privilege» to make rules and control their treasuries. It is worth noting here that traditional rulers that were declared and recognized as paramount Fons became a source of chieftaincy succession conflicts. This is because paramount chiefs had the capacity to designate and acknowledge chiefs in the 3rd, 4th and 5th

⁵⁴A.H.M, Kirk-Greene, and Lord Lugard., *The Dual Mandate System in British Colonial Africa*, London, Frank Cass, 1965, pp.194-214.

⁵⁵ The *Union Jack* is the British flag.

⁵⁶ Chiabi, “Traditional Rulers in National Politics”, p.28.

⁵⁷M. Goheen., “Chiefs, Sub-Chiefs and Local Control: Negotiating over Land, Struggle over Meaning”, In *B. Chem-Langhee and V.G. Fanso, (eds), Nso and Its Neighbors Readings in Social History*, Massachusetts, Amherst College,1996,pp.399-423.

categories. It was but normal that a paramount Fons could impose someone even though not legitimate to the position of chieftaincy⁵⁸. This was the case in the Meta area where Fondoms considered as vassals under the Bali witnessed the imposition of some candidates in some palaces who were not the rightful heirs. The goal here was to have someone at the helm of vassal's chiefdoms that was easy to manipulate.

Equally by giving much powers and privileges to the Fons at the detriment of other palace institutions and personalities, there was the danger of contestation of a potential heir to throne as king-makers who felt neglected could accept a Fon or chief from whom they could not benefit or who will not respect them. This situation was not different from the Cameroonian film; *La Succession de Wabo Deffo*⁵⁹.

According to the British, the Second grade Fon was to have a staff of office surmounted by a brass headpiece. The remaining grades were to be appointed by the Resident of the provinces assisted by their District Officers. A Fon of the third grade was allowed to carry a short baton as an office insignia but the Chiefs of the inferior grades carried nothing.

In fact, this category of chiefs that were designated by the British Residents became a time bomb. This was so, because, given that such Fons had no historical, traditional and customary basis, it was easy for any claimant to arrogate the throne.

Before discussing the question of warrant chiefs, it is important to high light the fact that, most chieftaincy succession conflicts that later emerged in the post independent *Bamenda* Grassfields (North West Region) mostly fall in the 2nd and 3rd class category of the classification done by the British colonial administration. This can partly be attributed among other factors the creation of warrant Fons by the British colonial administration.

ii. Creation of Warrant Chiefs to ease governance

One of the peculiarities of British colonialism was to create traditional rulers by introducing the so-called "Warrant Chiefs". To Peter Geschiere, to all colonial rulers, the French and the Germans and as well as the British, it soon became a matter of policy to rule the subjects through

⁵⁸Interview with Titatang Vincent, age 51, Rev Pastor, 20th August, 2020, Simbock-Yaounde.

⁵⁸ "La succession de Wabo Defo" is a cinematographic adaption shot in 1987 by Jean Paul Tueche illustrating a chain of conspiracy involve the replacement of a succession in typical Grassfields tradition with the example of the Bandjoun chiefdom.

⁵⁸Geschiere, "Chiefs and Colonial Rule in Cameroon", p. 158.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

indigenous Chiefs⁶⁰. Furthermore, in societies where rulers were hard to find, the French were as quick as the British to ones. In certain areas in the territory where local leaders did not exist, as already mentioned, there was a government Act under the Native Authority system which empowered the Governor General of Nigeria, and in later years, the Commissioner of the Cameroons to appoint whomever he pleased as a leader in Native Authority in the area⁶¹.

From this time, appointed Fons, called "Warrant Chiefs" were recognized in the system of indirect rule. These people were influential in their areas (according to the judgment of the British officer of the area) who received warrants or certificates of recognition from the government, acknowledging them as chiefs. But because of the native laws and customs, the appointment of warrant chiefs did not necessarily coincide with the traditional political system of an area.

The appointment of "Warrant chiefs" was also facilitated by the fact that in certain societies no proper traditional leaders were available and by the fact that some societies pointed to the British officer's false traditional leaders. The people did not want their real leaders to be known in fear that they might be killed or drawn into slavery⁶². At such, the false traditional leaders appointed in places of the Fons became more co-operative to the British system than protecting the peoples and their traditional systems (*See appendixes 11 and 12*).

This of course posed the problem of traditional legitimacy and authenticity of some chiefs that exist today. The authenticity of most chiefdom today in Cameroon depends whether or not they were warrant chiefs. The Warrant Chief system, anchored on the colonial Native Court of Equity, was a creation of colonial administration and owed its authority to its creator. This warrant not only made the individual Fon a member of the Native Court, but also recognized him as the de facto and the Fons de jure ruler of his community⁶³.

In their occupation in the *Bamenda* Grassfields, the British through their Indirect rule policy instituted Native Courts and installed chiefs by warrant (hence the name) who controlled them. Frequently, Warrant Chiefs were installed arbitrarily. In some cases, personalities were installed who actually had been local leaders before, but more often than not it was an accidental affair. Very often, the villagers forwarded people of little standing in the community to the British, on

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ J. R. Willard., *The Cameroon Federation: Political Integration in Fragmentary Society*, Princeton, Prince town University Press, 1970, p.58.

⁶² Aletum, *Political Conflict within*, p.92.

⁶³F. Adegbulu., "From Warrant Chiefs To Ezeship: A Distortion of Traditional Institutions In Igboland?", *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 2, No. 2.2, 2011, p.11.

the periphery of a kingdom, sometimes even persons of external origin were installed especially those who had the favor of the British colonial administration. This action was understandable in a society where the white-skinned individuals were perceived as strange and every move they made suspicious, even the values they were introducing were seen as anathema⁶⁴. Fons were thus installed without much recourse to local traditions or hierarchy and status, without taking into account the details of Pre-colonial local political structures. This arbitrariness stemmed from the fact that the British knew next to nothing about the Pre-colonial organization of the communities which they had coerced into submission⁶⁵. And since they were too arrogant to learn anyway, they erroneously assumed that African people had to be governed by chiefs, somehow. This was a very crude version of indirect rule⁶⁶.

The introduction of the Warrant Chiefs (among other policies), undermined the powers of the Fons. It re-arranged the political terrain by introducing a new organizational superstructure. This new order, which the “Warrant Chiefs” signified, created a new socio-political climate in which uncontrollable deceit, extortion’s and various forms of corruption held sway. Unlike in the traditional society where decisions were reached in the presence of the community and anchored on accepted customs, the Warrant Chiefs operated under a different system characterized by surreptitiousness.

They were accountable only to the colonial officer and not to the people or community. Once the colonial officer was happy with them, then they needed not border about their people. Due to the manner of their selection, these public officers themselves never felt any loyalty or responsibility to their own people⁶⁷. The Warrant Chiefs took undue advantage of the authorities bestowed upon them by the colonizers and the linguistic barriers between the people and the colonizers. Within a few years the appointed Warrant Chiefs became increasingly oppressive. They seized property, imposed draconian local regulations, and began imprisoning anyone who openly criticized them. Justice in the case of settling disputes became a commodity to be sold to the highest bidder⁶⁸. To this extent, many Warrant Chiefs solely constituted colonially-backed

⁶⁴ Adegbulu., “From Warrant Chiefs To Ezeship:”, p.21.

⁶⁵ A.E. Afigbo., *The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in Southeastern Nigeria, 1891-1929*, London, Longman, 1972, p.32.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p.40.

⁶⁷ E. Isichei., *A History of the Igbo people*. London: Macmillan Press, 1976, p.145.

⁶⁸ Afigbo, *The warrant chief* , p.316.

usurpers of power and had little or no legitimacy beyond the fact of their being installed by the colonial state⁶⁹.

Without any pedigree and claim to traditional legitimacy, they held power and used it for their own parochial ends. Their main source of power was the control of Native Courts and of labor, for example, for colonial road and waterway construction. By the 1920s, the Warrant Chief institution had, in many places, become synonymous with greed, avarice and corruption, and British administrative officers were increasingly aware of this.

This was because Warrant Chiefs were considered as the errand boys of the colonial administration and the people were essentially ‘guinea pigs,’ used by the British colonial government to try out its fanciful ideas of local governance. Indeed, even chiefs in the *Bamenda* Grassfields though not appointed by the British colonial administration could be considered as warrants as they were out to do errands for the British and at times to the disadvantage of their own kingdoms.

Section Two: Materialization of Indirect Rule

The British policy anchored on Indirect Rule would just have been mere theory if it was not put into practice by the local authorities. As such, the operationalization of the policy was manifested through the organization and functioning of the politico-administrative, judicial and economic organizations.

I. Native Authority and the Implementation of fiscal Policies

The Germans began the taxation system in order to pay their workers and sponsor development in their territory of the Cameroons, including the Grassfields. Taxation was considered too difficult in its collection regardless of the meager sources of the indigenes which were very challenging as many indigenes usually escaped from paying taxes. This was not the case with the British who had the same objectives but developed a mechanism of tax collection that depended enormously on direct taxation from Courts fees and payments of licenses which constituted the principal sources of colonial revenue⁷⁰.

The administrative Divisions had treasuries in which the NA deposited tax collected from their various NAAs despite the fact that, a portion of the taxes went to the central government, part

⁶⁹Adegbulu, “From Warrant Chiefs To Ezeship:”, p.15.

⁷⁰Che-Mfombong, “Bamenda Division under”, p.118.

was used by the Fons to run the day-to-day activities of their NAAs thereby encouraging the Natives to pay taxes as there was a transparent procedure in the collection and the utilization of the revenue for developmental projects. The implantation of the taxation system of the British came right away in 1924 British Southern Cameroons and the Bamenda Grassfields after the assessment and by due course, tax tickets were produced in the forms of a metal discs and handed to the NAs to distribute to their heads quarters as well for accountability in tax collection from the NAAs. It did not only end at the level of the quarter heads as it was equally handed to family heads as subordinate authorities to share to members of their families especially the males whom in imposition of the discs was an indication and evidence of regularly and adequately paying his taxes.

Fon Galega of Bali, Fon Ndefru of Mankon, Achirimbi of Bafut the Fons of Bum and Nso were heads of their NAAs who were the principal collectors of taxes and were assisted by their sub chiefs and quarter heads. They collected the taxes and deposited it in their various Divisional Treasuries. Each taxable male of ages above 18 was assessed to pay 4 shillings as tax. There was also a special tax levied on those on regular income like clerks, teachers, courts clerks and Nchindas. The jagali tax was levied on cattle Fulanis with an owner entitled to pay 1 shilling per cow⁷¹. The NAs did not only carry out the functions of collecting taxes, they equally were responsible for the maintenance of laws and order in their areas of jurisdictions.

i. Native Authorities and the Maintenance of Law and Order in the Bamenda Grassfields

The maintenance of law and order through some mechanisms for sustainable development of the *Bamenda* Grassfields and British Southern Cameroons inclusive, was not a new phenomenon. Traditional political governance and its institutions was responsible for the keeping of peace and order in the communities during the pre-colonial period. This continued to be the case during the German and British administrations of the Grassfields despite the introduction of modern mechanisms by the British. It is worthing that, the Grassfields Fondoms largely depended on the powers of the *Nkwifor*, *Megues*, *Manjong* and the *Nwerong* for the maintenance of law and order in their indigenous societies. The *kwifor* was responsible for internal security that is policing the entire Fondoms to ensure that peace and order reigned. The “*megues*” and “*Manjong*” took charge of the external security of the Fondoms. The military wing guarded the village boundaries

⁷¹Anunalezi. “Milestone in the History, p.29.

(as mentioned in chapter one of this study) against any unacceptable trespasses or incursions into the territories⁷².

The British Administration continued with the introduction of the police forces introduced by the Germans as new machinery in the maintenance of law and order in the *Bamenda* Grassfields. It is interesting to note that, the police force handled more complex issues of theft and land disputes and in their responsibilities equally assisted the Fons in ensuring the enforcement of law and order. The police forces, as time went by, arrested culprits of crimes of aggravated theft and murder were punishable according to the provision of the law and minor crimes of non-serious cases were managed in the Native authority courts. Following customary laws under the supervision of the DO. The NAs did not only keep peace but they managed justice in their NAAs.

ii. Native authority and the management of justice

Justice was equally a common feature in the pre-colonial societies handled by specific and high authorities of the indigenous setting. The study in chapter one revealed that it was the *kwifor*, *Nwerong* and the *Fons* and chiefs inclusive in the *Bamenda* Grassfields who were responsible for the management of justice in their communities. Together with some traditional councils as well as Courts, it made the judiciary an enrooted institution.⁷³ The *Fon* in some communities and some regulatory institutions were the ultimate judges of their communities. Nobody could question their decisions for it was a taboo to do so. They depended on their positions as defined by the tradition in passing judgments. It is interesting to recall that crimes such as murder and adultery especially with the Fons' wives were punishable by death or banishment through retributive justice of swearing by the accused. Meanwhile, minor crimes like petty theft and dowry debts were punishable by fines composed of items such as palm wine and animals like goats, palm oil, salt and fowls⁷⁴.

The advent of British colonial administration introduced the modern courts systems in the Grassfields of *Bamenda* wherein, the judicial system was restructured with more decentralized bodies. As the British were putting in place traditional Indigenous governance, they were also introducing the systems of local treasury as well as indigenous tribunals⁷⁵ the 3rd component of Indirect Colonial administration of the *Bamenda* Grassfields of Cameroons in which Fons received

⁷²Keng., "Traditional Institutional, p.45.

⁷³ Keng., "Traditional Institutional ,p.89.

⁷⁴M.Z. Njeuma., *Histoire du Cameroun (XIXes. Début XXe)*, Paris, Edition L'Harmattan, 1989, p.45.

⁷⁵Z.L. Elango, "The Councils of Notables and the Politics of Control in Cameroon under the French Rule, 1925-1949", *Trans-African Journal of History*, No 16, 1987, pp.24-26 .

progressive instructions from British colonial administrators. The introduction of indigenous tribunals was an extension of the proclamation of the 10th June 1916 proclamation ordinance of *Nigeria* on indigenous tribunals.

Through this ordinance, the Resident in *Nigeria* had the objectives of sensitizing the various Districts Administrators on the need of cultures and customs in the effective administration of indigenous populations. Thus as well as the creation of indigenous Authority areas, indigenous tribunals were equally created within the National territory of the BSCs as well as in the Bamenda Grassfields within the different time frame of the British occupation.⁷⁶ This institution was introduced as mentioned above among other reasons being the availability of adequate indigenous native personnel's in some localities capable of handling the functionality of an arm of administration as well as the wish of the colonial administration to guide and direct Africans leaders towards progressive acceptance of alien judicial systems. The creation of the indigenous tribunals by the British Colonial Master became a priority and necessity by the 1900s in the BSCs national territory with different rate of implantation as the different regions had specific features vis-a-vis its introduction.

In the Fako division it was not abruptly effective contrary to the *Grassfields Fons* who had an enrooted indigenous court systems headed by them, organized hearing structures and had a habitual authority of managing and presiding over the judicial affairs of the local populations. This however was profitable to the British colonial administration that did not face any major problem in its introduction in the *Bamenda* Grassfields. The British colonial administration deemed it important to introduce qualified personnels of Cameroonian origins into the system of judiciary which was lacking in the Grassfields of the *Bamenda* area.⁷⁷

It is of interest to note that, indigenous tribunals differed also in judicial responsibilities confined to the *Fons* constituted a major process of educating them in civil duties as well as handling criminal cases of their communities. The tribunals were charged with handling civil affairs of matrimonial issues as well as the collections of loans own. The tribunals especially that of the Mezam Division, examined issues of theft and civil disobedience. *Fons* within the same NAAs became Courts members under a single paramount *Fons* of *Bali*, *Bafut*, *Nso*, *Kom*, *Mankon* and *Bum*. The courts equally served as courts of appeal located in the District capitals. The Courts

⁷⁶V. Joan., "Colonial Chiefs and the Making of Class: A Case Study from Teso, Eastern Uganda", *Africa*, 47, 2, 1997, pp.140-159.

⁷⁷N.A. Ngeh. "The Conservation and Transformation of Royal Power in *Kom* dom, 1884-1966", DIPES II Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde, 1999, p 72.

of Appeal in *Mankon* had *Fon Ndefru of Mankon* as president and the chiefs of *Adzong*, *Awing* and *Akum* were vice presidents while the other chiefs of the *Ngemba* constituted court members⁷⁸.

NAs in the tribunals learned and were exposed to the Western jurisprudence of the British. The indigenous tribunals did not only limited their functions at the phase of the judiciary but they were equally a docile opine to the local administration as well as to colonial economy under the British colonial Administration. Thanks to fines paid in courts and other income paid on charges, tribunals had in possession the necessary resources to effectively manage and sustain the traditional authorities, the councilors, clerks and other staff of their local administration. The finances from the tribunals were equally used to finance local projects of roads constructions, the building of social facilities as well as on the improvement of economic activities. The British colonial administration within her time frame progressively increased the number of tribunals within BSCs in general as well as in the *Bamenda* Grassfields.

This was necessary in order to encourage the participative functions of Native authorities in local governance as it was indicated in an examination of public archives that through taxation, Native Authorities contributed the highest share into the administrative coffers thanks to their effective management of their courts fines and other charges.⁷⁹ It is within this perspective that Native Authorities were able to nourish local treasuries and administration as it was their principal source of revenues. This system of indigenous tribunals became a call for concern as Native Authorities became progressively exposed to rules of tax collectors and the retentions of a quota of tax collected led to malpractices as some of their peers began to dupe indigenes for personal interest and benefits.

This act however, exposed them into politics of the national spectrum.⁸⁰ This change of attitude was highly determined by the effective engagement of some indigenous rulers in the colonial administration. They began the race for who collected more taxes in his region of jurisdiction and highest depositions to both the native treasuries and in the national treasury. Thus, the colonial administration in its categorization of *Fons* was able to identify the influential *Fons*. This prompted the British authority to group the Native Authority areas to Federated Native

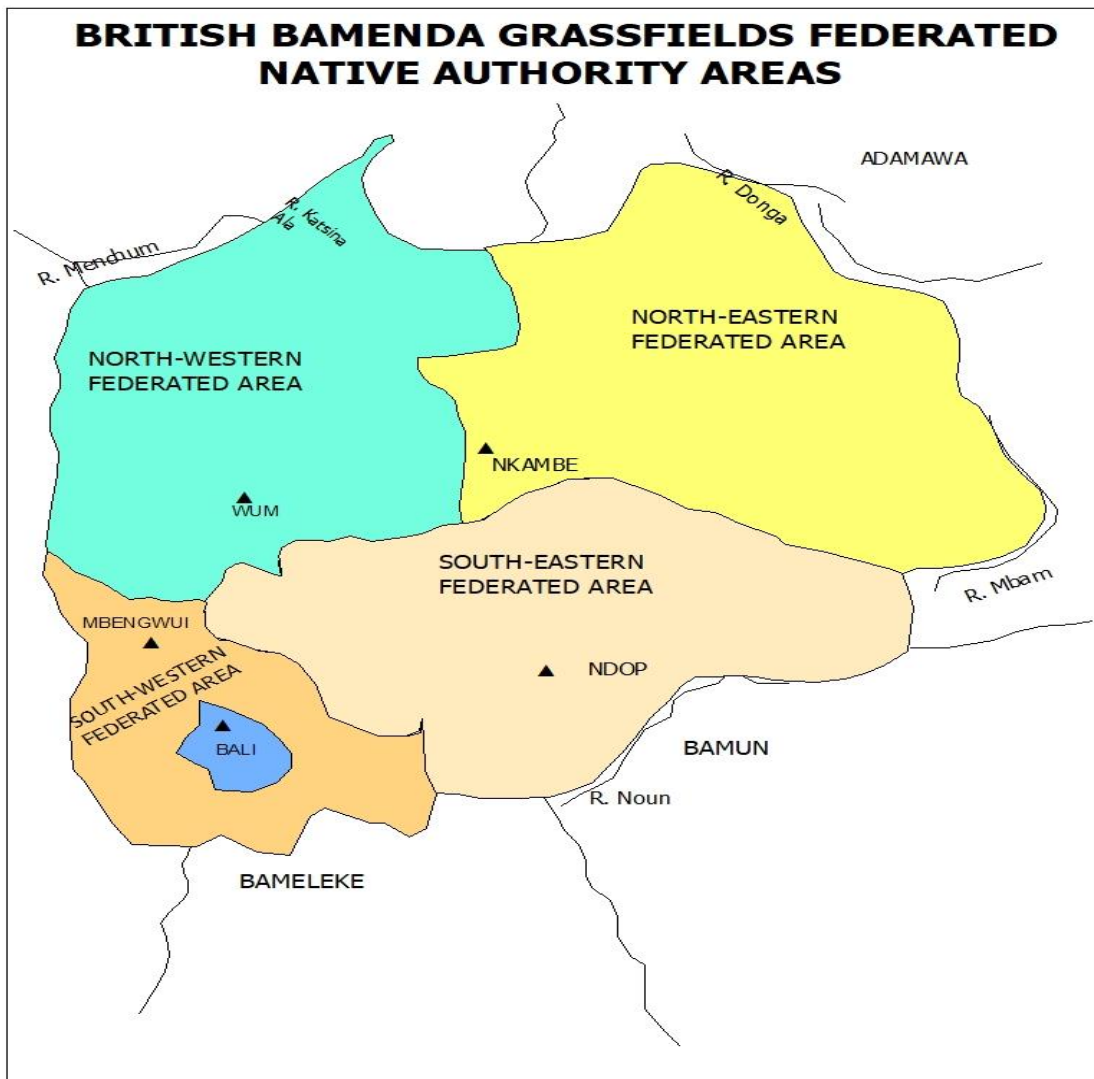
⁷⁸W.T.T. Samah., "Cameroon Grassfields Traditional Rulers in the Context of Globalization: Revival or Decline?", Paper Presented at the 15th Annual Conference of Pan African Anthropological Association, Yaounde, 8-12, August, 2005, p.6.

⁷⁹R.K. Engard., "Myth and Political Economy in Bafut (Cameroon): The Structural History of an African Kingdom", *Paideuma*, 34, 1988, pp. 51-89.

⁸⁰Ibid, p.91.

administrative Areas.⁸¹This aimed to attain the objective of autonomous self-administration for the *Bamenda* Grassfields and BSCs a large as seen below on the Map and also on the table.

⁸¹ W.T.T. Samah., "Cameroon Grassfields Traditional Rulers,p.200.

Map 3: British *Bamenda* Grassfields Federated Native Authority Areas

Source: Drawn by the Author.

Table 5: Federated Natives Authority Areas

No	FEDERATED NATIVES AUTHORITY AREAS	CONSTITUTED FONDOMS
01	NORTH - EASTERN	<i>Mbembe, Nfumte, Misaje, Mbem, Mbaw and Nsungli</i>
02	NORTH-WESTERN	<i>Fungom, Bum, Kom, Esimbi and Beba-Befang</i>
03	SOUTH-WESTERN	<i>Ngwo, Ngie, Ngemba, Moghamo and Meta</i>
04	EASTERN	<i>Nsaw, Bafut the Ndop Chiefdoms</i>

Source: Nkwi, "Cameroon Grassfields Chiefs and Modern Politics", p.109.

II. Implications of Indirect Rule on the Chieftaincy Institution

The British like the French colonial authorities in Cameroon crafted and imposed on their territory a governance policy of Indirect Rule. This governance policy was essentially manned by traditional rulers or chiefs in the Bamenda Grassfields. The *Fons* wielded before the advent of colonial rule in the Bamenda Grassfields⁸². The organization of the various entities known as chieftaincies at the helm of which were *Fons* also motivated the British to confine the execution of governance policy to them under their supervision. The objective in this section of the study is to establish historically how the British colonial policy of governance transformed the chieftaincy and chiefs in the *Bamenda* Grassfields. Thus, this transformation of the *Bamenda* Grassfields Fonship from traditional to colonial administrative chieftaincy can be seen in the implication of *Fons* in colonial politics.

i. Initiation of *Fons* in Colonial Politics

1940s and 1950s BSCS was characterized by political debates of self-rule towards autonomous regions from Nigeria and freedom from colonial domination. Chiefs in the course clashed with the educated elites for power and authority in local administration as the latter under the umbrella of political parties which dominated political representative in National Assemblies and party politics at the relegation of the ‘natural’ leaders⁸³. The educated elites represented by the KNC leadership was unable to secure a position of power for traditional leadership in the autonomous region of Southern Cameroons as the party was caught in the web of a dilemma. The chiefs together with the educated elites shared the goal of attaining a regional status for Southern Cameroons and the *Bamenda* Grassfields in particular could only be attained against a background of fiscal frugality⁸⁴.

In effect when the Southern Cameroons Regions became functional, the focus of the chiefs principally an issue of the House of chiefs fully backed by the chiefs in their support for the Western-educated politicians was absent and the *Bamenda* issue was also lost. These and other factors united both the chiefs and educated elites within the platform of separation of SCs from the Eastern Region of *Nigeria*. The setback which fueled the desire to obtain the prestigious goal sowed the seeds of discord and mistrust between the two main sets political actors who worked to

⁸²C. F. Mangwa., “Political Leadership in Bali-Nyonga, 1835-1985”, Master II Dissertation, University of *Buea*, 2000, p.24.

⁸³M.M. Ndobegang., “Grassfields Chiefs and Political Change in Cameroon Ca,1884-1996”, Ph.D thesis, Boston University, 1985, pp.100-152.

⁸⁴D.K. Chin., “The origin and the Development of Traditional political institutions and authority in Oku from Pre-colonial period to 2006”, DIPES II Dissertation in History, ENS Yaoundé I, 2009, p. 27.

accomplish the objective⁸⁵. As an aspiration, the chiefs and their populace stood at ending all links with *Nigerian* political parties especially in the quest of putting an end to the Ibo domination of their economy and civil service.

Again the *Fons* aspired and hoped *Fons* that in an autonomous Southern Cameroon regime, all structures which protected their powers and privileges will be maintained which was highly connected with the issue of the *Bamenda* province status. These aspirations were crowned with belief that, the house of chiefs within an autonomous region will give an opportunity for the legislative powers of the chiefs to be maintained along the lines of the Northern House of chiefs. Thus a means in which the natural rulers would have the opportunity to influence the nationalists' government leads by artificial rulers, the HC was also expected to provide economic opportunities in the form of salaries to its members⁸⁶. The British authority placed the grass field chiefs under categories of the centralized system of Administration practiced by the *Fons* bases on strong cultural values of leadership. The British ascertained the *Fon of Kom, Nso Bafut, Mankon and Bali Fondoms* were the paramount Chiefs. These chiefs mentioned above carried British Southern Cameroons into the political awareness and reunification of Cameroons. They were the fore runners in its politics from 1954 till 1972 in competitions with the elites but were finally flushed out on stage in Cameroons political History. This situation left the chiefs to be doom founded as auxiliaries of modern administration as E.M. Chilver notes;

While the chiefs' acquisition of power enhanced their stand in the local government of the Pre-World War II era, such powers were bound to ostracize them in the post-war period, when many educated Africans all over the continent were striving to introduce and engage in national politics and to determine their own affairs. Consequently, discontent between the chiefs and the educated elements increased.⁸⁷

Towards the end of WWII, when dependencies Nations of the world over were seeking for self-determination or at least greater participation in the national politics of their territories, Cameroonians of the *Bamenda* Grassfields were not indifferent. They were equally a dominated Nation State as the colonial masters of both the Germans and the British managed both her

⁸⁵Ibid, p. 35.

⁸⁶E.M. Chiabi., "Chieftaincy: Traditional rulers in National Politics" in *The Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences*, Séries Sciences Humaines volume VI, No 1 & 2 Yaoundé Cameroon, Janvier-Juliet 1990,p.45

⁸⁶ Vincent Samdala Galega II was born in 1906 in *Bali Nyonga*. His father, on *Nyonga* II, unlike some, saw some values in education and encouraged his and other sons of Bali to attend school. Consequently his heir apparent Samdala attended schools in *Bali* and *Bamenda* In 1924, he graduated from the government school which had been opened in *Bamenda* in 1922. As a standard five graduate a grade which at the time was adequate to obtain a job in the public service) Honorable Galega II obtained employment with The medical services and then trained as a nurse at the Bamenda General Hospital. He worked in *Ndop, Batibo* and finally in *Bali* from where he succeeded his father. His career as a dispensary attendant lasted some sixteen years 1924-1940 and that in politics lasted longer 1940-1985.

⁸⁷Chiabi, "Chieftaincy: Traditional rulers", p.178.

domestic and foreign affairs by incorporating NRs into the administration of the set territory. As companion of local administration, the traditional rulers played leading roles in the process of gaining consciousness and self-rule such as Johannes Manga Williams of Victoria and Vincent Samdala Galega II of Bali. Later with the combined efforts of traditional rulers and nationalists like Dr. John Ngu Foncha many more chiefs will engage in national politics which will even culminate in the creation of SCHCs in 1960. Until then Manga William and Galega II were the leading Chiefs who engaged in national politics at the time when SC was still an integral part of Nigeria. They represented Cameroon in the Eastern House of Assembly at Enugu, *Nigeria*.⁸⁸

Fon Galega II was observed by Gwanua Ndamgam a *Bali* scholar that he was not a politicians but represented traditional rulers in several political conferences making his pioneer role in the politics of Southern Cameroons not to be ignored as well as his active participations in the politics of Southern Cameroons. Besides domestic politics, Galega II played a very important role as a nationalist in the struggle for Independence in the period before the Southern Cameroons became autonomous affirmed by Martin Gwanfogbe. This was evident as the British supported his accession to the throne in 1940 because he was an educated and dynamic *Fon*.

This was the wish of all colonial administrators that all chiefs be educated at local level which they considered adequate in preparing them towards future administration and rightful representatives of their population. Galega II had received such an adequate education and would have little obstacle engaging in the pre-1954 national politics.⁸⁹

Again, *Fons* acquisition of power enhanced was a determinant factor in their stand in local government of the pre-war II era; such powers were bound to ostracize them in the post war period when many educated Africans all over the continent were striving to introduce and engage in national politics and to determine their own affairs. Consequently, discontent between the chiefs and the educated element increased. The result was that by the time the Cameroon House of Assembly was established in 1954, the educated elites had resolved though not collectively; forestall the continuation of chiefs in national politics. These elites were now engaging in nationalism as we know it. Struggle to create a Cameroon nation as distinct from representation of Cameroon by chiefs in the National politics of *Nigeria*. Consequently, the outcome of the disagreement between the traditional elites was that it was the educated elites and not the chiefs who gained admission to the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly in 1954.

⁸⁸ Chin, "The origin and the Development, p.50.

⁸⁹ Chiabi., "Chieftaincy: Traditional Rulers" ,p.69 .

This however did not constitute major conflict because many of the educated elites were either by birth directly relatives of the Chiefs such as Dr. Endely or by upbringing traditionally enough to compromise with traditional system and leadership as was the case with John Ngu Foncha. This made some of the politicians to favor the future House of Chiefs in the 1950s⁹⁰. The Chiefs role in national politics was not clearly implanted as they realized that the support of colonial administrators in education has thrown them out of politics, their children even those of commoners not only preferred national politics to local government but believed that time had come for national politics to prevail⁹¹.

More so, they also believed that the colonial-appointment of traditional leaders had little role to play in the national politics of the 1950s as some of the educated elites served in the House of chiefs both in Nigeria and in the *Bamenda* Grassfields. This became a great surprise to the Colonial masters as well as to the traditional rulers. This change of events realized through Africa and Cameroon by progressive administrators and nationalists had come to believe that Chiefs, especially the illiterate ones, had no future in national politics. There was the call and campaigns to educate the prospective Chiefs advice and given to the colonial administrator by E.S.B Tagart's in line with the changing trends. Commenting on the new role that the Chiefs were to take *"I would say, then, that while we should do what is possible to preserve the dignity of the chiefs of our native people, we should not expect those chiefs in return to perform executive functions as agents of European government."*⁹²

This advice came as early as in the 1930s as the chiefs were actively involved in local governance, little did both the colonial masters and chiefs envisage a radical change after the 2WW as the role of the chiefs was not clear. Thus, there was no official scheme within the native administrative system to accommodate the traditional and modern leaders.

Possibly some administrators privately hoped that new forms of government would evolve from the native administrative system. But unfortunately for these and natural rulers, instead of an evolution a revolution occurred. In 1940 and 1950s the educated elites in Cameroon and particularly those of the *Bamenda* Grassfields, sought to share political powers with the colonial rulers. In demanding political partnership, they differ from the traditional rulers who had accepted subordinates roles in the local administration. Eventually, the educated elites assumed leadership of the emergent national politics and administration while the chiefs continued to play leading

⁹⁰ Ndobegang., "Grassfields Chiefs and Political Change pp. 262-269.

⁹¹ Nche., "The Negative Impacts", p.12.

⁹² Ibid, p.19 .

roles in Native Administration. This role was thanks to the experiences and knows- how of the chiefs in traditional politics, they could not function in the nascent politics of the new nation created which called for a new wind of leadership⁹³.

Last but not the least, the IR administrative system put in place by the British a concept which was clearly defined in the Dual Mandate had as constitutional framework consisting of three ordinances; Indigenous administrative ordinance, indigenous Tribunal ordinance and local Finances or treasury ordinance. Within the national territory of the BSCs and the *Bamenda* Grassfields in particular, the three ordinances became instruments of indigenous administration or local administration or indirect administration which played an important role in Cameroons Nationalism and that of the Grassfields in particular⁹⁴.

Traditional rulers in national politics presented themselves as chief's instrument of native administration. Reasons being that native administration was considered a vital instrument for the introduction of modern political concepts, because Chiefs were regarded even more highly as orchestrators of the indigenous system. As such from the colonial beginning in Africa, the British recognized the importance of traditional rulers in the administration of their territories. All *Mamfe* congress in which all associations, politicians, traditional rulers, clergies and British Southern Cameroonians met to decide their political fate, traditional authorities were at the forefront of the agenda in *Mamfe* in 1953.⁹⁵

⁹³ Che, "Bamenda Division under", p .45.

⁹⁴Ibid, p.50 .

⁹⁵J.B. Ebune., *The Growth of Political Parties in Southern Cameroons 1916-1960*, CEPRE, Yaoundé,1999,p.21.

Figure 7: Achirimbi II *Fon* of *Bafut* in 1956



Source: HRM ABUMBI II; *Fon of Bafut, The Traditions and Customs of Bafut*, Layout and Printing, Pressprint Plc, *Limbe*, 2016, p.44.

The figure above, show the relative action of a Perfect Administrator⁹⁶ within the scope of governance between the Paramount *Fon* of *Bafut* and his subjects under the canopy of the British Governance policy of IR. He was rewarded a British medal of honour by King George VI of England around 1948 in recognition of his duty as a leader of his people, a protégé of the English. By 1950, he was the only *Fon* around who was given the opportunity and prerogative to fly the British flag over his Palace.⁹⁷ *Fon* Achirimbi II in the above picture is presenting a gift of an elephant tusk to Queen Elizabeth II of Britain on behalf of the Southern Cameroons Chiefs in Lagos 1956. This was very important as it was an opportunity for the *Fon* of *Bafut* to personally express his gratitude to British Colonial governance Authority of recognizing the natural rulers (Northern Chiefs were already having their HCs and the inauguration of the Eastern HCs in 1952 in *Nigeria*) as the people's indigenous representatives (*Fons*) and by extension worked with them towards the granting of a House of Chiefs as well to the *Bamenda* Grassfields *Fons*.

The British colonial policies amongst other things set the pace for nationalistic feelings in British Southern Cameroons together and the *Bamenda* Grassfields in general despite the fact that

⁹⁶BRA, File No.NW/Sa/d./3/Bk Achirimbi II of *Bafut*, 1978, p.56 by T.M. Aletum.

⁹⁷Ibid.

the introduction of Native administration “modernised” the traditional society. It however compromised by influencing the political decisions of the Grassfields chiefs and *Fons*. Under the British colonial administration, the chiefs and *Fons* were obliged to share their powers as chiefs to facilitate certain administrative duties like the collection of taxes and judgment of cases. Worst still chiefs in British Southern Cameroons and the Grassfields *Fons* were denied some traditional privileges as the missionaries condemned traditional religious beliefs on the people depended for solutions to their shrines. They also denied traditional dances characterized by masquerades and sacrifices. Indigenes were also discouraged from the practicing of polygamous lifestyle which was not only an abuse of the Grassfields traditional laws and customs but undermining the traditional administrative power. Therefore, the Grassfields *Fons* resented the subjection of their traditional rights to alien rule as they realized that colonialism was not just subjection to alien rule or a great restriction of power but a complete loss of sovereignty⁹⁸.

This in all nursed hatred and resentment among the people against the British colonial administration developing the quest to free them from the colonial bondage (Nationalism) became the main concern during this period. This dream grasped the opportunity after the Second World War among the Grassfields inhabitants to build nationalistic tendencies and with the birth of political parties, the platform and arena for political discursions in BSCs and the Grassfields were organized as a single people.

Thus, whatever changes or development in party politics in the British S.Cs, the *Fons* and the seat of chieftaincy together with its population were generally affected as they participated in party politics by propagating party programs and took part in the 1959 elections and 1961 Plebiscite especially in the K.N.C which was the first political party in B.S.C. in which the *Fons* pledged to support its objectives of separating BSCs from *Nigeria* which was in line with their ambition to free themselves from colonial domination and rule as mentioned above. The K.N.C. was the first political party in BSCs and the first in the *Bamenda* grass field in 1954 born on the amalgamation of the Cameroon National Federation and the Kamerun United National Congress during the All *Mamfe* conference of 1953 by Dr. Emmanuel Mbella Lifafe Endeley its leader⁹⁹.

With political pressure groups like the Cameroon welfare union “C.W.U.) of G.J. Mbene and the Cameroon Youth League (C.Y.L.) of Paul M. Kale to name just a few, emerged to press

⁹⁸Interview with Nyamsenkwen C. Kumbuma, aged, 46, Former Mayor of *Bali* Rural Council, 23rd, November, 2017, Mfoundi Division.

⁹⁹Interview with Tah Ndap George aged, 74, former Llord Mayor of *Mbengwi*, 19th August, 2017, Mbengwi.

for political reforms¹⁰⁰. In the 1950s, the pressure groups were transformed into political parties such as the Kamerun National congress K.N.C. being the first. The *Fons* of the Grassfields and their population supported the K.N.C., whose campaign platform of encouraging the Southern Cameroons to secede from *Nigeria* reflected their desire of freeing themselves from local colonial rule. The main objective with initial view of separating from *Nigeria* for Reunification of the two Cameroons got its popularity in the Grassfields and the participation of the *Fons* after the 1953 elections that gave the BSCs a status of quasi-Federal Region.

This victory of the K.N.C. brought Endeley and the party to the limelight of BSCs politics as *Fons* and Chiefs in the Grassfields became K.N.C. campaigned leaders in their different chiefdoms and militated in the K.N.C. party as its platform was in line with the aspiration of the *Fons* as earlier indicated. The traditional rulers support for the K.N.C. by convincing the people through campaign speeches as it was the party to lay their trust gave a landslide victory in the 1954 Elections as the K.N.C. won all the eight seats. The House of representatives together with her successive victories it became a popular party in the Grassfields chiefdoms as an informant described “it was a pride in *Meta* at the time for someone to become a K.N.C. militant’ ’The K.N.C. victories was enough evidence of the total support the party had and its determination to achieve its objectives¹⁰¹.

ii. Contribution of *Fons* to Constitutional Development of BSCs

In 1922, Indigenous Rulers served as Native Authority as administrator under the policy of the Indirect Rule stipulated by British their colonial masters. As actors of the modern system of Governance and experience gained, they became the first decision makers in the different Constitutions and Assemblies that were put in place by their colonial masters preparing them for future sole administrators of their Independent State.¹⁰² All political and administrative changes in *Nigeria* directly or indirectly influence political development in British Southern Cameroons and the *Bamenda* Grassfields. The Governor and commander-in-chief in *Nigeria* was also the governor of the Cameroons as well as the Executive Council of *Nigeria* was at the same that of Cameroon. In this perspective constitutions that were introduced in *Nigeria* equally affected Cameroons towards her political advancement.¹⁰³ The Richard constitution of 1947, this constitutions was

¹⁰⁰ Ebune., *The Growth of Political* , pp. 140 -160.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, p.167.

¹⁰² D.M.Njikang., “The Cameroon Chieftaincy Institution and access to justice in Cameroon” , *Mbengwi*, 2011, p. 34.

¹⁰³ E.M.L. Chiabi., “Background to Nationalism in Anglophone Cameroon, 1916-1925”, Ph.D Dissertation, University of California-Santa Barbara, 1982, pp.145-156.

introduced by Sir Arthur Richards', who was the then governor General of *Nigeria* from 1943-1947. The constitution was adopted in 1946 but became effective on the 1st of January, 1947. This constitution established a legislative Council in Lagos not providing any representation for BSCs in the said Council thus neglecting the traditional Rulers of the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon. Instead BSCs loose the one seat which chief Mange Williams of Victoria had occupied in the Lagos Council.

As an outcome of the Constitution, BSCs as well as Bamenda Grassfields traditional authority were given two seats in the Eastern Regional House of Assembly, (which had only an advisory roles and served as a link between the native authorities and central legislature in Lagos) at Enugu as the rightful representatives (Chief Manga Williams and *Fon Galega II*) of their populations without consulting the people. The constitutions said nothing concerning self-government of the BSCs which made both the Fons, Chiefs and Southern Cameroonians to criticize it because of the loss of representation in the central House in Lagos. Among other factors, it was criticized by P.M Kale through a memorandum written to the Labour Colonial secretary Arthur Creech Jones.¹⁰⁴

The demands among other were the immediate steps towards self-rule for *Nigeria* and Cameroons, questioned why the only seat in the legislative council was abolished, why SCs was not created a region but fused in the Eastern Region with Two traditional Chiefs representing SCs as mentioned in the study. The obnoxious appointment and deposition of chiefs Ordinance of 1945 gave the authorities the right to appoint and dismissed chiefs. The delegation returned home from Britain with all hopes dashed because the Colonial Secretary told them to implement Richard Constitutions.¹⁰⁵ The Macpherson Constitution of 1952 replaced the Richard constitution of 1948 after its adoption in 1951. This constitution was drawn in order to solve the neglected problems of granting a separated Regional Status with a House of Assembly to be directly responsible to the UN Trusteeship Council. As its outcome, SC was divided into six political districts with two seats each and *Bamenda* with 3 seats¹⁰⁶.

The SC was to be represented by 13 representatives in the 80 members of the Eastern House of Assembly in Enugu and Seven members of Non Traditional Authority but the elites and politicians of the 13 representatives were to be present in the New House of Lagos as seen on table

¹⁰⁴Ibid,p.56.

¹⁰⁵Interview with Mukete Victor Ndoki E., aged 98, Chief/Senator, 12th April, 2016, Yaounde.

¹⁰⁶Ibib.

three below. Amongst the four Ministers in the Council of Ministers in Lagos, Dr EML Endeley was the only SCs minister appointed as minister of Labour while ST Muna Minister of works with no Chiefs appointed as Minister who have been the sole administrator of their people.¹⁰⁷

Table 6: Thirteen Representatives from BSCs in the Eastern House of Assembly in Enugu

REPRESENTIVES	POLITICAL DISTRICTS
Lenjo and ST Muna	Bamenda
J.T Nze Ngala	Nkambe
J.T Kangsen and CT Ndi	Wum
S.A George and NN Mbile	Kumba
Dr. EML Endeley and Motombi Waleta	Victoria

Source: Ebune, *The Growth of Political*, p.21.

Lyttleton Constitution of 1952 in August was a Nigerian Constitutional conference which took place in Lancaster House. It was convened by Oliver Lyttleton who was the then British colonial Secretary. The Natural rulers and Native authorities of SCs on behave of their people and they authorized E.M.L. Endeley of the KNC to represent them at the conference by and N.N Mbile of the KPP together with Mallam Abba Abbi the lone traditional ruler from British Northern Cameroon without a single politician or traditional authority forms the *Bamenda* Grassfields. Resolutions of the Constitution stipulated that should Endeley win the Elections to be conducted in 1954 Southern Cameroons will be granted quasi regional status. Thus by 1954, she got Quazi regional status under the Leadership of Endely as minister of business at the relegation of traditional rulers. The executive Council equally met and was prévised by the Commissioner.¹⁰⁸

The SCHC was also created and met in *Buea*. This constitution was revised in 1957 at Lancaster House conference in which representatives where from political parties of KNDP, K.P.P. and KNC. SCs together with the *Bamenda* Grassfields was made a full Region known as SCs placed under the representative of her Majesty in the Federation of *Nigeria* and the Governor General of *Nigeria* was also to be the commissioner of SCs and a House of Chiefs was promised together with a ministerial system of Government.¹⁰⁹ In 1958 Dr. Endely as mentioned he became minister of Government business, introduced a ministerial system of government and became SCs

¹⁰⁷T. Eyongetah and R. Brain., *History of the Cameroon*, London, Longman, 1974, p.34.

¹⁰⁸ Ndobegang, "Grassfields Chiefs and Political", p. 67.

¹⁰⁹NAB,File, No. 2270/Cb1, Bamenda Division: Annual Report and League of Nations Report, 1937.p.34.

First PM with cabinet ministers of Rev Andose; N.N Mbile, Ajebe Sone and an Executive Council was also set up comprising of a President, the Commissioner of the Cameroons, Legal Secretary, Financial and Developmental Secretary. The unofficial members of the council were Endeley; Kangsen, Muna and SA George with no chief inclusive who played a very important role in KNC/Endeley popularity leading to his success in the 1954 House Representative Elections.¹¹⁰

The Lyttleton constitution of 1957 took a lot of political decisions which shaped and directed the politics and the future of Southern Cameroons and the *Bamenda* Grassfields inclusive. As in October, BSCs was proclaimed a Quazi Federal Region or a Semi-autonomous state under the governor of Nigeria, the creation of the House of Assembly with 25 members and 13 Elected which championed the political debates of BSCs regarding her continuous integration in Eastern-Nigeria or her separate entity from the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This however was decided in the March elections of 1957.¹¹¹ The *Bamenda* grass field's chiefs were active participants as they supported among other views secession from *Nigeria* together with the KNDP of John Ngu Foncha who stood for secession and immediate Reunification with French Cameroon. While Dr. Endeley KNC stood for full autonomous self-government for SCs within Nigeria and KPP of P.M. Kale stood for a regional status within Nigeria¹¹².

The results of the elections were highly contested as the chiefs opposed for the Non establishment of a House of Chief. These contestants were called to meet in London in a constitutional conference in May-June, 1957 in which deliberation were taken; The Quazi- Federal status was abolished and the territory was known as Southern Cameroons or Autonomous Region. The leader of Government Business was called the Premier ,the Governor-General was called High commissioner responsible for general policy, the House of Assembly members was increased from 13 to 26 members as well as the creation of the House of Chiefs with about 20 members.¹¹³

The resolutions raised another conference known as the London Constitutional conference scheduled for September 1958 in which the KNC& KPP stood for the attainment of an equal regional Status of SCs as other Nigerian of *Nigeria* while KNDP/*Fons* stood for pure and simple secession of Southern Cameroon from *Nigeria*. The outcome was the granting of Cameroons Full Regional Status similar to other Regions of *Nigeria* to be implemented after the Southern

¹¹⁰Ibid,p.81.

¹¹¹ K. Ezera., *Constitutional Development in Nigeria*, Cambridge University Press,1960,p.54.

¹¹²A. A. Ndamukong., "The Evolution of Traditional Administration in Meta from Pre-Colonial Times to 1990", MA Dissertation, University of Yaoundé 1, 1999, p.23.

¹¹³Ibid,p.54.

Cameroons House of Assembly has been dissolved in December 1958 and new elections held in 1959¹¹⁴.

The role of traditional rulers in nationalism at loggerheads with the educated elites which expressed itself especially during the creation of Cameroons House of Assembly established in 1954¹¹⁵. The educated elite's resolved thoughts individually without a collective approach to forestall the continuation of chiefs in national politics but engaged in nationalism (the struggle to create a Cameroon nation as distinct from the representation of Cameroon by chiefs in the national politics of *Nigeria*) a glaring example from the Western Grassfields.

Further by agreeing, the conflict between the two were averted as many of the educated elites were either by birth directly relatives of chiefs or by upbringing traditional enough to compromise with the traditional system and leadership. This was clearly seen in the 1950s as some of the politicians moved in favor of a future house of chiefs eventually created in 1960¹¹⁶ against a background support of the Grassfields chiefs who gave their total support to the nationalist movement. For instance, after the Lancaster House conference of 1953, in which Dr. Endeley KNC stood for separation of BSCs from Nigeria was ill-received by the Nigerian press and members of KNC were attacked as they decided to split from the N.C.N.C. These attacks did not stop the politicians of BSCs to respond to Lord Lyttleton call for a conference in London.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴A.W. Ndifor., "Colonial Impacts on Indigenous Political Institutions' case of Nweh Politics", DIPES II Dissertation in History, ENS Yaoundé, 1981, p.22.

¹¹⁵ Ngoh., *Cameroun: cent ans d'histoire*, p.56.

¹¹⁶Ngoh., *The History of Cameroon Since 1800*. Limbe: Pressbook, 1989, p. 76.

¹¹⁷ACE electoral knowledge network, "Paramount chieftaincy as a system of local Government", ACE Facilitators, 25th March, 2011,p 179.

Figure 8: British Southern Cameroons Assembly Men

Source: G. Smith, “Celebrating the life of Solomon T. Muna”, Health Communication Inc. January 22nd, 2002, p.7.

The Figure above carried some Southern Cameroons Nationalists (the Assemblymen) who walked away from the Eastern Regional Assembly in Nigeria in 1952. In 1950, the Eastern Region of *Nigeria* was hired by a political crisis in the leadership of the NCNC and membership into the Executive Council of Eastern Region of *Nigeria*. As the debate in the ERHA intensified and dragged on, the members in the picture (left to right: Lainjo, Endeley; S.T. Muna, Kangea followed by Foncha and Ngalla) constituted some members of the Cameroon bloc (the Neutrality Bloc) which walked out, demanding a separate region and eventual re-unification with the French Cameroon.¹¹⁸ The Assemblymen walked out of the ERHA in *Nigeria* due to the failure of their aspirations to be attained. This was supported by the Traditional Authorities in the 1948 Native Local Government Administrative reforms. The educated elites got the green tickets from the Natural Rulers through the elections conducted in Native Authority Council to represent both the Indigenous rulers and their subjects in subsequent political discuss on a regional status as the interest (the House of chiefs) TRs will equally be protected.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ G. Smith., “Celebrating the life of Solomon T. Muna”, Health Communication Inc. January,22nd, 2002,p.7.

¹¹⁹ M.M. Ndobegang., “Grassfields Chiefs and Political Change in Cameroon, Ca 1884-1966”, Ph.D Dissertation in History, Boston University, 1985, pp.272-286.

The Natural Rulers and native authorities of the BSCs, on behalf of their people and themselves authorized Dr. Endeley, J.C. Kangsen and Mallam Abba to represent BSCs at the conference. The authorization letter was signed by the following *aFons* and chiefs; chief Sake *Fon* for *Ndop* local Area signed on July 18, Sehm Atar, the *Fon* of Bansaw signed on 19th July, chief W. Mfiomi of Ndu signed on 19th July as well as chief of Nkambe. The chief of We, Chief Philip Bama signed on the 20th of July, Achirimbi II of *Bafut* signed on the 21st of July as well as the chief of *Mankon* SW Federation while on the 22nd August, Fon VS Galega II of *Bali* NA as well as *Fon* Mba II of Batibo signed on the 22nd of July 1953. These signatories nursed the creation of a House of Chiefs in 1954 and which was abolished 12 years after.¹²⁰ The chiefs were now able to realize the education which they were curbed to sustain by the colonial masters had thrown them out of modern politics. As stated by M. Aletum:

Their children and even those commoners who acquired the education not only preferred national to local government but also believed that time had come for national politics to prevail. They also believed that the colonial-appointed traditional leaders had little role to play in the national politics of the 1950s and some of the elites were ambitious to have important role in the House of chiefs which was very surprising to both the colonial administrators and many traditional rulers¹²¹.

The *Fons* usually were elected by inheritance and if the inherent are more than one or not nominated by outgoing *Fons* then election is conducted to elect one. These chiefs rule the tribe according to their own traditions and take decisions in important issues in consultation with his aids. Government generally did not interfere in their routine matters, in major issues like joint defense of the country, developmental schemes and external affairs, the Government enjoy full rights.¹²²

iii. Southern Cameroon House of Chiefs as Governance Institution

The Southern Cameroons house of chief was accepted in the London Constitutional conference of 1957 and came into operation in 1960. The idea of its creation was conceived as far back in 1953 after the Eastern Regional Crisis from which chiefs began to assert themselves very prominently in politics. It has a proportional representation as follows; Victoria division (2seats), *Kumba* division (4 seats), *Mamfe* Division (3seats) *Bamenda* Division (6 seats) *Wum* (3 Seats)

¹²⁰ E.S.D. Formin, "The Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs 1960-1972", Maitrise Dessertation, in History, University of Yaounde, 1979, pp.23-63.

¹²¹ Ngoh, *The History of Cameroon*, p. 79.

¹²² Fomin, "The Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs 1960-1972," p. 9.

Nkambe (3 seats)¹²³. Elections took place on July 1960 and it first met in September 1960 and was presided over by the Commissioner J.O. Field.

As the House of Lords in Britain, natural or traditional rulers came together to contribute towards the building up of the state. This was facilitated through the policy of indirect rule system that had existed since 1922 as the chiefs and Emirs played an important role in national politics precipitated the formation of the house of chiefs. In 1952, the chiefs of the then Eastern Region of *Nigeria* formed a House of chiefs; *Fon Galega II* of Bali was one of its members. The formation of the Eastern Chief Conference did not go unnoticed by the chiefs in British Southern Cameroons¹²⁴. Recounted as follow;

The chiefs were the traditional or “natural rulers” in Southern Cameroons. In the Bamenda Grassfields, they were known as the *AFons* Chieftaincy was very strong influential and respect institution in the Bamenda Grassfields. As the British colonial authority used the chiefs in administering their people. Chiefs had jurisdiction over the criminal and customary courts and were instrumental in the success of the Natives Authorities. Before the 1950s, the chiefs in Southern Cameroons had yet identified themselves as a political influential group with the formation of a recognized association, could influence the politics and the development of Southern Cameroons. This changed in the 1950s when the Chiefs demanded a House of Chief¹²⁵

The London constitutional conference called on the commissioner of Southern Cameroons to create a SCHC in the territory; The Commissioner, J.O. Field, visited all the divisions in the territory informing and seeking the opinions of the chiefs on matters which were related to the formation of the S.C.H.C. After the tour which took place in 1957-58, J.O. Fields laid down the following conditions for the elections of a Chiefs into the SCHC; the chief must be medically fit and law abiding; the Chief must be a British subject or must be protected by Britain and the commissioner had the last words on who was and who was not a Chief. It was finally decided that membership into the SCHC was to be done by elections after the above conditions had been fulfilled.¹²⁶

Nonetheless, the *AFon of Bali, Nso, Bafut* and *Kom* were given autonomous memberships. The First Elections were fixed for July 1960 and the first session of the SCHC met on September 6th 1960 presided over by J.O. Field But dark moment surfaced as the support and warmed relations nurtured with the K.N.C. and Dr. Endeley was very brief as the chief soon abandoned the K.N.C. to find comfort and confidence with the Kamerun National Democratic Party of Dr. John Ngu

¹²³ Formin, “The Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs 1960-1972,pp.23-35.

¹²⁴Ibid,pp.45-80.

¹²⁵Ndobegang., “Grassfields Chiefs and Political Change in Cameroon,p.20.

¹²⁶Ibid,pp.33-56.

Foncha in 1957.¹²⁷ After the K.N.C. victories in 1953 and 1954, Grassfields *Fons* and their populations parted and left from once and for all the K.N.C. due to Dr. Endeley's attitude of no confidence. This was demonstrated by his sudden change of stance on the political future of Southern Cameroons and the Grassfields from the very start advocating for secession from Nigeria as he lobbied all Grassfields *Fons* and population to stand behind him. This, together with his volte-face in advocating for autonomy of B.S.C.s with *Nigeria* frame became an embarrassment to the Grassfields that saw K.N.C. as a party of liberation from the British colonial rule in their territory to be a dilemma and Dr. Endeley became indifferent and lukewarm to the chieftaincy and traditionalism.¹²⁸

He committed several errors dealing with those who command the populace and symbol of tradition and culture by shaking hands with the chiefs and *Fons*, sitting with them on the stools reserved for their peers or by addressing them by the wrong title or at the wrong time. He sort of underestimating the role of Natural Rulers included in modern politics by despising and undermining them.¹²⁹ To the Bamenda Grassfields traditional rulers, it was an act of disrespect and gross political betrayal for the chiefs to withstand together with their populations. Consequently, the relationship with the K.N.C. headed by Dr. Endeley with the *Fons* were disrupted leading to the disintegration of the K.N.C. by the *Fons* leading to future Waterloo in elections where Dr. Endeley experienced his doom together with the party in favor of the K.N.D.P. Disgruntled and embarrassed with the K.N.C.¹³⁰

As mentioned earlier, the *Bamenda* Grassfields *Fons* saw a rescuer the K.N.D.P. of Dr. John Ngu Foncha whom after noticing the change of political orientation of the K.N.C. break away in 1955 to form an Independent part with political aspiration of secession from *Nigeria* and reunification with French Cameroon. To the Grassfields' rulers this was a true reflection of their aspirations and was ready to give their total support to K.N.D.P. making the party popular in the Grassfields area.¹³¹ Thus in the London conference of 1957 scheduled to negotiate on the political future of *Nigeria* and Cameroon the first of its kind and which hosted all the three main political parties in BSCs at the time, the Grassfields chiefs and their peers were represented on the conference by *Fon Galega II of Bali* as he went there on there on the K.N.C. list together with Dr.

¹²⁷P.N. Nkwi., "Cameroon Grassfields Chiefs and Modern Politics", *Paideuma*, 25, 1979, pp.105-167.

¹²⁸A. Lee, and K. A. Schultz., "Comparing British and French Colonial Legacies: A Discontinuity Analysis of Cameroon", *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 2012, p .23.

¹²⁹E.M.L. Chiabi., "Background to Nationalism in Anglophone Cameroon 1916-1945", Ph.D. Dissertation in History, University of California, 1982, pp. 134-149.

¹³⁰Nkwi., "Cameroon Grassfields Chiefs Nkwi, p.158.

¹³¹*Ibid*, p.160.

Endeley, J.T. Ndze and V.E. Mukete the party adviser. Dr. Foncha went there to represent the K.N.D.P. with A.N. Jua as adviser while P.M Kale was there to represent the K.P.P. with N.N. Mbile as adviser¹³².

Dr. Endeley confidence of having *Fon Galega* became ramshackle as he was not fortunate to have the support of the traditional ruler as has always been the case. This time thing change as he was short sighted and it was a miscalculation on his part for the traditional ruler were more than bend on pressing for a separate Cameroon entity (*Babila Fon Galega II*) and to disgrace Dr Endeley as M.P. Kale writes on the stance of traditional Rulers on the debate of BSCs Independence;

During the London Conference, the Southern Cameroons delegation stated their points of views vis-à-vis the political status of Southern Cameroon when *Nigeria* became Independent. Considering that they were not a political party, Galega presented a completely independent and distinct opinion at the conference. Dr. Endeley presented a memorandum that opted for Southern Cameroon to remain as part of *Nigeria*. The KNDP whose cardinal objectives was secession from Nigeria presented a memorandum that reflected the views of the Grassfields chiefs and Fons .The memorandum presented by Galega was in favor of separation from Nigeria and in line with the KNDP platform, this was a surprised for Dr. Endeley thought as a member of his delegation, Galega was going to support him. Little did he know Galega was there just to present his peers and had prepared.¹³³

The Author continued to substantiate the political attitudes of the Bamenda Grassfields Chiefs towards the political progress of traditional governance within the modern system of administration. The Fons of the Bamenda grassfileds did not believe and were in antagonism with the elitist son who claimed to stance for the aspiration of the Grassfields Fons. The Author attests that;

Again, disappointed because Dr. Endeley who was confident of the support of their traditional rulers presented a memorandum that included Galega's name entailing that that was his stance with regard to the political future of their territory. He had claimed Galega and his peers were unanimously in favor of autonomy for the Southern Cameroons within the Nigerian framework while, Galega was talking secession and full regional status for the Southern Cameroons under the colonial government. This was the confusion that characterized the Cameroonian delegation vis-a-vis the Southern Cameroons question. Galega took advantage of this sharp misunderstanding with Dr. Endeley to quit from the K.N.C. delegation and team up with Dr. Foncha whose political objective s reflected the views of the natural Rulers. He parted ways with Dr. Endeley, accusing him of having neglected the course supported by the Cameroonian people¹³⁴

In 1952, the House of Chief of the Eastern Regional House of *Nigeria* was created with Fon Galega II of Bali and Chief Manga William being the sole representatives from B.S.Cs to decide the fate of their people. The outcome of what happened in the London conference and the friendship with Dr. Foncha K.N.D.P. party with *Fon Galega* gave a new impetus and journey of traditional rulers' role in the political evolution of the Grassfields as things were never the same

¹³²M.P. Kale, *Political Evolution in the Cameroons*, Buea, Government Printer, 1968, p. 44.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 50-51.

again.¹³⁵ Galega return hope with a beautiful smile and hope for Grassfields rulers in general and the separation of BSCs from British role in general and from Nigeria domination in particular. Within this perspective, Fon Galega became an eye opener in patiently educating and enlightening his peers from the Grassfields on Dr. Endeley's defection and humiliation he got from him in London and by extension called and urged his peers to join him support the K.N.D.P. of Foncha as they both aspired for a better future of B.S.Cs and the Grassfield traditional rulers in particular.¹³⁶ The words of Galega II did not felt on deaf eyes as Grassfields Traditional Rulers undertook the sensitization campaigns in their various chiefdoms for their populations to dissociate themselves from K.N.C. activities and to give their unconditional support to the K.N.D.P. and by 1958, adult males of the Grassfields chiefdoms militated for K.N.D.P. party and the K.N.C. activities ceased in this region of the B.S.Cs.¹³⁷ It is said that when Dr. Endeley later understood the stance and activities of the Grassfields chiefs and Fons especially as they deserted from K.N.C., he resorted in issuing warning and limiting the political activities of the chiefs by telling them to stay out of politics and anyone insisting on doing so was acting on his own risk.¹³⁸ Despite these warnings, the traditional rulers were bent on their objectives of liberating BSCs and the Grassfields' population and by extension reinstate their legitimacy and resiliencies within the political evolution of their Nations.

Consequently, they occasionally met under the umbrella of Southern Cameroons Chiefs Conference, the brainchild of *Fon Galega II* and Achirimbi of *Bafut* at different Divisional headquarter. These meetings gave birth to the Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs in 1957¹³⁹. This House of Chiefs continued to struggle with the educated elites within party politics of the Grassfields and the B.S.Cs for an independent state from Nigeria and from British colonial (double colonizers) rule towards self-rule and eventual Independent as well as revamping their inherited power and authority over their indigenous populace as mentioned in part of this work not leaving out their identity as custodians and representatives of their population.¹⁴⁰

The SCHC was indefensible anachronism in an upcoming democratic nation; it symbolized privileges which were not justified on a rational basis, the idea of a hereditary legislator was absurd and it added an additional financial burden on the taxpayers. However the HCs became a very

¹³⁵Kale, *Political Evolution in the Cameroons*, p.69.

¹³⁶E.M.Chilver., "Native Administration in the West Central Cameroons, 1902-1954", in *Essays in Imperial Government*,(ed) Robinsin, K. and Madden, F, Blackwell, Oxford, 1963, pp.123-137.

¹³⁷Ibid, p.154.

¹³⁸ W.T.T. Samah., " Achirimbi II of *Bafut*" M.A. Dissertation, University of Yaoundé I, 1999, p 88

¹³⁹ Kale, *Political Evolution in the Cameroons*, p.90

¹⁴⁰Ibid,p.95.

influential institution in the politics of British Southern Cameroons. The Chiefs and Fons were the fore runners so speak of the SCCC (Southern Cameroons Chiefs Conference), its contributed immensely in the election and plebiscite victories which the K.N.D.P registered until the formation and official institution of the SCHC.¹⁴¹ Most of the influential members of the SCCC became members of the SCHC. When SC achieved independence in 1961 by reuniting with the republic of Cameroon, the SCHC was maintained and after reunification, it became known as the West Cameroon house of Chiefs. It was abolished in 1972 when the Federal Republic of Cameroon became the United Republic of Cameroon

BSC politicians took over the affairs of government from the colonial masters. They inherited and adopted the parliamentary system akin to that of the Great Britain which had a titular president. The president reign to enforce laws used but did not rule. In fact he lacked the executive power. In this situation, there was therefore, an inconsistency and lack of a cohesive interpretation of where the power to enforce laws lay. On one hand, the prime minister felt that he was the legal authority to enforce laws and on the other hand, the Chief or president considered himself as the rightful person to give out orders.¹⁴² There was therefore a struggle for status and supremacy. This is just one of the reasons why a general disorder which consequently plunge *Fons* into several conflicts. These which became eminent, led the leaders who decided to experiment a different system that would come out only with one national leader. The Chief is looked upon as a central figure of national unity and he serves as a center of judgment and initiative, he is a central figure of national unity and a symbol of national awareness, a person who will show Cameroonians a sense of direction and love for the father land which has not been fully accomplished because of British or colonial rule.¹⁴³

iv. Implication of Bamenda *Fons* in immoral Practices

Among the various duties confined to *Bamenda* Grassfields *Fons* by the British colonial governance was that of the collection of taxes. Indeed, many problems emerged from the practice of employing traditional rulers as tax collectors. Throughout the country, *Fons* became the victims of tax collection. It must be remembered that under the *Bamenda* Grassfields traditional political system no taxes were paid, but tributes were given which often took the form of material payment,

¹⁴¹J.S. Coleman., *Nigeria Background to Nationalism*, University of California, Berkely, 1st ed, 1965, pp.12-67.

¹⁴²NAB, File No.cb.47/1,p.12,Advice on the relationship between colonial administrators and chiefs”, 1947, p.55.

¹⁴³A. Tyodzua., “The Synergy of American presidential system and the Underdevelopment of African Societies: A Case study of the cost of governance in Nigeria” in *Africa social Science Rview*, vol.I , Africa Centre for Social & Economic Research, October 2, 2011, pp.100-108.

like agricultural products or manual labor¹⁴⁴. The payment of tribute was not a rational affair like the payment of taxes which set fixed amounts to be paid in English currency within a limited period of time. Under the German direct rule, it was not quite clear whether direct taxes were paid, but it is certain that heavy manual labor was demanded¹⁴⁵. Thus, the tax system under the Germans and British indirect rule became what Chilver and Kaberry termed "From Tribute to Tax". In their studies, Chilver and Kaberry showed how the organs of traditional political institutions (like the lineage-head, sub-Chief, *Ndakwifor*, *Ngwerong*, and other traditional organs) were converted into tax collecting authorities. Generally, in the Bamenda Grassfields and precisely in *Bafut* the system was that, out of every English pound the chief collected, he was paid one shilling.¹⁴⁶

It therefore implied that the *Fons* livelihood depended on the amount of tax he collected. If he did not submit to the local Council authorities of his area the sum of money prescribed, he was held responsible. So, the Chief needed helpers and lineage-heads to collaborate in the system of tax collecting. The system also required a territorially based organization census, a regular collection and an efficient method to impose the per capita amount of tax. Frequently the *Bafut* extended family system did not favor the census. Families were between ten and twenty members might present to the demographic officer only two people. The officer could not protest because there were no registers of births, and the census data were inadequate. The more people the chief called upon to assist in the collection of tax, the more his quota of one shilling in the pound decreased.¹⁴⁷

However, the system of tax collecting remains a problem even today. We know only too well that payment of tax is a problem faced by every government, whether traditional or indirect. In certain cases, the *Fons* exploited the situation to their own advantage by not handing over money collected to the Native Council Authorities. This was difficult to trace because no adequate records were kept showing names and numbers of residents in any of the territorial areas¹⁴⁸. The collection of taxes at one point in time became very problematic as it dealt with the deference and temerity they enjoyed from their subjects and in some factors that could lead to the contestation of the throne for the simple reason that the *Fon* was not morally upright as demanded by tradition. In *Kom*, tax collectors faced a number of problems. The proselytes, who regarded the missionaries as their immediate superiors, would not pay tax through pagan *Fons*. Per se, British officials began

¹⁴⁴ Aletum, *Political Conflict*, p.95.

¹⁴⁵ Nkwi, *The Germans in the Western Grassfields*, p.100.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, pp.134-155.

¹⁴⁷ Geschiere, "Chiefs and Colonial Rule in Cameroon", pp.56-82.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p.89.

to consider the possibility of appointing “Christian chiefs” in *Njinikom* village where most Christians lived¹⁴⁹.

This was obviously going to spark succession conflicts as individuals with legitimacy could not be appointed *Fons* contrary to customs and tradition of the *Njinikom* chieftaincy. Furthermore, the *Fon* of *Kom* in 1931 was accused openly by British Resident in the Cameroons for embezzling tax money, excessive tax collection than the amount authorized by the British authorities¹⁵⁰. After pleading with the British authorities, the charges levied against the *Fon* were uplifted. In *Bamali* the role of tax collection created chieftaincy succession conflicts between *Ndafaw* and Marculey who were all claiming the right to succession especially because of the advantages linked to tax collection. In reality the *Fon* was deported for the embezzlement of tax money and in such circumstances, the British administration sent a policeman to guard the palace and the vacant throne¹⁵¹. Also, *Fon* Ndesso of *Mankon* and many of his supporters were arrested and fined or imprisoned for tax-related crimes.

The above discursions revealed the effective establishment and a strong grip of traditional administration within the auspices of the British colonial administrative mechanisms. The policy of indirect rule positioned the traditional indigenous rulers at the second in command in the administration of their indigenous populations. Local administration tilted towards the interest of the British colonial administration as *Fons* were directly answerable to them.¹⁵² They were the immediate actors in the collection of taxes, management of peace and order in their administrative district as well as spearheading developmental projects prescribed by the colonial master. *Fons* in due course were forerunners of political activities of their population vis-a-vis the people’s representations in Colonial governance. But with the exposure to formal education, their role faced competitions in politics both from the British and the educated elites in the effective management of the indigenous population and the path for self-governance.¹⁵³

This however prompted the traditional rulers to developed new strategies and became active participants in the modern political life’s of both their traditional seats and that of their local population. This to an extent, determined their role in Modern political activities and their fates as indigenous rulers as well as custodians of their customs and traditions.

¹⁴⁹ Nkwi, *Traditional Government*, p.151

¹⁵⁰ NAB, File No.C25/1, “*Bikom* tax Report”, 1931, p.02

¹⁵¹ NAB, File 16/3, “Fingi (ex-chief of *Bamendjing*, *Bamenda* Division)”, 1917, p.13

¹⁵² F.Lugard.. *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, London, Frank Cases and Co, 5th ed, 1965, pp.12-44.

¹⁵³ Geschiere, “Chiefs and Colonial Rule in Cameroon”, p.160.

The British just like the former colonial Master (The Germans) did not hesitate to effectively implement their colonial governance policy on the already seated and enrooted governance mechanisms of German semi-direct colonial utilization of Traditional rulers (*Fons*). The *Fons* effectively ruled as local administrators and were quickly exposed to the system of alien administrative mechanisms. The British with the challenges of agglomerated chiefdoms under a single *Fondom* of the *Bali* Paramount decided to further fragment the *Bamenda* Grassfields into NAAs as well as FNAA for effective administration and accountability of Government businesses. She equally introduced the constitutional representative tools aimed at preparing BSCs for self-rule led to conflicts of endogenous representation between the *Fons* and the educated politicians.¹⁵⁴ Traditional Rulers in this pessimistic and hopeless situation became involved in political whimsicality for a revamping of leadership identity. This struggle of the chiefs did not unfold without dramatic changes on both *Fons* as individuals as well as their authority and legality incarnated by the Chieftaincy institution, constituting the next chapter of this study.

¹⁵⁴.Lugard. *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, p.53.

**CHAPTER FOUR:
THE FATE OF BAMENDA GRASSFIELDS TRADITIONAL RULERS IN
INDEPENDENT GOVERNANCE SYSTEM:1961-1990**

This chapter is about the fate of *Bamenda* Grassfields Traditional rulers at Independence. It deals with the challenges faced by traditional authorities in the post-independence governance system despite the rich experience they acquired during colonial rule. Traditional rulers in the *Bamenda* Grassfields played a fundamental role in the political, economic and socio-cultural life of the area under the German and British colonial administrations. Their role in the planning and execution of colonial policies was capital. As a matter of fact, they were the corner stone of colonial governance system in the Bamenda Grassfields.¹ For more and several decades, *Bamenda* Grassfields traditional rulers closely collaborated with colonial authorities. This obviously gave them the necessary governing, administrative and political experience. It was expected that, traditional rulers alongside the political elites were going to collaboratively manage the new state that emerged at independence. *Fons* were better placed to manage the administration of their localities given their experience. Unfortunately, at independence a different and insignificant role was reserved for them.

In several African countries, traditional rulers were confronted with a series of challenges, the principal challenge was from the political elite who claimed and accused traditional rulers of collaborating with colonial authorities to regressive developmental projects in their respective NAAs. The objective in this chapter is therefore, to examine the challenges faced by Bamenda Grassfields traditional rulers in post-independence Cameroon, especially as concern their integration and participation in modern governance. Structurally, the chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section dwells on the situation of *Bamenda* Grassfields *Fons* from 1961-1977. Here emphasis is laid on their activities concerning the administrative and political organization of the new independent state under the Federal system till the passing of the 1977 law regulating the organization and functioning of the chieftaincy institution (See Appendix 13). Part two handles the period from 1977 to 1990. Here attention is laid on the new general role of chiefs in Cameroon as a whole and specifically those of the *Bamenda* Grassfields as auxiliary of the administration in the national governance system.

¹P.M Kaberry., “Retainer and Royal Household in the Cameroon Grassfields”, *Cahier d’Etude Africaines*, Vol 3 No 2, 1962, pp.282-298.

Section One: Implications of Chieftaincy in Independent Cameroons' governance policies

The Modern State in Cameroon and elsewhere in Africa inherited the colonial administrative system of governance and the structures put in place by the said administration. In other words, the modern state inherited the governance system created by the various colonial authorities. This part of the chapter dwells on the situation of the Bamenda Grassfields chiefs during the period of 1961 to 1977.

