Ideologies, Governance and the Public Sphere in Cameroon

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Abstract

The founding history of Cameroon, as a nation-state was influenced by externally imposed factors, which also means that the founding political philosophy on which the neo-colonial state in Cameroon rests is traceable to foreign sources. Hence, Cameroon has no indigenous philosophical basis of existence from which an indigenous worldview should have emerged with its religion, literature, paintings, music, etc., to govern a public sphere that derives from and supports its own reality. And since the 'Idea of Kamerun' was transformed into a neo-colonial political structure during the Cold War for the purpose of achieving a foreign economic objective, like the original idea itself, one of the ways of achieving that desired goal was by dominating the public sphere with idiomatic expressions that claim to make life rather than being supportive of *reality*, which at the same time sought to destroy the foundation of all indigenous political philosophies, yet with no intention of establishing a universal ideal. The hypothesis of this article is that for the foreign founding philosophy to be maintained and reproduced in the public domain for the survival of the foreign-oriented kleptocratic state, there was the need to flood the public sphere with ideological mechanisms of public mediation for the effective epistemic control of the population. The result is the emergence of a fractured and contested public sphere that selectively 'favours' certain social categories for the success of the project of domination. This article, which seeks to develop a theory that explains the operation of the public sphere in a neo-colonial context, will thus examine, from a historical standpoint, the origins of a selected sample of some of the idiomatic expressions that govern the public sphere in Cameroon and the ideological options they represent, as a methodological preference to showing their correlation with the project of domination. The aim is to show how governance is mediated by the alienating role of an incoherent public sphere – dominated by representations of foreign ideologies – which does not seek to create a

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common consciousness in all citizens but rather to help maintain and perpetuate a fractured image of the Enlightenment. This is reinforced by a style of governance that thrives on a fractured public sphere, an understanding of which should illustrate a public sphere that encourages hybridised notions that are critical for foreign interference, meddling, destruction and domination within the overall project of 'nation building'. The article also aims at showing the role of trans-territorial influences in the 'development' of the public sphere in Cameroon and how this has been changing over the years.

Résumé

L'histoire fondatrice du Cameroun, en tant qu'État-nation, a été influencée par des facteurs imposés de l'extérieur, ce qui signifie également que la philosophie politique fondatrice sur laquelle repose l'État néocolonial au Cameroun remonte à des sources étrangères. Ainsi, l'existence du Cameroun n'est fondée sur aucune base philosophique indigène d'où aurait dû émerger une vision du monde indigène, avec sa religion, sa littérature, sa peinture, sa musique, etc., pour régir une sphère publique qui découle de sa propre réalité et soutient celle-ci. Et puisque l' « Idée de Kamerun » a été transformée en une structure politique néocoloniale pendant la Guerre Froide aux fins d'atteindre un objectif économique étranger, comme l'idée initiale elle-même, l'un des moyens pour atteindre cet objectif visé passait par la domination de la sphère publique avec des expressions idiomatiques qui prétendent rendre la vie plutôt que de soutenir la *réalité* qui, en même temps, cherchaient à détruire le fondement de toutes les philosophies politiques indigènes, toutefois sans aucune intention d'établir un idéal universel. L'hypothèse avancée par cet article est que, pour que la philosophie fondatrice étrangère soit maintenue et reproduite dans le domaine public pour la survie de l'État kleptocrate orienté vers l'extérieur, il fallait inonder la sphère publique de mécanismes idéologiques de médiation publique pour le contrôle épistémique efficace de la population. Il en résulte l'émergence d'une sphère publique fracturée et contestée qui « favorise » de façon sélective certaines catégories sociales pour la réussite du projet de domination. Cet article qui cherche à développer une théorie expliquant le fonctionnement de la sphère publique dans un contexte néocolonial examinera donc, d'un point de vue historique, les origines d'un échantillon choisi dans les expressions idiomatiques qui régissent la sphère publique au Cameroun et les options idéologiques qu'elles représentent, en tant que préférence méthodologique pour montrer leur corrélation avec le projet de domination. L'objectif est de montrer comment la gouvernance est assurée par le rôle aliénant d'une sphère publique incohérente – dominée par des représentations d'idéologies étrangères – qui ne cherchent pas à créer une conscience commune chez tous les citoyens, mais plutôt à faciliter le maintien et la perpétuation d'une image fracturée des « Lumières ». Cela est renforcé par un style de gouvernance qui prospère sur une sphère

publique fracturée dont la compréhension devrait illustrer une sphère publique qui encourage des notions hybridisées cruciales pour l'interface, l'ingérence, la destruction et la domination étrangères dans le projet global « d'édification de la nation ». L'article vise également à montrer le rôle des influences transterritoriales dans le « développement » de la sphère publique au Cameroun et comment il a évolué au fil des années.

Introduction

The public sphere in what became Cameroon during the last half of the 20th century – emerging as a kleptocratic state, erected on a foreign founding philosophy, with its founding history thus traceable to a foreign historical source – is dominated by a multiplicity of intersecting and conflicting mechanisms of public mediation. A large part of these represent sets of ideas of foreign origin which were introduced in that part of Africa following the invasion by Europeans in the 19th century. This was in addition to the earlier introduction of the Islamic public sphere in Africa by the invading Arabs who spilled out from the Arabian deserts from 640, following a new awareness of the conquering role of Islam after the death of Muhammad in 632. The intention was to arrest Africans ideologically for the success of the project of ecological invasion, political domination and economic enslavement. All of these had the one objective of robbing Africa's natural wealth, with the consent and participation of Africans themselves, for the industrial and economic expansion of European countries and that of the North in general. None of these ideational representations may seem to point to a clearly defined governing or dominant ideology as all of them compete for space, moderated by economic rather than discursive relations, thus helping to fragment the 'public' in a way that ensures the maintenance of a neo-colonial power structure. This dislocates the generation and flow of discussions that should counterbalance the overbearing power of the neo-colonial state. However, these contradictions find unity in a dominant ideology all the same.

This process has been undergoing rapid changes, beyond the control of Cameroonians who are mere subjects of foreign idioms. It seeks to destroy the indigenous basis on which a genuine depositary of ideas could emerge to govern the public sphere in Cameroon as a counterpoising dynamic to the project of domination by Europeans. The Europeans achieve their goal with the collaboration of their local neo-colonial allies in power, but with no intention of creating common ideals for self-representation, resulting in a hybrid public sphere arbitrated by economic imperatives. Up until now, political studies on Cameroon have focused neither on the realm of ideas, which has to do with the way Cameroonians have come to understand the world and how they are led by such ideas to go about their daily activities, nor on the structural

operations of the public sphere. Yet, the foundation on which Cameroonians base the commonsense notions with which they manage their daily affairs is loaded with economic meanings which hamper the public sphere from operating as a purely deliberative forum through which citizens can relate to the realm of political power in policy conception, formulation, and implementation.

This implies the absence of an indigenous worldview which should have arisen from a purely indigenous philosophical predisposition to establish itself as the ideological base of the nation with all its various forms of idiomatic expression – such as music, literature, poetry, religion, myths, symbols, paintings, code of ethics, etc. – emerging to govern a discursive public sphere which should, in turn, return to nourish and enrich that founding philosophy of the nation. The idea was rather to develop a fractured or an incoherent public sphere flooded with alienating ideological mechanisms of public mediation which claim to be responsible for the fabrication of the new person for the establishment of a new social order, thus seeking to breathe a new order into being (though without overtly saying so), and thus not derived from indigenous roots and therefore not supportive of any indigenous founding philosophy yet with no intention of establishing a universal model or ideal resulting in the emergence and blossoming of hybridised notions about the Enlightenment. The introduction of a utopian dimension to the subordinated peoples' understanding of history also sought and obtained the compliance of the Cameroonian peoples to be incorporated into the neo-colonial power structure within which they 'unconsciously' participate in a global division of labour which denies them the fruit of their toil.

This was vital for the project of domination in that it ensures the effective epistemic control of the population for the survival of the foreign-oriented kleptocratic state, a *superstructure* with all its ideological representations traceable to foreign origins intended to facilitate the project of racketeering and looting, over which were foisted neo-colonial allies during the Cold War whose duty it was to keep on nourishing the foreign-engineered founding philosophy on which the neo-colonial political structure was erected. An examination of the principal characteristics of a selected sample of the ideological mechanisms of public mediation which dictate the way in which the subordinated people of Cameroon have come to view history and their unconscious participation in it, and the historical processes through which these mechanisms were imposed on the people by the invading Europeans within the framework of an overarching, neo-colonial, legal, political and ideological 'superstructure' which combines the use of violence with control of the realm of ideas in order to achieve economic goals on behalf of Western

industrial economies, could explain why Cameroon does not stand on an indigenous founding philosophy with its own system of ideas that govern a deliberative public sphere unconstrained by economic relations.

From a historical standpoint, this was done as a methodological option intended to show not only how trans-territorial influences have been contributing over time to the 'development' of the public sphere in Cameroon, with Cameroon rather emerging as a broken copy of the Enlightenment, producing results that benefit only the class which has ruled Cameroon unopposed since the end of the national liberation struggle (in 1971), backed by countries of the North and their financial organisations, but also how this experience or phenomenon is correlated with the project of domination. We begin by defining the various concepts involved before moving on to show how the triple concepts of ideology, governance and the public sphere in Cameroon are interwoven. In so doing, it is necessary to go beyond the descriptive obviousness of an empiricist type in order to postulate a theory to better understand the operations or 'functioning' of the public sphere in Cameroon as well as to establish the *hidden link* between the seemingly contradictory spheres and the ruling ideology or governance in general.

Definition of Concepts

Ideology

The term 'ideology' was first coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy, who was one of the 19th century French theorists or *idéologues* in his *Mémoire sur la faculté de penser* (Vol. 1, 1796-1798) and *Éléments d'idéologie* (1801), to refer to what he called the 'science of ideas'. As a genetic theory of the ideas that dominate the human mind and govern the unconscious aspects of human behaviour, it has since then undergone rigorous intellectual debates among various sociological traditions including those of the structuralist traditions, those of the Durkheimian school as well as those of the Weberian leaning. However, as a sociological concept, it owes its origins in the works of Karl Marx (1818–1883) who gave the social phenomenon a Marxian interpretation in his sociological analysis of the structural and dominant role of ideology in the subordination of the proletariat in England and France in the 19th century. That Marxian interpretation of ideology has had an enduring impact on social science analysis to this day. In its broad form, ideology is used to refer to the assortment of ideas or philosophical propensities which structures the world for people in a given territorial context – a group, social category, class, institution, or any entity – and gives it meaning and provides them with certain ways of looking at things as well as an identity and thus justifies their collective activities and existence as a body of people, becoming the invisible

basis of their political, cultural, economic, or social life, which guides them on how their group should move as opposed to those outside their realm: it governs their unconscious.

An ideology, as an inclusive and consistent visualisation, or that invisible realm of ideas, that subliminal causality, from where people in a society or a substratum within society draw their commonsense notions, also defines and limits the actions of its individual members. Based on the knowledge, skills, abilities, beliefs, or characteristics conferred on them by what they have internalised as truths, these members have the responsibility of maintaining, recreating, and perpetuating the self-identity of their group in competition with other groups. Ideology, as an imposition of perspective on reality by those who want to give the world a certain order and a sense of direction for themselves thus predates even written history – Destutt de Tracy only coined a term to describe a phenomenon that was as old as human existence on earth.

Societies in pre-colonial Africa, for example, which have been erroneously labelled in colonial ethnographic literature as 'tribes' were actually people of diverse origins who came to inhabit a geo-political space through social contracts, not in the sense postulated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau but the sense in which historically structured groups amalgamated their differences and negotiated a common identity for themselves by themselves and as a result came to share one worldview in their similarity and difference (Aseh 2008). States in pre-colonial Africa, as seen in the example of Cameroon's Western Grassfields, were formed as associations which individuals and groups freely joined and freely left for one reason or the other, to negotiate either their way into another nation or the creation of a new one. Once the contract was sealed, they became unified by a single ideology imposed on themselves by themselves which structured reality for them in one nation expressed in one cultural system, one language, one religious tradition, supported by idiomatic expressions such as art, music, and symbols, all of which served as ideological mechanisms through which they transmitted shared ideas and values as one people through associative practices for the exploration of their physical world for their collective well-being.

To them, what was paramount was the direction in which society should go; the reproduction of the identity of the nation, based on the reproduction of the material conditions of their existence since that assured them the autonomy and independence on which their well-being depended. The self was defined as a logical scheme of ideas, in the positive sense, around which they based their thoughts and actions, categorised the world, expressed in a uniquely formulated language a complex set of artefacts and religion which

articulated their ideology as an identity group, to make the world suitable for them to live in. It conferred on them their provisos of existence which enabled them to manage similarity and difference perfectly well, giving an outward appearance of themselves as people from one ancestry; 'tribes'.

In a study of the relationship between ideology and time in Bali Nyong'a of the Western Grassfields of Cameroon, Kini-Yen Fongot-Kinni (2006) demonstrates how the notion of time (*ndip*) in Bali Nyong'a is an idiomatic expression of an ideology which governs the people's understanding of the world and makes reality more comprehensible for them. This is a result of the philosophy on which the people themselves founded their nation as an association-state in a geographical location which formed its material base, its infrastructure, and serves as that common source of perceptual stimulation from where the population – including those who manage the governing organs, which emerge from the terms of the association – receives the ideas with which they tackle the challenges of their daily existence without resulting in any significant differences. It was a context in which, as elsewhere in pre-colonial Africa, ideology was applicable in a uniform and unproblematic manner: neutral.

