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Anglo-Saxonism and Gallicism in Nation Building in Africa: The Case of Bilingual Cameroon and the Senegambia Confederation in Historical and Contemporary Perspective

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Abstract

This article is a comparative study of the impact of the colonial presence in nation building in Africa. The author argues that the colonial presence created identity markers and mindsets which sometimes facilitated but most of the time complicated the nation-building endeavours of African statesmen. The inherited Anglo-Saxon values and Gallic legacies in bilingual Cameroon on the one hand, and Senegal and The Gambia, which is located inside its belly, on the other hand, pose problems in different ways. In the case of Cameroon, the Anglo-French partition of the territory, which was originally a German protectorate, was transcended by the political elite of the two territories to achieve a reunified sovereign state in 1961 owing to a common German colonial past that generated a historical memory of one Cameroon. But Anglophone-Francophone differences in postcolonial Cameroon pose nation-building problems. In the case of Senegal and The Gambia, the British recommended close union between the two states for purposes of economic viability. But the colonially inherited values of the two states supplanted their common African ethnic bonds and militated against political integration. Thus, in both Cameroon and the Sene-Gambia, English and French colonial values constitute identity markers that pose a great challenge to nation building.

Résumé

Cet article est une étude comparative sur l'impact de la présence coloniale dans le processus de construction de la nation en Afrique. L'auteur affirme que la présence coloniale a contribué à la création de marqueurs identitaires et de mentalités spécifiques qui ont parfois facilité, mais également le plus souvent, compliqué les efforts de construction de la nation par les hommes d'État africains.

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Les valeurs anglo-saxonnes et gauloises héritées par les populations de l'État bilingue du Cameroun, d'une part, et d'autre part, par celles du Sénégal et de la Gambie, une enclave du Sénégal, posent des problèmes à divers niveaux. Dans le cas du Cameroun, la division anglo-française du territoire, qui était à l'origine un protectorat allemand, a été transcendée par l'élite politique de ces deux territoires, qui ont ainsi été fusionnés en un seul état souverain en 1961, du fait d'un passé colonial allemand commun, ce qui a permis de constituer la mémoire historique commune du Cameroun ainsi réunifié. Cependant, les différences entre Anglophones et Francophones, dans le Cameroun postcolonial posent diverses questions liées à la construction de la nation. Dans les cas du Sénégal et de la Gambie, les Britanniques avaient recommandé une étroite union entre les deux états pour atteindre une certaine viabilité économique. Toutefois, les valeurs coloniales héritées par ces deux pays ont vite supplanté les liens ethniques communs entre ces deux états et constitué un frein à l'intégration politique. Ainsi, aussi bien au Cameroun qu'en Sénégal, les valeurs coloniales anglaises et françaises constituent des marqueurs identitaires solides posant un réel défi à la construction de la nation.

Introduction

The mechanisms for the creation of modern African states are too well known with the Berlin West African Congress of 1884-1885 as the great watershed for the take-off. These European-created polities represent an absurd logical frame as far as the relocation of Africans was concerned. What ultimately emerged as inter-state boundaries were, according to Asiwaju (1978, 1984a&b), artificialities at every point, as kingdoms, ethnic groups and families were dissected arbitrarily according to European whims and caprices. Some of the European-created states were so ridiculously small in terms of either land area or population that their existence as sovereign states could hardly go unquestioned. Although the African Union¹ was born in 2002 with the intention of breaking down inter-state African boundaries in favour of greater integration, differences bequeathed by the colonial presence are profound and they have tended to compound Africa's multifaceted problems of nation building.

This paper examines how the colonial presence in Africa created identity markers and mind-sets in the shape of inherited languages and cultures, which sometimes facilitated but most of the time complicated the nation-building endeavours of African statesmen. It focuses on two contrasting cases of the impact of Anglo-Saxon and Gallic values on the building of the nation-state project in Africa—bilingual Cameroon on the one hand, and between Senegal and The Gambia on the other. In the case of Cameroon, the Anglo-French partition was transcended by the political elite of the two territories through reunification owing to shared historical memories, experiences and common

ethnic identities and bonds. In the case of Senegal and The Gambia their colonial inherited Francophoneness and Anglophoneness militated against political union despite the fact that they constituted the same people. In both Cameroon and Senegambia, English and French pose a great challenge to nation building.