I. Influence of Colonial Governance on Grassfields *Fons* at Independence

Colonial rule in the *Bamenda* Grassfields had a significant impact on the socio-political and economic institutions existent in the area. One of such organs affected, was the Chieftaincy institution. Generally opinion among scholars hold that, colonial rule did more harm than good to the African traditional system incarnated by chieftaincy, even if others suggested that the colonial administration actually molded the chiefs and the chieftaincy institutions in the colonial image.²

One of the main traits inscribed on the Chieftaincy institution in the *Bamenda* Grassfields was the in-depth implication of chiefs in colonial governance during the German and British administrations which undoubtedly modified the functioning role of the traditional authority incarnated by Chieftaincy. This did not only modify the role and functions of chiefs, it went as far as interfering in the laws guiding access to the Chiefly position³. A case in point was the introduction of “election” as a mode of access to chiefly position as it happened in Bu and Ashong Fondoms during the German colonial era.

The Germans and British administrations to some extent destabilized the traditional governance system in the *Bamenda* Grassfields by influencing the balance of power in favor some *Fondoms*, like the empowerment of *Bali-Nyonga Fandom* over *Widikum* sovereign villages. The unilateral modification of tradition and customs guiding access to chieftainship like in *Ashong* and *Bu* was a serious threat to chieftaincy as a dynastic institution. That is why by 1960, it became urgent to set rules regulating chieftaincy⁴. This was because the colonial governance system did

²T.Von Trotha., “From Administrative to Civil Chieftaincy: Some problems and prospects of African chieftaincy”, *Journal of Legal Pluralism*, vol 37/38, 1996, pp. 79-108.

³M.M. Ndobegang., and W.T.T Samah., “German Colonialism and the Cameroonian Chieftaincy Institution, 1884-1916: The Politics of Convenience, Tyranny and Hegemony, Unpublished, p.45-54.

⁴See Annexe 9, The Law on the Recognition of Chiefs, Southern Cameroons Gazette on Recognition of Chiefs, p.23.

not only affect the role and functions of Chiefs, it also orchestrated chieftaincy conflicts. Therefore, colonial interactions greatly affected the seat of the chieftaincy which incarnated traditional governance.

Traditional authority among the various ethnic groups in the *Bamenda* Grassfields has evolved over the years from pre-colonial to colonial rules (1884-1960), precisely under both the Germans and British. Through a series of regulations the colonial authorities became the final arbiter on matters of chief-ship and the chiefs' roles were defined by these various legislations. In this regard, not only did the basis of a Chief's authority shift from the indigenous people whom he served to the colonial authorities who ironically did not fall within the ambit of the chief's customary jurisdiction. The chief's now served not their peoples' interests as dictated by tradition and custom but that of the colonial authorities who ruled the people through them.

i. Ethno-tribal balkanization of *Fondoms*

In Pre-colonial African societies there had been considerable overlap between the peoples, languages and customs of regions. Where competition and conflict between the groups had existed it was for political power or economic advantage rather than simply because they were of different "tribes". The status-quo was rather misinterpreted by the colonial masters for one reason or the other for their selfish-interest. The Germans as well as the British, colonial masters through their activities as seen in the first-two chapters based their local administration upon what they saw as a series of minor but totally separated Pre-colonial Fondoms which needed to regroup and form entities⁵. In order to make this a reality, they emphasized differences in dialects and redefined them totally separate languages. They describe customary differences of dressing, housing and religious practices in term of rigid "tribal' distinctions'. Indeed it has been argued that colonial authorities invented "tribalism"⁶. By insisting on the strength of "tribal" differences and rivalries, colonists made it more difficult for Africans to achieve unity in opposition particularly among the rural population.

The whole colonial era which began with the German, British and French occupation and dominations of African mother land as well as its developmental institutions, emphasizes upon the role of chiefs exaggerated the so called "tribal' differences. The very word "tribe', deliberately

⁵J.K. Adjaye., and B. Misawa., "Chieftaincy at the Confluence of Tradition and Modernity: Transforming African Rulership in Ghana and Nigeria", *International Third World Studies Journal and Review*, Volume XVII, 2006, pp.31-45

⁶Ibid, p.50.

used by the European in a derogatory sense looked down upon African societies as “primitive’ and “inferior’ people without a regrouping identity of a Nation.⁷

The existence of diverse ethnic groups and Nation States did not portray any physical as well as socio-political and socio-economic demarcation as well as frontiers differentiations. The Nation States of Africa and the *Bamenda* Grassfields maintained positive diplomatic relations manifested through intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic marriages. Trading activities as well as peace talk negotiations without major conflicts and wars⁸. The Colonial masters took the opportunity of the peaceful relations between Nation-States to regroup the chieftaincies for administrative motive and better exploitation of the *Bamenda* Grassfields for selfish reasons⁹.

The Germans and particularly the British in this perspective made use of the age-old imperial maxima of divide and rule¹⁰. This policy went as far as grouping *Fondoms* into confederation and federation without governing principles and rules of putting in place real federations with constituted governance structures as examined in chapter 2 & 3 of this study. Instead chaos and supremacy identities were instilled among the Federated Association of *Fondoms* as some *Fons* of *Fondoms* were considered superior and paramount by the colonial masters at the disgruntlement of other *Fons* of same the traditional ranking and authority.

ii. Federation of diversified Polities in the *Bamenda* Grassfields

One of the major political ramifications of colonialism on multi-ethnic Cameroon was the amalgamation of diverse groups and the new role for Chiefs. Prior to the arrival of the Europeans in chapter I of the study and more importantly, before the introduction of the new system of administration, the Chiefs/*Fons* ruled over their ethnic groups. They controlled their ethnic domains and received protection and tributes from them. The jurisdiction and function of the chief shifted from the traditional to the extended national territory. While at first few traditional rulers were involved, the number increased by the time the House of Chiefs was created in 1960. Many of those who had ruled over circumscribed jurisdictions now retightened over areas larger than more populous than their traditional political units as seen in chapter II of the study under the Germans. Particularly the British brought many changes as in the process; some Chiefs lost while some gained in which amenable rulers were co-opted while intractable ones were broken. Either

⁷ Adjaye, and Misawa, “Chieftaincy at the Confluence of Tradition and Modernity, p. 62.

⁸Ibid, pp.60-79

⁹M.T. Aletum, “The Place of Traditional Institution in the Modern Political System”, in *Cameroon Law, Review No .9, 1976. pp.65-85.*

¹⁰K. Shillington., *History of Africa, USA, New York, ST Martin Press, Revised Edition ,1995, p 357.*

way, both categories experienced the impact of the new comers¹¹. Their roles changed in the face of the new administrative system which began during the German period in *Chapter II* of this study (1884-1914) in the jurisdiction of the *Bamenda* Grassfields Fons.

Under the German reign, centralized chieftaincies were created where non-existed, they maintained and empowered chiefs who compromised with them and destroyed those who were unamend able. By this, they created bases of a new political unit and conferred upon the *Fons* new functions. Chem-Langhëë confirm; “*The larger administrative districts, which grouped several Pre-colonial political leaders to operate within larger political or administrative units in the future.*”¹² This organigram created by the Germans was maintained both by the British and the French in order to foster and maintain the functionalities of Europeans who break the unnamable traditional rulers and co-opted the tractable ones. This was in perfect alignment with Lugard view of 1990 and that of Kay in the 1940s affirmed that “it was easier to break a Chief than to make one”. Thus it became a feature of both the British and French colonial administration wherein, there was the common practice of the “breaking” and co-opting of Native administration. In the final analysis there were more breakages in French Cameroons’ than in the British Cameroons and particularly in the *Bamenda* Grassfields which experienced a lot of co-opting¹³.

iii. Ambiguous Categorization of Grassfields *Fons*

Pre-colonial African societies and their leaders were never classified in order as when born, a *Fon* can rule a certain geographical area you were a *Fon*. Also, *Fons* were hereditary and chosen by the ancestors with the guide of divinity. There was no “strong” nor “weak” *Fons* as well as superior and less superior *Fons*. As *Fons* or traditional rulers, they had same rights, obligations and performed same duties with same responsibilities over their indigenous populations.¹⁴The hierarchical structures of the *Bamenda* grasslands, made reference to the colonial masters who were responsible in putting in place a classification structure of the *Fons*. This was in objective for the attainment of colonial interest. The introduction of this, led to the grouping of chiefdoms thereby setting into the palace, the actions of revandications of sovereignty and legitimacy of some traditional rulers. The colonial masters brought the perception of inequality actions on rituals

¹¹B. Oomen, *Chiefs in South Africa: Law, Power & Culture in the Post-Apartheid Era*. Oxford: James Currey Publishers, 2005, pp.75-98.

¹²B. Chem-Langhëë, “The Origin of the Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs”, in *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 16; 4, 1983, pp.653-674.

¹³Ibid, p. 681.

¹⁴I.Mouiche., *Autorités Traditionnelles et Démocratisation au Cameroun : Entre centralité de l’Etat et logiques de terroir*, Munster, Lit Verlag, 2005, pp. 45-51.

authorities and defunct *Fon* together with their leopard symbol ties. Again they put in place the perception of quantitative inequality of being a Chief which was based on the sensitization of each community population, an estimation of the *Fons*' resources in order to establish an assessment of taxes as regrouping administrative actions¹⁵.

Another colonial consequence on the native administration geared in the fact that, British in 1916 maintained the existing Status quo by employing the dictum of breakage above unlike the Germans who had issued the chiefs with books and assigned them as seen in chapter II of this study in new obligations, The British graded the Chiefs and gazette their colonial appointment. They classified the Chiefs into three categories. The first category comprised Paramount chiefs who ruled over larger areas (the chiefs or *Fons* of *Nso*, *Kom*, *Bali*, *Bafut*, *Bum* and *Bangwa*. Very much aware of the fact that these *Fons* commanded great influence and degree of authority and power, the British expanded their responsibilities vis-à-vis- colonial administration and that of their populace.

Some *Fons* like the *Fon* of *Nso*, was permitted to enact rules as long as the rules complied with the Native Authority Ordinance of 1933¹⁶. In 1932, it was again the *Fon* of *Nso* who became the first Native Authority in the British Cameroons and in the Bamenda Grassfields to receive control of his native treasury which was not only important because an African was "trusted" to take charge of the treasury. But also because from the perspective of the colonial administrators hoped to entrust African chiefs in modern forms of financial management. The example of *Nso* demonstrates that the chiefs' role and jurisdiction were being extended or broadened¹⁷.

As a matter of fact, it is important to note that only the chiefs in the first category enjoyed this "privilege" to make rules and control their treasuries. Those in the other two categories were considered more inferior. Those in the Second category of Chiefs seemed specifically designed to comprise three chiefs; Chiefs Williams of Victoria, Endeley of *Buea* and Chief Mukete of *Muyuka*. These chiefs unlike those in the First classification, who were Chiefs by tradition, obtained their position through colonial government recognition. These were the so called "Warrant chiefs"¹⁸ They were placed to en-charge and be heads of the metropolitans districts mentioned above as

¹⁵ See Appendix 09, Law on the appointment and dismissal of Native Chiefs by the British., p.10.

¹⁶ E.M. Chiabi., "Chieftaincy: Traditional Rulers in National Politics" in *Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences*, Volume VI, Nos 1 et 2, Janvier - Julillet 1990, pp.28-30.

¹⁷ Ibid.p.43.

¹⁸ "Warrants Chiefs", *These were chiefs appointed by the British colonial administration from the forest Region and other areas where chiefs proved recalcitrant to the British rule. The "appointed" equally gained their respect from colonial administrator to rule a given population or jurisdiction and not from their indigenous populations. This was thanks to their educational background and their responsiveness to the new administrative order.*

Native authorities with a council. The third category was grouped all the many other chiefs comprising the numerous sub-chiefs and prominent heads of the Grassfields region (*See appendixes 12 and 17*). These sub-chiefs and village heads as a matter of fact were officially classified and recognized because although they were only Sub-Chiefs and village heads, they nevertheless enjoyed more respect from their subjects than the “warrant” chiefs in the second category. In an elaborate discussion with the *Fon of Mankon*, the latter remarks:

These chiefs held their offices and came to power by virtue of tradition and customs and were chosen by their ancestors and accepted by their population. They had a territorial jurisdiction with their traditional administration well spelt and hierarchically organized. Their governance system was constituted of an ancestral clan and village heads. These heads migrated from their ancestral sites together with a population to settle in new sites. A push factor and pull factors of disagreement among the children of their father and the search for fertile lands caused them to migrate to lands and settle in *Mankon* where we are today. With the arrival of the Germans, my forefathers (...) were recognized as the village heads just like Tabi of Zang-Tabi as the Meta Village head. This recognition was acknowledged by the British who did not want to upset the already set statu quo for easy administration by the Germans.¹⁹

Some *Fons* in the *Bamenda* Grassfields felt marginalized as most of the roles and functions were attributed mostly to the so-called first class *Fondoms*. On like chiefs in the decentralized societies of the forest and coastal regions majority of whom were third class chiefs, they occupied much important functions than some second class *Bamenda* Grassfields *Fons*. While those who were administering heterogeneous plantation Districts in the forest areas and the Coast of the Cameroons because of their “enlightenments”²⁰ were functionally in the colonial administration as they judiciously served the colonial masters, made them more important than traditional sub-chiefs and village heads, were actually *primus inter pares*.

However within the above political set up and its introduction in the *Bamenda* Grassfields and Cameroon inclusive, chiefs were brought together as instruments of administration by virtue of the facts that they were traditional rulers and representatives of their population as of the examples from category I discussed in Chapter I and II of this study are illustrative. Thus the use of traditional rulers from the above categories suggests that categorization of Chiefs was an exercise for reasons other than function in the emerging administrative system²¹. These chiefs in the previous chapters effectively represented British Southern Cameroons and the Grassfields in particular in the evolutionary Assemblies and the political advancement of their territory towards self-rule as well as clamour for their lost authority and identity within the colonial administrative

¹⁹Interview with Angwafor III Fon, age, 88, 12th July, 2017, Mankon.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹K. Robinson, (eds)., *Native Administration in the Western Central Cameroons, 1902-1954, Essays in Imperial Government*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1963, pp.78-123.

mechanisms²². Therefore, the Chiefs whether traditional or appointed, paramount or subordinate, they became subject to the Native Ordinance which defined and regulated their functions. Under this ordinance, Chiefs became tax collectors, a function which originated as an easy means to ensure collection of taxes but was soon regarded as an important tool in self-governing. This change and novel function was underscored at an annual conference of Residents from the Southern Provinces holding in *Enugu* in 1919.

iv. Initiation of Grassfields Chiefs in Partisan Politics

One of the main implications of chieftaincy involvement in colonial governance in the Bamenda Grassfields was the fact that it forced cooperation among Chiefs and made them to start thinking beyond their immediate chiefdoms and to develop interest in regional and state affairs. That means, traditional rulers of the *Bamenda* Grassfields ignored their traditional functions and rather engaged themselves with issues of the modern state. By implicating themselves into modern politics, traditional rulers of the *Bamenda* Grassfields traditional societies completely ignored their role as custodians of the customs and traditions of their people and rather went in for the quest for modern power and position. Their subjects who felt alienated and humiliated by their chiefs had no other option than to express their discontentment by rioting against their chiefs and at times chasing them away. However, it should be noted that the phenomenon of dethronement in the Bamenda Grassfields took a serious crescendo from the colonial right into the post-colonial period.

The Council of elders and traditional institutions was composed of subjects of integrity and objectivity who have distinguished themselves in one way or the other and have been recognized as such by the *Fon*. The management of the traditional government by the *Fon* is usually done in collaboration with elders and other traditional institutions such as the regulatory society and the traditional council. All these institutions help the *Fon* to exercise his functions efficiently.

²²P.N. Nkwi., "Grassfields Kings and Chiefs and Modern Politics", University of Yaoundé, 1977, p.45.

Elders represent the advisory Council of the Fon, which he must consult before taking any action or decision. Even though traditional rulers in the Bamenda Grassfields have a lot of powers and prerogatives, they were obliged to show much respect to elders as well as other traditional institutions that make up the traditional government.

v. Judicial transformation in peacekeeping and maintenance of order

The Proclamation of June 10th 1916 brought the Native Court Ordinance of *Nigeria* into force in Cameroon and the *Bamenda* Grassfields. The Courts set up by the Resident “to meet the needs of the different Districts” administered “Native Law and Customs”. Like the NAs, Native Courts were opened in different parts of the *Bamenda* Grassfields at different times. The Native Court Ordinance (N.C.O) which sought to facilitate and regulate the exercise of certain powers and jurisdiction by Native Authorities“ made that evident by granting limited legislative and judicial powers to Chiefs, and their councilors and the Resident the power to suspend, depose or exile Chiefs.²³

Under the Native Court Ordinance, chiefs and their councilors were granted the power to make bying-laws. These laws were however not only to be consistent with the laws of the colony ‘which meant the people were subject to British law and not their traditional laws and usage, but also the subject matter of these bying-laws was regulated by the ordinance. In effect, the colonial authorities prescribed issues that the chiefs could legislate on. These limited bying-laws which the Chiefs could pass even when passed had to be reported to the Resident for his approval as No bying-law which the Resident in Council disallows shall have any force or effect whatsoever. “

In some places either the lack of traditional rulers to man the courts or want of colonial administrators to guide them hindered their creation and progress. Hence, in the early 1900s when the establishment of Native Courts received colonial administrative priority .Although Native Courts were more numerous and popular among the coastal peoples, the colonial administration found and identified NA anticipation without colonial involvement, functioned better in the *Bamenda* Grassfields where Fons were “more powerful” and had been accustomed to dealing with cases. Therefore, the Grassland Courts, however, lacked trained Cameroonians Court clerks while the coastal Courts had them. The Courts also differed in the extent of judicial powers conferred upon them but all provided a medium of instruction to Native Authorities in both civil and criminal

²³E.F. Fotso., “*Faut-il Bruler les Chefferies Traditionnelle*”, Yaounde, SOPECAM, 1991, pp.31-60.

cases. Through the traditional Courts, rulers learned to adjudicate numerous cases along Western lines at the detriment of their own judiciary and customs.²⁴

Consequently, the colonial authorities arrogated the right of legislation, which had hitherto resided in chiefs and their elders before colonial rule. There was also some transformation with respect to the exercise of the judicial functions of the chief. Native tribunals which were authorized by the colonial authorities had limited civil and criminal jurisdictions. For instance, in civil jurisdiction, Chiefs were limited to affiliation actions, custody of children, land and marital issues. The Chiefs' authority with relation to criminal jurisdiction was to be determined by the authorities. Native custom which was applicable in determining the rights of parties was only acceptable if not inconsistent with the principles of justice or with this ordinance. In other words, punishment to be imposed on any convicted person was not to be repugnant with natural justice or with the principles of the law.

In the Bamenda Grassfields, chiefs or *Fons* were aided by any Advisory Councils installed by colonial masters. Smaller chiefs with their jurisdiction were coopted as NAs and they were administered just in particular NAAs. Courts comprised of village heads that performed the executive and judicial functions of the NAs. The Courts had one chief recognized as the president 2 others as co-presidents and the rest were simply members. In 1949, Richard Constitution proposed the representation of chiefs in the Central legislative of Eastern *Nigeria* which worked in accordance with British desire to coopt and harness the social capital of the Western educated elites which was a major reorganization.

The constitution despite it legitimately, it authorizes the government to appoint and dismiss chiefs. The creation of the Northern House of chiefs was welcomed by Southern Cameroons who dreamed for that as well as Chief Manga William, a semi educated chief chaired a meeting of the New Cameroons provincial Council in Victoria in 1949, in which a resolution was adopted in favor of a separate Southern Cameroons Region made up of 2 Chiefs, 6 Administrative officers and 37 observers. 19 Chiefs were reminded of their subordinate rule vis-à-vis the British administration.²⁵ Despite petitions by both the educated elites and the local councils, the village courts handled local issues and implemented the policies of local administration which eventually transformed most TR into mere executors of general policies

²⁴E.M. Chilver and P.M. Kaberry "Traditional Government in Bafut", *Nigeria Field*, January, 1962, p.73

²⁵Mfombong, "*Bamenda Division*", p.56

I. Grassfields Chiefs in Post-Independent Ecosystem 1961-1977

With the approach of independence, the fate of chiefs and their integration into the administrative organization and functioning of the post independent state in British Southern Cameroon became a serious preoccupation for the chiefs. This was as result of the behavior of the new political elite towards chiefs. In reality, the political scene in the *Bamenda* Grassfields before independence was essentially animated by traditional authorities. This was visible with their collaboration with the German and British colonial administration to govern the territory under their country. Logically at independence, traditional authorities were to be considered as an integral part of the modern state given their colonial experience. In the quest to be part of the modern state, *Fons* indulged themselves into cruddy practices contrary to customary norms regulating their actions and behaviors.

Apart from this, the new political elites through their wealth and influence were capable of influencing the implication of *Fons* whether or not if they could be part of the modern administration statusquo. The post-colonial period in the Bamenda Grassfields witnessed the emergence of a new political, economic and social groups as well as the putting in place of modern state institutions notably an institution like MINATD that was to manage chiefs/ *Fons*. As a matter of fact, in many African countries, political power was largely transferred from the traditional elite to a new group of leaders emerging from the political leadership, the military, religious and professional groups as well as civil society organizations.²⁶ The new elite group mainly made of wealthy businessmen, professionals, high ranking security officials and top civil and public servants. The relationship between the administrative elites and the chieftaincy institution was not a very good one as the administrative authority considered the Chieftaincy an outdated institution.

i. Chieftaincy and the new political elite

The 1960s in the British Southern Cameroons saw the emergence of new African states, thanks to the efforts of the different nationalist movements. The Southern Cameroon was in a unique situation. It was caught up between two major nationalist factions; one (Kamerun National Congress/Kamerun Peoples' Party) fighting for independence within the Federation of Nigeria, the other (Kamerun National Democratic Party) preaching the doctrine of secession from *Nigeria* and reunification with the then French Cameroun²⁷, the latter won, thanks to the mobilization of traditional Chiefs.

²⁶ Robinson., (ed), *Native Administration in the Western Central Cameroons*, p.200

²⁷ Nkwi., "Cameroon Grassfield", p,114

The new elite that had emerged from the colonial formal educational process became very critical of the colonial administration. It attacked the whole basis of the Native Authorities, (the Indirect Rule). The new elite accused Britain of using unprogressive and illiterate *Fons* to retard the progress of the country.²⁸In a petition addressed to the United Nations visiting mission, the Kom Improvement Association, an association of the new elite, had this to say about British Administration: “The worst neglect of all is the absence of training for self-government whereby the people might hope to do these things for themselves”. Instead, by the damnable Native Administration System, there is the role of things remaining where they were.

This is done by excluding the literate and enlightened from the Administrative Councils. Most council members are there by right of birth, no matter whether they can serve the people or not, whether the people supposed to be represented like it or not. “When will these illiterate old men being trained for self-government rule in their graves? Of course it does not matter to the government; the longer they (Chiefs) are unable to rule the better for the British Government”²⁹ Britain had to take into account the views of this new elite. The creation of representative assemblies and the democratization of the Native Authority in preparation for full autonomy became the primary objective of the British. They played a vital role in promoting discussion at all levels in order to prepare for an easy transfer into independence. The chiefs, councilors, and the new elite were all invited to participate fully in this new struggle.

Like in most British colonies with recognized traditional rulers who had been integrated into the framework of the Indirect Rule Policy, the creation of a new political awareness had to take into account Chiefs. The democratization of the Native Authorities had passed on to the new elite some political power. The relationship between the traditional and new elite was a complex one. The new elite was eager to move into a new era of independence with or without the Chiefs who had come to be regarded as retarding the political and economic growth of the African people³⁰

The new elites were also keen in preserving those traditional institutions that gave them a sense of identity. This search for a past gave the politicians the feeling that independence could not be achieved without the active participation of Chiefs/ *Fons*. The *Fons* were the people who controlled the populations. The politicians knew that any political arrangement without the chiefs

²⁸Ibid, p.133

²⁹ Robinson, *Native Administration in the Western*, pp.203-212.

³⁰V.T. Le Vinne., *The Cameroon from Mandate to Independent*, Berkely/Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp.123-67.

would be disastrous. Fifty-seven per cent of the population of the then Southern Cameroons was controlled by Grassfields *Fons*³¹

Most of the chiefs were regarded as sacred persons whose ritual functions promoted the welfare of the tribe. Among their subjects were the new elite. To excite the people against their chiefs through political demagoguery and intrigue could be considered a sacrilege. These were the facts which no politician could ignore without ending up in political bankruptcy. It must be acknowledged that many of the Grassfields chiefs were inadequately prepared for the functions of a modern twentieth century government. The colonial government had made it a policy to educate chiefs' sons or any persons who were likely to become Chiefs. In a Memorandum dated 26 May 1932, G. S. Browne Resident for the Cameroon Province, outlined the British Stand on the education of chiefs:

If this province is to make any progress in the future there are two ends at which we must aim: (a) As many people as possible must be taught to speak good English; (b) All the chiefs should have been educated at government or Native Administration schools. As to (a), this is being done. As to (b) will you please inform me to what extent boys who are likely to succeed to chiefdoms are being educated in the schools and what prospect there is that the end will be attained in years to come, If any special attempt being made to induce chiefs' sons to attend schools³²

It is interesting to note that in 1932 only one Grassfields chief/ *Fons* had received a full primary education. He was Chief *Mfomiye* of Meta. The Chief of *Babungo* who had learned to read and write had been employed before he became Chief as a Basel Mission catechist.³³ There were sixty-three potential rulers attending government and Native Authority schools in 1932. The Administration was taking steps to explain the importance of education to chiefs/ *Fons*.

The importance of such a policy became more sensitive towards the sixties when Chiefs were called upon to participate in the constitutional process. Only those Chiefs/ *Fons* who had received a minimum of an education were able to participate actively and more sensibly. Among the few chiefs who could dialogue with the colonial administration was the *Fon* of *Bali*, Galega II, whose demand for a salary increase was readily supported by the District Officer, Mr. Milne.

He considered the *Fon* of *Bali* as more progressive and promising than the others. He was the only leading character among the Grassfields major *Fons* who could communicate with the Administration effectively and contribute positively during the transitional period to

³¹ Le Vinne., *The Cameroon from Mandate to Independent*, p.89.

³²See Appendix 19, West Cameroon Gazette, "the recognition of Chiefs", 1960, p.12.

³³NAB, File No 5/21, cf no 27 of 20/10/57"Southern Cameroons Report,1957, pp.19.

independence. The *Fons* of *Kom* and *Nso* were regarded as too old and unprogressive. They had changed very little under the colonial impact. Milne affirms that the *Fon* of *Bali* was being “underpaid in view of his position and the promise he shows; Bikom is old and too addicted to alcohol to be of any great use to his people; *Banso* is 'new', exceedingly active, bigoted and dangerous in his restlessness and promising poorly though he may eventually repay careful treatment; *Bafut* is old and his interests do not extend much outside parochial affairs.”³⁴ The educational background of the *Fon* of *Bali* gave him in advantage over his counterparts, and his role in the political evolution of Southern Cameroons is largely due to this factor. He was able to mobilize most of his illiterate colleagues into a cohesive body that had a say in the political change.

If the Chiefs/*Fons* had responded to the educational policy of the colonial government, which was meant to form future traditional rulers in the western schools, they would have played a more leading, meaningful and active role in the fight for Independence. They would have also stayed on much longer in politics because western education would have kept them abreast with the western political notions, process and intrigues. They would have been the leading characters in Cameroon politics today.

The relative exercise of power in the Pre-colonial and colonial periods would have continued, since they would have emerged as part of the new elite. As traditional rulers, and as part of the new political elite, chiefs would have had a more decisive say as to who was to rule this country; they had the native populations as their immediate subjects and grass-root supporters, or their ordinary subjects who formed part of the new elite with a western formation. The Chiefs would have played their trump cards, their subjects who regarded them both as secular and sacred leaders³⁵.

What was found at independence was the Chiefs' inability to interpret the signs of the times. The elite of the western schools became the actual power brokers. The chiefs were bound to disappear from the political scene, since the colonial administrators who were their strongest political allies in the Pre-colonial period were on their way out. The Chiefs found themselves confronted with the new elite. Those chiefs who had received a basic primary education were able to join the new elite in the political struggle. As the years unfolded most Chiefs who had played an initial role at independence were gradually forced out of the political process, since they had no adequate instruments to understand and play their role in the new nation-state.

³⁴NAB,File No 213/Ab/c/3, “Assessment Report on the *Bafut* Tribal Area, *Bamenda* Division”, Hawkesworth, E.G.,1926,p.11.

³⁵Mfombong., “ *Bamenda* Division under British”,p.89.

ii. *Bamenda Grassfields Chieftaincy under MINAT*

At independence, the modern state in Cameroon overshadowed the socio-political institutions (chieftaincy) by putting in place a new socio-political administrative structure to supervise and coordinate the traditional state. For the creation of the Ministry of Territorial Administration as a supervisory authority coupled with the signing of the 1977 decree on the organization and functioning of chieftaincy in Cameroon, marked the gradual phagocyte of chieftaincy with authorities appointed in their various ranks to manage it.

In fact, chieftaincy became more of what Rouveroy van Nieuwaal describes as “administrative chieftaincy”.³⁶ To Nieuwaal, Administrative chieftaincy is one of the results of a unifying process of modern state formation in Africa. In Africa this was historically set in motion and shaped primarily by the colonial conquerors through the establishment of their state administrations. Administrative chieftaincy was organized on the basis of three institutional innovations, von Trotha's principles of devolution, hierarchy, and the administrative district.³⁷

Devolution has meant that, the central state government has broken with the traditional rules of investiture and reserved to itself the right of appointment and dismissal of Chiefs.³⁸ During colonial days these state prerogatives were mainly in the hands of the district officers. Under the post-colonial rule they have become even more centralized³⁹ because of tight control which post-colonial leaders had kept over *Fons*. This situation has frustrated other chieftaincy institutions and the local population notably some traditionalist within the chieftaincy institution who do not appreciate the closeness between the chiefs and the state and keeping all advantages to themselves.

Henceforth politico-administrative and judicial duty formally exercised by Chiefs/*Fons* were transferred to these new administrative authorities. In fact Chiefs/*Fons* were henceforth submitted to function with respect to modern state laws and not traditional norms in Cameroon. As such chiefs had to receive all orders and orientation from the modern state (*See appendixes 14 and 15*), including their right of existence and the designation and recognition of who becomes a chief. The institution of chieftaincy in Cameroon was reshaped, lost its independence of the state and became more or less part of the political system as it was simply politicized. By this very fact, the institution

³⁶ E. A. B. R. Nieuwaal., States and Chiefs Are Chiefs Mere Puppets, *Journal Of Legal Pluralism*, Vol. 38, No. 37, 1996, pp.40

³⁷ Ibid, pp.24-35

³⁸ Ibid, p.42.

³⁹ Ibid, pp.56-62.

was opened to vulnerability especially as concerning the principles of access to chieftainship. However these State representatives in the course of discharging their duties either created chieftaincy succession conflicts or aggravated existing ones.

iii. The “Auxilliarization” of Traditional Authorities

At independence, the injunction for chiefs in participating in the functioning of the modern state was very brief as a decree was signed to guide and orientate its functioning. It can be deduced that the multiplied chieftaincy conflicts faced by the chieftaincy institution, some of which had their roots from colonial period actually threatened the State as some of them were marked by violent manifestations. To Van Nieuwaal, dreading the threat chieftaincy could cause the modern state as rival governance and in terms of stability, the African modern states just like colonialist co-opted and marginalize the chiefs within its bureaucratic models as mere auxiliaries as a means to resolve the threat posed by chieftaincy and at the same time use it to consolidate its existence.

Colonial administrators in the Bamenda Grassfields kept chiefs/ *Fons* at the forefront of socio-political and economic management of their polities, but with the advent of the post independent state, chieftaincy was not only threatened by the new political elites, it was transformed into a valet institution to the new state. They were later engulfed and aligned as the lowest administrative unit and representative of the state or what was administratively called auxiliaries of the administration. The fact that chieftaincy institution became a valet institution at the mercy of the modern state, capable of making and unmaking a Chief, a number of troubles increased within the chieftaincy institution, amongst which was the problematic of succession disputes.⁴⁰

In post independent Cameroon, one of the main factors that have frequently triggered chieftaincy succession conflicts in Cameroon and notably in the *Bamenda* Grassfields has been the question of appointment of traditional authorities by state administrators.

⁴⁰Interview with Namata Diteng Joseph, age,52, Civil Administrator, 5th July, 2017, Batibo.

II. Grassfield *Fons* in the Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs

The SCHC was inaugurated in May 1960 three years after the British government had approved it. The delayance was due to the uncertainty and confusion that characterized the political climate of British Southern Cameroons at the time. Several reasons motivated many chiefs to seek elections into the House of Chiefs. All members of the House of Chiefs drew some financial benefits, besides their salaries"; they were granted sitting allowances; their travelling and lodging expenses were also subsidized by the government. Secondly, on the protocol list, the elected chiefs enjoyed positions of preeminence over the non-elected ones. They were given the same protocol treatment as that given to elected parliamentarians. On September 5th 1960, the House of Chiefs sat for the first time at Buea. Addressing the House, the High Commissioner J. O. Field stressed its historical importance thus:

At no time in your history has there been greater need for wise statesmanship than in the months that lie immediately ahead. You come here not as elected politicians to express the views of this or that political party but as the traditional leaders and spokesmen of your communities who are expected to rise above all party factions and in the light of your experience of men and affairs at large to give considered and disinterested advice on the many weighty problems that confront the government and people of the Southern Cameroons today⁴¹.

What was the practical function of such an institution? In the minds of those who created it, it had to be a non-partisan body, giving advice and assisting the government in exercising its legislative authority. It was to consider, and by resolution to advice on any question or matter introduced by a member. The House would consider proposed legislation and other important matters of policy and its resolution would be laid on the table of the House of assembly where it would be open to the Government or any member of that House to take them up. Members of the Executive Council would be entitled to attend sessions of the House of Chiefs but not to vote. The life of the House of Chiefs would be coterminous with that of the House of Assembly, and at least initially the Commissioner would preside.⁴²It was to function like the British House of Lords.

By the creation of the House of Chiefs, the Chiefs of Southern Cameroons were given a unique place in the political structure of the Federal Republic of Cameroon It had been established to enable traditional rulers to participate in the task of governing the state. As an advisory body, it could not initiate legislation nor could it deal with finance bills. It could postpone but could not prevent the adoption of a bill. It also considered the merits of the miscellaneous bills before they were approved by the legislative Assembly which transformed them into law. As an upper House

⁴¹ Nieuwaal, *States and Chiefs Are Chiefs Mere Puppets*, p.45.

⁴²NAB, File no 1a/ac, "Extract from the report by the Nigerian Constitutional Conference", 1957, p .33

it performed a useful and an essential duty towards the people of the Southern Cameroons. At its initial stages the House was always preside over by a non-traditional ruler, first by the British High Commissioner, and later by politicians.

According to the official Report of the West Cameroon House of Chiefs, 1962, the following bills were placed before the House for proper examination: Appropriation Law (1962), Customary Courts Law (1962), Control of Farming and Grazing Law (1962), the West Cameroon Electricity Corporation, Constitutional Law (Amendment) and the Supplementary Appropriation Bill. From the report it is clear that only western oriented chiefs took an active part in the debates. The importance of chiefs' education was felt more when elected chiefs were being called upon to deal with national issues, most of which were far beyond their parochial thinking⁴³.Themselves with the new elite group and to keep abreast with the modern evolution of the nation-state.

They were aware of the importance of a sound education. It is only through it that traditional Chiefs today and tomorrow shall be able to function within the new political framework. Attempts made by colonial administrators to educate potential traditional rulers seem not to have received a warm reception among the Grassfields *Fons*. In the 1960s and right into the 1970s, a majority of the Grassfields chiefs were still illiterate. Education for a very long time was looked upon by any potential chief as an affair of the commoner, not one of the royalty. Why go to school, if the same material benefits offered by western education could also be acquirer as a traditional Chief? In an interview with Jinabo II of *Kom*, he honestly revealed that he was incapable of functioning within the new framework of nation-state because he was not educationally equipped to understand the riddle of modern politics. He preferred to have his educated subjects to take an active role in politics rather than he himself⁴⁴.

Most Grassfields *Fons*, like most Chiefs in Cameroon, were fully aware of their role within the new political structure. They must adapt themselves to it. They are leaders of ethnic groups whose cultural identities manifest the diversity of the new nation-state. Forging and realizing the much desired unity of a fragmentary society is also one of the tasks of chiefs today. They must help in the shaping or molding of this society into a cohesive entity. Their identification with the new Cameroon political personality is imperative. Ahidjo affirmed in the 1960s that the Chiefs "independently of their sentimental value, they still constitute today and surely will tomorrow, by

⁴³E.C. Welch.,(ed)., *Political Modernization*, Belmont, Wadsworth, 1967, p.90.

⁴⁴Ngeh., "The Conservation" ,p.12.

reason of the leadership which they give to the people, an instrument of action which the state cannot afford to do without at present".

i. The House of Chief in reviving the Chief's Authority

The house of Chiefs of SCs made great stride at salvaging or improving on the image, prestige, honor and authority of the chiefs in Southern Cameroon. The House gave advice on the bill of 1962 presented to them and suggested amendments where necessary equally. They affirmed their right to oversee and criticize government administrative action and got amendments to the standing order of settling disputes in the entire territory of SCs. Some cases in point were the disputes in *Nkambe* and *Kom*, the *Bali/Widikum* ethnic groups.⁴⁵

The house of chiefs worked to accomplish the administrative task of legislating with the house of Assembly. They advised the government on aspects of administration particularly when it concerned the traditional society. Advising government on matters of legislation when it concerned especially the traditional society was not a new exercise to the chiefs. It was in fact a continuation of their role in the indirect rule system⁴⁶. Though most of them were illiterate and could not easily understand and appreciate modern legislation making their contribution in this domain was not small. To show this importance, Foncha on the 13th April 1962 in an address to the SCHC note:

The present house selected after our independence and unification should embark whole-heartedly on implementing the broad policy of the government, which is building up a nation of united happy and contented people. With the selection of House of chiefs the west Cameroon government is complete and ready to carry out those measures, which are designed to achieve this policy⁴⁷

In matter of legislation, the Chiefs supported the 1962 bills presented to them, relating to farmer-graziers conflict. These were supported though with amendment on the farming and grazing bill. The amendment introduced in them by the House suggested that the government should provide barbed wires for fences to separate farmers from grazers so that the law could be practicable and the *Fons* were satisfied with the explanations of the technicians and the attorney general. By this measure, the authority of traditional rulers was felt by the government⁴⁸. In like

⁴⁵C.A. Ngwa and A.A. Kungang., "Revival of the Authority of Traditional Rulers in West Cameroon via the House of Chiefs, 1960-1972: Myth or Reality", in *Journal of Applied Social Sciences*, vol.8, No 1&2, 2009, pp.196-170.

⁴⁶Ibid, p.174.

⁴⁷Fomin, "The Southern Cameroon house of chiefs", p.8.

⁴⁸Ngwa and Kungang, "Revival of the Authority of traditional rulers", p.179.

manner, the Honorable members of the House arrogated to themselves the powers to oversee and criticize government administrative officers in their areas.

At the same time, they made their observation on the socio-economic and political life of the country. For instance in the 1962, session the traditional rulers cautioned that with the attainment of Independence government officers were expected to change their attitudes by becoming near to the people as much as possible. The chiefs equally warned against the declining values of the France CFA and the need to produce sufficient food for the population. The traditional rulers also drew the attention of the government to the growing crimes wave in the emerging towns. By these actions the Chiefs felt that they could intervene in all the aspects of life in the territory. These certainly upgraded their image, honor and prestige in the face of the government and the population who saw the chiefs as fighting for the interest and well-being of the masses⁴⁹.

In matter of resolutions and motions the House of chiefs from 1960-1972 made meaningful recommendations to the government which were often implemented. Some of these recommendations involved the building of roads, schools, and maternity homes. The Session of 1969 houses, the Chiefs made recommendations in order to better organize the House and its functioning. They suggested and got amendments of the Standing Order Regulation 7 and 10⁵⁰. The amendments for regulation 10 required the addition of clause two which stated that whenever the House is informed that the honorable P.M will be present in the House on a specific day and at a given time. It shall proceed as standing order.

The House of chief clearly repositioned itself and became an integral part of the Southern Cameroons and later West Cameroon Government. Indeed, one can assert that the progress that was made in Southern and West Cameroon from 1960-1972, in administration, economy and social development was the result of the joint efforts of the two legislative bodies-the House of Assembly and Chiefs. The advisory legislative role of the House persuaded the government to reconsider its negative perception of the chief/ *Fons* as conservatives, traditionalist and unprogressive. The government saw chiefs as progressive partners in the development of West Cameroon.⁵¹

Perhaps more conspicuous in salvaging the image of the Chiefs/*Fons* were the achievements of this House in cultural affairs specifically, the chieftaincy institution. In cooperation with the government, the House fostered the revision of the procedure for the recognition of traditional

⁴⁹Ibid, p.180.

⁵⁰ H.N.A. Enonchong., *Cameroon Constitutional Law Yaoundé* : Centre d'Edition et de production de manuel d'Auxiliaire de L'Ensigment, 1967, p.173.

⁵¹ Enonchong., *Cameroon Constitutional Law* ,p.81.

rulers in 1967. Prior to this date; the administration favored the choice of dome chiefs and hated other especially when they proved to be too powerful, which resulted to a succession conflict. In a circular written and distributed to all DOs by the Permanent Secretary in the ministry for Local Government in 1967, the procedure authorized for the recognition of Chiefs was revived. The new procedure stated; “...to have a declaration from recognized kingmakers of the village before forwarding names of any chief for recognition. Such recognition should for record purpose be in writing signed by the kingmakers and must be recognized by a majority of the population of the village”⁵²

Chieftaincy disputes had become many, particularly where village headship was not hereditary. These disputes were even deep seated where the post of a village headship of a particular family could lead the holder to the prestigious and lucrative membership of the House of chiefs. Therefore, the objectives of this revision fostered by the House were to minimize the petitions and complaints against such recognition. This revision largely restored order in the procedure of succession to the throne of Chiefs.

Indeed, the 1977 law on the organization of the chiefdoms by the then President of Cameroon, Ahmadou Ahidjou took precedence from these new procedures adopted in 1967. The house of Chiefs through these measures affirmed that the chieftaincy institution in West Cameroon; could adapt to the emergencies of modern Administration. It tried as much as possible to improve on the weaknesses of the past in a bid to situate itself among the progressive institutions of post-colonial era.⁵³

The House of Chiefs worked had to improve on the financial status of the traditional rulers at large. They worked towards getting a stipend for all the Chiefs in the form of emoluments for the running of the palace administration. Thus by 1971, the pressure from them on the government had become so intense that the secretary of State for Interior J.C. Kangkolo, advocated for a policy of harmonization in the payment of salaries to Chiefs, with their counterparts of East Cameroon. This however was a measure to salvage the financial status of the Chiefs.⁵⁴In judiciary matters, the House restored its roles in the settlement of disputes at national levels among some the villages of Ikiliwindi and Upper Bakossi. In Victoria, between villages of *Bonakanda Bwefeng* and *Bonakanda, Nkambe* between villages of *Benjengn Wowo* and *Nji Munkang*. Despite the efforts at

⁵²NAB, File no 1a/ac, “Extract from the report by the Nigerian Constitutional Conference”, 1957. p.12.

⁵³Ngwa and Kungang, “Revival of the Authority of Traditional Rulers”, p.181.

⁵⁴Ibid, p.183.

reviving the images of traditional rulers' considerable obstacles continued to water-down the hard work.

ii. The House of Chiefs as an illusion in the revival of traditional authority

Despite this great stride by the SCHC in salvaging and restoring the image, prestige and authority of the Chiefs, the elite in many instances influenced the choice of the representatives and consequently when in the House, such traditional rulers hardly represented the interest of the other chiefs but that of the politicians. A case in point was a letter from the *Gal of Baligham* on April 10th 1968 to the secretary of State for interior. He claimed in the letter that the choice of members was politically motivated and as a result the selected members never represented the interest of the traditional rulers and masses but that of the politicians which was not real⁵⁵. Often, applicants reminded the PM of their militancy in the support of his party or so. If we examine one of the applications in respect of the 1968 elections, we see clearly. The correspondence from J.N. Ngorake a KNDP militant justifying this assertion stated that:

I beg to say I got your reply of my letter with great joy. I am under your bosom and please rest assure of my support. You remember my support when we wanted to part from *Nigeria*. Since my great struggled among the masses in *Nkambe* Division then when we were only facing integration. I have not been considered in anything doing by the past government. I wonder whether you would soon tour the State or else I could have come down for a short visit...⁵⁶

The House of chiefs was a legislative chamber and an arm of government. But its power to originate bills was strictly limited. It was required to pass a money bill within a month. It could not veto legislation when it had passed through the house of Assembly. Bills other than money bills could only be delayed by the house for a period of little over six months. Thus, while the House could not veto legislation it could only temporarily obstruct its passage. Furthermore in article 17 section one of the West Cameroon Constitution of 1961 titled Procedure in Legislative House, the House of Chiefs was limited from proceeding with any bill other than a bill sent from the House of Assembly by the discretionary powers given the President of the House there in. In the same vein by the provisions of section (2) the money bill not passed by the house of Chiefs within the required time after being sent to it by the House of Assembly, could be sent to the President by the House of Assembly for assent.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Ibid, p.187.

⁵⁶V.J. Ngoh., *Constitutional Developments in Southern Cameroons 1946-1961*, Yaounde, CEPER, 1990, p.55.

⁵⁷ Ngoh., *Constitutional Developments* , p. 60.

In section 3 of the same article, recourse was also made to the president for assent, where by the house of Chiefs passed a non-money bill with amendments, not acceptable to the house of Assembly. An examination of the above provisions would show that besides the stated limitations placed on the House, it was handicapped by two main influences. Firstly, it was placed strictly under the discretion of its president to decide what to discuss and what not to. Its presidents except the first, J.O Field were usually members of the executive council and speakers of the House of Assembly. Worse still, the provisions of section (9) (3) (a) of the West Cameroon Constitution also gave the PM the right to appoint the President of the House of Chiefs. All those appointed were speakers of the House of Assembly. For instance, in 1968, the President of the SCHC was at the same time the speaker of the House of Assembly. The decision appointing the president of the House read as follows:

...his excellency the Prime Minister of West Cameroon has in accordance with the provisions of section (9)(1)(a) of the West Cameroon constitution, appointed Honorable W.N.O Effiom, speaker of the West Cameroon House of Assembly, president of the West Cameroon House of Chiefs.⁵⁸

These presidents could hardly take decisions in the House of Chiefs, which could affect the functioning of the West Cameroon House of Assembly. The assembly could easily secure the passing of a rejected bill by this house by seeking the direct assent of the President of the Republic in case of a disagreement between the two Houses. From the start of the Federal Republic, the House of chiefs was played down as a legislative chamber. It was a toothless bulldog. It could bark but not bite. Bills, which could undermine the authority of the traditional rulers, could pass through even if the house objected to it. Another impediment was its anticipated and eventual dissolution in 1972.⁵⁹In 1966 when the one party was created, the chiefs, particularly members of the House saw their future as a constituted body threatened because they were not given a representation at the decision making level of the party. When the era of multi-party politics ended, the need for the House remained only to traditional rulers themselves. The policy makers of the new party Cameroon National Union no longer saw the need for the House of Chiefs. Although the SCCs in the 1950s and later the West Cameroon House of Chiefs strongly urged for Unification, hardly did they know they were looking for their own self destruction.⁶⁰ Indeed, the President Ahidjo in 1959 had warned the chiefs when he said;

⁵⁸Ibid, p. 63.

⁵⁹R.K. Kpwang and W.T. Samah., "Chieftaincy, Adaptation and changes in the Forest Region of Cameroon", in *La Chefferie "Traditionnelle" dans les sociétés de la grande Zone forestière du Sud-Cameroun (1850-2010)*, Préface du Professeur V.N. Ndong, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2011, pp.75-79.

⁶⁰ Kpwang and Samah., "Chieftaincy, Adaptation and changes, p.84.

For their own interest and that of the people the chiefs have to remain artisans of evolution in our Country. They must even place themselves as the base of this evolution. What I am asking of them is that this evolution comes about with them for one the country cases they will be vanquished by it⁶¹

The creation of and the maintenance of the house of Chiefs in the Southern Cameroons fulfilled the demands of party politics. Consequently, with the advent of one party system, the House had no place in the new political arena; no doubt in a motion of support in Buea on August 6th 1968 the house of chiefs decried the oblique future of the chieftaincy institution in the Cameroon changing society. Also in a circular letter on March 3rd 1972 A.N. Diaga clerk of the house of chiefs informed traditional rulers of the eventual dissolution of the House. Consequently in May 1972, President Ahmadou Ahidjo abolished it when he pointed out that: “The House of Assembly of East Cameroon and the House of Assembly of West Cameroon and the House of chiefs in West Cameroon shall cease to sit as from the entry into forced of this constitution. They shall be abolished within a maximum time limit of six month.”⁶²

The dissolution of the West Cameroon House of chiefs never came as a surprise to the members but the decision to dissolve it was without consulting the House. Several reasons have been advanced for the dissolution of the House. From the point of view of the Post-Colonial government, the existence of the house of chiefs for West Cameroon was economically costly. They augured that the government found it difficult to maintain four chambers of legislation. For instance, the allowances of the members of the House had been reduced from eight to five thousand Francs CFA. According to Fomin, the West Cameroon House of Chiefs had no parallel in the East Cameroon and had become burden on the Federal government.⁶³

Another reason why the House of chiefs had to be brushed aside at the national level was that French colonial administration had played havoc on the traditional institution of chieftaincy and relegated the traditional rulers to the background in politics and administration. The Chief in East Cameroon was an agent of colonial Government and he did not necessarily administer an era which corresponded to the traditional Chiefdom or village. The French instead created artificial chiefs who were their administrative agents, 5 warrants chiefs like Charles Atangana of Yaoundé (Chiefs of the *Ewondo*) they also succeed to humiliate great Chiefs like Sultan Njoya of Fouban. He was deposed and exiled by the French to Yaoundé in 1931, where he died in exile in 1933. Thus the struggle to salvage the traditional rulers and the entire chieftaincy institutions from total

⁶¹A. Ahidjo., *Contribution to National Construction*, Paris, Présence Africaine, 1964, p.60.

⁶²Ibid, p .62.

⁶³Fomin, “The Southern Cameroon House of chiefs”, p.42.

destructions by the Post-Colonial administration could only be waged by the West Cameroon Chiefs⁶⁴.

The Post-Colonial government of Ahidjo like their colonial predecessors the French saw the West Cameroon House of Chiefs more as a threat to the absolute exercise of political power than as partner in the process of modern state development. Consequently, when the opportunity came, the house was dissolved without consultation. Furthermore, a good percentage of the members of the House of chiefs were illiterates. This made it difficult for the activities of the house to be smooth. The debates had to be explained to some members by interpreters. Bills and motions presented technically could not easily be appreciated Dr. Enonchong echoed this point when he asked in 1966: “Is the House of Chiefs really necessary..., The House of Chiefs as constituted does not fulfill the usual functions of a second chamber because of the large percentage of its members who are illiterates or incapable of understanding the complexities of modern legislation.”⁶⁵

This fact made it difficult for the house to function smoothly. Some of the members were compelled to vote based on the opinion of the politicians from their chiefdoms and not on their personal interpretations and understanding of the ideas being voted for. For instance some members of the House complaint in the first session after the Plebiscite in 1962 that they had been dubbed into voting for unification thinking that they were voting for self-rule. This was the consequences of illiteracy greatly limited the ability of the House from initiating measures to salvage the chiefs. No doubt even when they knew that the House would eventually be dissolved (though they did not know precisely when), they took no action to pre-empt its dissolution .The Ahidjo government took advantage of the illiteracy of the members to maneuver the House and dissolved it without fear of back clashes.⁶⁶

The abolition of the House of Chiefs thereby depriving it of a forum through which the status of the chiefs could be improved, could also be attributed to the political situation in Africa at the time. In Cameroon like elsewhere in the post- Independence African, traditional rulers were looked upon as unprogressive and therefore an obstacle to be avoided in the development of modern nation States. As Jean Ntonga puts it “...*in effect the traditional ruler with the new era of modern democracy, appears as an obstacle to national unity and instrument of balkanization of*

⁶⁴Ngwa and Kungang, “Revival of the Authority of Traditional Rulers” , p.198

⁶⁵ Ngeh, *The Conservation*, p.85.

⁶⁶Ngwa and Kungang, “Revival of the Authority of”, p.109.

*contemporary Africa*⁶⁷. To peg national unity on the decadence of the Chiefs and chiefdoms might be a false and rash assumption because it has been seen that colonial liberation and independence strained the cooperation between the elite's politicians and the traditional ruler.

If the elites politicians in the post-colonial administration tended to accuse traditional rulers of un-progressiveness, it was perhaps more a greed for absolute power on their own part than the validity of the accusation. In fact, despite their educational handicap, most traditional rulers understood the notion of national state as judged by the Pre-independence struggle.⁶⁸ This same tendency of the post-colonial government tying national unity to the destruction of chiefdoms was demonstrated in the case of several African chiefdoms in Kingdoms. In Uganda attempts were made to reduce the power of *Kabaka of Buganda* and Ivory Coast to reduce the power of King Amundoufu III as well as in Guinea to reduce the power of the Almanys Peuls of Futa Jallon. The destruction of the House of chiefs deprived the traditional rulers of West Cameroon an instrument which could enable it's asserted its position in modern state politics. The untimely dissolution halted the efforts of the house at improving on the prestige, honor and image of the chiefs of West Cameroon.⁶⁹

Section Two: Bamenda Grassfields Chieftaincy in the Democratization Era of 1990s'in Cameroon

The picture of the *Bamenda* Grassfields chieftaincy during the epoch of the liberalization of the political scene in Cameroon is painted in a new democratization era. The democratization wind favored the bouncing back of chieftaincy in the politico-administrative scene. This is because this period was marked by the open implication of chiefs in partisan politics, which for some provided an opportunity to occupy political offices. The political liberalization process in Cameroon in the 1990s favored the opening of the political space and the unleashing of opportunities which traditional rulers were quick to cease to demonstrate their relevance. This did not only permit traditional rulers to rejuvenate traditional rulership,⁷⁰ but also led to what Samah Walters describe

⁶⁷K.A. Busia, *Africa in search of Democracy*, London: Rout ledge and Kegan Paul, 1965, p.150.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰ C.F. Nchia., "Party Politics in the Bamenda Grassfields 1955-2004: Transmutations and Implications", Ph.D Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde 1, 2013, p.220.

as the “retraditionalisation” of the African State.⁷¹ That is to say, reconstructing African states based on African values and heritage such as the chieftaincy institution.

Traditional authorities in the *Bamenda* Grassfields took advantage of their status as the representatives of the grassroots, sought to impose themselves in this new era of liberalization in Cameroon.⁷² A number of factors within the democratization process contributed significantly in favor of the implication chiefs in democratic practices. These factors included the liberalization of the political scene that witnessed the militancy of traditional rulers in party politics, financial advantages of chieftaincy, and the emergence of a Neo-traditionalist class of Chiefs.

I. Liberalization of the Political Scene in Cameroon

Before delving into the factors that triggered chieftaincy succession as a liberalization of the political scene, it is important to present the background to the advent of the democratic transition, the goal is to present factors that prompted the democratization process in Cameroon. The democratization process in Cameroon was triggered both by international influence and internal changes in Cameroon. This period was fundamentally marked in Cameroon by the resignation of President Ahmadou Ahidjo in 1982 and Paul Biya becoming the new president. Internationally this period was characterized by the end of the cold war and the fall of the Berlin wall.

i. International Influence on Democratization in Cameroon

The post-Cold War era partly opened the way for debates and concerns on numerous perspectives, theories and ‘deep’ differences in opinion ranging from policies to strategies and approaches on various dimensions of development. The aim has been to arrive at concrete recommendations for action⁷³. Harry Truman the US president at the epoch proposed what he called “democratic fair dealing” that is a society where nations would respect the rights of men; where all men have a right to freedom of thought and expression and opportunity to share and participate in the common good.⁷⁴

According to Truman, democracy alone can provide the vitalizing force to stir the people into triumphant action. By this, he meant granting a voice to local peoples in deciding their own affairs. The Trumanian policy greatly influenced international cooperation as European powers and other international institutions controlled by the west had to impose democracy and

⁷¹ Samah, “Chiefs(traditional rulers)”, p.15.

⁷²Nchia, “Party Politics in the Bamenda Grassfields”, p.225.

⁷³ A. Szirmai., *The Dynamics of Socio-Economic Development: An Introduction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.78.

⁷⁴ Ibid,p.90.

decentralization as an international policy with each power influencing its former colonies.⁷⁵ The European and world Charters on local autonomy and specifically French local authorities have had an impact on the African continent and Cameroon in particular. The magnitude of these events had a direct impact on many African States notably with the widespread political and socio-economic crisis in the entire continent around 1990s.⁷⁶

Internationally and with the perspective of implementation of democratic principles, western powers imposed on African countries the implementation of a number of public policies. African countries including Cameroon were obliged to do so in exchange for Official Development Assistance following the failure of the Communist socialist ideology. It was obvious, that to stop the last bastions of this ideology in favor of economic liberalism, it was important to address the human element, that is, advocating for individual freedoms and the economic crisis raging in Africa. Following the wind of change from the East, a new method of defending democratic principles took over Western powers.⁷⁷

Consequently, by late 1945, through the voice of President George Bush, the United States expressed their new vision of their foreign policy, whereby the United States was committed more than before in promoting development and growth in an emerging democratic African continent.⁷⁸ It was against these events that the French President, Francois Mitterrand gave the impetus for French speaking Sub-Saharan African countries towards democratization during the customary Franco-African Summit notably that of Baule of 1990 which became a historic one as it conditioned French Development Assistance in exchange for implementation of democratic principles among which was decentralized cooperation. It is in this context that the wind of democratic transition was activated in Cameroon.

On 4th November 1982, Ahmadou Ahidjo, president of Cameroon abruptly resigned as president of Cameroon taking Cameroonians and the regime's international allies by surprise. He was immediately succeeded by his prime minister, Paul Biya, a long-serving technocrat and self-effacing ally. For the first six months, the hand-over of power appeared to go smoothly and was even hailed by some as a model transition in sub-Saharan Africa. But things soon went wrong as tensions over power, influence and the distribution of resources led to violence and cut short the

⁷⁵Ibid, p.80.

⁷⁶C.N. Mback., *Démocratisation Et Décentralisation. Genèse et Dynamiques Comparées des Processus de Décentralisation en Afrique Sub-saharienne*, Paris : Karthala / P.D.M., 2003. p.17.

⁷⁷Ibid, p.34

⁷⁸L.N. Tsimi., ‘L’Autonomie Administrative et Financière des Collectivités Territoriale Décentralisées : l’exemple du Cameroun, These de doctorat en droit public, Université Paris-Est, 2010, pp.67-100.

apparent liberalization of the regime. Since that time, President Biya's rule has been characterized by the tension between two conflicting modes of governance. On the one hand is the centralized clientelist system he and his supporters inherited from Ahidjo and have maintained. On the other, is the open debate, choice and popular legitimacy which has periodically emerged, whether in the one-party state or within a pluralist setting. When this latter form of political practice has gained sufficient momentum to challenge the principles of clientelist power, it is cut down to size. As an observer has said of the late 1980s, "the party-state functioned as a set of clientelist units during elections which were intended to follow a procedural, egalitarian, and competitive model. The result was a conflict of legitimacy which turned to chaos and the fracturing of the party".⁷⁹

In mid-1983, Ahidjo made a surprise recovery and affirmed what he continued to regard as his pre-eminent position, by virtue of having remained president of the CNU. He claimed, among other things, that he retained the right to nominate people to party positions. In June, Biya changed the composition of the government, getting rid of several Ahidjo loyalists, including Sadou Doudou, and replacing them with people more beholden to him.

Ahidjo, safely in Switzerland, launched a series of attacks on Biya's rule on French international radio. After two tense months, Biya, on 22 August, announced that he had uncovered a plot to unseat him, led by northerners in the army and instigated by Ahidjo⁸⁰. Things further worsened following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and subsequent reduction of international support for authoritarian regimes emboldened civil society and opposition groups across Africa. The re-introduction of multi-party politics in Africa was an inevitable by-product of globalization in Cameroon, the "*wind of change*" came with the formation and launching of the Social Democratic Front (SDF) party in *Bamenda* on 26th May 1990. This was following law No 90/056 of 19th December 1990 calling on the existence of other political parties in Cameroon.⁸¹

It is worth noting that the constitutional reforms of the 1990s were preceded by the legalization of political parties, which paved the way for open competition for elective posts.⁸² This was in stark contrast to what existed during single-party rule, under the dictatorship of Cameroon's first President, Ahmadou Ahidjo. During that era everyone, including traditional chiefs, in principle belonged to the Grand National Party, and any form of dissent was often

⁷⁹Mback., *Démocratisation Et Décentralisation*, p.17.

⁸⁰Ibid, p. 67.

⁸¹Samah., "Chiefs (Traditional Rulers)", pp.300-308.

⁸²N. W. Gwaibi., "Wrath from the Gods": Traditional Institutions and Electoral Politics in Bali", *Journal of Asian African Studies*, Vol.52, no.3 2017, p.339.

violently suppressed.⁸³ The liberation of the political scene in the 1990s gave chiefs the opportunity to bounce back into the political scene with some becoming mayors, and members of parliament.

The main question is that of the implication of chiefs and how the democratic transition in Cameroon came to be considered as a factor in the various efforts to access chiefly office in the Bamenda Grassfields. As Jude Fokwang indicates, the introduction of democracy in Cameroon in 1990 created conditions for the return of old political actors such as Chiefs to the “national political scene”, despite the popular demand for “actors” of a new kind⁸⁴. This was because in the days of the single party state, Paul Biya had prohibited Chiefs from participating in national politics.⁸⁵

Nevertheless, pluralism prompted by the demand for “Jacobin democracy”, compelled Paul Biya to backtrack from this position as he needed chiefs to consolidate his powers and the dissemination of the party.⁸⁶ For example, the *Fon of Mankon* was co-opted as the first Vice President of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM). At the same time, the Fons of Bali and Bafut became alternate members of the Central Committee.

But the principal question was on what legitimacy would such “old actors” play in the politics of the democratic era? Would their claim be based on “tradition” or on the grounds desired by the people for their new political actors? In many cases, chiefs attempted to impose their authority by claiming legitimacy on the basis of their status as ‘natural rulers’ and the notion that they sought and were the best representatives of their people.⁸⁷ In this situation many *Fons* in the Bamenda Grassfields who until then had been sidelined from national politics became full time militants and opted to collaborate with the ruling party.

ii. Traditional Rulers in Party Politics

According to Ibrahim Mouiche Traditional leaders in the era of multiparty politics in Cameroon became interest oriented persons in what he termed as; “*chasseurs d'intérêts ou d'utilité; leur option pour ceux qui tiennent le fusil*”.⁸⁸ To most chiefs, the choice to collaborate

⁸³ P. Geschiere., *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe*, Chicago, IL and London, UK: University of Chicago Press, 2009, p.29.

⁸⁴ J. Fokwang., “Chieftaincy in the Era of Democratic Transition in Africa: A Comparative study in the doms of Tshivhase and Bali”, M.A Dissertation in History, University of Pretoria, 2003,p.107

⁸⁵J-F. Bayart., *L'Etat au Cameroun*, Paris, Presses de la dation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1979.

⁸⁶N. Jua, “Indirect Rule in”, p.47.

⁸⁷ Ibid.p.62.

⁸⁸ M. Ibrahim., “Autorités traditionnelles, multipartisme et gouvernance démocratique au Cameroun”, *Afrique et Développement*, Vol. XXX, No. 4, 2005, p.8.

with the state was a rational choice that permitted them to get more access to the state apparatus and obtain advantages in exchange for their collaboration and also to pledge for bureaucratic recognition, security and autonomy.⁸⁹ In this coalition of interests, traditional authorities and the state participated in the same capacity to some extent in consolidating the authoritarian nature of the state.⁹⁰ One of the revealing episodes of the open support for parties in Cameroon was during the municipal elections campaign of 1996. As head of the CPDM list in the *Foumban* urban council, the sultan-king of *Bamoun* kingdom; Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya presented himself as the defender and the messenger of his populations by stating thus:

L'heure est justement à la démocratie. Par conséquent, que j'adhère à un parti et que mes amis, mes enfants et d'autres membres de ma famille militent dans d'autres ne devraient pas vous surprendre. Maintenant, s'agissant du roi des Bamoun que je suis, mon engagement dans le parti leader confirme mon souci de mieux servir mon peuple, car le peuple bamoun est un groupe minoritaire et ses intérêts ne peuvent être défendus que par les décideurs.

*Je ne crois fondamentalement pas être en conflit avec certains de mes sujets, mais être davantage engagé dans la défense des intérêts des Bamoun. C'est d'ailleurs à leur demande pressante que j'ai accepté de présenter ma candidature. Ils ont pensé que j'étais le mieux placé pour assurer la réalisation des priorités liées au développement de leur cité, et ces besoins sont nombreux.*⁹¹

It is worth noting that, even before the 1996 elections, the sultan of the *Bamoun* kingdom kept using denigrating words against the opposition party in *Bamoun* notably UDC. In a parable, the sultan noted that; « Lorsque'un chef de famille fuit des averses, il ne doit se mettre que sous la protection d'un arbre charnu, afin que lorsque la tempête secoue ses branches, il en ramasse quelques fruits qui tombent pour nourrir ses enfants ».⁹²

In other words the sultan was referring to the CPDM as a juicy tree under which all *Bamoun* people should stand so that when the wind blows they will be able to pick up the fruits. The Sultan opined that the sovereign of the *Bamoun* people can only support the ruling party, the CPDM, the only party that can respond to various requests from its people, unlike the UDC, a "sterile" tree that cannot even bear fruits.⁹³

In the Bamenda Grassfields Francis *Nyamnjoh* noted that some *aFon* like that of *Mankon*, *Bafut*, and *Balikumbat* that joined party politics saw their legitimacy and Authority being contested⁹⁴. In the 1992 presidential election, *Fon Angwafo's* residence was burnt by his people

⁸⁹Ibid,p.18.

⁹⁰L. Sindjoun., *L'État ailleurs. Entre noyau dur et case vide*, Paris: Agence intergouvernementale de la Francophonie-Economica, 2002, p.85.

⁹¹ Quoted in "Le Messenger" Newspaper, No. 472 of January 23, 1996, p.7.

⁹² Ibid,p.23.

⁹³ Ibrahim., "Autorités traditionnelles, multipartisme et ", p.9.

⁹⁴F. Nyamnjoh, and M. Rowlands., "Elites Associations and the Politics of Belonging in Cameroon", *Africa*, vol 68, No 3, 1998 p. 334.

claimed to be militants from the Social Democratic Front (SDF)⁹⁵. *Fon Ganyonga* was one of such Chiefs whose political career gained prominence in 1990 following his co-optation into the ranks of the ruling CPDM. He was one of the “old actors” clad in “new clothes”.⁹⁶

But the government’s claim to legitimacy, owing to its introduction of political pluralism, was soon brought into question⁹⁷. It followed that similar claims made by “old-new actors” such as *Ganyonga* also came into question. This was because the government and the CPDM party in particular were perceived as obstacles towards genuine democratic transformation in Cameroon. The people and the opposition expected chiefs to be ‘neutral’ mediators in the on-going struggle between civil society and the state, but this was not the case.

It was against this background that many people in the *Bamenda* Grassfields expressed hostility not only towards their chiefs who sided with the state, but also to the idea that chiefs ought not to participate overtly in multiparty politics⁹⁸. *Bamenda* Grassfields Chiefs that ventured into politics were faced with serious opposition and threats from their subjects. As a matter of fact, In October 1992 the much awaited presidential election was held. No election in Cameroon attracted as much fervor and enthusiasm as this election. Although the CPDM government insisted on organizing the election (See appendix 19) without an independent electoral commission, the SDF and other opposition parties decided not to squander this unique opportunity by boycotting elections they did in March 1992.⁹⁹ Given the growing unpopularity of the CPDM, many people anticipated the inevitable demise of Paul Biya, but he shocked everyone and emerged victorious.

Popular opinion maintained that victory was stolen from Ni John *Fru Ndi*. According to *Fokwang* Jude, the results showed that *Paul Biya*, the incumbent, won 39% of the votes, while *Fru Ndi* of the SDF and *Belo Boubou* of the UNDP won 35% and 19% respectively.¹⁰⁰ Owing to violent protests in *Bamenda* and other parts of the North West, where the SDF commanded overwhelming support, a state of emergency was declared in the province which lasted over two months. *Fru Ndi* was also put under house of arrest for declaring himself the president-elect. This period was extremely precarious for supporters of the CPDM including especially the much respected *Fons*

⁹⁵P. Konings., “Chieftaincy, Labour Control and Capitalist Development in Cameroon”, *Journal of Legal Pluralism* no 37/38, 1996, p.346.

⁹⁶ Ibid.p.355.

⁹⁷Fokwang., “Chieftaincy in the Era of Democratic”,p.108.

⁹⁸ Ibid,p.115.

⁹⁹Ibid, p.121.

¹⁰⁰Fokwang., “Chieftaincy in the Era of Democratic”,p.130.

of the North West Province. Hostile incidents against chiefs were registered in several parts of the North West Regions although none was directed at *Fon Ganyonga*.¹⁰¹

In *Mankon* for example, *Fon Angwafor* was confronted by accusations and threats from his subjects who blacklisted him for complicity with the CPDM administration. These accusations became more grievous during the state of emergency, when on 3rd November 1992 hundreds of subjects stormed his palace to protest against his 'meddling' in partisan politics. Other unidentified protesters burnt down the *Fon's* rest house in *Bamenda* to register their disillusion with him. All these violent reactions from the subjects and challenge to the *Fon's* authority could have possibly led to succession crisis if serious measures were not taken. This was because some subjects in *Mankon* began contesting the authority of the *Fon* and in such situations, opportunists generally emerged to openly contest the chieftaincy position as shall later examine in the case of *Balikumbat*. Furthermore, following the defeat of *Fonyonga II* of *Bali Nyonga* by the SDF in the local council election of 1996, elections in which members of his party (CPDM) were against his candidature, the position and legitimacy of the chieftaincy institution was put to at stake.

More members of the CPDM were completely against the fact that *Ganyonga* should stand as the party candidate for the election. The *Fon's* determination to run for the post led to chaos within the CPDM constituency of *Bali*. CPDM militants who opposed his candidature decided to elect their own candidate which excluded the *Fon* from participating. Eventually the CPDM had two contenders for the post of mayor within the same municipality, the *Fon* and one of his subjects. Although the *Fon* emerged as the CPDM candidate, in the end he was defeated by the opposition SDF.¹⁰² His defeat made him very unpopular as had been predicted by those who opposed his running for the mayoral office.

After their victory, the local leadership of the SDF in *Bali* decided to pay a visit to the *Fon* ostensibly to reassure him of their unalloyed loyalty. Although this was the official policy of the SDF, many of its militants decided to celebrate the *Fon's* humiliation at the palace ground, much to his displeasure. Other subjects who were opposed to the *Fon's* 'meddling' in party politics began to disobey instructions from the palace as a way of registering their disappointment with the *Fon*. At a particular period, some informants claimed, people refused to supply free labor to the *Fon*,

¹⁰¹ Ibid,p.138.

¹⁰²Fokwang quoting; *The Herald* No. 275, Thursday, January 11-14. It is also reported that after the defeat at the polls, some subjects called on him to resign. This was based on allegations that he had threatened to resign if his subjects failed to vote him for the position of mayor. Cf. *The Herald* No. 281, Friday, February 02-04, 1996. p.3

provoking him to place a temporary ban on all *death celebrations*¹⁰³ (cry-die) until subjects complied with his demands. This challenge of authority could have potentially provoked succession conflicts since the present *Fon* has become unpopular.

Elsewhere in the *Fondom* of *Ndu*, soldiers shot and killed six citizens while they protested against the supposedly stolen victory. The *Fon's* silence over the matter provoked the subjects to accuse him of collaborating with the CPDM and of being an auxiliary of state repression. Thereafter, subjects began to denounce him publicly and others called him by his name which was interpreted as an open sign of dethronement.¹⁰⁴ Again, this could possibly generate into a succession dispute as the *Fon* was symbolically dethrone just by calling his name.

In the same circumstances during the 1992 elections, *Fon* Galabe Doh Gah Gwanyin had apparently stuffed the ballot boxes in his palace before the beginning of the election.¹⁰⁵ This situation immediately raised tempers and violent reactions. In response, *Fon* Doh Galabe threatened to open fire on his subjects and in reaction, the population threatened to burnt down his palace had it not been for the rapid intervention of the forces of law and order.¹⁰⁶ During the legislative elections of 1997, still on a background of suspicion of fraud, the same recidivist faced the violent protest from his subjects and given the magnitude of the protest he took refuge for a time in Bamenda.¹⁰⁷ *Fon* Doh's implication in party politics and some mischievous acts that were credited to him during the 1997 elections laid grounds for chieftaincy succession conflicts in *Balikumbat*.

Preceding discussion suggests that the ultimate act of deserialization of chieftaincy was clear evidence to suggest that the reaction of the people vis-a-vis the behavior of the *Fon* could provoked a succession disputes at the moment people begin to question the legitimacy of their *Fons*. In the *Bali-Kumbat* case, the chief literally abdicated by escaping to *Bamenda*. This consummated the divorce or the temporary separation of the people and their *Fon*. In a bid to reconcile the two parties the Divisional Officer for *Mezam* launched an appeal to the natives to welcome and back their *Fon* to the village.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ According to Fokwang Jude, In Bali, it is customary to celebrate the death of deceased relatives soon after their burial. It is believed that failure to do so may invoke the wrath of the ancestors towards the living.

¹⁰⁴ C.F. Fisiy., "Chieftaincy in the Modern State: An Institution at the Crossroad of Democratic Change", *Paideuma*, 41, 1995, p.55.

¹⁰⁵ *The Herald* No. 275 Thursday, January 11-14.

¹⁰⁶ Jua, "Indirect Rule", p. 41.

¹⁰⁷ Ibrahim, "Autorités traditionnelles, multipartisme", p. 9.

¹⁰⁸ *Cameroon Post*, No. 105, 9 April, 1992, p.15.