While Karl Manheim maintains that ideology refers to the 'collective unconsciousness' of a people who seek to maintain the status quo in ways different from utopian thinking, unconscious of or even hostile to any alternative, Karl Marx holds the view that an ideology is the worldview of the dominant class imposed on the people with the intention to create a 'false consciousness' in the alienated groups; to transform human beings into 'workers' who should have a misconception of their own interests in order to have effective epistemic control over them in the production process and to maintain among them the necessary relations of production for the profit-seeking motives of capital. He postulated further that this was determined by the means of production which formed the base over which this dominant class superimposes a repressive *superstructure* on society, which included its ideology, its political system, its legal system, and its religion: its ideological mechanisms for the reproduction of the relations of production. Louis Althusser, who introduced the structural understanding of ideologies, maintains that ideologies exist and reproduce in ideological state apparatuses which enable the different categories of people and substratum groups within society to play their role effectively while at the same time reproducing themselves as 'labour' through the capitalist system of education which ejects masses of 'labour' into the 'labour market', ready for exploitation by the capitalist system.

Marx, from whom Althusser developed his views on ideology, maintains, in the *German Ideology,* that ideology is a pure dream manufactured for the alienation of labour. This description of ideology by Marx could be perfectly in order, given that state formation in the Western societies he studied was a result of an emergent bourgeois class which, having acquired the means with which to erect a 'repressive state apparatus', was now able to impose a *superstructure* – a political and legal system, religion, education, etc. – on the material base or *infrastructure* which includes the rest of the population. This population, which consists mainly of the alienated groups, feeds the *superstructure* by way of definite relations of production crucial for the reproduction of the 'whole', in an endless sequence, enables the domination and the effective control and exploitation of the subjects in the production process as was aptly described by Friedrich Engels in *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* and by Marx himself in the *Communist Manifesto* and his other classic writings. This conception and constitution of the state*,* which emerges rather as a 'machine' of repression, a repressive apparatus, for the political domination and the economic exploitation of the subordinated working classes by the bourgeois class, was also upheld later by Lenin in *The State and Revolution.*

In the 20th century, Lenin (1870–1924) gave a new breadth to Marxism by hypothesising that a revolutionary intellectual class, which he called the intelligentsia, would emerge to unravel the obscurantist tendencies embodied in the ideological imposition of the dominant class for the freedom of the subjugated peoples. Although Lenin himself epitomised that revolutionary intellectual class, the said intelligentsia, unfortunately, has, after Lenin, been incorporated into the very same repressive bourgeois structure it was supposed to intellectually demystify or disarm. This has weakened the revolutionary struggle against political domination and economic enslavement since the real problem of subordinated peoples has remained unknown to them, shrouded in Althusser's ideological state apparatuses through which subordinated peoples are held in a trance.

This is particularly the case in Cameroon, if not in all of Africa, where the population has come to believe in the utopian daydream of 'development', a post-World War II concept that was coined for Africa by the West and imposed on the people through the neo-colonial power structure, which it uses to justify its existence and which claims to recognise the real interests of the subjected people. The subjugation of the people to the daydream instead prevents their real interests from being realised; it prevents them from discussing their way out and thus developing their own skills in producing their own natural wealth and raising their own capital for their own social

and material transformation. The whole idea of 'modernity' or 'improvement in living conditions' itself hides its profit-seeking motives, especially in a world where the industrialised countries think that they are the only guarantors of development. This helps to reproduce the relations of production in Cameroon for the sustenance of the Western industrial economies: it keeps African peoples as subordinated 'workers' for the dominant industrial economies of the West.

Kwame Nkrumah (1964) has maintained that ideology refers to that philosophy which has finally established itself in a society as a self-determining system of ideas that makes reality more intelligible, based on a general, positive, and organic principle, becoming the determining factor for their cognitive processes and the foundation of the normative system that explains how the people in that context understand and rationally interact with reality, manifesting itself in the society's class structure, history, religion and art (Nkrumah 1964:59).

And if we realise, therefore, that there are some ideologies which are neutral: not a result of a foreign imposition, which could either be implicit or explicit, written or unwritten, yet still serve as ideologies, deeply embedded in the subconscious, directing groups of individuals within a territory towards achieving practical goals for themselves by themselves in ways which distinguish them from those outside their group, it becomes evident that ideology became problematic in the West after the French Revolution of 1778–1779. It was the French Revolution which introduced the idea of 'nation-building' in the West and rendered ideology problematic, especially after the Napoleonic wars which demonstrated the conquering power of the nation-state in the West. From then on, ideology became a useful instrument for Western societies to infiltrate, dominate, control, and enslave other races of the world with regard to the means of production, particularly the Black race of Africa, by imposing on them what they should believe in as real, determining how they should structure themselves and discuss the terms of their existence.

This has been the bitter experience of Africans at the hands of Europeans since the 19th century, a period which corresponded to the end of physical confrontation between Europe and Africa and the beginning of an era of ideological manipulation though not without the use of repression. This was an age in which Western ideas became weapons directed against African peoples. And even the Cold War battle between the two ideological giants of the West (capitalism) and the East (communism) over the control of space in the former *third world* (today *second world*) particularly in Africa, which saw the destruction of the latter by the former, led to the triumph of neo-liberalism, a Western ideological disposition which, suffused with such

doctrinal representations as democratisation, liberalisation, and privatisation, established a new kind of relationship between Africa and the imperialist West which espoused the direct re-invasion and the complete destruction of Africa by countries of the North in the late 1980s, underpinning Western foreign policy and international relations.

In the context of this article, ideology has been used, not only in the Freudian conception of ideology which, like consciousness, has no history and is thus eternal, to refer to the phenomenon as an eternal but mutable system of ideas which makes imposition and domination, as historical events, possible. Althusser contends that ideology does not announce its name to the people whom it subjects. Thus, some pre-colonial nations of what is today called Cameroon, which have received some considerable attention in anthropological literature, such as those of the Western Grassfields, those of the Douala area, the Ewondo, etc., may never have had a term for ideology, but they were fully aware of an inarticulate law which directed them and governed their 'ways of knowing and doing', which was the consequence of ideology. It was that invisible base of society, centred around certain key values, which subjects individuals to patterns of behaviour which they have come to eternalise over time, absorbed into their subliminal which they unconsciously reproduce, which is what makes Bafut people different from Bamum people, or the Ewondo people different from the Nso' people. These are all ideological communities governed by worldviews derived from their ideological base, which may either be similar or different depending on the type of historical relationship that may exist between them, yet what this base really is remains unknown to them.

Following the 19th century European invasion of Africa, these ideological communities were transformed into subordinated categories under a deceptive façade, a shield for Western criminality called a 'nation-state' which claims social responsibility over subjected peoples thus maintaining its dominance and reproducing itself through new forms of ideological apparatuses imposed by it through which it subjects the people by making them believe that their survival is guaranteed by their dependence on foreign materialistic forces. The idea of 'calling' or 'becoming' may be applicable in all ideological situations where individuals are 'called' to 'become' believers in a desirable worldview for a particular purpose and depending on what it guarantees them. But the subjugation of the peoples under a dominant ideology, following the invasion of Africa by Europeans in the 19th century, was achieved by way of individuals being 'called' to 'become' members of an ideological category for the reproduction of the conditions of production as well as the reproduction of the relations of production for the maintenance of the repressive state. With

it came a dominant ideology which structures the world for its practitioners and appoints individuals into it, as subordinated subjects, even before they are born.

It must not escape our attention that an ideology is as eternal as the group that is practising it, which means that if an ideology is that intangible edict that has become part of a people's unconsciousness and thus directs their ways as a group or as an institution, then the disappearance of that group or institution would mean the disappearance of that particular ideology. The reverse is also true in that the mutation or outright disappearance of an ideology would equally mean that the group would either cease to exist as an identity group or would undergo some structural mutation which may eventually lead to its disappearance, which is why the different pre-colonial nations of Africa in the 19th century rose up like one person to resist the European invasion of the African continent because the practices of the invading Europeans contradicted the canons of the existing ideologies and meant an unintended alteration in their 'ways of knowing and doing'.

This should also tell us something about why the invading Europeans, backed by superior firepower, subdued African pre-colonial nations one after the other and imposed Western systems of thought on them: it was necessary to forcefully co-opt Africans into the European barbaric worldview in order to secure their consent as 'unconscious participants' in the European enterprise of criminality against Black people. This should also validate the argument that the inside to an ideology attains a taken-for-granted status for those who have been co-opted into it and subordinated by it. This is why Europeans had to use force to co-opt African people into the European systems of ideas: to transform them into accomplices at different levels, through a system of 'differentiated interpellation', which subjects them to different sets of seemingly contradictory interests which are nevertheless unified by their subjugation to the interest of the governing elite on whom their survival and functioning depends. But again, this has only resulted in what Fanon refers to as 'dual consciousnesses' in which colonised subjects adopt European attributes for one reason or the other while not completely forgetting what is essentially theirs. In the domain of language, for example – language being an ideological medium of expression through which a group is able to classify the world for effectively re-ordering it by way of communication, i.e. expressing those ideas that ideology provides them with in order to make social life possible – Africans have become polyglots: speaking their mother tongues as well as one or more European languages without being conscious of the fact that they were being ordered to do so by an interplay of dominant ideologies which have structured reality for them.

Since human behaviour is determined by that ideological disposition which transforms human beings as individuals into active subjects, the concept of 'differentiated interpellation' (which will be demonstrated later on in this paper) should show how Western-imposed systems of ideas, which were ideological forms of violence that backed the physical brutalities of European aggression, operate in a neo-colonial context; how the foreign-imposed political system, which changed the course of history in a negative direction for African peoples, engages the population through the realm of ideas to achieve its economic goals; how ideology in a neo-colonial environment wins over the public for political domination and economic exploitation, which sort of marked 'the end of history' since the alienated and subordinated peoples of Africa, under neo-colonial political structures, were no longer free to chart any alternative course of history with its own system of meanings for themselves. Whatever the case, the problems of contemporary Africa cannot be explained only as a direct outcome of ideology in itself.

With their avaricious tendencies pushing Western countries to seek control of the whole world for their economic survival, they deploy a combination of measures, including enticement, fantasies, persuasion, distraction, deceit, diplomacy and force to compel people, especially Africans who are so excited about ideas that originate from the white man's countries that they foolishly apply them uncritically. In so doing, Africans apply intentionally formulated destructive ideas, such as Christianity, Western education, liberal democracy (democracy being what Marx and Lenin have variously described as the 'dictatorship of the bourgeoisie') and the structural adjustment programmes, with disastrous consequences. The imposition of agendas on African peoples for the reproduction of the relations of exploitation under European-imposed repressive states is facilitated by ideologies serving as the opium of the subordinated and exploited peoples, and in turn facilitates the outright armed robbery operations carried out by Europeans in non-European lands.

Governance

Governance refers to the type of relationship that exists between the government (i.e., the realm of political power) and the 'public' and how this relationship affects the production process, including the production of ideas, as well as the other aspects of social life in general. In defining governance in the context of this article, not necessarily in relation to its original Latin meaning of 'steering', we look at it as processes through which individuals and groups can act autonomously and independently in creating structures within which they can generate new ideas that help to enrich or shape public opinion for the establishment of a common understanding of common problems. We also look at how these processes, which include a feedback

process, ensure a smooth mediation between the governing organs and the 'public'; the extent to which each individual citizen is free within the state, the limits of power, and whether the final authority of the land rests with the people, who can act as a body to change the course of history once those who govern have resorted to the misuse of power; once the governing organs have not met with the people's expectations. The critical question in governance is, therefore, that of how persons and groups within a community are able to arrive at a common judgement on issues of collective interest within a discursive space/structure freely created by them, not based on economic relations, in their attempt to shape policy and influence decision making.

The Public Sphere

The public sphere means that inter-locking social space or arena which is shared by social actors from different backgrounds in conjunction with the cultures and structures that the people themselves build, which leaves an imprint on the daily lives of the members of the community for whom it operates and on whose activities it depends for its maintenance and reproduction. It is that sphere of public life where commonsense ideas are produced, nurtured into public policy, and perpetuated as reinforcement to the people's worldview; where the public sense of judgement is fashioned through the free congregation and discussion of the participants themselves who are able to arrive at a point of common understanding on issues affecting their lives and how these can be resolved, not through economic relations but by the free generation and exchange of ideas, that sphere which mediates between the private sphere, say of the family or the home, and the public sphere of the political realm through an interplay of ideas with no economic interests attached.