The modern Cameroon nation-state is an interesting case study of the question of forging a nation with conflicting and contradictory identities. It displays a multiple identity morphology reflected by its over 250 linguistically identifiable ethnic groups (Tadadjeu 1990:5; Fonlon 1967:196). To this fragmentary ethnic picture of the Cameroonian society,² can be added such crosscutting cleavages of religion (Muslim versus traditional religionist; Christian versus Muslim and so forth); economic modes (pastoral versus agricultural); and different levels of economic development (considerable primary and secondary industry in the south versus little in the north). The ethnic conflicts and cleavages that rock Cameroon are compounded by an ever-widening Anglophone-Francophone identification syndrome that is directly attributable to the legacies of colonialism and is visibly the nation's Achilles' heel and fault line.

Like Canada, Cameroon shares a heritage of an English and French colonial past, and English and French have come to be its official languages. But to the overwhelming number of Canadians, English and French are native languages and are held dearly as their cultural heritage. This is not the same with the Cameroonian situation where English and French are alien languages and are superimposed on a mosaic of over 250 African languages and dialects (Kom 1995:146; Fonlon 1976; Ateh 1996). In the words of Kom, *'l'anglais et le français sont et demeurent des langues étrangères que maîtrise une petite elite ne dépassant guère le 10 à 15 % de la population du pays'* (English and French are and remain foreign languages which a tiny elite that hardly exceed 10–15 percent of the population understand) (Kom 1995:146). Nonetheless, these English and French foreign languages have the capacity of generating conflicts and this has been the Cameroon experience since independence.

English and French serve as a modern identity variable and a source of perpetual friction and tension between Anglophones and Francophones. Since the 1990s, Anglophone Cameroon 'has been at the forefront of ethno-regional protests and demands for the re-arrangement of state power' (Konings and Nyamnjoh (2003:2). These authors opine that:

there appear to be sufficient grounds to justify the claims of Anglophone movements that the nation-state project after reunification has been driven by the firm determination of the Francophone political elite to dominate the

Anglophone minority... and erase all cultural and institutional foundations of Anglophone identity (p. 96).

They note that Anglophones have been regularly relegated to inferior positions in national decision-making process and have been constantly under-represented in the various spheres of public life. This graphical presentation constitutes the Anglophone problem in Cameroon. However, there are circumstances, especially election moments, when Anglophones and Francophones cooperate more because of their African linkages than their Anglophonicity and Francophonicity. Politicians tend to mobilise votes on ethnic bases across the Anglophone-Francophone divide, thereby bringing the two groups together against other Cameroonian groups with whom they do not share ethnic ties. Cameroonians therefore swing between primordial and modern identities depending on the circumstances and this love-hate contradiction has had the unanticipated result of generating national cohesion while at the same time exposing the possible fault line along which an eruption can occur.

The Anglo-French colonial partition of Senegal and The Gambia resulted in the creation of an Anglophone Gambian state in the belly of Francophone Senegal. Although the Gambians and Senegalese share a commonality of geography, history, ethnicity and traditional socio-political organisation, the two states are held apart by the colonial inherited languages of English and French. At the penultimate stage of decolonisation, the British imperialists recognised the arbitrariness of granting sovereignty to a small non-viable state like The Gambia and tried to rectify this anomaly by encouraging union between The Gambia and Senegal. But the small size of The Gambia, combined with its Anglophonicity and Francophonicity of Senegal, militated against this move. The unicity of Senegambian geography, history, ethnicity, languages and traditional socio-political organisations were sacrificed in favour of colonially inherited values.

An interesting observation that comes out of this study is that the primordial linkages or the historical memories between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians melted the colonial divide, resulting in the reunification of the two territories. But Anglophone Gambia and Francophone Senegal, with a dual colonial heritage like Cameroon, are more intensely intertwined but have not been able to constitute a single nation because of colonial differences. The Senegambian confederation that was constituted in 1982 was unfortunately short-lived owing to colonial inherited differences and the fear of hegemonic tendencies by the senior partner in the union. Senegal and The Gambia are two sisterly republics that are bound by the sameness of their Africanity to constitute a single nation but have failed to be so owing to the

Francophoness of the Senegalese and the Anglophoneness of the Gambians. Since The Gambia is located right inside Senegal, nowhere is union more required, urgent and easy to achieve in Africa than between these two states. Like Cameroon, the Senegambia peoples were partitioned between the French and British for their imperial purposes and not in the interest of the African peoples.