II. Chieftaincy in Modern Management Malpractices

One of the main factors that contributed in inducing Bamenda Grassfields chiefs into bad governance practices was their attachment to financial advantages attached to politics and modern governance. Traditional authorities in all their respective *Fondoms* have wealthy elites who contribute financially for the well-being of their villages. These and other financial advantages obtained from the government have made chieftaincy a highly coveted position even by people who have no link with royalty. Chieftaincy has become a means to achieve fast wealth and fame. In a prologue published in “Messenger Publication” in 2009 *Forkum Kebila* noted;

The once revered traditional rulers in the Northwest are today in disrepute’s as the traditional institution is at the crossroads. The integrity, nobility and dignity that were the hallmarks of traditional rulers of yore have been thrown overboard by a new breed of rulers who speak and understand only one language: money. The insatiable quest for money by traditional rulers has given birth to royal killers, royal dealers, royal drug barons, royal thieves and royal beggars. Traditional rulers can be seen palling around with armed robbers; they confer title of notability on celebrated embezzlers, and professional crooks. Most *Fons* in the Northwest have sold their soul to the devil. They need deliverance. The *Fons* have forgotten that character is the foundation stone upon which one must build to win respect. Just as no worthy building can be erected on a weak foundation, so no lasting reputation can be built on a weak character. A solid trust is never derived from a sordid character.¹⁰⁹

From this statement not only has the quest for financial wealth laid fertile grounds for chieftaincy succession disputes, but also, the attitude of some traditional authorities towards financial gains have pushed their subjects to contest the legitimacy of these Fons. For an institution like the “North West *Fons* Union” at its creation was considered as a political instrument capable of exercising pressure on the State and also an avenue through which to obtain financial and political positioning.

One of the lowest moments in the history of traditional rulers in the Northwest was during the reign of Achidi Achu as prime minister from 9th April 1992 to 19th September 1996. Oral sources from some anonymous informants revealed that the Prime Minister used state resources to bribe, cajole and divide the Fons for his political survival¹¹⁰. In 1994, the Northwest *Fons*’ Association, NOWEFA, was created to restore the lost glory of the traditional institution.

After watching in dismay how *Fons* were used, dumped and reduced to the regime’s “bottom woman,” some North Westerners thought it wise to create the NOWEFU to right the wrongs of the past. *Fon Fusi Yakum Ntaw* was elected president. Achidi Achu did not hide his contempt for NOWEFA¹¹¹. A strong and credible association of Fons was of no interest to him. So he decided

¹⁰⁹ F. Kebila., *Royal Beggars. The Northwest s and the Decadence of Tradition*, Yaounde, A Messenger Publication, 2009, p.1.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Ngala Ernest, aged, 58, Councilor in Ndonga Mantug, 24th October, 2015, Bui Division.

¹¹¹ Kebila., *Royal Beggars.*, pp.3-10 .

to create an association that would be at his beck and call. He found a willing tool in *Fon Doh Gah Gwayin* of *Balikumbat*. A rival association, the Northwest Fons Conference, NOWEFCO, was launched in style at Skyline hotel.

Achidi Achu used state helicopter to fly to *Bamenda* to grace the launching. For the first time in the Northwest, *Fons* held a meeting in a hotel instead of a palace. It was a sharp contrast to the low-key event that the launching of NOWEFA was. With Fon Doh at the helm, Achidi Achu provided the money for NOWEFCO to fight and eclipse NOWEFA. The rallying cry was: “Down with the so-called big five *Fondoms!* *Fon* are *Fons*”.¹¹² Promises of reclassification spiced with bank notes were too tempting for the 3rd class *Fons* to resist. NOWEFCO helped Achidi Achu to calm the political storm that was threatening to sweep him away from the Star Building. But NOWEFCO could not help Achidi Achu win elections. On 21st January 1996, the CPDM lost the municipal elections in Santa, Achidi Achu’s constituency, to the SDF.¹¹³

Fon Doh won in *Balikumbat* and became Mayor. While the prime minister was licking his wounds and struggling to come to terms with the humiliation in Santa, *Fon Doh* suddenly grew in stature. From Achidi Achu’s lackey, *Fon Doh* now became a CPDM hero. The discomfiture suffered by CPDM heavy weight *Fons* at the polls gave *Fon Doh* added value. 1st and 2nd class *Fons* who headed CPDM lists in their various constituencies were humiliated by the SDF at the polls.

In *Bali Nyonga*, for instance, where the *Fon*, a central committee member, headed the CPDM list, the party had 15 percent of the votes. The story was the same in other constituencies. On 19 September 1996, Achidi Achu was sacked and Peter Mafany Musonge appointed prime minister.

In May 1997, the CPDM party that won all the 20 parliamentary seats in the Northwest in 1992 thanks to an SDF boycott, lost 19 of the seats. *Fon Doh* won the lone seat for the ruling CPDM Party; he was now an influential political giant in his own right. With Achidi Achu out, *Fon Doh* had to look for a new source of finance to keep NOWEFCO alive. For one thing, most of the members in the association were not there because of conviction. Easy money and empty promises kept them in the association.¹¹⁴ So the president of NOWEFCO had to act fast before his followers started to jump ship. With his new status, it was not difficult for *Fon Doh* to get money. The regime was more than grateful to him and rewarded him generously. Huge contracts were

¹¹²Ibid,p.13.

¹¹³Ibid,p.19.

¹¹⁴Kebila, *Royal Beggars.The Northwest s and the Decadence of Tradition*, p.23

awarded to 'Royal Enterprise' that belongs to the *Fon*. Ministers and General Managers were at Doh Gah Gwayin's begged, called and the money continued to flow. Unknown to *Fon* Doh, Achidi Achu, his mentor of yesterday was no longer comfortable with him.

Doh's meteoric rise and his penchant to project himself as the new leader of the Northwest did not go down well with the men who have been manipulating the political scene in the region for years. The *Balikumbat* man was considered an outsider. *Fon* Doh and his NOWEFCO caused serious damage to NOWEFA and a wedge was put between the Fons¹¹⁵. Forkum Kebila is of the opinion that *Bamenda* Grassfields *Fons* have been celebrating ill-gotten wealth and auctioned tradition for a small fee.

According to V.B. Amazee, the economic benefits that accompanied the position of chiefs/*Fons*, made the chieftaincy title one to be contested for.¹¹⁶ The Tiben chieftaincy succession conflict is one of the main conflicts that originated in the *Bamenda* Grassfields due to economic benefits, even if other considerations were involved. This conflict originated as a result of a succession struggle between two princes and instigated by the regent (Tita Ndi Apum) who apparently was benefitting economically from the regency.¹¹⁷ It is explained that, upon the death of Chief Mondi Chick in 1955, Tita Ndi ruled the *Fondom* up to 1961. When the time for the regent came to hand over power or authority to the legitimate heir Mondi Bernard who was 13 years of age, Tita Ndi Apum rather continued to exercise chiefly authority since the heir was seemingly still young.

As time passed by, Mondi Marcus Mukwe, the elder brother to the legitimate heir, Mondi Bernard was coached by the regent to fight for the throne. It is not clear on what grounds the regent instigated the elder brother, but he should have been motivated financially. Gideon Wami opines that the regency did this, because he wanted to benefit from the struggle between the two brothers to consolidate his authority as the regent since he continued enjoying wealth from being a "Chief".¹¹⁸ At this point in time the administration was used to giving stipends to Chiefs and coupled to that, Chiefs were allow to control and collect tax money, enough reason to envy the position of chieftaincy. In a similar situation, Sylvie Ewi notes that in the *Bu* Chieftaincy succession conflicts, the group that wanted to replace the legitimate Chief Awua Daniel as Chief

¹¹⁵Ibid, p.31

¹¹⁶ Amazee, *Traditional Rulers(chiefs) and Politics*,p.13

¹¹⁷ G. Wami, "Conflicts and Conflicts Resolution in Moghamo Clan: From Colonial Times to 2005. A Historical Investigation", Master's Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde 1, 2010, p.82.

¹¹⁸Wami, "Conflicts and Conflicts Resolution, p.88.

had at their back mind, government monthly stipends and other economic advantages of chieftaincy.¹¹⁹

i. Chiefs as Politician Proxies

According to Nantang Ben Jua some politician and notably of members of government harbored an undisguised contempt for the Chiefs¹²⁰. Chiefs had entered into an unholy alliance with the state and the ramifications of this alliance on the institution of the *Fondom* threaten to be far reaching as it is the case with succession conflicts. Further evidence in support of this view emerged during the October Presidential elections in 2004. The *Fon* of *Mankon*, who is believed to have engaged similar exercise as his colleague of *Bali-Kumbat* did in the Legislative election, his official rest house burnt by an unidentified group of furious subjects.

Disidentification which is an effect of working against prevailing practices of ideological subjection¹²¹ is now common in the *Bamenda* Grassfields as some subjects turn to openly challenge their *aFons*. Countervailing forces, such as the concept of empowerment of the people that thrived because of the emergence of "moral pluralism" account for the failure of political elites attempt to use the Chiefs to capture civil society in the *Bamenda* Grassfields¹²². Equally important, there is now a new generation of subjects who do not profess blind allegiance to traditional authorities in the *Bamenda* Grassfields.¹²³

As indicated earlier, this has had tremendous repercussions on the powers of traditional authority, and at times produced non royal persons who contest the post of chieftaincy on the simple basis that the *Fon* has sway away from his traditional missions and objective of cultural preservation of their people. The use of Chiefs as proxies to ensure political positioning and legitimacy by the government and some political elites has caused more harmed than good to the institution.

In reality, the historical position occupied by *Bamenda* Grassfields *Fons* disposed them toward political manipulation and exploitation by vested political interests. In post democratic Cameroon, the central government has often envisage a role for traditional leaders in issues of local administration by considering them as auxiliaries of the administration, even though with

¹¹⁹S. Ewi., "Chieftaincy Dispute in Bu, Laimbwe Clan, North West Province 1942-2001", M.A Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2008, p.42.

¹²⁰Jua, "Indirect Rule in Colonial and Post-colonial Cameroon", p.48.

¹²¹D. MacDonell., *Theories of Discourse*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986,p.40.

¹²²Jua., "Indirect Rule in Colonial and Postcolonial Cameroon", p.48.

¹²³ Jua., "Indirect Rule in Colonial and Postcolonial Cameroon",p.51.

straw man roles. At the same time, traditional leaders have at one point in time constituted a threat to state authority especially during the early years of independence. During the post democratic period in Cameroon the governments did no more see traditional leaders as a force capable of undermining their own power, rather in some instances, it has attempt to turn Chiefs from more or less independent local actors into mere agents of the state.

In most *Bamenda Grassfields Fondoms*, Chief's nowadays pay more respect to government official and the political elites than to their own subjects and institutions which are not bad in its self. The problem is that they turn to even carry out some assignments which jeopardize their positions and put their legitimacy asunder. This was the case in *Kedjom Keku* where the dethroned Chief *Vugah* with the encouragement of his peers and state authorities went back to the village to dethrone *Fon Vubangsi* using force. Following the enthronement of *Vubangsi Benjamin Vutsibong* as the new chief of *Kedjom Keku*, a deep friction surfaced between the *Kedjom Keku* people and the administration, as well as some members of the North West *Fon*'s union.

The administration denounced the dethronement of *Vugah Simon*. *Fon Vubangsi Benjamin* was even jailed and later released by the Mezam High Court.¹²⁴ In a letter addressed to the Minister of Territorial administration and decentralization, calling on the arrest of the enthroned *Fon*. In the correspondence, Chief *Vugah Simon II* noted that a state cannot be within a state. He further begged in his letter to MINATD that the government should quickly interven *Kedjom Keku* to reinstate him as rightful Chief because he has been *Fon* for 25 years with a palace population of 135 persons. Following his excommunication from the village, chief *Vugah* noted that he has been driven from the palace and from the village with his family and were suffering from serious starvation, illness and no place to stay for eight months and a half. Chief *Vugah* maintained in the letter that he was an arm of the administration and that the state should intervene to safe him from his own people.¹²⁵

When peace and calm was restored in *Kedjom Keku*, the administration backed by some *Fons* of the North West *Fons* Union made attempts to re-enthroned the self-exiled Chief. They even pleaded with the administration to reinstate *Vugah Simon* in his capacity as the *Fon* of *Kedjom Keku*. What the *Fons* forgot was the fact that once a people reject their ruler, nobody can impose this same ruler on them. On the 29th of December 2005, the S.D.O of *Mezam* went to *Kedjom Keku* to re-install the dethroned chief but meet with fierce resistance from *Kedjom Keku* villagers. This

¹²⁴Interview withj Mangei Jonathan, age 68, retired post worker, 15th December 2015, Momo Division.

¹²⁵ See Appendix 17, Harassment and usurpation of my inherited Traditional title of Chief Mbebili Village by the *Fon* of Bafut.

simply indicated the role of the administration in Chieftaincy disputes, as well as dethronement of chiefs in the *Bamenda* Grassfields. Some informants argued that the death of Chief *Vugah* Simon was caused by the bad advice he was given. This is because, knowing the hatred the *Kedjom Keku* people had for him, and he still had the courage to sneak into the *Kedjom Keku* palace. According to *Ngie Asunkwen*:

The *Fon* of *Mankon*, in whose palace the dethroned *Fon* had been staying from the time he abdicated the throne is the person who really pushed Chief *Vugah* Simon to his death. I say so because the *Fon* of *Mankon* is a true traditionalist, who could have known better that once a people reject their leader, he can never again be imposed upon them by other *Fondom*.¹²⁶

Otherwise, if *Fon Vugah* was not instrumentalized by some politicians he could not have dared to set foot in the palace and worse again at night. Some sources even hold that there was some secret planning in the night. *Fon Vugah* came down to the village because he is said to have briefly waited in his private residence beside the road only to enter the palace late that night. Though without substantial facts, the close collaboration between some *Fons* and political elites in the *Bamenda* Grassfields has provoked conflicts. Evidence has shown that the state and some political elites have propped up to impose chiefs in some areas just to ensure its control in the area. This could as it is the case recently; co-optation through bureaucratization of chiefs in order for the government and some political elites to benefit from the functions chiefs performed in their communities and to exploit the control they exercise over people and resources. This has thus pushed Chiefs to be closer to the state and political elites than to their population. It had occurred at times that some Chiefs reported their own people to the state as *Fon Vugah* Simon II of *Kedjom Keku* did in 2005.

In the same perspective, the administration instead of finding solutions to chieftaincy problems, rather in some instances worsen the situation. A case in point is that of the *Ashong* Chieftaincy succession crisis. On the 25th August 1994 Bell Luc Rene the governor of the North West Province called a meeting of all *Ashong* indigenes through their representatives in Bamenda to find solution to the chieftaincy conflict in *Ashong*¹²⁷. The outcome was the creation of the *Ashong* Central Third Class *Fondom*¹²⁷ through a prefectural order signed by the S.D.O. for *Momo John Niba Nchotu* on 6th September 1994. The *Fondom* was comprised of upper *Ashong*, lower

¹²⁶ Cited from an exclusive interview conducted by *The Post* News Paper No 105, by Chris Mbunwe, January 19th 2006.

¹²⁷ A. E. Agwi, "Chieftaincy Dispute in Ashong-Batibo Sub-Division, 1900-2009: A Historical Analysis", Long Essay in History, University of Buea, 2011, p. 13.

Ashong, together with *Njen*, *Kom* and the *Fulani*. These third class *Fondoms* were to pay allegiance to the second class chief of *Ashong*.¹²⁸

Initially the solution was acclaimed by all but it was doomed to fail since it did not precise who was to be designated as the third class chief but only assumed that it would be given to *Enongang's* Successor as compensation or as recommended previously¹²⁹. However, *Enongang* could not be designated the third class chief because it needed to go through public consultation to allow the king-makers to present the candidate. Thus, it was presumed that during the public consultation; the pro-Mbafor King-makers who were in the majority would straight away refute to sustain the choice of *Enongang* III as the third class chief of *Ashong* Central. This was so because making *Enongang* III third class chief of *Ashong* central meant that Chief Mbafor would have no base and so he would perhaps not recommend *Enongang* III for the position. At the public consultation scheduled for 24 January 1995 the pro-*Enongang*s refused to show up and it was a fiasco.¹³⁰ Another consultative talk was programmed for 24th March 1996 but it was later postponed indefinitely. On 17 May 1996, 1500 pro- *Enongang* supporters staged a march to the D.O.s office in *Batibo* in what they termed “Presentation of the Third Class Chief for *Ashong* Central”. They presented *Enongang* III as their candidate to the D.O. Etah *Ashu Mbokaye* who received them with promises that were never honored.¹³¹

From a general perspective what is presented as recognition by the state or a strengthening of the role and position of traditional leaders, may in fact be a co-optation and may reduce the role of Chiefs to helping legitimize state policies without being given real and independent power. In such cases, Bamenda Grassfields Fons have not been an alternative to the state and political elites, but rather a particular manifestation of state intervention and influence of elites in the localities. While integrating traditional leaders politically and administratively into central government, and utilizing tradition as a symbolic, legitimizing resource for governmental power, they simultaneously attempted to ‘*folklorise*’ the traditional side of the Chiefs’ role.¹³²

ii. Emergence of a Progressive class of Fons

¹²⁸ R. Frii-Manyi Anjoh, “Power Politics in Moghamo Clan of Cameroon: An Analysis of the Succession Squabbles in the Royal Family in Ashong; 1900-2013”, p.100.

¹²⁸Wami, “Conflicts and Conflicts Resolution in, p.82.

¹²⁹Anjoh, “Power Politics in Moghamo Clan of Cameroon”, p.189.

¹³⁰ Ibid.p.192.

¹³¹Anjoh, “Power Politics in Moghamo Clan of Cameroon”, p.197

¹³²Von Trotha, “From Administrative to Civil Chieftaincy, pp.87-88

Nowadays there exist certain class of Fons, mostly young who believe their place and role is no more limited only at the *Fondom* and the palace. To them before being a Fon, they are first of all citizens. Today we have Fons who are medical doctors, lawyers, civil administrators, senators and diplomats who for the most part are resident out of their *Fondoms* and rarely go to the palace. To them chieftaincy should not be limited to living in the palace and the *Fondom* and handling *Fondom* matters. Such class of chiefs can be qualified as progressivist.

The main characteristic of all these progressives Fons are based on three determinants; their level of education, their profession and their perspective about the chieftaincy institution. Though all of these determinants highlighted are essential for the chieftaincy institution especially in a fast evolving society today. When these become a threat, the fundamental bases that constitute chieftaincy, the immediate effects are generally conflicts and notably chieftaincy succession conflicts as conservatives of tradition generally think the chiefs are not fit for their task.

Field investigation carried out in the *Bamenda* Grassfields indicated that the rate at which “educated chiefs” that is Fons who have attended a certain level of western education is increasingly by the years. Most *Fons* enthroned in the last ten years possess at least an ordinary level certificate, while some hold masters’ degree certificates. Some of these *aFon* continue schooling after their enthronement.¹³³ This at times gave them the room to posed acts that don’t tally with their status. For instance, an anonymous informant in the Higher Teachers Training College of the University of *Bamenda* confided to the researcher that their classmate who was a chief was an adept night clubs, beer parlors and dressed in colorful style.

At one point in time, this same chief was called to order by the village authorities and even threatened replacing him if he continued misbehaving. These are some of the situations that opportunists could actually capitalize on to contest and claim the position of chieftaincy. In another dimension education had at times pushed some young princes to study abroad. Some of them after completing their education don’t desire at times to come to assume the throne. A vacant office can nurse bad intensions and generate a “coup d’état”.

Furthermore, some Fons nowadays are professionals in varied fields, teachers, administrators, lawyers, trade-unionists, university lecturers, senators, parliamentarians, medical doctors etc. The main interrogation is generally on alternating with efficiency between their professional careers and the duties of chieftaincy. The position and personality obliges the person

¹³³ Samah, “Cameroon Grassfields Traditional Rulers in the Context of Globalization: Revival or Decline, p.24.

incarnating the institution to be more reserved. That is a Chief cannot do what a common person does. Fons according to some Grassfields *Fondoms* don't eat in public don't shake hands with "commoners" and moreover, they are not supposed to be called by their names. All these taboos are frequently overstepped by Fons who are professionals. On the other hand, there is a group of conservatives in the *Fondom* and mostly notables who deem the actions of Fons unacceptable.

This explains why Fons who are professionals are mostly in a shoulder head either with their notables who believe *Fons* ought to stay off from activities that regularly expose them to the public and the world at large. In some instances, such category of Chiefs had generally delegated powers to their assistance in the *Fondom* and the results had not been generally good ones. Either the assistance end up claiming the position of siding with others to overthrow the chief who is permanently in absentia or he aligned. A Personal discussion with the Fon of *Banging* revealed that chiefs living out of their *Fondoms* generally absent from the *Fondom* either for academic or professional motives stand the risk of running into conflict with elders and stand the danger of been contested by some ambitious power thirsty princes or palace elders¹³⁴.

As a matter of fact, modernists or progressivist Fons from the *Bamenda* Grassfields have a different way of looking and exercising chieftaincy duties. To them, chieftaincy should and must not be a stumbling block to any aspiring young person. This explains why Fons are constantly seen on social media, Television, in open gatherings, shaking and feeling so free. The creation of syndicates with political motivations has become the order of the day with chiefs sending motions of support to political figures. There is hardly any political official ceremony where chiefs are absent and at times without their valets.

From the foregoing discussion, it is trite to note that the chiefs and the chieftaincy institution has been the embodiment of political power in the Pre-colonial times. It is also admitted, however that the traditionally unfitted powers of Fons have undergone transformation as a result of formal colonial rule under the Germans and the British and the introduction of parliamentary democracy after independence. The discursions further demonstrate the changing nature of local administrative roles of the chiefs. Indeed the challenges to the chief and their entire chieftaincy institution over the years are varied and ranges from colonial crated mechanisms to break their authority to the imperceptible marginalization of chiefs in political through constitutional provisions and other governing acts.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ A. Wolgers., *Discord and collaboration*, Baltimore, John Hopkins, 1962, pp.73-77.

¹³⁵ Ngwa and Kungang, "Revival of the Authority of traditional rulers, p.193.

**CHAPTER FIVE:
RAMIFICATIONS OF THE CHIEFTAINCY INSTITUTION IN THE BAMENDA
GRASSFIELDS FROM 1996 TILL PRESENT**

Chieftaincy as an institution of governance has played a significant role as far as politics, socio-economic and cultural life of the people of the *Bamenda* Grassfields is concerned. Throughout history, *Fons* have been at the center of democratic and developmental projects of their respective societies. Therefore, when something goes wrong in the sphere of Chieftaincy, it affects the peace and development of the people because the institution is the focus of the African identity¹. The moment the institution came in contact with alien rule, things became different; its structures and functions were drastically transformed. Thus, things have not been the same for both the seat of the chieftaincy and its indigenous populace. It must be admitted, however, that the traditionally unfettered powers of Chiefs have undergone transformation² as a result of formal colonial rule and the introduction of electoral parliamentary democracy before and since independence. This chapter therefore seeks to critically examine the changes and the impact of chieftaincy transformation as an institution of Governance firstly, during the German and the British colonial rules, secondly, since Independence and post-Independence Governments of Cameroon.

Section One: Colonial Implications on Bamenda Traditional Governance Ecosystem

One of the major problems African kingdoms faced with the advent of colonialism was the interference of colonial administrators in the customs and traditions of African traditional societies notably in norms guiding access to the throne and functions of the traditional authorities incarnated by the chieftaincy institution of governance³. The attempt to distort some cultural and traditional norms guiding a way of life of Africans had serious consequences. Among these consequences was change in the role of *Fons*, the disintegration of the traditional system of governance and administration, contribution to political evolution of the *Bamenda* Grassfields and chieftaincy conflicts as articulated in the following sub parts of this section.

¹Adjaye, J.K. and Misawa, B., “Chieftaincy at the Confluence of Tradition and Modernity: Transforming African Rulership in Ghana and Nigeria”, *International Third World Studies Journal and Review*, Volume XVII, 2006, pp.34-65.

²Ibid, p.42.

³Ibid, p.48.

I. Changes in the Role of Chiefs (Traditional Authorities)

Before the advent of colonial rule in Africa and in the *Bamenda* Grassfields, the role of traditional rulers was essentially centered on the wellbeing of the local population and on the development of the Chiefdom/*Fondoms*. The present day geographic location of the *Bamenda* Grassfields (North West Region of Cameroon), with its system of administrative structures, was naturally not the same during Pre-colonial times. The peoples of the area were organized into ethnic states otherwise known as *Fondoms*. The *Fon* of each ethnic group served as the executive head with the support of a council of elders⁴.

Chieftaincy in the pre-colonial era was the main system of governance that administered the combined legislative, executive, judicial, religious, and military responsibilities. These functions were vested in Fons and Councils of Elders of community, which in turn were subject to the paramount Fon or the king of the area. The lower level chiefs received instructions from the higher chiefs in all aspects of administration. The communities and divisional chiefs had responsibility to report to paramount Fons of the state of affairs of the community during an annual meeting to deliberate on the state of affairs (*See appendix 16*).

Although these types of institutions were not the same as those of “Western” institutions, in terms of structure and administrative procedures, the substance of the responsibilities, as well as the privileges attached created a similar level of social and political cohesion in their respective communities as were found in Western countries at the time. The chieftaincy institution during the pre-colonial period was not regulated by any external legislation beyond the respective traditional councils. The Traditional Councils were considered independent entities with apposite sovereignty.

The role of traditional rulers however witnessed a significant change with the advent of colonial authorities, first with the Germans and later the British. As a matter of fact, the chieftaincy institution during the colonial period was refined, restructured, and integrated into the German and British colonial administrative hierarchies and policies respectively. This was for the British a cost-efficient means of facilitating control and governance. The colonial period served as the genesis of the legal framework to regulate the institution. Prior to this period, the chiefs with the

⁴M. Fortes and E.E. Evans-Pritchard (eds), *African Political Systems*, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, pp.5-75.

support of and recommendations from their council of elders enacted laws to regulate their jurisdictions⁵.

There were three main guidelines that determined legislation regarding Traditional chieftaincy. First, the institution was tailor made to suit the British colonial requirement at the time. Secondly, attempts were made to practice a colonial policy before ordinances were introduced to legalize such practices, (ex post facto rationalization of government action) and finally, chiefs who resisted laws of the colonial administration were deposed or deported out of the country⁶.

As a follow up by the British colonial government to provide an everlasting solutions to land disputes in the *Bamenda* Grassfields in 1917, G.S. Podevin established an Instructional Court in *Bamenda* for the training of indigenous Fons on a new NC Ordinance and again in 1933, the British introduced the Inter-Tribal Boundaries settlement Ordinance which combined both the NC and Administrative procedures in the resolution of boundary disputes. NCs examined disputes of lower levels and were presided over by clan chiefs while other chiefs sat on the bench as judges.⁷

The colonial legislation on chieftaincy was stimulated by the necessity to deal with growing social discontentment which was increasingly threatening the position of the Fon. It emanated from the agitations of the educated elites and the youth against colonial policies which were meant to exploit the indigenous population as well as to pilfer the mineral wealth of the communities through their chiefs as Colonial agents. Fons in these communities consequently lost the long held community reverence because they were considered traitors. Over the long period of colonial rule, the chieftaincy institution was refined, restructured and integrated into the British Colonial administrative system under the Indirect Rule policy as discoursed in *chapter three of the study*. This was an efficient means of facilitating control and effectively reducing the cost of governance. This of course marked the genesis of the legal framework to regulate the institution.

Prior to this period, chiefs had the support and recommendation of their council of elders enacted laws to regulate their jurisdictions⁸. Hence, three main considerations determined legislation regarding chieftaincy. First, the institution was tailor-modeled to suit the colonial requirement at the time, second attempts were instituted to practice a colonial policy before

⁵I.Owusu-Mensah, *Politics, Chieftaincy and Customary Law in Ghana, Kas International Reports, 2013, p.9*

⁶Ibid.p.14.

⁷NAB, File: No.cb.47/1, p.12, Advice on the relationship between colonial Administrators and chiefs",1947, p.55.

⁸H.S. Daanna., "History of Chieftaincy Legislation in Ghana", a paper presented at a seminar organized by Eastern Regional House of Chiefs, 2010, p.45.

ordinances were introduced to legalize such practices, and third, chiefs who resisted the laws of the colonial administration were deposed or deported⁹.

Furthermore, the colonial legislations on Chieftaincy were driven by the need to comprehend the growing discontent that increasingly threatened the position of the Fon. Social discontentment emanated from the agitations of the educated elite and the youth against colonial policies meant to exploit the indigenous people and pilfer the mineral wealth of communities as some chiefs acted as colonial agents. Fons in these communities consequently lost their long-held community reverence, because they were considered betrayers, and consequently the stability of the social order with the Fons as the foremost constituents became a concern for the colonial regime¹⁰. One of the main consequences of colonial reorientation of chieftaincy was the disintegration of the traditional governance system.

i. Disintegration of the traditional system

Before the advent of colonial rule in the *Bamenda* Grassfields of Cameroon, the chieftaincy institution was a form of a social organization on which depended the people. They were equally defined as natural political system of traditional Africa, while traditional associations are the assemblies which were formed surrounding the chieftaincies, the first stoker of a rudimentary state and the embryos of great migration from the *Sahara* desert of those of *Kalahari*, those of the banks of the Atlantic and Indian oceans. In general, traditional associations were the exhalations of sub and sub units of traditional chieftaincy¹¹. The dis-functioning of both the chieftaincies and its subordinate associations became wanting and hopeless in the domineering rules and obligations of colonial sheerings.

The conflicting claims of chieftaincy among segmented societies of both the forest and the *Bamenda* Grassfields has as one of its main causes is the idea of “Natives and slaves” relation which has been exacerbated by the socio-political context of patronage in Cameroon in the 1990s and elites as self-serving political entrepreneurs are increasingly using the ethnic association and chieftaincy titles to strategically position themselves for appointment within the centralized bureaucracy as representatives of their area of origin. Chiefs in the colonial and Post-colonial context in Cameroon were co-opted by all their colonial masters and appropriated into the realization of political agenda of the post-colonial Cameroon. Under the Germans the chiefs

⁹Ibid, p.56.

¹⁰K.A. Ninsin., “Land, Chieftaincy and Political Stability in Colonial Ghana”, *Research Review* 2, 1986, p.15.

¹¹M. T. Aletum and P. Ngam., “The Social and Political structure of Power in the Traditional society”, in *Science and Technology Review* vol. VI, No 1-2, January-June 1989, pp.34-67.

negotiated and signed treaties between themselves and the German representatives. (*In Chapter Two of this study*)

Like the Germans, their predecessor relied on the existing administrative cartography under the tutelage of District heads who at times happened to be the recognized indigenous ruler of a tribal group with the district. Just like the Germans, French used super imposed “neo-traditional” chiefs and rules based on the perceived interpretation of native laws and customs as new chiefs lacked legitimate authority as they were not from the formally established royal blood as they were installed in community which chieftaincy did not exist per say.¹² The creation of the house of chief was as a result of non-interference in native affairs which strengthen their indigenous authority and a stiff resistance to modern leaders trying to replace traditional authorities. The house of chiefs aimed at representing and giving the voice of chiefs in politics, the Germans and British colonial policies, political events in *Nigeria*, western educated elites hope to harness their support in the struggle with Britain and the TA wanted to have a say in decision making of their people.¹³

In the *Bamenda* Grassfields, chiefs or Fons were aided by any advisory council installed by colonial masters. Smaller Fons with their jurisdiction were coopted as NAs and they were administered just in particular NAAs. Courts compromised village head that performed the executive and judicial functions of the NA. The Courts had one Fon recognized as the president, 2 other as co-president and rest were simply members. The Richard Constitution proposed the representation of chiefs in the Central legislative of Eastern Nigeria which worked in accordance with British desire to coopt and harness the social capital of the Western educated elites which was a major reorganization. The constitution despite, its objectives, legitimately authorizes the government to appoint and dismiss Fons.

¹²Aletum and Ngam., “The Social and Political structure of Power”, p.78.

¹³B. Chem-Langhee., “The Transfer of Power and Authority in *Nto 'nkar*”, *Annals of the Faculty of Arts, letters and Social Sciences, Serie Science Humaine*, Vol 3, No 1, 1987, p.55.

The creation of the Northern House of Fons was welcomed by Southern Cameroonians who dreamed for that as well. Fon Manga William a semi educated chief chaired a meeting of the New Cameroon provincial Council in Victoria in 1949, in which a resolution was adopted in favor of a separate Southern Cameroon Region made up of 22 Fons, 6 Administrative officers and 37 observers, 19 Fons were reminded of their subordinate rule vis-à-vis the British administration.¹⁴ Despite petitions by both the educated elites and the local councils, the village courts handled local issues and implemented the policies of local administration which eventually transformed most TR into mere executors of general policies as they struggle with commoners (elected members) of the central administration who focused on a larger political concern- autonomy, separation, unification and Reunification of the two Cameroons.

ii. Grassfields Traditional Rulers in Regional Politics

The selective and hereditary representation of authorities was transformed with the advent of colonialism. This system which was based on customary procedures and means of initiations by some recognized secret-religious nature was replaced by the elective represented system introduced by colonial actors. Thus preceding the 1940s and in the 1951 general elections into the Eastern House of Assembly, elected candidates were nominees of the traditional council dominated by the Federal Councils invented by colonialism as the “legal” representatives of the people and out of the 13 elected officials only a few came from the chiefly families¹⁵. Chiefs were co-opted by the western elites with the complicity of colonial masters into the Nationalist movement for self-rule. The unconditional support of indigenous rulers was expressed in action during the KNC victory in the elections of 1953 on a separate Region for Southern Cameroon with a gross majority thanks to the support of the Traditional rulers. Again in 1954 the same scenario repeated itself against KPP which resulted in the inaugurated meeting of SCHA and advocated vehemently supported the creation of the SCHCs who enjoyed the obedience of the masses but were jealous of the elected commoners. The Fons under the umbrella of the SCHCs had functions and obligations limited to legislative proposals and policies typical of an advisory role; they were placed under the patronage of the Commissioner of the Southern Cameroon Executive Council J.O. Field who was the speaker of the House of Assembly and not a TR leader.¹⁶ In 1961, the Federal Republic of Cameroon changed its name to West Cameroon House of Fons and by May

¹⁴I.Z. Forji., “Traditional Authorities in Ndungated Chiefdom from 1899-1995”, Master Dissertation, History, ENS-Bambili, 2012, pp.34-62 .

¹⁵Ibid, p.71.

¹⁶V.B. Amazeé., *Traditional Rulers (Chiefs) and politics in Cameroon History*, Presses Universitaires, Yaounde, October, 2002, pp.61-72.

1972, Ahidjo unilaterally disbanded making the chiefs to search for a political identity. Apart from coopting prominent chiefs into ranking by the ruling part, the Government also appointed some Senators. In the composition of Cameroons First ever Senate in which 70% were “voted’ by Municipal Councilors and 30% elected directly by the President of the Republic,¹⁵ traditional rulers were nominated by the President on the basis of their supposed or real affiliation to the ruling CPDM party.¹⁷

Within the socio-political organization of both the centralized states of the North and the Western Highlands and the acephalous societies of the forest and Coast, chiefs and Fons were administrative auxiliaries. They were subordinated and appropriated by the state making them impossible to be used as independent arbiters between the civil society and the state of Cameroon democratization process. There were also reagent chiefs who were also known as “administrative chiefs”. These Government chiefs did not command any special respect no authority despite their position or high office.

The adoption of the system of IR in the *Bamenda* Grassfields was a system of Governance used by the British Authorities in which Cameroonians and the Traditional Authorities of the said area complied willingly rather than coercively with her effective occupation¹⁸. This was equally a corollary process of colonial and Post-Colonial State construction which redefined the power relations at the state level. The chiefs under the hidden objectives of the British in creating an enabling environment for maximum economic exploitation were exposed to the formal education through which they were taught good English either in Government schools or in Native Authority schools. This was in line with the British policy of “Africanization” of 1948 which acclaimed Administrative service should be taken by improved system of Native Administration and local government. Through this process there were the high possibilities of chiefs or local authorities were the major agents and empowered to collect taxes, within their areas of jurisdiction on the advice of colonial administrators. Chiefs were responsible for the deposition of one third of poll taxes collected into the Native Treasuries as attempted mismanagement of funds not clearly defined. Also under the system of IR, the senior *Fons* held Post of the Presidents through which they were able to foster social peace to any project designed to foster unfitted exploitation of Cameroonians of the Bamenda Grassfields in particular and British Southern Cameroons a large.

¹⁷Ahidjo., *Contribution to National Construction*, p.188.

¹⁸N.B. Jua., “Indirect Rule in Colonial and Post-Colonial Cameroon”,in CSAC Ethnographics Gallery,p.67.

As a matter of fact, only chiefs and sub-chiefs were workers in the Native Courts as initially the courts began under the auspices of the Clan council which manages the administration and the development of their local areas.¹⁹ Thus due to the effective role of the chiefs and *Fons* in the administration of BC administration, 18 chiefs and *Fons* were gazetted as NAs by 1934 and the number effectively increased to 23 by 1943. The creation of the Government equally improved local government efficiency as the chiefs faced the incorporation of the educated class into formal administrative structure. The educated class served as councilors which further led to the creation of local notables who were established in business as consequently effectively colonized and deflated traditional powers. Thus the outcome was the creation of the HCs in 1957 to provide albeit illusory role in policy making on the part of the chiefs and *Fons* of the *Bamenda* Grassfields.

One of the major outcomes of transformation of chieftaincy duties and obligation in the administration of the *Bamenda* Grassfields was the gross disruptive colonial boundaries and the attempts to resolve boundary disputes created by the colonial masters in the course of implementing their effective occupation of the said areas. In the process, there was the fragmentation and agglomeration of the territorial integrity of the *Bamenda* Grassfields as some *Fons* together with land were considered imperative at the detriment of other *Fons*.²⁰ Again the agglomeration of *Fondoms* and chiefs for effective administration led to the creation of Federated areas of jurisdictions as seen in chapter 1&2 of this study led to the reduction of power influence of some traditional rulers as they were made subordinate administrators and simple servant in the Native Courts. One major cause of the land disputes between village-groups in the Grassfields was the Ethno-Tribal favoritism practiced by the German administrative policy²¹ as it was designed to bolster and favored village-groups that collaborated with the German colonial exploitation, while those that did not, were subjected and placed under the suzerainty of friendlier ones as vassal states (*Chapter 2 of this study*). This domineering position of “stronger” *Fondoms* led to a source of recurrent conflict with the *Balis* and the *Widikum* ethnic groups which became intensified from the period of 1902-1915. The Germans colonial Government in Cameroon recognized *Bali-Nyonga* Suzerainty over a larger areas in the *Bamenda* Grassfields.²²

¹⁹E.S.D.Fomin., “The German Colonialists and Lingering Ethnic Conflicts in Cameroon 1890-1990”, *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume VIII, No II. Quarter, II 2017, pp.12-40.

²⁰Amazee, V.B., *Traditional Rulers Chiefs/and Politics in Cameroon*, pp.98-100.

²¹BRA, File N° 78/NW/1Qa/a.1, “Demography Administration of the North-West Province”, 2001, p.04.

²²The recognition of *Bali-Nyonga* authority over her neighboring village helps the Germans in subduing surrounding village-groups. Zintgraff had realised the impossibility of 6000 *Bali-Nyonga* soldiers subjugating to more than 15000 soldiers of the neighboring-Village for this reason, 1000 rifles were provided to *Galega* and *Bali-Nyonga* soldiers drilled on the act of Modern warfare.

Again the chiefs and *Fons* continued to face the disruptive boundary demarcations or delineation as another cause of land disputes within the *Bamenda* Grassfields under the British Administration as the British, their new colonial Master took the procedure and process in providing attempted solutions in resolving the boundaries and lands dispute confusions set by the Germans. A case in point was the claimed by *Guzang* in *Batibo* Sub-Division of her ancestral and monumental land that was handed to *Bali-Nyonga* in 1935 by J. Sn Smith the then Assistant District Officer.²³ Also another example of dispute put in place by the Germans was the chief of *Nsongwa* a son from the *Mankon* chiefdom was supported and recognized by the Germans Government for aid and the British unsatisfactory resolution of the raffia and farming farmland between *Mankon* and *Nsongwa* fuelled dispute between them.

The taxation policy of the Germans which was later continued by the British as the authorities drew boundaries base on demographic figures and amount anticipated tax revenue. Villages placed under *Bali-Nyonga* hesitated to pay taxes were punished as well as independent villages such as *Babadji* and *Okoremanji* in the Wum area. Related to land disputes faced by the chiefs was the important and use of communal land as the colonial master did not understand the concept of communal land. Chapter one of this study clearly situated that land was a collective ownership of the Indigenes which ensured harmony of the population between village-groups and its exploitation under the supervision of the traditional authority was imperative to traditional governance. The colonial masters despised the concept by effectively deviating as they went astray to demarcate it with the use of boundary pillars and the introduction of individual ownership and some were placed under warranted chiefs. Therefore the traditional hunting grounds, farming land became problematic such as the case of *Akum* and *Nsongwa*. The disputes identified in this section of the work were not however by-pass by the British colonial government in providing attempted solutions;

British proposed to the Indigenes to choose a side of belonging to the *Bali-Gasho* community and negotiations were made between the chiefs of *Bafanji* and chief of *Gasho*. As agreed, *Bafanji* abandoned its original site and relocated itself east of River Mombe-Tangwa while *Bali Gasho* occupied the vacated land west Bank of the River and recognized the suzerainty of the chief of *Bafandji*. However, after 20 years conflict resurfaced and chief of *Bali-Gasho* took *Bafanji* to the *Ndop* Native court²⁴.

As a follow up by the British colonial government to provide an everlasting solutions to land disputes in the *Bamenda* Grassfields in 1917 G.S. Podevin established an Instructional Court in

²³BRA, File, No AB5./2/3b, "Assessment Report on the Bali Clan in the Bamenda Division of Cameroon", p.23.

²⁴BRA, File No AB5./2/3b, "Assessment Report on the Bali Clan in the *Bamenda* Division of Cameroon", Hunt, W.E., 1925, p.34

Bamenda for the training of indigenous Fons on a new NC Ordinance and again in 1933, the British introduced the Inter-Tribal Boundaries settlement Ordinance which combined both the NC and Administrative procedures in the resolution of boundary disputes. NCs examined disputes of lower levels and were presided over by clan chiefs while other chiefs sat on the bench as judges.²⁵

iii. Fons in Constitutional Evolution of the *Bamenda* Grassfields

The experience gained by Fons in their collaboration with the German and British authorities gave them the capacity to participate in the political evolution of British Southern Cameroon. In a bid to make *Bamenda* Grassfields Fons part of their colonial allies for the realization of their ambition, the colonial authorities unconsciously contributed in training traditional rulers towards enhancing the political evolution of British Cameroons. In 1922, Indigenous Rulers served as Native Authority as administrator under the policy of the Indirect Rule stipulated by British their colonial masters. As actors of the modern system of Governance and experience gained, they became the first decision makers in the different Constitutions and Assemblies that were put in place by their colonial masters preparing them for future sole administrators of their Independent State.²⁶

All political and administrative changes in Nigeria directly or indirectly influence political development in British Southern Cameroons and the *Bamenda* Grassfields. The Governor and commander-in-chief in Nigeria was also the governor of the Cameroons as well as the Executive Council of Nigeria was at the same that of Cameroon. In this perspective constitutions that were introduced in Nigeria equally affected Cameroons towards her political advancement.

The Richard Constitution of 1947, this constitution was introduced by Sir Arthur Richards', who was the then governor General of Nigeria from 1943-1947. The constitution was adopted in 1946 but became effective on the 1st of January, 1947. This constitution established a legislative Council in Lagos not providing any representation for BSCs in the said Council thus neglecting the traditional Rulers of Grassfields of Cameroon²⁷. Instead Cameroon loose the one seat which Fon Mange Williams of Victoria had occupied in the Lagos Council. As an outcome of the Constitution, BSCs as well as *Bamenda* Grassfields traditional authority were given two seats in the Eastern Regional House of Assembly (which had only an advisory roles and served as a link between the native authorities and central legislature in Lagos) at Enugu as the rightful

²⁵Ibid, pp.65-70.

²⁶D.M. Njikang., "The Cameroon Chieftaincy Institution and access to justice in Cameroon", *Mbengwi*, 2011, p 34.

²⁷W. Che-Mfombong., "*Bamenda* Division under British Administration 1916-1961: From Native Administration to Local Government" M.A. Dissertation, University of Yaoundé 1, History Department, 1980, p.43.

representatives (Chief Manga Williams and *Fon Galega II*) of their populations without consulting the people. The constitutions said nothing concerning self-government of the BSCs which made both the chiefs and Southern Cameroons to criticize it because of the loss of representation in the central House in Lagos. Among other factors it was criticized by PM Kale through a memorandum written to the Labour Colonial secretary Arthur Creeche Jones.²⁸

The demands among others were the immediate steps towards self-rule for *Nigeria* and Cameroons, questioned why the only seat in the legislative council was abolished, why SCs was not created a region but fused in the Eastern Region with Two traditional chiefs representing SCs as mentioned in the study. And the obnoxious Appointment and Deposition of chiefs Ordinance of 1945 gave the authorities the right to appoint and dismissed chiefs. The delegation returned home from Britain will all hopes dashed because the Colonial Secretary told them to implement Richard Constitutions.²⁹

The Macpherson Constitution of 1952 replaced the Richard Constitution of 1948 after its adoption in 1951. This constitution was drawn in order to solve the neglected problems of granting a separated Regional Status with a House of Assembly to be directly responsible to the UN Trusteeship Council. As its outcome, SC was divided into six political districts with two seats each and Bamenda with 3 seats. The SC was to be represented by 13 representatives in the 80 members of the Eastern House of Assembly in Enugu and Seven members of Non Traditional Authority but the elites and politicians of the 13 representatives were to be present in the New House of Lagos. Amongst the four Ministers in the Council of Ministers in Lagos, Dr. EML Endeley was the only SCs minister appointed as minister of Labour while ST Muna Minister of works with no chiefs appointed as minister who have been the sole administrator of their people.³⁰

The Lyttleton Constitution of in August 1952, a Nigerian Constitutional conference took place in Lancaster House. It was convened by Oliver Lyttleton who was the then British Colonial Secretary. The Natural rulers and Native authorities of SCs on behave of their people authorized EML Endeley of the KNC to represent them at the conference and N.N Mbile of the KPP together with Mallam Abba Abbi the lone traditional ruler from British Northern Cameroon without a single politician or traditional authority forms the *Bamenda* Grassfields. Resolutions of the Constitution stipulated that, should Endeley win the Elections to be conducted in 1954 Southern Cameroons

²⁸E.M. Chilver., *Native Administration in West Central Cameroons*, (eds), Robinson K. and Madden F, in *Essays in Imperial Government*, 1963, p.94. ,

²⁹ NAB, File: No 5/21,cf no 27 of 20/10/57,“Southern Cameroon Report”,1957 p.4.

³⁰P. N. Nkwi.,“Cameroon Grassfields Chiefs and Modern Politics”, *Paideuma*, No. 25, 1979, p.89.

will be granted Quazi regional status. Thus by 1954, she got a Quazi regional status under the Leadership of Endely as minister of business at the relegation of traditional rulers. The executive Council equally met and was precised by the Commissioner.³¹

The SCHC was also created and met in *Buea*. This constitution was revised in 1957 at Lancaster House conference in which representatives where from political parties of KNDP, K.P.P. and KNC. BSCs and the *Bamenda* Grassfields inclusive made a full Region known as SCs and placed under the representative of her Majesty in the Federation of *Nigeria*. The Governor General of *Nigeria* was also to be the commissioner of SCs and a house of chiefs was promised together with a ministerial system of Government³². In 1958 Dr. Endely as mentioned above became minister of Government business, introduced a ministerial system of government and became SCs First PM with cabinet ministers of Rev Andose; N.N Mbile, Ajebe Sone. An Executive Council was also set up comprising of a President, the Commissioner of the Cameroons, Legal Secretary, Financial and Developmental Secretary. The unofficial members of the council were Endeley; Kangsen, Muna and SA George with no Fon inclusive. The Chiefs who played a very important role in KNC/Endeley popularity leading to his success in the 1954 House Representative Elections.³³

The Lyttleton constitution of 1957 took a lot of political decisions which shaped and directed the politics and the future of Southern Cameroons and the *Bamenda* Grassfields inclusive. As in October, BSCs was proclaimed a Quazi Federal Region or a semi-autonomous state under the governor of *Nigeria*, the creation of the House of Assembly with 25 members and 13 Elected championed the political debates of BSCs regarding her continuous integration in Eastern *Nigeria* or her separate entity from the Federal Republic of *Nigeria*. This however was decided in the March elections of 1957. The *Bamenda* grass field's chiefs were active participants as they supported among other views secession from Nigeria together with the KNDP of John Ngu Foncha who stood for Secession and Immediate Reunification with French Cameroon. While Dr. Endeley KNC stood for full autonomous self-government for SCs within Nigeria and KPP of P.M. Kale stood for a regional status within *Nigeria*³⁴.

³¹M.M. Ndobegang, "Grassfields Chiefs and Political Change in Cameroon, Ca 1884-1966", Ph. D Dissertation in History, Boston University, 1985. p. 65.

³²E.M. Chiabi., "Traditional Rulers in National Politics", *Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Letters Social Sciences, Serie Science Humaine*, Vol. VI, no 1&2, Janvier- Julliet, 1990, pp.27-50.

³³Ibid, p.45.

³⁴A. A. Ndamukong., "The Evolution of Traditional Administration in *Meta* from Pre-Colonial Times to 1990" Master Dissertation, University of Yaounde 1, 1999, p.23.

The results of the elections were highly contested as the Chiefs opposed for the non-establishment of a House of Chief. This contestant were called to meet in London in a constitutional conference in May-June, 1957 in which deliberation were taken; The Quazi- Federal status was abolished and the territory was known as Southern Cameroons or Autonomous Region. The leader of Government Business was called the Premier; the Governor-General was called High commissioner responsible for general policy, in the House of Assembly members was increased from 13 to 26 members as well as the creation of the house of Chiefs with about 20 members³⁵.

The resolutions raised another conference known as the London Constitutional conference scheduled for September 1958 in which the KNC & KPP stood for the attainment of an equal regional Status of SCs as other Nigerian of Nigeria while KNDP/Fons stood for pure and simple secession of Southern Cameroon from *Nigeria*. The outcome was the granting of Cameroons Full Regional Status similar to other Regions of *Nigeria* to be implemented after the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly has been dissolved in December 1958 and new elections held in 1959³⁶.

The role of traditional rulers in nationalism at loggerheads with the educated elites expressed itself especially during the creation of Cameroons House of Assembly established in 1954.³⁷ The educated elites resolved thoughts individually without a collective approach to forestall the continuation of Chiefs in national politics but engaged in nationalism (the struggle to create a Cameroon nation as distinct from the representation of Cameroon by Chiefs in the national politics of *Nigeria*) a glaring example from the Western Grassfields. Further by agreeing the conflict between the two were averted as many of the educated elites were either by birth directly relatives of Chiefs or by upbringing traditional enough to compromise with the traditional system and leadership. This was clearly seen in the 1950s as some of the politicians moved in favor of a future house of chiefs eventually created in 1960³⁸ against a background support of the Grassfields Chiefs who gave their total support to the nationalist movement. For instance, after the Lancaster House conference of 1953, in which Dr. Endely KNC stood for separation of BSCs from *Nigeria* was ill-received by the Nigerian press and members of KNC were attacked as they decided to split from

³⁵V.J. Ngoh., *Cameroon 1884-1985: A Hundred Years' of History*, Yaoundé, Navi-Group publication, 1988.p.65.

³⁶A. W. Ndifor., "Colonial Impacts on Indigenous Political Institutions' case of Nweh Politics" DIPES II Dissertation, E.N.S Yaoundé, 1981, p.22.

³⁷ Ngoh, *Cameroun : cent ans d'histoire*, p.78.

³⁸ Ngoh, *History of Cameroon s*, p.76.

the N.C.N.C. These attacks did not stop the politicians of BSCs to respond to Lord Lyttleton call for a conference in London.³⁹

The Natural Rulers and native authorities of the BSCs, on behalf of their people and themselves authorized Dr. Endeley, J.C. Kangsen and Mallam Abba to represent BSCs at the conference. The authorization letter was signed by the following *aFons* and Chiefs; Fon Sake, *Fon* for Ndop local Area signed on July 18, Sehm Atar, the *Fon* of *Bansaw* signed on 19th July, chief W. Mfiomi of Ndu signed on 19th July as well as chief of *Nkambe*. The chief of We, chief Philip Bama signed on the 20th of July, *Achirimbi* II of *Bafut* signed on the 21st of July as well as the *Fon* of *Mankon* SW Federation while on the 22nd August, *Fon* VS Galega II of *Bali* NA as well as *Fon* Mba II of *Batibo* signed on the 22nd of July 1953. This signatory nursed the creation of a House of Fons in 1954 and which was abolished 12 years after. The Fons were now able to realize the education which they were curbed to sustain by the colonial masters had thrown them out of modern politics. As attested by E.S.D. Fomin;

Their children and even those commoners who acquired the education not only preferred national to local government but also believed that time had come for national politics to prevail. They also believed that the colonial-appointed traditional leaders had little role to play in the national politics of the 1950s and some of the elites were ambitious to have important role in the House of chiefs which was very surprised to both the colonial administrators and many traditional rulers⁴⁰.

The Fons usually were elected by inheritance and if the inherent are more than one or not nominated by outgoing *Fon* then election is conducted to elect one. These Fons rule the tribe according to their own traditions and take decisions in important issues in consultation with his aids. Government generally did not interfere in their routine matters, in major issues like joint defense of the country, developmental schemes and external affairs, the Government enjoy full rights.⁴¹

iv. Creation of Association of Fons

One of the main consequences of Fons' implication in colonial governance was the fact that it created awareness on their fate. The Southern Cameroons house of Chief was accepted in the London Constitutional conference of 1957 and came into operation in 1960. The idea of its creation was conceived as far back in 1953 after the Eastern Regional Crisis from which Chiefs began to assert themselves very prominently in politics. It has a proportional representation as follows;

³⁹ ACE electoral knowledge network, "Paramount chieftaincy as a system of local Government, ACE Facilitators, 25, March, 2011, p. 179.

⁴⁰ Lee and Schultz, "Comparing British and French rule", pp.45-56.

Victoria division (2seats), *Kumba* division (4 seats), *Mamfe* Division (3seats) *Bamenda* Division (6 seats) *Wum* (3 Seats) *Nkambe* (3 seats). Elections took place on July 1960 and it first met in September 1960 and was presided over by the Commissioner J.O. Field. As the House of Lords in Britain, natural or traditional rulers came together to contribute towards the building up of the state. This was facilitated through the policy of indirect rule system that had existed since 1922 as the chiefs and Emirs played an important role in national politics precipitated the formation of the house of chiefs. In 1952, the Chiefs of the then Eastern Region of *Nigeria* formed a House of Chiefs; *Fon* Galega II of *Bali* was one of its members. The formation of the Eastern Chief Conference did not go unnoticed by the Chiefs in British Southern Cameroons⁴². ESD Fomin writes that:

The Fons were the traditional or “natural rulers” in Southern Cameroons. In the Bamenda Grassfields, they were known as the *AFons*. Chieftaincy was a very strong influential and respected institution in the Bamenda Grassfields. As the British colonial authority used the chiefs in administering their people. Chiefs had jurisdiction over the criminal and customary courts and were instrumental in the success of the Natives Authorities. Before the 1950s, the Chiefs in Southern Cameroons had yet identified themselves as a political influential group with the formation of a recognized association, could influence the politics and the development of Southern Cameroons. This changed in the 1950s when the Chiefs demanded a House of Chief.⁴³

Another factor that motivated its creation was the fact that the British had as primary motive the objective to implant their parliamentary system of government of a Bi-Cameralism into the structural decision making machinery of British Southern Cameroons. The British regarded a House of Chiefs performing the same functions as the House of Lords which included: advising the government, deliberating bills and proposing, approving or modifying legislations. In short the functions were judicial, legislative and deliberative. As the British saw it, as a bi-cameral legislature on the British Model would function better with the existence of a House of Chiefs working together with the House of Assembly. According to the British Indirect rule proved that the traditional rulers had much clout among their subjects⁴⁴.

A second factor which led to the creation of the House of Chiefs was the experience which the Chiefs of southern Cameroons had following their association with the chiefs and Emirs of *Nigeria*. Since Britain administered Southern Cameroons as part of the Eastern Region of *Nigeria*, Southern Cameroons were represented in the Eastern House of Assembly by two Chiefs; on *Galega II* of *Bali* and Chief Manga Williams of *Victoria*. These Chiefs experienced the political clout which the Chiefs in *Nigeria* exercised. In addition, *Nnamdi Azikiwe* favored the participation

⁴² Fomin., “The Southern Cameroons House, p. 39.

⁴³ Chem-Langhee., “The origin of the Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs”, pp .34-67.

⁴⁴ Chem-Langhee., “The origin of the Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs”, p.86.

of traditional rulers in the political development of *Nigeria*. These Chiefs in Southern Cameroons were often informed of the meetings and conferences which the Chiefs and Emirs of Nigeria held to promote their interests and those of their subjects.

In 1952, the chiefs in the Eastern Region formed an Eastern Chiefs Conference and *Fon Galega II* was one of the members. The formation of the Eastern Chiefs conference did not go unnoticed to the chiefs of SCs as during the London conference of 1957, one of its resolutions was the creation of a house of Chiefs in Southern Cameroons. The House of Chiefs would be empowered to exercise the following; through the judiciary they will advise the government, deliberate by considering questions tabled before it by the commissioner, consider legislation that will be brought before them. The Commissioner of Southern Cameroon was delegated to see into its creation⁴⁵.

Grassfields Fons acknowledged that their roles in the political evolution in the Grassfields in particular and BSCs at large where their authorities were challenged and threatened by Western Educated elites such as Dr. Endeley warning. They were marginalized in political decisions by the educated elites; their influence, prestige and honor were declining as they settled among other peers to create a recognized association through which their villages could influence politics and development of the territory.

Traditional rulers of British Southern Cameroon rallied their resources to champion the national politics of this region and the creation of S.C.H.Cs was born in 1959. One of the major reasons for creation of the House of Chief was the active role played under the British Administration and forerunners in the independent struggle of British Southern Cameroons in particular. They stated the fact. That this institution taught the native administration who gained experience on the Southern Cameroon politicians. This justified their involvement in the political arena as well as they were very close to the grassroots population. They were also of the opinion that they better understood the problems of the indigenous people than the educated elite who spent very little time with the local people⁴⁶.

The House of Chiefs had judicial, deliberative and legislative functions within the spatial frame of the *Bamenda* Grassfields. They were to advise the government, consider and debate legislation brought before them and influence policy. Therefore the influence of Chiefs in the

⁴⁵ N. L. Tam., "Relations between the Bali and the Non-Bali Chiefdoms in Bali Nyonga from Pre-colonial Times to Colonial Times", MA Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2000, p.33-46.

⁴⁶T.J. Tazifor, and J.D. Tabi., *Cameroon History in the 19th & 20th centuries*, Education Book centre Buea, South West Region, Cameroon, 2009, p .23.

political life of the Bamenda Grassfields' population was indispensable as Chiefs with their absolute authority over the subject stood a better chance of enforcing government directives. They contributed to the maintenance of law and order. The local government called NA and the Customary Courts were under their control. These safeguarded the culture and traditions of the various communities.⁴⁷

Through this association the Grassfields Fons views will be transmitted to the political elites her political prestige least under-minded. The establishment of this house served as an instrument for *Fons* and Chiefs to reestablish the authority usurped by the British colonial government. Their interest in the house no doubt was enough evidence of the Grassfields desire to play an active role in modern politics. Thus in 1954, Natural Rulers headed by *Fon* Galega II of Bali and *Fon* Achirimbi of Bafut with the support of their peers wrote a letter to the British Government requesting among issues the creation of a House of Chiefs for Southern Cameroons.⁴⁸ After much pressure from the Natural Rulers, the British authority had no choice but to encourage its creation as she understood that the natural rulers constituted an essential arm of administration and thus needed to be officially involved in the modern politics so that, they could assist the political elites on legislative matters like the House of Lords in Britain.⁴⁹

The SCHC was inaugurated in May 1960 three years after the British government had approved it. The delayance was due to the uncertainty and confusion that characterized the political climate of Cs at the time. This house later became an arm of the SCs House of Assembly in which Samuel Mofor was the Chief whip and when the SCHA was transformed into West Cameroon House of Assembly following the constitution of the Federal Republic of Cameroon. Samuel Mofor was elected in 1962 among the ten deputies of the W.C.H.A. to represent West Cameroon in the F.H.A. in Yaoundé. In this same year, the K.N.D.P. government carefully prepared the Recognition of Chiefs' law which was formally approved by the Chiefs and it laid down the rules by which Chiefs would be formally recognized by the government after they have been chosen and installed by the king makers.

The law came as a result of the numerous crises that occurred in the 1950s and 1960s after the death of a Chief. The death of the Chief often resulted to a crisis of interest where potential

⁴⁷Ibid, p.56.

⁴⁸W.T. T. Samah., "Achirimbi II of Bafut" M.A. Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 1999, p. 96.

⁴⁸J. R. Willard, *The Cameroon Federation: Political Integration in Fragmentary Society*, Princeton, Prince town University Press, 1970, p.60.

⁴⁹Ibid.

heirs struggled to succeed to the throne therefore the recognition law was therefore introduced to provide guidelines to resolve disputes of such nature. The certificate was issued from the Prime Minister office in *Buea* recognizing and enlisting traditional rulers and administrative policy which fostered the good relations that existed between the K.N.D.P. and the Traditional Ruler. This gesture by the government was welcome with pride and honor by the traditional rulers and the population as compensation for liberating and for consistently supporting the party in power during this struggle for political awareness and active participation in both the 1959 elections and the 1961 plebiscite.⁵⁰

Through the S.C.H.C. they contributed enormously in nation building. In 1962 a bill on farmer-grazer conflict was tabled to them in which they proposed the mechanism of using bared wires for fences to separate farmers from grazers' practical law which was approved by the then government of Cameroon. They augured that due to their functions in national politics and pressure, a decree harmonizing their succession and payment of salaries to meet their basic needs was signed by President Amadou Ahidjo. Irrespective of the above contributions by traditional authorities, they said chiefs had no veto power in the Cameroon house of Assembly, did not proceed bills other from those of the House of Assembly and referred to their functions as "dogs" that could bark but not "bite" consequently the future became blur for the SCHC of Chiefs as it was defunct in 1972⁵¹.

v. Multiplication of conflicts within the chieftaincy institution

One significant fact that is worth stressing on is that, throughout colonial period in the Bamenda Grassfields, the chieftaincy and its associative institutions of traditional administration and governance that used to function as a system, was disintegrated and privileged given exclusively to Chief/*Fons*. By so doing all the other palace institutions such as the traditional council, the regulatory society were ignored and frustrated. This attitude could generate nothing apart from conflicts. These institutions in some cases became an opposition to the *Fon* who now was receiving orders from the colonial administrators. In fact the system of check and balance that characterized chieftaincy before the advent of colonialism was distorted thus making the *Fon* more or less a "democratic-dictator" under the protection of the colonial administrators. Chiefs who dare took sides with their people faced the wrath of the colonial administrators.⁵²

⁵⁰C.E. Tabi., "Native Courts in Mamfe Division 1922-1961", MA Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé 1, 2005, pp.45,62.

⁵²BRA, File N° 57/2/NW/Ha./1, "Chieftaincy in North-West Province" Bamenda Cultural Centre", 1984, p.14.

On the other hand, chiefs who sided with colonial administrators faced their subjects. Whichever way they took, they were trapped. In such cases, only tactful means and diplomacy was used to play in active management of administration between colonial pressure and the exigencies of the subjects. As a result of these mutations in the role played by Chiefs/ *Fons* under German colonial rule seriously impacted Chieftaincy conflicts which prolonged into the British colonial era. Even though, the British colonial rule in its own way contributed in intensifying the existing conflicts and created new ones. The British authorities just like the Germans made traditional rulers the corner stone of their administration and granted them with much power management than the German did. The British inherited what the Germans left behind such as the chieftaincy succession disputes and at the same time triggered the operationalization of their policy.⁵³

In the *Bamenda* Grassfields *Fons* were very crucial in the execution of British administration. That is why in 1947, the Senior Divisional Officer of the *Bamenda* Division, F.K. Kay warned his colleagues against tampering with the position of chiefs when he cautioned them that: “A chief can be broken in twenty minutes but it takes twenty years to make one”. However, this statement did not stop the British colonial administration from posing acts that were tantamount to jeopardizing the chieftaincy institution.⁵⁴

Section Two: Impacts of Chiefs Role at Post-Independence Cameroon

Traditional Authority in the post-colonial era has been the embodiment of political power from pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial times. Since independence, the Head of State in the Republic of Cameroon has had the authority to restructure and withdraw official recognition (See appendix 13) from the chiefs/*Fons* who have not equally relinquished their effort to regain their loss status of legitimization and authority through legal and constitutional legalization. Thus chiefs/*Fons* as auxiliaries of the administrative machinery have been directly controlled by the government since Independence.

I. Relegation of Traditional Authority to the Background of Governance

The first impact that *Bamenda* Grassfields *Fons* were confronted with at Independence in Cameroon was their relegation in effective modern governance. As there was the caporalisation of Chiefs into the administrative machinery and by 1972 process which effectively put in place by

⁵³ See Appendix 8, German policy in the Old Bamenda Division, Cameroon, 1908-1912, part II, Translation of material in Buea Archives.

⁵⁴ See Appendix 14, Decree No.77/245, “Bearing the Organization of traditional Chieftaincy”, 15th July 1977, p.04.

the colonial masters and was followed by the dissolution of their association (SCHCs). By the 1977 law, there was the reorganization of the Chieftaincy as an institution of local governance with far reaching effects both on the seat of the institution as well on the traditional authority functionality.

According to the 1977 decree on the reorganization of chieftaincy in Cameroon, the administrative authority could only confirm a Chief presented by the kingmakers of the concerned *Fondom*, but at the same time the administrative authority had the powers to or not to recognize a Chief even if he was legitimately chosen by the kingmakers. A Chief could rule if only if he was recognized and installed legally by the administrative authority and his names sent to archives at MINATD (See appendix 4). This in other words suggests that even if a Chief was illegitimate and legal, he could be allowed to rule in the *Fondom*.⁵⁵

Since the chieftaincy institution is controlled by the state through administrative authorities, the minimization of the value of chieftaincy history has provoked and deteriorated the state of chieftaincy succession quarrels due to wrong administrative decisions without reference to history. State authorities through the poor management of existing chieftaincy crisis, disregard for chieftaincy history and tradition and the influence of bribery and corruption have contributed in exasperating the rate of chieftaincy succession conflicts in the *Bamenda* Grassfields. In reality, some administrators saw chieftaincy succession conflicts as a means of making money, to the extent that resolved conflicts were actually been revived by some administrative authorities.⁵⁶

In the modern Cameroon administration and according to constitutional backings, the appointment of any individual stems from the discretionary power of the authority appointing. As a matter of fact, the appointment of a Chief by an administrative authority is a “government act” and cannot be contested even in the court. This was clearly spelled out in ordinance no.72/6 of August 26th 1972 on the reorganization of the Supreme Court. This in other words means that once the administrative authority appoints a chief be-him legitimate or not, so far as the act is legal, such a decision cannot be contested. What happens when an administratively appointed chief dies and has to be replaced? In Cameroon, Decree No. 77/245 of 1977 turned all traditional leaders into auxiliaries of the government. The chief’s installation has to be ratified by an express note of administrative recognition before he can officially exercise any active role.⁵⁷ He is now

⁵⁵ See Appendix 11, Information on Etwi II Chieftaincy, May 7th 2005, p.5.

⁵⁶*Ibid*, p. 10.

⁵⁷*Ibid*.

accountable to the Senior Divisional Officer of his area and might suffer disciplinary sanction from low level bureaucrats.⁵⁸

In return, the chiefs received a small monthly salary from the state in addition to a small commission from tax collections. The bureaucratization of chieftaincy has demystified the sacred nature of royalty and seriously curtailed the powers of the chiefs as even non royal persons because of wealth and political influence can influence the choice of a chief in his *Fondom*.⁵⁹ That explains why the link between chiefs and the political elites of the *Bamenda* Grassfields is ever strong. As a matter fact, the post independent state did everything possible to manipulate chieftaincy to its favor. Evidence that the modern state has consistently sought not only to capture but undermine the office of the chief can be seen in the way in which it has been manipulated.

Article 2 of the decree sets out a threefold classification of chiefs; First class Chiefs were to be those with two Second class chiefs under their jurisdiction and within the territorial limits of a divisional unit. Second class Chiefs had to have the allegiance of two Third class chiefs and their jurisdiction could not be larger than a sub-division. The jurisdiction of Third class chiefs was limited to a village or a "quarter" in a rural or urban area. However, intent on manipulating these Chiefs, Article 4 gave discretionary powers to the administrative authority of the post-colonial state to classify a *Fondom* as first, second or third degree basis of the nebulous concepts of demographic or economic importance.⁶⁰

According to Nantang Ben Jua, the post independent state has manipulated traditional authority by seeking to convert Chiefs to clients.⁶¹ Relations between the two have taken on the semblance of parasitism, than symbiosis as was the case in the Colonial State. The ability of the state to manipulate and control the Chiefs was increased by the fact that, they depended on the state for financial needs and some of them power thirsty for political offices. All these advantages increased the scramble for the position of chieftaincy and thus the outcome has been a series of chieftaincy succession disputes.⁶²

⁵⁸J. Ubink., *Traditional Authorities in Africa: Resurgence in an Era of Democratisation*, Leiden University Press, 2008, p.46.

⁵⁹ C.F. Fisiy., 'Chieftaincy in the modern state: An institution at the crossroads of democratic change'. *Paideuma* 41, 1995, p.54.

⁶⁰ N.B. Jua., "Indirect Rule in Colonial and Post-Colonial Cameroon", *Paideuma: Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde*, Bd. 41, 1995, p. 44.

⁶¹Ibid, p.46.

⁶² M. M. P. Menye. *Problématique de la succession à la chefferie traditionnelle*, Yaoundé, Edition SOPECAM, 1990, p.23.

In the *Bamenda* Grassfields, access to the chiefly position was through a systematic mechanisms and criterion at the basis of which the candidate for chieftaincy among several criteria must have been born on the tiger skin. It is the process of designating a Chief and installing a Chief in the *Bamenda* Grassfields that gives chieftaincy its traditional, customary and legitimate characteristics. While the colonial state in the *Bamenda* Grassfields had sought to borrow legitimacy from traditional chiefs, the post-colonial state through statutory provisions eventually reversed this order and Decree no. 77/245 of 15 July 1977; Article 20 stipulated that recognized Chiefs were to act as auxiliaries of the administration.⁶³

Stressing on the importance of legitimacy vis-a-vis power management Max Weber was famous for emphasizing that power relationships with the subjects are influenced by legitimacy. In political science, legitimacy implies that the subjects accept and recognize that a particular institution has “the right to rule”, and that its compliance to this institution is more or less voluntary.⁶⁴ In other words, this means that a legitimate institution has got the right to exercise power it has power through consent and mutual understanding, instead of through coercion. As Weber explains it; the subjects must have an interest in obeying that particular ruler.⁶⁵

Seymour Martin Lipset provides a slightly different definition of legitimacy. However, his definition is still related to Weber’s understanding of the concept. Lipset argues that legitimacy is “the capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society”.⁶⁶ In order to assess the legitimacy of the chieftaincy in the *Bamenda* Grassfields, the term legitimacy must operationalize. In line with Oomen’s recommendation, legitimacy within African chieftaincy institution is necessarily operationalized as justified support.⁶⁷ Justified as it takes into account the way in which people think of, speak about and justify the way in which the chieftaincy institution obtained its authority”⁶⁸ and support it because support forms “a reasonable and measurable indication of whether people will comply when told to do so or not.”⁶⁹ It is upon this process that the traditional

⁶³Ibid, p.44.

⁶⁴ M. Weber., *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978, p.212.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶S.M. Lipset., “Social Conflict, Legitimacy and Democracy”, in *Legitimacy and the State*, W. E. Connolly (ed), Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1984, p.88.

⁶⁷B. Oomen., *Chiefs in South Africa: Law, Power & Culture in the Post-Apartheid Era*. Oxford: James Currey Publishers, 2005, p.167.

⁶⁸H. B. Markus., “A Chief is a Chief by the People. Exploring the legitimacy of the Mzinyathi chieftaincy in eThekweni, KwaZulu-Natal”, Master’s Dissertation in Political Science, University of Oslo, 2017, p.24.

⁶⁹ Ibid.p.36.

authorities hands the name of the chief to the administrative authorities for appointment or confirmation.

However, in case of dispute over who to succeed a chieftain position, the decision to decide who to become chief depends on the discretionary powers of the administrative authority. This suggests that an illegitimate candidate could use his wealth and political connection to be appointed a Chief at the detriment of the legitimate one. This practice has been common in several Chieftaincy crises in the *Bamenda* Grassfields. Quite problematic again was the authority vested on the administration to unmake or destitute a chief. In reality, decree no.77/245 of 15 July of 1977 on the organization of the chieftaincy institution in Cameroon gives the authority to destitute a Chief especially if a Chief had posed illegal act that threatens the security of the population and fundamental human rights.

i. The Auxilliarization of Chiefs

At independence, the injunction for chiefs in participating in the functioning of the modern state was very brief as a decree was signed to regulate its functioning. It can be deduced that the multiplied Chieftaincy conflicts faced by the chieftaincy institution some of which had their roots from colonial period actually threatened the State as some of them were marked by violent manifestations. To Van Nieuwaal dreading the threat chieftaincy could cause the modern state as rival governance and in terms of stability, the African modern states just like colonialist co-opted and marginalize the Chiefs within its bureaucratic models as mere auxiliaries as a means to resolve the threat posed by chieftaincy and at the same time use it to consolidate its existence.

Colonial administrators in the *Bamenda* Grassfields kept Chiefs at the forefront of socio-political and economic management of their polities, but with the advent of the post independent state, chieftaincy was not only threatened by the new political elites, it was transformed into a valet institution to the new state. They were later engulfed and aligned as the lowest administrative unit and representative of the state or what was administratively called auxiliaries of the administration. The fact that Chieftaincy institution became a valet institution at the mercy of the modern state, capable of making and unmaking a chief, a number of troubles increased within the chieftaincy institution, amongst which was the problematic of succession disputes.⁷⁰

⁷⁰Interview with Namata Diteng Joseph, age, 52, Civil Administrator, 12th February, 2017, Momo Division.

In post independent Cameroon, one of the main factors that have frequently triggered chieftaincy succession conflicts in Cameroon and notably in the *Bamenda* Grassfields has been the question of appointment of traditional authorities by state administrators.

ii. Politisation of Chieftaincy

According to Ibrahim Mouiche Traditional leaders in the era of multiparty politics in Cameroon became interest oriented persons in what he termed as; “chasseurs *d'intérêts ou d'utilité*”; “leur option pour ceux qui tiennent le fusil”.⁷¹ To most chiefs, the choice to collaborate with the state was a rational choice that permitted them to get more access to the state apparatus and obtain advantages in exchange for their collaboration and also to pledge for bureaucratic recognition, security and autonomy.⁷² In this coalition of interests, traditional authorities and the state participated in the same capacity to some extent in consolidating the authoritarian nature of the state.⁷³ One of the revealing episodes of the open support for parties in Cameroon was during the municipal elections campaign of 1996. As head of the CPDM list in the *Foumban* urban council, the sultan-king of *Bamoun* kingdom; Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya presented himself as the defender and the messenger of his populations by stating thus:

L'heure est justement à la démocratie. Par conséquent, que j'adhère à un parti et que mes amis, mes enfants et d'autres membres de ma famille militent dans d'autres ne devraient pas vous surprendre. Maintenant, s'agissant du roi des Bamoun que je suis, mon engagement dans le parti leader confirme mon souci de mieux servir mon peuple, car le peuple bamoun est un groupe minoritaire et ses intérêts ne peuvent être défendus que par les décideurs.