Yenshu Vubo (2006a) and Nfamewih Aseh (2008:219), from the perspective of pre-colonial African states of the Western Grassfields of the savannah region of West/Central Africa, have observed that the public sphere is that arena where the identity of the state, which embodies the social memory, is deliberated, renegotiated, maintained, and reproduced indefinitely for social stability, orderliness and continuity by way of the free association of the people within an ideological community, outside the family. In that case, the public sphere carries public opinion as a pool of ideas with cultural codes created and shared by the people themselves for the maintenance and perpetuation of the identity of the state, not only cementing the moral bonds of solidarity among society members but also keeping the governing organs in close touch with the people whose ideological image they represent. Thus, in pre-colonial African societies, the public sphere, incorrectly and derogatorily described in colonial ethnographic literature as 'secret societies', connected

people across families, gradually forged a common identity around a shared world view based on a common ethical understanding of reality, which became embodied in the identity of the state, reflected and reproduced in its ideological vectors such as language, sculpture, music, religion, symbols and meanings with ideological effects (Warnier 1975; Nkwi 1976; Mzeka 1980).

Jürgen Habermas – after Plato who first explored the notion of *The Republic* – in his theory on the structural transformation of the public sphere in Europe where a new civil society emerged in the 18th century, compelled by the need for open business arenas where information and matters of common interest could be freely traded and examined, postulates that it is that social site or arena where meanings are expressed, circulated, and bargained. In that process, 'the public is collectively constituted into a body for the public monitoring of state authority by the people through informed and critical discourses. The public sphere, Habermas argues, is also that social forum where agendas for public discussion could be set through a display of opinions that are emancipated from the shackles of economic reliance. But following the emergence of the repressive bourgeois state in Europe during the 18th century, Habermas also observed that the public sphere was transformed into a mere social site; a 'bourgeois public sphere', where the power of the absolutist state was represented to the people through mechanisms of public mediation; a new social arena that was governed by economic markets, state apparatuses, the media or the so-called democratic press (publishing enterprises and newspapers), and the so-called democratic associations, etc., wherein the public sphere gained its 'economic independence' and was freed from the power of the state and that of the church, resulting in the decline of the public sphere since the 'public' had become a consumerist one rather than one that was critical in giving society a sense of collective survival.

In a neo-colonial context such as that of Cameroon, what is referred to as the 'nation-state' is actually a kleptocratic state in which the racketeering and thuggery practised by the 'elite' in collaboration with foreigners are its main *modus operandi*. In this state, which is a fractured copy of the bourgeois state that emerged in Europe during the 18th century and was imposed on Africans by Europeans in the 20th century, the public sphere is rather that captured social arena which structures our understanding of reality around employment or economic benefits in general. It forms and outlines a world for us to inhabit and believe in as valid, as genuine, as authentic, by means of an intense, selective interpretation and presentation of events which appeal to our emotions, thus setting the agenda for us. On this basis, we discuss our terms of being and we come to know who we are and to fashion our

lifestyles according to that agenda. Cameroon is the locus of competing economic interests, languages, and ideologies which have fractured a public sphere that is also weakened by its dependence on the political realm for its economic survival. The public sphere lacks that facility and vitality with which to build a collective will into a systematic body of ideas that can forge a strong public opinion for the survival of the population as a political community, free from foreign interference and dictatorship.

From the Perspective of a Theory to the Understanding of the Empirical

Social phenomena, unlike natural phenomena, are articulated by invisible laws which can be better understood and explained by theoretically linking the empirical to the abstract. And the operations of the public sphere in a neo-colonial context, such as one empirically observes in Cameroon, could be demonstrated using what I call the theory of 'differentiated interpellation'. With this theory, I seek to establish the 'missing' relationship between the empirical and the abstract in relation to the project of domination. The theory is derived from Louis Althusser's concept of *interpellation,* which is the process through which ideology manufactures the active subject. I intend to demonstrate how the people themselves, as social actors, in their uncon-scious state, acting within identity groups, or what Althusser refers to as 'ideological state apparatuses', adopt specific attitudes in accordance with certain ideological leanings which ascribe or confer on them certain skills or characteristics around which their identities are constituted and with which they are able to reproduce their differences. These differences are what they have been brought to believe in, endowing their consciousness and trans-forming them into active subjects, acting according to their 'calling', yet in accordance with the ruling ideology.

This should enable us to understand how these different 'callings', arising from the socio-technical division of labour, have culminated in a fractured public sphere in Cameroon, a public sphere with no urge to build a communal consciousness for collective survival, and which does not aim at creating a universal model either since different social categories have been fabricated to pursue different interests, all tied to the interests of the ruling aristocracy, thus facilitating the project of domination. This would mean that the neo-colonial state in Cameroon, which obeys the logic of a business enterprise and is both physically and ideologically repressive, achieves its goals by way of the socio-technical division of labour, which ensures that the interests of the subordinated categories are sustained and reproduced at the same time as they reproduce the material conditions of production.

It thus becomes relatively easy to 'govern' a population which has been subjected to the ruling ideology, as in the case of Cameroon (which has been described by Nyamnjoh [1999] as 'a country united by ethnic ambitions and difference') when the people are made to pursue different interests which may seem contradictory but ultimately achievable from the very source that governs those different interests. This is especially so in the case where the neo-colonial structure has the political, legal, military and material means to maintain the population in a state of 'false consciousness' by suppressing their interests and subsuming them into the neo-colonial power structure through political coercion and vague economic promises. Indeed, the promise of an 'improvement in living conditions' has constituted the substance of the political agenda of the president since independence Ahmadou Ahidjo and the successor regime of Paul Biya in which the regions (council areas and provinces) are kept at bay and played one against the other in their hope of receiving the 'generosity' of the Santa Clause state (Nkwi and Nyamnjoh 1997).

The population is also being deceived through heavily flawed elections into voting fortune-seeking neo-colonialists into political office in the hope that these fortune seekers will bring them an 'improvement in their living conditions', embodied in the euphemism 'development' which, unfortunately, is a process through which the neo-colonial *superstructure* incorporates new elites, including public service employees, into its system for the legitimisation of its project of domination and repression (Alawadi Zelao 2005). Here we find a direct relationship between the various ideas that govern public life and the realm of politics and the economy. These arrays of ideas guarantee the dominance of the neo-colonial state. They play different but concomitant roles in maintaining the status quo, and are a product of a history hidden from the social actors by those who control the realm of ideas. Their intention is to enable the differentiated social categories (such as those in the medical corps, in education, the legal profession, the police or defence in general, those in the domain of religion, legislators, etc.), in their struggle to produce the things that reproduce their various identities, to unconsciously fashion out a materialistic history for the economic and political interests of the ruling class.

Accordingly, what the people hold as ideas are translated into 'goods' for the neo-colonial economy. This benefits the ruling class and is justified by the 'invisible hand of history' reflected in the fractured image of the Enlightenment they have come to represent, necessary for the growth and expansion of the Western industrial economy. In the neo-colonial context, and in a public sphere that is governed by the theory of 'differentiated

interpellation', disinterested individuals who pursue different economic interests do not engage in the discourse surrounding specific issues in a way that could enable the discussions to be reproduced across the different interest groups to establish an all-inclusive and consistent or dependable public sphere that could influence the realm of politics and give society a new direction. Instead, the different 'ideological state apparatuses' play dissimilar but associated roles in linking the interests of the 'public' – which is reproduced by the 'expectations' of the subject people – to the interests of the ruling class, whose dominance is legitimised by the 'proper functioning' of the various 'ideological state apparatuses'.

Such an incoherent and inconsistent public sphere is controlled by its economic dependence rather than by reason. Here, the subordinated strata, economically dependent on the superordinate structure, are held in check by economic limitations and political intimidation. The desired effect is their subjugation to the neo-colonial state and hence the preservation of the status quo. In this case, the creation of awareness on matters of common interests or the construction of common meanings and cultural norms around which public opinion can be groomed for a discursive interaction that resonates across the entire society, free from class control and critical for the reproduction of the social memory, is not the main concern of individuals and groups who are pursuing different interests, united by their efforts to cope with the repressive character of the neo-colonial political arrangement, with no ambition to arrive at a common judgement: they have no reason to form a shared opinion on the political destiny of society.

In Cameroon we observe a patchy public sphere which has been hijacked by the media (newspapers, TV, radio, the internet, books, paintings, etc.) and economic forces through the 'democratic' process which cultivates a 'public' that has no conscious political influence on the way society should go; a helpless 'public' which is bereft of reasoning partly due to its heavy reliance on external materialistic forces which transforms them as individuals into subjects of the ruling ideology. And the subordinated nature of the population to the neo-colonial political structure on which it relies for its economic survival has rendered the task of curbing deviant behaviour in all domains a near impossible one due to the incompatibility of the various interests which compete in the public sphere for economic opportunities rather than for the generation of ideas that would have a positive influence on the political destiny of society.

However, the effect of the application of a multiplicity of ideological devices in a neo-colonial context is that substratum groups within the population help to achieve the goal of the repressive state by maintaining and perpetuating

foreign ideologies among themselves in the hope of achieving some desired goals. However, these goals are themselves promoted among the population by the same European invading forces which control the outcome, thereby weakening the capacity of the population to produce a singular counterpoising force against European invasion and domination. In that case, the public sphere, as permitted or legally recognised by the ruling elite and patronised by it as part of its neo-colonial 'function' as a superordinate structure, instead emerges as a contested and contradictory arena where the discussions and deliberations which fashion public opinion do not empower the people to challenge the invading powers or to overcome the project of domination by the state whose existence as a 'repressive machine' demands the deployment of both mechanisms of repression and those of ideological reproduction of the relations of surplus-value extortion.

On the contrary, each ideological sphere has tended to perceive its political and economic survival as depending on those foreign material forces which introduced them to the foreign ideologies, culminating in a state of general dependence; wherein the public sphere has been weakened by its economic dependence. This is where persons and groups, who inhabit a land rich in natural wealth but which is rapidly being depleted by foreigners who exploit it almost for free with the use of the cheap 'labour power' of the fragmented public for the industrial and economic expansion of countries of the North, are motivated by a consumerist attitude. Karl Marx refers to this as 'commodity fetishism', which has killed their ability to be rationally critical of the foreign origins of their plight. As a result, they instead gear their activities towards attracting the benefits of 'modernity' or what is generally referred to as 'development aid' or 'foreign assistance' from those same foreign sources that promised them 'modernity' or 'development'. This makes them unable to challenge the foreign domination accomplished with the assistance of the allies or puppets of neo-colonialism in power whose political and economic agendas are equally geared towards attracting 'foreign partners' in 'nation building', based on the illusory drive to 'improve the living conditions of the population'. This is the core of the ruling ideology – the interpellation and subjection of Cameroonians who must be made to believe that everything has to be that way, with no alternative (Ahidjo 1964:55; Biya 1986:17).

It is this absolute subjection on which the dominant ideology is centred, which in the light of ensuing events determines not only the type of institutions/ structures established in Cameroon but also the nature of the public sphere. Thus the public sphere is a fragment of different contradictory ideological spheres in what was established in the post-colony against the wishes of the people. This population continues to be persuaded and forced to accept such

fictitious arrangements as genuine, such that the commonsense ideas that animate 'public' discussion are instead centred on 'foreign aid' as the only means through which the people believe they can achieve 'development', which is in fact a utopian concept embedded in the unconscious reproduction of the ruling ideology. Hence, what was a Western coinage intended only to cool off the independence struggles that engulfed Africa in the late 1940s and spanned the next two decades, has become the founding philosophy for the Cameroonian people's mistaken conception of what is in their own interest.

To keep alive this utopian thinking about a 'development bliss', the fractured and contested public sphere selectively 'favours' certain social categories so that the project of domination can succeed. We need to understand how this historical process – based on the materialistic conception of ideology which Althusser says makes use of the 'lacuna discourse', which hides that which is actually intended – established in the alienated peoples of Cameroon a 'mistaken conception of interest'. Since we are delving into the scientific study of the abstract, a study of how the invisible realm structures the visible world beyond the consciousness of the active subject, a domain which is still unexplored in the area of political studies in Cameroon, I will begin my exposé by first discussing how and why the founding philosophy on which Cameroon was established is traceable to a foreign source, before elaborating on how that gave rise to a subordinated public sphere for the transformation of individuals into subjects. In this effort, we will methodically move from the empirical to extrapolating the abstract, invisible law, which can be validated by an empirical examination of the facts of history.

The Historical Origins of the 'Kamerun Idea' and the Imposition of a Superstructure

We begin from the notion that the need to reproduce indefinitely the productive forces within certain relations of production alongside the reproduction of the material conditions of production for the continuous growth and expansion of Western industrial economies necessitated the imposition of a 'superstructure' on the peoples of this portion of Africa which became Cameroon. A dominant political ideology became that invisible phenomenon which structured the Cameroonian world into different spheres for the interpellation and subjugation of Cameroonians to that dominant political ideology for the realisation of that need. Therefore, the original Cameroon idea itself, that founding philosophy on which Cameroon was erected by the Germans and consolidated by the French and the British during the Cold War, is part of the overall 'idea' in which Europeans saw Africa as a vast land of economic potential which they set out to explore and exploit to the fullest by using local labour that could be reproduced indefinitely on the spot.

The way of achieving that goal was by establishing encapsulating structures better known as 'nation-states' in Africa whose existence was to be assured by repression. And since Africans generally did not attach a lot of importance to the notion of physical boundaries by way of communities caging themselves within fixed geographical spaces, Europeans went ahead to partition the entire continent for themselves at the Berlin Conference of 1884. In so doing, Europeans assumed, as Columbus did on the other side of the Atlantic in the 15th century, that the land of Africa was *terra nullius* without any political form and without a government hence belonging to nobody, especially since Europeans did not regard Africans as human beings.