Who was behind the unification of Senegal and The Gambia? The initiative for fusion came from the colonising power at the penultimate stage of the independence of The Gambia, while the political elite barely paid lip service to it. Consequently, The Gambia acceded to independence in 1965 and its relationship with Senegal was a catalogue of treaties and cooperation agreements. However, the two countries moved closer to political union in 1982 by the Senegambian confederation, which was merely a political marriage of convenience following an attempted *coup d'état* against the Jawara government in The Gambia. The colonial past and size of The Gambia, and the fear of its political elite of being swallowed by Senegal under the pretext of greater integration, militated against the survival of the confederation and it rapidly collapsed in October 1989. This comparative study of nation building endeavours in Cameroon and the Senegambia, which inherited the English and French language and cultures is of great importance given that the African union that was constituted in 2002 can operate smoothly, only if one takes into consideration the colonial factor as an important dynamic that must be understood.

The Colonial Mould, the Challenge of the Anglo-French Colonial Status Quo and the Making of Bilingual Cameroon

Modern Cameroon, like other African countries, is a European creation. Cameroon became a German protectorate in 1884 after the famous nineteenth century Scramble for Africa. During the First World War in Africa, German Cameroon was conquered by the Allies and divided disproportionately into the British (western) and French (eastern) spheres. The British acquired just one-fifth of German Cameroon, composed of two discontinuous trips of territory along the eastern border with Nigeria, with a total area of 88,036 square kilometres, while France received the remaining four-fifths with a land area of 431,845 square kilometres (Mbuagbaw 1987:78-79; Ngoh 1996:126). This unequal partition of German Cameroon between the British and French ultimately gave rise to an Anglophone minority and a Francophone majority in the new Cameroon nation-state that emerged after reunification in 1961.

During the period of separate administration under Britain and France, the two Cameroons enjoyed an international status, first as mandated territories

of the League of Nations, and later as trust territories of the United Nations (Gardinier 1963; Wright 1930). The Anglo-French colonial boundary, like all colonial boundaries in Africa, was artificial at every point (Asiwaju 1984a, 1984b; Atem 1984). The boundary separated ethnic groups, families and farmlands, and attempts by the British and French colonial authorities to erect and impose customs restrictions between African peoples were resented (Chem-Langhee & Njeuma 1980:26-30).

The ethnic groups in Cameroon that were separated by the Anglo-French colonial boundary are those clustered in the southwestern quadrant in which is situated the Anglophone North West and South West Provinces and the Francophone West and Littoral Provinces. The majority of Cameroon's 250 ethnic groups are clustered in this southwestern quadrant which is geographically located along the Cameroon mountain and plateau chain, and is historically an ethnic shatter zone dividing the Niger and Congo river basins (Courade 1971; Le Vine 1976:272; Ardener 1996).

Which were the separated African ethnic groups from south to north? Along the coastal region of the Anglophone South West Province are located ethnic groups, which have close affinities to those of the Francophone Littoral Province of which the most important are the Bakolle, Bamboko and the Bakweri—all offshoots of the Douala in Francophone Cameroon. Further inland, the Mungo, Balong, Bakossi and Mbo ethnic groups in the South West Province span into the Littoral Province (Ardener 1996). The Lebialem people who are further north of the Manyu Division of the South West Province are a simple extension of the Bamileke people of the Francophone West Province.

The Anglophones of the North West Province and the Francophones of the West Province equally have close ethnic ties. The zigzag migratory movements of the peoples of these provinces since pre-colonial times created an ethnic continuum between the two provinces. The Tikar peoples are found in the two provinces. The kingdom of Nso in the North West Province and the neighbouring sultanate of Bamoum in the Francophone West Province claim a common place of origin from the Tikar country of Rifem (Tardit 1960, 1970; Chilver 1973; Ghomsi 1972). The leaders of these two kingdoms refer to themselves as brothers and their presence is mandatory in each other's territory when certain important traditional ceremonies have to be performed.

These ethnically related Anglophone and Francophone groups or kingdoms are those Cameroonians who under one circumstance are mobilised by, or act because of, deep-seated loyalties. Under other circumstances, they are mobilised by or act because of their modern acquired identities in the shape of English and French. Put differently, at one point these peoples invoke

their African-ness with inspirations from their deep-seated ties. At other moments they are pure Anglophones or Francophones.