*Je ne crois Fondamentalement pas être en conflit avec certains de mes sujets, mais être davantage engagé dans la défense des intérêts des Bamoun. C'est d'ailleurs à leur demande pressante que j'ai accepté de présenter ma candidature. Ils ont pensé que j'étais le mieux placé pour assurer la réalisation des priorités liées au développement de leur cité, et ces besoins sont nombreux....*⁷⁴

It is worth noting that, even before the 1996 elections, the sultan of the *Bamoun* kingdom kept using denigrating words against the opposition party in Bamoun notably UDC. In a parable, the sultan noted that; *Lorsqu'un chef de famille fuit des averses, il ne doit se mettre que sous la protection d'un arbre charnu, afin que lorsque la tempête secoue ses branches, il en ramasse quelques fruits qui tombent pour nourrir ses enfants.*⁷⁵

⁷¹ M. Ibrahim., "Autorités traditionnelles, multipartisme et gouvernance démocratique au Cameroun", *Afrique et Développement*, Vol. XXX, No. 4, 2005, p.8.

⁷² Ibid.p.20.

⁷³ L. Sindjoun., *L'État ailleurs. Entre noyau dur et case vide*, Paris: Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie, *Economica*, 2002, p.85.

⁷⁴ Quoted in “*Le Messenger*” Newspaper, No. 472, January 23, 1996, p.7.

⁷⁵ Ibid.p.10.

In other words, the sultan was referring to the CPDM as a juicy tree under which all Bamoun people should stand so that when the wind blows they will be able to pick up the fruits. The Sultan opined that the sovereign of the *Bamoun* people can only support the ruling party, the CPDM, the only party that can respond to various requests from its people, unlike the UDC, a "sterile" tree that cannot even bear fruits.⁷⁶

In the *Bamenda* Grassfields Francis Nyamnjoh noted that some *aFon* like that of *Mankon*, *Bafut*, and *Balikumbat* that joined party politics saw their legitimacy and Authority being contested⁷⁷. In the 1992 presidential election, *Fon Angwafo*'s residence was burnt by his people claimed to be militants from the Social Democratic Front (SDF)⁷⁸. *Fon Ganyonga* was one of such chiefs whose political career gained prominence in 1990 following his co-optation into the ranks of the ruling CPDM. He was one of the "old actors" clad in "new clothes".⁷⁹

But the government's claim to legitimacy, owing to its introduction of political pluralism, was soon brought into question⁸⁰. It followed that similar claims made by "old-new actors" such as *Ganyonga* also came into question. This was because the government and the CPDM party in particular were perceived as obstacles towards genuine democratic transformation in Cameroon. The people and the opposition expected chiefs to be 'neutral' mediators in the on-going struggle between civil society and the state, but this was not the case.

It was against this background that many people in the *Bamenda* Grassfields expressed hostility not only towards their chiefs who sided with the state, but also to the idea that chiefs ought not to participate overtly in multiparty politics⁸¹. *Bamenda* Grassfields *Fons* that ventured into politics were faced with serious opposition and threats from their subjects. As a matter of fact, In October 1992 the much awaited presidential election was held. No election in Cameroon attracted as much fervor and enthusiasm as this election. Although the CPDM government insisted on organizing the election without an independent electoral commission, the SDF and other opposition parties decided not to squander this unique opportunity by boycotting as they had done

⁷⁶ Ibrahim, "Autorités traditionnelles, multipartisme et, p.9.

⁷⁷F. Nyamnjoh, and M. Rowlands., "Elites Associations and the Politics of Belonging in Cameroon", *Africa*, vol. 68, No 3, 1998 p. 334.

⁷⁸P. Konings., "Chieftaincy, Labour Control and Capitalist Development in Cameroon", *Journal of Legal Pluralism* no 37/38, 1996, p.346.

⁷⁹ Ibid.p.342

⁸⁰J. Fokwang, "Chieftaincy in the Era of", p.108

⁸¹ Ibid, p.67.

in March 1992.⁸² Given the growing unpopularity of the CPDM, many people anticipated the inevitable demise of Paul Biya, but he shocked everyone and emerged victorious.

Popular opinion maintained that victory was stolen from Ni John Fru Ndi. According to Fokwang Jude, the results showed that Paul Biya, the incumbent, won 39% of the votes, while Fru Ndi of the SDF and *Belo Bouba* of the UNDP won 35% and 19% respectively.⁸³ Owing to violent protests in *Bamenda* and other parts of the North West, where the SDF commanded overwhelming support, a state of emergency was declared in the province which lasted over two months. Fru Ndi was also put under house arrest for declaring himself the president-elect. This period was extremely precarious for supporters of the CPDM including especially the much respected *Fons* of the North West Province. Hostile incidents against *Fons* were registered in several parts of the North West Regions although none was directed at *Fon Ganyonga*.⁸⁴

In *Mankon* for example, *Fon Angwafor* was confronted by accusations and threats from his subjects who blacklisted him for complicity with the CPDM administration. These accusations became more grievous during the state of emergency, when on 3rd November 1992 hundreds of subjects stormed his palace to protest against his ‘meddling’ in partisan politics. Other unidentified protesters burnt down the *Fon's* rest house in *Bamenda* to register their disillusion with him. All these violent reactions from the subjects and challenge to the *Fon's* authority could have possibly led to succession crisis if serious measures were not taken. This was because some subjects in *Mankon* began contesting the authority of the *Fon* and in such situations, opportunists generally emerged to openly contest the chieftaincy position as shall later examine in the case of *Balikumbat*. Furthermore, following the defeat of *Fonyonga II* of *Bali Nyonga* by the SDF in the local council election of 1996, elections in which members of his party (CPDM) were against his candidature, the position and legitimacy of the Chieftaincy institution was put to at stake.

More members of the CPDM were completely against the fact that *Ganyonga* should stand as the party candidate for the election. The *Fon's* determination to run for the post led to chaos within the CPDM constituency of *Bali*. CPDM militants who opposed his candidature decided to elect their own candidate which excluded the *Fon* from participating. Eventually the CPDM had two contenders for the post of mayor within the same municipality, the *Fon* and one of his subjects. Although the *Fon* emerged as the CPDM candidate, in the end he was defeated by the opposition

⁸²Ibid, p.109.

⁸³Ibid, p.112.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p.116.

SDF.⁸⁵ His defeat made him very unpopular as had been predicted by those who opposed his running for the mayoral office.

After their victory, the local leadership of the SDF in Bali decided to pay a visit to the *Fon* ostensibly to reassure him of their unalloyed loyalty. Although this was the official policy of the SDF, many of its militants decided to celebrate the *Fon's* humiliation at the palace ground, much to his displeasure. Other subjects who were opposed to the *Fon's* 'meddling' in party politics began to disobey instructions from the palace as a way of registering their disappointment with the *Fon*. At a particular period, some informants claimed, people refused to supply free labor to the *Fon*, provoking him to place a temporary ban on all *death celebrations*⁸⁶ (cry-die) until subjects complied with his demands. This challenge of authority could have potentially provoked succession conflicts since the present *Fon* has become unpopular.

Elsewhere in the *Fondom* of Ndu, soldiers shot and killed six citizens while they protested against the supposedly stolen victory. The *Fon's* silence over the matter provoked the subjects to accuse him of collaborating with the CPDM and of being an auxiliary of state repression. Thereafter, subjects began to denounce him publicly and others called him by his name which was interpreted as an open sign of dethronement.⁸⁷ Again, this could possibly generate into a succession dispute as the *Fon* was symbolically dethrone just by calling his name.

In the same circumstances during the 1992 elections, *Fon* Galabe Doh Gah Gwanyin had apparently stuffed the ballot boxes in his palace before the beginning of the election.⁸⁸ This situation immediately raised tempers and violent reactions. In response, *Fon* Doh Galabe threatened to open fire on his subjects and in reaction, the population threatened to burnt down his palace had it not been for the rapid intervention of the forces of law and order.⁸⁹ During the legislative elections of 1997, still on a background of suspicion of fraud, the same recidivist faced the violent protest from his subjects and given the magnitude of the protest he took refuge for a time in *Bamenda*.⁹⁰ *Fon* Doh's implication in party politics and some mischievous acts that were

⁸⁵Fokwang quoting; *The Herald* No. 275 Thursday, January 11-14, it is also reported that after the defeat at the polls, some subjects called on him to resign. This was based on allegations that he had threatened to resign if his subjects failed to vote him for the position of mayor. Cf. *The Herald* No. 281, Friday, February 02-04, 1996. p.3.

⁸⁶ According to Fokwang Jude, In Bali, it is customary to celebrate the death of deceased relatives soon after their burial. It is believed that failure to do so may invoke the wrath of the ancestors towards the living.

⁸⁷C.F. Fisiy., "Chieftaincy in the Modern State: An Institution at the Crossroad of Democratic Change", *Paideuma*, 41, 1995, p.55.

⁸⁸*The Herald* No. 275 Thursday, January 11-14.

⁸⁹ Jua, "Indirect Rule in Colonial," p. 41.

⁹⁰ Ibrahim, "Autorités traditionnelles, multipartisme et ", p.9.

credited to him during the 1997 elections laid grounds for chieftaincy succession conflicts in Balikumbat.

Preceding discussion suggested that the ultimate act of deserialization of chieftaincy was clear evidence to suggest that the reaction of the people vis-a-vis the behavior of the *Fon* could provoked a succession disputes at the moment people begin to question the legitimacy of their Fons. In the *Bali-Kumbat* case, the chief literally abdicated by escaping to *Bamenda*. This consummated the divorce or the temporary separation of the people and their *Fon*. In a bid to reconcile the two parties the Divisional Officer for *Mezam* launched an appeal to the natives to welcome and back their *Fon* to the village.⁹¹ This case reveals that the people could reject authority of a chief who still commands the government's stamp of legitimacy

According to Nantang Ben Jua some politician and notably of members of government harbored an undisguised contempt for the chiefs⁹². Chiefs had entered into an unholy alliance with the state and the ramifications of this alliance on the institution of the Fendom threaten to be far reaching as it is the case with succession conflicts. Further evidence in support of this view emerged during the October Presidential elections in 2004. The *Fon* of Mankon, who is believed to have engaged similar exercise as his colleague of Bali-Kumbat did in the Legislative election, his official rest house burnt by an unidentified group of furious subjects.

Disidentification which is an effect of working against prevailing practices of ideological subjection⁹³ is now common place in the *Bamenda* Grassfields as some subjects turn to openly challenge their *aFon*. Countervailing forces, such as the concept of empowerment of the people that thrived because of the emergence of "moral pluralism" account for the failure of political elites attempt to use the chiefs to capture civil society in the *Bamenda* Grassfields⁹⁴. Equally important, there is now a new generation of subjects who do not profess blind allegiance to traditional authorities in the *Bamenda* Grassfields.⁹⁵

As indicated earlier, this has had tremendous repercussions on the powers of traditional authority, and at times produced non royal persons who contest the post of CHIEFTAINCY on the simple basis that the *Fon* has sway away from his traditional missions and objective of cultural preservation of their people. The use of chiefs as proxies to ensure political positioning and

⁹¹Cameroon Post, No. 105, 9 April, 1992, p.15

⁹²Jua, *Indirect Rule in Colonial and* , p.48.

⁹³D. MacDonell., *Theories of Discourse*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986, p.40.

⁹⁴Jua., *Indirect Rule in* , p.48.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*p.50.

legitimacy by the government and some political elites has caused more harm than good to the institution.

In reality, the historical position occupied by *Bamenda Grassfields Fons* disposed them toward political manipulation and exploitation by vested political interests. In post democratic Cameroon, the central government has often envisaged a role for traditional leaders in issues of local administration by considering them as auxiliaries of the administration, even though with straw man roles. At the same time, traditional leaders have at one point in time constituted a threat to state authority especially during the early years of independence. During the post democratic period in Cameroon, the governments did not see traditional leaders as a force capable of undermining their own power, rather in some instances, it has attempted to turn chiefs from more or less independent local actors into mere agents of the state.

In most *Bamenda Grassfields Fondoms*, *Fon's* nowadays pay more respect to government officials and the political elites than to their own subjects and institutions which are not bad in itself. The problem is that they turn to even carry out some assignments which jeopardize their positions and put their legitimacy asunder. This was the case in *Kedjom Keku* where the dethroned Chief Vugah with the encouragement of his peers and state authorities went back to the village to dethrone *Fon* Vubangsi using force. Following the enthronement of Vubangsi Benjamin Vutsibong as the new chief of *Kedjom Keku*, a deep friction surfaced between the *Kedjom Keku* people and the administration, as well as some members of the North West *Fon's* union.

The administration denounced the dethronement of Vugah Simon. Chief Vubangsi Benjamin was even jailed and later released by the *Mezam* high court.⁹⁶ In a letter addressed to the Minister of Territorial administration and decentralization, calling on the arrest of the enthroned *Fon*. In the correspondence, Chief Vugah Simon II noted that a state cannot be within a state. He further begged in his letter to MINATD that the government should quickly intervene in *Kedjom Keku* to reinstate him as rightful chief because he has been *Fon* for 25 years with a palace population of 135 persons. Following his excommunication from the village, chief Vugah noted that he has been driven from the palace and from the village with his family and were suffering from serious starvation, illness and no place to stay for eight months and a half. Chief Vugah maintained in the letter that he was an arm of the administration and that the state should intervene to save him from his own people.⁹⁷

⁹⁶Interview with Mangei Jonathan, age, 68 years, retired post worker, 5th December, 2017, Momo Division.

⁹⁷ See Appendix 11, Information on Etwi II Chieftaincy, May 7th 2005, p. 10.

When peace and calm was restored in *Kedjom Keku*, the administration backed by some chiefs of the North West *Fons* Union made attempts to re-enthroned the self-exiled chief. They even pleaded with the administration to reinstate Vugah Simon in his capacity as the *Fon* of *Kedjom Keku*. What the chiefs forgot was the fact that once a people reject their ruler, nobody can impose this same ruler on them. On the 29th of December 2005, the S.D.O of *Mezam* went to *Kedjom Keku* to re-install the dethroned chief but meet with fierce resistance from *Kedjom Keku* villagers. This simply indicated the role of the administration in chieftaincy disputes, as well as dethronement of chiefs in the *Bamenda* Grassfields. Some informants argue that the death of chief Vugah Simon was caused by the bad advice he was given. This is because, knowing the hatred the *Kedjom Keku* people had for him, and he still had the courage to sneak into the *Kedjom Keku* palace. According to *Ngie Asunkwen*:

The *Fon* of *Mankon*, in whose palace the dethroned *Fon* had been staying from the time he abdicated the throne is the person who really pushed Chief Vugah Simon to his death. I say so because the *Fon* of *Mankon* is a true traditionalist, who could have known better that once a people reject their leader, he can never again be imposed upon them by other *Fondom*.⁹⁸

Had it been Chief Vugah was not instrumentalized by some politicians, he could not have dared to set foot in the palace and worse again at night. Some sources even hold that there was some secret planning in the night. Chief Vugah came down to the village because he is said to have briefly waited in his private residence beside the road only to enter the palace late that night. Though without substantial facts, the close collaboration between some chiefs and political elites in the *Bamenda* Grassfields has provoked conflicts. Evidence has shown that the state and some political elites have propped up to impose chiefs in some areas just to ensure its control in the area. This could as it is the case recently; co-optation through bureaucratization of chiefs in order for the government and some political elites to benefit from the functions chiefs performed in their communities and to exploit the control they exercise over people and resources. This has thus pushed chiefs to be closer to the state and political elites than to their population; it had occurred at times that some chiefs reported their own people to the state as *Fon* Vugah Simon II of *Kedjom Keku* did in 2005.⁹⁹

In the same perspective, the administration instead of finding solutions to a chieftaincy succession conflicts has rather in some instances worsen the situation. A case in point is that of the

⁹⁸Cited from an exclusive interview, conducted by *The Post* News Paper by; Chris Mbunwe, January 19th 2006.

⁹⁹See *Appendix 11*, Information on Etwi II Chieftaincy, May 7th, 2005, p. 10.

Ashong chieftaincy succession crisis. On the 25th August 1994 Bell Luc Rene the governor of the North West Province called a meeting of all *Ashong* indigenes through their representatives in *Bamenda* to find solution to the chieftaincy conflict in *Ashong*¹⁰⁰. The outcome was the creation of the *Ashong* Central Third Class *Fondom*“ through a prefectural order signed by the S.D.O. for *Momo John Niba Nchotu* on 6th September 1994. The *Fondom* was comprised of upper *Ashong*, lower *Ashong*, together with *Njen*, *Kon* and the *Fulani*. These third class *Fondoms* were to pay allegiance to the second class chief of *Ashong*.¹⁰¹

Initially the solution was acclaimed by all but it was doomed to fail since it did not precise who was to be designated as the third class chief but only assumed that it would be given to Enongang’s Successor as compensation or as recommended previously¹⁰². However, Enongang could not be designated the third class chief because it needed to go through public consultation to allow the king-makers to present the candidate. Thus, it was presumed that during the public consultation; the pro-Mbafor King-makers who were in the majority would straight away refute to sustain the choice of Enongang III as the third class chief of *Ashong* Central. This was so because making Enongang III third class chief of *Ashong* central meant that Chief Mbafor would have no base and so he would perhaps not recommend Enongang III for the position. At the public consultation scheduled for 24th January, 1995 the pro-Enongangs refused to show up and it was a fiasco.¹⁰³ Another consultative talk was programmed for 24th March 1996 but it was later postponed indefinitely.

On May 17th 1996, 1500 pro- Enongang supporters staged a march to the D.O.s office in *Batibo* in what they termed “Presentation of the Third Class Chief for *Ashong* Central”. They presented Enongang III as their candidate to the D.O. Etah Ashu Mbokaye who received them with promises that were never honored.¹⁰⁴

From a general perspective what is presented as recognition by the state or a strengthening of the role and position of traditional leaders, may in fact be a co-optation and may reduce the role of chiefs to helping legitimize state policies without being given real and independent power. In such cases, *Bamenda* Grassfields *Fons* have not been an alternative to the state and political elites, but rather a particular manifestation of state intervention and influence of elites in the localities.

¹⁰⁰ Agwi, “Chieftaincy Dispute in”, 13.

¹⁰¹ R.F-M. Anjoh., “Power Politics in Moghamo Clan of Cameroon: An Analysis of the Succession Squabbles in the Royal Family in *Ashong*; 1900-2013”, *Global Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2018, p.188.

¹⁰²Ibid, p.194.

¹⁰³ Anjoh., “Power Politics in Moghamo Clan, p.190.

¹⁰⁴Ibid, p.197.

While integrating traditional leaders politically and administratively into central government, and utilizing tradition as a symbolic, legitimizing resource for governmental power, they simultaneously attempted to ‘folklorise’ the traditional side of the chiefs’ role.¹⁰⁵

This immediate impact was the tension that arose between the chief and his subject who gradually began to shift their trust from the chief to a more dynamic person and generally conservatives. In some cases, princes that were unfortunate to inherit their father’s throne at the expense of their brothers used the opportunity of the rift between the chief and the subject to impose his legitimacy and claim the throne. Actually, governmental policy towards traditional leadership in Cameroon, whether informed by fear or friendship has a bearing on the relationship between traditional leaders and their people. In Cameroon, the power of traditional leaders is often based on two sources: state recognition (legality) and local “tradition” (legitimacy).

The formal recognition of *Fons* can enhance their local power and legitimacy, but might as well endanger those qualities, especially when the legitimacy of the government itself is being questioned. When chiefs are heavily integrated into the administrative apparatus and tied to the national political structure dominated by the interest of the head of state and the ruling national party, call it the party in power, this can have a detrimental effect on their local position and even put his own position in danger, thus succession conflicts. The local attachment of the chief can be to a certain extent give way to his responsibilities as a member of the central administration and his loyalty towards the national government and the politics of the national center can come to dominate.¹⁰⁶

iii. Chiefs and elected positions

As noted earlier in this study, the attitude manifested towards traditional rulers in Cameroon by the political elite was clear indication that chiefs were no longer welcome in the political space. Thus they were literally excluded from all elective positions. The only influential channel left for traditional authorities to express their views on political issues in Cameroon was the House of Chiefs. However, noticing the influential role of the association of chiefs, the political regime decided to dissolve the House of Chiefs in 1972.

However, the House of chiefs that had served as an arena as well as an outlet for traditional authorities in the former West Cameroon to engage in national politics was unceremoniously

¹⁰⁵ T. V. Trotha., “From Administrative to Civil Chieftaincy: Some Problems and Prospects of African Chieftaincy”, *Journal of Legal Pluralism* 37/38, 1996, pp.87-88.

¹⁰⁶Trotha., “From Administrative to Civil Chieftaincy”, pp.89-94

dissolved in 1972¹⁰⁷. At these moment chiefs became politically unemployed as they could not participate fully in party politics. Worst still, the 1977 decree has made chiefs “auxiliaries of the administration” and by so doing greatly reduced the spiritual and mystical position of chief’s vis-à-vis their subjects. In fact, chiefs had to depend on the state to exist politically. The occasion presented itself in the 1990s for the wind of change that brought about democracy and multiparty.

The political liberalization process in Cameroon in the 1990s favored the opening of the political space and the unleashing of opportunities which traditional rulers were quick to seize to demonstrate their relevance. This did only permit traditional rulers to rejuvenate traditional rulership¹⁰⁸ but also led what Samah Walters described as the “retraditionalisation” of the African State.¹⁰⁹ That is to say, reconstructing African states based on African values and heritage such as the chieftaincy institution.

Traditional authorities in the Bamenda Grassfields taking the advantage of their status as the representatives of grassroots people, sought to impose themselves in this new era of liberalization in Cameroon.¹¹⁰ A number of factors within the democratization process in Cameroon that contributed significantly in inciting chiefs’ participation in modern elections. These factors include; the liberalization of the political scene that witnessed the militancy of traditional rulers in Party Politics, financial advantages of chieftaincy, and the emergence of a Neo-traditionalist class of chiefs.

Before delving into the factors that triggered chieftaincy succession as a liberalization of the political scene, it is important to present the background to the advent of the democratic transition, the goal is to present factors that prompted the democratization process in Cameroon. The democratization process in Cameroon was triggered both by international influence and internal changes in Cameroon. This period was fundamentally marked in Cameroon by the resignation of President Ahmadou Ahidjo in 1982 and Paul Biya becoming the new president. Internationally this period was characterized by the end of the cold war and the fall of the Berlin war.

The post-Cold War era partly opened the way for debates and concerns on numerous perspectives, theories and ‘deep’ differences in opinion ranging from policies to strategies and approaches on various dimensions of development. The aim has been to arrive at concrete

¹⁰⁷B. Chem-Langhee., “The origin of the Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs”, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 4(16): 1983, p.658.

¹⁰⁸C.F. Nchia., “Party Politics in the Bamenda Grassfields 1955-2004: Transmutations and Implications”, Ph.D Dissertation in History, The University of Yaounde 1, 2013, p.220.

¹⁰⁹Samah, “Chiefs (traditional rulers)”, p.15.

¹¹⁰Nchia, “Party Politics”, p.220.

recommendations for action¹¹¹. Harry Truman the US president at the epoch proposed what he called “democratic fair dealing” that is a society where nations would respect the rights of men; where all men have a right to freedom of thought and expression and opportunity to share and participate in the common good.¹¹²

According to Truman, democracy alone can provide the vitalizing force to stir the people into triumphant action. By this, he meant granting a voice to local peoples in deciding their own affairs. The Trumanian policy greatly influenced international cooperation as European powers and other international institutions controlled by the west had to impose democracy and decentralization as an international policy with each power influencing its former colonies.¹¹³ The European and world Charters on local autonomy and specifically French local authorities have had an impact on the African continent and Cameroon in particular. The magnitude of these events had a direct impact on many African States notably with the widespread political and socio-economic crisis in the entire continent around 1990s.¹¹⁴

Internationally and with the perspective of implementation democratization principles, western powers imposed on African countries the implementation of a number of public policies. African countries including Cameroon were obliged to do so in exchange for Official Development Assistance following the failure of the Communism socialist ideology. It was obvious, that to stop the last bastions of this ideology in favor of economic liberalism, it was important to address the human element, that is, advocating for individual freedoms and the economic crisis raging in Africa. Following the wind of change from the East, a new method of defending democratic principles took over Western powers.¹¹⁵

Consequently, by late 1945, through the voice of President George Bush, the United States expressed their new vision of their foreign policy, whereby the United States was committed more than before in promoting development and growth in an emerging democratic African continent.¹¹⁶ It was against these events that the French President, Francois Mitterrand gave the impetus for French speaking Sub-Saharan African countries towards democratization during the

¹¹¹ A. Szirmai., *The Dynamics of Socio-Economic Development: An Introduction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.78.

¹¹² Ibid, p.100.

¹¹³ Ibid, p.106.

¹¹⁴ C.N. Mback., *Démocratisation Et Décentralisation. Genèse et Dynamiques Comparées des Processus de Décentralisation en Afrique Sub-saharienne*, Paris : Karthala / P.D.M., 2003. p.17.

¹¹⁵ Mback., *Démocratisation Et Décentralisation*, p.33.

¹¹⁶ L.N. Tsimi., “L’autonomie administrative et financière des collectivités territoriale décentralisées : l’exemple du Cameroun, Ph.D. Dissertation in Public Law, University of Eastern Paris, 2010, p.67.

customary Franco-African Summit notably that of Baule of 1990 which became a historic one as it conditioned French Development Assistance in exchange for implementation of democratic principles among which was decentralized cooperation. It is in this context that the wind of democratic transition was activated in Cameroon.

On 4th November 1982, Ahmadou Ahidjo, president of Cameroon abruptly resigned as president of Cameroon taking Cameroonians and the regime's international allies by surprise. He was immediately succeeded by his prime minister, Paul Biya, a long-serving technocrat and self-effacing ally. For the first six months, the hand-over of power appeared to go smoothly and was even hailed by some as a model transition in sub-Saharan Africa. But things soon went wrong as tensions over power, influence and the distribution of resources led to violence and cut short the apparent liberalization of the regime. Since that time, President Biya's rule has been characterized by the tension between two conflicting modes of governance. On the one hand is the centralized clientelist system he and his supporters inherited from Ahidjo and have maintained. On the other, is the open debate, choice and popular legitimacy which has periodically emerged, whether in the one-party state or within a pluralist setting. When this latter form of political practice has gained sufficient momentum to challenge the principles of clientelist power, it is cut down to size. As an observer has said of the late 1980s, "the party-state functioned as a set of clientelist units during elections which were intended to follow a procedural, egalitarian, and competitive model. The result was a conflict of legitimacy which turned to chaos and the fracturing of the party".¹¹⁷

In mid-1983, Ahidjo made a surprise recovery and affirmed what he continued to regard as his pre-eminent position, by virtue of having remained president of the CNU. He claimed, among other things, that he retained the right to nominate people to party positions. In June, Biya changed the composition of the government, getting rid of several Ahidjo loyalists, including Sadou Doudou, and replacing them with people more beholden to him.

Ahidjo, safely in Switzerland, launched a series of attacks on Biya's rule on French international radio. After two tense months, Biya, on 22nd August, announced that he had uncovered a plot to unseat him, led by northerners in the army and instigated by Ahidjo¹¹⁸. Things further worsened following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and subsequent reduction of international support for authoritarian regimes emboldened civil society and opposition groups across Africa. The re-introduction of multi-party politics in Africa was an inevitable by-product

¹¹⁷Mback., *Démocratisation*, p.17.

¹¹⁸Ibid, p.26.

of globalization in Cameroon, the “*wind of change*” came with the formation and launching of the Social Democratic Front SDF party in *Bamenda* on 26th May 1990. This was following law No 90/056 of 19th December 1990 calling on the existence of other political parties in Cameroon.¹¹⁹

It is worth noting that the constitutional reforms of the 1990s were preceded by the legalization of political parties, which paved the way for open competition for elective posts.¹²⁰ This was in stark contrast to what existed during single-party rule, under the dictatorship of Cameroon’s first President, Ahmadou Ahidjo. During that era everyone, including traditional chiefs, in principle belonged to the Grand National Party, and any form of dissent was often violently suppressed.¹²¹ The liberation of the political scene in the 1990s gave chiefs the opportunity to bounce back into the political scene with some becoming mayors, and members of parliament.

As Jude Fokwang indicates, the introduction of democracy in Cameroon in 1990 created conditions for the return of old political actors such as chiefs to the “national political scene”, despite the popular demand for “actors” of a new kind¹²². This was because in the days of the single party state, Paul Biya had prohibited chiefs from participating in national politics.¹²³

Nevertheless, pluralism prompted by the demand for “Jacobin democracy”, compelled Paul Biya to backtrack from this position as he needed chiefs to consolidate his powers and the dissemination of the party.¹²⁴ For example, *Fon* of Mankon was co-opted as the first Vice President of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM). At the same time, the *Fons* of *Bali* and *Bafut* became alternate members of the Central Committee.

According to Ibrahim Mouiche Traditional leaders in the era of multiparty politics in Cameroon became interest oriented persons in what he termed as; “*chasseurs d'intérêts ou d'utilité*”; *«leur option pour ceux qui tiennent le fusil»*.¹²⁵ To most Chiefs, the choice to collaborate with the state was a rational choice that permitted them to get more access to the state apparatus and obtain advantages in exchange for their collaboration and also to pledge for bureaucratic

¹¹⁹Samah., “Chiefs (Traditional Rulers)”, pp.300-301.

¹²⁰N.W. Gwaibi., “Wrath from the Gods’: Traditional Institutions and Electoral Politics in Bali”, *Journal of Asian African Studies*, Vol.52, no.3 2017, p.339.

¹²¹P. Geschiere., *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe*, Chicago, IL and London, UK: University of Chicago Press, 2009, p.29.

¹²²J. Fokwang., “Chieftaincy in the Era of Democratic Transition in Africa”, p.107.

¹²³J-F. Bayart, *L’Etat au Cameroun*, Paris, Presses de la dation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1979.

¹²⁴Jua, “Indirect Rule in Colonial”, p.47.

¹²⁵M. Ibrahim., “Autorités traditionnelles, multipartisme et gouvernance démocratique au Cameroun”, *Afrique et Développement*, Vol. XXX, No. 4, 2005, p.8.

recognition, security and autonomy.¹²⁶ In this coalition of interests, traditional authorities and the state participated in the same capacity to some extent in consolidating authoritarian nature of the state.¹²⁷ One of the revealing episodes of the open support for parties in Cameroon was during the municipal elections campaign of 1996. As head of the CPDM list in the *Foumban* urban council, the sultan-king of Bamoun kingdom; Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya presented himself as the defender and the messenger of his populations by stating thus:

L'heure est justement à la démocratie. Par conséquent, que j'adhère à un parti et que mes amis, mes enfants et d'autres membres de ma famille militent dans d'autres ne devraient pas vous surprendre. Maintenant, s'agissant du roi des Bamoun que je suis, mon engagement dans le parti leader confirme mon souci de mieux servir mon peuple, car le peuple bamoun est un groupe minoritaire et ses intérêts ne peuvent être défendus que par les décideurs.

*Je ne crois fondamentalement pas être en conflit avec certains de mes sujets, mais être davantage engagé dans la défense des intérêts des Bamoun. C'est d'ailleurs à leur demande pressante que j'ai accepté de présenter ma candidature. Ils ont pensé que j'étais le mieux placé pour assurer la réalisation des priorités liées au développement de leur cité, et ces besoins sont nombreux.*¹²⁸

It is worth noting that, even before the 1996 elections, the sultan of the *Bamoun* kingdom kept using denigrating words against the opposition party in *Bamoun* notably UDC. In a parable, the sultan noted that; « Lorsque'un chef de famille fuit des averses, il ne doit se mettre que sous la protection d'un arbre charnu, afin que lorsque la tempête secoue ses branches, il en ramasse quelques fruits qui tombent pour nourrir ses enfants ». ¹²⁹

In other words the sultan was referring to the CPDM as a juicy tree under which all *Bamoun* people should stand so that when the wind blows they will be able to pick up the fruits. The Sultan opined that the sovereign of the *Bamoun* people can only support that the ruling party, the CPDM, the only party that can respond to various requests from its people, unlike the UDC, a "sterile" tree that cannot even bear fruits.¹³⁰

In the *Bamenda* Grassfields Francis Nyamnjoh noted that some *Fons* like that of *Mankon*, *Bafut*, and *Balikumbat* that joined party politics saw their legitimacy and Authority being contested¹³¹. In the 1992 presidential election, Fon Angwafo's residence was burnt by his people claimed to be militants from the Social Democratic Front (SDF)¹³². *Fon* Ganyonga was one of

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷ L. Sindjoun., *L'État ailleurs. Entre noyau dur et case vide*, Paris : Agence intergouvernementale de la Francophonie-Economica, 2002, p.85.

¹²⁸ Quoted in "*Le Messenger*" Newspaper, No. 472 of January 23, 1996, p.7.

¹²⁹ Quoted in "*Le Messenger*" Newspaper, No. 472 of January 23, 1996, p.8.

¹³⁰ Ibrahim., "Autorités traditionnelles, multipartisme et", p.9.

¹³¹F. Nyamnjoh, and M. Rowlands, "Elites Associations and the Politics of Belonging in Cameroon", *Africa*, vol. 68, No 3, 1998 p. 334.

¹³²P. Konings., "Chieftaincy, Labour Control and Capitalist Development in Cameroon", *Journal of Legal Pluralism* no 37/38, 1996, p.346.

such chiefs whose political career gained prominence in 1990 following his co-optation into the ranks of the ruling CPDM. He was one of the “old actors” clad in “new clothes”.¹³³

But the government’s claim to legitimacy, owing to its introduction of political pluralism, was soon brought into question¹³⁴. It followed that similar claims made by “old-new actors” such as Ganyonga also came into question. This was because the government and the CPDM party in particular were perceived as obstacles towards genuine democratic transformation in Cameroon. The people and the opposition expected Chiefs to be ‘neutral’ mediators in the on-going struggle between civil society and the state, but this was not the case.

It was against this background that many people in the Bamenda Grassfields expressed hostility not only towards their chiefs who sided with the state, but also to the idea that chiefs ought to participate overtly in multiparty politics¹³⁵. *Bamenda* Grassfields chiefs that ventured into politics were faced with serious opposition and threats from their subjects. As a matter of fact, In October 1992 the much awaited presidential election was held. No election in Cameroon attracted as much fervor and enthusiasm as this election. Although the CPDM government insisted on organizing the election without an independent electoral commission, the SDF and other opposition parties decided not to squander this unique opportunity by boycotting as they had done in March 1992.¹³⁶ Given the growing unpopularity of the CPDM, many people anticipated the inevitable demise of Paul Biya, but he shocked everyone and emerged victorious.

Popular opinion maintained that victory was stolen from Ni John Fru Ndi. According to Fokwang Jude, the results showed that Paul Biya, the incumbent, won 39% of the votes, while Fru Ndi of the SDF and *Belo* Bouba of the UNDP won 35% and 19% respectively.¹³⁷ Owing to violent protests in *Bamenda* and other parts of the North West, where the SDF commanded overwhelming support, a state of emergency was declared in the province which lasted over two months. Fru Ndi was also put under house arrest for declaring himself the president-elect. This period was extremely precarious for supporters of the CPDM including especially the much respected *Fons* of the North West Province. Hostile incidents against chiefs were registered in several parts of the North West Regions although none was directed at *Fon* Ganyonga.¹³⁸

¹³³Ibid, p.360.

¹³⁴Fokwang, “Chieftaincy in ”, p.108.

¹³⁵ J. Nche., “The Negative Impacts of Foreign Influence on the Traditional Authority in Central Grass Field of Cameroon”, M.A., Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé 1, 1982,p.45.

¹³⁶Nche., “The Negative Impacts of Foreign Influence, p.118.

¹³⁷Ibid, p.126.

¹³⁸ Ibid, p.132.

In *Mankon* for example, *Fon* Angwafor was confronted by accusations and threats from his subjects who blacklisted him for complicity with the CPDM administration. These accusations became more grievous during the state of emergency, when on 3rd November 1992 hundreds of subjects stormed his palace to protest against his ‘meddling’ in partisan politics. Other unidentified protesters burnt down the *Fon's* rest house in *Bamenda* to register their disillusion with him. All these violent reactions from the subjects and challenge to the *Fon's* authority could have possibly led to succession crisis if serious measures were not taken. This was because some subjects in *Mankon* began contesting the authority of the *Fon* and in such situations, opportunists generally emerged to openly contest the chieftaincy position as shall later examine in the case of *Balikumbat*. Furthermore, following the defeat of *Fonyonga II* of *Bali Nyonga* by the SDF in the local council election of 1996, elections in which members of his party (CPDM) were against his candidature, the position and legitimacy of the chieftaincy institution was put to at stake.

More members of the CPDM were completely against the fact that *Ganyonga* should stand as the party candidate for the election. The *Fon's* determination to run for the post led to chaos within the CPDM constituency of *Bali*. CPDM militants who opposed his candidature decided to elect their own candidate which excluded the *Fon* from participating. Eventually the CPDM had two contenders for the post of mayor within the same municipality, the *Fon* and one of his subjects. Although the *Fon* emerged as the CPDM candidate, in the end he was defeated by the opposition SDF.¹³⁹ His defeat made him very unpopular as had been predicted by those who opposed his running for the mayoral office.

After their victory, the local leadership of the SDF in *Bali* decided to pay a visit to the *Fon* ostensibly to reassure him of their unalloyed loyalty. Although this was the official policy of the SDF, many of its militants decided to celebrate the *Fon's* humiliation at the palace ground, much to his displeasure. Other subjects who were opposed to the *Fon's* ‘meddling’ in party politics began to disobey instructions from the palace as a way of registering their disappointment with the *Fon*. At a particular period, some informants claimed, people refused to supply free labor to the *Fon*, provoking him to place a temporary ban on all *death celebrations*¹⁴⁰ (cry-die) until subjects

¹³⁹Fokwang quoting; *The Herald* No. 275 Thursday, January 11-14, It is also reported that after the defeat at the polls, some subjects called on him to resign. This was based on allegations that he had threatened to resign if his subjects failed to vote him for the position of mayor. Cf. *The Herald* No. 281, Friday, February 02-04, 1996. p.3.

¹⁴⁰ According to Fokwang Jude, In *Bali*, it is customary to celebrate the death of deceased relatives soon after their burial. It is believed that failure to do so may invoke the wrath of the ancestors towards the living.

complied with his demands. This challenge of authority could have potentially provoked succession conflicts since the present Fon has become unpopular.

Elsewhere in the Fondom of Ndu, soldiers shot and killed six citizens while they protested against the supposedly stolen victory. The *Fon's* silence over the matter provoked the subjects to accuse him of collaborating with the CPDM and of being an auxiliary of state repression. Thereafter, subjects began to denounce him publicly and others called him by his name which was interpreted as an open sign of dethronement.¹⁴¹ Again, this could possibly generate into a succession dispute as the Fon was symbolically dethrone just by calling his name.

In the same circumstances during the 1992 elections, *Fon Galabe Doh Gah Gwanyin* had apparently stuffed the ballot boxes in his palace before the beginning of the election.¹⁴² This situation immediately raised tempers and violent reactions. In response, *Fon Doh Galabe* threatened to open fire on his subjects and in reaction, the population threatened to burnt down his palace had it not been for the rapid intervention of the forces of law and order.¹⁴³ During the legislative elections of 1997, still on a background of suspicion of fraud, the same recidivist faced the violent protest from his subjects and given the magnitude of the protest he took refuge for a time in *Bamenda*.¹⁴⁴

The study of ramifications and changes on the traditional institution incarnated by the chieftaincy entangled its functional activities within the era of colonialism, Independent and Post-Independent state of Cameroon. The institution and its structural bodies acted as administrators within the functional mechanisms of modern Administration. As tool of local administration, they were reorganized and restructured to suit the effective administration of modern administrators. Their ranking system became graded and their function as custodian of culture was transformed into custodian of alien culture as well as promoters of modern institutions of governance. The institution became a secondary administrator which led to the struggle for identity and legitimacy within the modern governance as well as to make their voices heard in national politics. Despite their struggle and challenges reckoned within the search of an identity, they successfully contributed in the amelioration of the social well-being of their population. Thus in this perspective

¹⁴¹C.F. Fisiy., "Chieftaincy in the Modern State: An Institution at the Crossroad of Democratic Change", *Paideuma*, 41, 1995, p.55.

¹⁴²*The Herald No. 275* Thursday, January 11-14.

¹⁴³ Jua., "Indirect Rule in Colonial and " p. 41.

¹⁴⁴Ibrahim., "Autorités traditionnelles, multipartisme et », p.9.

the institution remained a tool to reckon with in the political evolution of the modern State of Cameroon.

**CHAPTER SIX:
TOUTING TRADITIONAL GOVERNANCE FOR EFFECTIVE MODERN
GOVERNANCE IN CONTEMPORARY CAMEROON**

The clash of civilizations between the emergence of modern conceptions of democracy and principles of human rights on the one hand and the entrenched cultural traits in Africa on the other hand has left the continent at a crossroads in relation to the fundamental alternative forms of governance available to move the continent forward. Due to the fact that the colonial legacy has seriously undermined the relevance of traditional institutions that hitherto dominated the African way of life, the fate of such institutions has been put on the edge of peril. Post-colonial state-building has largely undertaken under the guise of transplanting a European institutional system that, has made the state in Africa basically a neo-colonial one. The fundamental change of the termination of the colonial legacy is in effect the replacement of colonial powers with new local elite leaders.

Since the removal of the shackles of colonialism, there has always been a debate on the political, social, and legal framework needed to bring about change in Africa. Primarily, the new elites in a bid to bring about speedy prosperity to the region, aimed at eliminating African customs and traditions. The new elites claimed that, traditional institutions are either repressive or that their legitimacy and role has been compromised by colonial powers. Thus, the alternative state formation endeavored is largely transplanting European style of governance. Some African countries such as Cameroon with its semi-capitalist economy even resorted to the socialist system of government. Due to the lack of objective situations to transplant either the liberal or socialist packages of government, the transformation of African governance has been largely characterized by repression, corruption, and inefficiency as well as the inability to address poverty and conflicts¹. In light of such failure of state formation, researchers and policymakers are wondering how to take African governance forward. Particularly, there has been an increasing debate on the role of traditional institutions in advancing the African democratization process. Though the total exclusion of traditional institutions had been practiced since the end of colonialism, the contemporary trend primarily grants some room to African traditional institutions in various forms.

¹A. Mafeje., “Democratic Governance and New Democracy in Africa: Agenda for the Future”, Presentation Before the African Forum for Envisioning Africa 6, April. 26–29, 2002, (transcript available from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, *available at* <http://www.uneca.org/itca/governance/Documents/ArchieMafeje2.pdf>.), consulted on 15th May, 2021, pp.12-67.

Section One: Harnessing the Chieftaincy Institution for Sustainable Governance

If governance is about the equitable distribution of resources, then African societies have been grappling with the problem since time immemorial. Long before the inauguration of the colonial project, Africans had established a variety of political systems with corresponding political, economic, and social institutions which dealt with allocation of resources, law-making, and social and political control. The predominant principle of social relations in society was presumed to be that of family and kinship associated with communalism. Every member of the society was believed to have his or her position defended in terms of relatives on the mother's or father's side². Land, a major means of production, was owned by groups such as the family or clan³. Because of this principle of social organization, consensus, rather than conflict over the distribution of economic resources was often assumed in the discourse about governance. However, from oral and other anecdotal accounts, we also know that over time some families, through wars of conquest, subjugated other family groups and widened their territorial bases and eventually became ruling aristocracies.

Thus for the modern state to effectively implement its governance policies, there is the need to appropriate the traditional governance system into its governing apparatus. In fact the success of modern governance in Cameroon potentially depends on the complementarity or duality of the traditional and modern governance systems. But the question is why the traditional governance system is a potential complementary system to the governance architecture in Cameroon? The response can be argued from the point of view of certain features such as traditional legitimacy, territorial identification and sacredness of chieftaincy. If chieftaincy has continued to survive in the modern context, it is simply because of some fundamental features on which the institution maintains its strength. Some of these features include territorial identity, sacredness and traditional legitimacy⁴.

I. Chieftaincy as a Territorial Identification

The chief, or the "royal family," literally embodies the name that gives the village its collective identity. In Cameroon, the village does not exist as a village exception so far as it has a chief. In this sense, the chief is something like a *Durk heimiantotem*, symbolically embodying in

² "The Inter-Africa group, Social Development in the Horn of Africa: Challenges and Perspective", paper prepare for the World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen, Denmark, March, 1995, p.95.

³ W. Rodney, *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*. London : Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1978, p.55.

⁴ J.E. Elia gwa and A.A. Mazrui, "Nation Building" in *UNESCO International scientific committee for the drafting of a general History of Africa* vol VIII, Africa since 1935(edit) Ali A. Mazrui, assistance Wonj Heinemann, California-UNESCO Press, 1993, p.78.

his (or occasionally her) own person the very existence of the community. In other words, it is a system of belief in which humans are said to have kinship or a mystical relationship with a spirit-being, such as an animal or plant. The entity, or totem, is thought to interact with a given king grouper an individual and to serve as their emblem or symbol.

In Cameroon almost every individual before being a Cameroonian is an indigene of a particular village or tribe or ethnic group which are generally the smallest administrative units. The most influential head of any village or tribe in Cameroon is the traditional rulers incarnated by the chieftaincy institution. As a matter of fact, nobody can enter any village in Cameroon and carry out any activity without the prior consent of the traditional authority. Many a times, each major state project is about to be lunched in any local, area the traditional authority is generally consulted to seek his opinion.

This explains why chiefs and the chieftaincy institution have continued to survive because of the reverence and respect the people still have for the institution. People might challenge the chief incarnating chieftaincy, but not the chieftaincy institution that carries a people's history, tradition and culture. In fact, chieftaincy is the engine or substratum of African tradition and civilization, just like the pharaohs were the under lying principle of Egyptian civilization.⁵ The destruction of chieftaincy will betant amount to the destruction of a people's civilization and culture.

i. Sacredness of chieftaincy

Another element that explains their silent nature of chieftaincy despite the threats of the neo-patrimonial elites lies with the sacred nature of the institution. J. Clyde Mitchell argues that Chiefs also store up and in some wisdom embody-sacred power⁶. Their sacred power is connected to what are, or were, at least in the indigenous systems, specific ritual roles in communicating with the ancestors or ensuring the fertility of land, animals, and people. It is difficult, however, to distinguish a chief's prestige, which comes in part from traditional cultural roles, from his sacred or spiritual powers, which in turn both reflect and protect the strength and health of his community. Chiefs' prestige in turn depends on their ability to access and contain sacred powers. This sacred of chieftaincy has thus played to their advantage and to person who attempt sat adulterating the institution. This sacred nature of chieftaincy gives it a magico-mystical dimension

⁵Interview with Metiege Njikang Divine, age, 49, Magistrate, Bello Hight Court, 8th Dec.2017, Boyo Division.

⁶J.C. Mitchell., *The Yao Village: A Study in the Social Structure of a Nyaa land Tribe*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1956, pp.39-53.

that scares a way any external physical force.⁷

ii. Traditional Legitimacy

According to Jing Chen, legitimacy is a value whereby something or someone is recognized and accepted as right and proper⁸. In political science, legitimacy usually is understood as the popular acceptance and recognition by the public of the authority of a governing régime, whereby authority has political power through consent and mutual understandings, not coercion. The three types of political legitimacy described by German sociologist Max Weber are traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal:

Traditional legitimacy derives from societal custom and habit that emphasize the history of the authority of tradition. Traditionalists understand this form of rule as historically accepted, hence its continuity, because it is the way society has always been. Therefore, the institutions of traditional government usually are historically continuous, as in monarchy and tribalism. The chieftaincy institution in Cameroon wields all the forms of political legitimacy Max Weber stressed upon. In all villages and communities, the chieftaincy is recognized by each and every indigene. Some might hold grudges with the person incarnating the institution, but the institution itself does not suffer from any form of contestation. That is why in most grass roots communities in Cameroon, the local population pay more reverence and attention to the orders of the chief than the state administrators⁹. This situation has often created conflict between the administrative authority and the chief. This only further justifies why chieftaincy has continue to survive and continue to remind a powerful competitor of state legitimacy.

Charismatic legitimacy derives from the ideas and personal charisma of the leader, a person whose authoritative person ach arms and psychologically dominates the people of the society in agreement with the government's régime and rule. A charismatic government usually features weak political and administrative institutions, because they derive authority from the persona of the leader, and usually disappear without the leader in power¹⁰. However, if the charismatic leader has a successor, a government derived from charismatic legitimacy might continue. Traditional rulers in Cameroon are generally very charismatic persons. In fact, charisma is one of the main features of selection of chiefs in some communities, notably in the Western Grassfields of

⁷ Mitchell., *The Yao Village: A Study in the Social*, p.77.

⁸J. Chen., *Useful Complaints: How Petitions Assist Decentralized Authoritarianism in China*. New York : Lexington Books, 2016, pp.79-90.

⁹ L.Mbassi., « Les temps sont-ils accomplis ? » *Repenser le développement à partir de l'Afrique*, sous la direction de J. E. Pondi, Africaine d'édition, B.P 11834, Yaounde-Cameroun, Mai, 2011, p.145.

¹⁰J.K. Nyererer, *Freedoms and Socialism-Uhuru na Ujamaa*, Oxford University Press, 1969, p.254.

Cameroon.

Rational-legal legitimacy derives from a system of institutional procedure, wherein government institutions establish and enforce law and order in the public interest. Therefore, it is through public trust that the government will abide the law that confers rational-legal legitimacy¹¹. Just like the traditional system in most traditional societies in Cameroon, norms guiding society and behavior are generally enforced by the chieftaincy institution.

II. Pre-Conditions of Traditional Governance Complementarity

There is the need for traditional governance to work in synergy with the modern governance structures. Reason being that, their existence alongside gives them the opportunity to better manage and serve the communities developmental project for the good habitation of all. However, there are some facets for an enabling environment to be created for the effective and participatory actions of the Traditional governance as actors of complementarity.

i. The Constitutionalisation of the Chieftaincy Institution

The formal recognition of the institution of traditional authority by the state is likely to transform the position and legitimacy of traditional leaders. On the one hand, it strengthens their position vis-a-vis the government. On the other hand, the possible negative impact of formal recognition is that they may lose their independence and risk being identified with state failure¹². State influence on the selection of individual candidates affects their independence even more. An additional effect is that the government will become implicated in local struggles for chieftaincy positions, which are rife in many countries and often lead to violent popular uprisings.

One of the most fundamental prerequisites that could give the chieftaincy more relevance in Cameroon and transform it from a crisis institution to a development-prone institution is its enshrinement into the constitution. In some African countries like Ghana the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana of 1992 guarantees the institution of chieftaincy, and states that Parliament has no power to enact a law which ‘confers on any person or authority the right to accord or withdraw recognition to or from a chief for any purpose whatsoever’ (Article 270).¹³This same document defines a chief as ‘a person, who, hailing from the appropriate family and lineage has been validly

¹¹O'Neil, Patrick, *Essentials of Comparative Politics*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010, p.56.

¹²Interview with V. N. Mukete, age, 98 Paramount Chief of Bafor/Senator, 5th Aug. 2017, Mfoundi Division

¹³J. Ubink, *Traditional Authorities in Africa: Resurgence in an Era of Democratisation*, Leiden University Press, 2008, p.13.

nominated, elected or selected and en-stooled, en-skinned or installed as a chief or queen mother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage (Article 277). Furthermore, it prohibits chiefs from taking part in partisan politics.

In Cameroon, the chieftaincy institution is regulated by the Decree No.77/245 of 15th July 1977 that organizes traditional *Fondoms* on a territorial basis following a pyramid of three, the highest of which is the First Class *Fondom*, followed by the second class and third class. At the same time, this degree gives the state the latitude to appoint and dismissed chiefs and as well as the mechanism of access and exit of chieftaincy. By so doing chieftaincy has been deprived of its socio-cultural and mystical meaning. The 1977 degree made chieftaincy a more administrative and political instrument than a socio-cultural institution that has as prime role before any other to guarantee the socio-cultural heritage and wellbeing of their respective communities. Within the present state dispensation in Cameroon chiefs have been given both political and special duties to lead their communities. Hierarchically, Traditional chiefs are directly below the State representatives in their electoral Districts and their means of appointment, responsibilities, financial status and disciplinary approach makes them agents of the state¹⁴.

The administration's authority to appoint chiefs is preceded by a preliminary process that enables the local community to participate in the naming of the person they want as their chief. That naming process involves a number of steps designed to ensure the candidate's bond to his community. Furthermore, in the appointment process of a traditional chief, the Cameroon Chieftaincy Law enacted on July 15, 1977 served with Decree No 77/245, which organizes *Fondoms* states that, "in principle, traditional chiefs are chosen from families that are customarily called upon to carryout traditional leadership role". But to what existent is this principle respected is the main problem nowadays. The decree defines family as a group of people sharing the same bloodline and lineage, from the same father, mother or just the same father.¹⁵ This notwithstanding, the king-makers can set aside these rules and select a candidate they believe can serve the people better. And as such a candidate must come from a chieftaincy lineage. This disposition has not prevented non-royal members to seek and contest for the chieftaincy position¹⁶.

Furthermore, the candidate for the traditional chieftaincy must have a minimum intellectual capacity and must also, if at all possible, be able to read and write. He is also required to provide a certificate from a public doctor, attesting to his good health. The appropriate administrative

¹⁴T.M. Aletum., *Political sociology*, Patoh publisher, Cameroon Yaoundé, 2001, pp.2013-2019.

¹⁵ See Appendix 14, Decree No.77/245, "Bearing the Organization of traditional Chieftaincy" 5th July, 1977, p.8.

¹⁶E.M. Chilver. and P.M. Kaberry, "Traditional Government in Bafut, West Cameroon, the Nigeria Field", 1963. p.18.

authority selects the new chief from the candidates who meet those criteria. In other words, in the absence of a legitimate literate candidate becomes problematic. The tendency of sidelining traditional norms guiding the access and exit of chieftaincy has created a lot of chieftaincy succession conflicts¹⁷. This was because the process of appointing a traditional chief is set out in section 10 and 11 of the 1977 decree without any consideration for traditional norms even though not coded.

The appropriate administrative authority undertakes the necessary consultations to appoint a new Chief. The authority must consult the appropriate customary public figures. Those consultations took place during meetings called by either the Senior Divisional Officer (S.D.O) or the Sub Divisional Officer (D.O). In the consultations, the various candidates are reviewed and the new chief is chosen. The administrative authority in charge draws up the minutes and sends them along with a complete file of the candidate to the central authorities.¹⁸ The file contains a police clearance (Non Conviction), a copy of the candidate's birth certificate, a medical certificate and as required, a copy of the certificate confirming the vacancy at the head of the chieftaincy (death certificate, medical report on disability, or disqualification, letter of resignation or decision to dismiss the predecessor¹⁹). The appropriate administrative authority has only to ratify the selection¹⁹.

Although public figures are consulted, their views are not necessarily taken into account. The administrative authority may supersede the local decision and selects a candidate whom he believe could serve the interest of the administration (*See appendixes 14 and 16*). This is where the main problem lays, the competence to choose a chief at the detriment of custom and tradition. It worth noting chieftaincy was not an administrative position in sensu stricto, where a chief could be appointed and dismissed at will. It is neither an elective post where there exist several contenders like in democratic elections. Chieftaincy is a mystical institution with specific norms and mystical rites that vary from *Fondom* to *Fondom*. The absence of these dispositions in the making or unmaking of a chief makes the chieftaincy null in the face of tradition and custom and void of its mystical dimension. Moreover, a degree does not guarantee the protection and survival of chieftaincy.

¹⁷ See Appendix 10, J. A.T. Tebi., "Confidential message of the hierarchy seat of the Clan Head of Meta and Munib". 15th, December, 1945, p.18.

¹⁸ Interview with W. M. YeFon, age, 41, Civil Administrator, MINATD, 6th November, 2018, Mfoundi Division.

¹⁹ Ibid.

It could be abrogated and even wiped out completely by another decree.²⁰ As such the only legal disposition in the present context is to secure the chieftaincy institution constitutionally. The role Chiefs played in administration from colonial period and the experience gained warrants the merit of enshrining this institution in the constitution. Apart from being a social contract between the government and the people it governs. It can also be deemed as the fundamental law that gives legitimacy and legality to operational institutions that contribute in the running of the state.²¹ The chieftaincy will be more protected from manipulation and credible if it is inscribed in the constitution. If the chieftaincy institution in most southern African countries and British colonized countries is doing well, it is simply because the chieftaincy institution has been enshrined into the constitution in accordance with traditional norms and customs.

ii. Regulations of Chiefs in Partisan Politics

Chiefs could belong to all political parties, but member of none of these parties. Even though chiefs in Cameroon and specially those of the *Bamenda* Grassfields have been involve in party politics right from the late period of colonial rule, their implication in party politics since the era of democratic transition characterized by multiparty politics has strongly affected chieftaincy. The participation of Chiefs in participant politics is anti-democratic and has dealt a serious blow to the chieftaincy institution²². To corroborate this assertion, Ibrahim Mouiche notes that ;

*Le militantisme politique des chefs quand leurs choix contrarient ceux de leurs Sujets...constitue aujourd'hui un frein à la gouvernance démocratique. Le multipartisme induit par le processus actuel de démocratisation a plutôt conduit à des trajectoires variées du comportement politique des chefs : en raison de certains facteurs, certains chefs ont vu leur position s'affaiblir, d'autres par contre, sont devenus des banques de vote. Ce militantisme est mû par l'instinct d'accumulation où s'imbrique logique patrimonialiste et autoritaire. Ce militantisme conduit en outre conduit à l'affaiblissement de la position des chefs dans les arènes politiques locales quand ils perdent leur caution morale auprès des populations.*²³

One of the main factors that has greatly discredited the chieftaincy institution and provoked the succession conflicts in the *Bamenda* Grassfields is the role of the modern state and *Fons* involvement in party politics especially following the reintroduction of multi-party politics in Cameroon in 1990s. The introduction of multi-party politics in Africa as a whole was an inevitable by-product of globalization. In Cameroon and more precisely in the *Bamenda* Grassfields, the impetus was given with the founding of the Social Democratic Front party on the 26th of May

²⁰Interview with S. Tanwain, age. 87, Retired Headmaster in Mbengwi, 7th Jan. 2018, Momo Division.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Email Exchanges and social media discussion with Charles Nach Mback, 49 years, Expert in chieftaincy and decentralization Questions, November 2017, June 2018.

²³I. Mouiche, "Autorités traditionnelles, Multipartisme et Mouvernance Démocratique au Cameroun", *Afrique et Développement*, Vol. XXX, No. 4, 2005, p.4.

1990. The “wind of change” which started blowing from the Bamenda Grassfields, began spreading steadily across the rest of the Country and on 19th December 1991, President Paul Biya was obliged to liberalize multi-party politics in Cameroon. This was followed by law no. 90/056 of 19th December 1990 liberalizing the existence of other political parties in Cameroon.²⁴ Within this new political context, the bone of contention was the control of political power.

Newly created opposition parties struggled to seize power through ballot boxes, from the ruling party, Cameroon People Democratic Movement (CPDM). In this tussle, each group sought to rally the people behind their parties. As spokesmen and leader of their people, traditional rulers in Cameroon especially those of the Bamenda Grassfields could not remain indifferent in the face of this new political dispensation that was reigning in the Cameroonian political landscape. Besides, it was a golden opportunity for traditional rulers to bounce back to the national scene after haven been eclipsed in earlier decades by the political regimes of Presidents, Ahmadou Ahidjo and Paul Biya. That is why the SDF from its creation received massive support from most Fons in the Bamenda Grassfields. To counter this support given to the SDF by Bamenda Grassfields traditional rulers, the ruling party, CPDM and the government decided to authorize traditional rulers’ participation in partisan politics to their advantage. As such, the government used strategies influencing the choice of successors to thrones and imposing chiefs who will support the CPDM. In other words, chiefs who did not support or were against the ruling CPDM were dethroned.²⁵ On his part *Francis Adigwe* noted:

Another way or means the government used to control the local population and which is peculiar to Africa was the intervention in succession or chieftaincy disputes by the central government to favor nominees who supported the party in power. The nominee was then expected to use his position to influence elections so as to secure victory for the ruling party and the government.²⁶

However, the introduction of multi-partism sparked a serious debate on the role of traditional rulers in the new political dispensation. The dilemma that confronted traditional rulers in the 1990s was defining a balance between the wishes and aspiration of their subjects and the government. This way, traditional rulers found themselves between the hammer and the anvil.

That is between their subjects on the one hand and the state on the other hand.²⁷ The ruling party saw traditional rulers as vote breakers and sure tickets to rural votes and demanded their

²⁴Samah, “Chiefs (Traditional Rulers) in ”, pp.300-301.

²⁵Ibid, p.270.

²⁶F. Adigwe., *Essentials of Government for West Africa*, Ibadan, University Press Limited, 1984, pp.22-23.

²⁷L. Kaptué, “Pris entre le marteau et enclume, le pouvoir traditionnelle choisit-il de se prostituer au Cameroun, endoscopie de la situation de 1884 a1992”. Paper presented during *The international colloquium on "Rois et chefs “ dans les Etats Africaines de la veille des Independance à la fin du XXe siècle”*, Paris, 8, 9,10 novembre 1999, p.10.

allegiance and support. But instead, many subjects supported opposition parties and could not stand to see their chiefs in the ruling parties.²⁸ This was a delicate issue, for the relationships between traditional rulers and their subjects were affected by the political choices their chiefs made. This was particularly serious with *Fons* of the Bamenda Grassfields. Consequently, this sparked off a serious debate over whether chiefs should or not play part in partisan politics in Cameroon.

Politicians, scholars and traditional rulers themselves were divided on the issue. This led to the emergence of two opposing camps. While the first, the conservative camp or traditionalist held that chiefs should steer clear of partisan politics, the second camp, the progressive, advocated that chiefs had the legitimate right to participate freely in partisan politics. Whatever the views held by the traditionalist or the progressive camps, our main interest is to know how the involvement of traditional rulers in partisan politics, especially of the *Bamenda* Grassfields contributed to their dethronement. Basing our argument on the traditionalist views, it can be noted that it was largely to prevent chiefs from committing crimes that could *warrant* their dethronement.

Traditionalists insisted that it was improper for traditional rulers to compete with their subjects in democratic elections because, if the chief losses, he brings dishonor to his elevated status and in some cases be dethroned by his people.²⁹ Furthermore, the *Fon* or chiefs especially in most *Bamenda* Grassfields traditional societies are considered by their people as “The father” of everybody and as such it was unthinkable for a *Fon* to compete for political post with his subjects, regardless of the party to which they might belong. One advocate of the traditionaliste camp states :

*Un chef traditionnel ne doit pas entrer en concurrence avec un de ses sujets pour briguer le siège du conseiller municipal ou de responsable de sous –section du parti. Les chefs devraient demeurer l’incarnation de cette force morale à laquelle l’on se réfère coutumièrement, pour ce faire il faudrait qu’ils soient libérés du parti du pouvoir, d’impôt qu’ils collectent en lieu et place des agents publics. Il faudrait qu’ils retournent à leur rôle symbolique sur le plan culturel.*³⁰

In the same vein, one informant in Bali drew a clear distinction between politics in the traditional society and modern politics when he warns that:

Chiefs should not participate in party politics because it is a dirty game. Tradition demands that *Fons* should be respected, but in politics there is no respect for a person, status or title, so it is not fair for a commoner

²⁸Fokwang, “Chieftaincy”, pp.90-91.

²⁹ Group Interview in Bali Nyonga Traditional Council with Notables in the Palace, 4th September, 2017, Mezam Division.

³⁰ Fopoussi., *Faut-il bruler les*, p.60.

to address the chief in a similar way they will do with an ordinary subject. I have seen ordinary people insulting Fons in their faces because of party politics.³¹

In the *Bamenda* Grassfields traditional society, a *Fon* who is no more respected by his people is very liable to deposition as the subjects consider such a *Fon* as bringing shame on them and desecrating their customs and traditions. This was the case with the *Fon* of *Ndu*, where government troops shot and killed people who were participating in a protest match against stolen votes in the 1992 presidential elections in Cameroon.³²

In the face of this confused situation, the people of *Ndu* expected their chief to play his neutral role as the people shield by siding with them and condemning the government brutality on his subjects.³³ The people of *Ndu* also expected their *Fon* to invoke the ancestors of the land to protect them. Unfortunately, the *Fon* remained silent and his subjects considered this as a mark of collaboration with the government to kill the *Ndu* people. The people denounced their *Fon* publicly and called him by his original names, which is an act synonymous to dethronement in most *Bamenda* Grassfields traditional societies.³⁴

Similarly the *Fon* of *Mankon* also suffered the same fate, when the people of *Mankon* went to the extent of demolishing their palace of the *Fon*. Traditional rulers' participation in party politics was a serious blunder that was sure to under mind the legitimacy and credibility of Fons in the eyes of the people. That is why Lantum notes:

*when a chief participates and losses in elections as it happened in the Fondoms of Nkar and Oku ... it is tantamount to virtual dethronement, or whenever he won and became a council member; he has to answer to his personal names in public affairs, which is a serious contradiction to tradition, by which a living Fon is never called by his real names.*³⁵

In a nutshell factors, that provoke the dethronement and attempts at the deposition of traditional rulers were varied and many as seen in the analysis above. Next, the nature of the dethronement of Fons in the *Bamenda* Grassfields shall be examined. Traditional rulers in the *Bamenda* Grassfields right from the Pre-colonial period by their organization and functioning were political figures. In reality Fons could participate in politics without actually been partisans. Indeed, the British Southern Cameroon witnessed its political evolution first under the chiefs who at one point in time represented the interest of BSC in *Nigeria*. Their involvement in politics did

³¹Fokwang, "Chieftaincy", p.120.

³² C. Fisiy, "Chieftaincy in the Modern State: An Institution at the Crossroads of Democratic Change", *Paideuma* 41, 1995, pp.54-55.

³³Interview with N. W. Bambo, aged 60, Retired worker, *Ndu* tea Estate, 8th February 2018, Mfoundi Division

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Samah, "Chiefs (Traditional Rulers) in ", p.336.

not actually pose a problem. Per se, chieftaincy could become less belligerent and developmental transformation instrument if chiefs are restraint from participating in partisan politics and occupying certain political offices. Cameroon could emulate the situation in Ghana whereby the authorities upon noticing the dangers of the implication of chiefs in partisans politics and the increasing politicization of the institution, decided to restraint chiefs from participating in partisan politics. The constitutional provision of the 1992 Constitution in Ghana debars chiefs from taking an active part in partisan politics.³⁶

iii. Conciliating Administrative Authorities towards Chieftaincy

Since the advent of the modern state in Cameroon, the relationship between the administrators and chiefs has not been a very good one. This was because territories that were formally under the control of traditional authorities were now henceforth controlled by the modern administrators variously called Governors, Seniors and Divisional officer administering today in regions, Divisions and sub-Divisions respectively. These administrators are commonly called “Chef de Terre”, that is the head of the land. This obviously did not sound good in the ears of some Grassfields Fons who as Samah Walters described them were, the “Maître de la terre”, that is the sole dispenser of all lands. This has provoked what some authors have referred to as “rival governance”.

In Cameroon today and particularly in the *Bamenda* Grassfields, the attitude some administrative officers manifest towards Fons is appalling. Some chiefs have seen their traditional decisions on some important issues like land disputes concealed by some administrative officers. Investigation on the field, notably at *Guzang* indicated that some administrative officers end up acquiring more land in areas where they have been posted and at times against the will of the palace.

Furthermore, in instances where individuals were not satisfied with a case judged and verdict rendered by the chief, such people generally took such cases to the administrative authority that at times conceal previous judgments instituting new ones. The struggle by traditional authorities and administrative officers to control space and population has generated a lot of conflicts. Using himself as an example, Fon Lekunze Neambo Andreas III of the Bamumbu Fondom opines that there is hardly any Fon in Cameroon especially in the Bamenda Grassfields who is in very good terms with the administrative authority in his Fondom. He furthermore maintains that, even though

³⁶T. G. Kwarkye., “Chieftaincy and Partisan Politics: The Case of Agona Ashanti Traditional Area”, *Developing Country Studies*, Vol.6, No.11, 2016, p.23.

there might exist seemingly collaboration between the chief and the administrator, conflict is never too far especially when it comes to the management of resources.³⁷

It is worth noting that, so far as the state exists, there is need to manifest its presence in the national territory through administrators. At the same time, areas in which these administrators exercise state authority had prior been administered by another type of governance known as a traditional government and with the full characteristics of a modern state. Given that modern administrators are the one coming into a particular *Fondom*, their exercise of power should take into account the tradition, culture and religious belief of the local people as customs prescribe. In 1971 when President *Ahidjo* visited *Nso*, he requested the *Fon* to meet him. The *Fon* at the epoch *Fon Mbinglo Sehm* told *Ahidjo's* messenger that “ the palace does not move” and *Ahidjo* had to come down to the palace to meet the *Fon*.³⁸ This same *Fon* had refused to shake hands with the queen of England visiting Nigeria in the 1960s. President *Ahidjo* gesture demonstrated the respect he had for traditional authorities at that epoch.³⁹

As such and as part of state administration, full respect towards chiefs is essential as it reinforces the legitimacy of chiefs in front of their people and at the same time render the exercise of authority efficient and effective in the area, thanks to the chief.

iv. Optimizing the Integration of Chiefs in Modern Governance

Decentralization is one of the leading political reforms that developing countries have undertaken in the two decades since the end of the Cold War, and it has arguably been undertaken (at least in name) in more countries in Africa than anywhere else in the world. In the past twenty years, the majority of African central governments have initiated or deepened the transfer of power and resources to a range of subnational government bodies, including regions, states, provinces, districts, and municipalities.⁴⁰

At the same time, the factors driving decentralization have varied from region to region. In Latin America, the main push towards decentralization originated in the need to transform political systems from military dictatorships to democracies. In Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, decentralization has been part of the political and economic transformation process from a

³⁷Interview with Lekunze III, *Fon* of Bamumbu, age, 74,5th October, 2017, Mfoundi Division.

³⁸ Interview with Lewoh Emmanuel, 68 years, Retired teacher and Liberian at the Council Library in Kumbo,12th April,2018.

³⁹ Idem.

⁴⁰J.T. Dickovick., et Al, *Decentralization in Africa: The Paradox of State Strength*, USA, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014, p.30.

socialist system to a market economy. In Africa, decentralization was generally promoted from the outside and linked to the dual imperative of structural adjustment, and democratization and good governance.

For the past three decades, many African countries have been engaged in the vast democratization process characterized among other features by decentralization. According to Alper Ozmen, decentralization can be defined as the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to subordinate or quasi-independent government organizations or the private sector.⁴¹ 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 within central government and local government relations. Several definitions have been offered for decentralization.

One of the most generally used definition of decentralization; is the transfer of responsibilities and authority from higher to lower levels of government.⁴² Decentralization in its current form in Cameroon is based on the Constitution embodied in Law No. 96/06 of 18 January 1996 and Law No. 2004/17 of 22nd 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. Since its introduction in the modern state, its achievements are more or less satisfactory depending on various countries and the willingness of the effective implementation of the decentralization process. Just like Cosmas Cheka puts it, the pace of the process of decentralization in a given context unavoidably depends on the degree of favorableness of the legal environment and the dynamism of stakeholders especially of local authorities, the state, development cooperation partners and civil society.⁴³

A close observation in countries where decentralization has actually witnessed significant progress indicates that, the chieftaincy institution has actually been made part of the execution of decentralization process, contrary to Cameroon that, completely kept the chieftaincy institution aside which historically has played a major role in the first forms of local governments in Cameroon. Given the historical role of chiefs in local government, it is of no doubt that if the chieftaincy institution is integrated into as an institution in the decentralization process, it could

⁴¹A. Ozmen, "Notes to the Concept of Decentralization", *European Scientific Journal*, Vol.10, No.10, April 2014, p.14.

⁴²N.S.T. Kaze, "Decentralization as an Instrument of International Cooperation between Cameroon and Germany: A Development Study", MA Dissertation in International Relations, IRIC, 2017, pp.89-92.

⁴³C. Cheka, "The State of the Process of Decentralization in Cameroon", *Africa Development*, Vol. XXXII, No. 2, 2007, p.7.

play a major role especially at this particular moment when Cameroon needs to speed the decentralization process to solve the socio-political challenges faced by the nation (*See appendix 18*).

African traditional chieftaincies notably those of the Bamenda Grassfields and their leaders can play a role in the democratic and decentralization initiatives and programs aiming at increasing state's legitimacy. It is not to be understood as a defense of traditional chieftaincy as this institution in itself does not constitute a panacea for effective decentralization in Cameroon. As such, considering both the size of the country (472,710 km²) and the extent of the task, it is necessary over and above the reforms at the center of the state, to think about mechanisms that can permit an effective and efficient contribution of all the stakeholders of the country in the measure of their potentialities. And this is only possible, in our humble opinion, if the chieftaincy institution which is revered and a socio-cultural identification institution were fully integrated in the current decentralization process and above all to avoid a conflict of balance of power that might eventually emerge from local government headed by mayors and traditional governments head by chiefs at the local level.

Chiefs and elders in the decentralized political systems are leaders in the practice of those values and they form an integral albeit informal part of the governance structures of rural Africa. Chiefs and village heads under civil chieftaincy constitute a forum where local interests are debated and articulated.⁴⁴ Thus, they can constitute a valuable resource in informing the state about the interests of local communities as well as in mobilizing rural populations for active engagement, not only in development activities and the distribution of public services, but also in the national political process.

Unlike government-appointed administrators, lower-level chiefs and village leaders live in conditions largely similar to those of their communities. They share common interests and think like their people. As a result, are better equip to represent the interests of their communities than government-appointed administrators? These administrators most often, are accountable only to the political *élite*.⁴⁵ Partnership in development between local traditional leaders and government administrators is also likely to promote cooperative state-society relations that are sorely absent in Africa. However, even though incorporating these leaders has not been controversial, the state has

⁴⁴ Kaze, "Decentralization as an Instrument, p.55.

⁴⁵ Cheka, "The State of the Process of Decentralization in Cameroon", pp.56-82.

invariably underutilized the traditional leaders at the grassroots level and has done little to integrate them into the formal governance structures.