They classified Africans as beings qualified to be enslaved. Thus followed hundreds of years of murderous trans-oceanic slavery and slave trade which produced the wealth of the industrialized nations of the West which is today being 'given' to Africans as loans. Yet the bourgeois economists still make African people believe, unscientifically, that foreign capital is indispensable for African development.

In July 1472 the Portuguese became the first Europeans to visit Africa's Atlantic Coast in general and the Wouri estuary in particular where they were welcomed by the Douala people with local dishes of shellfish, caught from the Wouri River. The Portuguese thereafter named the Wouri River *Rio dos Cameroes*, meaning the river of abundant shell fish. This in effect announced the existence of a profitable natural resource in that river in the same way as other European interlopers also announced the Gold Coast or the Ivory Coast. As a sequel, the Germans, who arrived in 1884, took up the Portuguese term of *Cameroes* to coin the German appellation *Kamerun* to designate that vast territory made up of a constellation of existing nations that they carved up and reserved, as their 'protectorate', for their exploration, exploitation and for the exportation of proceeds from there back to Germany for the benefit of its ailing industrial economy of that time. This was the source of the 'Kamerun idea' which was transformed into a neo-colonial 'superstructure' after World War II by the French for the same purpose as the original German idea itself, as shall be discussed in the next few paragraphs.

Although the first German trading post was set up in Douala in 1868 by the German shipping company Woermann, the landing of the Germans on the Wouri estuary in 1884 during the era of the European scramble for Africa, marked the beginning of seismic events that were to give birth to a repressive 'superstructure' and the birth of disjunctive urban settlements to serve as European business centres. Their one-sided agreements signed with the Douala kings constituted the legal basis for the Germans to annex the land. Realising this grand deception, the Douala people rose up against the Germans

in what became the Douala-German war of 1884-1885. After conquering the Douala people the Germans moved inland, towards the foot of Mount Cameroon where they found a treasure in the rich volcanic soils. They established their headquarters and from there extended their criminal practices to establish Yaoundé (a distorted form of Ewondo) as their main trading centre in 1888. At the foot of the mountain, the Germans met stiff resistance from the Bakweri people who inhabited the area now known as Buea. Under Kuva Lekenye, the Bakweri people held up the Germans in a serious struggle that lasted from 1891 to 1895. After defeating the Bakweri people, the Germans, under the spiritual guidance of the Basel Mission, established laws with which they seized over 60,000 acres of land from the Bakweri people around Mount Cameroon and from the Douala peoples of the coastal plains right down to the Mungo Valley. The Germans set up large plantations over most of the entire coastal region, occupying almost all the rich fertile lands of the Atlantic Coast.

Wherever the Germans went, they met with solid resistance, which produced the disrupting effects that Africa as a whole experienced during the 19th century. In the Bangwa land under Fon Asonganyi Fontem in 1900; in Bafut under Fon Abumbi during the Bafut/Mankon resistance struggle against the Germans in 1901; in Kom where Fon Ngam led the Kom people to resist the German invasion for seven good years; in Nso, in Esu, in the Ewondo land of what is today Yaoundé in 1896, 1907, and so on, it was a season of unprecedented warfare. But the Germans, with superior firepower unleashed terror and conquered them one after the other, seizing both land and slaves to produce resources for the ailing German industry. Eventually, as accounts by Harry Rudin (1958) and plantation reports indicate, by 1913 about 195 Germans and German firms had established plantations and small-scale industries, and were enslaving some 80,000 people in plantations, factories, and public works in very cruel conditions. Between Yaoundé and Kribi there were some 20,000 slave labourers serving as porters.

Before 1953, German plantations in the Mount Cameroon region – which became the CDC (Cameroon Development Corporation) plantations in 1947 – alone held over 32,000 slave-workers, drawn from the hinterlands of the region including what is today francophone Cameroon and even parts of present-day eastern Nigeria..They produced palm oil, palm kernel, pepper, coffee, cocoa, banana, tea, rubber, tobacco, etc., which were shipped to Europe as raw material for the bourgeoning European industries. Out of that total number of slave-workers that were in the German plantations, over 10,000 of them were from the Western Grassfields alone who, between 1913 and 1914, had been forced to walk to the coast, without food and in

chains. Many of them died on the way; among those that arrived, there was an 8 per cent death rate in the plantations as well as in the public works where they used their bare hands to dig roads, construct bridges as well as build railway lines. Unfortunately for the Germans the European scramble over the patches of the Ottoman Empire, after it collapsed, led to the outbreak of World War I. This war involved Africa and Africans only because of the European colonial presence on the continent, during which the French, eager to regain their 'possessions' from Germany, allied with the British and ejected the Germans from Kamerun in 1916 and shared the territory between themselves.

Both the French and the British administered their respective Cameroon territories as Class B mandated territories of the League of Nations, although the French transformed theirs into a colony. When the British took over the German plantations, claiming them as 'enemy property', the territory on which the plantations were located became known as the Southern Cameroons and the British administered it as part of the Southern Province of Nigeria between 1922 and 1946. It became part of Eastern Nigeria from 1947 to 1958 when the first Prime Minister was elected according to the wishes of the first London Constitutional Conference of 1957, then achieved 'quasi-regional' status in 1953 when the first elections were held in the Southern Cameroons. Meanwhile, the French, who took over the larger portion of Cameroonian soil with claims over its people and all its resources and mineral wealth, seemed bent on beating the record of the Germans in terms of rapacity and brutal arbitrary practices against local peoples.

A new independence struggle followed with the launch of the national liberation movement (see below). The French met this with superior firepower, including tanks and mortars, mercilessly massacring many thousands of Cameroonians struggling to defend their land with rudimentary weapons. The eventual outcome in 1960 was a series of accords signed with the neo-colonial regime of Ahidjo which gave the French the right to take total control of almost all the internal affairs of Cameroon. Although the French had also adopted a kind of indirect rule system in which they integrated their own portion of Cameroon into French Equatorial Africa, they also adopted an assimilationist style through which the Cameroonians of that part of the territory were taught to believe that they were part of the greater France and equal in status to French citizens. This is a classical example of the Marxian idea of 'false consciousness' in which people are alienated from themselves and made to believe to be what they are not, buried in a mistaken conception of history.

The 11 February 1961 plebiscite transformed the 'Kamerun idea' into the Federal Republic of Cameroon, made up of West and East Cameroon. The

federal structure was abolished in 1972, returning the territory to its near-'original' status as mapped out by the Germans, but not without losing some portions to Nigeria and to French Equatorial Africa.

Before then, the post-World War II reforms, which gave a semblance of freedom to colonised people around the world, had ignited the independence struggle and led to the creation of the national resistance movement on 10 April 1948. This was known as the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC) which, from its inception, sought the re-unification of the two halves of Cameroon as a precondition for the territory's accession to independence. Faced with this nationalist struggle to free the territory from France and Great Britain, the colonialists and their local allies systematically eliminated all UPC leaders between September 1958 and January 1971 when the last leader of the movement was killed in a public firing squad in Bafoussam.

The French had appointed the first black Prime Minister in the person of André Marie Mbida on 9 May 1957 to take over the duties formerly performed by a succession of French Governors. This led to the 'independence' of East Cameroon on 1 January 1960 when the French took a back seat but ruled indirectly through Ahmadou Ahidjo. He had been appointed by French High Commissioner Pierre Messmer on 18 February 1958 to take over from Mbida who had started expressing ideas contrary to the 'Kamerun idea'. It will be recalled that this was the project of creating a social formation for the subjection of Cameroonians for the ultimate reproduction of the conditions of production for the benefit of the industrial West. After the granting of 'independence' to East Cameroon by the French, negotiations continued with the British to bring the 'anglophone' territory into the French-concocted political arrangement. This led to the 1 October 1961 re-unification drama, the day 'Anglophones' claim to have gained their own 'independence' by becoming part of the Cameroon federation composed of the conflictual linguistic categories of 'francophones' and 'anglophones', and then to the 20 May 1972 referendum, after which the territory was known as the United Republic of Cameroon. It became known simply as the Republic of Cameroon following a Presidential Decree of 1984 which sought to re-establish the original German idea in its geographical sense and with the same political implications: the subjugation of Cameroonians to a dominant ideology which ensures the reproduction of the conditions of production for the health of the industrial economies of the West.

After having shown the historical origins of the "Kamerun Idea" and how it was physically transformed into a neo-colonial political structure by way of physical repression during the Cold War for the same purpose of achieving a foreign economic objective like the original idea itself, we now examine how the ideological repression and imposition was achieved. One of the

ways of achieving that desired goal was by dominating the public sphere with idiomatic expressions that claim to make life rather than being supportive of *reality*, which at the same time sought to destroy the foundation of all indigenous political philosophies yet with no intention to establish a universal ideal because if that happens 'labour' will be liberated and the Western industrial economies will lose their global dominance.

This should lead to the nadir of the enigma that has fragmented the Cameroonian world into incoherent ideological spheres or into ideological state apparatuses which serve as instruments of (ideological) repression, and show how these are subjected to the dominant ideology for the benefit of the industrial economies of the West. It should also show how Cameroonians by themselves, with a false consciousness of their interests, are 'obeying' the orders of the neo-colonial, repressive state. In the fragmented public sphere, and in search of that utopia of 'improvement in living standards', Cameroonians are reproducing the dominant ideology of the ruling clique which makes foreign interference, meddling, destruction, and domination possible.

The Emergence of a Public Sphere as a Display of Ideological Mechanisms for Political Domination and Economic Exploitation

The public sphere in what finally emerged as the neo-colonial state of Cameroon, from the historical process just narrated, was rather a display of ideological mechanisms for the control of public opinion than a social arena in which Cameroonians could, on their own and outside the control of eco-nomic relations and political dominance, influence matters that affect their own destiny through the medium of discussion and negotiation. This way of looking at the public sphere as a display of idiomatic expressions for the effective epistemic control of the population is informed by the view that for the foreign founding philosophy to be maintained and reproduced in the pub-lic domain for the survival of the foreign-oriented kleptocratic state there was the need to flood the public sphere with ideological mechanisms for the alienation of the population. This resulted in the emergence of a fractured and contested public sphere which selectively 'favours' certain social categories for the success of the project of domination, especially that the idea of social responsibility (salvation, modernisation, civilisation, development, etc.), which constituted that founding philosophy on which the neo-colonial state stands, was just a dream, a fleeting illusion since the 'Kamerun idea' was to satisfy colonial interests and colonial interests only.

For a clearer understanding, it is necessary to discuss in detail the historical processes through which the public sphere within the newly imposed

superstructure became flooded with mechanisms of public mediation of foreign origin for the effective epistemic control of the population for the survival of the neo-colonial state. This *superstructure* emerged to serve the needs of a dominant mode of production, reinforced by a style of government that thrives on a fractured public sphere in which the built-in structures and cultures have no indigenous roots and are not intended to galvanise public opinion into a self-sustaining ideology for national development defined by the people themselves. The overriding question that should guide the discussion here is: if the emerging industrial economy of the West depended on slave labour, why did it not collapse after the abolition of slavery and slave trade?

We begin from the understanding that the Haitian Revolution that was launched on 14 August 1791 by Boukman, a former Black slave, was to set in motion a chain of processes in the West that were to terminate in the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (and not slavery). It had put to question and balked the whole idea of slavery and slave trade as was perpetuated by the West as a means of economic production. Unfortunately, the abolition of slave trade as a physical form of violence, which was a response to the moral question raised against the evils of slavery and slave trade by the Haitian Revolution, turned out to be an act that concealed its historical mission, a pompous display of falsehood from calculating factory owners whose only intention was to give an impression to the whole world that some moral progress was being made in the West. Consequently, a new dimension had to be given to the phenomenon to water down the moral implications that had been exposed by the Haitian Revolution. This was by transforming it into a more palatable form of slavery; a refinement of slavery, in which victims could unconsciously accept participating in its established structures without compulsion. And this was to be achieved ideologically by the application of a non-physical form of violence, which could explain why the public sphere in what became Cameroon emerged as a deluge of new idiomatic expressions imposing a new repressive order.

From the above discussion on ideology we realise that ideology is that invisible basis of society which models for the people what they should believe in and unquestioningly hold as true and thus act according to its edicts and prescriptions. As Althusser points out, ideologies exist in apparatuses – which corresponds to our definition of the public sphere – where they are reproduced for the continuous 'interpellation' of individuals into subjects who obligatorily abide by its logic. Although ideological state apparatuses may sometimes seem to be outside the topography of political practices, they are always subjected to the public sphere of political power. And the need to establish ideological state apparatuses in the colony for political

conquest followed immediately after the hypocritical abolition of slave trade, which was championed by the English liberals who were inspired by and supported the American Revolution and eventually upheld by the British government.

This was also necessitated by the need to establish a new kind of ('acceptable') relationship with slaves who should henceforth, under definite relations of production, willingly offer their 'labour' for the continuous growth and development of Western industrial economies. Hence, the first of these ideological state apparatuses that was established in the post-colony as a mechanism for public mediation was the church. The Atlantic coastline of West Africa had long been teeming with missionary activity struggling to 'rescue' Africans from a rudimentary culture who were helplessly bound for hell, and providing assurance of an 'improvement in the living conditions of those degenerate heathens in Africa'.