The propinquity of Cameroonians of the southwestern quadrant comprising Anglophones and Francophones was underpinned by the keen interest they took in the reunification struggle in the post-Second World War era (Amaazee 1994; Awasom 2000) in contrast to the other Francophones of the Centre-South, East and Grand North Provinces who are not linked to the Anglophones. The Francophone Littoral and West Provinces (neighbours to the Anglophones) constituted the stronghold of the leftist Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC) party, formed in 1948 on the platform of immediate independence and reunification of the British and French Cameroons. When the French disbanded the UPC in 1955, the party moved to the British Cameroons from where it continued to operate until it was compelled to move elsewhere³ (Mbembe 1985; Joseph 1977; Etana 1996). During their sojourn in the British Cameroons, the Francophone politicians behaved as if the Anglo-French international boundary was irrelevant and the two Cameroons were a single country.⁴

Shortly before and after the independence of the French Cameroons in 1960, the UPC nationalists, who were engaged in an armed struggle against the pro-French Ahmadou Ahidjo regime, easily used the territory of their kith and kin of the British Cameroons as a safe haven. Reunificationist forces, championed by John Ngu Foncha's Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) were equally strong in the British Cameroons, partly because of shared historical and ethnic ties with their Francophone neighbour. The British were overtly against the reunification of the two Cameroons⁵ (cf. Chem-Langhee 1976; Awasom 2000) because they had all along prepared that territory for integration with their Nigerian colony. Foncha therefore had to rely heavily and almost exclusively on the financial and logistic support of Francophone southern politicians and to a lesser extent Francophone émigrés resident in the British Cameroons.⁶ In essence, the Cameroonians in the southwestern quadrant were the foremost challengers of the Anglo-French status quo, and they co-operated with each other to obliterate the obnoxious colonial divide through the reunification dream. Despite the closeness of the Senegalese and the Gambians, no such similar development was recorded.

Foncha's victory in the United Nations-organised February 1961 plebiscites, in which the British Southern Cameroons⁷ voted to reunify with La République du Cameroun, was clearly the fruits of political cooperation between the ethnically related peoples of the southwestern quadrant across the Anglo-French colonial boundary. It is precisely for this reason that Ahidjo became scared of reunification, which brought together Anglophones and southern Francophones. Ahidjo saw in the reunification of the two Cameroons

the increase in the political constituency of his southern political enemies. The British Southern Cameroonians who had opted to join La République du Cameroun were a simple ethnic extension of the rebellious peoples of southern Francophone Cameroon who were Ahidjo's die-hard opponents.

Foncha had won the plebiscite by a huge margin with 233,571 votes for La République du Cameroun against only 97,741 for Nigeria (Le Vine 1961). Consequently, Foncha emerged as a political force and was being wooed publicly and privately by 'both the Ahidjo government and opposition groups in and out of the National Assembly of Francophone Cameroun' (Le Vine 1961). Foncha started holding talks with his southern allies in Francophone Cameroon comprising Prince Douala Manga Bell, Dr Bebey Eyidi, Daniel Kemajou, Soppo Prisso and UPC leaders inside Francophone Cameroon and in exile. These talks caused panic within the Ahidjo government circle as it was highly suspected that some sort of south-south coalition of the people of the southwestern quadrant, comprising the Anglophones and Ahidjo's southern Francophone political enemies, was in the offing (Le Vine 1962).

The new coalition that was taking shape was a direct consequence of reunification and was a potential explosive that could unseat the Ahidjo regime in any future elections in a united Cameroon. This possibility haunted Ahidjo and his colleagues, and it is against this background that Ahidjo was upset by the loss of the British Northern Cameroons region. This region was of the same ethnic and religious extraction as Ahidjo's native Northern Cameroon region and it was lost to Nigeria in the UN-organised plebiscite. Without his own kith and kin of the British Northern Cameroons to bolster his position, Ahidjo had to rely on other survival techniques based on the institutionalisation of an authoritarian system of governance, which need not delay us here (cf. Bayart 1978:82-90, 1985, 1973:125-44, 1978:5-35). Suffice it to state that when the bilingual Cameroon Federation took off on 1 October 1961, Ahidjo prevailed on Foncha that they should restrict the activities of their political parties exclusively within their respective territories because of the prospects of the realignment of the Francophones and their Anglophone kith and kin in the southwestern quadrant.

Under the Ahidjo-Foncha entente, Ahidjo's Union Camerounaise (UC) party had to operate exclusively in Francophone East Cameroon, while Foncha's KNDP had to restrict its own activities exclusively within Anglophone West Cameroon (Bayart 1978:84). The threat of an enlarged KNDP comprising Anglophones and Francophones of the southwestern quadrant was therefore averted. Throughout Ahidjo's presidential tenure of office (1961-1982), he succeeded in containing deep-seated ethnic affiliations between Cameroonians of the southwestern quadrant from snowballing into

a political force that could challenge him. As we shall see subsequently, Biya was unable to prevent this realignment in the 1990s.