In Cameroon today, much of the controversy over traditional institutions lies in the debate over the incorporation of the upper echelons of chiefs into the modern governance structures. Nevertheless, a growing number of African countries, including some of those that had previously attempted without success to strip chiefs of their power or to completely abolish traditional institutions, have realized the political currency that chiefs possess and have integrated chieftaincy as one of the fundamental institutions for development and not “vote-broking” in rural areas and exercise significant informal control over the State’s intervention in local affairs.

Section Two: Traditional Governance in the Building of Modern Institutions in Cameroon

Since the African society is deeply traditional, the role of traditional customs and institutions is of paramount importance. Particularly, the roles of indigenous organs are highly influential in rural communities where the visibility of modern institutions is largely absent. Since there are no institutions such as modern local administration, police or Courts of law in remote communities, people turn to traditional leaders such as chiefs, local councils, and religious leaders with their needs. In other words, whether or not formal institutions officially recognize traditional institutions, they continue to have considerable impact on the lives of the communities in Africa. In light of their continued relevance, the viable option for improving governance in Africa is accommodating traditional customs and institutions within the existing state structure.

A system of legal pluralism that allows traditional institutions to discharge their responsibility would greatly improve problems of governance in Africa. But there is a different critique forwarded against the accommodation of traditional institutions within the modern state structure. One of the critiques directed against the role of traditional institutions is that they are repressive and not compatible with modern liberal values. This assertion has its own merits and its own pitfalls. In light of the hereditary nature of power holders in traditional institutions and the harmful traditional practices that discriminate against women, traditional institutions are at odds with modern liberal values.

On the contrary, the fact that those traditional institutions are participatory, consensual, transparent and changing makes them not necessarily against the ideals of liberalism.⁴⁶ In light of

⁴⁶ Adelman, “Constitutionalism, Pluralism and Democracy in Africa,p.67

such continued debate on the relevance and compatibility of traditional institutions to the modern state institutions in Africa, this section of the chapter attempts to highlight the significance of traditional institutions in the process of improving governance in Africa and the prospects for improving their democratic features to meet the demands of modern institutional development.

Furthermore, it is the debates on the Universalist versus relativist approach in relation to democratic and human rights principles and the impact of the ongoing debate on the nature of governance needed in Africa. It also dwells on the features of African traditional institutions that have wider relevance to the principles of modern democracy, and argues for the emergence of a system of legal pluralism whereby the formal and informal institutions flourish side-by-side until the informal systems are gradually integrated into the formal institutional system.

I. Universalism versus Cultural Relativism in the Cameroonian Context

Though there are different views on the definition and scope of democracy, the Western liberal democratic model has emerged as the uncontested form of modern governance. Particularly, the turn of events after the fall of the Berlin Wall seems to have greatly changed the democratic demography of the world.

The dynamics of political change in Cameroon since 1990 have resulted in a resurgence of liberal democracy that triumphed during the Cold War to the extent of compelling Francis Fukuyama, in “The End of History and the Last Man”, to argue that the Cold War marked the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government⁴⁷. Furthermore, the horizon of democracy has been expanded since December 2010 when the vibrant power of democracy once again dismantled the age-old repressive regimes in North African and Arab countries that were living under the veil of “Islamic values.” The revolutions that have rocked the Middle East once again proved democracy is not something reserved to Western societies. In light of such unprecedented moves towards democratization and freedom, liberalism has been largely treated as “universally valid and everlasting.”⁴⁸

Though this spread of democracy has been viewed as appropriate within the liberal ideological context of the West, the administration of democratic governance is a problematic in African societies that have different historical backgrounds. In the case of African countries and

⁴⁷ F. Fukuyama, *The End of History*, pp. 36–37

⁴⁸ Mafeje, “Democratic Governance and New Democracy in Africa”, 2002.

specifically in Cameroon, there has been an argument that liberal democracy cannot be transplanted into their societies because of the “specialty” of their cultures⁴⁹.

Defenders of Asian values have claimed that Western-style liberal democracy is neither suitable to nor compatible with Confucian East Asia, where collective welfare, a sense of duty, and other principles of Confucian moral philosophy are deeply rooted⁵⁰.

For two decades, African scholars have questioned the role of democracy in Africa. The debate is particularly intense as to the role of traditional institutions in African democratic transformation. As scholars recognize, “there is a widely held perception that democracy . . . is inappropriate for Africa as it is antiethical to African values and culture.”⁵¹ Their claim is this:

African democracy is a different species of democracy, which has roots in African culture and history. African societies are plagued by ethnic, tribal, and religious conflicts which can be solved not by Western-style liberal democracy, but within the framework of the traditional African institutions of consensus-building, elder mediation, and conciliation.⁵²

According to this assertion, since African communities from the village upwards have traditionally decided their course through free discussion, they have much to learn from their own traditions and to teach others about the true meaning and spirit of democracy.⁵³ Due to such claims of peculiarities, some argue that liberalism is at odds with African culture and tradition⁵⁴. There is even a “widespread tendency to equate democracy with liberal capitalism in a way that reinforces the cultural imperialism to which the developing world has long been subjected.”⁵⁵ In light of this, one of the prominent leaders of the Pan African movement, Julius Nyerere, has claimed that “Western constitutionalism represented a foreign element which had no place in African history, tradition or practice and that notions of individual rights or the separation of powers were incomprehensible to the African masses.”⁵⁶

⁴⁹ S. Adelman, “Constitutionalism, Pluralism and Democracy in Africa”, *Journal of Legal Pluralism & Unofficial* , 42, 1998, pp.73-78.

⁵⁰ P.Chong-Min and D. Chull Shin, *Do Asian Values Deter Popular Support for Democracy? The Case of South Korea 5*,(Asian Barometer Project Office, Working Paper No. 26, 2004), available at <http://www.asianbarometer.org/newenglish/publications/workingpapers/no.26.pdf>.

⁵¹ K.A. Bentley., *Reflections on Perceived Conflicts Between Culture and Democracy in Africa: The South African Case 1*, Nov. 2005, draftpaper), available at http://www.hsrb.ac.za/research/output/outputDocuments/3514_Bentley_Reflectionsonperceivedconflicts.pdf, consulted, 19th, May, 2021.

⁵² G. M. Alemayehu., *The Democracy Before Democracy in Africa*, PAMBAZUKA NEWS (Jan. 25, 2010), <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/61799>,consulted,13rd April, 2021.

⁵³ Bentley, *Reflections on Perceived Conflicts between Culture and Democracy in Africa*, 2005.

⁵⁴ Adelman., “Constitutionalism, Pluralism and Democracy in Africa”, 1998.

⁵⁵ Bentley, *Reflections on Perceived Conflicts between Culture and Democracy in Africa*, 2005,pp.32-78.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*.

But contrary to the socio-political realities in the continent, post decolonization African leaders resorted to a liberal constitution-making process that aimed at building a modern state. Some of the African countries had also resorted to a Marxism-Leninism model of state formation. Many of the newly independent African countries installed the state model of the British parliamentary system or the French strong presidential system⁵⁷. The liberal constitutions that have been enshrined in many of the Post-colonization African countries provides for free and fair elections, separation of powers principles, protections of human rights, freedom of opinion, transparency, and accountability⁵⁸.

Furthermore, “these constitutions have also taken many forms and sought to address a range of social, political, ethnic, tribal and regional problems, suggesting the existence of a high degree of pluralism⁵⁹.” Based on such constitutional systems, formal political institutions such as parliament, administrative institutions, the judiciary, and other relevant organs have been put in place⁶⁰. Those countries that resorted to Marxism as state ideology, on the other hand, argued that “liberalism was incompatible with their developmental needs, for which a strong state was required.”⁶¹ But attempts to adopt such liberal democracy or Marxist state models in Africa succeeded only in producing one-party dictatorships under a veneer of European bureaucratic structures and procedures, which is neither African nor European. It is believed that “African society has suffered a rupture and crisis of thought and culture as a result of the encounter with liberalism.”⁶² This is because the path to development through the liberal ideological context of the West is much “more problematic in societies with different histories.”⁶³

The interaction between liberal values and traditional ways of life in Africa seems to have created some kind of anomaly due to the differences of the two systems in societal values. The values rendered by liberalism are basically divergent from the entrenched cultural traits prevalent in Africa. Liberalism considers the individual an entity whereas African thought respects individuality but abhors individualism. Liberalism concentrates on individual materialistic concerns while African society focuses on the material and spiritual welfare of the community. Apparently, the system of transplantation of Western legal and political ideals was made by way

⁵⁷E. P. Skinner., *African Political Cultures and the Problems of Government*, 2 AFR. STUD. Q. 17,1998, pp.18–19.

⁵⁸A. Akwasi., *Africa: Democracy without Human Rights?*, 15 HUM. RTS. Q. 1993, pp.703-709.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰G. A. Semahagn “The Relevance of African Culture in Building Modern Institutions and the Quest for Legal Pluralism”, Saint Louis University School Of Law, 2003,pp.45-60.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²S. Harvey., “Liberalism and African Culture”, 21 *J. Black Stud*, 1990, p. 190.

⁶³Ibid.

of disregarding the well-entrenched, informal traditional values that guided the lives of ordinary Africans for centuries. Unlike the experience of other development models such as Japanese and the Turks, post-colonial Africans decided to culturally Westernize without economically modernizing themselves⁶⁴. This unmerited transplantation of systems has resulted in a series of discrepancies between the formal and informal system in Africa. Incompatibility between the visible and the invisible institutions has led to the simultaneous existence of different rules in relation to property rights, laws and customs that lead to conflict, which usually results in different notions of rights and obligations.⁶⁵

In addition to this, the incoherence of the two systems has created different socio-economic spaces and citizenships, characterized by exclusion, corruption and patronage which has resulted in the application of different ways of conflict resolution and decision-making in Cameroon and Africa in general thereby deepening conflicting relationships rather than sustainable peace. There is no any easy way out of this paradox. Adhering exclusively either to the modern systems of government or to the traditional institutions is costly to African governance. Since the modern institutions already have wider appeal due to the impact of globalization, African states cannot ignore the relevance of such institutions. In addition to this, not only is it doubtful whether the existing traditional institutions are in a position to efficiently regulate complex social and economic relations in modern society, the colonial heritage has seriously weakened the role of traditional institutions⁶⁶.

In the same token, African societies could not entirely depend on modern institutions. Not only are the modern institutions installed in Africa incompatible with the social and economic realities in Africa, but the institutions also are characterized by inefficiency and corruption, and they are only visible in urban Centres⁶⁷. The large majority of rural Africans still depend on traditional institutions for their day-to-day life. In light of such multiple institutional developments in the region, it seems Africa could transform its challenges of democratic governance through integrating the old system with the new legal order⁶⁸.

⁶⁴ A. A. Mazrui., *Who Killed Democracy in Africa? Clues of the Past, Concerns of the Future*, 9 Development. Policy Management. Network Bulletin, 15, 17 2002, pp.23-57.

⁶⁵ *Human. Science. Research Council, Reconciling Africa's Fragmented Institutions of Governance: A New Approach to Institution Building* 8 (May. 20, 2021), <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/News-document-1120.phtml>, consulted 24th ,Apri,2021.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ I. Bonny., "Between Culture and Constitution: Evaluating the Cultural Legitimacy of Human Rights in the African State", 22 *HUM. RTS.* Q. 2000, pp. 838-845.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p.153.

II. Resolving the Conflict between formal and informal Institutions

The way forward to resolve the conflict between formal and informal institutions in Africa seems to be reconciling the application of traditional institutions with modern systems of governance. In finding an appropriate balance between the two systems, it is primarily inappropriate to assume that African traditional systems are entirely incompatible with the values of liberal democracy. In light of the universality of democratic values, it is erroneous to assume that every aspect of liberal values are alien to Africa just because they are not upheld, practiced, or expressed in Western forms. In fact, though liberal values seem to be alien to the African culture, there are African traditional elements such as social justice and leadership accountability that can serve as fertile ground to grow the seeds of basic liberal values.⁶⁹ Rather, the challenges of adopting democracy in Africa are of approach rather than mere adoption of liberal values. Since many of the African countries attempted to implant a liberal system by completely disregarding African values, African constitutional development remains elusive.

Though such official discouragement of cultural values has weakened many of the rich cultures in the continent, there are still numerous traditional values that, if nurtured and supported, could serve as sound frameworks for transforming values of democracy in Africa. Traditional values could support the development of democracy because they still have significant appeal to the African masses⁷⁰.

It has now become clear that “contemporary debates and transitions to democracy in Africa suggest that viable democratic alternatives can emerge only with the consent of the African masses.”⁷¹ In other words, the most viable venue to take African democracy forward is through the recognition of diverse forms of traditional institutions to which the majority of African people prescribe. In light of such significance, the fusion of traditional and modern institutions is likely to lead to a democratic system that is more compatible with African socioeconomic realities by integrating the parallel socioeconomic spaces⁷². In light of these invisible hands of culture controlling the lives of ordinary Africans, the way forward for African constitutional development is to search out mechanisms to transform African cultural institutions rather than to leave them to extinction.

⁶⁹ A. O. Nwauwa, *Concepts of Democracy and Democratization in Africa Revisited*, in *Democracy & Globalization*, Charles L. Nieman ed., 2005, available at http://upress.kent.edu/Nieman/Concepts_of_Democracy.htm, consulted, 8th, May, 2021. pp.50-89.

⁷⁰ Nwauwa, *Concepts of Democracy and Democratization*, p 106.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

III. The Cameroon Traditional Institutions and Adaptation to Modernism

As has been indicated earlier, because of the legacy of colonialism and westernized education systems, there has never been a coherent development of institutions in Africa. The primary institutions of governance in Africa are those formal structures which are state-sponsored institutions inherited from the colonial legacy. On the other hand, there are traditional institutions that entail Pre-colonial forms of governance with different forms of traditional authority systems. Though many of these Pre-colonial systems have either been destroyed or incorporated into colonial systems of governance, traditional institutions in sub-Saharan Africa remain very influential elements in the society. Traditional chiefs in particular have tremendous power in many parts of Africa, whether they have been officially recognized or not. In many of the Bamenda Grassfields societies, different traditional institutions still play a significant role. As far back as in many Pre-colonial African societies, community-wide gatherings known in the Widikum as *efetsi-mbeng* and many other names, offered an opportunity for a wide array of community members to voice their opinions on community affairs. This thus brought their participative actions in consensus-based decision making⁷³.

Despite the establishment of formal institutions in Africa, such informal traditional institutions remain significant⁷⁴. Studies reveal traditional institutions “still play an important role in the lives of many Africans,” particularly in their “Pre-eminent role as mediators of violent conflict.” Traditional institutions are also used as mechanisms for ensuring equitable access to land in rural areas and for moderating inequality. In light of this, traditional institutions cater to rural populations, often alienated by the official state government. Since lower-level chiefs and village leaders live in rural communities, they better represent the interests of their communities than state government officials.⁷⁵

According to one study, “popular perceptions of [informal] traditional leaders are slightly more positive than those for elected leaders.” In fact, “the formal institutions of the modern state, those that regulate the structure of polity, property rights and contracting cannot be effective if they disregard or contradict the customary rules of the traditional institutions, which govern the

⁷³ Interview with Ngwe Cecilia Ijang, age, 61, retired nurse, , 6th May, 2021, Yaoundé.

⁷⁴ Carolyn Logan., Traditional Leaders in Modern Africa: Can Democracy and the Chief Co-Exist? 3 (Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 93, 2008), available at <http://afrobarometer.org/index.php>

⁷⁵ Ibid.

lives and livelihood of large segments of the population.⁷⁶ By failing to engage the traditional institutions adhered to by large segments of the population, formal institutions have remained ineffective in coordinating policy and resources with broad social interests, preventing conflicts, and promoting synergy in state-society relations.

In particular, the fact that the African state could not guarantee access to justice for large portions of the population due to modern institutional weakness means that the role of traditional institutions is indispensable. The “effective legitimacy [of traditional institutions] within their respective societies could certainly offer an opportunity to develop new power structures better articulated with official institutions of power and offer a counter weight in some instances.”⁷⁷

African traditional institutions also have their own democratic features, albeit with some limitations. Scholars recognize that in Pre-colonial Africa, many liberties co-existed, including liberty of religion, liberty of association, freedom of expression, the right to participate in affairs of the state, and freedom of circulation.⁷⁸ “All over Africa, the people essentially form a community-based culture” characterized by “social harmony, solidarity and community values.”⁷⁹ Though the individual under African culture is only addressed in light of the wider communal values, it could be argued that there are elements of democracy in some of the cultural practices expressed in social associations such as the councils of elders, mutual aid organizations, and procedures dealing with conflicts and crimes. Though the African traditional institutions are primarily concerned with communal welfare, this does not mean that there is a tendency to disregard individual preferences. Rather, as Menkiti argues, “whereas the African view [of society] asserts an ontological independence to human society, and moves from society to individuals, the Western view moves instead from individuals to society.”⁸⁰

“For the African, it is the respect for life and community that is a priority” that “focuses on the material and spiritual welfare of the community and individual.”⁸¹ The other fundamental feature of traditional institutions is a decentralized participatory decision-making system, which allows the empowerment of local communities to control local decisions and matters of their self-

⁷⁶ Jerry Bungu., *Making Use of Traditional Institutions in Modern African States*, MMEGIONLINE (July 17, 2020), <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=6&aid=16&dir=2009/July/> Friday, 17, consulted, 22nd April, 2021.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ J. Frémont., “Legal Pluralism, Customary Law and Human Rights in Francophone African Countries”, 40 *Victoria U. Wellington L. Review* 149, 156, 2009, pp.123-145.

⁷⁹ Frémont., “Legal Pluralism, Customary Law and Human Rights”, p.200.

⁸⁰ A.M. Ifeanyi., “Person and Community in African Traditional Court”, in *African Philosophy: An Introduction* 180, Richard A. Wright(Ed), 1984, pp.124-133.

⁸¹ Ibid.

governance. The relatively centralized chieftaincy systems are generally more decentralized than the often autocratic post-colonial state. In light of this, the chiefs often delegate their powers to designate “sub-chiefs” and they share power with the sorcerers, witches and magicians who also hold hereditary titles and are in charge of the magico-religious dimensions of power.

In addition to this, in many Grassfields *Fondoms*, the Fon is counseled by a privy council which advises him with regard to applying the rules flowing from ancestral traditions and helps in assuring that the decisions are taken in coherence with lineage. The equilibrium and existence of such counter weights within any given society are typical of the contemporary elements of democracy. African traditional institutions also have village councils where direct democracy is exercised. In many African communities, there are periodic public meetings that deliberate on the major social and economic issues of the village. All such democratic exercises are compatible with the modern democratic conception.

Traditional institutions in African society also resolve conflicts through negotiations. Many aspects of traditional institutions involve communal justice, which is an integral part of the principles of fundamental justice. Negotiated political solutions work in traditional institutions to resolve ethnic conflicts, but they can also be applied to mitigate conflicts among state political parties. The “consensus-based system of decision-making” allows respect for dissent, protects minority interests, resolves conflicts and promotes communication between political parties. In particular, the end result [in a traditional justice system] is based on sacrifice as well as just and fair compensation. The principle of accountability is also an important feature of the traditional justice system in Africa, due to the fact that traditional courts are open to the public increases accountability and builds confidence in the system.⁸²

Furthermore, in traditional institutions, litigants speak local languages, while modern justice is rendered and administered in French or English. Thus, the traditional institutions of governance are more accessible, readily understood, and participatory. Individuals from rural areas do feel foreign in a justice system that “applies complex, modern norms rather than well understood norms and principles aimed at preserving cohesion, harmony and collective values.

Despite the value of traditional institutions in Cameroon, the development of a system that facilitates the development of traditional institutions poses numerous challenges. Primarily, the crude implementation of western institutions without consideration for traditional Cameroonian

⁸² Ifeanyl., “Person and Community in African”, pp.162.

institutions has seriously undermined the prospect for the development of traditional institutions. The fact that this importation has completely disregarded traditional systems has not only weakened the traditional institutions but has harmed democratic transformation on the continent.

In addition, since the development of traditional institutions was blocked by the combined effects of Africa's colonial experience and subsequent neglect by the post-colonial state, traditional African democratic values and their conflict resolution mechanisms remained largely confined to the local level. This had equally been influenced by the concept of globalization which also eroded the value of traditional institutions.

Since the impact of western culture is reaching the most inaccessible parts of the continent, the young generation increasingly ignores the value of traditional institutions. Considering the world is dominated by cultural, economic, and political ideologies of Western society, preserving traditional institutions has become more difficult. The attitude of African ruling elites towards traditional institutions presents another obstacle. Though many of the African dictators' reject democratizing the African state under the pretext that Western values are incompatible with African culture, many of the ruling elites consider traditional institutions a threat to their power. Because of this threat, many African regimes deny the official recognition of traditional institutions.

The other challenge to the development of traditional institutions is related to problems of accountability and discriminatory practices within some customs in Africa. "Viewed from the perspective of contemporary principles of democracy, the formal mechanisms of accountability in the centralized African traditional institutions are rather weak since chiefs often combine executive and judicial powers.

Additionally, "women and young adults, though not formally prohibited by rule, are often presumed to be represented by their husbands and fathers, respectively, and are customarily excluded from participating in the decision-making assemblies.⁸³ Despite the apparent prevalence of harmful practices in many of the African traditions, there are also tremendous improvements. Because of the increasing adoption of international human rights principles in many of the African countries, traditional practices have changed over the last few decades. Further, as modernization extends into rural families, traditional leaders are forced to adapt by abandoning outdated practices.

⁸³ Frémont., "Legal Pluralism, Customary Law and Human Rights, pp.153-167.

IV. Defense of Cameroon's legal pluralism

As previously indicated, the African constitutional system has faced conflict between the formal and informal systems of governance. Though a return solely to traditional institutions is impossible, African culture, history and tradition still affect people's lives in the twenty-first century. Although African countries have adopted Western liberal constitutional systems, traditional institutions remain entrenched. Because of the significance of these institutions in Africa, political elites, academics, activists, and chiefs themselves "debate the proper position of traditional authorities in society at length. The issue of reconciling traditional authorities with modern political systems becomes particularly acute at the local level, where traditional institutions exert the most influence on the daily lives of Africans, and where the contest with government authorities for resources and responsibilities is most intense.

In light of the contentions between the two systems, there is a need to rethink the role of African traditional institutions within the current democratic setup. To achieve the goal of accommodating the two systems, African legal systems need to adopt principles of legal pluralism whereby the formal and informal systems work together to achieve transitional democracy. Rather than forcing Western liberal values on unwilling populations, the appropriate procedure would install the Western constitutional system within the context of traditional values. The primary step needed to reconcile the two systems is to realize the fact that, although there is tension between the two systems, they are not fundamentally incompatible.

Rather than being alien to liberal values, as has been indicated earlier, African traditional institutions have their own features that could serve as the foundation to build a democratic system of governance. Traditional institutions that largely worked on principles of consensus and reconciliation, could serve as foundation on which building democratic transitions in Africa are done. Particularly, through a system of decentralization, there are opportunities for creating conducive environments to expand the role of traditional institutions at the local level. Once the traditional and modern institutions are fully reconciled, and once state building is more developed, the effective institutions of democracy are likely to evolve.

In light of this comprehensive approach, different African countries have adopted diverse forms of legal pluralism to accommodate the informal traditional institutions. The first approach, adopted in countries such as Ghana and Uganda, incorporated traditional authorities into the

governance structure with a largely advisory role⁸⁴. In addition to recognizing the institution of the Chieftaincy, the Ghanaian Constitution established a National House of Chiefs that has wide responsibilities in determining the role of traditional chiefs, the interpretation and codification of customary law, the elimination of customs and usages that are outmoded and socially harmful, and additional roles related to regulating traditional institutions.

In Uganda for example, subject to the provisions of the constitution, the institution of traditional leader may exist in any area of Uganda in accordance with the culture, customs and traditions or wishes and aspirations of the people to whom it applies⁸⁵. In particular, the restoration of the Buganda *Kingdom* in 1993 significantly resurrected the role of traditional institutions in Uganda.⁸⁶ In the last two decades, with a king, a parliament that included clan elders, a government, an administrative structure, buildings, representatives deep in the country and abroad. Buganda kingdom for instance has by and large acquired or recovered most of the political institutions which characterized its states.⁸⁷ Though such an approach has helped these countries to maintain traditional values, the role of traditional councils has been limited to advisory rather than having vital decision-making power.

Thus, there has to be more political commitment to expand the horizon of legal pluralism whereby traditional institutions play a significant role in discharging their responsibilities. A second approach, initiated by Post-apartheid South Africa, incorporated traditional authorities into regional and local governance to avert conflicts between the new state and traditional authorities. The recognition of traditional leadership and indigenous law was enshrined in the 1996 South African Constitution.⁸⁸ The rights of “Cultural, religious and linguistic communities” are enshrined in Article 31 of the South African Constitution.⁸⁹ There are two distinct rights recognized by this section.

The first is the right of communities to actively enjoy, practice, and use their culture, religion, or language. The second is the right to form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society. The Constitution further deals with the recognition of traditional leaders and outlined their role, but, most importantly, it allocates to them the power

⁸⁴ P. Englebert., “Born-Again Buganda or the Limits of Traditional Resurgence in Africa”, 40 *J. MOD. AFR. STUD.* 345, 349, 2002, pp.100-112

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Englebert., “Born-Again Buganda or the Limits of Traditional, pp.211-112.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

to deal with matters pertaining to African customary law and the communities that observe this law. The various aspects of the traditional institutions in the Republic of South Africa are enumerated as follows by a scholar who studied the revival of traditional institutions in the country:

This recognition would among other things entail the right to a salary paid by the government, to adjudicate certain disputes according to customary law and to representation at various levels of government. In addition to this, provision is made for the establishment of a House of Traditional Leaders in each province which has traditional leaders and the establishment of a Council of Traditional Leaders at the national level. Each House of Traditional Leaders is empowered to advise its provincial legislature on matters relating to indigenous law, tradition and custom, while the Council of Traditional Leaders is empowered to advise the national government on the same matters.⁹⁰

A third approach that has been undertaken by countries such as Botswana and Somaliland is by far more successful than the previous two approaches. In these countries, traditional institutions have been granted wider decision-making powers. For example just like, in the Bamenda Grassfields traditional authority has been retained after independence, and the traditional structures were given recognition and authority.

By recognizing the traditional chieftainship, the government realized that the people in rural areas continued to have respect for and faith in the traditional structures. In addition accepting Fons to form associations, Cameroonian authorities utilized traditional leaders in various capacities, including in its judiciary to resolve land disputes at the local level. The traditional Fon has a number of powers such as promoting the welfare of the members of his tribe, determining questions of tribal membership, arranging tribal ceremonies, and preventing the commission of offences within his tribal territory.

The association of chiefs such as NOWEFU also serves as a forum for the traditional leaders to make their contribution on matters of interest to them or their tribes. Customary courts in Cameroon play a significant role in rendering justice to the community. One of the most significant roles of traditional leaders in Cameroon Grassfields is imparting justice on customary lines through the customary courts.

In light of the significance of traditional institutions in Africa, attempts undertaken by some countries to accommodate the traditional institutions are commendable. However, many other countries in Africa like Cameroon have failed not only to recognize the role of traditional institutions, but also may ultimately fail to develop vibrant transitional institutions that may bring about a viable transition to democracy in Cameroon. More political commitment, research, and

⁹⁰ V.K. Inekel and B. Oomen., "One Chief, One Vote": The Revival of Traditional Authorities in Post-Apartheid South Africa", *96 AFRICAN AFFAIRS* 561, 573, 1997, pp.68-95.

reform are needed to transform the role of African traditional institutions in the twenty-first century. Such an integrated approach is essential to transforming African democracy, which has been slow to develop because of the unmerited loyalty to Western institutional models without providing proper attention to indigenous traditional institutions.

The constitutional development process in Africa has been caught between two institutional systems. On the one hand, Africa has entrenched Pre-colonial traditional institutions whose existence transcends the colonial legacy.⁹¹ These traditional institutions still play significant roles in the lives of millions of ordinary Africans. On the other hand, African elites resorted to adopting the constitutional models of their former colonizers after the independence on African from colonial rule. Despite the adoption of Western institutions, many of the African ruling elites discouraged development of a democratic system of government by arguing that the Western conception of liberal democracy is alien to the African egalitarian traditional system.⁹² Thus, African ruling elites were not loyal to either the traditional institutions or the modern state structures imported from Europe. This has created a governance crisis in Africa whereby the continent is plagued by authoritarian regimes, violation of human rights, poverty, and corruption.

In light of such compelling challenges, the way forward to improve African governance is to find mechanisms of reconciling the formal and informal institutional systems that have always been considered antagonistic. The primary step needed to reconcile the systems is to realize the fact that, though there is tension between the two systems, they are not necessarily incompatible. Rather than being alien to liberal values, African traditional institutions have their own characteristics that could serve as a foundation to build democratic systems of government. Particularly, African traditional institutions that largely work on principles of consensus and reconciliation could serve as a foundation to build democratic transformation in Africa.

To achieve the goal of reconciling the two divergent systems of institutions, African legal systems need to adopt principles of legal pluralism, whereby the formal and informal institutions work together to achieve a transition to democracy. Such a transitional arrangement of reconciling the two parallel institutional systems is a more realistic option available to African countries to build a vibrant democratic tradition.

V. Traditional Leadership on the Concepts of the State, Sovereignty, and Legitimacy

⁹¹ N. Gennaioli and I. Rainer., “The Modern Impact of Precolonial Centralization in Africa”, 12 *J. ECON, GROWTH* 185, 186, 2007, pp.56-88.

⁹²*ibid.*

The Ghanaian case suggests that the continuing presence of traditional authority or leadership during the colonial and post-colonial areas has arguably introduced new aspects for the operation of the concepts of the state, legitimacy, and sovereignty in Ghana and possibly other states of Africa. This has implications for rural (and even urban) local government in Ghana.

A canon is a set of expectations that a certain concept or theory is accepted by most people as being true, that it is part of the dominant world view and, therefore, is not to be challenged. There is a canon that has come to be accepted, implicitly and/or explicitly, on what a state is amongst many researchers and policy practitioners.

This canon of the state is commonly used to denote a set of political structures and processes directed ultimately by one political authority (be that an individual such as a king/sovereign or a body such as Parliament) that exercises control over all the people within its territorial boundaries. For example, Watkins defines the state in one of the voices of the canon, the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, as being “a geographically delimited segment of human society united by common obedience to a sovereign⁹³.” A key point for the argument in the part is that Watkins highlights the Western notion that an undivided supreme political authority or sovereign is key to the whole understanding of the state or government (in its broadest sense). He notes: “The state is a territory in which a single authority exercises sovereign powers both *de jure* (in law) and *de facto* (in life).” Watkins’ view of the state in this regard is not an isolated one. Indeed, it could be argued that virtually all the authors and approaches to the study of the state who are included in Chilcote’s outstanding encyclopedic 1994 survey of comparative politics, share this assumption about the state, even if they disagree on other aspects of state analysis.⁹⁴

However, this assumption needs to be revised with regard to the state in Cameroon because of the continued presence of traditional authority there. In turn, this suggests that local government management and development in Cameroon, and especially rural areas needs to consist not only of state structures but also somehow include traditional leaders or chiefs. However, in order to better understand these aspects of the argument, it is useful to first consider the three main historic periods of the state in Cameroon, i.e., Pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial, as well as briefly outline the main governments or regimes of the post-colonial state.

⁹³ F.M. Watkins., “State: The concept.”in David L. Sills, (ed), *International Encyclopedia, Social Sciences 15*, s.v. “state”, 1968, pp. 150–57.

⁹⁴ Gennaioli and I. Rainer., “The Modern Impact,pp.98.100.

For the present purpose, the state in what is now Cameroon can be seen being manifested in three different forms that accord with three different historical periods during the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. While the Cameroonian state forms share many of the same characteristics as those of the canonical conceptualization of the state, they differ in several respects; most notably in terms of the effects of the imposition of colonialism on the factors of legitimacy and sovereignty.

In turn, these effects have ramifications for the operation of both the colonial state and the post-colonial state. Our special concern to this study is the ramifications for local government. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a constellation of African states and other more decentralized political entities had long existed, and in some cases they could trace their existence and/or roots back several more centuries.⁹⁵

Until the 1830s or 1840s, these African states and other political entities in what is now Ghana existed virtually free from European colonial control⁹⁶. European states had little control beyond the cannon balls shot from their castles, forts, and trading posts on the coast. These Pre-colonial states experienced growth, ascendancy, hegemony, decline, and incorporation into other states in rather similar ways to that experienced by the European states.

These Pre-colonial states had their own structures and processes for exercising authority and carrying out various functions, including that of local government. Britain had begun the process of imposing its claim to control, administer, and exercise sovereignty by the early mid-1800s. This process was carried out tentatively at first as in the bond of 1844 which extended limited British judicial jurisdiction to some of the coastal states. After Britain's participation in the defeat and ousting of the Germans in Cameroon in 1916 and followed by its partition between France and Britain, Britain imposed indirect rule over the political authorities who, in large measure, had run the Pre-colonial states in what is now the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon.

In the main aftermath the British colonial state did not extinguish these political authorities, but rather transformed them from kings into chiefs, otherwise called traditional authorities or traditional leaders. The leaders of the former Pre-colonial states and other political entities lost certain trappings of their states such as their own armies and foreign policies much of their control over their legislative, administrative, executive, and judicial powers, but they retained a significant

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Logan, *Traditional Chiefs in Modern Africa*, pp.89-124.

variable amount of their authority, legitimacy, influence, power, and even elements of sovereignty into the colonial and Post-colonial periods⁹⁷.

These chiefs or traditional leaders may have lost power at the national or state-level, but in many cases they have remained influential at the local and regional levels, especially in the rural areas. Hence, one of the major questions of local government policy that the colonial state and its successor post-colonial state have faced has been how, if at all, chiefs or traditional leaders should be incorporated into the new structures and processes of local government.

The British colonial state in British Southern Cameroons was fundamentally transformed after 1954 the quasi-regional status was granted to BSC and principally lead the new political elites in the likes of EML Endeley, John Ngu Foncha who had to share power with traditional rulers who before then were the ones manning the political evolution of the territory.

This sharing ended in 1961 when the UN confirmed the independence of BSC and authority handed over total colonial state control to BSC political elites who transformed this after independence into a Post-colonial state. Despite the fear of some traditional leaders after the dissolution of the British Cameroon House of chiefs in 1972, the governments of the postcolonial state, following the predecessors of the colonial state, have sought to find the optimum relationship with traditional authority, often by adjusting formally the governmental powers and authority that the post-colonial state believed it was granting to the traditional leaders. These adjustments were formally manifested through a variety of legal instruments ranging from degrees to laws. Also, the post-colonial state in Cameroon has attempted in the recent times in part to incorporate traditional leaders by creating the Houses of Chiefs system which operates from the national or state level through to the regions and localities.

In order to understand the legislative and constitutional context of the various postcolonial governments, it is necessary to list these governments. These governments generated the legislative and constitutional instruments that the state used in its attempts to control traditional leaders, including their participation in rural and urban local government.

Political legitimacy deals with the reasons that people are expected to obey political authority, especially that of government. M. Foucault notes that, political legitimacy is an important mechanism of the state to obtain the compliance of its citizens (or subjects) with the

⁹⁷ D. I. Ray, and S. La Branche., "Foucault's Chiefs: The Question of Legitimacy in Chief-State Relations in Ghana." Presented to the Canadian Political Science Association Conference, Ottawa, 2 June, 1998, pp.33-83.

laws (or other wishes) of the state⁹⁸. Force can be used by a state (or government) to compel obedience or compliance from its people, be the citizens or subjects, but in the long run this is often an expensive and even ineffective strategy for the state. Drawing upon the European experience, Foucault argued that, the modern state relies much more on hegemonic legitimacy strategies to convince its people that they should willingly obey its laws⁹⁹. Thus, certain lines of argument or knowledge are encouraged by the state and others may not only be discouraged but even be suppressed, so that a certain legitimacy of the state is created by the agreement of people to rule and be ruled in certain ways under certain conditions. One might go further and argue that when the state's canon of political legitimacy breaks down, riots, revolts, and revolutions begin.

Thus, it would seem, at least in utilitarian terms that the best interests of democratic government and people would be served if the political legitimacy of governments, including local government, could be expanded so as to create the conditions for democratic development. Such a political culture must be concerned with creating and enhancing the structures, processes, and values that promote both people and the various communities to which they see themselves belonging. Moreover, given the existence of political legitimacy roots going back to the Pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods, people today may see themselves belonging simultaneously to a community rooted in the newly independent state as well as belonging to another type of community, one rooted in traditional authority.

A key point in the discussion of democratic political legitimacy should be that people have the ability to give or withdraw their consent to be governed, and that governments and other governing and decision-making structures honour the decisions of the people.¹⁰⁰ Agreement with this does not necessarily bind us to one universal application of democratic political legitimacy, to one particular set of structures or even processes.

For example, while there is now broad agreement that multi-party elections at the level of national or local are usually one of the expressions of democratic political legitimacy, these views are not shared by all democratic countries when it comes to local government. Some countries such as Canada and Ghana have opted for non-party elections for local government on either an informal basis (e.g., Canada) or on a formal basis (e.g., Ghana). Others such as the U.K. and South

⁹⁸ M. Foucault., *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, (ed), Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon, 1980, pp.53-100.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ V. Pelonomi., (ed) *Traditional Leadership in Africa: A Research Report on Traditional Systems of Administration and their Role in the Promotion of Good Governance*. London and Cape Town: Commonwealth Local Government Forum and the Institute for Local Governance and Development, 1995, pp.103-122.

Africa have accepted multi-party local government elections¹⁰¹. Such differences in political culture and the expression of political legitimacy are, in large measure then, differences of the history and cultural context for each of these countries, rather than any corruption of some mythical one true expression of democracy. Hence, while there can be a broad agreement on a core set of criteria by which the presence or absence of democracy can be determined (e.g., government legitimately elected, etc.), historical and cultural variations are possible in how that democracy (including political legitimacy) is expressed and experienced¹⁰².

Democracy incorporates and accepts (indeed perhaps depends upon) diversity, difference, and plurality. This is a key point to recognize in this present analysis of traditional leadership and local government, because traditional leadership/traditional authority and the contemporary state now have different bases of legitimacy. These differences could be, and have been, interpreted as proof that traditional leadership/ authority is totally incompatible with contemporary democratic government. If such an argument were extended to local government, then the participation of traditional leadership in democratic local government could be seen as being undesirable.

Such an argument, in my view, does not take into account the complexity and specific cultural context of a number of democratic post-colonial states in Africa and elsewhere. Any discussion of the desirability and possibility of the participation of traditional leadership / authority in democratic local government and governance has first to examine these different bases of legitimacy.

Legitimacy can be based on different arguments (or logics), and these can vary over time between and within cultural and historical contexts. So for example, the legitimacy of the contemporary (or Post-colonial) state in Africa derives primarily from three sources, all of which are secular: the nationalist struggle for independence; democracy; and constitutional legality.¹⁰³ Constitutional legality can derive from the post-colonial or colonial period in degrees that vary from state to state. In one sense, the contemporary African states are the successors to the colonial states created by the European imperialist powers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, just as the United States and Canada can be seen as Post-colonial states of Great Britain's colonies in North America.

¹⁰¹ R. A. Naidu., and P. S. Reddy, (eds) *Metropolitan Government and Development: Present and Future Challenges*. Durban: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the Democracy Development Programme, 1997, pp.300-326.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ . I. Ray, K. Sharma and I. I. May-Parker, *Symposium on Traditional Leadership and Local Government*, London: CLGF, 199, pp.23-78.

The post-colonial state inherited and has to deal in one way or another with a considerable amount of constitutional and legislative instruments from the colonial state period¹⁰⁴. In this sense, at least in the initial period of independence, the post-colonial state is usually the successor to the colonial state. Much of the colonial state's legislative and constitutional framework continues to influence that of the post-colonial state in either positive or negative ways. Thus, the post-colonial state demands obedience to those aspects of the colonial laws and constitutional framework that it deems acceptable because these are seen to be acceptable or legitimate in legal and/or constitutional terms.¹⁰⁵ In short, whatever evaluation of the colonial state the post-colonial state might have, it may continue to accept a particular law or constitutional measure or principle on its own legal merit.

Legality, thus, may be the legitimacy basis of the continued usage of a colonial measure, even if the colonial state period as a whole has reduced or no legitimacy in the eyes of the post-colonial state and its citizens because of the lack of democracy that imperial or colonial rule means.¹⁰⁶ The post-colonial state also uses the legal system to legitimate its behavior. Appeals by government are made to the citizenry to be "law-abiding."

The Post-colonial state could also appeal to democracy and the nationalist struggle for Independence as two more primary-level bases of its legitimation. Of course, this assumes that the post-colonial state represents itself as the democratic result of the nationalist struggle for independence. This could be seen as a mechanism by which the post-colonial state distances itself from the essentially undemocratic past of the colonial state. Sometimes military coups and governments have shrunk the democratic legitimacy of the post-colonial state to only that of the achievement of independence and legality. However, where the democratic content of the post-colonial state has been preserved or re-invented, the post-colonial state is able to base its claims to legitimacy on having its government duly elected by their people.

All of these democratic claims by the post-colonial states are ultimately rooted in the concept and practice that the citizens really do have the ability to select and to change their governmental leaders through elections held at specified intervals. To expand on a point made earlier, while this particular conception is now widely held throughout much of the world as being the core meaning of democracy, there is considerable debate on how to put democracy into practice. For instance,

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ T.N.S Kaze., "The Dynamics of Chieftaincy Succession Conflicts in the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon, Ca 1800-2013. A Historical Investigation", PhD Dissertation in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2020, p.308.

should the times between elections be fixed (e.g., every four years?) or flexible (e.g., no more than five years apart?) . Which governmental leaders should be elected and which should be appointed: executive, Legislative judicial, Administrative and military? There are considerable differences amongst the democracies on these basic questions of democratic legitimation. Should traditional leaders be added to this list of categories of government leaders who might be elected in order to ensure their legitimacy in the contemporary democratic state including local government, or is there a legitimate case for chiefs not to be elected by every citizen?

A significant part of the answer to this question lies within the nature of the legitimacy of traditional authority. Two key points need to be made about the bases of the claims to political legitimacy by traditional leadership in the era of the postcolonial democratic state. First, such legitimacy claims by traditional leaders are in very large measure (if not entirely) different from those of the state itself. Second, the traditional leaders' legitimacy potentially could be added to the legitimacy pool of the contemporary state, especially for matters of local governance and development.

This is a point that was and/or has not been lost on a number of colonial and postcolonial states. Traditional leaders have three distinct claims to legitimacy in the contemporary era. First, traditional leaders can claim to be the carriers of political authority and legitimacy that is derived from the Pre-colonial period. Traditional leaders occupy structures supported by constitutions and laws that, while they may have changed in varying degrees by the colonial and post-colonial states, still retain a core of customary legitimacy that predates the imposition of colonialism.

In other words, traditional leaders have a special historical claim to Pre-colonial roots; i.e., the first period of African independence before it was lost to colonialism (primarily during the 1800s). Traditional leaders can point to the antiquity of their particular office and make the argument that since it was founded (either directly or indirectly through an office that was Pre-colonial) in the Pre-colonial period, their particular traditional authority represents those indigenous, truly African values and authority that existed before the changes imposed by the colonial system began to take effect.

Such customary constitutions of traditional leadership may be seen as the constitutions of the grassroots, i.e., of the local-level rural and often urban people. These customary constitutions form part of rural and often urban local governance that people encounter as they grow up, perhaps

even before they engage with the rural local government of the post-colonial state¹⁰⁷. Traditional leadership and its customary constitutions is the form of rural local governance in which the vast majority of rural Ghanaians are first politically socialized, and thus imbibe their first political values.

The second distinct claim to legitimacy by traditional leaders in the post-colonial democratic state is that based on religion. To be a traditional leader is to have one's authority, one's power legitimated by links to the divine, whether the sacred being a god, a spirit, or the ancestors. For a traditional leader to function, that office must maintain and demonstrate its link to the divine. In Africa, the divine basis of traditional legitimacy pre-dates the imposition of colonialism. This timing thereby reinforces the other distinct basis of legitimacy for traditional leaders.

In much of Africa, these religious beliefs were established before the introduction of Islam and Christianity, but in some cases these later religions have been added to, or superseded, the earlier religious beliefs¹⁰⁸. If one distinguishes between states in which a religion is present as a system of belief and one in which the state has formally adopted the religion as part of its legitimacy, then there are few states in Africa that have state religions and, thus, the differences in the bases of legitimacy which were argued above hold. It should be added, that the absence or presence of any religion does not detract from the ability of a state to be democratic.

The third distinct claim to legitimacy by traditional leaders is that of Pre-colonial rooted culture. The historical and religious legitimacy claims can be interpreted as contributing to the view that traditional authority and leadership has deep roots in indigenous culture. Traditional leaders thus may be seen as the fathers and mothers of the people. Traditional leaders use regalia, dance, ceremony, music, cloth, etc., to display physically their cultural legitimacy. Traditional leaders may be recognized, as they are in Cameroon, as very significant transmitters of culture by their peoples, themselves, and by the state.

Thus, it is argued, that two different sets of roots of legitimacy present within a contemporary post-colonial state such as Cameroon. The legitimacy roots of the traditional authorities pre-date those of the colonial and post-colonial states and were not incorporated to any significant degree into the sovereignty claims of the colonial and post-colonial states. As will be seen in the next section, at best these states have been ambiguous as to what degree this differently-rooted

¹⁰⁷ R. Van Nieuwaal, Van E. Adriaan and W. Zips., "Political and Legal Pluralism in West Africa: Introduction and Overview." In E. A. B. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal and Werner Zips, eds., *Sovereignty, Legitimacy, and Power in West African Societies: Perspectives from Legal Anthropology*, Hamburg: LIT, 1998, pp.200-2012.

¹⁰⁸ Van Nieuwaal, Adriaan, Zips., "Political and Legal Pluralism", p.200.

legitimacy could or should be mobilized or co-opted in aid of the goals of the colonial and post-colonial states. It would appear that legitimacy, sovereignty, power, authority, and influence may be divided in post-colonial states containing traditional authorities.

While the overwhelming share of sovereignty, power, and authority is held by the Ghanaian post-colonial state, traditional leaders hold (figuratively), significant amounts and types of legitimacy, authority, and influence. There has been perhaps some recognition in these states by their leaders that they are dealing with states having not just one ultimate source of sovereignty, but rather states which have two different-rooted, asymmetrical sources of sovereignty¹⁰⁹. If the two different sets of roots (i.e., sources of legitimacy) are seen as being capable of producing different genes or characteristics, then it is possible to conceive of the different roots producing a stronger, more productive tree. If rural local development is imagined to be a tree, then it needs a combination of rural local government and traditional leadership for stronger rural local governance.

If legitimacy is not seen as a zero-sum, winner-take-all situation, then the different bases of legitimacy that the state and traditional leaders have need not be an obstacle to the achievement of development and democratization by rural local and central/national governments of African post-colonial states. Where there is little co-operation, little co-ordination, and little recognition of the differing bases of legitimacy between the local government of the state and traditional leaders, rural local government itself will carry out its policies and projects as best it can, often without all of the desired or even necessary resources.

However, if there is a strategy of adding the legitimacy resources that traditional leaders have to those of the state's rural local government, then it should be possible to mobilize more quickly the compliance, co-operation, and other resources of those people who are both citizens of the state and subjects of the traditional leader with local government. Of course, this strategy will only apply to people who believe in the legitimacy of the traditional leader. From a rural local government policy management perspective, the issue here is not whether people accept the legitimacy of local government, but rather how the addition of legitimacy resources from traditional leaders may increase the compliance and enthusiasm of people for legitimate development projects and policies, thereby increasing the capacity of rural local government in

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 218.

promoting development as well as increasing the cultural fit of democratic local government structures amongst the peoples of African states¹¹⁰.

Traditional leadership is a factor that has been significantly overlooked in evaluations of rural local government in much of contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa and in many parts of the Afro-Caribbean. This oversight continues to result in lost opportunities for rural local government. This interdisciplinary and intercontinental volume responds to this perception and seeks to establish a base line for best practice in rural local government and traditional leadership (also called chiefs) in Africa and elsewhere that policy practitioners, political leaders, traditional leaders, researchers, and other citizens can use.

Traditional leadership, it seems, continues to exist in Britain, Canada, and many African countries because the citizens want this, but they want this only under conditions that ensure that the traditional leaders are not seen to abuse their offices or the citizens. In a sense, to be a traditional leader is to be subject to informal referendums that are held on a daily basis forever: When the people decide not to honor the traditional leader, when the citizens decide to withdraw their legitimation of the chiefs, then these offices will no longer function. What republicans and their ilk seem to forget is that in many African countries traditional leaders continue to enjoy popular support because of their particular bases of legitimacy. Chiefs, in these circumstances, remain important political actors, especially at the level of local government and local governance.

VI. Political and Legal Pluralism in Cameroon

In its awareness of its continent's triple heritage (indigenous, Islamic and Western), Africa's intelligentsia is craving for a total understanding of the complex experience of what Georges Balandier describes as its dynamic, sometimes turbulent, and incredibly creative re-invention of the present, over the centuries and in the light of its constant memory of its past¹¹¹. When inaugurating the yearly Marcel Mauss Conference of the Société des Africanistes, in Paris, on 26th March 1999, Georges Balandier emphasized the enormous task that is confronting the makers of the newly-born African nation-states of today, especially in the arena of political power, which determines the relationship between those who govern and those who are governed:

L'unité qui donne à celui-ci [à l'État moderne naissant] son assise est d'abord bureaucratique, les forces économiques et les intérêts particuliers y prévalent rapidement, le pouvoir n'est plus contenu dans des limites définies par une "charte" mystique, originelle, mais dans des rapports de forces instables, et sa

¹¹⁰ D. I. Ray, and P. S. Reddy., *Grassroots chiefs in Africa*, pp.39-78.

¹¹¹ G. Balandier., " Ce que j'ai appris de l'Afrique", Conférence Marcel Mauss, 1999, *Journal des Africanistes*, 69, no. 1, 1999, p.45.

légitimation, encore mal assurée, contient insuffisamment les tendances à l'autocratie et aux confrontations. L'Afrique est engagée dans une période de refaçonnage des espaces politiques et de mutation dont l'État moderne est l'instrument, et le tragique peut surgir¹¹².

In several African countries including Cameroon, various forms of traditional authority still do coexist with the new rules of governance set (with or without a constitution) within the modern (republican or military) Nation-States, and this situation has often led to internal struggles over sovereignty, legitimacy, and power.

The topic of political and legal pluralism in Africa has already been the sole focus of two recent symposia. The first one, held in September 1994 in Kumasi and Accra (Ghana), and co-organized by Nana Kwame Brempong Arhin, Professor Donald I. Ray, and Professor E. A. B. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal addressed the theme of "The Contribution of Traditional Authority to Development, Human Rights and Environmental Protection: Strategies for Africa." One year later, a symposium on Legal Anthropology was held at the University of Vienna and resulted in the publication of a book on Sovereignty, Legitimacy and Power in West African Societies in 1998. The topic remains central to an international research project launched in Durban (South Africa) in December 1999, the Traditional Authority Applied Research Network (TAARN),¹¹³ which is presently embarking upon a comparative study of the relationship between traditional leaders and the modern states in South Africa, Botswana, and Ghana.

These new avenues of research, and the integrated and/or multidisciplinary approach followed by researchers in this field, could certainly facilitate the dialogue between the representatives of the modern African states in question and their traditional authorities. The success of such a dialogue, nevertheless, may depend, as Zips and van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal point out, "on the humility with which the power holders of modern African states are willing to acknowledge the authority of original African institutions and learn from the democratic principles on which these institutions rest"¹¹⁴.

Ghana like Cameroon has been noted, in this respect, by the same scholars, as having taken an interesting "stance towards chieftaincy that strives towards co-operation, transparency, and internal peaceful relation"¹¹⁵ The 1977 law on chieftaincy certainly indicate that traditional rulers

¹¹² Ibid, p.267.

¹¹³ Project financed by the IDRC, Canada and coordinated by Donald I. Ray of the University of Calgary, Albert Owusu-Sarpong of the University of Kumasi, Tim Quinlan of the University of Durban-Westville, and Keshaw Sharma of the University of Botswana, 1999.

¹¹⁴ Nieuwaal, Adriaan and Zips. 1998. "Political and Legal Pluralism in West Africa, pp.200-219.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

were still relevant in Cameroon at the end of the twentieth century, and that chieftaincy may well become one of the traditional values to regain new strength and importance for the building of an authentically African and modern nation-state in the Third Millennium.

In his article on “Chief-State Relations in Ghana,” Donald Ray seems, to us, to have rightly concluded his analysis of the positions towards chieftaincy adopted by the successive governing and legislative bodies under and after the colonial rule in Ghana. By stating that “the 1992 Constitution of the Fourth Republic contained a shift back to the Third Republic’s policy of constitutionally-limiting the sovereignty of the state over chiefs”¹¹⁶. This situation holds same for Cameroon in the sense that the auxilliarization of chiefs through the 1977 law were simply made tools in the hands of the modern state and some political elites who in turn used the institution to consolidate their political positions. According to the 1977 decree on the reorganization of chieftaincy in Cameroon, the administrative authority could only confirm a chief presented by the kingmakers of the concerned Fodom, but at the same time the administrative authority had the powers to or not to recognize a chief even if was legitimately chosen by the kingmakers. A chief could rule if only if he was recognized and installed legally by the administrative authority and his names sent to archives at MINATD. This in other words suggests that even if a chief was illegitimate and legal, he could be allowed to rule in the *Fodom*.

In Ghana the same situation is tenable. In this perspective, Donald Ray’s argued that there was constitutional evidence that “chiefs should not be considered to be ‘inferior agents’”; that, in Ghana, “an entity (i.e., the state) which is sovereign in most respects coexists with an entity (i.e., traditional authority) that seems to be sovereign in this respect”; and that “history and religion combine to provide the distinctive basis of legitimacy for chiefs” in Ghana. Donald Ray thus restates an earlier claim: “In Ghana the relation between the state and chiefs has been characterized by divided sovereignty and legitimacy”¹¹⁷.

Although the 1992 constitution establishes clearly that “A chief shall not take part in party politics” (art. 276), it does assign new and important tasks to the National and Regional Houses of Chiefs – in particular that of a re-evaluation and a transcoding (or systematizing and putting in writing) of traditional rule and of all socio-cultural practices classified as “tradition” under Customary Law (art. 272)¹¹⁸. In practice, this constitutional recognition of “the honor and dignity of chieftaincy” (art. 270 2b), which sounds more like an official acceptance of traditional authority,

¹¹⁶ D. I. Ray., “Chief-State Relations in Ghana – Divided Sovereignty and Legitimacy.”, pp.62-63.

¹¹⁷ Ray., “Chief-State Relations in Ghana – Divided Sovereignty and Legitimacy, p.64.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

did certainly derive, first and foremost, from the actual influence traditional rulers of Ghana still have over their people; 70 per cent of Ghana's population lives in rural areas and tends to recognize its traditional rulers as its legitimate moral and social leaders (not to talk about the political influence some partisan and corrupt chiefs could and do have during and even outside electoral periods)¹¹⁹.

The current policy of decentralization and local government in Cameroon is, in this setup, a major factor contributing for an enabling environment of co-operation which seems to prevail between locally elected representatives of the regional councils and the traditional rulers of the same regions.

VII. Optimizing the Integration of Chiefs in Modern Governance

Decentralization is one of the leading political reforms that developing countries have undertaken in the two decades since the end of the Cold War, and it has arguably been undertaken (at least in name) in more countries in Africa than anywhere else in the world. In the past twenty years, the majority of African central governments have initiated or deepened the transfer of power and resources to a range of subnational government bodies, including regions, states, provinces, districts, and municipalities.¹²⁰

At the same time, the factors driving decentralization have varied from region to region. In Latin America, the main push towards decentralization originated in the need to transform political systems from military dictatorships to democracies. In Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, decentralization has been part of the political and economic transformation process from a socialist system to a market economy. In Africa, decentralization was generally promoted from the outside and linked to the dual imperative of structural adjustment and democratization and good governance.

For the past three decades, many African countries have been engaged in the vast democratization process characterized among other features by decentralization. According to Alper Ozmen, decentralization can be defined as the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to subordinate or quasi-independent government

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰J.T. Dickovick., et Al, *Decentralization in Africa: The Paradox of State Strength*, USA, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014, p.30

organizations or the private sector.¹²¹ 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 within central government and local government relations. Several definitions have been offered for decentralization.

One of the most generally used definition of decentralization; is the transfer of responsibilities and authority from higher to lower levels of government.¹²² Decentralization in its current form in Cameroon is based on the Constitution embodied in Law N°. 96/06 of 18 January 1996. Law N°.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. Since its introduction in the modern state, its achievements are more or less satisfactory depending on various countries and the willingness of the effective implementation of the decentralization process. Just like Cosmas Cheka puts it, the pace of the process of decentralization in a given context unavoidably depends on the degree of favorableness of the legal environment and the dynamism of stakeholders especially of local authorities, the state, development cooperation partners and civil society.¹²³

A close observation in countries where decentralization has actually witnessed significant progress indicates that the chieftaincy institution has actually been made part of the execution of the decentralization process, contrary to Cameroon that completely kept the chieftaincy institution aside which historically has played a major role in the first forms of local governments in Cameroon. Given the historical role of chiefs in local government, it is of no doubt that if the chieftaincy institution is integrated into as an institution in the decentralization process, it could play a major role especially at this particular moment when Cameroon needs to speed the decentralization process to solve the socio-political challenges faced by the nation.

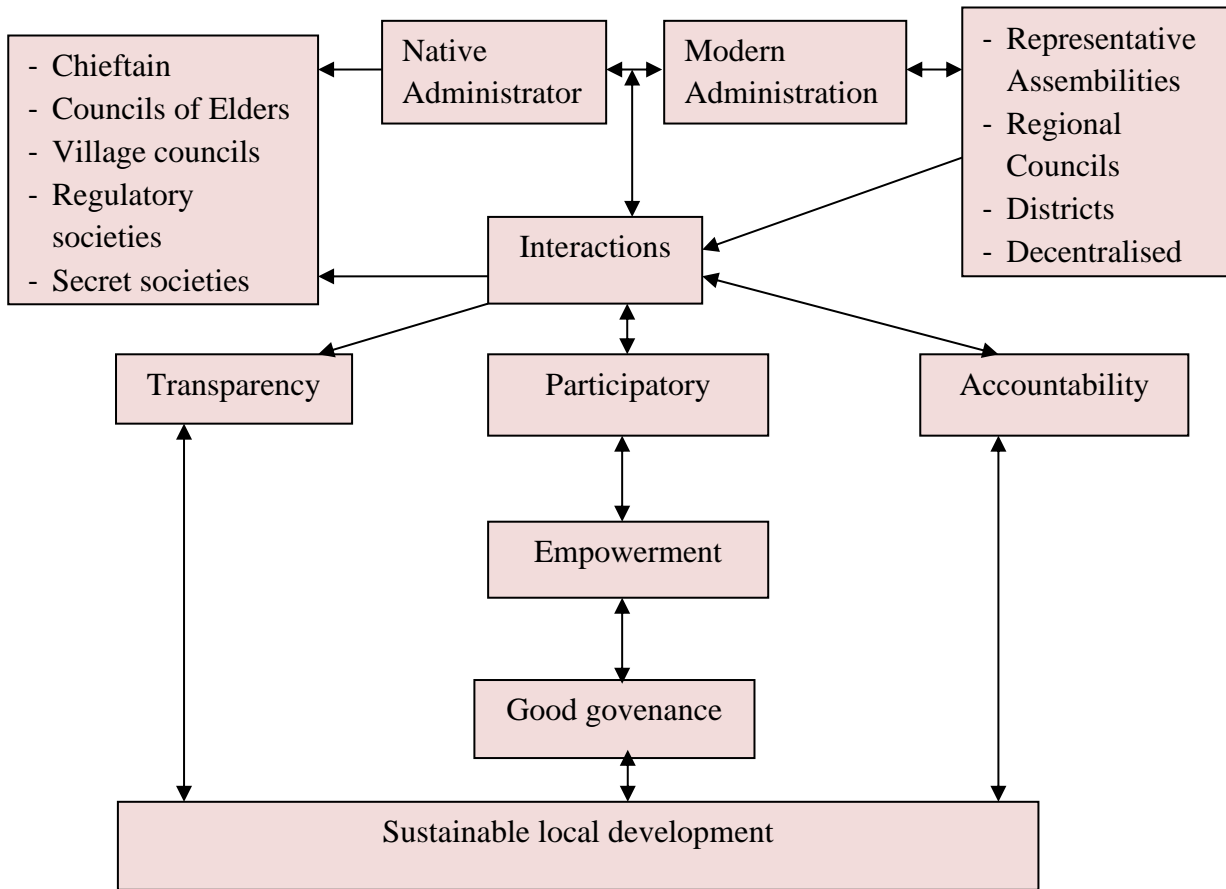
African traditional chieftaincies notably those of the *Bamenda* Grassfields and their leaders can play a role in the democratic and decentralization initiatives and programs aiming at increasing state's legitimacy. It is not to be understood as a defense of traditional chieftaincy as this institution in itself does not constitute a panacea for effective decentralization in Cameroon. As such, considering both the size of the country (472,710 km²) and the extent of the task, it is necessary

¹²¹A. Ozmen, "Notes to the Concept of Decentralization", *European Scientific Journal*, Vol.10, No.10, April 2014, p.14.

¹²²Kaze, "Decentralization as an Instrument of International, Cooperation, pp.89-92.

¹²³C. Cheka, "The State of the Process of Decentralization in Cameroon", *Africa Development*, Vol. XXXII, No. 2, 2007,p.7.

over and above the reforms at the center of the state, to think about mechanisms that can permit an effective and efficient contribution of all the stakeholders of the country in the measure of their potentialities. And this is only possible, in our humble opinion, if the chieftaincy institution which is revered and an a socio-cultural identification institution is fully integrated in the current decentralization process and above all to avoid a conflict of balance of power that might eventually emerge from local government headed by mayors and traditional governments head by chiefs at the local level as seen on the diagram below.

Figure 9: Interactive organigram of native and modern Administration

Source: Drawn by the author

Chiefs and elders in the decentralized political systems are leaders in the practice of those values and they form an integral albeit informal part of the governance structures of rural Africa. Chiefs and village heads under civil chieftaincy constitute a forum where local interests are debated and articulated. Thus, they can constitute a valuable resource in informing the state about the interests of local communities as well as in mobilizing rural populations for active engagement, not only in development activities and the distribution of public services, but also in the national political process.

Unlike government-appointed administrators, lower-level chiefs and village leaders live in conditions largely similar to those of their communities. They share common interests and think like their people. As a result, they are better equipped to represent the interests of their communities than government-appointed administrators, who are accountable only to the political *élite*. Partnership in development between local traditional leaders and government administrators is also likely to promote cooperative state-society relations that are sorely absent in Africa. However, even though incorporating these leaders has not been controversial, the state has invariably

underutilized the traditional leaders at the grassroots level and has done little to integrate them into the formal governance structures.

In Cameroon today, much of the controversy over traditional institutions lies in the debate over the incorporation of the upper echelons of Fons into the modern governance structures. Nevertheless, a growing number of African countries, including some of those that had previously attempted without success to strip chiefs of their power or to completely abolish traditional institutions, have realized the political currency that chiefs possess and have integrated chieftaincy as one of the fundamental institutions for development and not “vote-broking” in rural areas and exercise significant informal control over the State’s intervention in local affairs.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

A multitude of studies on the socio-political situation in most African states including Cameroon has revealed a degrading state of governance. In reality, one of the major plights of the Republic of Cameroon since independence was the question of governance. In less than seven decades of existence, the modern state today is challenged by serious socio-political and economic problems principally generated by poor governance. On the other hand, Traditional governance as an indigenous institution has stood the taste of time for more than a century. The western system of governance largely adopted in African states including Cameroon was strongly rooted in their history. In as much as Cameroon was colonized by the western powers, it would have been good for the system of governance to be adapted from pre-colonial governance systems to avoid the situation today.

It was quite unfortunate that, the system of governance adopted and implemented in Cameroon like in many African states did not take into consideration pre-existing socio-political system of management. This system was conceived based on the socio-cultural and traditional environment of various polities existent in Cameroon before the advent of colonial rule. The management of these polities was ensured by the chieftaincy institution. Like modern states today, chieftaincies institutions in the Bamenda Grassfields were well structured and efficiently well managed with the sole objective of ensuring social welfare to all.

The distribution of vital societal resources in pre-colonial traditional societies was organized through various structures of governance. With the inauguration of the colonial project in the continent, these leadership structures lost a considerable amount of the administrative, legislative, judicial and religious powers they wielded prior to the time. Even though many of the colonial powers tried to maintain these traditional governance structures, especially the Germans, French and British under their various colonial administrative policies in Cameroon, in the absence of any independent resource base to provide services to their communities, chiefs and their elders were left without much influence. Because of the intensity of the colonial exploitation, based largely on race, there was virtually a wholesale adoption of the socialist paradigm of development by the post-colonial elite upon the attainment of national independence in the 1960s.

Because of the reasoning of the new elite's that, traditional leadership was feudal in nature and did not include the mass of the people in governance, several of the new leaders sought to reduce the powers and influence of traditional leaders further, and in some instances even sought

to abolish the institution altogether. The failure of the socialist experiments by African states led to the adoption of market reforms and their concomitant democratization processes in the 1980s and 1990s under the so-called Washington Consensus. However, these reforms too did not yield the expected benefits as far as the improvement in living standards were concerned. This led to renewed interest in African indigenous knowledge systems in general and traditional institutions of governance in particular.

The later opportunities for democratic participation and good governance in many African States and, notably Cameroon, seemed unprecedented. Yet there were many failures. A significant part of this lies in the overlooked relationship between the contemporary state in Cameroon and traditional authorities and the opportunities these institutions provide for bringing development to the people. There remains a disconnection between State structures and civil society, and while the view is held that, the democratization process in Cameroon should draw from its cultural traditions, more needs to be done to analyze systematically the extent to which this can or does occur.

Chieftaincy is not only an integral part but also a vital element in the social, political and cultural establishment of the various communities that make up the nation of Cameroon. It is a dynamic institution that reflects and also responds to the evolving political and social transformations of society. The institution of chieftaincy and the institutions of the modern state are located along the line where the traditional world meets the modern-state administration. Therefore as Cameroon continues to develop its political institutions as it is the case with the recent putting in place of the regional councils to serve the demands of a democratic government , the position of chiefs will continue to attract the attention of policy makers.

Therefore, exploration into the origins and practices of traditional governance and how they coincide with modern day government is important for understanding Cameroon's political challenges. Cameroon, like other African countries is relatively new to the Western practice of democratic government. The West that began modern democracy has been applying the practice for centuries. However, Cameroon as a state has gone through dramatic shifts in governance from colonial to the Independence era.

The renewed interest in traditional governance is reflected in the increased rate with which African countries are adopting decentralization to ensure efficient and effective delivery of services, especially at the local community level. While following the renewed interest in traditional governance structures and decentralization, countries on the continent have moved to

recognize traditional leadership institutions through constitutional and legal frameworks. But their roles and powers with regard to service delivery at the local level are vaguely defined.

The increasing rate at which countries are adopting decentralization as a way of bringing services to people provides opportunities for formalizing and integrating traditional leaders into the state structures to enable them play a more prominent role in service delivery. Efforts to enhance the role of traditional leaders in public service delivery will require the adoption of a framework that will seek to address the strengths and weaknesses of traditional leadership to enable it to become an effective vehicle for service delivery.

To the extent that governance is about the equitable distribution of societal resources, African societies have been grappling with the problem of governance since time immemorial. Long before the inauguration of the colonial period, African societies had established a variety of political systems with corresponding political, economic, and social institutions which dealt with allocation of resources, law-making, and social and political control. The predominant principle of social relations in pre-colonial society was presumed to be that of family and kinship associated with communalism. Every member of an African society was believed to have his or her position defined in terms of relatives on his mother's or father's side. Land, a major means of production, was owned by groups such as the family or clan. Because of this principle of social organization, consensus, rather than conflict over the distribution of economic resources, was often assumed in the discourse about governance. However, from oral and other anecdotal accounts, we also know that over time some families, through wars of conquest, subjugated other family groups and widened their territorial bases and eventually became ruling aristocracies.

As a result of the generally exploitative relationship that characterized the colonial project where "racial justice" dominated the discourse on governance, it became a fad for the Post-colonial African state to adopt socialist principles of development in the 1960s and 1970s. However, in the 1980s, after the dismal failure of the socialist experiment, African states gradually reverted to the neo-liberal development paradigm with its wholesale embrace of the market reforms popularly known as the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). But, in spite of this embrace of the so-called Washington Consensus by Africa's ruling elite for more than two decades, African societies continue to be faced with various problems of governance, a situation which, without doubt, has led to the loss of a great deal of legitimacy by the post-colonial state.

Coupled with the failure of the structures inherited from the colonial state to govern in line with the socio-economic aspirations of Africa's peoples, and the proven resilience of traditional

institutions as a result of their effective institutionalization, there has been a renewed interest in indigenous knowledge and institutions. This resurgence of interest in traditional institutions has largely been manifested in the increasing popularity of decentralization which has occupied the center stage of policy experiments in several developing countries, including those in Asia and Africa in recent years. This is regarded as a way of diffusing social and political tensions and at the same time ensuring local cultural and political autonomy. However, some scholars have suggested that the fact that traditional governance is popular among mainly rural as opposed to the vast majority of urban residents who cling to modern governance structures has not helped in the resolution of this crisis of governance.

In the same light, the constant evolution in the world generally and African societies in particular requires that the traditional governance incarnated by the Chieftaincy institution that represents the African reality adapts to this evolution. The need to approach all governance and development projects in Africa through African traditional institutions, culture and traditions is of utmost importance.

If the post independent state has been inefficient (or partially failed), it is simply because the African customs and tradition as well as their *modus operandi* and *vivendi* have been sidelined. A political scientist like Sindjoun has clearly posited the fact that the modern administrative, political and socio-economic organization existent in majority of African States was transposed from European customs and traditions to Africa.

Clash between two civilizations cannot bring anything short of conflicts, under development and poverty. The situation is partly responsible for African predicament. Yet all is not lost, as Africa can still count on its traditional institutions incarnated by chieftaincy that has been able to resist all engulfing forces such as colonialism and the post-colonial state.

The resilience of the Traditional Authority in Modern governance system and its capacity to adapt to the evolving society is a great opportunity for Africa to reconcile with its history and lay fresh grounds for the emergence of new African states, though incorporating good practices from the Western culture or civilization. In fact, chiefs could, because of their legitimate nature and efficiency, become actors of international relations. This is because their roles in the resolution of major international questions like climate change, violent extremist (terrorism), and gender mainstreaming and conflict resolution. In a nutshell, chieftaincy is a mineral resource like uranium, which if carefully exploited could prone development, peace and social cohesion, but which, if

poorly used, could be a very dangerous destructive weapon for African civilization and the modern state.

APPENDIX

LIST OF APPENDICES

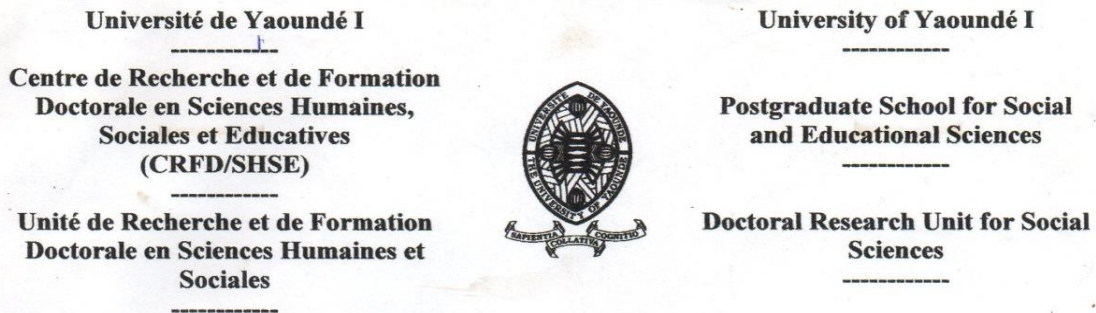
Appendix 1: Questions	323
Appendix 2: Research Attestation	325
Appendix 3: Authorisation to carry out research	326
Appendix 4: Authorisation to access the Archives and documentation of MINATD.....	327
Appendix 5: Answer on the life cycle of a chief in the North West Province by the <i>Fon</i> of Kai, <i>Fon</i> Moses Fonyonga Akam	328
Appendix 6: “How are traditional rulers enthroned in the Grassfields of Cameroon” Grassfields working Group looks at some example in the North-West Province.....	331
Appendix 7: Confidential message of the hierarchy seat of the clan head of metta and Munib .	339
Appendix 8: German Policy in the old Bamenda Division, Cameroon 1908 – 1912, Part II, Translation of material in the Buea Archives.....	349
Appendix 9 : Native Chiefs: Appointment, Dismissal, etc. General correspondence concerning	369
Appendix 10: Confidential Memorandum on Bikom Tax report N° C25/1931.....	371
Appendix 11: Information on Etwii Chieftaincy	384
Appendix 12: Southern Cameroons Gazette	392
Appendix 13: West Cameroons Gazette	397
Appendix 14: Law N° 77/245 of 15 th July 1977 organising traditional Chieftaincies in Cameroon	401
Appendix 15: Attendance list for Fons Momo (Meta Fons with the D.O of 03/01/2017).....	407
Appendix 16: Minutes of the Meta Fons with the D.O of Momo Division of 03/01/2017.....	408
Appendix 17: Harassment and Usurpation of my Inherited Traditional Title of Chief of Mbebili Village by the Paramount Fon of Bafut J.N. Abumbi II through His “Kwifor”	417
Appendix 18: Table of Traditional Chieftaincies of the North West Region (Fondoms).....	423
Appendix 19: Decree N° 2020/526 of 02 Sept 2020 fixing the number of Regional Counsellors per Division and Categorie.....	427
Appendix 20: A propose project on the Improvement of Elections activities in Cameroon.....	431

Appendix 1: Questions

1. What was the main institution of governance of the *Bamenda* Grassfields before the advent of Colonial rule?
2. Why and how was the Fon considered as an institution of indigenous governance in the Bamenda Grassfields?
3. What were the functions of the legislative and executive arms of chieftaincy Governance?
4. Why and how was the administrative set-up of the *Bamenda* Grassfields structuralized?
5. What were the socio-political and socio-economic functions of the Fon in the Bamenda Grassfields before the advent of colonial rule?
6. What were the objectives of the German expansion and conquest of the Bamenda Grassfields?
7. What methods were used by the Germans to conquer the hinterland of Cameroon?
8. Why and how did the Germans establish her colonial administration?
9. How did the Fons/Chiefs promote German activities in Cameroon?
10. Why and how did the German put in place the Institution of Paramountcy in the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon?
11. Why and how did the British adopt the policy of Indirect Rule system of Governance in the Bamenda Grassfields?
12. Who were the main actors of indirect rule system of Governance and how were they classified in the Bamenda Grassfields?
13. Why and how were traditional rulers involved in the British Colonial taxation system in the Bamenda Grassfields?
14. How was the judiciary managed by Fons/Chiefs within the British governance system?
15. Why and how did the Fon/Chiefs present their plight of Indigenous representatives in the 1950s?
16. What were some of the legacy of Colonial Governance on Traditional Governance at Independent?
17. What is the path taken towards a new chieftaincy policy in Cameroon?
18. What is the interchangeable role of Fons/Chiefs in Local Governance?
19. How has traditional Rulers benefited from the liberalization of politics in Cameroon?
20. What role have the Fons/Chiefs played in enhancing bad governance in Cameroon?
21. How did Colonial rule generate numerous conflicts of interest among indegegnous rulers?
22. What were the objectives of creating an Association of Fons/Chiefs in the 1950s?