Religion thus justified the colonial invasion of the continent, in exactly the same way it justified slavery and the slave trade, and secured the ground for the introduction of a repressive political system by the invading Europeans together with its ideology. This ideology has structured the contemporary world for Africans to believe in as being a design of God. Among the many missionary bodies which overran the Atlantic coastline of West Africa in general and the Wouri estuary in particular during that period, with a definite mission to 'soften' the ground for the imposition of an encumbering *superstructure*, were representatives of the English Baptist Missionary Society from Britain where parliament had ratified a resolution for the abolition of slavery trade.

There was the Pallottine Mission to Kamerun, a Roman Catholic mission that was established by the German and Swiss-run Pallotines in 1886 on condition that they did not pose any threat to the already established Protestant Basel Mission which accompanied the German invasion of the Wouri estuary in 1884. There were also German Baptists as well as French Catholic groups which came later on. On 25 October 1890, eight Pallotine priests arrived in Douala. On arrival the Pallotine priests encountered hostility from Presbyterian missionaries who were already stationed in Douala and were thus forced to set up shop in Mariemberg near Edea on the outskirts of Douala. Within thirteen years, they opened missions and schools in Kribi, Edea, Douala, Batanga, Jaunde, Ikassa, Minlaba, Sasse, Bota, Dschang, Ossing (Mamfe), and Deido in Douala, and a convent in Bonjongo.

The English Baptist missionaries who had arrived in 1883 had established mission stations in Douala and Bimbia shortly before the German invasion. But unlike the Baptists who adopted a gradual approach in church planting,

the Roman Catholics opted for an absolutist approach, in territorial terms. Ecclesiastically, Kamerun, under the Germans, belonged to the Apostolic Vicariate of Gabon. In 1890 it was broken off and established as a separate Apostolic Prefecture, which became an Apostolic Vicariate in 1904 though applicable only to the south of the territory since the north was made part of the Apostolic Vicariate of Sudan/Central Africa. It was separated in 1914 and transformed into the Apostolic Prefecture of the Adamawa. Suffice it to note that it was during this period that, for the first time, local people were coming to terms with Christianity as an ideology and the church, which was to become a major mechanism for public mediation in the post-colony.

As an ideological weapon directed against the indigenous peoples, the church, as established by those four competing missionary organisations and as an ideological state apparatus, promoted the ideology of Christianity and at the same time condemned the cultural institutions which served as deliberative mechanisms for public mediation for the strengthening of bonds of solidarity necessary for communal existence. The public sphere of the church, and Christianity as an ideology, may seem to have no relationship with the political realm but they play a political role – by destroying the authentic world of African peoples, a foundation is made possible for the establishment of hybridised notions crucial for the neo-colonial political arrangement to thrive. The destruction of the African social system with the Christian ideology and the forceful establishment of the church as a public sphere, which has remained contested to this day, was thus a pre-condition for anarchy, which facilitated the introduction of liberalism and democracy; the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, within the neo-colonial ad hoc state, which Cameroonians are being persuaded to accept as a valid form of social organisation.

While the church, as an ideological state apparatus, as established by different missionary bodies took off on a conflictual foundation, Christianity, as an ideology, established for the people an imaginary relationship between them and their material condition with no bearing on the latter by the former. Structurally, and for the imaginary transposition and deformation of the local people's conditions of existence which brought about an alienation in the imaginary, the missionaries, with a tinge of social responsibility, presented themselves before the local population as messengers of God to people who did not know God; people sent to 'call' them out of darkness, out of their sinful nature into light, to become part of the Magnificent Body of Christ. 'You were yet sinners, "uncivilised", while God loved you and gave his only begotten son to die on the cross for you. All you need do is to love Him and be saved (from your uncivilisation). Amen', was the interpellation that rang

out to the 'natives' who were made to believe, as a matter of absolute truth, that they were sinners saved by the grace of God only and so must define their lives on the basis of that belief.

To transform the local people into subjects of the Christian ideology through the process of interpellation, emphasis was laid on the illusion that anyone who hesitated to answer to the 'call' ran the risk of missing the train bound for the Eternal Glorious Kingdom. Those who failed to believe would face the disastrous consequence of life hereafter in an eternal scorching inferno. That alone, however, could not have produced the desired effect of transforming individuals into subjects under the dominion of Christ who was presented as white and the only son of God, the being who commands and interdicts those who believe in him to adopt corresponding attitudes and patterns of behaviour. Where local people resisted, the administrators used military force to ensure compliance. In Kom, for example, the entire population together with the Fon of Kom offered resistance. But the colonial administrators made use of the military to force Christianity down the throats of the local people as a way of 'tuning the discordant note' (Evans 1927:1-2). Another strategy was that moneys were raised and new converts encouraged to increase their Sunday offerings so that evangelism could be intensified. And following that intensification, more and more local people were converted and subjected to the ideology of Christianity. This is reflected today by the mushroom churches of different denominations with seemingly conflicting missions that are only different versions of the same thing.

As social arenas or interlocking spaces shared by social actors, the thousand and one churches that litter every street in Cameroon today, competing for public space for the marketing of salvation, do not serve as forums for discussion and negotiation. They do not serve the people's need to constantly engage in the discussion, negotiation and remoulding of their different opinions or views about their own existence which they can reformulate into policy or recast into a common pool as a systematising vision. They rather serve as a public sphere which recruits individuals from different backgrounds intended for transformation or conversion into ideological subjects who are then subjected to the dominant ideology, thereby claiming to be making life, claiming to be dispensing salvation, rather than being derived from an indigenous founding philosophy and thus not being supportive to it. On the contrary, the church established itself in that portion of the African soil by seeking to destroy all indigenous founding philosophies, therefore, distorting reality with imaginary or falsified depictions of the world which have no relationship with the local people's real conditions of existence but which have come to dominate their imaginations and have thus enslaved

them. Unfortunately, the church as an ideological state apparatus which serves employment needs also produces its own elite who depend entirely on the church for their employment thus unconsciously reproducing the subjugating ideology of Christianity, which is also the foundation for anarchism.

There may seem to be no visible relationship between the religious ideology of Christianity and the neo-colonial state or there may as well seem to be a contradiction between Christianity as anarchism and as a subjugating ideology. Yet those 'hidden' relationships exist all the same, which makes the church an ideological state apparatus, as indicated by Althusser. The 'hidden' relationship, which also clarifies the contradiction between Christianity and the neo-colonial state is established by the fact that all Christian denominations, in spite of all the apparent differences, while condemning the cultural traditions of local people for the purpose of making social atomism possible for invaders to be able to pick and choose their collaborators, they teach submissiveness (in ways different from the principles or norms of the authentic religious traditions of local peoples which emphasise the intrinsic worth of all human beings). By submitting to imaginary depictions (Jesus Christ, Mary, the Apostles, etc.) with the hope of finding salvation and turning the other cheek, converts are being unconsciously subordinated to the neo-colonial state.

Perhaps an examination of the historical process through which a foreign concept of education – the capitalist system of education – was established on Cameroonian soil and how schools, which are the ideological state apparatuses for promoting the foreign ideology for the reproduction of the neo-colonial state, would further elucidate the point. It is important to bear in mind that Western industrial economies which have always depended on slave labour have never embodied the needs of 'labour' as historically defined by the people themselves but have always imposed their needs on 'labour' as defined by the insatiable demands of profit. Thus the need to develop productive forces outside the factory gate, in foreign lands, in its diversified but unified form, is at the origin of the Western system of education in Cameroon. This explains why the West hypocritically called for the abolition of slave trade at a given point in history: a new idea had emerged in which the reproduction of on-the-spot slave labour was necessary, which had to go beyond the mere provision of the 'minimum material conditions' for its survival to include the reproduction of 'competent' labour in its diversified form, suitable for 'unconsciously' performing varying tasks according to the drive for profit of Western industrial economies.

Historically, there needed to be a shift from the use of brute force to social projects that were to be embodied in the civilisation propaganda. Perhaps the central social project was education which the Germans first modelled

around agriculture as a way of 'teaching' Africans to willingly take up 'jobs' and 'posts' in the plantations as 'workers', devoid of any ethical implications. The 'natives' did not need to be forced and beaten to work anymore. They needed to be taught certain skills to enable them take up slavery as a profession without being conscious of the fact that they were actually doing so. This needed to be done away from the plantations so that those who 'qualified' had to apply to 'work' for a minimum wage which was barely enough to enable the 'workers' to reproduce themselves by paying for their children's school fees and other school needs as well as compulsory taxation which was payable only in cash, thereby uprooting family heads who had to go and unwillingly offer their labour for minimum wages in cash.

Colonial education also included what was called technical education, first introduced in 1952 by Americans, in Ombe, near the German plantations, as Ombe Trade Centre to train low-level skilled 'workers' for the repair and maintenance of plantation equipment and for the European factories in Douala. Domains such as mining – the secret of Western global economic dominance – remained secret domains and mining techniques, no matter how rudimentary, were the preserve of whites who needed only unskilled manpower for the mines and quarry operations, hence, the exclusion of mining techniques from the colonial school curriculum.

Through education, the practices of physical brutality and flogging were removed and 'working' in the plantations became a 'favour' from the white man who selected those he wanted from amongst the lot, the 'educated' as well as the 'uneducated', to serve different purposes within a new system of hierarchies where the 'educated' had more value. This set in motion a process of voluntary migration in which people left the hinterlands for the coast to look for 'work' in the plantations, to sell their labour power to the white man. There was also a rush for 'education' and those who were 'educated' and could speak the white man's language; the language of domination, were employed as clerks, overseers, managers, etc., and made to supervise those who had only their labour power to offer, the 'uneducated'. A new era of voluntary slavery was dawning and those who were selected went to town with the story of how 'the white man loves us'.

The Germans were also to 'educate' Cameroonians to know themselves as subordinates to the white race. The Germans sought to 'educate' Cameroonians that they were polygamists, for example, and that 'God' was against it (Rudin 1938). The 'natives' were also to see themselves as subordinates to the Germans by learning to speak German[1] which was also what was taught in the makeshift schools besides agriculture and the Christian ideology for the subjection of the 'rebellious natives' to the rule of the (white)

son of God. The capitalist system of education gained ground in the colony and the business of education itself was undertaken away from the plantations by missionaries who seemingly had no connection with production (Ajayi 1969).

Hence, the idea of education was jointly taken up by the four missions (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Baptist and Presbyterian). It was initially the preserve of one mission with the sole intention being to teach the German language. The emphasis on language was in order to reproduce those who would be able to manage the 'workers' properly as well as report to the whites. 'The curricula which evolved emphasised a religious content and the immediate objective in view was to enable converts to read the scriptures' (Shu 2000: 2). Reading, writing, addition and some basic notions of a literary and scientific culture were also taught along with a good number of other things directly useful in different parts of the production process. Eventually, education became the main preoccupation of the churches in seeming competition with the administration, putting primary and secondary schools here and there, recording a total of about 67,000 pupils by the 1950s. Upon graduation, they worked in close collaboration with the whites, becoming the elite who were to take over from the whites with the mandate to ensure the reproduction and continuity of what the whites had established. The coastal area, where the whites had based their exploitative practices, emerged in the 1960s as the region with the highest enrolment rate.

As early as 1886, the Baptist missionaries had established the Alfred Saker College in Douala and in 1939, the French, who had taken over from the Germans, opened the Leclerc College in Yaoundé and a major seminary at Akono in the south. In British-controlled territory, the Roman Catholic Church set up the Sasse College in Sasse near Buea. These set the standards for what would became Cameroon's educational system although with slight variations in the 'anglophone' and 'francophone' educational sub-systems which are just variations of the same thing: the capitalist system of education which, in its function of ensuring the reproduction of 'labour' for the 'labour market', also ensures the reproduction of its submission to the established order (as do other state ideological apparatuses such as the church or the police). In a neo-colonial context such as Cameroon, the so-called professional schools (including seminaries, schools of education and administration, and the like) have a special role to play in this respect. That is where the neo-colonial doctrine is instilled to ensure that learners are not only completely subjected to the neo-colonial order but should also master its ideology in order to better manipulate it for the total subjugation and domination of Cameroonians. Thus does 'labour' specialise in the reproduction of one aspect of the neo-colonial ideology.

Since the inception of education as an ideology and the school as a public sphere where people from different backgrounds congregate outside the family unit, schools as ideological state apparatuses have become a major instrument of politics in which the neo-colonial state holds onto its claim of social responsibility, its claim that the state has the responsibility to educate its citizens. Consequently, schools are created in different localities as a special favour from the neo-colonial government. Yet schools are only ideological state apparatuses for the reproduction of 'labour power' as well as for the reproduction of the submission of its products to the neo-colonial state.