Essentially the ethnic continuum and cooperation between Anglophones and Francophones in the southwestern quadrant was one important level of identification whose source is pre-colonial and indigenous. This indigenous or traditional identity variable therefore played a crucial role in bringing about the birth of a reunified Cameroon of an Anglophone minority and a Francophone majority and would create a political bridge across the Anglophone-Francophone divide.

The Colonial Mould, the Partition and Independence of the Senegambian into two Sovereign States and Considerations for Integration

The Senegambia region was subjected to similar European experiences starting from the fifteenth century with the Portuguese, after which the Dutch, British and French followed. The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the entry of the Senegambia into the colonial era and Senegal and The Gambia fell to France and Britain respectively.

Like Cameroon, the Senegambia peoples were partitioned between the French and British for their imperial purposes and not in the interest of the African peoples. Britain occupied the River Gambia firstly for strategic economic reasons and later for military reasons related to the disbanding of the slave trade. French presence in the four coastal settlements of St. Louis, Rufisque, Dakar and Gorée resulted in the granting of the franchise to educated Senegalese in 1848 as French citizens (Oloruntimehin 1981:33). However, it was only in 1889 that the French and British actually demarcated the boundaries between their respective territories of The Gambia and Senegal. Following the conquest of Wolof, Tukolor, Samori Toure, and the Mossi, the French set up a single administration for French West Africa in 1895 under a Governor-General.

The French and British partitioned Senegal and The Gambia, which actually constitute the same geographical, historical and ethnic region, given that Senegal actually sandwiches the tiny strip of Gambian territory. The present-day Republic of The Gambia is a petty enclave in Senegal which envelopes it to the north and south banks of the River Gambia from which it derives its name. With a total land area of 11,300 square kilometres, the country represents one of the poorest handiworks of the colonial state-building enterprise because of its size, artificiality, non-viability and ever-increasing pauperisation of its population. It is a strip of land, in the literary sense of the word, of a length of 470 kilometres, and is only 24 kilometres wide in some places along the navigable length of the River Gambia, which dissects

the country. The Gambia is right inside the belly of Senegal and nowhere is union more required and easy to achieve in Africa than between these two states, given that almost every Gambian has a Senegalese blood relative. As H.R. Jarret observes, 'the very elongated shape of the Gambia makes it an extremely awkward country to regard even as a whole national region'.

As a natural geographical unit, the Senegambia can be divided into at least seven regions: Futa Toro, the Quala, the Coastal, the Cayorean, the Savannah and the Lower Casamance. The ethnic groups are the same and the most important ones are the Mandika, Fula, Wolof, Jola, Serer and the Sarahuli. The languages they speak are quite similar.

The socio-political structures of the Senegambian peoples show a great similarity. There are at least four distinct status groups—nobles, freemen, artisans and slaves. For the most part, this social status was ascribed at birth but was slowly modified over the years by societal factors such as marriage, wealth, education and religion.

After a series of negotiations between the British and French, the Senegambia was carved into two distinct territories in 1889 and placed under separate administrations. The colonial demarcation did not automatically disconnect the Senegambian people who were too intertwined. The inhabitants on either side of the frontier had carried on their business as before with little regard to the niceties of non-violation of the other states territorial integrity (Sonko-Godwin 2003).

The Senegambian region constitutes a relatively impoverished region without important mineral resources or a strong agricultural base. Its mono-cultural economy is hinged principally on groundnuts whose prices in the international market often fluctuated. The logic of regional integration made sense and the French unsuccessfully attempted a Federation of French West African states including Senegal which flopped, giving way for the independence of Senegal in 1960.

The independence of Senegal raised the issue of the future of the Gambia, which was a piece of impoverished territory that could hardly stand on its own. Until the late 1950s, independence for the Gambia was not seriously contemplated owing to the poor state of the territory. Under a plan known as the Malta scheme, the British had contemplated integrating The Gambia in the politics of the United Kingdom by sending three elected Gambian representatives to the United Kingdom parliament, but the arrangement failed.