23. How did Traditional Rulers become elective representative at the advent of Colonialism?
24. What were the new roles of *Fons*/Chiefs after being part of Colonial administration?
25. How was traditional Authority relegated to the background of Post-Independent Governance?
26. What is the state of governance in Cameroon since Independence?
27. What are some of the features of poor governance faced by Cameroons' Modern State?
28. What efforts have been by state actors towards the promotion of good governance?
29. How can the traditional governance incarnated by the Chieftaincy contribute to sustainable governance of our Nation?
30. How can the role of traditional Authorities be redefined towards other state institutions?

Appendix 2: Research Attestation



ATTESTATION DE RECHERCHE

Je soussigné, **Pr. Philippe Blaise ESSOMBA**, Chef de Département d'Histoire, certifie que **Mlle AKEH-LINDA-KENG**, Matricule **05L265**, étudiante au Département d'Histoire, spécialité : Histoire des relations internationales est inscrit en **Thèse de Doctorat Ph.D** à l'Université de Yaoundé I et poursuit actuellement un travail de recherche, sur le thème suivant :

« Traditional Institutional Governance in National Integration in Cameroon from 1950 to 2000 ».

Sous la co-direction du **Pr. VERKIJIKA FANSO** et du **Dr. MOUSSA II**.

Nous le recommandons aux responsables des Administrations, Centres de documentation, Archives et toutes institutions de recherches nationales ou internationales, en vue de lui faciliter la recherche.

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

Fait à Yaoundé, le **16 MAI 2016**.....

Le Chef de Département



Philippe Blaise

Appendix 3: Authorisation to carry out research

NORTH WEST REGION

MOMO DIVISION

MBENGWI SUB DIVISION

SUB PREFECTURE OFFICE

PRIVATE SECRETARIAT

Ref: NW. 06/02/137/04/PS/16



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
PEACE – WORK – FATHERLAND

MBENGWI, the 05 JAN 2017

THE DIVISIONAL OFFICER
MBENGWI SUB DIVISION
TO
WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

SUBJECT: AUTHORISATION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH

Following a research attestation from the head of the History Department of the University of Yaounde 1 Pr. Philippe Blaise ESSOMBA certifying that Miss. AKEH Linda KENG, Code 05L265, is a student in the History Department and is on a research programme to obtain a PhD in the above Department under the supervision of Pr. VERKIJIKA FANSO and Dr. MOUSSA II;

I have the honour to grant her an Authorisation to carry out her research in this Sub Division hitch free. Consequently I am requesting all the stakeholders to grant her access to all achieves, interviews and information she will be in need of for the success of her research. Considering the importance of her topic, “**TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN CAMEROON FROM 1950 TO 2000**” I will want to request that the Chiefs / Fons in particular should fully collaborate with her and be very frank in their interventions in order not to thwart the out come of the research result. She will be expected to present this authorisation anywhere she is requested to do so to enable her get what she wants for the purpose of her research.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, this authorisation is issued to serve the purpose for which it is intended.

Cc


- SDO MOMO
- FLO MBENGWI
- THE CONCERNED ✓
- CHRONO / FILE



THE DIVISIONAL OFFICER
MBENGWI SUB - DIVISION

Frankeng Charles Formin
ADMINISTRATEUR CIVIL PRINCIPAL

Appendix 4: Autorisation to access the Archives and documentation of MINATD

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN Paix - Travail – Patrie ----- MINISTERE DE L'ADMINISTRATION TERRITORIALE ET DE LA DECENTRALISATION ----- SECRETARIAT GENERAL ----- SERVICE DE LA DOCUMENTATION ET DES ARCHIVES		REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN Paix - Travail – Patrie ----- MINISTERE DE L'ADMINISTRATION TERRITORIALE ET DE LA DECENTRALISATION ----- SECRETARIAT GENERAL ----- SERVICE DE LA DOCUMENTATION ET DES ARCHIVES
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Lettre N° 00 000 49 1 /L/MINATD/SG/SDA

**LE MINISTRE DE L'ADMINISTRATION TERRITORIALE
ET DE LA DECENTRALISATION**

- YAOUNDE-

A

MADAM AKEH-LINDA KENG

Tel: 678 12 99 58

- YAOUNDE -

Ref : V/L du 12 janvier 2018

Objet : Autorisation d'accès à la documentation

Et aux archives du MINATD

Monsieur,

Comme suite à votre requête dont l'objet est porté en marge,
J'ai l'honneur de vous inviter à vous rapprocher du service de la documentation et des archives de mon département ministériel, pour les modalités d'accès aux informations sollicitées./.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de ma considération distinguée./.

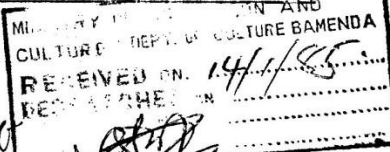
23 JAN 2018

Pour le Ministre de l'Administration
Territoriale et de la Décentralisation
et par Délégation
Le Secrétaire Général
Essomba Pierre
Administrateur Civil Principal



Appendix 5: Answer on the life cycle of a chief in the North West Province by the *Fon* of Kai, *Fon* Moses Fonyonga Akam

ANSWER ON THE LIFE CYCLE OF A CHIEF IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE
BY THE FON OF KAI, FON MOSES FONYONGA AKAM:



I THE CHIEF IS SICK:

1. No
2. It is not made public because the ^{chief} is for the people by the people. So that the individual dies but the chiefdom remains or the throne and chief's power is inherited at once.
3. No
4. There is fever in the palace.
5. Yes
6. No
7. No
8. (a) Yes, (b) No, (c) No, (d) Yes only when it concerns a special disease which cannot be treated by a medical doctor, (e) Yes (f) No
9. Yes
10. When the Chief is sick he requires normal nursing care and treatment and this can be administered by any man or woman.
11. No
12. In as much as it is not declared in public that the chief is dead there is no public crying or mourning allow for his death. Because it is also said that the chief is missing and hidden not dead and buried.

II A CHOICE OF A CHIEF

1. The Chief nominates his successor in agreement with the King-Makers while alive.
2. Whilst alive the chief keep the king-makers constantly well informed in confidence of his would-be successor in case of any eventuality.
3. The new chief must be the direct decendant or son of the chief
4. ~~The new chief must be a direct decendant of the late chief.~~
5. Yes
6. In view of the fact that the chief himself has the closer opportunity of watching always the moral and general behaviour of his children especially the male children, he the chief is in a better position to know whom of his sons can best handle or rule his people after his death.
7. By watching and testing ~~at times~~ ^{the} moral and general conduct of his sons as said in item 6 above.
8. "Yes" if after his death, his would-be successor also dies and "No" in case his chosen success is alive.
9. Chieftaincy is heriditry and nobody has the jurisdiction or power to change a successor proposed by the late chief and accepted ~~by~~ by the king-makers. Customarily, the chief ~~while~~ makes in order of merit three proposals of his successors. In case of any eventuality let say the first choice disappears, the second takes over and so on.

III THE CHIEF IS DEAD

1. The first to be informed about the death of a chief are the "Kwefons" or "Ngumba" in other words all the King-makers.
 - (b) Then the Kwefons informs the administrative hierarchy depending on the grade of the chief concerned. eg. grade one chief, two, and three respectively.
 - (c) The other chiefs within the administrative jurisdiction are also informed by the Kwefon.
2. The king-makers are informed in particular for the preparation of the burial of the chief.

IV. THE CHIEF'S BURIAL

1. Not every person can be present during the burial of a chief. Only the king-makers or "Kwefons" including other chiefs quarters heads and the head of the administrative unit concerned. And public security unit heads.
2. No
3. The chief is missing and hidden. Not dead and buried.
4. It is called that way because the chiefdom is for the people by people and the throne is ever presence and the chief's power that belong to all remains in-tact.
5. The grave of the chief is dug in the house.
6. That the late chief is hidden and not buried.
7. The late chief is not buried in the same way with ordinary people. His grave is dug in the same way but with a slide difference in that when the grave is 6ft deep another corner is stepped inwards to the right so that there should be no direct pressure when refilling the grave by burials. This also depends on the particular tradition of the people concern. Some dead chiefs are kept sitting in the grave while others are buried lying sideways.
8. The difference is that the chief's grave is in the house in most cases with the exception that for certain reasons, the late chief himself instructed otherwise *then he could be buried*
9. *one as described.*
10. Traditional robes are put on the neck of some and in the grave for the others depending on sometimes the will of the concerned traditional requirements, of the deceased.
11. Since the chief's grave is in the house, *house* the is reserved as an important place for traditional remembrance and blessings given to future deserving citizens in the name of the late chiefs.
12. In same way with any other persons but the difference ^{is} described in item 7 above.
13. Between the hours of 4-5 p.m.
14. Inside a house in most cases and outside the house on the particular advice of the deceased.
15. Inside a house as inherited tradition in view of the necessity of protecting the late chief even after death. The same for those buried outside on the concerned's instruction as an inherited native custom.

IV NEW CHIEF MEANS A NEW QUEEN:

1. A Queen or Queens are (is) enthroned when a new chief is being enthroned.
2. The Queen or Queens is (are) as a wife (wives) of the new chief are (is) enthroned after the new chief had received enthronement on the same day. She or they has or have throne to sit on, but the traditional oil - cam-wood is used in robbing the new chief afterwards the remainder is used in robbing his queens.
3. Yes there can be many Queens under one chief.
4. Yes
5. Immediately the chief dies, the new chief marries his own wives with whom he will be enthroned. Some new chiefs inherit the throne whilst already with their own wives or wife married ~~when he had not be killed the throne on during his father's~~

- 3 -

7. A chief's wife or Queen is chosen by the chief himself.
8. Not very necessary that a Queen must be only from another chief's family. It can only fall within another Chiefdom by coincidence.

VI ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DEATH OF A CHIEF

1. The "Kwefons" - king-makers inform people that the chief is dead or missing or is having final rest.
2. The Quarters heads or the members of Kwefon or Ngumba, or king-makers inform quietly at their various quarters the people that no going out from this period to this period because the chief is missing. All people then gather to stay within that prescribed period mourning in silence the chief.
3. The kwefons.
4. As soon as the chief is dead but during the particular ^{time} that they can reach everybody the same day.
5. All gather in the palace for silence mourning for at ^{least} 7 days with no going to the farm or any other work in the village.
6. Women do not cry then.

VII ENTHRONEMENT OF A CHIEF

1. The Senior Quarters Heads, Subchief(s) who form the "Kwefon" enthrone the chief. The kwefon members are not all the relatives of the chief. But at least one of the key members must be of necessity come within the chief's eldest children. or in other words such an elderly Prince is called The Princes/Princesses representative. *Princes Quarter Head.*
2. The king-makers Head arrest the new chief and present him to the crowd before the hierarchical administrative unit head concerned and the crowd shouts in traditional language and the chief is stoned by the public. There and then he runs to the palace and officiate his first meeting with the king-makers whom after that adore him as a chief.
3. Yes
4. You are today enthroned a chief in charge of people and they shall be loyal to you in all aspect and you shall be kind, forgiving and prompt to solving problems without any favour.... These words pronounced by the leader of the king-makers, and the rest of king-makers lay their hands on the chief. The chief drinks water and wine in the traditional cup as an oath to be honest and diligent in his rule without favour or hatred and may God almighty help him, would be chief's own response.
5. The king-makers in the presence of the public and the head of the administrative unit and ~~pbu~~ public security respectively.
6. The youngmen to be a chief remove their clothes before the king-makers and the prince's presence have right of such clothes and they can take them away.
7. Traditional robes of his late father
8. Yes, but there is secret enthronement i.e. the part of undressing redressing the new chief is done secretly by king-makers only before presentation to the public as described above.
9. Yes
10. In real cases can anybody refuse to be a chief. But if it does happened that one leaves the village and settles outside while the next proposed successor is enthroned as the chief.

**Appendix 6: "How are traditional rulers enthroned in the Grassfields of Cameroon"
Grassfields working Group looks at some example in the North-West Province**

A three day seminar organised by the Grassfield Working Group, ended in Bamenda December 19, 1985 with a call by the Director of the Institute of Human sciences on members of the group to intensify research in human sciences.

Professor Wilfred NDONKO went on to explain that over the past five years the Institute of Human Sciences has intensified its efforts in carrying out research programmes throughout the national territory, and that the Grassfields have been given particular attention not only in the creation of a station in the North-West Province but also in the increase of both human and financial resources.

He revealed that for the year 1985/86, there are 123 research operations in the I.H.S. out of which there are more than 30 situated within the Grassfields. He said these operations cost 50.000.000 francs CFA out of a total grant of 255.580.000 francs CFA for the whole country - thus representing more than 25% of the total research budget.

The I.H.S. Director further revealed that there are over 30 full time researchers of the Institute involved in Grassfield research.

"We can proudly say the Grassfields (North-West and West Provinces) constitute an area of priority research that will continue to support and encouragement from the Institute and encourage foreign scholars to get involved in this endeavour, he affirmed.

Professor Wilfred NDONKO seized the opportunity to thank the organisers of the group, and their constant efforts to contribute to scientific research in Cameroon in general and to Grassfield studies in general.

Finally he said the theme of the conference, "Palace RITUALS" or "Installation Rites" went a long way to cover an area which will help I.H.S. to exclude it from its future research operations.

During the following three days researchers presented papers on installation rites in the Moghamo Chiefdoms, the Fondoms of Kom, Ndu, Bafut and NBO.

The case of Moghamo

In his paper Mr. SOH BEJENG, a researcher at the Bamenda Station of I.H.S., after giving a brief geographical location of Moghamo and the history of the Chiefdom. He said there are twenty chiefdoms which are autonomous political entities non allegiance to the other and with the Fon is the supreme political leader.

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He explained that he is the apex of the political structure and his social and political status surpasses that of any individual within the society. Above him is only the duty and his powers are suppose to be sacred and divine. He rules with a council called BUKUM. There are also other important personalities that high political powers such as KWETIS under whom institutions such as MEMANG, NOEBSAI, NTSHIBI, TAKUM, KWIFON and NGGIRI.

The researcher went on that the selection of the Prince who succeeds the Fon is the absolute prerogative of the reigning Fon. He does not have to consult any person what soever. When he realises that age is weighing on him, he proceeds to a meticulous examination of the conduct of all the princes who are all eligible in principle to the throne.

However, he went on, only princes "born on the leopard skin" i.e. after the reigning acceded to the throne are qualified to be selected. Qualities they should possess include a sound moral background, generosity, loyalty to institutions of the chiefdom and a recent sound educational background.

Mr. Soh Bejeng continued that after the choice, the Fon informs either one or two of his brothers and a number of quarterheads who solemnly promise that they would keep it secret. This is to avoid conflict and ensure that the heir apparent is not eliminated.

As soon as he falls sick and there visible signs that he will die, he secluded by the BUKUM until he dies and his death is announced and buried in a special grave. The grave is six feet deep but a special compartment is dug vertically in which they put one of the thrones (chairs) on which he is sitting while alive. After certain magical rituals he seated on it. A number of articles are also put inside the grave such as one of his pipes if he was a smoker, a calabash filled with wine, a cup and a living dog instead of a slave as in the olden days.

The continued that no sooner does the Fon die or "disappears", or "goes on a journey" than the Kingsmakers go for the new Fon who is then hidden in his uncles compound, in a MUKUMA's compound or taken to a neighbouring friendly Chiefdom for his own safety.

The use of expressions such as, "disappear or go on a journey" instead die is that the Fon as an institution cannot die so long as the society continues to exist.

A few days later the new Fon is brought, some fresh leaves symbolising peace are wrapped round his neck. The first King maker puts him on the throne and

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he makes a speech in which he implores his late father to give him wisdom so that he can rule his people well. He is then introduced to the people in front of the palace. In chiefdoms small stones or fruits are thrown on him.

After introduction to the villagers, mourning of the late Fon ceases and gives way to jubilation for about one month. A date is fixed for the death celebration of the late Fon. This involves shooting of guns, dancing etc. Villages that maintain friendly relations are informed and they in turn come one after another and participate in the ceremonies.

According to Mr. SOH BEJENG Puis this is the transfer of power is done in the MOGHAMO Political System.

Becoming King In Kom

In his own paper titled "Becoming King In Kom" another researcher Mr. Paul NCHOJI NKWI explained that all rulers of Kom have been selected from the royal Ekwu Clan that founded Kom dynasty by mid 18th century. However unlike other Tikar groups of the Western Grassfields, where succession is patrilineal, Kom has a matrilineal system which permits only one's sister son to succeed him.

The succession rule stipulates that when the "King" (Fon) dies the most senior person usually the oldest brother succeeds him, and if there is none, the oldest from amongst the sisters' son becomes King. Mr. NKWI, however, pointed out that at any given time there are always a number of known persons who can become the Fon of Kom.

He said presently there are more than seven in the line of succession, some of them occupying important village headships preparing themselves for the highest political office in the Kingdom.

Mr. Paul NCHOJI NKWI, a renown researcher on the Kom tradition said the heir apparent was never informed when the Fon was gravely sick, may be to keep him at a distance and clear his name from any fraudulent practices leading up to the "disappearance" of the King.

As soon as the Fon died, a palace retainer was sent to BO'FULI to report the death. BO'FULI then travels to Laikom and perform certain rituals that confirmed him as next King.

The papers says the corpse of a deceased Fon is ritually prepared and made to lie in-state in KOINU, a palace chamber facing the court of audiences (wae-fujang) where all princes and the children of the palace paid their

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last respects to the deceased Fon. It continues the heir apparent arrives, he untires the ritual ceremonial beads around the deceased's neck. He then dressed up as the Chief mourner in a white loin cloth around his waist and a white cap on his head.

The corpse of the late Fon is taken to the burial shrine, efum, and royals and senior notables pay their last tribute. He is then buried after which celebrations begin with all the palace associations displaying masquerades. From the day of the burial the would-be-king played a minimal role in the administering of the tribe. Instead the princes and princesses select one princess who is installed as Fon to act during three days of mourning. The would-be-Fon is entirely controlled by a secret society the "KWIFOYN".

On the day of the installation, everyone (Kwifoyn members, notables and three kingmakers) all assemble in front of the NTUL lodge which is said to be the first hut built by the royal immigrants on their arrival at Laikom, and where the first ancestresses of the clan are said to have been buried.

Prior to the choice of the new Fon, a place is cleared up on a hill near a stream east of the capital. Sacrifices will then be offered there the morning of the installation in the presence of the new Fon.

On that morning the priest who presides over the ceremony says a prayer in which he emphasizes the rule of justice, the protection of fertility, and prosperity of the nation after which the party returns to the palace through different paths and not the sacrificial one the python tract that brought the founding ancestors to Kom.

Back to the grave shrine the Fon-to-be is received by the queen mother and certain rituals are performed to make a last separation from her. Everyone then assembles including the new Fon but soon two-kingmakers rise and begin searching for him. They get hold of him and he is slapped and buffeted for the last time by the King-makers. He is immediately seated on a ritual stone after which he is taken to the grave of his immediate predecessor and bathed. This ritual is meant to clean him of his past faults which should then be buried with the dead king.

The Fon then is secluded for eight days during which, Kingmakers, hereditary priests and other nobles tell him how to rule and the wishes of his late predecessor. He is also introduced to certain shrines the ACHAT Spring. He then comes out and princes pledge their filial respects to their new father and he accedes to his throne.

The Installation Of The Fon Of Ndu
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In a paper read during the seminar, Fon NFORM NFOR I) of Ndu described the Fon of Ndu is installed.

He says succession to the throne of Ndu is usually from father to son and rarely from brother to brother. The matter is settled in a secret conclave summoned by the reigning Fon when he feels that the end is near. Having observed his children, he proposes the one whom he thinks fit to succeed. If notables object his nominee, they are fit to propose others but they hadly object because they think the Fon knows his children better. A debate might ensue but finally choose one and take an oath never to reveal the secret even to the heir himself.

The death of the Fon is kept secret and after burial his successor is enthroned secretly. He remains in seclusion for three weeks before being introduced publicly to the people. How he receives visitors.

It is then that the death celebration starts with the population assembling in palace firing guns and dancing with marks and jujus. However, as he says during his installation, it was only afterwards that he was shown to the people.

The Example Of Bafut

In his paper, Dr. Alatum Tabuwe of Yaounde University talked on the choice of a candidate for the throne, burial of a late Fon and the installation of a new one.

He said unlike other tribes in the Tikar Group, succession in Bafut is more similar to that of the Ngemba in the Widikum tribe. Like in Ngemba it is one of the princes born of the late Fon who succeeds and added that up-till now there has been no occasion in Bafut a Fon hadn't a son.

Another difference between the political set-up in Bafut and either the Widikum, Ngemba and other Tikar Groups is that there is a Paramount Chief (Fon) under whom are sub-chiefs who administer groups of quarters. They are recognised by government as second class chiefs.

During this reign the Fon observes his sons very carefully and studies their characters. When he becomes elderly and thinks he may soon die, he convenes a few members of the Kwifon and confides his choice to them. Of course unlike in Ndu or elsewhere nobody has the right to object. Thereafter they take an oath promising not to release the secret until the Fon dies. In Bafut also the Fon does not die, "he goes on a journey" or "is missing".

When it does happen, news of his death is not announced immediately. However many people know he is gone because some activities such as farming

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do not take place for about two or three days during which time he is being prepared for burial. His sub-chiefs and secret societies such as Kwifon are convened.

In the meantime Kingmakers amongst whom are special installation, priest do everything to get the heir who in the past was always around the palace. However, he said nowadays most princes study and work as civil servants far from Bafut so that as was the case with the present Fon, he had to be brought from afar. He is then hidden somewhere especially in his maternal relations compound and the death of the Fon is announced by gun firing and a period of mourning declared.

Meantime also the burial of the late Fon goes on. Unlike in the other papers, Dr. Aletum said it is difficult to describe what rituals are performed before he is buried alongside his predecessors because the ceremony is done in secret by priests of certain lodges who are even forbidden to reveal the secret.

A few days later, the Kingmakers enthrone the new Fon also secretly in the presence of all nobles such as Tabukwifon, Alangche, Ndifor, Moma etc., give him all his regalia including a staff, a chair, a drinking cup (preferably that of the late Fon) the tiger skin and elephant tusk. The villagers are then informed on when he would appear in the public and everybody assembles at the palace green. Most people come along with small stones. The Kingmakers then bring him out of the palace and conduct him round. Everybody throws the stones at him and they continue throwing until he is rushed into the palace. Throwing of stones on him, Dr. Aletum explained is to some vote for him because there are others who show their discontent by simply not throwing. He said these are visible signs of democracy in Bafut right from the olden days.

Mourning of the late Fon continues for weeks but at this juncture, the new Fon is in firm control of the Fandom and with the advice of his immediate collaborators can take major decisions, the first of which is choosing the date of his predecessors' death celebration. He then goes into a period of seclusion during which he is taught his main functions, introduced or initiated into certain lodges and normally no matter his age, when he comes out he talks maturely. It is then that a day is fixed on which he addresses his people for the first time as their new Fon.

Dr. Aletum ended up by stressing the role of certain personalities in the palace amongst which is the Queen mother who wields considerable power over the rest of the palace women. If she has special residence, servants and is sometimes alleged to influence the Fon's. That also is the way it is

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done in Bafut.

The final paper was presented by Dr. CHEM LAGLEE and Dr. FANSO who both lecture in the University of Yaounde.

They said succession in Nso can be from father to son or brother to brother depending on the circumstances but all candidates to the throne must have born when the preceeding Fon was on the throne and must posses a number of qualities.

They should be mature in age, be responsible and proven to be "the father of the Nso Nation". Their fecondity must be proven, which means that they must be married with many children. Their mothers must be NSO - (pure).

This means that the reigning Fon has no say in the choice of his successor and as soon as he dies a conclave immediately convenes and select the new Fon who is taken to Suh Fai Ndzendzev's compound where installation takes place immediately to avoid conflicts amongst him and other candidates. immediately to avoid conflicts amongst him and other candidates.

The installation regalia include the throne, a long neck royal calabash, palm wine, a royal cap, calwood, a walking stick and bracelets. Three persons perform the ritual. Meanwhile during the interregnum, a society called TAWONG acts in the place of the Fon and sometimes it is the new Fon's mother, the would-be-Queen mother who performs. After the ceremony, he is brought to the palace and introduced to the people.

The two researchers rounded up their expose by stressing on the importance and meaning of titles in the NSO Kingdom. TAWONG means Father of the Nation, YEWONG means Mother of the Country, SUH means Greater Lord. MIBRON is a society made up of distant descendants of Fons.

What Is The Grassfield Working Group ?

The G.W.G. is an acéphalous non-institutionalised voluntary association membership of which is opened to researchers doing research in the Grassfields. It aims at promoting communication, collaboration, exchange of ideas and information between scholars doing research in the above mentioned area so as to break their isolation and provide them with the intellectual support necessary for work.

It also aims, by doing so, at helping each member to test ideas and hypothesis. It does not take responsibility for the publication of material produced by its members. They do research in the fields of anthropology, sociology, and history.

It

students only. It is not open to undergraduates. It is open to graduates

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actually conducted first hand research for a long time. Membership is informal and by personal with members of the group.

The organisers of conferences are not expected to find financial support, not to cater for travelling, housing and other expenses of people attending the meeting. However, they should propose a theme for the meeting, provide a meeting room and enough leadership for the meeting to proceed smoothly.

The first conference of the group took place in CUISLES, FRANCE in 1978 and the various papers presented were published in PAIDEUMA, No.25, 1979 Frankfurt. The second was held in Oxford in 1983 and PAIDEUMA of the Frobenius Institute was again happy to publish the results in its issue No. 31, 1985. The Bamenda Conference was the third and before it ended members agreed that the fourth shall take place in March 1986 in Holland.

The researchers were drawn from North-America, Africa and Europe.

Story By: Contantine Fon.

Appendix 7: Confidential message of the hierarchy seat of the clan head of metta and Munib

**CONFIDENTIAL MESSAGE
OF THE HIERARCHY SEAT OF THE
CLAN HEAD OF METTA AND MUNIB**

**ZANG TABI VILLAGE
MBENGWI SUB DIVISION
MOMO DIVISION
NORTH WEST PROVINCE
BAMENDA**

**Compiled and written by TITA TECHORO FRITZ BAH with
the knowledge of Fon J.A. Teghencha Tebi.**

Copies:

Fon J.A. Teghencha Tebi (Clan Head of Metta)

Tita Techoro (Head of Mogwe)

The Senior Divisional Officer, Mbengwi - Momo Division

**ZANG TEGHENCHA TEBI PALACE
MBENGWI SUB DIVISION
MOMO DIVISION
NORTH WEST PROVINCE
BAMENDA
15TH DECEMBER 1945**

Ref. N°. ZTTP/5/09/7

HIERARCHY SEAT OF THE CLAN HEAD OF METTA

Fon Teghencha Tebi Traditional Administration of Zang Teghencha Tebi's seat. The Fon installs only Tita Techoro on Tita Techoro's Chair in Zang Tebi's village. The families of the member of Kwefon installs their next of kins and take to the Fon to bless in a traditionally well arranged manner.

When Tita Techoro dies, the family will write the announcement in the name of Fon Teghencha Tebi to announce.

When there is fever in the Palace of Fon Teghencha Tebi, Tita Techoro will arrange the forerunners, (Meugwe) to take charge of the Palace and ensure that, there is enough traditional security both with the administration, when need be.

In Metta clan, Fon Teghencha Tebi installs all Fons of Mundek family. Fon Teghencha Tebi sees that, chiefs in other Fondoms are installed in accordance with the tradition or he delicate powers to perform the action.



Fon J.A. Teghencha Tebi

Fon J.A. Teghencha Tebi 15-12-1945.

**HIS MAJESTY FON
Teghencha J.A. Teghencha Tebi
MOUNT CLAN HEAD OF METTA**

FON'S PALACE – ZANG TEBI
 MBENGWI
 MOMO DIVISION
 NORTH WEST PROVINCE
 2ND OCTOBER 1989

The Senior Divisionald Officer
 MBENGWI
 MOMO DIVISION.

Subject: TRADITIONAL INSTALLATION OF FON TEBI CLAN HEAD
OF METTA

I have the honour to declare to the Administration that, should in case death takes me in all circumstances. The person to install my son next of kin, who is named secretly is TECHORO ON TECHORO'S throne.

Mr. Techoro is of the Royal extended family unit. I have to make this clear that, I Fon Jacob Agwo Tebi was installed by late Johny Koh Techoro on 15th December, 1945.

This calls for your assistance when need be.

FON JACOB AGWO TEBI

c.c

- The Divisional Officer,
Mbengwi – Momo Division.
- The Company Commander Gendarmerie
Mbengwi – Momo Division
- The Commissioner of Public Security
Mbengwi – Momo Division
- The Commissioner of Special Branch
Mbengwi – Momo Division
- The Brigade Commander Gendarmerie National
Mbengwi – Momo Division

For information.

Fon J. Agwo Tebi
2-10-1989



HIS MAJESTY FON
Eghehcha J. A. Tebi
 PARAMOUNT CLAN HEAD OF METTA.

MUNIB-ZANG TABI,
MBENGWI – Momo Division,
15/05/1995.

Subject/- TRADITIONAL INSTALLATION –
FOR EDUCATION

I Techoro Fritz Bah was installed on late Johnny Koh Techoro's throne on 06th March, 1967 by His Royal Highness Fon Jacob Agwo Tabi. The Fon was accompanied by Papa Joseph Mukom. Johnny Koh Techoro died on 13th February, 1951, (Native day Tang) when I was in school in standard Five now called class 6.

Johnny Koh Techoro crowned Fon Jacob Agwo Tabi on 15th December, 1945, the year I began primary school in Gwofon Native Authority, Infant one.

The death celebration of Johnny Koh was opened on 7th February, 1967 and ended on 3rd March, 1967. The death celebration was delayed because; I was young to organize it.

The big daughters in Munib compound rubbed the Traditional cup with camp wood and gave me. The daughters prepared a type of food unknown and gave me, I ate. One cow was slaughtered for the occasion, head and neck of the cow was given to the daughters as their right. They cooked it and a jug of wine was given.

On the 6th of March, 1967, Fon Tabi blessed the Traditional cup and drank in it and gave me. This was given after a long fatherly good talk and advice to the entire family. This was the first installation Fon J. A. Tabi did in Zang village since he was crowned on 15th December, 1945.



TECHORO FRITZ BAH.

C.C:-
 Fon J.A. Tabi
 Zang – Tabi

For information

HIS MAJESTY

Highness J. A. Tabi
 CLAN HEAD OF M.L.



BIOGRAPHY OF TITA TECHORO FRITZ BAH

Written and compiled by TITA TECHORO FRITZ BAH on the 12th of March 1998.

Tita Techoro Fritz Bah was born on 12th March 1940 in Zang Tabi, Momo Division and died on 19th February 2008, to Pa Tita Techoro Johnny Koh who died in 1951 at Munib Zang-Tabi, and to Mama Mundih Akay; princessd of Fon Akam of Kai village; both of late.

Family status:

- Married to Deborah Amuzang on the 6th July 1958; daughter of Mama Sofia Nung and Jonas Teboh of Zang Tabi, both of late.
- Has sons and daughters and grand children.
- On the 6th March 1967, was installed on to late Tita Johnny Koh's throne by His Royal Highness Fon Jacob Agwo Teghencha Tabi, clan head of Metta.

Religious status

- Presbyterian Religion Christian.
- 6th October 1952, was baptized in the Basel Mission Church Kai by Rev. Mosi, Pa Thomas Teboh, as godfather and Mama Salome Angwi who died on 20th November 1998, as godmother.
- 19th October 1997, was dedicated as Christian Men Fellowship member in Presbyterian Church Acha-Tugi by Rev. S. Lafen.

Education

- 1945 – 46: Entered Infants I and II at N.A. School Gwofon.
- 1947 – 50: Standard I-IV at N.A. school Gwofon.
- 1951: Standard V at N.A. School Nyenjei.
- 1952: N.A school Bambili where he completed Standard VI and obtained the F.S.L.C.
- 1956-57: Entered Veterinary school Jakiri and obtained Veterinary Assistant Certificate.

- 1971-72: Entered the Pan African Institute for Development College Buead and obtained a Diploma in Rural Development Specialised in Agricultural and Economic Development.

Work Career / Services

- 1957-58 worked in Bamenda Veterinary Centre.
- 1959-61 Worked in Batibo Sub Division
- 1962-63 Transferred to work in Njikwa
- 1963-65 Transferred from Njikwa to work in Wum and Fundong.
- 1965 (Dec) Transferred from Wum to work in Acha-Tugi as Veterinary Chief of Centre, Gazetted in Buea No. 54. Dec. 1965.
- 1968-69 Worked in Nwa Donga Mantung Division.
- 1970-71 Worked in Tubah/ Bafut.
- 1976 Promoted as Veterinary Technical Officer, Ministerial Decision No. 000026 of 1976, Yaounde.
- 20th May 1988: Was awarded Cameroon Order of Merit in Nkambe, Donga Mantung Division.
Traditional Crowner of the Fon and Kwefor Organiser

Bible Quotation: Psalm 73:25 & 26

Life is transformation and not destruction. What else do I have in Heaven but you? Since my mind and body may grow weak but God is my strength, He is all I ever need.

11/11/99

BIBLIOGRAPHY FON JACOB AGWO TEGHENCHA TEBI.

Fon Jacob Agwo Teghencha Tebi born in Zang Tabi village in Mbengwi Sub Division in Momo Division in 1920.

Education: Attended vernacular school in Zang Tabi from 1927 to 1929. Began primary school in Bamenda 1929 to 1932 (G.S) and Bali Mission School from 1933 to 1934.

Entered Theological College Nyasoso from 1935 to 1936 trained as an Evangelist.

Work Career: Worked in the veterinary department Bamendad 1937 – 38. Began preaching the Gospel in the Basel Mission church Njah Etu in 1939 to 1945.

Crowning: Fon Isaac Tacho Teghencha Tebi crowned in 1932 and ruled from 1932 to 1945 and died. Fon Jacob Agwo Teghencha Tebi took over the Fondomship.

Fon Jacob Agwo Teghencha Tebi was crowned on the 15th December, 1945 by Tita Johnny Koh Techoro in the secret stream Kyakeh.

Religion: Presbyterian, Baptised on 24th Nov. 1935 in the then Basel Mission church Zang Tabi.

Development: Constructed the feeder road from Kai to Zang Tabi village linked up to Ngwokwong and Acha Tugi villages.

Encouraged the Basel Mission to open mission school in Zang Tabi village in 1940, now Government school.

Created the new quarter in Kwojoh Zang Tabi on 12th December, 1990.

Encouraged the modification of the Traditional Head Quarter of Metta clan to Zang Mbeng to get good roads structure for the clan touristic site.

MOGWE

Installation of Head of the Forerunner (Mogwe) and Assistant, by His Royal Highness Fon Jacob Agwo Teghencha Tebi, clan Head of Metta in Zang Tebi Palace, Mbengwi Sub Division in Momo Division on the 13/09/2006.

Installed are Messrs Godlove Munjing, and Isaac Andeh replaced late Stephen Agwe who died on 02/06/2004.

Role: Your duty is to guide the village in and out always as traditional soldiers.

All your orders come from me and Tita Techoro when it falls due.

Mogwes meetings are secret and office private.

Appointment: The Head of Mogwes are strictly appointed by me following seniority and not by hereditary.

Court: All cases are judged by me and not by the Traditional council.

Law: Any person who disturbs Mogwe – Forerunner in Uniform on duty, will pay a fine of one cock, two jugs of wine and five thousand francs.

Work in unity and report to me all matters leading to disturb the peace of the village.

Special attire shall be designed for you.

God's work: Whenever there is fever in the palace, Tita Techoro will instruct you to take charge of the palace.

When Tita Techoro dies, the Mogwe will be in Munib on duty on the day of burial and the last day of the celebration and feast.

Conclusion: Work in love, maintain peace and participate in all development projects.

Secretary

Tita Techoro Fritz Bah

H.R.H Fon J.A. Teghencha Tebi
Clan Head Metta.

Copies:

Tita Techoro
Head of Mogwe



Fon J.A. Teghencha Tebi

11-11-1999.
HIS MAJESTY FON
Teghencha J.A. Tebi
PARAMOUNT CLAN HEAD OF METTA

WILL CONFIDENTIAL**ZANG TEGHENCHA TEBI PALACE****WEDNESDAY 4TH FEBRUARY 2004 (NATIVE DAY MBON)**

I Fon Jacob Agwo Teghencha TABI in good health have given my Will on the 04/02/2004 to the entire Royal Family of Fon Teghencha Tabi and to the people of Metta Clan.

My next of Kin is my Son TABI TITA TAYE (FON)

And my Son TABI GABRIEL OZO (TITA)

My Prayer is that you live in Love and Peace.

May God bless it so.



Fon J. A. Tabi 4-2-2004
Fon Jacob Agwo Teghencha Tabi

copies:

The Concern

TITA TECHORO

The Senior Divisional Officer Mbengwi Momo Division

For Information and necessary Assistance when need be.

HIS MAJESTY FON

Teghencha J. A. Tabi
PARAMOUNT CLAN HEAD OF METTA CLAN

WILL – CONFIDENTIAL

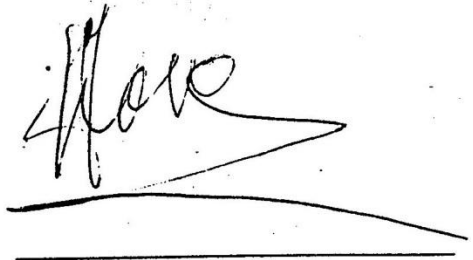
Mubib – Zang Tebi village Wednesday 24th March 2004 Native Day (Aje)

I Tita Techoro Fritz Bah in good health have given my will to the entire family of Tita Techoro.

The next of kin is **Techoro Tebug Mba (Tita)**

I pray the whole family live in love and peace.

As from origin installation is the responsibility of His Royal Highness Fon Teghencha Tebi, Traditionally well arranged.



Tita Techoro Fritz Bah

Copies:

The Concern

His Royal Highness

Fon Teghencha Tebi.

Fon Teghencha Tebi 24-3-2004.



**HIS MAJESTY FON
Teghencha T. A. Tebi
PARAMOUNT LAN HEAD OF MUBIB**

**Appendix 8: German Policy in the old Bamenda Division, Cameroon 1908 – 1912, Part II,
Translation of material in the Buea Archives**

GERMAN POLICY IN THE OLD

BAMENDA DIVISION , CAMEROON

1908 - 1912

Part II

Translation of material in the

BUEA Archives

IC 51^N Administrative Affairs

Bamenda Division

(Continued)

Ref: I 788.I. ... 39. Re matters Bali the files indicate:

On 15.7.1904 station Bamenda enquired if chief Bapini (also Bapinjen) whom the Bali chief considered to be one of his sub chiefs, should be placed under the latter's jurisdiction or if he should be allowed to remain independent. (F. Nr. 11396/04 Bamenda 690). The reply given (see Ord. of 10.8.1904 ...) was that condition of dependence was to be recognised.

On 1.10.04 (F. No. 15126/04) the station head, .. v.Knobloch, reported that at the time of the announcement the Bali chief named further provinces* which had previously been subject to him: Take, Fongu, Fonjong, Fobang, Fobossam, Fomonge, Babutscham, Babessi, Baminje, Bafutschg, Bamimbi, Bafomessong, Bambutu, Bangoa, Bambatschung, Bamumum and Bamengom. The mission apparently mentioned that these areas had broken away from Bali because they believed that the station did not like them to be under Bali jurisdiction. v. Knobloch recommended placing them under Fonyonge. Ord. of 19.11.04 ...) ~~accepted~~ agreed to this, should a careful investigation show that previous conditions of dependence had existed.

In Bali, on 15.6.1905, Hauptmann Glauning ceremoniously appointed Fonyonge as high chief over 31 "provinces" (no names mentioned) and to the report of 16.8.05 (F. Nr. 13339) a map of the southern district of Bamenda is appended, which shows the boundaries of the Bali empire.

In March-April 1906 the ^{territories} ~~provinces~~ Bamumum, Batibo, Hambunji, Banya, Baminji, Bamumgum, Bamumbo - claimed by Bali to be vassal villages - were punished (F. No. 5446, 6500/06). A sketch map in file brought the western part of the Bali empire up to date. Punishment was due to disobedience against Bali.

2 April - May 1907 (F. Nr. 10843/07 ...) Glauning punished the Bali ^{territories} ~~provinces~~ Bamumbu (until then unknown) and Bamessong.

[10-16] In the bi-annual of 1908 (Vol.12, I.C. 51n) the difficulties of the Bali question are mentioned for the first time, which, it is stated, are due to the fact that a part of the chiefs placed by Glauning under Fonyonge, had never been conquered by Bali and these only unwillingly recognise his overlordship position. (.....)

* Landschaften = territory or any component of a larger unit

[22-27] The report dated 7.5.1909 (Vol. 22) deals with the southern vassal villages of Bali, namely Bameessong, Babadju, Bangang, Bamumbu. It sees the disadvantages in the arrangement of jurisdiction under Bali due to Bali oppression of the vassals and talks of the necessity by the station to uphold subjection with the use of force. As an example, a quarrel between Bangang and Bamendge^(?) in which Bali wanted to interfere - Feb. 1909 - is cited. Divorce from Bali jurisdiction is recommended. No decision.

In 1908 the Bali established a force of 50 - 100 soldiers. The station did not allow this force to be equipped with rifles. In fact they were station messengers. The Govt. sanctioned the measure (.....)

[45-46] On 4.8.09 Hauptmann v. Raven again requests that the southern vassals are to be separated from Bali. Decision is left to his discretion.

[53-55] In September 1909 v. Raven had to sort out a case of disobedience by the Batibo chief against Bali. He requested that the chief be exiled to the coast (.....) During Gov. Seitz's visit the latter decided against

[74] exile for the Batibo chief (.....)

The southern question was decided on the spot by Gov. Seitz on 6.12.09. Bangang and Babadju were to be separated from Bali jurisdiction against compensation to Bali. The amount fixed was M.300. Bamumbu was left with Bali (Vol. 55).

3 In Feb 1910 the Bali delivered 221 rifles to the station. The station [87] interpreted this to be a move for securing official support against disobedient vassals. (.....)

[95-96] In ... 1910 the Batibo chief ^{was} ~~is being~~ exiled for life to Banyo because of renewed disobedience against Bali (Vol. 95).

* Bameessingc?

From Zintgraff's book Nord-Kamerun, p. 207, the following can be learned: The whole Bali tribe consists of the Bali proper, about 6000 strong, with approx. 1500 warriors, and those living in Vordörfern (villages around Bali) the so-called "Bakonguan", amounting to 15000 people with 3500 warriors, of which the Baminji are the most numerous. The Bakonguan living in the northern belt of Bali are the original masters of the country who were defeated and subjected by the Bali approximately 75 years ago when they made their way to their present abodes from the southern part of German Adamaua. As the defeated were left with a certain amount of independence they adapted to the new circumstances fairly easily and one can now consider them to be fairly close to each other. Under the joint name of Bali, led by chief Garega this tribe is most feared among the inland tribes.

(pp. 230, 366, 382) Between Bali and Bandeng there is a circle of 8 vassal villages, among these Bangoa, Bafutschu, Bambuku.

(p.327) Bamenda even is listed as a vassal village of Bali - so is Bafuen, situated further eastwards.

(p.200) The Fo Bessong on the steep rise along the Bali road is only called a trading partner of Bali - therefore obviously not a vassal.

(p.395) Para II of the agreement signed between Zintgraff and Garega in October 1891 and ratified by the Auswärtige Amt reads: "To Chief Garega is guaranteed the founding, recognition and the protection of his position as first chief over neighbouring tribes in the northern hinterland of Kamerun."

The following seems to emerge from the investigation:

Until Bamenda station was taken over by Hauptmann Menzel in 1908, the Bali chief was considered a pillar of the Govt. and to further his power over the vassals placed under him seemed necessary and in the interest of the administration. Previous station heads (v. Knobloch, Hirtler and above all Glauning) have always stood by Bali and have repeatedly emphasized that German rule was much indebted to him. Since 1908 changes have taken place in the position of the station, the reasons for which are not quite clear. It appears as if the Bali has simply

fallen from grace. Perhaps he has lost some of the sympathies by allowing the mission too much influence in his decisions. Since then one hears of vassals who are most unwillingly carrying the burden of Bali rule. The station has already had one victory: Bangang and Babadju have been separated, but with the consent of Bali and against a cash compensation.

Little can be ascertained about the relationship of Bali and the three villages: Batibo, Bamessong, Bamumbu, for whom independence is now being requested. In particular, the files do not show if they have ever been subjected by Bali. What is clear is that Govt. Seitz in 1909 has refused to grant separation from Bali to Bamumbu. No mention was made at that time of Batibo and Bamessong.

5 Before a final decision it seems to me that we must be quite clear if we want to retain the Bali chief as a certain power factor or not. There is no doubt in my mind that the separation of further chiefs would be the beginning of the end of his influence; immediately other villages would come forward with the same demand. As one is - in the interest of our rule - generally inclined to retain native political organisations and even to strengthen them, one should, in the absence of special reasons for a change of policy retain the first alternative.

But the least which consequences of previous behaviour would demand is that any separation should be carried out with the approval, however nominal, of the Bali chief and that he is allowed compensation for his loss of political influence.

R 11/9

1. Matter to be decided during my stay in Bamenda
2. Add notes to details for journey
3. Attach the two sketch maps by Glauning ...

12/9

THE GOVERNOR.

Military Station.

F.No. 877

Bamenda 17.11.1911.

Received Govt. Kamerun 25.11.1911.

G.B. I. No. 1342

To Imp. Govt. Buea.

Ref. Ord. of 5.10.10. F.N. I. 1213/10

Due to the long delay in clarifying the question and frightened by the exile of its chief, Batebe? (^{Batebe}~~Schiribo~~), whose jurisdiction under Bali cannot be upheld, begins to be unsettled and shows signs of falling apart. There are also indications that the unsettled state of the Batebe is spreading to neighbouring tribes, vassals of Bali. The deputy of the exiled chief does not possess the necessary authority. The Batebe will not rise against the station but it must be feared that parts of the tribe who are without leadership will migrate and commit excesses against neighbouring tribes - Bali - which would have to be punished.

The station urgently demands the return of the energetic chief who is loyal to the station - but not to the Bali - and urgently requests that permission for his release is cabled to Banjo.

Adametz.

Oberleutnant und Stationschef.

Imp. Mil. Station Bamenda.

Bamenda 2/2/12

F. No. 88/12

22/12/1911.

Received Govt. Kamerun 18.2.1912

To Imp. Govt. Buea.

G.B.I. No.19.

Ref: Report on conditions in Bali country.

F. Nos. 114 Secret of 18.6.1911 (~~p. 72 of this typescript~~)
and

Two tours of inspection by the head of the station in October and December 1911 helped to investigate political conditions in Bali itself and visits to all vassal villages (with the exception of the corner on the Bali-Sabe-Tinto road, and Bali-Widekum, see further below) ascertained their relationship to Bali.

For dealing with the whole matter three categories of tribes have to be considered:

1. A number of smaller tribes who were subjected by Bali during the occupation of their present abodes before the arrival of Europeans, or who voluntarily or ^{enforcedly} forcefully placed themselves under the protection of Bali after the latter had settled on their present lands.
2. A number of big tribes who were never conquered by Bali but whose subjection was achieved by Bali (Fonyonge) under false claims with the help of Hauptmann Glauning.
3. A number of hostile vassals in the corner of the road Bali-Sabe-Tinto, and Bali-Widekum.

2 To (1) It was the result of the tours that almost all vassals had just reason for complaint, which they did not put forward directly for fear of Bali. It was found that in only a few cases were the grievances Fonyonge's direct fault. A Bali law makes it impermissible to the chief to acquire power outside his limited tribal boundaries, e.g. his power is restricted to lands inhabited by pure Bali and therefore Fonyonge does not even know most of his vassal villages. He has distributed all these villages to his elders from the actual Bali tribe (Taamanji) who see to its administration. They look upon the villages allocated to them as sources for their personal gains and it is those people who together with

Bali soldiers and other Bali carry out the oppression and extortion in the administered villages whose conduct has been the main root of the dissatisfaction. Fonyonge himself, with his relatives and elders, is conservative and attached to old ideas and customs and is not the man to redress matters, nor to safeguard the free economic development of the Bali vassals on the same basis as is guaranteed to other independent tribes in the district.

3 On the other hand there is no doubt that he possesses the historic right for the continued subjection of the tribes in this category (compare with my report of 18.6.1911 No.114). The subjection has been certified in his Schutzbrief by Glauning in 1905 and it is stated that for most of the villages the subjection is founded on historical events. It would be wrong to take from a man his documented rights - a man who has been loyal to the Govt. since the appearance of Zintgraff (during the lost battle near Bandeng Fonyonge personally saved Zintgraff's life). I therefore do not uphold the suggestion offered in my previous report for ending the subjection by paying Fonyonge a cash compensation. It will be the task of the station to continue suppressing all possible desires for independence as long as Fonyonge manifests the good intention of removing the known grievances and as long as he not only claims, but is, a true friend of the Govt. He has often been lacking in unreserved honesty.

4 At the same time it will continue to be the duty of the station to ease the lot of the tribes whose subjection is justified and to ensure that their master does not inflict hardships and injustices on them whose phase of development is either equal or superior to Bali and who are loyal to the Govt.

During long discussions with Fonyonge at the end of my first tour he admitted his faults and agreed that the old way of slave-like oppression of his vassals for the benefit of his true Bali tribe could not go on and that it was in his own interest to make their subjection acceptable. During my second journey I had the impression that he showed earnest desire to remove admitted hardships. In the knowledge that the station was not trying to harm but to help him, Fonyonge acknowledged my orders for the

redress of grievances. He recognises them to be in aid of the continuation of his rule.

To illustrate the grievances and complaints of the subjected tribes and to show the necessity for corrective measures, I shall list the main points. I emphasize again that these are absolute facts which Fonyonge has acknowledged.

5. a. Fonyonge distributes the head tax levied on him quite arbitrarily among his vassals without any consideration for strength of population and, it is evident from the compiled lists, very much to the advantage of the true Balis. The sub-chiefs did not share in the collection fee. Fonyonge then delivered all the money and so far it was not possible to control how much of it was paid by the vassals and how much by Bali. The census which Fonyonge was asked to compile showed that he has no overall view over his empire. Remedy: Based on the population table compiled by the station (see enclosure) the station will in the future give Fonyonge exact instructions as to the distribution of the tax returns for the various vassals and for Bali itself. Income from taxation must be handed over by Fonyonge to the station in separate amounts for each village and the sub-chiefs are to share half of the collection fee.
- b. Distribution among the tribes for making available carriers and labourers was handled equally arbitrarily. The last contingent of 300 labourers to be made available for one year to W.A.P.V. was being controlled by the station. Fonyonge upon his own admission wanted to include from the vassals $1/4$ to $1/2$ of all existing grown up men (hoary old men included)
6. Remedy: ~~The station specifies~~ the number of any larger requirements of labour and its distribution among vassals and Bali.
- c. The Bali elders (Tasmanjis) appointed by Fonyonge to carry out the administration of the vassal villages who impose deliveries of food and domestic animals for Fonyonge also include additional amounts for themselves. No payments were ever made for these. The vassals know from contact with other tribes that every delivery, however small, is being paid for by the station and with right they resent such arbitrarily imposed demands by a coloured ruler.

The Taamanjis and other Bali elders (the latter without Fonyonge's knowledge) have in many of the subjected villages confiscated the best farm land and often forcefully taken away fields already cultivated. It is a fact well known in the country that the Taamanjis have become richer than Fonyonge himself!

Remedy: Dismissal of a few Taamanjis; orders by Fonyonge for the removal of Balis from the farms of the vassals and deliveries of goods demanded from them to be paid for.

d. Bali soldiers and other Bali, without Fonyonge's knowledge, scour the country and extort labour, domestic animals and chickens. Bali women steal at the farms, in the vassal villages, and try to get away with farm implements. Remedy: To prohibit Fonyonge to send his soldiers outside of Bali villages. Stricter control of his dealing with the vassals by reliable people.

c. Until now Fonyonge has usually known with cunning and force how to prevent the sub-chiefs from lodging complaints at the station. Such sub-chiefs were simply locked up.

Remedy: Permission to the sub-chiefs to bring complaints against the high chief to the station. Also any palaver which Fonyonge is unable to straighten out. Fonyonge to be prohibited from imprisoning sub-chiefs.

With such measures peace and order has temporarily been restored in Bali country (with the exception of the corner between the roads Bali-Widekum and Bali-Sabe). The subjection of the vassals remains in force, but they are given greater freedom and development possibilities. Control by the station guarantees juster and more equal treatment and restores self-reliance. Among the sub-tribes now obeying Bali there are a few where justification for subjection could not be clearly established:

8 Bamessinge was never conquered by Bali and until 1909 it never wanted to acknowledge Bali's sovereignty. (The writer of the report was at that time stationed in Bamehda). The chief merely wanted to be friends with Fonyonge. Only at the time specified did he give up his resistance. The Station had at that time gained the impression that from the Bali side strong pressure was brought to bear on However, this could not be proven.

Bapinjim states that Bali has on several occasions fought against them but they were never conquered. Only after the establishment of the station were they placed under him without ever being asked. They only obey because the station forced them into this position.

Bamessong also claim that they were never conquered and that they have only been on a friendly footing with Bali (Zintgraff too lists them only as Bali's trading partners). Only through war with the station was it forced to become a Bali vassal.

The tribe, which according to Zintgraff's notes must have been of a fairly considerable size, today consist of only grown up men. The majority of the people died during the fighting or has migrated to other tribes in order to avoid being constantly molested by Bali.

It is possible that for the three above-named tribes - and perhaps some others - it might be necessary in the course of time to change the manner of subjection, either for reasons of administration or economics, or in case Fonyonge continues his oppressions and again puts himself in the wrong. The station to whom the right of decision must be ceded will have to be in a position to offer, if necessary, immediate redress.

/Question mark in margin./

The station therefore requests permission to decide independently from case to case if and when changes in the manner of subjection are deemed necessary. These will have to be negotiated directly with the chiefs concerned and might necessitate the exclusion of the high chiefs' direct influence by paying an annual cash tribute in compensation.

The subjection of the three larger tribes could not be upheld because there was no historic basis to it.

A. Bamumbu (according to their own statement consist of 800 men, 1340 women and 1200 children), is not included in the Schutzbrief as being a subjected tribe. Fonyonge appears to have thought of registering claims for the subjection of the most important and powerful tribes only 2 years after recognition of the ~~most important~~ vassals was given by Glauning - e.g. only at the time when Bamumbu was subjected in 1907. When the Bali people - about 80 years ago - still had no home they moved through Bamumbu. This was shortly before the unhappy battle near Bafu-Fondang which

11 resulted in the partition of the Bali people into six parts, one of which constitutes the present day Bali. At that time the Bamumbu cleverly vacated their villages for the time of the march through and went back again to their old abodes when they had passed. The Bali today base their claim upon Bamumbu upon this incident. After a very difficult subjection by Glauning in 1907 Bamumbu was forced by the station to enter into a loose relationship with Bali, which after a few months came to a natural end. Since then the station deals with Bamumbu directly, excluding Bali in its dealings. In this way the tribe obeys loyally. I draw attention to the report mentioned above, F, No. 114. By its geographical position Bamumbu is so well protected that no negro tribe, however powerful it might be, could conquer it. An attempt by the Govt. to uphold subjection could only be carried out with the use of a full company. The attempt would, however, be a failure, because the Bamumbu tribe could be annihilated but could never be brought to accept Bali sovereignty. As the station must assume that such a form of war for the unjust interests of a coloured ruler is today no longer even a possibility for consideration, it has accepted and recognised Bamumbu's independence which in practice has already existed for years. The station requests subsequent approval of this action.

12 B. Bati (945 males, 1106 females, 808 children). The men were counted by Dr. Zollenkopf) a Tikar tribe, friendly to Bali since the days of Bali's early migratory movements. Were forced out of their last abodes near Bamum due to shortage of land and received by Bali 8 years ago as friends. Fonyonge admits that his statement to Glauning in 1905 in which he claimed that Bati was a vassal had been incorrect. Fonyonge's mother is a Bati. The original friendship changed to real hatred during the last few years when Bali did not keep its agreements and oppressed and exploited Bati and all its raffia was taken away, thus taking away most of its livelihood. Early in October the Bati aired their grievances of oppression against the Bali. The chief's intention to complain at the station was suppressed by Fonyonge just like all previous attempts made by Foti. Fonyonge had all exits of Foti's palace guarded by Bali soldiers. During the night a Bati deputation of 500 men without their chief arrived at the station and registered their complaint. Only the immediate dispatch

of a European with soldiers and the occupation of Bali-Bati for three weeks avoided the outbreak of hostilities between Bali and Bati. The investigation proved Fonyonge's guilt in the matter. As the opponents could not be brought to agree during negotiations on the spot which lasted for three weeks the Bati were resettled with Fonyonge's permission near Galim-Bagam on the right bank of the Nun river.

13 C. Batebe (540 ,. 910 f., 960 children, based on their own statement) like Bamumbu could never be conquered by Bali. Fonyonge's information to Glauning in 1905 that Batebe was a vassal was just as one-sided as the statements made in respect of the other villages and could not be checked at the time because the Batebe was not known then and had neither been defeated by the station or by Bali. Batebe would not have fought in 1906 had it not been known that Glauning's expedition was carried out at Bali's instigation and for the purpose of subjecting to Bali. Just like in the case of Bamumbu Bali sovereignty was even after the war only an illusion. Bali is today afraid of the Batebe and even if Bali were given permission to act, they could do nothing against Batebe (compare with report F. Nr. 114). Batebe is the only large and strictly organised tribe along the whole western boundary of Bali and maintains direct relations with the station, obeying willingly (compare with para. 3). The tribe is loyally devoted to its lawful chief who is quite obedient to the station and who has become a victim of Bali intrigues. During my stay in October it became quite clear to me that this tribe was the only pillar of the station on the western boundary which is in danger of collapse because the present chief lacks the necessary authority. To stop disintegration of the tribe I have promised Batebe that I shall without fail request from the Imp. Govt. permission for separation from Bali and the return of the chief from his exile in Banjo. This has been done in my report F. Nr. 877, Urgent of 17.11.1911

14 Referring to this report again the station urgently renews its request for separation from Bali and the return of the chief.

To 3. Bali complains for a long time of disobedience from the vassals Bamefa (included in Schutzbrief) and Baminga (not included in the Schutzbrief) who live in the triangle of the roads Bali-Sate and Bali-Widekum. After maltreating on two occasions the station messengers sent to invite the

chief to come to the station (the messengers had great difficulty to save their lives) the Bamefa were punished by a patrol. I have not taken any further action as every measure undertaken against Bali vassals in this area would automatically spread to the other numerous tribes who live there in close proximity. Right in the middle of these disobedient tribes Batebe is situated. The station must therefore attach great weight that this tribe with its strict organisation is being retained as a source of strength.

The situation along the western boundary of Bali is being explained in a special report and permission has been applied for to undertake an expedition in May and June 1912.

Signed ADAMETZ

For the accuracy of the transcription.

Michaelis

Oberleutnant.

15	Appendix. to the Report of 22.12.1911	Reference Bali.		
	Names of villages listed in Fonyonge's Schutzbrief.	Adult males according to the census carried out by Fonyonge.	Adult males based on census resp. estimates carried out by the station.	Remarks.
	Babadju	-	-	Separated. Same tribe with Babadju Separated
	Bamessinge	168	400 (!)	
	Bangang	-	-	
	Bapinjin	100	430 (!)	
	Bamessong	100	100	
	Bamowa	150	170	
	Bamenji	160	210	
	Babessi	90	228 (!)	
	Babudjang	100	200 (!)	
	Bambo	100	160	
	Bamefa	60		At present not accessible to the Admin.
	Bat#be	n.a.	590	
	Bamyemi [?? Bamyensi]	9	9	
	Bam#mum [Bam#mum?]	100	290 (!)	
	Bamentschong	20	20	} Could not be checked
	Batabi	60	60	
	Bantscha	30	30	
	Babossa	100	100	
	Fonjom	10	10	
	Fobong	50	50	
	Take	80	80	
	Fongu	100	100	
	Bafotschu	100	130	
	Baba	not listed	54	
	Bangwa	33	99 (!)	
	Bamessang Bafomessang	50	80	
	Bambuti	not listed	88	
	Fongane	30	30	
	Bati	200	945 (!)	Tikar tribe. Now settled near Bagam
	Fonga	not listed		
	Babundji	not listed		
	Bali itself	not listed	1563	<u>Bamumbu not included.</u>

Signed. ADAMETZ.

Imp. Mil. Station Bamenda

Bamenda 16 Jan 1912

F. No. 938/11

Received Govt. Kamerun 18 Feb 1912

G.B. II No.10.

To Imp. Govt. Buea.

Ref. ORD. G. Nr. I 1342 of 9 December 1911. ***

The station herewith submits a report of 22.12.11 which was written on tour and before your Ord. I.1342 had been received. This report, which in the main shares the opinion expressed by the Govt. Ord. I 1342, is being upheld by the station and the following additional remarks offered in reply

To para. 2. of Ord. I.1342: The station still considers Bali to be a pillar of the Govt. /Remark: in margin: A pillar which has been systematically lying to the Govt for years and involves in it costly enterprises! In my reports of 18.6.11, SECRET No.114, and of 22.12.11, Fonyonge's historical rights for the continuation of supremacy over most of his vassals have been dealt with and it was emphasized that the Govt. owes much to him. Therefore Fonyonge, who is not easy to deal with and who lacks all desired honesty, is still being considered as the chief most loyal to the Govt.

2 It is never the less a fact that the vassals obey him only unwillingly and only under pressure from the station. The reasons for this are given in the report of 22.12.11; so are the measures under which a change is being hoped for.

To para.3: Positive information about the villages to be separated from Bali is listed in the report of 22/12/11. The immediate separation of Bameassong, although it ~~is~~ too is being administered by Bali, is being dropped (compare with report of 22/12/11) because the tribe is disintegrating and in its present condition without importance. The refusal to separate Bamumbu in December 1909 was decided upon by H.E. Gov. Seitz on his return journey without a hearing having been granted to the Bamumbu.

To para.4: Fonyonge has a right to have his supremacy upheld wherever his claims for jurisdiction over vassals are truly based on historic rights. In his just demands he must now as in the past be given

** Follows on p. 91.

the necessary support. Precisely for this reason it is essential to revise his demands. In the past this was not possible. In the early days of Fonyonge's position really was a source of strength to the station because the station did not need to bother about Bali and thus learned nothing about the vassals attitude /* Remark in margin: Unfortunately it did not bother enough about Bali; F. has lied to them all!/*

3 Thus the station has its hands free to work in lesser known parts of the district. Today, when that part of the district which is under strict administration (bordered in the west and north by Bali- Bafut- Bekom - Bannso-Bamum) does its duty as well as Bali did in the past, e.g. satisfies the positive demands made by the Govt., it is not defensible that two large tribes whose history and sense of duty to the Govt. entitles ^{them} ~~it~~ to independence, are under the tutelage of a coloured ruler. Bali's position of power rested in the past on its early acquaintance with the Govt. and on its reliability* - at a time when in the country side around Bali no orderly administration existed. /*Remark in margin: It would be more correct to say Bali's diplomatic attitude! Bali was never reliable!/* But today, when services are rendered to the Govt. in a well ordered fashion there can no longer be any question of a special position of power by a single tribe. The task today is to support the authority of all independent chiefs as organs of the Govt, to uphold tribal organisations in general and the subjection of sub-chiefs where it is based on actual rights. This naturally includes the organisation of Bali as far as it is historically founded.

4 Wishes for separation have also been expressed by tribes to whom Bali is legally entitled. But this movement already started in 1909 after the separation of Bangang and Babadju. Such desires will not increase with the separation of Bamumbu and Batibe. On the contrary, it might perhaps be easier to subject them if a clean breast is made and the vassals realize that the Govt. on the one hand takes historic events into account and on the other ensures that the Bali vassals are treated as equals and justly and not as slaves.

The station hopes that on his basis the reestablished order can be maintained in Bali country.

However, circumstances may develop after the present reshuffle, the legal* extent of the Bali empire must be maintained with all means - at least during Fonyonge's life time. /*Remark in margin: For this it is important to ascertain what is its legal extent, and how much remains under legal circumstances!/. If a change is urgently required at the time of a new reign in Bali, is something which observations and experience will teach in due course.

5 When separating Batibo- Bamumbu (not listed among the 31 vassals named in the Schutzbrief) I request that Fonyonge is granted a single compensation of M.300. Fonyonge has already given his formal consent by expressing that he would accept any Govt. decision without protest.

To Para. 5: The station again requests urgently the return of the Batebe chief so as to avoid a disintegration of the tribe (see also (p.84) Report of 17.11.1911 Urgent. No. 877 and of 22.12.11): Its previous strict organisation amidst a number of difficult tribes has been of special value to the administration.

The organisation of the Grassfields tribes is such that as long as the legal ruler is alive he remains chief even if he is prevented from carrying out his office either by the Govt. or through illness. Any deputy or successor appointed by the Govt. however capable and energetic will never be recognised by the people. /*Remark in margin: Correct!/.

In the case of Batibe there is another additional fact: the chief is held in high esteem by his people and considered to be very energetic and correct. Ever since he was exiled there are weekly deputations sent to Bango from Batebe - a walk of 16 days - in order to see their chief.

6 I would like to illustrate this point further by citing the case of chief Bumbi of Bafut. After the 1906 uprising he was upon the station's request exiled for life. His successor was not recognised by the people and all economic life was at a standstill. He had to be recalled, and in 1907 this was granted.

As in Bafut the exiling of Batebe did not achieve the desired result. The withdrawal of a measure whose effect is recognised to have been a mistake should under the existing difficult political conditions be

preferable to persistence.

The station would like to make the following comments in reply to the extracts sent from Zintgraff's work:

To page 207: Bame song, Bamumbu, Bapunjen, Bapia^h/Batebe do not belong to Bakongwan.

All Bakongwan were in fact conquered by Bali.

2. Bafut, Bekom, Bansso were already at that time more feared than Bali, but less well known. /Remark in margin: Therefore Zintgraff was incited against them by Bali!/
 7

Shortly before the arrival of Zintgraff Bali had twice been attacked and beaten by Balikumbat, another Bali branch, which is numerically much smaller.

Bandeng and Bafut have severely defeated Bali under Zintgraff.
 p. 327. Bamenda was put under Bali rule by Zintgraff. The subjection was never of political consequence. Bafutu /?/ is unknown.

p. 200 Fo-Bessong on the steep decline is Fo-Bessong - Bame song.

Signed: ADAMETZ.

For the accuracy of the copy.

....

Oberleutnant.

Appendix 9 : Native Chiefs: Appointment, Dismissal, etc. General correspondence concerning

NIGERIA.	
NO. <i>101/1930</i>	
<i>Prov. Administration</i> <small>Can. Encl.</small>	
FROM:	
PLACE <i>BUEA</i>	
DATE <i>9 July 1930</i>	
SUBJECT:	
<u><i>Native Chiefs:</i></u> <i>Appointment, Dismissal, etc. General</i> <i>Correspondence concerning.</i>	
PERTINENT PAPERS:	CONTENTS:
<u>No Minutes to be written on this Jacket.</u>	

CIRCULAR.

No.S.P.7129/3.

MEMORANDUM.

24th June, 1930.

SECRETARY: SOUTHERN PROVINCES,
N O R T H
E N G U.

To THE RESIDENT,
CAMEROONS PROVINCE,
B U E A.

*Inclosed
File*

Term 'probationary' in connexion with
appointments of Paramount Chiefs.

I am directed by the Lieutenant-Governor to inform you that the attention of His Excellency the Governor has been drawn to the use of the term "probationary" in connexion with appointments of paramount Chiefs.

2. His Excellency is advised that there can be nothing intermediate between the non-appointment and the appointment of a Chief, inasmuch as any act which falls short of the "appointment" of a Chief is not sufficient to give him, legally, any authority at all. Thus, a person who is expressed to be "appointed a Chief on probation" is not appointed a Chief at all, and cannot be regarded as having ever become a Chief.

3. His Excellency, however, wishes it to be understood that although the expression "Probationary Chief" should not be employed, this will not prevent the Chief in question being warned, if His Honour should see fit so to direct, that he is liable to removal should he fail to carry out his duties to the satisfaction of Government.

No. 1220/101/1930.
11th July, 1930.

② THE DIVISIONAL OFFICERS,
BALENDIA, MAIFE, K'BA & VICTORIA.

For information.

My
Resident, Cameroons Province.

*Car...
...*

F. P. LYNCH

Acting Secretary,
Southern Provinces.

Appendix 10: Confidential Memorandum on Bikom Tax report N° C25/1931

From
 Resident,
 Cameroons Province,
 B u e a.

To

9 November

The Divisional Officer,
 Bamenda.

B I K O M T A X.

In reference to my telegrams 1553 of 30 October and 1611 of 9 November I attach a copy of a minute by Mr Dew written at B u e a.

7. XI.31.

2. The fact was known to me that the missionaries at various times in past years have alleged demands by Bikom Chief for contributions or excessive tax. I have never heard it suggested that these allegations were in form capable of proof or disproof or that any admission the Chief was to be expected.

3. I have for some years held the opinion and so informed you last March that many of the Bamenda Chiefs were under-paid. It was obvious that the display then made by the Bikom Chief at Laakom was only possible with contributions or resources greatly in excess of his official salary.

4. Customary voluntary presents or contributions from the people to a chief are a very different matter from an excessive tax demanded and collected. The latter are both offences under Cap 74 sect. 18.

5. The matter is urgent and difficult and I expect your report and recommendations at the earliest possible date.

S. Bennett
 Resident, Cameroons Province.

H. S. R.,

Your code wire no 1553 was handed by me to D. Bamenda for action. When he makes a further report, I should be glad if he would send you copies of his original minute to me and of my replies.

2. Father Jacobs mentioned the matter to me at Njinikom in Sept. last, and I informed him that I was going to Laakom and would see the chief about it. I understand that the mission members decline to pay the tax or 'contribution' to the Chief so that they personally can have no complaint on that score.

3. At Laakom the chief was quite open about the matter as he had been to Capt. Denton, and as already stated was fully prepared to discontinue the practice. I gave him full reasons why it could not possibly be countenanced by Govt. in my minute of the 8th Oct. I have mentioned the arrangement which I made with the chief, and on my return to Njinikom I informed Father Jacobs.

4. It appears that this yearly tribute to the chief has always been regarded by the people as something quite distinct from the tax, and is paid voluntarily by the compound heads. I think that the chief would be quite ready to give details of the exact method of collection.

5. The question remains as to whether the chief receives sufficient salary. I do not think that there is any evidence that any of his people have ever complained about this tribute, and you have suggested that in all probability they wish to support their chief as his former authority has been impaired by the close proximity of the Mission.

The salaries of the Bikom and Manso chiefs might well be raised. When general conditions improve there would be no hardship in raising the incidence, especially as this extra 2/6 is now paid without demur in the Nkom area.

(Sgd) H.T.B.Dew, Resdt., 7.XI.31.

ESIDEY
CAMEROONS

Confidential

D.O.

- In reference to my minute written from Ben, on the subject of Mkom Tan, I now find there is no mention in Mr. Macgregor's minutes of the discussion of the day with of G. Tan, with the Mission.
- Further the Mkom Chief seems to be certain in his own mind that the question was not then discussed with him.
2. The meeting with the Mission was very trying & lengthy & I cannot now state with absolute ^{all} ~~sureness~~ ^{certainty} that ~~was~~ actually took place on that day. Had the question of Tan been discussed with the Mission it would have been referred to in Mr. Macgregor's minutes when I wrote from Ben & thought this was the case.
3. The Chief of Mkom is so certain that the subject was not discussed

with him at that time, that I
have asked that he be given the
benefit of the doubt.

Atlanta

D.O.

10/14/31

Mr. Cantle

Is it certain that the chief was clearly
asked about it in 1928? And if so, by whom
was he asked?

W.A.

16/12/31

D.O.

By myself of this I am certain

W.A.

16/12/31

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

M E M O R A N D U M.

No. C 25/1931/15.

29 December, 19 31.

RESIDENT,
CAMEROONS PROVINCE,
BUEA.

THE HONOURABLE
THE SECRETARY,
SOUTHERN PROVINCES, ENUGU.

ILLEGAL TAX COLLECTION : NKOM DISTRICT,
BAMENDA DIVISION.

I regret to report that the chief of Nkom has been in the regular habit of receiving from his people a contribution of 2/6d per annum in addition to the authorised tax of 3/6d per adult male.

2. For some years past allegations have been made by missionaries from time to time that some irregular tax demand was made by the chief and resisted by the Christian natives, but no complaints had been formulated by natives and the missionaries were either unwilling or unable to substantiate the allegation. Mr L.L.Cantle states that in past years both he and Mr E.G. Hawkesworth had questioned the chief concerning this allegation and he had always denied the truth of it. The possibility of its existence is hinted in para 136 of Mr G.V.Evans' Bikom Assessment report of 12 September 1927. Your S.P.4412/15 of 10 March 1928 refers.

3. Recently the Divisional Officer Bamenda, Captain M.C. Denton, had a similar allegation made to him by a Baptist Missionary and obtained some confirmation from native informants. When challenged the chief at once admitted the truth expressed his regret for the past concealment and his wish to bring the practice to an end by formal announcement to his people.

4. On 19th December I visited the chief in his home at Laakom with Captain M.C.Denton and Mr L.L. Cantle. The chief confirmed what he had admitted recently to Capt. Denton and to the Resident Bamenda, Mr H.T.B. Dew, and added

some

- 2 -

some further information as to the origin of the practice and its existence for a long period of years. The facts appear to be as follows: When the Germans established their administration between thirty and forty years ago, it was the practice for every man to give the chief of Nkom five fowls every year. The Germans imposed a tax first of four marks, then of six and latterly of eight marks. They did not interfere with the annual contribution to the chief and this continued without interruption throughout the regime of the last two preceding chiefs of Bikom and after the succession of the present chief in 1926. The only change which took place is that at some period during the late chief's reign a cash payment of 2/6d was substituted for the payment in kind of five fowls.