As a public sphere, schools – including universities, professional schools and other types, formal or informal, run by individuals, confessional institutions, corporate bodies or government (it doesn't matter who runs a school; what matters is the internal bourgeois law it reproduces) – which are today found everywhere throughout the national territory, are not discursive forums where individuals get together to mould or to formulate their different opinions into policy. Instead, they are forums in which children are taught varying elements of knowledge, skills, techniques or simple know-how, which only transforms them into subjects of the ruling ideology who expect to become 'something', and expect employment. Pupils and students are also taught in school to master the practices of the ruling ideology, which certifies their participation in the 'labour process' in the sense Marx describes it, which includes all forms of paid employment (white collar, blue collar, local, national or international, business ventures), leading to 'false consciousness', their own misconception of their needs and interests, which the ideology of Western education imposes on the people of Cameroon, if not Africa as a whole, who have tended to believe in its empty promises and to fashion their lives according to that belief, and subjects them to the neo-colonial state, as willing subordinates.

As mentioned earlier, the programme of study of the school introduced by the Germans consisted mainly of agriculture, besides the German language and the romantic ideology of Christianity. This was because the emerging factories in the West, at the time, depended largely on agricultural inputs from the plantations: its division of labour was still relatively simple. As the factories became diversified in production, emerging as a complex system which required a complex division of labour, there was need to also diversify the school curriculum to suit the expanding nature of Western industrial economies.

To this end, the expanding factories need a continuous production and reproduction of diverse skills which find their unity in the division of labour

itself which requires that diverse forms of knowledge, abilities and proficiencies are reproduced on the spot so as to:

- secure channels through which the factory has a continuous supply of raw material;
- expand channels for the distribution and consumption of the finished products from the factory at the global level (including all the complex stages of distribution, marketing, advertising, accounting, import and export, private channels for wholesale and retail, etc.);
- secure the possibilities through which the factory will have to ensure the continuous reproduction of new and changing ideas for the reproduction of the relations of production (including the priests and the high priests of the neo-colonial system such as ministers, professors, pastors, teachers, directors, journalists, and others);
- reproduce the mechanisms for the maintenance of order (including the neo-colonial state and all the repressive and ideological state apparatuses within it), all of which should keep the 'demand and supply sequence' at equilibrium, subsidised by the peasantry whose labour is no longer for the reproduction of itself but for the sustenance of those who are 'called' to offer their 'skilled labour' for the capitalist system.

And for the changing needs of the globalising Western industrial economies to be sustained, the capitalist system of education – which includes apprenticeship, professional training and other institutions of formal and informal learning – had to become complex, loaded with subjects that would meet the diversified needs of the expanding factories and their expanding chain of production and reproduction procedures. This is why it is referred to as the capitalist system of education: it serves the diverse needs of the capitalist system. To renew the conditions for the reproduction of 'labour', the 'school' must broaden its scope to go beyond the mere teaching of skills in reading, writing and calculation, agriculture and manual work, to include many other things that are directly relevant in the different occupations and posts in the growing industrial production chain including all kinds of knowledge and techniques that will ensure that 'labour' wholly embraces the capitalist system and accepts it as what has to be and must be, with no alternative.

To ensure this embrace, 'labour' must also be taught to accept the neo-colonial ad hoc political arrangement, learn to obey its rules, thereby learning to reproduce its submission to the repressive ideology of the ruling elite and learning to play its role as an exploited category. Besides learning to place its

hope and trust in the neo-colonial state from which it expects an 'improvement in its living condition' – which is what keeps the different revolutionary pressures within the neo-colonial state at equilibrium (Ake 1978) – 'labour' also needs to learn some notion of economics in order to explain the operations of the neo-colonial state in terms of a business enterprise wherein the President of the Republic must be evaluated only in terms of his abilities as a manager. They must equally learn history, not because it is a subject intended to enable the learners to reformulate their future from the ruins of the past, but a history which rather celebrates colonial achievements, a history which presents whites as great explorers, scientists, great thinkers, great statesmen, etc., to whom they must submit and then willingly offer their 'labour'.

'Labour' also needs some notions about science, which may be either elementary or detailed, but which, in the final analysis, is not intended to produce scientists in the post-colony but to let the learners know how far the white man (who must be perceived and received as master without question) has gone in extrapolating the laws of nature. 'Labour' needs to learn how to carry out a systematic diagnosis of the biological causes of diseases and to administer drugs (as medical doctors) manufactured by Western pharmaceutical companies, and must learn to produce food that meets the food demands of the capitalist system: to feed those who are 'working' for capital, etc. Whatever the case, the capitalist system of education, which can even be rigorous, ends up imparting in the pupils and students only hybridised notions about the self, about social formations, about Western science, about history in general, and about every other thing which makes 'labour' belong neither here no there, bereft of the means to formulate for itself an identity and to establish ways of reproducing it. With hybridised notions in diverse domains, 'labour' is thus qualified not to become masters of its own destiny but for deployment in the 'labour process' as passive subordinates whose only obligation is to 'work' so as to 'improve its living conditions'. 'Labour' has no alternative except its ultimate submission to the demands of capital; its submission to the 'labour market, like a candle in the wind.

Against this background are the various class struggles in the post-colony which are centred on the demands for an 'improvement in living conditions', sustained by the local representatives of the European factory owners, namely the President of the neo-colonial state and his staff, ably assisted by graduates from the Yaoundé School of Administration and Magistracy, whose duty it is to learn how to manipulate the dominant ideology for the subjection of the exploited category as they keep on daydreaming about an 'improvement in

living conditions'. In this case, unemployment presents itself as a function of the need to create a reserve pool of diversified 'labour power' (first school leavers, GCE 'O' and 'A' level holders, technicians, teachers, engineers, degree holders, high-level managers, etc) from where the capitalist system can, at any time, recruit its productive forces according to its diversified operations and historical needs and not according to the historical needs as defined by the holders themselves. Knowledge and certificates are useless in a neo-colonial context as long as their holders have not been called upon to offer their 'competence' or 'skills' for the capitalist system, for wages which are not calculated in terms of redistribution but by the absolute necessity to ensure that 'labour' is able to reproduce itself indefinitely (in its children) for future deployment. This also keeps 'qualified labour' in diverse domains looking up to the neo-colonial political arrangement and the capitalist system as a whole on which it helplessly depends for its economic survival; for 'improvement in living conditions'.

Amongst all the mechanisms of public mediation to be found in a neo-colonial context, schools are the most servile and obsequious yet the least suspected of being what reproduces and ensures the continuous 'functioning' of the capitalist system and its neo-colonial copy or affiliate. This is a function of the unconsciousness as local people get more and more subjected to the ideology of Western education and then through it, to the dominant mode of production. Alternatively stated, besides all that is taught in school, pupils and students, as agents in the division of labour, are also schooled on the rules of 'civilisation'/'modernity' and its moral codes which mould their civic and professional consciences and enable them to respect the socio-technical division of labour and in so doing respect the rules of the neo-colonial state and to be obedient to it. This explains why the history of resistance to colonial and neo-colonial domination in all of Africa since 1900 gradually died out, following the inception of Western education and Christianity:

> Each mass ejected *en route* is practically provided with the ideology which suits the role it has to fulfil in class society: the role of the exploited (with a 'highly-developed' 'professional', 'ethical', 'civic', 'national' and a-political consciousness); the role of the agent of exploitation (ability to give the workers orders and speak to them: 'human relations'), of the agent of repression (ability to give orders and enforce obedience 'without discussion', or ability to manipulate the demagogy of a political leader's rhetoric), or of the professional ideologist (ability to treat consciousnesses with the respect, i.e. with the contempt, blackmail, and demagogy they deserve, adapted to the accents of Morality, of Virtue, of 'Transcendence', of the Nation, of [Europe's] World Role, etc.).

Of course, many of these contrasting Virtues (modesty, resignation, submissiveness on the one hand, cynicism, contempt, arrogance, confidence, self-importance, even smooth talk and cunning on the other) are also taught in the Family, in the Church, in the Army, in Good Books, in films and even in the football stadium. But no other Ideological State Apparatus has the obligatory (and not least, free) audience of the totality of the children in the capitalist social formation, eight hours a day for five or six days out of seven.[2]

The hidden 'meaning' beneath Western education, therefore, is that as an unnoticeable underside, it transforms individuals into obedient 'servants' of the neo-colonial arrangement which they see as their only source of economic rescue. Besides that, the neo-colonial government, as a major aspect of governance, methodically controls the content of what is taught in schools: to produce citizens who are compliant to the neo-colonial state, which could also be one of the reasons why education in Cameroon was not necessarily intended to be thorough. And even it is thorough, it does not intend to achieve any other goal other than transforming learners into ready-made 'labour' for the capitalist system. It was only intended to distort reality for young people, by transforming them into job seekers and subjecting them to the demands of the 'labour market', It was only intended to tilt their attention towards the neo-colonial state which, on behalf of the countries of the industrial North which control the process of demand and supply of labour in the 'labour market' – from the point of exploitation and transportation of raw material to the point of production, distribution and consumption – 'promises' to satisfy the needs it has imposed on them. Otherwise, why this circumlocutory approach to meeting bio/physiological needs when the soil is there, holding in its sacred womb all the agricultural and mineral resources for all to depend on as a benchmark for development? Unfortunately, 'citizens' who have been fashioned to depend on the neo-colonial state for 'improvement in living conditions', plus subsidies provided for by the peasantry with their agricultural production, 'unconsciously' reproduce themselves as 'labour' within the framework of the school as an ideological state apparatus, a public sphere, for the reproduction of the neo-colonial state and the entire capitalist system.

For further verification of the hypothesis, there is the case of the law as an ideology operating within the framework of a public sphere to be discussed. We begin from the premise that law in Cameroon is a foreign imposition which, like religion and education, was part of the 'superstructure' imposed on the material base of African societies for the reproduction of the conditions of production. In the paragraphs that follow, I will demonstrate how law, as a repressive ideology which operates in public places or ideological state apparatuses such as courts, prisons, police stations, lawyers' chambers,

etc., has facilitated the project of domination by aiding the neo-colonial state in the reproduction of the conditions of production for the benefit of Western industrial economies. We begin from the understanding that no society in the world, 'primitive' or 'civilised', can exist as a whole, as an entity, without a system of rules that defines and regulates its numerous aspects and a set of institutions that enforces them, imposed on the people by themselves. As a foreign imposition, the intention will be to create what we have already seen to be 'false consciousness' in which the people are persuaded to mistake someone else's interests for their own and then become unconscious of the fact that by reconstituting themselves in the reproduction of what they have come to believe in to be the law – which is not based on a system that allows for the self-generation of moral laws by the people themselves but is instead based on repression, made possible by the assurance of economic benefits for those who reproduce it – they will be 'unconsciously' reproducing the material conditions that satisfy some other people's historically defined interests.

Upon their arrival in the Wouri estuary in 1884, the Germans had no respect for the people they met. With no respect for the existing laws and institutions, the European invaders proceeded to establish what would suit their interests, a repressive apparatus resulting in the physical confrontations between them and local peoples. After forcefully installing themselves, the Germans imposed Station Heads or District Officials who constituted the 'administration' and functioned as a higher instance with responsibilities which included administration and judicial authority. They could even impose the death penalty on those who tried to offer any form of resistance to German exploitative practices. To ensure maximum and unperturbed exploitation of the territory, the Germans in 1891 introduced the *polizeitruppe* (police force) and in 1895 the *schutztruppe* (the armed forces), recruiting mostly foreigners, particularly people from Dahomey, into both forces for the protection of Germans in the Kamerun as they carried out their armed robbery. In 1903 they established what they called *Gouvernementstrat* or an Advisory Council, which was made up mainly of missionaries, planters and merchants, all whites, at the head of which was the German military Governor, stationed in Buea, represented at district level by District Officials. Operating in conjunction with the 'administration' was the *bezirksgericht* or the District Court which functioned as the basic court, and the *obergericht* which functioned as the High Court, based in Douala. Dispensation of justice at the higher instance was done either by the Governor or a Judge appointed by him.

By establishing a 'machine of repression' and its supplementary organs such as a government bureaucracy, the courts, the military, and the police,

the Germans had set the stage for the imposition of a superordinate structure together with its laws for the effective control, domination and exploitation of the people in what eventually became the neo-colonial state of Cameroon. This was to be fully realised after World War II under the French and the British, who held the divided "German idea" in trust for the UN, with very slight modifications to the German structural idea. In other words, what obtains today in Cameroon as structural elements is not very different from the 'repressive machinery' which the Germans had set up except for the consolidation of the Ideological State Apparatuses vital for the reproduction of the conditions of production, a government and the administration, which were gradually established, at the summit of which was a head of state.

This massive repressive ensemble was, during the Cold War, delegated to indigenes led by Ahmadou Ahidjo. He had received the necessary political grooming from the whites on whose behalf he was to operate a *repressive machinery*, as their auxiliary manager assisted by the 'functionaries' who were and are still the high priests of the ruling ideology (ministers, directors, etc.). That, in itself, is the result of the hidden hand of history which was never revealed to Cameroonians who are unconscious of the fact that they are reproducing themselves as 'labour' for Western industrial economies and as distributors and consumers of Western industrial goods. And what obtains today in Cameroon as law is rooted in what the Germans introduced as law, intended to protect German interests in the Cameroons in their larceny.

Take the case of the Cameroon Land Tenure Law of 5 August 1974, based on Ordinance N° 74.001 of 6 July 1974, which virtually deprived all citizens of their land by transferring all lands to the neo-colonial state of Cameroon in exactly the same spirit as the German military law imposed on the 'natives' which deprived them of their land and enabled the Germans to seize extensive domains for their plantations. The experience was similar under the Arthur Richards 1946 Land Ordinances which transformed all lands in the British-occupied territories of Nigeria and the Southern Cameroons into Crown land, including all the mineral resources therein. Realising that the neo-colonial state of Cameroon is an affiliate or even a counterfeit of the Western capitalist system, then by vesting in itself 'all pieces of land occupied or exploited before August 5, 1974' or 'those lands free of any occupation, or all lands occupied or used before August 5, 1974', the neo-colonial state seized virtually all the people's lands and held them in trust for Western industrial countries, rendering Cameroonians voiceless subjects with no claim to what they can call their own land.

The implications of this are very grave for Cameroonians. While they have no voice to raise because the land, *ab initio*, belongs to the neo-colonial

state, as enshrined in the law, the American company Geovic can exploit and export cobalt and nickel from Nkamouna near Lomié in the East Province or exploit and export bauxite in Minim Martap near Ngaoundere as it is currently doing alongside the French company Bolloré, which is responsible for 25 per cent of petroleum exploitation and exportation, or French logging companies such as SIBAF, Thanry, SAB, Pallisco, etc., recklessly destroying Cameroon's forest,. The same can be said of administrative law – which regulates the activities of the illegitimate agencies of government imposed on Cameroonians by Europeans – as well as every other law in the post-colony. Although the laws of Cameroon may be enacted today by the 'natives' themselves, they are rooted in the legal foundation initiated by the Germans and upheld by successive European intruders, which completely ignores or even seeks to destroy all indigenous philosophy on the basis of which law in Cameroon should have been evolving.

The fact that Cameroon is a country in which two foreign legal systems co-exist, derived from English and French law, tells the story. The overall legal system was established to protect the interests of Western industrial countries in Cameroon. To ensure the effectiveness of that mission, the authentic laws of the peoples of the land are derogatorily referred to as 'customary law', relegated to the background, and targeted for destruction. This makes the public sphere of the law, like that of Christianity, and that of education, as shown above, contested public spheres since not only do they have foreign origins, established to achieve goals for Western industrial countries, but they also seek to destroy their indigenous versions. And by claiming that 'ignorance of the law is no excuse of the law' Cameroonians are under a legal system whose existence they would otherwise contest since it did not develop as a result of their cultural experience.

Even what is referred to as the Constitution of Cameroon, under which Parliament is empowered to enact laws, was voted into existence by the French parliament where it was first submitted in 1946 after which it was amended and confirmed suitable for the subjection of colonised peoples. In 1960 a few changes were made to it and it was adopted by the East Cameroons Legislative Assembly, which was 'given' the power (by the French) to elect the president of the republic. It became the 'fundamental law' of the land from which all other laws are derived, for ideological repression, 'unconsciously' subsidised by Cameroonians.

To be sure of how Cameroonians are unconsciously subsidising a foreign idea of law, we look at the law as it operates in Cameroon in the form of the official bar and the private bar. While those who are 'called' to the official bar, such as magistrates, are subsidised by the neo-colonial state to exercise

a European idea of law in Cameroon, those who are 'called' to the private bar, such as lawyers, are subsidised by Cameroonians themselves as they seek justice within a legal system whose logic they do not understand. This reveals another instance of how Cameroonians have come to accept a fictitious world and its law as valid and are unconsciously legitimising their own repression. On the other hand, Cameroonians have no other alternative because it is not only an imposition, enforced by the neo-colonial state, which they must accept as absolute truth but also because the public sphere in Cameroon operates in purely economic terms (justice, for example, is paid for: magistrates are on a salary and lawyers are hired with the court, as a public sphere, regulated by economic relations and not by the desire to mould public opinion into a counterpoising force against neo-colonial designs), which have weakened the capacity of Cameroonians to confront the process that has rendered them slaves of Western ideas in their own land.

If we re-examine Althusser's postulation that the end result of ideologies is that they are transformed into material things, then we can now see how the interplay of Western-imposed ideologies in Cameroon – namely, the ideologies of Christianity, education and law – achieves the material gains necessary for the growth and expansion of Western industrial economies. Put simply, what you believe in and hold to be true, which becomes part of your unconsciousness, governs your life and determines the type of things your hands produce. Lawyers and magistrates in Cameroon, for example, like teachers, priests/pastors, medics, administrators, etc., are hardly aware of the ultimate results of their 'jobs'; they are unconscious of the fact that they are actually assisting the Western world in its project for the reproduction of the conditions of production in Africa for the same purpose as the trans-Atlantic slave trade and slavery

The neo-colonial state operates by controlling the invisible realm of ideas or by the 'management of ideologies' in conjunction with the use of physical repression to achieve exactly the same or even better results for Western industrial economies as slavery and the slave trade. For labour today also has to posses some skills, needs to be 'qualified' to fit into the different positions and levels of the complex division of labour within the capitalist system (from truck drivers to professors, from mechanics to economists, from farmers to medical doctors, from bartenders to journalists, etc).

At this point in our discussion, the unavoidable question is: how does the ruling ideology, which aims at the reproduction of the conditions of production for Western industrial economies, secure the unity of a public sphere which is made up of a multiplicity of ideological state apparatuses which are relatively autonomous and possess dissimilar characteristics? As a straightforward

answer, this unity is secured by the very contradictions that are found in the public sphere, which are expressed through the conflicts inherent in the various class interests, which governance in a neo-colonial context is interested in fomenting and keeping these class, ethnic and regional interests in existence, by promising them 'development' or 'improvement in standards of living', for the purpose of achieving its goal of repression and domination. Neo-colonial domination and extortion, which are vital for the growth and expansion of Western industrial economies, would be impossible if the Cameroonian 'public' was rallied around a single vision, speaking with 'one voice' as it were. Even the different ethnic ideologies, which manifest themselves within the neo-colonial arrangement in the form of 'tribalism', have been co-opted into the ruling ideology through the propaganda of 'development' which evokes the promised social responsibility of the neo-colonial state.

From the point of view of the theory of 'differentiated interpellation', we have come to realise that the public sphere in Cameroon is a fragment of different ideological state apparatuses which harbour different ideological patterns which 'call' Cameroonians from different backgrounds to become participants in different domains for different reasons which are all linked to the ruling ideology by the cry for an 'improvement in living conditions'. It is a situation of the survival of the fittest as each class, ethnic group, region, corps or organisation is 'called', by its vocation, to fulfil its different expectations.

Once one steps out of the family circle – which is an ideological state apparatus in itself as a para-public sphere which propagates the bourgeois ideas of neo-colonialism by teaching children how to speak English or French, teaching them Western mathematical ideas as well as bourgeois history, arresting them with the power of the media (TV, films, radio messages, books of foreign cultural background, etc.) – one is either in school, in church, in court, in the market place, in the office, in the bar, at a bus station, at the police station, in the military barracks, at a political party meeting, in the stadium, at the gymnasium, at the cyber café, confronted by billboards and so on. Thus are individuals 'called' upon to respond to different interests, mediated by economic relations in accordance with the ruling ideology which is centred on the claim that it offers opportunities for the 'improvement in the living conditions' of the population. One is either 'called' as an individual and as a member of a group (political, religious, legal, educational, professional, economic, aesthetic, etc.) or is performing a different 'job' according to the division of labour, all of which operate on different ideological principles with no common vision of which direction society should go.

This has been changing over the years in response to the needs or interests of the foreign countries and organisations which initiated the 'Kamerun Idea' itself which was initially intended for the production of resources using the cheap, willing labour of local people for the growth and expansion of European industrial economies. Hence, a 'superstructure' was established for the purpose of ideologically controlling the political process for the production and transmission of ideas within a public sphere in which certain privileges are reserved for certain social categories while associating others with subordinate roles.

By assigning superior values to certain categories which are then viewed against their opposites which are presented as inferior, a hierarchy of inferior/ dominance is established which de-emphasises a deliberative public sphere of independent and active individuals who freely congregate and freely discuss their terms of existence in relation to the power of the public sphere of the ruling class, both of which should form a single dynamic continuum. This effectively controls the people epistemologically by denying them the opportunity to generate and nurture their own common understanding of the world intended to model for themselves a common identity and a common destiny. Yet, for a people to be referred to as a nation, they should be governed by a single ideology which embraces them as one people, embodied in their system of political organisation, rooted in a shared principle, expressed in culture, language, art, religion, music, etc., for the 'interpellation' of citizens in a public sphere which serves the people's need to constantly engage in the discussion, negotiation, and the remoulding of their different opinions about their own existence and through that, reformulating them into a coherent system of concepts that should characterise their ways of 'knowing' and 'doing' as they obligatorily engage in employing reason in creating social structures or ideological apparatuses within which they act, as one people, to define their lives, making policy on a regular basis, allocating power and scrutinising performance.

Accordingly, a division of labour should be derived from a 'national ideology' which governs the people's consciousness about their relationship with the all-creating and all-knowing God (the One God that all pre-colonial African peoples believed in), nature, and their fellow humans in their associative practices to meet their bio-physiological needs. Cameroon is far from meeting that expectation because the ideological apparatuses which 'call' individuals to 'become' active subjects within the repressive state have foreign origins for the reproduction of relations of production as well as for the reproduction of the material means of production in ways that not only 'favour' the ruling class but also benefit the foreign industrial economies

(including Asian countries which are now coming in with full force) to the disadvantage of the local population which is subordinated and marginalised in the process.

On the contrary, what is referred to as Cameroon is instead a distortion of reality.[3] This construct followed the military conquest and ideological transformation of the people of that geographical space, which was, before 1884, inhabited by different political units governed by their different indigenous ideologies rooted in their self-governing and deliberative institutions of public mediation, built into a political economy. But based on foreign systems of ideas, which actually distorted the local peoples' understanding of reality, a relatively autonomous, overarching, politico-legal power structure with its foreign-imposed systems of thought (the various ideologies; educational, religious, political, legal, etc) was imposed on local peoples. It carries out ideological repression on the subordinated categories for the purpose of extracting surplus-value for the 'favoured' categories that represent Western industrial countries and serve as local allies in the project of subordinating the population.

The establishment of plantations in the coastal regions, the building of the Douala Sea Port initiated by the Germans in 1885, the building of Douala International Airport by the French in 1935, the establishment of industries in Bassa and the establishment of corporate businesses in areas that favoured the production of certain types of inputs for Western industrial concerns (including the establishment of the cotton estate in Garoua in 1951 by the French amongst others) emerged as new forms of social arenas mediated by economic relations. These were also supported by the establishment of the public service by the French (in East Cameroon) and by the British (in West Cameroon) in 1958 as part of the social responsibility dream invented by Europeans for the subjugation of Cameroonians under a dominant mode of production. They became the new types of ideological apparatuses within which the local people were to discuss their terms of existence. The disjunctive urban settlements that became known as towns wherein the European business activities were located selectively 'favoured' certain regions and 'favoured' those who first 'qualified' to offer their 'labour power' in them, especially those who held top posts in the public service, who were working in close collaboration with the whites, and who became the '*nouveau riche*', serving as the high priests of the new 'superstructure'. The process also 'disfavoured' women whose labour power was not immediately sought. To support that foreign founding philosophy on which the new 'superstructure' was erected, in the 1950s, as the neo-colonial 'superstructure' was crystallising, new forms of idiomatic expression (art, sculpture, poetry, music,

literature, etc.), dominated the new public sphere, which was emerging for the 'interpellation' and subjugation of Cameroonians. As contested forms, they became antagonistic to their indigenous counterparts which derived from and supported the indigenous world views which are today marginalised forms. Bars and night clubs, for example, which were the new but contested forms of social arenas which were making their inroads in the late 1950s and early 1960s, came along with their own kind of music (*makossa, meringue*, rhumba, highlife, and later on *zouk, kwasakwasa, ndombolo, bikutsi, ben skin, coupe décale*, etc.), which emerged from indigenous roots alright but in its search for international recognition relied heavily on a foreign outlook. It was in these new public arenas that early prostitution found its breeding grounds and served the political needs of the dominant ideology in that through this practice, women were 'compensated' for what they had lost in terms of 'improving their condition'.

By their claim of making life for the new people of the new era by giving it meaning, developing to meet economic needs rather than support any indigenous political philosophy or world view for the political purposes of stemming European invasion, they 'called out' on Cameroonians who, in responding to the 'call' to come and 'enjoy life', unconsciously subjected themselves to a dominant mode of production, whose expansion in the post-colony benefits Western industries such as producers of bottled alcoholic drinks or musical instruments. It was an era in which authentic forms that were derived from indigenous reality and supported it were instead targeted for ridicule and destruction with the corresponding effect being the alienation of local people who were being 'called' upon to look up to the coming 'desirable' era with admiration since it was ushering in a new lifestyle characterised by the European ideological concepts of aestheticism and romanticism, which have hybridised and distorted the African world.

The operations of the various 'publics' (including the over 200 legal political parties that currently exist in Cameroon, trade unions, professional associations, cultural associations, etc.) are determined by economic relations, governed by foreign ideas which seek to reproduce the conditions of production to satisfy foreign interests, pretentiously claiming that such manoeuvres will ultimately end up 'improving the living conditions' of the population. And governance is about the maintenance and reproduction of these different 'publics' which, though different and seemingly conflictual, are unified by their subjugation to the dominant ideology which assures their continued existence, under the subjective claim that they 'improve the living conditions' of the population. The ruling ideology does so by providing wages to state employees, which is also the case with 'workers' in all domains.