5. The present tax rate of 3/6d per adult male may appear a very light one compared with the German rates of 6 and 8 marks before the war. It is not really so because the Germans accepted a nominal sum which had very little relation to the true number of taxable males.

6. I have warned the chief that Government may take a serious view of this illegal tax demand and of his past concealment. He regrets his error but pleads that he did nothing to bring it about and that it has always been a purely voluntary contribution made to him personally by each tax payer and that it was never enforced from those who were unwilling such as Christians. He further pleads that the money so contributed was used by him to mitigate the burden of taxation upon those least able to pay, i.e., when any compound or quarter failed to pay its duly assessed tax, he made up the deficiency from the surplus contributions and that he did not personally profit by more than £35 and £40 during the past two years. While I do not regard these figures as exact I consider the above account of the practice may be accepted as substantially correct. It is impossible not to respect the chief's frank and dignified manner in admitting

- 3 -

admitting his fault and his desire to bring to an end an unsatisfactory but ancient practice inherited from his predecessors.

7. The relations between the chief of Nkom and his people have always been those of a patriarchal autocrat confident of the loyal obedience of his people (except in recent years of his Christian subjects under direct influence of the Roman Catholic Fathers). But in spite of the population totalling nearly 20,000 persons these relations have always been very personal and this is illustrated by the method of collecting the tax and the chief's contribution. There are a number of influential Quarter Heads whose proper function it should be to collect the tax and deliver it to the chief. This they have almost all refused to do. When their tax payers are ready they go in groups to the chief's compound and personally deliver the tax and the contribution to him or are present when the Quarter or Compound Head delivers it to him.

8. I have advised the chief to insist that the Quarter Heads in future collect and deliver the tax to him; that there is no objection whatever to the tax payers being present if they so wish; that we desire the personal relations between the chief and his people to remain as strong as possible and that this can best be secured by encouraging his people to seek personal access to him. I pointed out to him the unwisdom and unfairness as well as the illegality of the extra 2/6d per taxable male since the fact that he was compelled to exempt the increasing group of Christians gave it precisely the same effect as if he were annually making a present of 2/6d to any man who was willing to become a Christian. This point of view was evidently new to him but there can be no question that he is genuinely determined to bring the present practice to an end. This does not mean, I think, that his subjects will or ought to cease entirely from making occasional presents to him. So long as the gifts are genuine free-will offerings I think there can

- 4 -

be no objection. But the circumstances of its payment indicate that this annual 2/6d was regarded as a tax due to the chief as distinct from a tax due to the Government.

9. I further informed the chief that when there was good reason for the tax of any compound or quarter being less than in previous years, he should inform the Divisional Officer and return the discs for any tax payers that could not be found. But that he must take steps to prevent evasion and that the Divisional Officer would send him assistance in checking the tax payers where evasion seemed likely to occur.

10. I recommend for His Honour's approval, in view of the ancient character of this exaction, and of the chief's frank confession and determination to bring it to an end, that Government should pardon his past deception in concealing it from our knowledge. I attach copies of some memoranda by Divisional Officer and Resident Bamenda.

11. With regard to the future it is obvious that in normal times the people of Bikom can easily pay tax at a 6/- rate as they have done for years past without complaint. At the moment it is impossible to advise any increase upon the approved 3/6d rate but as soon as trade improves I think a reassessment should be made at a higher rate say 5/- with an increase a few years later to 6/-.

12. It has been obvious to me for several years that several of the Bamenda chiefs have a position of wealth and social importance which cannot possibly be maintained on their small official salaries of £100 to £150 per annum. The Divisional Officer considers that the chief of Bikom derived large income until recently from the trade in locally grown kola nuts which are carried to Katsina Allah and Ibi for sale. The chief of Bali and to

- 5 -

a less extent Bansa also trade largely. Their important official positions cannot in ~~my~~^{my} opinion be considered satisfactorily secured until means are available to grant them larger official incomes. The same arguments apply in a proportionate degree to many chiefs of smaller clans such as Wum Bum, Ndop, Bafut whose official salaries are extremely low. This is not a time to ask Government for assistance in the form of any higher proportion of tax revenue than the 50% now allotted to the Native Administrations of this Province, but it is deserving of mention that the four Native Administrations of this Province which have been in existence since 1923 have undertaken large expenditure on public services such as Education, Health, Roads, Public Works, and Forestry, which is only possible by pooling the resources of all the separate Native Authorities of each Division into one Treasury. If the more important of these Native Authorities are to be given the opportunity^{of}/self-development which they deserve, it will be necessary to look for more financial assistance from Government than has been granted in the past, or else to increase considerably the rates of taxation. There is certainly room in Bamenda Division for increase^{of}/taxes when trade recovers normal proportions, but so long as Government takes 50% of that increase, the share of increased revenue accruing to individual Native Authorities must remain very small.

(Sgd) E. J. Arnett,
Resident, Cameroons Province.

No. C 25/1931/11.
29 December 1931.

The Divisional Officer,
B a m e n d a.

CONFIDENTIAL.M E M O R A N D U M.No C 28/2112/12.

8 March 1932.

From

To

R e s i d e n t,

The Divisional Officer,

Cameroons Province, Buea.

B a m e n d a.

N K O M T A X.

I attach extracts from a letter to Chief Secretary to the Government recording the Lieutenant-Governor's views on this matter. His Honour desires action to be taken in accordance with the directions in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 here quoted.

2. Re para 3 : The Kaka-Ntem and Hohani assessment must take precedence of a reassessment of Nkom, but the advantage of the recent announcement and change of tax payments by the Chief will be lost if reassessment is not made in 1932. If it can be undertaken this year or in the next dry season there will be an opportunity of placing the Chief's administration on a much sounder basis than was possible in 1925-26.

3. Re para 4 : An increase of the Nkom and Bansa salaries could be provided in the next estimates, but you must submit your proposals for consideration well in advance.

4. Re para 5 : We have already corresponded and discussed the proposal to make several separate estimates for the principal Native Authorities while keeping the one Treasury at Bamenda.

E. A. Smith
Resident, Cameroons Province.

S.P. 8748/18
24. 2. 1932.

Confidential.

No. S.P. 8742/18.

24 February 1932.

The Honourable
The Chief Secretary to the Government,
L a g o s.

Illegal Tax Collection, Nkom District,
Bamenda Division.

x

x

x

3. With regard to paragraph 11 of the Resident's letter the German tax of 8 marks per adult male was imposed on a basis which bore little relation to the actual number of adult males, and in fact the incidence was actually lighter than it is now with a rate of 3/6d based on comparatively accurate figures of male adults. It does not therefore necessarily follow that, because some of the people have for long paid an extra 2/6d in addition to the rate, they are all well able to do so, even in normal times, and this is borne out by the Chief's contention that he used most of the money thus illegally received to help those quarters which were unable to complete their quota of tax. In His Honour's opinion therefore any increase in the rate of tax should be made, not arbitrarily as trade improve, but with discrimination as a detailed re-assessment proves it to be justifiable, and the Resident is being so informed.

4. With regard to paragraph 12 of the Resident's letter the three most important Chiefs are those of Bali, Nkom and Bansa and they receive 43%, 17% and 16% respectively of the whole tax collected in the areas controlled by them. The proportion in the case of Bali is exceptionally high for the reason that his salary was originally based on the tax paid to him by certain sub-towns which were under his control during the period of German administration but seceded during the war.

salary. The proportion in the case of the other two Chiefs could be gradually increased up to 25% of the gross tax, being the maximum proportion allowed under section 11 of Chapter 74 (Laws, Volume I, page 809), and His Honour is of the opinion that this might be done in due course. In that event these three Chiefs would appear to be adequately recompensed, for their salaries, save for the special case of Bali, would be proportionate to the amount of tax their people pay. They have no real responsibilities outside their respective chiefdoms even though they are rather artificially united in a composite Native Administration, and the fact that two of them engage in trade, which they would probably continue to do even if their salaries were raised, does not seem to affect the issue.

5. The Resident goes on to suggest that if the more important Native Authorities are to be given the opportunity of self-development they must either be granted a greater percentage of the tax, or the rate itself must be increased. In His Honour's view however such self-development is not greatly furthered by augmenting the Chiefs' salary. Salvation would seem rather to lie in splitting up the Bamenda Divisional Native Administration which as at present constituted is an unwieldy body with but little real life of its own, because the Native Authorities never meet in person, and rarely by proxy, to discuss the affairs and finance of the Native Administration. Smaller units corresponding with the areas controlled by the more important Native Authorities would in all probability evince a far more lively interest in the development of their own districts if they were financially autonomous and would be more ready in due course to raise the rate of tax if they knew that the increased return would be spent in their own districts under their own direction. Nor is it likely that the more advanced units would be so parochial as to refuse to contribute to schemes, such as new trunk roads

- 3 -

or a central middle school, which though undertaken outside the bounds of their administration were calculated to conduce ultimately to their own advantage as well as to that of their neighbours. It is therefore being suggested to the Resident that a division into smaller Native Administrations appears more likely to promote a sense of self-development and self-reliance, not to mention a healthy spirit of emulation, than the present system of a somewhat soulless central Native Administration under the virtual control of the District Officer.

_____(Sgd.) W.M. Hunt,

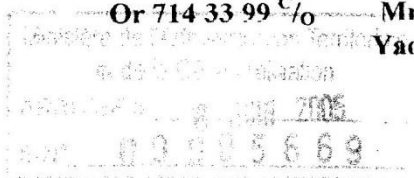
Secretary,
Southern Provinces.

Appendix 11: Information on Etwii Chieftaincy

Etwii Fon's Palace,
 Ngie Sub Division,
 Momo Division,
 P.O. BOX 619 Bamenda,
 7th May 2005,

Contact: Tel: 987 93 65,

Or 714 33 99 ^{C/o} Mr. Akwei Philip
 Yaounde.



*Her Excellency,
 Mafor Ama Tutu Muna,
 Secretary of State,
 Ministry of Commerce,
 Yaounde.*

Subject: INFORMATION ON ETWII CHIEFTAINCY

Your Excellency,

I have great honour to humbly submit information on Etwii Chieftaincy to Your Excellency for proper understanding.

This is because the S.D.F. Party leadership in Ngie has always manipulated the Divisional Officers to create a chieftaincy dispute in Etwii.

Unfortunately for them the Prefects for Momo, out-rightly condemned the attempt to politicise chieftaincy institution.

Your Excellency, attached herewith are the following administrative documents:

1. My Prefectoral order N° 31/2000/BPR/B3/SP of 25th May 2000
2. S.D.O Momo's letter N° DMO. C.6/S.6/30 of 22nd September 1975
3. S.D.O Momo's letter of 11th December 2000
4. Governor North West's letter N° 1633/L/E/GNW.55/S.5/SG of 22nd July 1978
5. Governor North West's letter N° 419/L/E/GNW/55/CAB of 12th August 1997
6. Governor North West's letter N° 277/L/E/GNW.55/SG/LA of 2nd August 1999
7. Minister of Territorial Administration's letter N° 7791/L/MINAT/DOT of 12th June 1978
8. Minister of Territorial Administration's letter N° 4975/L/MINAT/DOT/OA of 18th October 1985
9. D.O.Ngie's letter Ref N° E30/04/S2/C51/146 of 15th March 2004 to the S.D.O Momo advocating for a chieftaincy dispute in Etwii.
10. My letter of 8th April 2004 to the S.D.O Momo as a reply to the above quoted D.O's letter.

Accept Your Excellency, the expression of my profound respect.

Yours sincerely

The Fon



HRH FON FORKIM DAVID
LCGI, AMIIExE, AMInstBE

Civil Engineer

Fon of Etwii

*President Angani Sub Section C.P.D.M Party
 Secretary General Ngie C.P.D.M Fon's Meeting.*

PROVINCE
 /)) o /)) o DIVISION
 SENIOR DIVISIONAL OFFICE /)) BENGWI
 BUREAU FOR PERSONNEL & REGULATIONS
 SECTION FOR PERSONNEL
 B3

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
 Peace - Work - Fatherland

PREFECTORAL ORDER N° 031/2000/REP
 B3/SP Designating MR FORKIM ENJECKAYANG
 DAVID as 3rd Class Chief of ETWII village
 in NGIE Sub-Division - MOMO.

THE PREFECT FOR MOMO DIVISION .

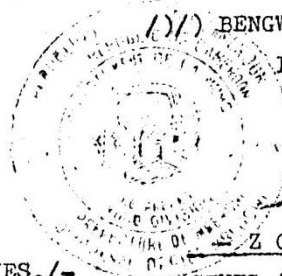
MINDFUL of the Constitution;
 MINDFUL of Decree N° 83/390 of 22/08/93 relating to the Administrative
 organisation of the Republic of Cameroon;
 MINDFUL of Decree N° 97/205 of 7/12/97 organising the Government and its subsequent
 amendments;
 MINDFUL of Decree 97/207 of 7/12/97 appointing Members of Government and its
 amendments;
 MINDFUL of Decree N°78/485 of 9/11/78 defining the powers and Heads of Adminis-
 trative Units and those charged with assisting them in their functions
 as amended by Corrigendum N° 79/024 of 28/01/79;
 MINDFUL of Decree N° 98/147 of 17/7/98 reorganising the Ministry of Territorial
 Administration;
 MINDFUL of Decree N°77/245 of 15/07/77 organising Chieftaincies in the Republic
 of Cameroon as amended by its subsequent amendments; (Art. 16(1) & 37;
 MINDFUL OF DECREE N°98/166 OF 26/08/98 appointing Mr ZOULNA DJOBOM, Civil
 Administrator, Prefect for Momo Division;
 CONSIDERING Minister letters N°7791/L/MINAT/DOT and N° 04975/L/MINAT/DOT/OA of
 12/06/78 & 18/10/85;
 CONSIDERING Governor letters N°419/L/E/GNW/55/CAB and N°277/L/E/NGW/55/SG/LA of
 12/08/97 & 02/03/99.
 CONSIDERING Letter N° E30/04/12/059 of 24th April 2000 from the Divisional
 Officer, NGIE sub-Division forwarding minutes of Public Consultation
 leading to the designation of Mr FORKIM ENJECKAYANG David, as 3rd
 class Chief of ETWII Village in NGIE Sub-Division- MOMO.
 CONSIDERING the necessity for continuity of service;

HEREBY ORDERS AS FOLLOWS

ARTICLE -1- That with effect from date of signature of this order Mr FORKIM
 ENJECKAYANG David of ETWII -NGIE Sub-Division -MOMO is designated as 3rd Class
 Chief of ETWII NGIE sub-Division -MOMO Division in replacement of his late Father
 Chief Joseph FON FORKIM, who died on the 23th January 1996.
ARTICLE - 2- / That this order shall be registered and communicated wherever and
 whenever necessary/-

DISTRIBUTIONS

-MINAT/YDE
 -GOVERNOR/NWP/BDA
 -PREFECTS/NWP/BDA
 -SUB-PREFECTS/MOMO
 -FORCES OF LAW & ORDER/MOMO
 -MAYOR/ANDEK RURAL COUNCIL
 -CONCERNED/FILE/CHRONO/ARCHIVES./-



/)) BENGWI, the 25 Mai 2000
 P R E F E C T ,

Z O U L N A D J O B O M -
 CIVIL ADMINISTRATOR.

DIRECTION DE L'ORGANISATION DU TERRITOIRE

04975 /L/MINAT/DOT/OA.-

18 OCT. 1985

a/s affaire chefferie d'ETWII.-

MONSIEUR LE PREFET DU DEPARTEMENT DE LA MOHO

à - MBENGWI -

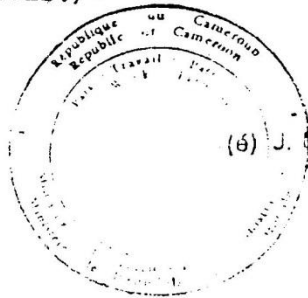
S/C DE MONSIEUR LE GOUVERNEUR DE LA PROVINCE DU NORD-OUEST

à - BAMBENDA -

Par requête en date du 17 mai 1985, Monsieur Joseph YBOKIN m'a saisi pour dénoncer les manoeuvres perfides de certains individus tendant à remettre en cause sa légitimité en tant que chef de 1e degré d'ETWII.

Afin de mettre définitivement un terme à cette affaire, je vous demande de vouloir bien régulariser la situation administrative de l'intéressé par un acte après la procédure réglementaire prévue par le décret n° 77/245 du 15 juillet 1977 portant organisation des chefferies traditionnelles.

Vous voudrez bien me rendre compte de l'exécution des présentes instructions./-



(6) J. M. MENGUEME

Y/L N° ___ of 29/11/75

N° 7791/L/MINAT/DOT

12 JUIN 1978

Etwii village chief-
tainship dispute.

P.A. NDOH Ikoickok, quarter Head of
Etwii village,

Through the Senior Divisional Officer,
Momo Division

- MBENGWI -

By your letter dated 29th November, 1975 you referred to me a dispute between you and Mr. Joseph Fon Fonkin as to the succession to the throne of Etwii chief.

After investigation on reports that have reached me on the matter, it emerges that Mr. Joseph Fon Fonkin is the legitimate chief and that your father was only carrying out the regency in the absence of the holder who is normally resuming his functions on his return to the village.

Therefore, I have the honour to inform you that I confirm the decision taken on the case by local administrative authorities and to invite you to refrain from sending groundless letter to me.

I remain, Sir, yours faithfully,

POUR COPIE CERTIFIEE CONFORME
YAOUNDE, le

Le Directeur de l'Organisation
du Territoire

MAHMOUDOU MOUSSA

P. le Ministre d'Etat chargé de
l'Administration Territoriale

Le Vice-Ministre

(é) YANG Philémon



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace - Work - Fatherland

NORTH WEST PROVINCE

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

REF: N^o 277/L/E/GNW.55/SG/LA

Subject: OFFICIAL DESIGNATION OF
Objet: 3RD CLASS CHIEF OF
ETWII - NGIE

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix - Travail - Patrie

PROVINCE DU NORD-OUEST

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

Bamenda, Le... 02 Aout 1999
The

Le Gouverneur
The Governor

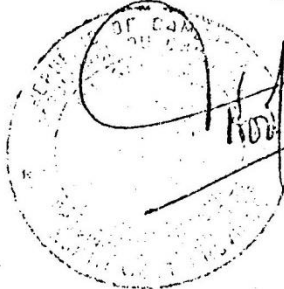
TO: M. The Senior Divisional Officer
A Momo Division,

- MBENGWI -

Reference a letter captioned as above and dated 30/6/1999 that is addressed to you by the Chief of Etwii and copied me,

I have the honour to request that you take necessary action in solving this crisis in pursuant of my letter n^o. 419/1/E/GNW.55/CAB of 12/8/1997 and thereafter report soonest on the line of action you have taken./-

LE GOUVERNEUR



Adrien KOLAMBO

419/L/E/GNW.55/CAB

ETWIL CHIEFTAINCYTHE SENIOR DIVISIONAL OFFICER
FOR MOMO IN -- M B E N G W I -

12-08-97

My attention has been drawn to the still pending matter regarding the official designation of the 3rd class Chief of Etwil village, in NGIE Sub-Division, despite my instructions as per Radio-Message N° 715/MR/E/GNW.55/59/E2A of 29/3/94 for consultations to be effected towards the designation in accordance with the provisions of decree n° 27/245 of 15/7/77 on the organisation of traditional Chieftaincy as modified by corrigendum n° 79/241 of 24/6/82.

This protracted delay can only go to enhance further confusion especially as the issue of lineage was already resolved following the Honourable Minister of Territorial Administration's letter N° .4985/L/MINAT/DOT of 12/06/78 addressed to you.

You should therefore ensure that the necessary action is taken and the Chieftaincy dispute brought to a definite close so as to restore harmony and promote the socio-economic development of the said village.

Your prompt action and report will be highly appreciated.



LE GOUVERNEUR

Francis Fai Yingo
FAI YINGO Francis
Administrateur Civil

COPY

NP/MSF

REPUBLIQUE UNIE DU CAMEROUN
Paix - Travail - Patrie

MINISTRE
L'ADMINISTRATION TERRITORIALE

PROVINCE DU NORD-OUEST

CABINET DU GOUVERNEUR
BAMENDA

LE GOUVERNEUR

UNITED REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace - Work - Fatherland

MINISTRY OF
TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION

NORTH-WEST PROVINCE

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
BAMENDA

THE GOVERNOR

BAMENDA, the 22 JUL, 1978

No. 1633/L/E/GNW:55/S.5/SG.-

Subject/- CHIEFTAINCY DISPUTE-
ETWII VILLAGE - NGIE

Mr. P.A. IDGH Ikeichek,
Bonanyang - Etwii Village,
Nkongwi Central Sub-Division,
Momo Division
u.f.s.

The Prefect of Momo Division
- NKONGWI -

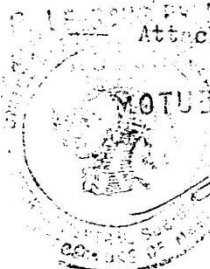
I wish to acknowledge receipt of your petition dated 20th June, 1978 and to inform you that I regard this matter as closed as the Hon. Minister of State i/c of Territorial Administration has reached a final decision on the issue confirming Mr. Joseph Don E. Forkin as the legitimate traditional ruler of Etwii and dismissing your petition. You will remember that this decision was notified to you on the 4th July, 1978 by the Divisional Officer of Nkongwi Central Sub-Division.

Consequently, you are advised in your own interest to conform to the Hon. Minister of State's final decision on the dispute and to work for the promotion of peace and unity in Etwii Village. I also wish to forewarn that no petition shall be entertained from you any more to challenge the decision reached in the subject matter referred to above.

Note also that any act of disloyalty to the recognized Chief of Etwii or any breach of the peace resulting from any attempt by you or any of your supporters to kick against the aforementioned settlement will expose you to severe administrative sanctions.

Attached hereto is the original of your petition/-

MOTUBA ECOMME Samuel



The Prefect of Momo Division,

BAMENDA.

Le Gouverneur de Province
et par delegation
Le Secrétaire General

COB. H. ITO NGIHE NGIHE
Civil Administrator

DMO.C.6/S.6/30

22nd September, 1975

Chieftaincy dispute: Etwii Village - Ngie Area

The Governor,
North West Province, Bamenda.

With reference to your letter No.1217/L/PNO/GNW.55/S5/43/LA of 10th September 1975, I have to inform you that the Etwii Chieftaincy dispute has been exhaustively examined and in a meeting convened by me referre-~~n~~ce my letter No.DMO.43/S.3/39 of 19th October 1973 copy attached which was held on 24th October 1973, Chief Joseph Fon Forkim was on the whole selected by the king-makers and quarter heads as their chief in my presence as could be seen from a copy of the signed declaration of the chief-makers and Quarters[^] dated 24th October 1973 attached. The meeting was attended by all chief makers, quarter heads, the contestants, Party leaders such as Mr. Umenjoh, Mr. Enokoh and many other important personalities. Etwii village comprises four Quarters namely:- Tinakaw, Baites, Bonatin and Bonayang. Only the Quarter head and one chief from Bonayang Quarter did not accept to sign the declaration. The petitioner Mr. P.A. Andoh who wants to be chief is the recognised Quarter head of Bonayang Quarter and has not got the support of the other three Quarters. I attach hereto a copy of my letter No. DMO.C.6/S.6/S.4/13 of 13th December 1973 which I addressed to you on this settlement, together with a copy of Gendarm and Security Reports.

2. To clarify the position concerning the dispute, I wish to inform you that petitioner - P.A.Andoh who is not the son of the late Chief of Etwii tried through the political backing and manoeuvre of Mr. Umenjoh, the Honourable Member to ascend to the throne of Etwii in 1966 while late chief was still living without success. The village and the Administration did not support this move as you will see from copy of letter No.AGW.43/249 of 10th November 1966 attached. When the chief died in August 1969, a signed declaration by a group in Etwii village was sent to the Administration declaring Mr. D.E.U. Forkim as a chief. At this time, petitioner Mr. P.A. Andoh also styled himself as chief of Etwii with the support of only his quarter - Bonayang out of the four quarters in Etwii. Because Petitioner does not have the support of the majority king makers of Etwii, Mr. Umenjo who is not a native of Etwii influenced other chiefs in Ngie Clan who have nothing to do traditionally with the affairs of Etwii village to give support to petitioner as Chief.

3. Since the selection of a chief is purely a matter for the traditional chief makers of the village to decide, and since this decision was done by the traditional chief makers and quarter heads in my presence as stated above, where three quarters of the village were in favour of chief Joseph Fon, I had no alternative but to acknowledge chief Joseph Fon as the Chief of Etwii as from 24th October 1973. He has since been administering the Village effectively except of recent when a few elements from Bonayang quarter who are being instigated by a few youths, mainly teachers to try and fight against the accepted chief. Petitioner had even accepted before me after having failed to get Honourable Muna, President of the National Assembly be in his favour to give up the fight in the interest of peace and good Government of that small village. I wish further to bring to your notice that, the plan as instigated by some elements of Bonayang quarter of Etwii is for the quarter to break off and constitute a village so as to have petitioner as their own chief while the present chief should be the chief of the remainder three quarters. It is my plan to take stern maeasures against this type of resistance and this I shall do after you have taken a final and conclusive decision in the matter as in the case of Tiben and Ashong where peace now reigns.



(Sgd) P. M. ELAD,
Senior Divisional Officer,
Momo Division.

Appendix 12: Southern Cameroons Gazette



to SC No. 7. 1960
Recognition of Chiefs
Law.

Southern Cameroons Gazette

Published by Authority

No. 59

BUEA - 10th December, 1960

Vol. 6

CONTENTS

Movements of Officers	Page	— Southern Cameroons Law No. 7 of 1960—Recognition of Chiefs Law, 1960	A19-23
Teachers' Grade II and Grade III Examination Results	287	— Southern Cameroons Law No. 8 of 1960—Coffee Board Law, 1960	A24-27
Meeting of House of Chiefs	288	— Southern Cameroons Law No. 9 of 1960—Produce Inspection Law, 1960	A28-46
INDEX TO LEGAL NOTICES IN SUPPLEMENT			
<i>S.C.L.N.</i>		84 Adaptation of Laws (No. 2) Order, 1960	B249-56
<i>No.</i>	<i>Short Title</i>	<i>Page</i>	
—	Southern Cameroons Law No. 6 of 1960—Audit (Amendment) Law, 1960	A17-18	
		85 The Bafut-Ndop Council Muzzle-Loading Firearms (Revocation Order) 1960	B256

Southern Cameroons Notice No. 351

NEW APPOINTMENTS

<i>Department</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Appointment</i>	<i>Date of Appointment</i>	<i>Date of Arrival</i>
Education ..	Epee, O.D.	.. Typist, Grade III	.. 15-6-60	—
Government Press	Achimbi, J. N.	.. Storekeeper, Grade III	.. 15-11-60	—
Ministry of Commerce and Industries	Ngufor, E. T.	.. Typist, Grade III	.. 15-6-60	—
Ministry of Social Services	Nyamndi, W. D.	.. Clerical Assistant	.. 6-5-60	—
Premier's Office ..	Barika, J. T.	.. Typist, Grade III	.. 15-6-60	—
Public Works ..	Rolph, E. A.	.. Works Superintendent	.. 8-11-60	9-11-60
	Tambe, J. T.	.. Assistant Executive Officer	.. 4-8-60	—

PROMOTIONS

<i>Department</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Appointment</i>	<i>Date of Promotion</i>
Forestry Mosenja, T. E.	.. 3rd Class Clerk 25-9-59
Judicial Galabe, M. S. W.	.. 3rd Class Clerk 15-6-60
	.. Kejetue, J. 3rd Class Clerk 15-6-60

RECOGNITION OF CHIEFS LAW, 1960**ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS****Section**

1. Short title.
2. Interpretation.
3. Report by Divisional Officer.
4. Reference of disputes to Chieftaincy Advisory Committee.
5. Register of recognised chiefs.
6. Withdrawal of recognition.
7. Recognition or withdrawal of recognition not to be questioned in any court.
8. Limitation of jurisdiction of court.
9. Offences and penalties.
10. Repeal of Chapter 12 of the 1948 Laws in Southern Cameroons.

2. In this Law—

Interpreta-
tion.

“chief” means the member of a tribe or clan or local community whose authority and control in that behalf is recognised by such tribe or clan or village or community and who has been duly installed by those traditionally responsible for choosing the chief in accordance with native law and custom;

“Chieftaincy Advisory Committee” means a body consisting of

(a) a chairman appointed by the Commissioner and

(b) not more than six members of whom at least one shall be chosen from the administrative division in which the dispute arises, appointed by the Commissioner from a panel of twelve persons designated for the purpose from among their number by the House of Chiefs of the Southern Cameroons;

“court” means the High Court, Magistrate’s Court and any native court or customary court;

“the Minister” means the Minister who for the time being is charged with responsibility for Local Government;

“property” includes all regalia and other things whatsoever attaching to a chief by virtue of his chieftancy.

3. Whenever the Divisional Officer reports to the Minister that a person is entitled to be a chief the Minister shall convey such report to the Commissioner accordingly and after receiving such report the Commissioner may recognise the person to be a chief.

Report by
Divisional
Officer.

4. (1) Whenever the Divisional Officer reports to the Minister that a dispute exists as to the person entitled to be a chief or to be appointed a chief he shall convey such report to the Commissioner accordingly.

Reference of
disputes to
Chieftaincy
Advisory
Committee

(2) After the receipt of such report the Commissioner shall refer the matter to a Chieftaincy Advisory Committee which shall make due inquiry into the matter. In making such inquiry the Committee shall amongst any other matters take into account the native law and custom that appears to them to be applicable in respect of the appointment of the chief in question, and may for such purpose have reference to any records reporting the state of such native law and custom at the time of the inquiry or in the past.

(3) After reference has been made under the provisions of this section to a Chieftaincy Advisory Committee and after consideration of the report of such Committee the Commissioner may recognise a person to be a chief. If the Commissioner does not accept the report of the

Chieftaincy Advisory Committee he may refer the matter back to such Committee once for further consideration by it and thereafter having received and considered the further report of such Committee he may recognise such person as chief as he shall think fit and shall not be bound in this respect to act in accordance with the advice of the Chieftaincy Advisory Committee.

Register of recognised Chiefs.

5. A register of the names and customary titles of recognised chiefs shall be kept in the Ministry of Local Government.

Withdrawal of recognition.

6. The Commissioner may withdraw recognition from any recognised chief after reference of the matter has been made to a Chieftaincy Advisory Committee in accordance with the procedure laid down in section 4 of this Law if it appears that such withdrawal of recognition is required by native law and custom or is necessary in the interests of peace or order or good government and if recognition is so withdrawn the name and customary title of the person from whom recognition has been withdrawn shall be erased from the register of recognised chiefs.

Recognition or Withdrawal of recognition not to be questioned in any court.

7. The recognition or withdrawal of recognition of a person as a chief by the Commissioner shall not be subject to question in any court except for the purpose of inquiring whether the procedure prescribed by the Law has been duly observed.

Limitation of jurisdiction of court.

8. Notwithstanding anything contained in any written law whereby jurisdiction is conferred upon any court, whether such jurisdiction is original, appellate or by way of transfer, a court shall not have jurisdiction to entertain any civil cause or matter instituted for

Cit:

(a) the determination of any question relating to the selection, appointment, installation, deposition or abdication of a chief or

Re:
of:
15

(b) the recovery or delivery up of any property in connection with the selection, appointment, installation, deposition, or abdication of a chief

Provided that any chief who has been recognised shall not be precluded from taking action in a court of competent jurisdiction for the recovery or delivery of such property and related damages.

Offences and penalties.

9. After the Commissioner has recognised a person as a chief following upon a dispute and a decision thereon under the provisions of Section 4 of this Law any person who

(a) instals or purports to instal another person as chief; or

(b) allows himself to be installed as a chief in the stead of the person so recognised; or

(c) holds himself out as or carries out or attempts to carry out the functions of a chief in the stead of the person so recognised; or

(d) uses, occupies or appropriates any real or personal property attaching to a chief so recognised

is guilty of an offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve months or to a fine not exceeding one hundred pounds or to both such imprisonment and fine.

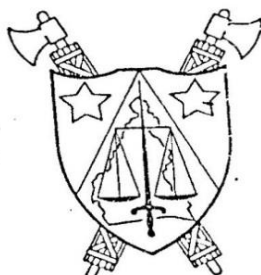
10. The Appointment and Deposition of Chiefs Ordinance to the extent to which it applies to the Southern Cameroons is hereby repealed.

Repeat of
Chapter 12 of
the 1948
Laws in
Southern
Cameroons.

This printed impression has been carefully compared by me with the Bill which has passed the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly, and is found by me to be a true and correctly printed copy of the said Bill. The marginal notes have been added after the Bill was passed.

K. C. THOMPSON,
*Clerk of the Southern Cameroons
House of Assembly*

Appendix 13: West Cameroons Gazette



West Cameroon Gazette

(Federal Republic of Cameroon)

Published by Authority

No. 26

BUEA - 8th June, 1963

Vol. 3

CONTENTS

	Page	INDEX TO LEGAL NOTICES IN SUPPLEMENT		
		<i>W.C.L.N.</i>	<i>Short Title</i>	<i>Page</i>
		<i>No.</i>		
Movements of Officers	141	75	The West Cameroon Police Service Regulations, 1963	B71
Register of Chiefs	143	76	The Forestry (Amendment) Regulations, 1963	B75
Direction with respect to the Presentation of the Accounts of West Cameroon	150	77	Road Traffic (Victoria, Tiko and Buea) Notice, 1963	B75
Police Department—Law Examination	150	78	Kumba Western Council: (Dogs Licence Fees) Order, 1963	B76
Vacancy for Warden	151	79	Notice of Appointment of Court Members: Bakolle Native Court	B76
Mail Contract: Invitation to Tenders	151	80	Balong Council—Motor Park and Control of Traffic Adoptive Rules Order, 1961	B77
Application for Registration of Trade Union	152	81	Victoria Divisional Council (Specification of Composition) Notice, 1963	B77
Sale of Government Publication	152			
Teachers' Grade III Certificate Examination—Complete Pass	152			
Corrigendum	152			
Obituary: Mr Peter Nibah	152			
West Cameroon Development Agency: Appointment of Temporary Chairman	152			
Notice of Publication of a Bill	152			

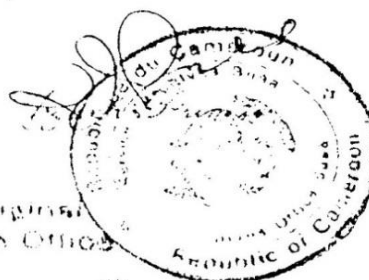
West Cameroon Notice No. 138

NEW APPOINTMENTS

<i>Department</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Appointment</i>	<i>Date of Appointment</i>	<i>Date of Arrival</i>
Agriculture	Tondjo, M.	Clerical Assistant	28-12-62	—
Audit	*Mengot, B. E. N.	Clerical Assistant	1-5-63	—
Forestry	Njobe, M. .. .	Clerical Assistant	8-2-63	—
	Sama, J. N.	Forest Assistant, Grade III	5-1-63	—
Marketing and Inspection	Ndango, A. T. F.	Produce Inspector, Grade III	19-4-63	—
Medical	Doh, F. S. M.	Laboratory Assistant	29-1-63	—
	Enobetek, P. E.	Clerical Assistant	1-3-62	—
	Mongo, L. A.	Clerical Assistant	8-10-62	—
	Mukwelle, M. B.	Laboratory Assistant	29-1-63	—
	Nchichupa, V. N.	Laboratory Assistant	29-1-63	—
Treasury	Ebong-Pende, A. E.	Typist, Grade III	25-1-63	—

* Notification in West Cameroon Gazette No. 24 of 25-5-63 (page 133), amended.

(141)



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BUEA 414 18 JUN 2013

8th June, 1963

West Cameroon Notice No. 139

THE REGISTER OF CHIEFS

Notice is hereby given that in accordance with the provisions of the Recognition of Chiefs Law, the Secretary of State for Local Government proposes to direct that the persons listed in the first column of the Schedule to this notice should be registered in the Register of Chiefs as being the recognised Chiefs of the villages shown in the second column opposite their names.

2. Any member of the public who wishes to dispute the registration of any particular name may do so by notifying the District Officer of his Division and by paying to him the deposit of 34 600 Francs CFA required by section 4(1) of the Recognition of Chiefs law.

DATED at Buca this 2nd day of June, 1963.

J. THRUPP,
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Local Government

SCHEDULE

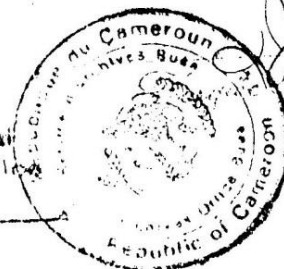
VICTORIA DIVISION

First Column Name	Second Column Village or Area	First Column Name	Second Column Village or Area
1. G. M. Endeley ..	Buca	49. Mokoko Mbembe ..	Matangu
2. Mbuaye Nakie ..	Bondakanda	50. Mokoko Ejonje ..	Maumu
3. Mecke Ito ..	Bonayanango	51. Ewome Mblua ..	Moli
4. Isume Nyoki ..	Bova	52. Namme Esuse ..	Moudame
5. Joseph Liyai Ewome ..	Bwassa	53. Tonde Mokonde ..	Monyange
6. Litia Mondoe ..	Bwiyuku	54. Ekuke Mwange ..	Mbasake
7. Lionga Esuka ..	Ewonda	55. Manene Lisonge ..	Mosone
8. Nganji Efeme ..	Kombo	56. Monika Eku ..	Wokaka
9. Luma La Mokili ..	Likombe	57. Mbonga Nganje ..	Boanda
10. Apa Venenje ..	Membea	58. Mwambo Mbale ..	Bokova Lelu
11. Escnja Liwate ..	Mevio	59. Lionga Yume ..	Bokova Mbenge
12. Molua Mokenge ..	Sasse	60. Esove Motute ..	Bokwae
13. Fute Mosenge ..	Small Soppo	61. Nganja Malongo ..	Bolifamba Lelu
14. Ngale Eko ..	Wokoko	62. Monyonge Lifufu ..	Bolifamba Mbenge
15. Nganji Mowende ..	Wilikawo	63. Nango Kongo ..	Momaka
16. Mwambo Molua ..	Wotolo	64. Kote Fonde ..	Bonamabie
17. Etonga Wolowa ..	Wolu	65. Njia Ngando ..	Bonamokumba
18. Ndela Mbonde ..	Boawa	66. Molombe Ngomba ..	Bonduma
19. Mbaka Moloka ..	Boando-Upper	67. Nasosa Lingange ..	Bwiteva
20. Moka Mataka ..	Boando-Lower	68. Mathias Kange Tambi ..	Bwitingi
21. Mbola Likine ..	Bojoke	69. Ngala Vako ..	Dibanda
22. Mbaka Ebonde ..	Bonjava	70. Moveni Kofi ..	Ekande
23. Mbale Efase ..	Upper-Bonjongo	71. Malive Monika ..	Ewili
24. Moka Mayai ..	Lower-Bonjongo	72. Kombe Kose ..	Liongo
25. Eko Yowo ..	Middle-Bonjongo	73. Ikome Nganje ..	Moliko
26. Nako Njie ..	Bomalikombo	74. Njako Wojave ..	Muangai
27. Esimboe Molue ..	Ebongo	75. Ikome Ngole ..	Muea Lelu
28. Ngando Eviele ..	Ekonje	76. R. E. Sona ..	Malende
29. Lionga Moki ..	Mapanja	77. Eyambe Mukete ..	Mpundu
30. Fike Etunbe ..	Masengi	78. Fritz Mukete ..	Muyuka
31. Njembe Itambi ..	Mokunda	79. J. E. Esambe ..	Yoke
32. Kwamange Likofe ..	Wokoka	80. Paul Mpando ..	Bonako
33. Lisuke Njoke ..	Wongala	81. Elame Kwa ..	Bana Ebanda
34. Etone Mokase ..	Wosenge	82. Joseph Maladi ..	Missellelle
35. Mokako ..	Wosumbu	83. S. P. Dipoko ..	Missaka
36. Duala Wokwoto ..	Wotutu	84. Isaac Ngomba ..	Bwinga Mikuke
37. Mbela Eyoki ..	Bafia	85. Johnson Moki Nganje ..	Mutengene
38. Namweni Motimbi ..	Bavenga	86. Martin Mundenge ..	Ebonji
39. Eugen Ewome ..	Bokuju	87. Thomas Vako ..	Likomba
40. Sakio Woloko ..	Botava	88. Ndumbe Bebe ..	Tiko (Douala)
41. Nganja Mongombe ..	Ekona Lelu	89. Epanda Tama ..	Tiko (Bakweri)
42. Manyanya Enyunge ..	Ekona Mbenge	90. Shadrack M. Njako ..	Mondoni
43. Mokombe Njoke ..	Ikata	91. Lionga Mbonda ..	Owe
44. Woso Itonde ..	Lio La Buca	92. Peter Masonjo ..	Eamusso
45. Molua Mwafise ..	Lysoka-Wambaki	93. Lucas Mosongo ..	Bekanje
46. Ikomi Esole ..	Lysoka-Moliwe	94. Martin Menda ..	Betika
47. Ikome Mesoso ..	Lysoka-Bwile	95. James Eko ..	Njangassa
48. Mbua Mokoto ..	Masuma	96. Daniel Motumba ..	Yenda

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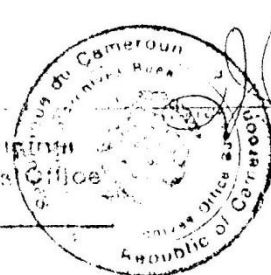
19 JUN 2012



First Column Name	Second Column Village or Area	First Column Name	Second Column Village or Area
97. Liwoto Ekeku ..	Bakingili	163. Ndifor Mosongo ..	Koba
98. Mbua Ngoto ..	Batoke	164. Thomas Moto ..	Ibemi
99. John Mokoko ..	Bibunde	165. Mambo Mboni ..	Mbu
100. Motombi Ngande ..	Etome	166. Njibili Nakanda ..	Itoki
101. Andreas Monjimbe ..	Mukondange	167. Stephen Abia ..	Manyemen
102. Njoh Ekoko ..	Ngeme	168. Emmanuel Akwo ..	Dikomi
103. Simon Ndemba ..	Njonje	169. Moki Esika ..	Kombone Bafaw
104. Elias Kelle ..	Sanje	170. Martin Esembe ..	Kokobuma
105. Etubi Mbimbi ..	Bimbia-Bonabile	171. Simon Ayuk ..	Talangaye
106. G. S. Musuka ..	Bimbia-Bonangombe	172. Edward Ebele ..	Ayong
107. Nako Ndumbe ..	Bimbia-Dikolo	173. Emmanuel Bechiching ..	Sikani
108. Luma George ..	Bota Island Inelloko- lo Mainland	174. Solomon Ayuk ..	Batuk
109. Mbeye Ewari ..	Bota Land Molondi	175. Sadrack Agbor ..	Israib
110. Motulu Ndumbe ..	Kie	176. Tambe Epey ..	Ekenge
111. Alami Ekane ..	Mondoli	177. Abia Osong ..	Babensi I and II
112. Tatie Ekema ..	Mondoli	178. Moses Ekoko ..	Mungo Ndor
113. F. B. Manga-Williams ..	Victoria	179. Dominic Enone ..	Konye Bassosi
114. Thompson Iwoma Njea ..	Likoko	180. Patrick Njonki ..	Ntale Bassosi
KUMBA DIVISION			
115. Esike Dibote ..	Bakosso	181. Hans Awubi ..	Bome
116. Lionga Wote ..	Ebie	182. Ngole Etumbi ..	Songlo
117. Makia Litonge ..	Boviongo	183. Pete Elah ..	Njunyue
118. Njombe Mokondo ..	Mundongo	184. Asue ..	Ediango
119. Makoko Ngamba ..	Mumyange	185. Elias Panje ..	Babitti
120. Stephen Ebow ..	Trouble Mumyange	186. Abel Nkopi ..	Badum
121. Michael D'wote ..	Efoldo	187. Paul Ekuba ..	Bambe
122. Kumba Njotto ..	Kotto I	188. Banabas Ejaw ..	Muanzeter
123. Stephen Mowonji ..	Kotto II	189. Emmanuel Enombe ..	Bajange
124. Liwunje Njase ..	Mueli	190. Johannes Menjamin ..	Bemin
125. Bolongo Njano ..	Bwassa	191. Clement Eho ..	Babubok
126. Elinge Ewango ..	Bomana Bakweri	192. Bronue Akwo ..	Editiongo
127. Kamba Nanyongo ..	Liwenyi	193. Ekpepe ..	Nloh
128. Mbombo Elemgba ..	Lisombe	194. Dominic Ede ..	Nkemfor
129. Ewange Iwoki ..	Bova	195. Stephen B. Njuma ..	Ndian Town
130. Muambo Efande ..	Kuke Bova	196. Njibili Itoe ..	Pamol Estate
131. Ngombe Kallembe ..	Bomana	197. Ekpe Ekpe ..	Ndian, Ikassa
132. Nicholas Albenda ..	Kose	198. Okon Obasi ..	Lisombe
133. Nebale ..	Betenge	199. Ambrose E. Ekpo ..	Ikassa Town
134. Itoe Bokwe ..	Ndonono	200. Ambrose E. Ekpo ..	Musongiseri
135. Itoe Molate ..	Ebobe	201. Anamani ..	Weke
136. Netonge Nanyunga ..	Mekoma	202. Mosama Asalami ..	Ekondo-Ekondo
137. Namaku Nonga ..	Bonji	203. Motia Epite ..	Ekon
138. Okole Nambu ..	Itende	204. Mayor ..	Bekoko
139. Daniel Grole ..	Bosunga	205. Ekole Makumba ..	Ngumu
140. Mbote Bokwe ..	Dikome Balue	206. Effamba Njoko ..	Ekumbako
141. Mote Mlade ..	Mofako Balue	207. Anje Ebane ..	Bareka
142. Itoe Molakale ..	Dipenda	208. Dion Nemba ..	Ituka
143. Paul Nanyinga ..	Kumbe Balue	209. Dioko Martin ..	Mundimba
144. Namaku Mofa ..	Bafaka	210. Osang Nanyinga ..	Manja
145. Motale Nalinga ..	Pondo	211. Otu ..	Matamani
146. Mana Nkuta ..	Diboki	212. Ekuka ..	Mokango
147. Itoe Molate ..	Ekue	213. Etana ..	Massaka Bima
148. Pius Molate ..	Disoro	214. Buke Nakombe ..	Esoki
149. Mbotake ..	Weme	215. Nya Boa ..	Beboka
150. Nakeri Ngube ..	Bona	216. Obie Dibumba ..	Kuma
151. Nebale Etongwe ..	Kotto	217. James Ekpere ..	Fabe
152. Nambo Nanyi ..	Marende	218. Motule Anamani ..	Boa
153. Mokole ..	Masore	219. Itoe Mbotake ..	Ijowe
154. Bake Njila ..	Kitta	220. Moleka Obie ..	Mopako Batanga
155. Etongwe Ntoto ..	Munyange	221. Mekanya Dioto ..	Dienge Batanga
156. Diuh Tim ..	Ngolo Metoko	222. Lobe Obini ..	Dipundu Batanga
157. Butame Imasako ..	Kokaka	223. Sakwe Disonge ..	Banyu Batanga
158. Moses Masango ..	Ndoi	224. Monde Mosinga ..	Babiabanga
159. Itoe Meda ..	Konye	225. Ngembeni Mopako ..	Ndoi I
160. Isaac Njame ..	Supe	226. Esaw ..	Ndoi II
161. Mindako Obie ..	Wone	227. Elibe Oke ..	Dibonda
162. Nangia Obie ..	Dipenda	228. Massango Naseli ..	Dibonda Koroki
		229. Balemba Motia ..	Itali
			Massaka Batanga
			Bombangi
			Ipongi

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8th June, 1963

WEST CAMEROON GAZETTE

145

First Column		Second Column	
Name	Village or Area	Name	Village or Area
230. Nemba Monde	.. Loba Batanga	300. Ebaba Awo	.. Bongongo I
231. Njibiri Oku	.. Bareka II	301. Nademu Nefenda	.. Dikome Balundo
232. Ekpeni Nalenya	.. Ikenge	302. Noringa	.. Lipenja
233. Ochoe Akioh	.. Esuetan	303. Abel Nwanja	.. Bongongo II
234. Moses Beke	.. Berra	304. Daniel Mokoto	.. Ngatami
235. Dissonge Obie	.. Ikori	305. Nyongo Nkembe	.. Bekalakara
236. Ekpere Oponde	.. Loe	306. Ngeti Mafero	.. Mokoko Barombi
237. Ikona Obie	.. Esoki Batanga	307. Naseri Nebota	.. Bekora
238. Mulango Ikio	.. Lipenja II	308. Stephen P. Arusaji	.. Barracks (Fish settle- ment)
239. Asangole Mbalo	.. Many	309. Ngalafa	.. Black-Bush (Fish Settlement)
240. Massano Mbutu	.. Mayeke	310. Ambrose James	.. Lobe Pamol Estate
241. Obie Kuabela	.. Bareka I	311. Luis Nango	.. Kumba C. D. C.
242. Isong Ekpe	.. Lipenja I	312. James Nofanjo	.. Mbongo
243. Ngumu Itoe	.. Beoko Ngolo	313. Natondo Kpwe	.. Boda Barombi
244. Allo Ngunda	.. Itoki II Ngolo	314. Franz H. Nkumbe	.. Elum
245. Osife Dibo	.. Maberebere	315. Jacob Epie	.. Muekan
246. Nanweko Lobe	.. Boa Ngolo	316. David Epie	.. Ndjom
247. Njuma Esobo	.. Mosongiseli	317. Petros Mesumbe	.. Bangem
248. Dikulu Ngele	.. Lipenja Muketi	318. Benedict Nzile	.. Muajukung
249. Nabuma Mekalo	.. Isai Ngolo	319. Eugen Nnoko	.. Elung Nkiko
250. Soli Bichong	.. Ngamoki Ekama II	320. Eugen Nnoko	.. Ekanzauk
251. Malow Munyake	.. Toko Ikoi	321. Eugen Akwi	.. Nyam
252. John Besonge	.. Bokoma Ikoi	322. Jacob Ngwese	.. Muanjeken
253. Aluma Etongo	.. Dikuma Ikoi	323. Manfred Ngwese	.. Ekangte
254. Motale Ekon	.. Meka Ngolo	324. Emmanuel Esume	.. Muasum
255. Bila Nibili	.. Besingi Ikoi	325. Alocious Enongene	.. Muanyet
256. Etukeni Umoh	.. Meagwe II	326. William Elah Etah	.. Muolong
257. John Motoko	.. Meta Ngolo	327. John Nnane	.. Muabi
258. Ndiba Boyiako	.. Ndiba	328. James Ngwenkang	.. Mbat
259. Nangia Nawka	.. Bosaw	329. Patrick Ngeko	.. Ekabeng
260. Anje Oponde	.. Boweme	330. Lucas Nzouge Nkwele	.. Nkack
261. Mokete Ngoe	.. Mobenge	331. Petro Esong Makoge	.. Mueba Ninong
262. Besingi Sakwe	.. Ikoti Besingi	332. John Masango	.. Ebonemuin
263. Diangi Kuh	.. Betika	333. Benedick Nzong	.. Epenebel
264. Ekoi Diangi	.. Bokuba	334. Epie Nkwele	.. Muambong
265. Isele Orume	.. Basari	335. Manfred Ewane	.. Muaku
266. Moses Njibirir	.. Toko I	336. Mathew E. Mesape	.. Enyandong
267. Ekpe Ngoe	.. Toko II	337. Melle Nkumbe	.. Ntho I and II
268. Njuma Ekoi	.. Meangwe I	338. Peter Nzumbi	.. Ebamut
269. Mtoia Bokpara	.. Itoki I	339. Peter A. Diobe	.. Ndobse I and II
270. Nemba Illambo	.. Iyombo	340. Sam Ebulle	.. Nduum Maumbong
271. Mosembe Etana	.. Ikoi Ngolo	341. Petro Same	.. Mbat
272. Ngerime Diah	.. Dikome Ngolo	342. Simon Ndele	.. Mualong
273. Manene Motoko	.. Iwasa	343. Elias Sone	.. Ebase
274. Ekandem Isele	.. Nwamoki Weliba	344. Rudolph Ekome	.. Muedibmel
275. Daniel Mamata	.. Ngamoki Ekama I	345. Edward Ekome	.. Elambeng
276. William Ekole	.. Madie	346. Abraham Ngode	.. Komuin
277. Nalibia Ngerime	.. Moboka	347. Michael Msembe	.. Muetan Aku
278. Orume Epingi	.. Kirikile	348. Patrick Salle	.. Muetug Aku
279. Nanjeme Okele	.. Ilondo	349. Michael Kome	.. Elasse
280. Elias Epie	.. Kodmuin	350. Abel Ndode	.. Njimheng
281. Enongene Epie	.. Bajoh	351. Kofii Ntoko	.. Ngamuin
282. Ngole Nzeme	.. Nyandong II	352. Alocious Enongene	.. Muandelengo
283. Alfred Ebako	.. Malongo	353. Abel Mukete	.. Kumba Town
284. Naingi Motiti	.. Ekondo Titi	354. Ndeme	.. Mambanda
285. J. Buma	.. Lobe	355. Petro Dibo	.. Ikiliwindi
286. Nanji Niko	.. Ekondo Nene	356. I. M. Epie	.. Kurume
287. Oka Okon	.. Kumba Balundo	357. S. A. Ebanja	.. Mukonje
288. Iseli Motiti	.. Loe	358. Mboe	.. Baduma
289. Ifo-Mukete	.. Boa-balondo	359. Londo	.. Bai Kuke
290. Etongo Nguande	.. Illoe	360. Etoke	.. Bai Many
291. Aboko Nyando	.. Funge	361. Obase	.. Bai Longe
292. Simon Moto Nekena	.. Dibonda	362. Timothy	.. Bai Foe
293. Efori-Nekena	.. Meme	363. E. N. N. Efukani	.. Barombi Kotto
294. Naseri Nghoh	.. Liongo	364. Martin Male	.. Barombi Mbo
295. James Osife	.. Illoani	365. A. O. Ekaro	.. Ekumbe Bonji
296. Duma Ekpo	.. Benjari	366. Betto	.. Ediki
297. Michael Ambeno	.. Ekombe Liongo	367. Hans Moki	.. Mbalangi
298. Philip Nitua	.. Ekombe Waterfall		
299. Besumbu Misori	.. Ekombe Mufako		



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1963 JUN 10

Appendix 14: Law N° 77/245 of 15th July 1977 organising traditional Chieftancies in Cameroon

REPUBLIQUE UNIE DU CAMEROUN

PAIX - TRAVAIL - PATRIE

DECRET N° 77/245 DU 15 JUILLET 1977

portant organisation des chefferies traditionnelles.

LE PRESIDENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE ,

- VU la Constitution du 2 juin 1972 modifiée et complétée par la loi n° 7 du 9 mai 1975 ;
- VU la loi n° 7/SC du 10 décembre 1960 sur la reconnaissance des chefs traditionnels, ensemble les textes modificatifs subséquents ;
- VU le décret n° 72/349 du 24 juillet 1972 portant organisation administrative ;
- VU le décret n° 72/422 du 26 août 1972 modifié et complété par le décret n° 76/147 du 10 avril 1976 fixant les attributions des chefs de circonscriptions administratives et les organismes administratifs chargés d'assister dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions ;
- VU l'arrêté n° 244 du 4 février 1933 fixant le statut des chefs coutumiers ensemble les textes modificatifs subséquents ;

D E C R E T E :

CHAPITRE I

DISPOSITIONS GENERALES

ARTICLE 1er. - Les collectivités traditionnelles sont organisées en chefferies conformément aux dispositions du présent décret.

ARTICLE 2. - La chefferie traditionnelle est organisée sur une base territoriale. Elle comporte trois degrés hiérarchisés suivants :

- chefferie de 1er degré ,
- chefferie de 2ème degré ,
- chefferie de 3ème degré .

ARTICLE 3. - Est de 1er degré, toute chefferie dont le territoire de compétence recouvre celui d'au moins deux chefferies de 2ème degré. Ses limites territoriales n'excèdent pas en principe celles d'un département.

Est de 2ème degré, toute chefferie dont le territoire de commandement englobe celui d'au moins deux chefferies de 3ème degré. Ses limites n'excèdent pas en principe celles d'un arrondissement.

La chefferie de 3ème degré correspond au village ou quartier milieu rural, et au quartier en milieu urbain.

ARTICLE 4. - Nonobstant les dispositions de l'article 3 ci-dessus, l'autorité compétente peut classer une chefferie traditionnelle au 1er ou 2ème degré raison notamment de son importance démographique et économique.

ARTICLE 5. - Chaque chefferie porte la dénomination consacrée par la tradition. Toutefois, l'autorité compétente peut lui conférer, le cas échéant, une nouvelle dénomination.

ARTICLE 6.- Toute chefferie traditionnelle est placée sous l'autorité d'un chef, assisté d'un conseil de notables, formé selon la tradition locale.

Le chef désigne au sein du conseil, un notable qui le représente en cas d'absence ou d'empêchement. Le chef peut mettre fin à ses fonctions.

ARTICLE 7.- Les chefferies de 1er degré sont créées par arrêté du Premier Ministre, celles de 2ème degré par le Ministre de l'Administration Territoriale et celles de 3ème degré, par le préfet.

CHAPITRE II

DESIGNATION DES CHEFS

ARTICLE 8.- Les chefs traditionnels sont, en principe, choisis au sein des familles appelées à exercer coutumièrement le commandement traditionnel. Les candidats doivent remplir les conditions d'aptitude physique et morale requises, et savoir autant que possible, lire et écrire.

ARTICLE 9.- La vacance d'une chefferie traditionnelle intervient par suite de décès, de destitution, de démission ou d'incapacité physique ou mentale permanente du titulaire, dûment constatée par un médecin public requis à cet effet.

ARTICLE 10.- En cas de vacance d'une chefferie, l'autorité administrative procède sans délai aux consultations nécessaires, en vue de la désignation d'un nouveau chef.

ARTICLE 11.- Les notabilités coutumières compétentes, sont obligatoirement consultées pour la désignation d'un chef.

ARTICLE 12.- Les consultations prévues aux articles 10 et 11 qui précèdent ont lieu au cours d'une réunion présidée par le Préfet pour les chefferies de 1er et 2ème degrés, et par le sous-préfet pour les chefferies de 3ème degré.

Le déroulement des consultations est consigné sur un procès-verbal signé du président de la réunion.

ARTICLE 13.- Le préfet transmet par voie hiérarchique aux autorités compétentes, le procès-verbal de consultation accompagné des pièces suivantes :

- un extrait de casier judiciaire du candidat (bulletin n°3);
- une copie d'acte de naissance de l'intéressé ou du jugement supplétif en tenant lieu ;
- un certificat médical d'aptitude physique établi par un médecin public ;
- une copie s'il y a lieu de l'acte officiel prouvant la vacance de la chefferie (acte de décès, démission ou destitution, rapport médical).

ARTICLE 14.- Le sous-préfet compétent transmet au préfet, un dossier similaire à celui prévu à l'article 13 ci-dessus.

ARTICLE 15.- Les chefs de 1er degré sont désignés par le Premier Ministre; ceux de 2ème degré par le Ministre de l'Administration Territoriale et ceux de 3ème degré par le préfet.

Source: Ibid

ARTICLE 16.- Les contestations soulevées à l'occasion de la désignation d'un chef sont portées devant l'autorité investie du pouvoir de désignation qui se prononce en premier et en dernier ressort.

Toutefois, la décision prise peut être rapportée, s'il est établi que l'autorité compétente a été induite en erreur.

ARTICLE 17.- (1) Le chef doit nécessairement résider sur son territoire de commandement;

(2) Les fonctions de chef traditionnel sont incompatibles avec toute autre fonction publique, Toutefois, l'autorité investie du pouvoir de désignation peut autoriser le cumul de fonctions, notamment lorsque la personne intéressée réside sur le territoire de la chefferie concernée.

ARTICLE 18.- (1) Le chef peut démissionner de ses fonctions.

(2) Sa démission est acceptée par l'autorité investie du pouvoir de désignation.

CHAPITRE III

ATTRIBUTIONS ET AVANTAGES ATTACHES

AUX FONCTIONS DE CHEF TRADITIONNEL

ARTICLE 19.- Sous l'autorité du Ministre de l'Administration Territoriale, les chefs traditionnels ont pour rôle de seconder les autorités administratives dans leur mission d'encadrement des populations.

ARTICLE 20.- Auxiliaires de l'Administration, les chefs traditionnels sont notamment chargés :

- 1°- de transmettre à la population les directives des autorités administratives, et d'en assurer l'exécution ;
- 2°- de concourir, sous la direction des autorités administratives compétentes, au maintien de l'ordre public et au développement économique, social et culturel de leur unités de commandement ;
- 3°- de recouvrer les impôts et taxes de l'Etat et des autres collectivités publiques, dans les conditions fixées par la réglementation.

Indépendamment des tâches qui précèdent, les chefs traditionnels doivent accomplir toute autre mission qui peut leur être confiée par l'autorité administrative locale.

ARTICLE 21.- Les chefs traditionnels peuvent, conformément à la coutume et lorsque les lois et règlements n'en disposent pas autrement, procéder à des conciliations ou arbitrages entre leurs administrés.

ARTICLE 22.- (1) Les chefs de 1er et 2ème degrés perçoivent mensuellement

- une allocation fixe, calculée sur la base de l'importance numérique de leur population ;
- une indemnité pour charges spéciales.

Source Ibid

(2) L'allocation fixe et l'indemnité pour charges spéciales prévues au présent article sont fixées par arrêté conjoint du Ministre de l'Administration Territoriale et du Ministre des Finances.

(3) L'allocation fixe est soumise à retenue pour impôt; elle ne peut être inférieure au salaire du travailleur de la 1ère catégorie échelon 1 du secteur public de la zone où est installée la chefferie.

ARTICLE 23. - (1) Les chefs traditionnels peuvent prétendre au paiement des remises sur l'impôt forfaitaire collecté par leurs soins, dans les conditions fixées par le Code Général des Impôts.

(2) Ils peuvent également prétendre à des primes d'efficacité octroyées par arrêté du Ministre de l'Administration Territoriale sur proposition des autorités administratives, en raison de leur dynamisme et de leur efficacité dans les opérations de développement économique et social de la nation.

(3) Les taux de cette prime sont fixés dans les mêmes conditions que ceux de l'allocation fixe et de l'indemnité pour charges spéciales.

ARTICLE 24. - (1) L'allocation fixe et l'indemnité pour charges spéciales ne peuvent se cumuler avec les indemnités parlementaires, le traitement de fonctionnaire ou d'agent des administrations publiques.

(2) En cas de cumul de fonctions dûment autorisé, l'intéressé doit opter, avant sa désignation par l'autorité compétente, soit pour le maintien de son traitement ou salaire, soit pour le bénéfice des émoluments de chef traditionnel.

ARTICLE 25. - (1) Tout chef traditionnel victime d'une incapacité permanente imputable au service peut prétendre :

- 1° à une rente viagère lorsque cette incapacité entraîne son dégageement de ses fonctions ;
- 2° à une indemnité dans les autres cas.

(2) Le montant des allocations prévues ci-dessus est déterminé par arrêté conjoint du Ministre de l'Administration Territoriale et du Ministre des Finances.

ARTICLE 26. - Les chefs traditionnels portent un insigne distinctif, et éventuellement une tenue dont les caractéristiques sont déterminées par arrêté du Ministre de l'Administration Territoriale. L'acquisition de cet insigne et de cette tenue est à leur charge.

CHAPITRE IV GARANTIES ET DISCIPLINE

ARTICLE 27. - (1) L'Etat est tenu d'assurer au chef la protection contre les menaces, outrages, violences, voies de fait, injures ou diffamation dont il peut être l'objet en raison ou à l'occasion de l'exercice de ses fonctions.

(2) Il est tenu, le cas échéant, de réparer le préjudice subi par le chef du fait de ces actes. Dans ce cas, l'Etat est d'office subrogé aux droits de la victime, pour obtenir du ou des auteurs des faits incriminés, la restitution des sommes versées par lui au chef à titre de dédommagement, indépendamment des sanctions pénales encourues.

Sources: ibid.

ARTICLE 28. - Les autorités administratives portent chaque année leur appréciation sur l'activité des chefs traditionnels de leurs circonscriptions administratives, compte tenu notamment de leur efficacité, de leur rendement et du développement économique et social de leur territoire de commandement.

ARTICLE 29. - En cas de faute dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions, en cas d'inefficacité, d'inertie ou d'exactions à l'égard des populations, les chefs traditionnels encourent les sanctions suivantes :

- rappel à l'ordre ;
- avertissement ;
- blâme simple ;
- blâme avec suspension pendant 3 mois au plus de la totalité des allocations ;
- destitution.

Les sanctions disciplinaires qui précèdent ne peuvent être infligées que si le chef a été préalablement appelé à donner des explications sur son comportement, son inefficacité ou son inertie.

ARTICLE 30. - (1) Le rappel à l'ordre, l'avertissement et le blâme simple sont infligés :

- a) - aux chefs de 3ème degré par le sous-préfet territorialement compétent ;
- b) - aux chefs de 2ème degré par le préfet, d'office ou sur proposition du sous-préfet ;
- c) - aux chefs de 1er degré par le gouverneur, d'office ou sur proposition du préfet.

(2) Le blâme avec suspension pendant 3 mois au plus de la totalité des allocations est infligé par le Ministre de l'Administration Territoriale.

(3) La destitution des chefs de 3ème degré est prononcée par le Ministre de l'Administration Territoriale, celle des chefs de 1er et 2ème degrés est prononcée par le Premier Ministre.

CHAPITRE V

DISPOSITIONS DIVERSES

ARTICLE 31. - Par dérogation aux dispositions de l'article 7 ci-dessus, certaines agglomérations urbaines peuvent être organisées en zones, quartiers et blocs par arrêté du Ministre de l'Administration Territoriale, sur rapport des autorités administratives locales, compte tenu de leur importance démographique et lorsque les nécessités d'encadrement l'exigent.

Toutefois, le Ministre de l'Administration Territoriale peut décider qu'une zone constituant antérieurement une chefferie traditionnelle soit maintenue en tant que telle; dans ce cas, la zone considérée bénéficie de la réglementation applicable aux chefferies de son degré de classement.

Souwa, Ibid

ARTICLE 32.- (1) Les zones, quartiers et blocs sont des structures hiérarchisées, placées sous l'autorité des responsables appelés : chefs de zones, chefs de quartiers, chefs de blocs.

(2) Leurs fonctions peuvent se cumuler avec toute autre activité salariée, à condition que les intéressés résident effectivement dans leur territoire de commandement.

ARTICLE 33.- (1) Les zones et les quartiers sont assimilés, du point de vue de leur fonctionnement et de leur administration, aux chefferies de 2ème et 3ème degrés.

(2) Le mode de désignation des chefs de zones, de quartiers et de blocs est déterminé par arrêtés du Ministre de l'Administration Territoriale.

ARTICLE 34.- (1) Les chefs de zones et de quartiers peuvent prétendre à la prime de rendement et aux remises sur l'impôt forfaitaire, dans les mêmes conditions que les chefs traditionnels. Ils n'ont droit ni à l'allocation fixe ni à l'indemnité pour charges spéciales.

(2) Les chefs de blocs peuvent prétendre à une remise sur l'impôt forfaitaire s'ils ont été désignés en qualité de collecteurs d'impôt.

ARTICLE 35.- Les chefs traditionnels qui exercent leurs fonctions dans les agglomérations urbaines réorganisées conformément aux dispositions de l'article 31 alinéa 1er ci-dessus, mais auxquelles ne s'applique pas l'article 31 alinéa 2 du présent décret, conservent leur statut coutumier à titre personnel.

ARTICLE 36.- Les avantages prévus au présent décret ne s'appliquent qu'aux chefferies traditionnelles dûment reclassées, conformément aux dispositions de l'article 2 ci-dessus.

ARTICLE 37.- Les contestations en matière de désignation des chefs non tranchées à la date de dissolution de la "Chieftancy Advisory Commission", instituée par la loi n° 7/SC du 10 décembre 1960 sont réglées conformément aux dispositions de l'article 16 du présent décret.

ARTICLE 38.- Les dispositions financières prévues aux articles 22 et 23 ci-dessus, entreront en vigueur à compter du 1er juillet 1977.

ARTICLE 39.- Sont abrogées toutes les dispositions antérieures au présent décret.

ARTICLE 40.- Le présent décret sera enregistré et publié au Journal Officiel français et en anglais.

YAOUNDE, le 15 JUILLET 1977

LE PRESIDENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE

(6) AHMADOU AHIDJO

POUR COPIE CERTIFIEE, CONFORME

YAOUNDE, le 16 JUILLET 1977

LE DIRECTEUR DE L'ORGANISATION

DU TERRITOIRE, Isaac NJOMGANG

Isaac NJOMGANG

Appendix 15: Attendance list for Fons Momo (Meta Fons with the D.O of 03/01/2017)

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
PEACE - WORK - FATHERLAND

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
PAIX - TRAVAIL - PATRIE

NORTH WEST REGION

THE DIVISIONAL OFFICER
MBENGWI SUB DIVISION
TO
WHOM IT MY CONCERN

MOMO DIVISION

MBENGWI SUB DIVISION

NW06/02/161/

SUBJECT: Attendance list for

Fons Momo (Meta Fons with the D.O of 03/01/2017).

NO.	NAME	PROFESSION	PHONE NO.	SIGNATURE
1	AKOM MAC	V.H of Kai	675074179	[Signature]
2	FON FOCHO T.H	Fon of Kob	675029898	[Signature]
3	Fon Fomukong	Fon of Bessit	676047561	[Signature]
4	TEGHEN H. G	Fon of Barakwe	677696296	[Signature]
5	NWE OBED	Rep. Fon of Choum	679297289	[Signature]
6	Tebso G.M	Traditional R	677365195	[Signature]
7	Mbabit Pius wda	Rep Fon Njindom	67756294	[Signature]
8	Fon ANOH Inadans N	Traditional Ruler	676567585	[Signature]
9	Fon Mbabit H.T. (2.T.V)	Fon of Tug	675775521	[Signature]
10	Fon Mbabit H.T.	Student	679499459	[Signature]
11	Robert M. Fomng	Traditional	674714788	[Signature]
12	Fon Mbachen Enak	Traditional R	661171723	[Signature]
13	H.M.M MBANU II	Traditional Ruler	677081449	[Signature]
14	Anderson Akoh	Journalist	675035248	[Signature]
14	Wick Humphrey	Fongary	673133597	[Signature]
15	NGU Atanga J	Fon of Wamubiti	677711485	[Signature]
16	Fonguh Henry	Fon of Ku-Bone	675828369	[Signature]
17	HRH Fon Azah	Ngwokwong	69923248	[Signature]
18	HRH Fominyen	Fon of Nyen	672671225	[Signature]
19	HRH Fon Fon Yam	Fon of Zangmbong	677576363	[Signature]

Appendix 16: Minutes of the Meta Fons with the D.O of Momo Division of 03/01/2017MINUTES OF THE META FONIS WITH THE
D.O OF MOMO DIVISION OF 31/1/17

The meeting took place in the MECUDA Hall on Tuesday 3rd of 1, 2017. The meeting began at 11 am prompt while waiting for the coming of arrival of other Fons. A proposed Agenda was subsequently read by the D.O himself who served as the Chairman of the meeting. Anthem was twined by the secretary on duty - AKEM. This was immediately followed by a word of prayer done by HRH Fon AKAM of Kai.

The D.O then took the floor to reiterate on the President Speech made on the 31/12/16. He brought down the importance of the speech made by His Excellency, which had as principal recommendation of the maintenance of peace both at the National and in their Local Communities in their various Fandoms. He equally brought the indulgences of the Fons to be aware of the redeployment of Teachers within the Division. He equally call on the Fons to be aware of the insecurity of the Division, planned by some vandals on the population.

HRH Fon TAWU of Mberewi Fon reacted to the strike activities and the reaction of the Head of State in his speech. He in a nutshell identifies some causes of the strike; 'inadequate social facilities such as a University in Mberewi. To him the strike activities were peacefully demonstrating their civil right. The strikes according to him were violated by the arm forces.

He concluded by proposing that the soldiers who violated the strikers should be brought to answer ~~for~~ their acts.

HRH Fon AKAM of Kai in the same light identify the importance of the Head of State by admitting the recognition of an Anglophone problem. To him this problem has been identified and proper management should be followed soon regarding what is already done on the ground. He went further to identify the weaknesses in common entrance examination in our professional schools. Imbalance is grossly practised with the Anglophones giving a less quotas to admission into these schools.

The D.O reiterate on the weakness of study output of trained teachers posted to their different post duties. To him administrators contributed to the mix-system of educational training. E.g. Francophones expected to be trained in English courses, do not served the purpose of their training due to a second language impediment.

HRH Fon of Barakwe took the floor to stress on the poor treatment of the 3rd class Fono in Nieta who seemed not to be recognized by the power been legally through a Prefectural order from the National Body in Yaounde. He went further to bring the indulgences of the Administration on the adverse treatment given to strike vandals who were transported to serve their prison terms in Yaounde. To him there is the existence of competences courts within the Divisional and regional level to manage the strikers.

He equally identify the weaknesses of the usage of the bicultural languages of French and English in the writing of official texts. He recalled the existence of the constitutional reforms gives a specific conditionally of Traditional Ruler as auxiliary of the Administration. He by extension agreed with HRH the Fon of Kai to pass the message through the D.O to the Central Administration that the Meter Fon unanimously denied the issue of secession in favour of Federalism.

He concluded by outlining the following problems:

- Unemployment as a major cause of youth
- Marginalization of Anglophones again.
- Poor infrastructure and communication within their Fodomos
- Poor channelling of grassroots poor living conditions to the central authority.

The above points/causes outline were supported and re-emphasized by the Fon of Wumnebit.

Discussion on the prefectural order resurfaced on the table as the Fon suggested they need to have their official recognition. Fon AKam re-iterate and proposed a proper investigation and a list of identification of the Fom. The D.O examined the weaknesses of Traditional Administration, whereby there is the general tendency of absentee Fon who paid importances to personal services to individual and private needs than the community. "Issue of Traditional Ruler is a need of die issue" D.O in other words these Traditional Rulers should be responsible to their responsibilities and be able to give an account timely to the administration when call in respect to duty. ~~Functionality~~ Therefore Traditional Rulers cannot be dubily receive the 50,000 incentives for no work done.