This motivates them to want to keep on 'working' as part of the subject-citizens who live in hope that things will one day be different, encouraged by Christianity's call for hope in a better life hereafter, all of which culminates in the indefinite reproduction of the material means and the relations of production in the post-colony for Western industrial economies. In that same spirit, the different public spheres, privately owned or government owned, thrive by their manipulation of the ruling ideology, claiming, like the neo-colonial state, to be seeking 'improvement in living conditions'.

It should be made clear that as long as a sphere has been permitted to exist (such as a bar, a night club or even a telephone booth) within the neo-colonial arrangement, that should be seen as an indication that it either correlates with the ruling ideology and thus serves the needs of the dominant mode of production or is being persuaded to do so. One example is that of the family which has become an ideological state apparatus in that the state, in its modernisation drive, is muzzling the family (indirectly through the church) to toe the line by adopting only those attitudes, such as monogamy and few children, for example, which are consistent with its claim of social responsibility. And for being economically dependent on the neo-colonial arrangement, the family has been weakened and its members have been transformed into ideological subjects for the neo-colonial state, which claims social responsibility, at least as a public relations strategy for its endurance, which it selectively uses to the benefit of some groups and the disadvantage of others. By linking a diverse 'public' to itself in this way, the neo-colonial state can successfully achieve its mission, which is to hold an alienated 'public' ideologically captive for Western industrial economies. We now examine how the neo-colonial regime realised the 'Kamerun Idea' by repression, both physically and ideologically.

From Social Tyranny to Neo-Liberalism and the Liberalisation of the Public Sphere in Cameroon

Social tyranny refers to that style of governance that was adopted by President Ahmadou Ahidjo. In order to subject Cameroonians totally to a pure dream manufactured to alienate them, Ahidjo declared a permanent state of emergency in the same spirit as the 1955 emergency law (*loi cadre*) imposed by the French which ended up suppressing the national liberation movement. The neo-colonial state under Ahidjo played the role of a 'good father' and monitored and controlled all that was meant for public consumption such as information, film, music, art and books. All forms of associations were banned; the only organs operating were the official media (Radio Cameroon and *Cameroon Tribune*) and the repressive state apparatuses (the army, police, gendarmerie,

prisons, military tribunals) which were directly under the control of the presidency and included an omnipresent spy network which monitored all public and private discussions.

Those who were found guilty of having 'discussed' matters considered to be contrary to the agenda of the neo-colonial political arrangement were reported to Ahidjo, who ordered their immediate arrest and detention at the Yaoundé Kondengui maximum security prison, which contained underground cells and torture chambers, or at concentration camps at Tcholere and at Mantoum, all constructed for Ahidjo by the French. When Ahidjo resigned from power in November 1982, his reign since February 1958 was described by Mongo Beti (1984) as fratricidal and was characterised by murders, disappearances, and imprisonment. Over twenty thousand Cameroonians were tortured to death, over twenty-five thousand others shed their blood in the *maquis* of the liberation struggle, and another five thousand lost their lives in the concentration camps (Mukong 1985:90). Richard Joseph (1974) observed that the emerging repressive neo-colonial state in Cameroon under Ahidjo was:

> … buttressed by concentration camps, the extensive use of physical brutality and torture by soldiers and gendarmes, [an] ubiquitous military and security-service presence, the retention of the state of emergency in most of the South, the use of military tribunals for political – or even political – offences, etc., [was] specifically related to the devolution of power by France to the very political forces in the territory which had played no part whatsoever in the nationalist struggle and which, until the eve of the power-transfer, had vigorously opposed this movement (Joseph 1974:429-430).

Although the use of repressive state apparatuses under Ahidjo also had an ideological effect, the combined use of the ideological state apparatuses – which, in this case, were limited to the three mainline churches for the purposes of effective state control, namely the Roman Catholic Church, the Presbyterian, and the Baptist Churches plus the mosques and schools which were permitted to function – produced the 'right' ideological results of subjecting individuals to the dominant ideology of the neo-colonial state which was shielded behind the mask of social responsibility.

Within the framework of what Ahidjo styled as the policy of regional balancing, which he claimed was an attempt to redistribute the colonial infrastructure (located in areas strategic to colonial interests) to the regions on an equal basis, he rather incorporated those pre-colonial nations that were larger in size into the neo-colonial political arrangement as ethno-regional power blocks to facilitate his 'sharing' programme. This only succeeded in creating regional hegemonies which disfavoured other groups and resulted

in regional imbalances (van den Berg 1997:165). During the 1980s and 1990s, following the final destruction of the Soviet Union by the West, a measure of 'freedom' was ushered into Cameroon in what was termed as a 'wave of freedom that was blowing from the East'. This led to the emergence of diverse mechanisms of public mediation which flooded the public arena where they were competing for space. That threw the public sphere in Cameroon in the 1990s into turmoil as marginalised groups as well as those opinions that were suppressed under the state of emergency laws sought expression. There was clamour for freedom of expression, freedom of association, a desire for spiritual freedom, and a quest for a return to multiparty politics (abolished in 1966 by Ahidjo in favour of a one-party system of politics).

In 1990, a series of laws were passed in relation to freedoms such as of the press and of association, which unleashed social forces into the public arena, where they were contesting for space, and led to social unrest in the early 1990s. Following those seismic events, the public sphere in Cameroon became 'liberated'. Today, all forms of associations, multinationals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and common initiative groups (CIGs) compete for control of the public sphere. Over two hundred political parties, which were legalised in response to the demand for freedom, are also contesting for control over the public sphere. These newly created 'opposition' political parties, with the Social Democratic Front (SDF) as the forerunner, have been contesting the legitimacy of the ruling party, the Cameroon Peoples Democratic Party (CPDM), in its monopoly control of the public sphere. Political contestation over the public sphere brought about a new social phenomenon which characterised public life in Cameroon in the 1990s whereby some Cameroonians contested the presence of other Cameroonians in certain parts of Cameroon in what became the 'settlers' versus 'indigenes' struggle.

Following the advent of 'freedom', state monopoly ownership of the media and monopoly control of information was ended, leading to the proliferation of private radio and TV stations. This was coeval with the introduction of the new information technologies (including the Internet and the parabolic antenna) which revolutionised 'public information', broke physical boundaries, established 'virtual' publics, placed the mental life of young Cameroonians under the direct control of Western countries which control the content of the new media, all of which radicalised the public sphere. The same seismic events did not spare the three mainline churches which monopolised the dispensation of salvation in Ahidjo's period as part of the ideological control over the population. A wave of spiritual revivalism shook the foundation of the three mainline churches, contesting their monopoly role as an ideological state apparatus.

In the Roman Catholic Church, it was Reverend Father Etienne N. Khumba of the Buea Diocese who launched a spiritual revivalist group in the Bonjongo Parish which he called the 'Maranatha'. In the struggle that ensued between him and the Roman Catholic Church, he was sacked and later reinstated. In the Presbyterian Church, it was Rev. Dr. Bame Bame who contested mainstream presbyterianism by introducing spiritual revivalist ideas in the anglophone parish in Djongolo, Yaoundé. He was fired from the Presbyterian Church. Rev. Mbong Valentine, with support from the South American Baptist churches, shook the foundations of the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Church which is supported by the North American Baptist churches, in what became famously known as the 'Belo Field Crisis' in the 1990s in which the Kom faction of the CBC church was contesting the managerial style of CBC over the Belo Field Council of Churches and was thus seeking a new space outside the framework of the CBC structure. Today, all sorts of churches operate at every street corner, including the Jehovah's Witness Church, which went underground after it was banned by Ahidjo and resurfaced in the 1990s and is very visibly contesting for a fair share of space in the public sphere.

It was an era in which the state of emergency law was lifted; the repressive face of the state was veiled (not eliminated), and was counterbalanced on the ideological front by flooding the public sphere with a multiplicity of mechanisms of public mediation not only for the fragmentation of the public sphere but for the complete ideological alienation of Cameroonians. The dictatorship of the neo-colonial state adjusted to accommodate new 'publics' which operate on different ideological lines with no intention of developing an all-encompassing common identity and with no commitment to working together within a single systematising vision for a common destiny. It was an era of the survival of the fittest in which Cameroonians and foreigners competed for space; an era of neo-liberalism in which the industrial countries of the North, through their IMF/World Bank, imposed the structural adjustment programme (SAP) on Cameroon and 37 other African countries, with privatisation, liberalisation and democracy as its main components.

As a way of establishing a *new* kind of relationship with 'labour', this enabled the countries of the North, acting in concert, through multilateral institutions and multinationals, to return and reclaim the economy in a more direct manner, buying up all the colonial infrastructure (water, electricity, plantations, etc) and introducing new ones (MTN, Orange, PMUC, etc) thus directly controlling almost the entire corporate sector in Cameroon today with Cameroonians being able to offer only their 'labour' with the ruling band, in line with the ruling ideology, mediating the process by using democracy as an alibi to allow corporate organisations from the North to dominate the

public sphere in Cameroon for the continuous growth and expansion of the industrial economies of countries of the North, shielded by the neo-colonial state. Today, exactly 124 years after the Germans imposed the colonial structures which eventually became the neo-colonial state of Cameroon, Cameroonians are free, but only to the extent to which they are able to freely reproduce themselves as 'labour', as professionals with skills and expert knowledge, through their children for deployment in the complex global division of labour which assures the development and expansion of the Western industrial economies. Thus to think about the public sphere in Cameroon is to be prepared to rethink the whole 'Kamerun Idea' as a contestable one wherein the 'traditional', the Western, and the Islamic, based on conflicting principles, co-exist problematically, as Kwame Nkrumah (1964:78) observed.

Itself a public sphere, which was forcefully established by Europeans outside the public sphere of the pre-colonial nations, the endurance of the 'Kamerun Idea' has been assured only by the use of repression: the combined use of the repressive state apparatuses and the repressive ideological mechanisms for public mediation, being a style of governance which is aimed at maintaining Cameroonians in a physical and mental state of arrest for exploitation for the benefit of Western industrial economies. As such, the public sphere of the neo-colonial state in Cameroon remains a contentious issue, highlighted in the works of some famous Cameroonian authors such as Mongo Beti, Ebenezer Njoh-Mouelle, Marcien Towa, Woungly-Massaga, Abel Eyinga, and the political writings of the leaders of the national liberation movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Unfortunately, political analyses in Cameroon have been consigned only to such rubrics as 'tribalism', 'regionalism', 'favouritism', 'nepotism', or 'corruption', 'embezzlement', and 'misappropriation', etc., which, as manifestations of class struggles and domination, not only stereotype but are also essentially empiricist and thus do not go beyond the 'shield' of the neo-colonial state to uncover the invisible mediating role of ideologies in fragmenting the public sphere in ways that facilitate neo-colonial domination.

The major objective of this paper is to outline the politico-historical processes through which a 'superstructure' on the 'infrastructural' base of this portion of Africa which became Cameroon was imposed on Cameroonians for the popularisation of hybridised notions necessary for the alienation and subordination of Cameroonians for the purpose of surplus-value extortion. I have also tried to show how alienation has gradually assimilated Cameroonians, if not all Africans, into the monetary economy of the Western industrial countries where they have come to depend on money which the industrial West rations out with different conditions at different times aimed at sustaining the economic enslavement and political domination of Cameroon.

Unfortunately, through 'differentiated interpellation', Cameroonians are 'called' to serve different 'functions' within different spheres for economic purposes (including even those public spheres which are created by the individuals themselves: bars, schools, NGOs, TV stations, political parties, newspapers, etc.). These are not discursive forums which offer Cameroonians the possibility of public discussion and of forging a common identity for a common destiny, but which are rather created in response to economic pressures, and also in response to Christianity's doctrine of salvation being a personal matter, thereby offering the possibility for the unconscious reproduction of the dominant ideology in all its contradictions. This has alienated the Cameroonian 'public', weakened it, and rendered it unable to muster the energy to dismantle a 'repressive machine' that was imposed on them by invading Europeans in the 19th century.

Notes

1. Language signifies autonomy and independence and those who are co-opted into a language community become subservient to the native speakers of that language. In the same measure, those who lose their mother tongue lose their autonomy and independence, for language is ideology in its expressive form which 'calls' or transforms individual into subjects who act according to its rules.
2. Louis Althusser, [French (1970) English Translation (1971)]; "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", in *"Lenin and Philosophy" and Other Essays.*
3. The true picture of any African society can be known only by studying its pre-19th century status. All these encapsulating shady power structures that were imposed on African peoples by Europeans in the 20th century, arbitrarily, which claim to be nation-states and whose operations are being manipulated by Europeans from behind the scenes who, in collaboration with the European tailor-made elite who are at the beck and call of European countries, keep on confusing the people, are not true representations of Africa. For a theory on the operations of neo-colonialism in Africa, illustrated with the particular case of Cameroon, see my *Political Philosophies and Nation-Building in Cameroon: Grounds for the Second National Liberation Struggle,* 2006.

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