He equally identified the non and poor attendance of Chiefs to administrative meetings called by the D.Os and S.D.Os. These meetings which aimed at discussing issues of their general interest and their communities. Consequently, they do not adequately get the basic issues which are to be transmitted to their communities. Chiefs are equally perpetually non-attendance at National Ceremonies. As a resolution to the attendance of Chiefs to these ceremonies, the Youth Department have been deployed to take attendance.

As concerned the issue raised on Trans-humans there is a general tendency of conflicting occupation of grazing land. He called the Chiefs indulgent not to go into relax and personal negotiations for grazing land. The procedures of acquiring and managing of Grazing Land is the sole responsibility of MINIPRA not the D.O and S.D.O. The Chief of Gumbo stressed on the conflicting usage of grazing land especially around the palace premises where the graziers have violated. The graziers justified their actions to be ordered from the power been from Vaoude. He beseeched on the D.O to suggest proper solutions to this conflict which has consequently impeded his functional duties as a Chief in his Fandom.

The D.O reacted that the problem has not been properly channelled to the Administration in Nibengui, he suggested the fencing of grazing land and concluded that the grazing commissions in Bamenda are responsible and not the power been in Vaoude.

⑤

Closely linked to the ~~growing~~ issue is the Frontier or boundary conflicts characterised all the villages of the Meta Clan and Momo Division. Frontier conflicts with a case study of the Zang Tabi Fandom is critical, as there is the removal and implantation of Frontier boundaries indication done by parties involved in the numerous conflicts. He further substantiate the procedures of resolution by the S. D. O and D O who listened to their hearings. Again he identified the non participation of the Borosors in community works within their Fandom. To him these Borosors have vehemently refused to be members of his Fandom by not participating in civil activities.

The D. O reiterate the functions of the Traditional Councils and their Fons. They are the sole judges who begin the procedures of peace keeping and maintenance within their Fandoms. Fons and Councils of cultural indigenous origin should be towards investigation done and not resolution to the Administration. Therefore Traditional Rulers and their Councils should be able to handle conflicts in respect to customary laws used by the Fons initial stamped. Examples of Frontier conflicts, Njindom faces conflicts with Basatug Wumrebit and Wumbet Reports should be detailed written carrying proper investigation. He concluded that Commission created for investigation should not be done relative affiliation which must often thwart the investigation and proper management and resolution of Frontier conflicts.

The problematic of representative and signing of respective orders was raised. The effect of

poor appointment of representatives who know little or nothing of the customs and values of their indigenous land. Irresponsible representatives of not good will and fate.

The resolution of former grazing issue have been given tentative approaches whereby Commission have been created such as that of the Bessi Fondom to investigate the territorial occupation of grazing and application for grazing land are properly followed for an effective utilization of the grazing land cited in the case of Mbergwi and Bessi.

Again the Fon of Gundom proposed traditional investigation should be done in the presence of modern Administrative representative. He equally raised the marginalization of conflict resolutions issues by aged and older Fons who claimed superiority over the younger Fons who are in the majority on the Meta clan.

The issue of meta history was raised as a problematic due to the blake discontinuity of their historical evolution. The Fons Union or Meta Fons Union seem not to be existence due to conflicting hereditary of Fondoms. Rumpet should not be sounded across frontier of Fondoms, if it is done it is the violation of territorial jurisdiction. The appellation of Chief are conflicting as the Paramount and class Fondoms which appeared as 1st, 2nd and 3rd classes. The D.O further substantiate the problem of physical frontier and traditional as a weakness to social integration and the undermarkation of frontier delimitation.

reports of investigation using customary methods and forwards the reports which has been used with the Council Stamp and that of the Fon. Unvisa report and non stamped by the Fon will not be examined by the authorities been. Again reports should be detailly written carrying proper investigation and procedures of investigation. He proposed that Commission of investigation set in place by the Meta Fon should not be done on affiliation but intuitive investigation of goodwill and competencies. To him it the Commission not well supervise and caution, there will be the poor management and thwarted frontier investigation.

Again the problematic of frontier investigation was equally seen at the levels of representatives and signing of reports. Representatives appointed are usually non knowledgeable of the customs and values of their indigenous land. As an approach to the resolution of frontier conflict and grazing land an example was drawn from the Bassi Fandom land and application are written and paper allowed for an effective utilization of grazing land. The Fon of Gundom proposed that presence of an observatory team from the Administration or modern administration. He equally raised the marginalization of young Foms by aged Foms who claimed master their traditional values and know the history of their Fandom than the younger Foms.

The above brought is the issue of Meta History. To some of the Foms, the problematic of their History is seen in its discontinuity of historical evolution. The Meta Foms Unvisa seem not to be in existence due to conflict.

The Meta Foss Union issue was raised as a union which seems not to be existence Foss brainstorm on the existence of constitution or by-laws to govern the association of the Meta Foss. Again the mandate of the heads of the association is not stipulated anywhere. Moreover, ^{the} inconsistency of holding meetings and fractionalism ~~of~~ within the Foss itself.

Looking at other matters, the Foss of Kaw raised the rehabilitation of road across the Meta villages non identified by the Meta Foss and their union. Further there is the pollution of water catchment done by both the groups and ~~the~~ by the non identified operators of the rehabilitation projects. The Meta Foss unanimously agreed to meet on the 21/1/2017 to brainstorm on the review and re-examination of the Meta Foss Union Association constitution.

Rural electrification was raised as a problem by some villages who have not received ~~the~~ the findings of visibility study whereby some properties were destroyed and needed to be compensated. Visiting colleagues should be well stipulated either a friendly visit or official visit should be properly directed and be told or ~~informed~~ to be aware by both parties. The D.O concluded on the cordiality of visiting relations are made.

The meeting ended at about 5pm with a concluding words from the D.O. thanking those who made it to the meeting.

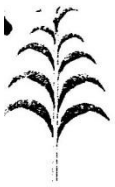
the Parliamentarians and persons of good will not leaving out the elites and Meter associations of cultural background.

The Meta Foss unanimously agreed to meet on 21/12/07 in the MECCUDA Hall to brainstorm on the Renaissance of the Meta Foss Union with the reviewing of a supposed constitution drafted seemingly not in existence.

Again Rural electrification which hampered some properties in the course of electrifying the villages have not been compensated by the powers been. Again visit to Foudons either a friendly visit to members other than the Foss which could be official or private notification should be done for whatever purpose of the visit. The D.O concluded that cordiality should be the condition sine qua non for any inter Foudon visits.

The meeting, which was very exciting with important issue of both general interest and private interest ended at 5pm with a concluding words from the D.O thanking those present, the intuitive and intelligent contribution to the peacekeeping and maintenance of their sub-Division. He lastly appealed for the Foss indulgence by presenting a Ph.D student researcher who is in need for their cooperative assistance in the writing of one of the principal functions of traditional authorities promoting integration within their Foudons in particular and Cameroon at large.

Appendix 17: Harassment and Usurpation of my Inherited Traditional Title of Chief of Mbebili Village by the Paramount Fon of Bafut J.N. Abumbi II through His "Kwifor"



HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS N.G. NEBACHI III

**MBEBILI ROYAL
BAFUT**



**PALACE
SUB-DIVISION**



PEACE

UNITY

DEVELOPMENT

Ref:.....

Your Ref:.....
Phone: 962 78 66
Date: 15/09/2003

Through the Divisional Officer for Bafut Sub-Division,
Through the Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam,
Through the Governor, North West Province,
To the Honourable Minister of Territorial Administration,
Ministry of Territorial Administration, Yaounde.



Your Excellency,

DET
15/9/03

RE: **HARASSMENT AND USURPATION OF MY INHERITED TRADITIONAL TITLE OF CHIEF OF MBEBILI VILLAGE BY THE PARAMOUNT FON OF BAFUT J. N. ABUMBI II THROUGH HIS "KWIFOR"**

I am the traditional Chief of Mbebili as the Administration of Bafut and my Subjects can testify. Even though I have not yet been classified as we are still waiting a further classification of Chiefs, I am the inherited Chief of my village Mbebili. The following are the satanic acts carried out on me and some of my subjects on my behalf and most in court.

- 1.) Though I do not contest the paramountship of the Fon of Bafut, I have my right over my area of jurisdiction which is being violated by the Fon of Bafut by inciting some of my people against me and has disrupted my traditional institutions and seized some of my raffia palm bushes.
- 2.) All invitations from the Administration recognize me as Chief and from 1999, when ever I go to the grandstand, he sends his thugs to disgrace me and push me in the public. Some of these famous thugs are Michael Chembuh, Ndifor Emmanuel and Tumaju Joseph Mforbi. My subjects are always wanting to attack them but I always restrain them to wait for the decision of the Administration following my several complaints.

- 3.) He has constantly taken me to court accusing me for calling myself the chief of my village. All history taught in Bafut from primary school, and research work by eminent scholars confirm the fact that my throne was the first to settle on Bafut land before the coming of all of them.

The paramount Fon of Bafut confirms this in his various letters to the Administration. In the 1995 list of traditional rulers, I am no. 23 and in the 1998 list I am no. 22. All these lists sent by him. He has in the past when we were on speaking terms both signed documents, I the Chief of Mbebili under his own nose and he saw. Example is the last page of MBECUDA Constitution here attached. He is worrying now because he says I join the other Chiefs of the area to complain against him for creating new Chiefs.

I possess signed documents from the Administration and the Bafut Rural Council showing that I sold tax tickets as the Chief of Mbebili for many years since I took over the Mbebili throne from my late father in 1974. (copies attached)

- 4.) As concerns no. 3 above, three prominent cases are outstanding:-

- (a) He took me to court for calling myself Chief and that I should desist from owning the title.
- (b) He took my wife to court for what he terms "wearing Chieftaincy cowries".
- (c) He took some members of my "Kwifor" to court for what he terms "wrongly using the instruments and equipment of "kwifor" and "Mbaabooh" secrete societies" and also creating an over ten year old village traditional council in my palace.

Sir, the court cases referred to above have a connection with Chieftaincy and according to the chieftaincy law the courts do not handle them but since the native court in Bafut is full of the Fons people, including his relatives and none from any other area in Bafut, I always lost the cases.

I should be grateful therefore that since I have limited powers and without money, the administration should protect me from the Fon of Bafut because I serve the administration by organising my subjects and was collecting Government tax money and mobilizing development project for my people. I humbly wish to suggest that:

- a) The Hon. Minister see the Minister of Justice to check these cases from the customary court Bafut whether they are not chieftaincy cases being tried by the court, which is contrary to the chieftaincy law. They are: Civil Suit case No. 17/2000/2001 of 25/01/2001, Bk2 /2000/20001.
- Civil Suit case No. 9/2001/2002 of 14/02/2002, Bk 3/99/2000,
 - Civil Suit case No. 3/99/2000 of 04/10/99
- b) The Customary Court in Bafut be represented by ALL the village in Bafut and NOT only from around the paramount Fon's palace. For example:- Court member John Njofor Achirimbi is the Fon's bother and lives about 300 metres from the palace. Court members Nchotu William Ngwa is at the head of the Fon's "Kwifor" and lives just behind the Fon's palace.

Court member Mbonifor Isaiah Ngwanu is a newly made Chief and is secretary of the Atangcho's meeting in the Fon's palace. He lives about 2km. From the Fon's palace. Court member Ngwa Joseph is a relative of the palace and lives about 1 km. Form the palace.

Hon. Minister, with the above relationship and consoled with the Fon's traditional power, can anybody win a case against him in the Bafut customary court? More so, they have no right to try Chieftaincy cases which they have been doing.

This report comes only to reinforce the one I sent to the Ministry in October 2001. Despite the steps taken, the paramount Fon of Bafut still looks low on the Administration.

While hoping the Administration through the Minister of Territorial Administration will treat these provocative and killing acts with the urgency they deserve to avert such occurrences in Bafut and to gives justice a chance in the Bafut customary court.

I am yours in your Service,



H.R.H N. G. Nebachi III

ADVANCE COPY TO THE MINISTER



19. SOCIAL ACTIVITIES:

The Manjong shall support social activities such as games and sports, cultural activities etc.

20. DEVELOPMENT.

- (a) The Steering Committee and the village Council should encourage the youths of the village to build at home by mobilising parents who own plots along our streets, to be ready to give them out to them following the tradition laid down.
- (b) The routine cleaning up of the roads and other minor works in the village shall have a clean up committee formed by the home branch and directly responsible to the village council on matters of quick solution.
- (c) A health Committee, if necessary, shall be organised within the conditions stipulated by the health department.

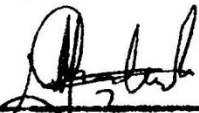
21. SPECIAL DUTY.


The steering Committee in consultation with the village council shall execute any other duty not mentioned here, when such duty is deemed necessary for the upkeep of the aims of the manjong.

22. Changes in the Constitution can only be done with the approval of the delegates meeting which shall appoint a constitution committee to effect the changes.


6th November 1988 at
MBEBILI - BAFUT.

Signs


 CHIEF NEECHI OF MBEBILI


 FORLEM JOSEPH NEE
 PRESIDENT GENERAL




 HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
 ABUBAHI II
 FON OF BAFUT

D.O.'s office Baghat
22/12/94

Received from chief Nabachi
George of Mbebeli, the sum of
45,000fus (forty five thousands)
being tax money for 1993/1994
fiscal year.

Official Receipt will be
issued to him after payment
into the Treasury.

Joseph Mumbi

D.O.'s office Baghat.
20th of July 1995

Temporal Receipt

Received from Chief Naba George
Nabachi of Mbebeli Quarter the
sum of 6000fus (six thousand) being
tax money for the financial year
1993/1994.

The Official Receipt will be
issued to him when money is
paid into the Treasury



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
REVENUE COLLECTOR'S RECEIPT - RURAL/URBAN COUNCIL



Bafut Rural COUNCIL

No 214469

Date 3 - 7 - 1996

HEAD

Received from

Chief Nebachi George of Mbebiti
the sum of ten thousand francs only

Sub-Head 9

being (description of payment)*

Outstanding (in words) 10.000= (in figures) Francs CFA

Collected by Chief Nebachi
Yell Tax Money

*If space is insufficient further particulars must be inserted at the back of the Receipt

Ledger Page No. _____

Signature or Mark of Payer

Signature of Treasurer

Cash Page No. _____

INAB 359/0187/2000 bk-50d

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
REVENUE COLLECTOR'S RECEIPT - RURAL/URBAN COUNCIL



Bafut R. COUNCIL

No 215088

Date 15-07-1996

HEAD

Received from

Chief Nebachi George of Mbebiti
the sum of thirty thousand francs only

Sub-Head 9

being (description of payment)*

Final payment of shortage (in words) 30.000= (in figures) Francs CFA

due to transfer tax tickets

*If space is insufficient further particulars must be inserted at the back of the Receipt

Ledger Page No. _____

Signature or Mark of Payer

Signature of Treasurer

Cash Page No. _____

INAB 359/0187/2000 bk-50d

rebates allow to him (27.000)

Appendix 18: Table of Traditional Chieftaincies of the North West Region (Fondoms)

<http://www.northwest-cameroon.com/home-86-inner-0.html>

No	Fondom	Sub-division	Name of the Fon	Class
BOYO DIVISION				
1.	KOM	FUNDONG	VINCENT YUH II	1st CLASS
2.	BUM	FONFUKA	KWANG PETER YAI	2 nd CLASS
3.	MBESSA	BELO	NJONG GILBERT	2 nd CLASS
4.	BELO	BELO	PETER NDONG ABANG	2 nd CLASS
5.	ANYAJUA	BELO	NSOM JOHNSON CHONGSI	2 nd CLASS
6.	FUNDONG	FUNDONG	DIANG ZACHEUS	2 nd CLASS
7.	ABUH	FUNDONG	CLEMENT FONKWAH MBENG	2 nd CLASS
8.	NJINIKOM	NJINIKOM	NGEH FRANCIS	2 nd CLASS
BUI DIVISION				
1.	NSO	KUMBO	SEHM MBINGLO I	1st CLASS
2.	NDZENDZEV	KUMBO	JOSEHP YUYUN	2 nd CLASS
3.	NKAR	JAKIRI	WIRBA PATRICK	2 nd CLASS
4.	KILU-UN	JAKIRI	JOHN TAMGIN	2 nd CLASS
5.	NDZENREM – NYAM	JAKIRI	LUKONG ATNTHONY MORMAH	2 nd CLASS
6.	NKOR KOCHI	NONI	WAII JOSEPH NFON	2 nd CLASS
7.	DJOTTIN	NONI	TAYEM NGAM JOSEPH	2 nd CLASS
8.	NSEH	NKUM	SENYUY OLIVER	2 nd CLASS
9.	MBIAME	MBVEM	SHINDZEV TATAH III JAFF SHADRACK	2 nd CLASS
10.	OKU	OKU	SINTIEH II NGUM MARTIN YUOSEMBOM	2 nd CLASS
DONGA - MANTUNG DIVISION				
1.	NKAMBE	NKAMBE	JABO NFOR IBRAHIM	2 nd CLASS
2.	TABENKEN	NKAMBE	NGAYI DIBOTI POLYCARP	2 nd CLASS
3.	BINKA	NKAMBE	BENCHEP NFOR ADAMU	2 nd CLASS
4.	BINSHUA	NKAMBE	KIMBI EDMONG	2 nd CLASS
5.	MBOT	NKAMBE	SHEY BANABAS MBUNWE	2 nd CLASS
6.	WATT	NKAMBE	NGORAKE NFOR	2 nd CLASS
7.	KUNGI	NKAMBE	YAYA MUSA GAMNJE BOUDI	2 nd CLASS
8.	MFE	NWA	Vacant	2 nd CLASS
9.	SIH	NWA	Vacant	2 nd CLASS
10.	SAAM	NWA	BOCHIE BOCHIE FRIDAY	2 nd CLASS
11.	YANG	NWA	ANDRE ANJIKA	2 nd CLASS
12.	MBEM	NWA	NGWIM SAMUEL NGEBUIN	2 nd CLASS
13.	NTONG	NWA	YUNGI YETOH JOSEPH	2 nd CLASS
14.	GOM	NWA	NKATOW GEORGE NJAPNCHAK	2 nd CLASS
15.	LUS	NWA	JATO PARTICE GUWO	2 nd CLASS
16.	KWAJA	NWA	GEORGE SHOLAK GEMBE	2 nd CLASS
17.	NTEM	NWA	FOWANKO TIMOTHY NFONANSI II	2 nd CLASS

18.	ABAFUM	AKO	WADEFE KENNEDY CHUEJUBUA	2 nd CLASS
19.	ABUENSHIE	AKO	AMAFE POWA CYPRIAN	2 nd CLASS
20.	AKWAJA	AKO	GEORGE WAZIRI NSEKA	2 nd CLASS
21.	BERABE	AKO	FOABO EMMANUEL MBAMU	2 nd CLASS
22.	BUKU	AKO	LENGE JOSHP EKU	2 nd CLASS
23.	NDAKA	AKO	UMARU TATU GBWANYA	2 nd CLASS
24.	NKAMCHI	MISAJE	RICHARD CHEFON	2 nd CLASS
25.	AKWETO	MISAJE	JOHN KITITA KEI	2 nd CLASS
26.	DUMBU	MISAJE	JEBU AUGUSTINE JANG	2 nd CLASS
27.	NDU	NDU	NFORMI EMMANUEL NFOR	2 nd CLASS
28.	TALLA	NDU	NGALA DICKSON NGWANG	2 nd CLASS
29.	NGARUM	NDU	JOCHIM DOCTA NGANJI	2 nd CLASS
30.	NTUNDIP	NDU	FON NFOR PETER NFOR	2 nd CLASS
MENCHUM DIVISION				
1.	BAFMENG	FUNGOM	ANENG NYA FRANCIS	2 nd CLASS
2.	ESU	FUNGOM	KUM ACHUO II KAWZU GILBERT CHI	2 nd CLASS
3.	WEH	FUNGOM	BAMA II NAZARIUS KPUE	2 nd CLASS
4.	ABAR	FUNGOM	BUM KANG AARON KULO JOHN II	2 nd CLASS
5.	BADJI	FURU – AWA	GALADIMA ANDREW NYANGJU	2 nd CLASS
6.	FURU – AWAH	FURU – AWA	TEMBE JONATHAN	2 nd CLASS
7.	FURU – BANA	FURU – AWA	EYAH FIDELIS AKAU	2 nd CLASS
8.	BENAKUMA	MENCHUM VALLEY	AZEH WACHONG	2 nd CLASS
9.	MODELE	MENCHUM VALLEY	AYO WILSON OFON III	2 nd CLASS
10.	BENADE	MENCHUM VALLEY	IHMIBRU ABRAHAM KUDI	2 nd CLASS
11.	MUKURU	MENCHUM VALLEY	FOTOH ATHANASIOUS ANGIE II	2 nd CLASS
12.	BATOMO	MENCHUM VALLEY	ANYI ESE JOHANNES	2 nd CLASS
13.	BAWORO	MENCHUM VALLEY	HIMBRU EPHRAIM	2 nd CLASS
MEZAM DIVISION				
1.	MANKON	BAMENDA II	ANGWAFOR III S.A.N.	1 ST CLASS
2.	BAFUT	BAFUT	ABUMBI II	1 ST CLASS
3.	BALI NYONGA	BALI	Dr. DOH GANYONGA III	1 ST CLASS
4.	CHOMBA	BAMENDA II	FORBUZE Martin	2 nd CLASS
5.	MUNDUM I	BAFUT	NDENECHO F.T. II	2 nd CLASS
6.	NSEM	BAFUT	MBINFOR ISAIHA NEBA	2 nd CLASS
7.	MANKANIKONG	BAFUT	ATANGA MUWA	2 nd CLASS

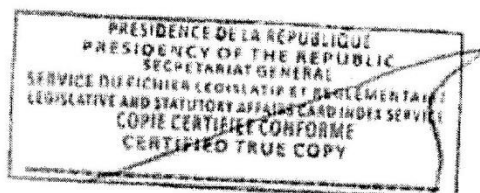
8.	MANKWI	BAFUT	TALA SIMON NEBA	2 nd CLASS
9.	MAMBU	BAFUT	MBAH WANKI WILLIAM	2 nd CLASS
10.	BANJI	BAFUT	VACANT/DEAD	2 nd CLASS
11.	BAWUM	BAFUT	NGU NAZARIUS NOTH TO-O II	2 nd CLASS
12.	OBANG	BAFUT	NANOH PHILEMON II	2 nd CLASS
13.	MBANKONG	BAFUT	NGWAMELLA'A II ELVIS NEBA	2 nd CLASS
14.	BAMBILI	TUBAH	AFUNGOCHI AWEMO II	2 nd CLASS
15.	KEDJOM KETINGUH	TUBAH	VIYOUF NELSON SHETEH	2 nd CLASS
16.	BAMBUI	TUBAH	ANGAFOR MOMBO-OH III	2 nd CLASS
17.	KEDJOM KEKU	TUBAH	VUBANGSI BENJAMIN VUTSIBONG	2 nd CLASS
18.	LAMIDAT SABGA	TUBAH	MALLAM MAMOUDA SAGBA ABDOULAYE	2 nd CLASS
19.	BAMENDAKWE	BAMENDA I	FORSUH FONGWA II	2 nd CLASS
20.	NSONGWA	BAMENDA II	F.E.N. FONWADE III	2 nd CLASS
21.	NKWEN	BAMENDA III	NGUFOR III S.Z.	2 nd CLASS
22.	BAWOCK	BALI	QUOIMON NANA WANDA THEODORE	2 nd CLASS
23.	PINYIN	SANTA	TANNI GODFRED	2 nd CLASS
24.	AWING	SANTA	FOZO PUWAGH II	2 nd CLASS
25.	AKUM	SANTA	NDIKUM NGWASHI GEORGE II	2 nd CLASS
26.	BALIGHAM	SANTA	M.S.T. GALABE II	2 nd CLASS
MOMO DIVISION				
1.	NGIENMUWAH	BATIBO	TECHE NJEI II	2 nd CLASS
2.	ZANG – TABI	MBENGWI	JACOB AGBOR TABI	2 nd CLASS
3.	MBENGWI	MBENGWI	NJOKEM THADDEUS I TAWAM	2 nd CLASS
4.	NYEN	MBENGWI	FOMINYEN NGYA R. II	2 nd CLASS
5.	GUNEKU	MBENGWI	FOMUKI PARICK NJI	2 nd CLASS
6.	KAI	MBENGWI	Dr. T. MAC AKAM	2 nd CLASS
7.	BATIBO	BATIBO	TEBO AFUMBA	2 nd CLASS
8.	ASHONG	BATIBO	MBAH CHRISTOPHER MBAFOR III	2 nd CLASS
9.	BESSSI – AWUM	BATIBO	MBAH RICHARDSON FORKUM II	2 nd CLASS
10.	GUZANG	BATIBO	GWAN MBANYAMSIG III CHARLES MBAH	2 nd CLASS
11.	TIBEN	BATIBO	MOUDI BERNARD	2 nd CLASS
12.	ENYOH	BATIBO	FOMBA RICHARD AYONG	2 nd CLASS
13.	NGWO	NJIKWA	Dr. Col. ANAGHO AKO HANS	2 nd CLASS
14.	OSHIE	NJIKWA	ANYANGWE ERICSYNOL YANDE	2 nd CLASS
15.	TEZE	NGIE	ATUGHAP JUSTINE E.	2 nd CLASS
16.	ABEGUM	WIDIKUM	NKON VINCENT EDUM	2 nd CLASS
17.	ANGWI	WIDIKUM	FONGUM GORJI DINKA	2 nd CLASS

18.	EBENDI	WIDIKUM	VACANT/DEATH	2 nd CLASS
19.	BARAMBICHANG	WIDIKUM	AWUNO PATRICK	2 nd CLASS
20.	AKANUMNKU ADORATE	BI HAMAN	BI HAMAN	2 nd CLASS
21.	EKAW	WIDIKUM	AGOH MOSES ABOH	2 nd CLASS
NGOKENTUNJIA DIVISION				
1.	BAMUNKA	NDOP CENTRAL	MEBOH FEUNGHI IV	2 nd CLASS
2.	BAMBALANG	NDOP CENTRAL	SHOMITANG II KEVIN	2 nd CLASS
3.	BAMESSING	NDOP CENTRAL	RICHARD MUTONG II	2 nd CLASS
4.	BAMILI	NDOP CENTRAL	EDRISUH NOPU	2 nd CLASS
5.	BABESSI	BABESSI	YIMUO OLIVER NSONDONEMBIO II	2 nd CLASS
6.	BABA I	BABESSI	FUEKEMSHI MELO	2 nd CLASS
7.	BANGOLAN	BABESSI	CHAFI ISAAC	2 nd CLASS
8.	BABUNGO	BALIKUMBAT	ZOFOA ABOUBAKAR	2 nd CLASS
9.	BALIKUMBAT	BALIKUMBAT		2 nd CLASS
10.	BAFANJI	BALIKUMBAT	GWEFUNI FRANSUA NONOH	2 nd CLASS
11.	BAMUMKUMBIT	BALIKUMBAT	GODLOVE AYENG III	2 nd CLASS
31.	NTUNDIP	NDU	FON NFOR PETER NFOR	2 nd CLASS

**Appendix 19: Decree N° 2020/526 of 02 Sept 2020 fixing the number of Regional
Councillors per Division and Categorie**

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

PAIX – TRAVAIL - PATRIE



DECRET N° 2020/526 DU 02 SEPT 2020
fixant le nombre de Conseillers Régionaux
par Département et par catégorie.-

LE PRESIDENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE,

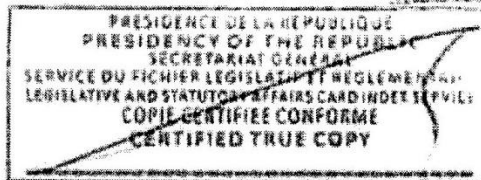
- Vu la Constitution ;
- Vu la loi n° 2012/001 du 19 avril 2012 portant Code Electoral, modifiée et complétée par la loi n° 2012/017 du 21 décembre 2012 et la loi n° 2019/005 du 25 avril 2019 ;
- Vu la loi n° 2019/006 du 25 avril 2019 fixant le nombre, la proportion par catégorie et le régime des indemnités des conseillers régionaux ;
- Vu la loi n° 2019/024 du 24 décembre 2019 portant Code Général des Collectivités Territoriales Décentralisées ;
- Vu le décret n° 77/245 du 15 juillet 1977 portant organisation des chefferies traditionnelles ;
- Vu le décret n° 2008/376 du 12 novembre 2008 portant organisation administrative de la République du Cameroun,

DECRETE :

ARTICLE 1^{er}.- Le présent décret, pris en application des dispositions de la loi n° 2019/006 du 25 avril 2019 susvisée, fixe le nombre de Conseillers Régionaux par Département et par catégorie, ainsi qu'il suit :

I. REGION DE L'ADAMAOUA

DÉPARTEMENT	CATÉGORIE		TOTAL
	DÉLÉGUÉS DE DÉPARTEMENT	REPRÉSENTANTS DU COMMANDEMENT TRADITIONNEL	
DJEREM	09	04	13
FARO-ET-DEO	09	04	13
MAYO-BANYO	13	04	17
MBERE	14	04	18
VINA	25	04	29
TOTAL DE LA RÉGION	70	20	90



II. REGION DU CENTRE

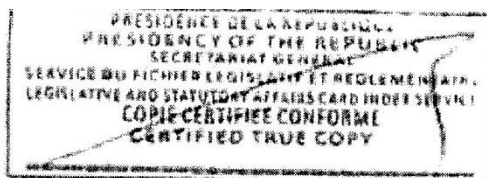
DÉPARTEMENT	CATÉGORIE		TOTAL
	DÉLÉGUÉS DE DÉPARTEMENT	REPRÉSENTANTS DU COMMANDEMENT TRADITIONNEL	
HAUTE-SANAGA	07	02	09
LEKIE	09	02	11
MBAM-ET-INOUBOU	09	02	11
MBAM-ET-KIM	05	02	07
MEFOU-ET-AFAMBA	08	02	10
MEFOU-ET-AKONO	04	02	06
MFOUNDI	07	02	09
NYONG-ET-KELLE	10	02	12
NYONG-ET-MFOUMOU	05	02	07
NYONG-ET-SO'O	06	02	08
TOTAL DE LA RÉGION	70	20	90

III. REGION DE L'EST

DÉPARTEMENT	CATÉGORIE		TOTAL
	DÉLÉGUÉS DE DÉPARTEMENT	REPRÉSENTANTS DU COMMANDEMENT TRADITIONNEL	
BOUMBA-ET-NGOKO	10	05	15
HAUT-NYONG	23	05	28
KADEY	16	05	21
LOM-ET-DJEREM	21	05	26
TOTAL DE LA RÉGION	70	20	90

IV. REGION DE L'EXTREME-NORD

DÉPARTEMENT	CATÉGORIE		TOTAL
	DÉLÉGUÉS DE DÉPARTEMENT	REPRÉSENTANTS DU COMMANDEMENT TRADITIONNEL	
DIAMARE	14	04	18
LOGONE-ET-CHARI	14	04	18



MAYO-DANAY	15	03	18
MAYO-KANI	10	03	13
MAYO-SAVA	05	03	08
MAYO-TSANAGA	12	03	15
TOTAL DE LA REGION	70	20	90

V. REGION DU LITTORAL

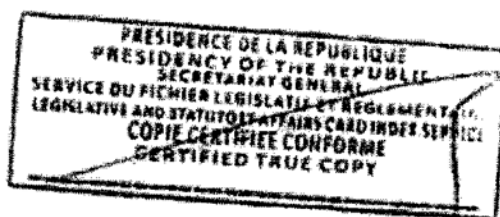
DEPARTEMENT	CATEGORIE		TOTAL
	DELEGUES DE DEPARTEMENT	REPRESENTANTS DU COMMANDEMENT TRADITIONNEL	
MOUNGO	19	05	24
NKAM	06	05	11
SANAGA-MARITIME	15	05	20
WOURI	30	05	35
TOTAL DE LA REGION	70	20	90

VI. REGION DU NORD

DEPARTEMENT	CATEGORIE		TOTAL
	DELEGUES DE DEPARTEMENT	REPRESENTANTS DU COMMANDEMENT TRADITIONNEL	
BENOUE	28	05	33
FARO	07	05	12
MAYO-LOUTI	17	05	22
MAYO-REY	18	05	23
TOTAL DE LA REGION	70	20	90

VII. REGION DU NORD-OUEST

DEPARTEMENT	CATEGORIE		TOTAL
	DELEGUES DE DEPARTEMENT	REPRESENTANTS DU COMMANDEMENT TRADITIONNEL	
BOYO	07	03	10
BUI	13	03	16
DONGA-MANTUNG	10	03	13
MENCHUM	07	03	10
MEZAM	18	03	21



MOMO	08	03	11
NGO-KETUNJIA	07	02	09
TOTAL DE LA RÉGION	70	20	90

VIII. REGION DE L'OUEST

DÉPARTEMENT	CATÉGORIE		TOTAL
	DÉLÉGUÉS DE DÉPARTEMENT	REPRÉSENTANTS DU COMMANDEMENT TRADITIONNEL	
BAMBOUTOS	09	03	12
HAUT-NKAM	10	02	12
HAUTS PLATEAUX	05	02	07
KOUNG-KHI	04	02	06
MENOUA	11	03	14
MIFI	08	03	11
NDE	06	02	08
NOUN	17	03	20
TOTAL DE LA RÉGION	70	20	90

IX. REGION DU SUD

DÉPARTEMENT	CATÉGORIE		TOTAL
	DÉLÉGUÉS DE DÉPARTEMENT	REPRÉSENTANTS DU COMMANDEMENT TRADITIONNEL	
DJA-ET-LOBO	21	05	26
MVILA	20	05	25
OCEAN	20	05	25
VALLEE-DU-NTEM	09	05	14
TOTAL DE LA RÉGION	70	20	90

X. REGION DU SUD-OUEST

DÉPARTEMENT	CATÉGORIE		TOTAL
	DÉLÉGUÉS DE DÉPARTEMENT	REPRÉSENTANTS DU COMMANDEMENT TRADITIONNEL	
FAKO	21	03	24
KUPE-MUANENGOUBA	06	04	10
LEBIALEM	06	03	09
MANYU	09	04	13

Appendix 20: A propose project on the Improvement of Elections activities in Cameroon

Please follow the format below:

SUMMARY

(1 2 paragraphs) Clearly and concisely summarize your proposal

2. BACKGROUND

(1-2 pages) Describe the relevant political, economic, or social environment as it affects the development of democracy in the country or region that your project addresses. Identify the needs or problems that exist and explain how your project will make an impact as it addresses those challenges

In the past few years, several institutional and legislative changes have taken place in Cameroon which have a seminal role on the evolution of its democratic process. The president of the republic was re-elected into office for a Seven-year mandate in October 2011. In 2018 his mandate comes to an end. The Upper House of the National Assembly was created in 2013 and 100 Senators were elected (70) and appointed (30) into the Senate in July 2013. They have a 5-year mandate which ends in 2018. 180 Parliamentarians have been elected into the lower house on September 30, 2013, and they also have a 5-year mandate which ends in 2018. About 10000 Municipal Councilors have been elected into office on September 30, 2013. They have a five-year mandate which ends in 2018. It should be highlighted that on September 30, 2013, the President announced the creation of the Constitutional Council of Cameroon, which is to proclaim all electoral results, the first being those of 2018. All things being equal, 2018 promises be a politically defining moment for Cameroon.

On the other hand, all the laws governing elections in Cameroon have been revised into a single law (Law No. 2012/017 of 21 December 2012), which amended and supplemented some provisions of Law No. 2012/001 of 19 April 2012 relating to the Electoral Code. This Code contains provisions governing the Election management body ELECAM, Referendums, those governing the election of the President of the Republic, Senators, Members of Parliament, Regional Councilors and Municipal Councilors. It also contains provisions relating to voting by Cameroonians residing abroad and to public financing of Political parties. The introduction of the Biometric system of registration of voters and the commencement of recompilation of voters lists by ELECAM in 2014 signals the beginning of preparations for the historic 2018. These changes have come in quick succession and require large scale action to enable their domestication at the grassroots level.

While there is convergence among actors that these reforms should facilitate greater participation at the grassroots, opinions are still very varied on what type of changes are needed to make them respond to local conditions. Yet, in Cameroon, when it comes to women, young and indigenous people's presence in the democratic arena, the realities point to preoccupying levels of poverty and marginalization that push democratic tenets out of the realms of immediate concern for these categories; the realities reveal levels of democratic awareness that show many women, youths and indigenous people still need to be beckoned out of the political backwoods albeit in creative ways; and ever more precisely, those realities point to the need for a critical mass of local people who are not only politically aware but

also recognize different democratic openings and express concern about their role in effecting positive change.

As our organization observed Cameroon's electoral process up to the twin elections of September 30, 2013, we witnessed influence peddling and contentious politics that sways uninitiated minds, problems of corruption, wastefulness and short sighted economic reforms, reports of voter cards being faked, of boundaries of electoral constituencies being drawn unfairly, and of the electoral authorities displaying questionable impartiality. Even with the introduction of the biometric system, the process was not fully biometric - registration was biometric but the tallying of results was not. It was also evident that some members of the Local Polling Commissions were not trained in the electoral laws and process. The apparent inadaptability that resulted from the mass recruitment of local players into the electoral process with little familiarity with the rules weakened it. A shortfall of resources also meant that in some polling stations one or two members made up the polling commissions. Local community members are not aware of the legal requirements in this respect and take no measures for improvement. It is equally important to note that participation was low. Out of 5.4 Million registered voters in a national population of about 20 Million, voter turnout was only 75%. Without extending emphasis on these weaknesses which do not overlook efforts being made, this scenario highlights the need to reweave the fabric of democratic performance at the grassroots, with the strengthening and inclusion of broad-based local participation and perspectives for new strategies that facilitate ownership of the political process at the grassroots level.

Our endeavor is to facilitate understanding of the laws and political process by reaching out to the local communities in a manner that resonates with their experience. By using exclusively English and French in education as well as in official day-to-day interaction and functions in Cameroon, many of the indigenous people remain largely ignorant and unable to participate in crucial national issues, and thus contribute in national development. Many of them neither know the content of the electoral code nor the constitution of their country, basic legal documents that guide their lives. This means that the functioning of the State remains a largely elitist affair, and excludes any meaningful participation of the indigenes. What other means to help them better understand these processes than in their own language? What easier form of consensus-building than to reach out to these people and include their voices in the national political process? We seek to translate the omnibus Electoral Code of Cameroon into Ewondo and Fulfulde

Promoting the use of National languages within Cameroon falls in line with national policy. To use the term "National Language" was decided at a meeting of the National Council for Cultural Affairs December 18-22, 1974 to promote the policy of official language bilingualism and of national languages which constitutes the main core of Cameroon's language policy. Article 1, paragraph 3 of the Constitution of 18 January 1996 is abundantly clear in this regard:

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

Even with the multitude of local languages in the country, these two languages Ewondo and Fulfulde are widely spoken in Cameroon. Ewondo is spoken across three Regions (Centre, South, and East) of Cameroon. Although there are other languages spoken in this area, they are dialectical variants of the same phylum, and Ewondo is mutually intelligible across them. It suffices to note that this region is host to some of the most politically marginalized groups (including Pygmies) in the Country. On the other hand Fulfulde is widely spoken in the three northern regions of Cameroon (Adamawa, North and Far North). When it comes to reading

and writing in the official languages, this region has one of the worst literacy rates in the country.

Promoting their participation in the national democratic process through creating better understanding of the laws is not only a means to help strengthen national democracy but also improve their lot through understanding and seizing political opportunities.

Through a conference supported by the World Youth Movement for Democracy, we have created a movement of youth in Cameroon known as the Youth Coalition for Democracy (Cameroon Youth CoDe). This movement shall establish and expand Regional Chapters; its members shall be trained in the education of the local indigenous communities on these documents. We shall also establish running programmes on local Community Radio networks and invite local experts to debate and broadcast useful information and tips on this Electoral Code.

Efforts to reach local people in more tailored and responsive ways have been ongoing through other institutions such as SIL-Cameroon, the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL), the National Association of Cameroonian Language Committees (NACALCO) and Fogang Business and Communications Systems (FBCOMS) which have translated the Bible, CEDAW and other relevant texts in these local languages. We shall establish partnerships with these institutions to develop this program.

At its close we are expected to reach 5 Million Cameroonians (3 Million Fulfulde users and about 2 Million Ewondo users). This means that information on the political process will become much more diffuse and this will contribute to strengthen local consensus on the quality of the democratic process and facilitate the visibility of indigenous concerns, easily channeled through the right quarters. Youth are expected to gain mobilization skills, knowledge on the laws and greater ability to network for a political cause.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

(1-2 short paragraphs or bullet points)

State the specific objectives you hope to achieve through the proposed activities

The objectives should address the specific needs or problems identified in the "Background" section. In most cases, one or two objectives are sufficient

The project objectives include:

- To improve awareness of the political process of Cameroon among politically marginal groups of the Centre –South-East I and the Adamawa-North-Far North linguistic zones by translating the omnibus Electoral Code into Ewondo and Fulfulde
- Enhance the Insertion of indigenous youth into the Democratic process through liaising the Youth Coalition for Democracy (Youth CoDe) with local networks to intensify activities that create a critical mass of politically conscious youth before the 2018 political watershed.

Objectives should be reasonably measurable, and therefore capable of being evaluated. Project objectives should be limited in scope and time, and identify specifically what will be achieved with the funds requested for the particular project. Also, be sure to distinguish objectives from activities. For example, "to hold a workshop" is a proposed activity, not an objective.

4. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

(2 -4 pages) Describe in detail the planned activities of your project. If the project requires

funding from more than one source. please describe any other funding you have obtained, or hope to obtain. If the project activity includes workshops or other events provide the following information:

- **Planning**
To ensure effective participation in the implementation of project activities, 3 planning meetings will be held at the beginning of each implementation period with the project team, board members, staff, volunteers, key beneficiaries, consultants and resource persons. The first meeting will include a presentation of the project design, objectives, activities, timeframe, and reporting procedures. Also, a plan of action will be drawn for the project cycle with human and material resources identified for each period. Project information kits and contents will as well be elaborated; beneficiaries informed meanwhile Resource Persons and Consultants will be engaged subsequently.
- **Call for Tenders**
Although the Network for Solidarity, Empowerment and Transformation for All (NewSETA) has established individual partnerships with the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation - CABTAL, and the translation company Fogang Business and Communication Systems- FBCOMS, we shall launch a call for tenders to encourage more qualified bidders to apply for this translation project. These tenders shall be examined by a vetting committee, the best bids selected and experts contracted according to our established criteria to translate the omnibus Electoral Code into Ewondo and Fulfulde.
Besides we shall seek collaboration with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation and the Ministry of Arts and Culture which are competent Ministries in this domain to pursue the initiative
- **Translation**
The Translation of this Electoral Code into two national languages – Ewondo and Fulfulde – shall be carried out in three months from February to April, 2014. Then it shall be peer reviewed by a selected consortium of linguists specialized in national languages comprising of university lecturers, CABTAL and SIL translators, local native speakers and lawyers hailing from these linguistic backgrounds. These shall be validated before printing
- **Printing**
40000 Copies of the translated Electoral Code will be printed – 20000 in Ewondo and 20000 in Fulfulde. A pro forma invoice will be made to several publishing houses to compare and select best and affordable printing options for the publications
- **Training**
We shall organize six, 3-day training workshops in the different regions targeting 30 participants across four groups of people, the local Chiefs, Imams and notables, Adult trainers, Youth focal points of the Youth CoDe and local community radio Journalists. They shall be trained on ways on popularizing the Code, mobilizing participation of local indigenes to register in the recompilation of voter lists, the requirements for participation either as candidate or voter in the political system and how to network with and influence their political leaders
- **Launching**

This activity shall include high level officials of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MINATD), the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation (MINRESI) and the Ministry of Arts and Culture, representatives of local language cultures and university linguists. It shall be a forum to galvanize support for this local initiative and enlist administrative support for its furtherance.

- Distribution
 - These documents shall be made available in local museums and libraries, and distributed to local indigenous community groups and local adult training programmes
 - Dissemination through community radio – the creation of a political program on community radio, "Time for Election" to sensitize and debate political issues that concern local people.
 - Creation of Regional Chapters and focal points of the Youth CoDe and training of leaders in local mobilization and organization of sensitization campaigns on the translated Electoral Code. They shall also collaborate with adult learning centres, conduct regular training in youth meetings and provide feedback on the changes that are resulting from the process.
- duration (number of days or hours per workshop or seminar)
 - planned topics and formats (lectures, discussions, brainstorming, role-playing etc.)
 - number and profile of expected participants, speakers, and trainers. If the project includes a publication or website, please describe:
 - editorial philosophy and mission
 - how content will be created (in-house writers, outside contributors, translation, re-printing, etc)
 - target audience(s) and mechanisms for reader or user feedback
 - expected circulation numbers and distribution plan (for sale or without charge)
 - length and frequency of each issue or new posting

5. EVALUATION PLAN

(2-4 paragraphs or bullet points)

Please describe how the project's progress toward its stated objectives will be measured, including

what changes, evidence, or results will indicate that project objectives have been achieved

Remember that the implementation of planned activities does not demonstrate the success of the project. For example "All five workshops for youth will take place" is not an evaluation point because it describes an activity. More relevant evaluation measures would include

- observing whether participants made concrete plans during the workshop;
 - what activities participants carried out after the workshop
 - making use of the knowledge, skills, or alliances formed as a result of the workshop
 - and participants' perception of the workshop's value to their work.
- NED procedures require grantees to monitor the progress of their project and to submit periodic reports documenting activities and assessing achievements and successes

6. INTERIM ASSESSMENT

(1-2 pages)

(required only if applying to renew a current NED grant)

If you are applying to renew a current NED grant, please assess the current project's major accomplishments, obstacles faced, and the overall impact on the project objectives. This section should address the objectives in the current grant's Evaluation Plan (in Attachment A). Describe how all past activities and achievements relate to the proposed project.

7. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

(up to 1 page)

Describe your organization's qualifications for this particular project, including its history and past work

Provide information about

its mission, size, geographical reach, professional, and political character, and registration or incorporation status, including date

Identify the key individuals, whether paid staff or volunteers, who will be in charge of carrying out the proposed project and describe their most relevant qualifications.

Other funding

If your organization has received or is receiving financial support from other sources for the proposed activity or other activities, please provide a list of the donors, the level of support you received and a short description of the projects being funded

Indicate whether this support is monetary or in-kind, domestic or foreign. Also, provide the names and contact information for any other funding organizations to which this proposal is also being submitted.

References:

- Please provide names and contact information for two or more individuals who know the organization's work or the work of its key staff and volunteers.

Along with the proposal narrative, you must also prepare a project budget.

The budget is the financial description of the proposed project and should relate directly to the description of project activities in the narrative proposal. Please use the budget template provided on the website.

For additional information on writing a proposal narrative and budget, please see the "Additional Guidance" document available on NED's website

Ngalim Eugene

Executive Director

Cameroon Youths Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP)

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SOURCES CONSULTED

I. Primary Sources

1) Oral Sources

N ^o	Names of Informants	Ages	Status	Place of interview	Date of interview
1	Akam Philip McTebug	45	National secretary of CEDECA	Yaounde	6 th October, 2018.
2	Akam Mac T.	63	Doctor/Fon	Nkai	26 th January, 2017.
3	Ambe Ngwa G. Atonah,	57	Chairman of BDM,	Yaounde	15 th February, 2017.
4	Anapa Peter	78	Divisional Delegate of Commerce	Mbengwi	11 th November, 2017.
5	Bah Samuel,	79	Carpenter,	Mankon	3 rd September, 2018.
7	Barno Issa	43	Cattle Rearer	Tonechup	3 rd September, 2016.
8	Bih Elizabeth	86	Farmer	Bafut	18 th October, 2015.
9	Chemuta Divine Banda,	64	Chairman of NCHRF in Cameroon	Yaounde	2 nd October, 2018.
10	Fonjo Cyprien,	69	Carpenter	Kumbo,	12 th December, 2016.
11	Forch Musi John	75	Regent of Ku palace	Wumfi	11 st August, 2017.
12	Formin A Charlse	57	Divisional officer of Mbengwi	Mile 18 Mbengwi	29 th August, 2016.
13	Godlove Ayeng III Ba	75	Fon	Yaoundé	5 th October, 2017.
14	Joseph Mbah-Ndam,	55	Barrister/Honourable	Yaounde	16 th April, 2016.
15	Lewoh Emmanuel	69	Liberian	Kumbo Council	7 th March, 2016.
16	Mangei Jonathan	75	Retired post worker	Fundong	21 st January, 2017.
17	Massock B. Emmanuel	50	Presbyterain Secretary of East Mongo North	Yaoundé	23 rd January, 2018.
18	Mbarkwa Wilson	59	Fon/Retired soldier	Tugi Palace	7 Th August, 2018.
19	MbongoN. Peter	55	Divisional officer of Bamenda II	Small Mankon	16 th April. 2017
20	Mesinge Ijang Matta	95	Mafor	Njinibi	1 st July. 2018

21	Metiege Njikang Divine	49	Magistrate	Fundong	8 th December, 2017.
22	Moudi Bernard	56	Fon	Tiben	14 th October, 2016
23	Mukete Victor Ndoki E	98	Chief/Senator	Yaounde	5 th August. 2017
24	Namata Diteng Joseph	58	Civil Administrator	Batibo	12 th February, 2016.
25	Ndakwe Taiwain Philip	100	Notable	Wumso- Batibo	7 th October. 2018.
26	Ndassi Franka	84	Councilor,	Bali- Nyonga	12 th August, 2016.
27	Nfawminyen M. Robertson	60	Fon/Retired D.O.	Nyen palace	16 th August. 2018.
28	Nfor William Bambo	60	Retired worker from the Ndu tea Estate	Yaounde	8 th February, 2018.
29	Ngala Ernest	70	Councillor	Bamenda	15 th December, 2018.
30	Ngwa Jacob	62	Megue	Zang-Tabi Palace	22 nd December, 2017.
31	Njem Alfred	65	Regent/Kingmaker	Zang-Tabi	25 th August, 2017.
32	Njokem Tawn II	62	<i>Fon</i> /Farmer	Mbengwi Palace	22 nd August, 2017.
33	Njom Muna Ephraim	45	National President of CEDECA	Diedo	5 th September, 2019.
34	Njwing For Rossa	85	Farmer	Chomba	2 nd May, 2018.
35	Nyamsenkwen, Christopher Kumbuma	55	Former Mayor of Bali Council	Yaounde	17 th July, 2018.
36	Sikot Fon Joseph	60	Quarter Head	Santa	12 th February 2017.
37	Tabi Simon.	67	Retired clerk/notable	Zang-Tabi	25 th August, 2018.
38	Tabug Lucas	90	Notable/quarter head	Gamuygee	4 th August, 2017
39	Tah Ndap George	63	Former Lord Mayor of Mbengwi	Mbengwi	19 th August, 2019.
40	Tamunang Ivo	55	National secretary of MECUDA	Yaoundé	12 th September 2016.
41	Tamuton Marcus	64	Secretary of CTC / Trader	Mbengwi	4 th August, 2018.
42	Tamuton Rose	95	Farmer	Tonechup	18 th August, 2017.

43	Tanwaini Simon.	80	Retired Headmaster	Mbengwi	7 th January, 2017.
44	Tayong Andrew	49	Town planning Engineer	Bamenda	13 th August, 2018.
45	Tayong God love	90	Notable	Mankon	17 th October, 2017
46	Tebo Afumba	80	<i>Fon</i>	Ashong Palace	8 th December, 2016.
47	Tembe N Pascal.	55	Advicer	Dschang	21 st August, 2018.
48	Tembe N. Christopher	60	Notable	Awing	1 st July, 2016.
49	Tembe Stephen	64	Retired teacher/notable	Zang-Tabi	25 th August, 2016.
50	Titatang Vincent	50	Rev Pastor	Simbock- Yaounde	20 th August, 2019.

2) Archival Sources

Bamenda Regional Archives (BRA)

BRA, File N° 57/2/NW/Ha./1, “Chieftaincy in North-West Province” *Bamenda Cultural Centre*, 1984, p.7.

BRA, File N° 78/NW/1Qa/a.1, “Demography Administration of the North-West Province”, 2001, p.5.

BRA, File No 1a/374/2/NW/Hb, “Extract from the report by the Nigerian Constitutional Conference”, 1957, pp.3-9.

BRA, File No 2/78 /NW/AB, “Chieftaincy Dispute and Complaints”, Mezam Division 1961, p.11.

BRA, File No 43. NW/Ha./1, “Chieftaincy in North-West Province” *Bamenda Cultural Centre*, 1984, p.11.

BRA, File No 472/E/29/SP, “The creation of Chieftaincies in the Bafut Sub Division”, 3rd, July 1998, p.10.

BRA, File No 48/.NW/La.G/1“,Urgent Report to the S.D.O of Bamenda as regard the chieftaincy Dispute”, 1963, p.4.

BRA, File No 57/2 NW/Ac. /1/BK “Historical notes on Bamenda Grassfields”, Ndifor Cletus, North-West Delegate of Culture, 1960, p.13.

BRA, File No 5c/16/3, “Fingi ex-chief of Bamendjing, Bamenda Division”, 1917, p.8.

- BRA, File N° 78/NW/1Qa/a/1, “Demography and Administration of the North-West Province”, 2001, p.12
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INDEX

Index of Authors

A	G
A.P. Temgoua..... 103	G.N. Wandé 31
A.W. Ndifor..... 175	H
Abai Mbongong Edwin 33	H.R. Rudins 111
Adegbulu, F. 451	Halidou Bouba..... 31
Aletum Tabuwe 36	I
Aletum, M. T. 445, 451	I. Fowler, and D. Zeitlyn 105
Amazee V Bong 38	I. Mouiche 5, 278
aristocracy 91	I. Owusu-Mensah 7
Ashong..... 186, 224, 225, 259, 457	J
Awasom , N.F..... 446	J. M. Zang-Atangana 112
B	J. Nche 7, 107, 266, 267
Benon C. Basheka 28	J.J.C. Anene, and G.N. Brown 1
Bongfen Chem-Langéé..... 29	K
C	Kaze Tindo Narcisse 44
C. Cheka 1, 284, 313	Kedjom Keku 83, 223, 224, 257, 258, 259
C. Geary..... 73, 109	Kwei Diddymus Chin..... 30
Che-Mfombong 141, 150, 152, 158, 238, 458	N
Claude Tardits 35	N. Nkweke 3
D	Ndobengang Michael Mbapndah 37
D. I. Ray., and G. Eizlini 5	Ngwerong 29, 70, 88, 183
E	Njikang Metugie Divine 35
E. M. Chilver 30, 83, 118	Nkwi and J.P. Warnier 34, 117, 118
E. Mveng 102	O
E.M. Chilver and P.M. Kabbery 24, 30	Oni Samuel & Segun Joshua 26
E.M.L. Chiabi 171, 179	P
E.S.D. Fomin 105, 242	P. B. Meyene Ongolo 32
Eballa and Aka 109, 114	P.M. Tem, and M.B. Gwanfogbe 104
F	P.N. Nkwi, and J.P. Warnier 2
F. Fukuyama 8, 287	Paul Nchoji Nkwi 33, 35

R

R. Kpwang Kpwang6

Richard G. Dillon39

T

T. N. Kahjum.....4

Tabi C. Egbe.....33

W

V.G. Fanzo.....64, 108, 154

V.J. Ngoh.....101, 115, 116, 206, 241

W.T.T. Samah6, 104, 161, 162, 181

Z

Zang - Atangana114

Index of concepts**A**

Administrationiii, iv, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17,
18, 26, 28, 31, 32, 35, 59, 60, 68, 82, 87,
96, 97, 98, 102, 103, 105, 106, 107, 110,
111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118,
119, 121, 122, 123, 125, 126, 127, 130,
131, 132, 133, 135, 137, 138, 139, 140,
141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 147, 149, 150, 153,
155, 158, 160, 161, 162, 164, 165, 166,
167, 168, 169, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188,
189, 190, 191, 194, 195, 200, 203, 204,
205, 208, 217, 222, 223, 224, 230, 234,
236, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 250, 251,
254, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 267, 269,
275, 276, 277, 283, 286, 287, 317, 323,
444, 459

Administrative Machinery27, 60, 114, 120,
132, 247, 248

Administrative Mechanisms.... 184, 185, 192

Advisory Role.....234, 296

African communities ... 11, 13, 286, 288, 293

African democracy288, 291, 298

African rulers..... 18, 140, 142

Aletum Tabuwe36

Aletum, M. T.445, 451

Alien3, 69, 99, 161, 170, 185, 229, 269, 290,
296, 298, 299

Alien rule170, 229

Aristocracy91

Ashong.....186, 224, 225, 259, 457

Authority1, 4, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 27, 29,
30, 31, 34, 35, 38, 40, 42, 46, 47, 48, 49,
51, 57, 58, 59, 60, 62, 64, 65, 66, 67, 72,
80, 84, 85, 88, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 100,
104, 106, 108, 109, 111, 113, 115, 118,
119, 121, 125, 126, 129, 133, 140, 152,
156, 160, 161, 164, 165, 172, 173, 178, 181,
182, 185, 187, 188, 190, 192, 194, 195,
199, 201, 203, 206, 207, 214, 217, 218,
221, 222, 223, 228, 233, 235, 236, 237,
239, 240, 243, 245, 247, 248, 249, 251,
254, 255, 256, 257, 267, 268, 272, 273,
274, 275, 276, 282, 283, 291, 297, 299,
300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307,
309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 317, 452, 458

B

Bafut83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 138, 214, 216,
253, 265, 266, 445

- Balikumbat 216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 253, 254, 256, 266, 267
- Bamendaii, iii, iv, xi, 2, 3, 4, 6, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31, 33, 34, 37, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 55, 56, 58, 59, 65, 67, 70, 72, 77, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 103, 105, 106, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 117, 120, 122, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 132, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 146, 147, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 177, 178, 179, 182, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 198, 199, 200, 210, 211, 213, 214, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 243, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 264, 266, 267, 268, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 284, 291, 297, 305, 313, 322, 348, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 444, 446, 447, 448, 450, 452, 457, 458, 459, 460
- Bamenda Grassfields 45, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 98, 101, 103, 105, 106, 137, 138, 139, 186, 195, 200, 210, 211, 214, 216, 219, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 256, 257, 258, 260, 261, 266, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 284, 313, 457
- Bongfen Chem-Langéé.....29
- Britain 94, 101, 111, 118, 134, 137, 138, 140, 143, 169, 172, 178, 182, 196, 233, 239, 243, 245, 301, 304, 309, 446, 447
- British 45, 101, 137, 138, 139, 179, 186, 195, 242, 247, 277, 281, 454
- Bu 186, 222, 225, 458
- C**
- Central Legislature 172, 239
- Centralization 2, 106
- Chief 4, 6, 7, 14, 15, 16, 17, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 58, 59, 61, 62, 64, 65, 67, 68, 79, 85, 86, 87, 88, 102, 104, 105, 120, 121, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 130, 131, 132, 134, 138, 139, 142, 148, 149, 152, 154, 155, 156, 157, 161, 168, 171, 174, 177, 178, 182, 183, 184, 187, 188, 189, 190, 194, 197, 200, 202, 203, 204, 205, 208, 218, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 231, 232, 233, 234, 237, 238, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 272, 273, 275, 276, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 311, 327, 438, 439, 446
- Chiefdom 34, 55, 56, 120, 230, 234, 449, 458, 459
- Chieftaincy iii, 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 29, 32, 33, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 65, 67, 70, 72, 75, 82, 88, 95, 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 128, 135, 137, 142, 152, 153, 154, 155, 164, 170, 175, 179, 184, 185, 186, 192, 195, 199, 200, 204, 205, 208, 210, 211, 217,

- 218, 219, 221, 222, 224, 226, 227, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 236, 242, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 254, 256, 258, 259, 261, 262, 267, 269, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 281, 284, 285, 293, 310, 311, 313, 314, 315, 317, 319, 320, 322, 438, 439, 440, 459
- Collective identity272
- Colonial1, 5, 6, 7, 45, 88, 102, 103, 104, 105, 137, 138, 186, 195, 199, 200, 229, 246, 247, 249, 250, 251, 277, 281
- Colonial Administration11, 32, 45, 99, 103, 111, 114, 115, 117, 120, 121, 122, 124, 127, 130, 132, 133, 134, 135, 140, 141, 142, 145, 146, 148, 150, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 158, 160, 161, 162, 170, 184, 186, 189, 190, 191, 193, 196, 197, 208, 210, 231, 232, 322
- Colonial Governance11, 13, 15, 28, 96, 111, 136, 164, 182, 185, 186, 187, 192, 242
- Colonial Legacy270, 291, 298
- Colonial Legislation231
- Colonial RuleIii, 1, 7, 20, 21, 34, 45, 95, 96, 110, 116, 130, 137, 139, 164, 171, 179, 182, 185, 194, 227, 229, 231, 232, 247, 298, 305, 310, 322
- ColonialismIii, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 26, 28, 33, 34, 42, 98, 102, 143, 155, 170, 188, 229, 234, 269, 270, 291, 300, 306, 307, 319, 443
- Communalism 13, 271, 318
- Community gatheringxiii
- Conflict86, 87, 88, 213, 221, 225, 227, 246, 259, 263, 282, 284, 313
- Consensus13, 40, 41, 271, 288, 292, 294, 296, 299, 318
- Constitution**41, 67, 172, 173, 194, 206, 207, 233, 239, 274, 281, 284, 290, 296, 297, 310, 313, 452, 461
- Constitutional Assembly234
- Constitutional Development 67, 290, 291, 298
- Cultural Imperialism.....288
- Cultural Institutions79, 291
- Cultural Values.....124, 165, 291, 455
- Customary Law7, 142, 275, 296, 297
- Customs2, 6, 9, 10, 28, 35, 46, 48, 52, 53, 60, 65, 67, 68, 69, 86, 92, 110, 118, 119, 131, 132, 136, 148, 150, 156, 157, 160, 170, 184, 185, 186, 187, 191, 192, 194, 229, 233, 277, 280, 282, 289, 295, 296, 319
- Customs And Tradition280
- D**
- Decentralisationxi, 124
- Democracy41, 42, 50, 210, 250, 270, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 303, 441, 442, 443, 451, 455, 461, 462
- Destabilization105
- Dethronement106, 218, 223, 224, 255, 257, 258, 268, 279, 280, 281
- Direct Rule45, 183
- Dispute.....218, 247, 251, 255, 268
- Dynamic260
- E**
- Educated Politicians 164, 185
- Education Systems291
- Effective Governance126

Enthronement 29, 35, 36, 37, 56, 58, 60, 73,
75, 79, 223, 226, 257

Evolution 19, 21, 22, 25, 38, 39, 68, 73, 78,
110, 111, 112, 167, 181, 198, 202, 208,
230, 238, 244, 269, 281, 287, 302, 319

Executive. 171, 174, 176, 201, 234, 238, 240

Executive Council ... 171, 174, 176, 201, 238

F

Federated 162, 163, 236

Fonxiii, 3, 6, 29, 30, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40,
47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57,
58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 68, 69, 70,
71, 73, 74, 75, 77, 78, 79, 81, 82, 84, 87,
88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 95, 99, 106, 109,
123, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131,
134, 148, 153, 154, 155, 159, 160, 161,
165, 166, 169, 172, 177, 178, 179, 180,
181, 184, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 197,
198, 214, 216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 222,
223, 224, 230, 239, 242, 243, 244, 245,
246, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259,
265, 266, 267, 268, 279, 280, 281, 282,
322, 327, 416, 436, 437, 438, 460

Fondom 4, 7, 29, 30, 31, 33, 37, 38, 46, 55,
56, 57, 59, 61, 63, 64, 68, 70, 73, 82, 84,
85, 86, 87, 88, 93, 105, 106, 125, 153, 185,
186, 218, 221, 222, 224, 225, 226, 227,
230, 248, 249, 255, 256, 258, 259, 268,
275, 277, 282, 311, 459, 460

G

G.N. Wande 31

German 8, 20, 21, 33, 45, 46, 82, 97, 98, 99,
100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107,
108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115,

116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123,
124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131,
132, 133, 135, 136, 137, 146, 159, 183,
185, 186, 187, 189, 195, 229, 230, 233,
236, 238, 247, 273, 322, 348, 439, 442,
443, 449, 453, 455, 456, 461

Governing 5, 20, 22, 31, 67, 86, 87, 106, 132,
185, 188, 192, 201, 228, 271, 273, 303, 310

Government 2, 4, 6, 10, 13, 16, 18, 22, 27, 28,
31, 35, 37, 41, 58, 59, 60, 62, 70, 71, 75,
80, 88, 95, 110, 112, 113, 114, 115, 118,
122, 124, 125, 126, 127, 131, 132, 135,
138, 139, 140, 142, 146, 147, 149, 156,
158, 165, 166, 167, 172, 173, 174, 177,
180, 182, 183, 190, 192, 193, 194, 196,
197, 198, 199, 201, 203, 204, 205, 206,
208, 209, 210, 213, 216, 219, 222, 223,
224, 226, 231, 233, 235, 236, 237, 238,
239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246,
247, 248, 253, 256, 257, 258, 260, 264,
266, 270, 273, 274, 277, 278, 279, 280,
282, 283, 284, 285, 287, 290, 292, 295,
296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303,
304, 305, 306, 308, 309, 312, 313, 314,
317, 443, 453

H

Heir 221

Historical Backgrounds 287

Historical resilience iii, 21, 25

House of Assembly xi, xii, 166, 172, 173,
174, 175, 201, 204, 206, 207, 208, 234,
239, 241, 243

- I**
- Independence 20, 144, 182, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 203, 210, 223, 227, 229, 247, 251, 257, 274, 293, 297, 298, 302, 304, 305, 306, 316, 317
- Indigenous 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17, 18, 27, 28, 32, 33, 35, 38, 47, 54, 58, 59, 77, 91, 93, 94, 95, 99, 101, 110, 111, 120, 121, 122, 130, 132, 135, 142, 145, 147, 150, 152, 155, 159, 160, 161, 162, 168, 169, 181, 184, 185, 187, 189, 191, 229, 231, 232, 233, 234, 238, 244, 272, 297, 298, 306, 307, 309, 317, 319, 322, 440
- Indirect Rule xi, 111, 132, 138, 139, 140, 141, 143, 147, 152, 157, 164, 171, 196, 214, 218, 222, 231, 235, 238, 249, 255, 256, 265, 268, 322, 445, 454
- Institutions 2, 3, 6, 8, 26, 27, 30, 31, 49, 50, 55, 56, 59, 61, 71, 78, 121, 138, 156, 175, 213, 241, 264, 289, 291, 292, 445, 446, 449, 451, 453, 454, 456, 457, 459, 462
- J**
- J. M. Zang-Atangana 112
- J. Nche 7, 107, 266, 267
- J.J.C. Anene, and G.N. Brown 1
- judiciary 30, 32, 33, 63, 69, 146, 160, 161, 162, 194, 205, 244, 288, 298, 322
- jurisdiction 14, 33, 73, 119, 125, 130, 143, 147, 152, 153, 154, 162, 178, 187, 188, 190, 191, 193, 194, 233, 235, 243, 249, 301
- K**
- Kaze Tindo Narcisse 44
- Kedjom Keku 83, 223, 224, 257, 258, 259
- king maker 56, 71
- Kingdoms 87
- kinship .7, 41, 91, 92, 93, 141, 271, 272, 318
- Kwei Diddymus Chin 30
- L**
- Law Making 69
- Leadership iii, iv, 1, 5, 6, 8, 13, 22, 28, 38, 40, 41, 42, 45, 46, 47, 61, 68, 73, 82, 83, 97, 99, 105, 111, 114, 134, 135, 148, 164, 165, 167, 175, 176, 185, 195, 203, 217, 241, 255, 260, 268, 275, 290, 297, 299, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 316, 317, 318, 443
- Legal 14, 35, 40, 47, 58, 61, 62, 94, 113, 115, 118, 140, 142, 146, 182, 231, 234, 247, 248, 249, 270, 273, 274, 277, 284, 286, 289, 290, 295, 296, 297, 299, 302, 304, 305, 310, 311, 313, 318
- Legislative Council 172, 238
- Legitimacy iii, 2, 4, 17, 27, 38, 59, 84, 86, 88, 97, 98, 152, 156, 157, 158, 181, 184, 190, 213, 214, 216, 217, 218, 219, 222, 223, 250, 251, 253, 254, 256, 257, 260, 263, 266, 267, 269, 270, 271, 273, 274, 277, 281, 283, 284, 292, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 311, 313, 319, 459
- Legitimate .. 84, 221, 248, 250, 251, 276, 279
- LG 131
- Liberal Capitalism 288
- Liberal values 286, 289, 290, 296, 299
- Local Administration 124
- Local governance 10, 64, 121, 138, 158, 162, 167, 248, 297, 306, 308, 309

- M**
- Magico-mystical.....273
- Mankon83, 214, 216, 217, 222, 224, 253,
254, 256, 258, 265, 266, 267, 280
- Meta.....82
- Modern1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 20, 46, 50, 51,
52, 102, 111, 124, 129, 136, 138, 139, 153,
163, 179, 185, 188, 192, 218, 219, 237,
239, 255, 268, 280, 283, 289, 292, 298,
300, 301, 312, 319, 323, 441, 443, 445,
449, 451, 453, 455, 456, 457
- Modern administration440
- Modern Governance**.....270
- Modern Institution.....46
- Modern StateIii, 3, 4, 7, 19, 20, 21, 25, 27,
67, 185, 192, 195, 199, 200, 209, 249, 251,
252, 271, 278, 281, 282, 284, 286, 288,
292, 298, 302, 311, 313, 317, 320
- Multiparty politics215, 216, 252, 253, 265,
266, 277
- N**
- Native Administration 17, 168
- Native AuthorityXi, Xii, 86, 99, 117, 147,
148, 151, 154, 156, 158, 163, 171, 176,
190, 196, 197, 235, 238, 440
- Native Court 148
- Native Treasury 148
- Natural Rulers5, 165, 167, 169, 178, 214,
243, 245
- Natural Rulers..... 176, 177, 179, 242, 245
- Neo-Colonialism Iii, 28
- Neo-patrimonial.....272
- Norms6, 103, 195, 199, 229, 276, 277
- Notables.....4, 227
- Nso.....83, 84, 88, 282
- O**
- official recognition247, 295
- Oni Samuel & Segun Joshua26
- Ordinancexii, 147, 172, 190, 192, 193, 231,
238, 239
- P**
- Palace.....88, 279
- Policy Implementation 1
- Policy Makers.....3, 26, 207, 317
- Political Advancement 171, 192, 238
- Political Authority1, 7, 58, 92, 94, 299, 302,
306
- Political Development 82, 458
- Political Districts 172, 239
- Political Entity Iii
- Political System8, 41, 67, 95, 156, 183, 200,
232, 446
- Politico-Governance Architecture Iii
- Politico-Religious..... 1, 5
- Politics3, 10, 12, 13, 16, 18, 20, 38, 39, 43,
80, 85, 152, 162, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168,
170, 171, 174, 175, 177, 178, 179, 181,
182, 184, 192, 198, 202, 207, 208, 210,
213, 214, 216, 217, 218, 219, 229, 233,
234, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246,
253, 254, 255, 260, 261, 264, 265, 266,
267, 268, 269, 275, 277, 278, 279, 280,
281, 300, 311, 322, 442
- Polities2, 4, 5, 11, 12, 14, 20, 22, 25, 35, 38,
39, 40, 58, 59, 66, 84, 89, 93, 97, 98, 105,
200, 251
- Populace38, 54, 99, 109, 111, 113, 165, 179,
181, 190, 229

Post-colonial1, 5, 11, 27, 34, 38, 42, 192,
199, 205, 210, 233, 247, 249, 250, 289,
293, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305,
306, 307, 308, 316, 318
Post-Independent.....20, 45, 185, 269, 323
Power Relations.....235
Pre-Colonial1, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18,
21, 22, 28, 30, 31, 34, 38, 40, 41, 45, 46,
47, 59, 61, 65, 66, 75, 77, 78, 89, 90, 93,
95, 96, 111, 123, 126, 133, 141, 153, 157,
160, 164, 187, 189, 198, 227, 230, 244,
247, 271, 291, 292, 298, 300, 301, 303,
306, 307, 316, 318, 446, 447, 453, 458,
459, 460
Public Administration6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18, 28,
442, 445, 446, 452

R

Rational ... 182, 183, 215, 252, 265, 273, 274
Regime123, 125, 165, 212, 220, 221, 232,
261, 263
Regulatory Society30, 31, 59, 70, 75, 85,
192, 246
Representations 140, 184
Responsibilities14, 64, 69, 123, 141, 153,
154, 160, 161, 189, 190, 230, 260, 275,
283, 295, 296, 297, 313
Royalty51, 202, 219, 249

S

Sacred Power.....272
Sacredness6, 271
Self-Government 140
Self-Rule144, 164, 166, 172, 181, 185, 192,
209, 234, 239
Semi-Autonomous.....174

Social Governance.....10
Social Organization12, 232, 271, 318
Sovereignty71, 98, 102, 103, 104, 106, 108,
110, 120, 125, 170, 190, 230, 299, 300,
301, 307, 309, 311
Spiritual Powers 14, 124, 273
State-Building.....26, 456
Succession6, 101, 103, 104, 105, 200, 211,
217, 218, 219, 221, 222, 226, 247, 248,
250, 252, 254, 255, 256, 259, 260, 262,
267, 268, 276, 278, 448
Succession4, 51, 53, 155, 225, 259, 305, 451,
457, 458
supreme court 69

T

Territorial Identity271
Tikar83, 105, 447
Traditional Administration 82, 174, 440, 459
Traditional Authorities323
Traditional AuthorityXii, 1, 7, 41, 88, 89,
107, 172, 239, 247, 248, 266, 310, 319,
452, 459, 461
Traditional Councils.....30, 160, 230, 297
Traditional Court454
Traditional Governance8, 26, 45, 79, 132,
137, 274, 319, 322, 442, 461
Traditional Institution36, 37, 45, 46, 48, 188,
451
Traditional Legitimacy.....271, 306
Traditional rulers2, 4, 5, 6, 19, 32, 34, 35, 38,
45, 46, 55, 58, 67, 93, 98, 100, 102, 103,
106, 108, 111, 112, 119, 120, 121, 125,
126, 127, 130, 135, 137, 140, 142, 143,
144, 152, 153, 154, 155, 164, 166, 167,

168, 171, 173, 175, 177, 178, 179, 180,
 181, 182, 184, 185, 188, 189, 191, 192,
 193, 196, 198, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205,
 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 219, 230,
 235, 236, 238, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244,
 246, 247, 261, 272, 278, 279, 281, 302,
 310, 311, 312, 322, 330

Traditional Rulers 139, 213, 214, 221, 264,
 278, 281

Traditional Rulership..... 1, 210, 261

Traditionalism 179