The British realised that the 1889 border settlement with France, which resulted in the birth of modern Gambia, handicapped The Gambia more than Senegal for the territory was too small and artificial to be economically viable. The practicability of The Gambia's independence was therefore in doubt. Thus, from 1958 the British government had hoped for the arrangement of

some form of closer association between The Gambia and Senegal. Governor Edward Windley (1957-62) favoured voluntary integration with Senegal as an answer to doubts about The Gambia's sustainability as an independent state. Before assuming office in Banjul, Governor Windley met with the French colonial officials in Paris, and once in Africa, he travelled to Dakar for informal talks. The discussions focussed on association between the two territories as a technical rather than a political matter. In essence, the British saw integration with Senegal as indispensable and enlightened the Gambian political elite on the matter. Gambians were therefore made to understand that they were inheriting a national territory and boundary that did not make any sense. Political leaders therefore started acting on the situation.

In August 1959, I.M. Garba Jahumba, the leader of the Gambian Muslim League, indicated in a broadcast on radio Dakar that The Gambia would like to join the Mali Federation of which Senegal was a member. The British therefore supported regular inter-ministerial meetings between the Njie administration in The Gambia and the newly independent state of Senegal. In November, the Legislative Council of the Gambia agreed that the idea really needed to be seriously examined. The Gambian political elite therefore inherited the idea of Senegambia integration and used it at various times in the early 1960s as an instrument of political positioning and not as a genuine political goal. P.S. Njie and D.K. Jawara variously castigated and upheld union with Senegal, depending on whether they were in or out of office. In office they used it to obtain Senegalese support. Out of office, they raised the alarm that the idea was a threat to the autonomy of The Gambia.

Starting from 1961, the UP leader, P.S. Njie, moved towards integration with Senegal, with the setting up of an Inter-Ministerial Committee to serve as a permanent link between the two countries to encourage Wolof unity and protect Njie's political lifeline. The Senegalese supported this scheme as a way of allaying the fears of The Gambia of being swamped by their more populous and richer partner. It would serve as a basis for a customs union, which the Senegalese felt would curtail smuggling from The Gambia, which was negatively affecting their economy. The committee was expected to act as a bulwark against separatist tendencies in the Casamance, the Southern part of Senegal separated by The Gambia from the rest of Senegal. Apart from discussions and agreements confined to improving road infrastructure and telecommunication as a necessary step for political and economic union, the committee achieved little success. Meanwhile, Jawara's PPP as the opposition was busy mobilising local feelings against a precipitate comprehensive integration with Senegal.

The successor administration of Dawda Jawara, which came to power after the 1962 general elections, reinvigorated closer integration with Senegal against which it had previously mobilised local opinion. The Inter-Ministerial Committee continued to discuss questions such as postage rates, collaboration in the orthography of local languages and formalities of moving cattle across their common frontier. In October 1962 a joint communiqué was signed by the two governments briefly indicating their willingness and that of the British government to enter into fuller union, and in 1963 the two governments commissioned the United Nations to examine the prospects of union between the two countries.

Both The Gambia and Senegal made a request to the United Nations for assistance on how to achieve integration between the territories with different colonial backgrounds. In a bid to allay the Gambians' fears of the Senegalese, the Gambian government issued a statement to accompany the communiqué. The document indicated the objectives being pursued and defined in clear terms the limits of any concession the Government was prepared to make to the Senegalese. It underscored the principal areas that were to remain under Gambian control in the eventuality of union with Senegal: the responsibility for internal administration, the police, civil service and local government, the Gambian criminal and civil law, the educational system and the maintenance of close ties with the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. The Gambian government would also want to ensure that there was joint representation for matters for which responsibility might be apportioned and clear constitutional safeguards for its autonomy in order to protect the territory's distinctive background and identity. The Gambian people were still suspicious of the Senegalese and the opposition tried to exploit this situation to make political capital out of it. They attempted to stop any moves towards integration with Senegal in parliament and when the United Nations experts arrived in Banjul, they were given a hostile reception. Nonetheless, the United Nations published its report on the prospects of integration between Senegal and The Gambia in April 1964. The UN proposal on the matter was contained in the Van Moek Report, and both Governments met in Dakar to look at the document. The Van Moek Report proposed three options: the total integration of the Gambia with Senegal as the eighth region of the country, which Francophone Senegal supported; a loose federation which appealed to the Anglophone Gambians; and a compromise association which would promote gradual political integration by means of a functional cooperation (Diene-Njie 1996:37).

While pointing to the benefits of total integration in the long run, the document also provided information about the difficulties that were likely to two territories. The Report recognised the impracticability of immediate union

and instead placed greater hopes in some loose form of union, or failing that, a treaty of union between Dakar and Banjul. It is against this background that Jawara envisaged a federal union between an independent Gambian state and Senegal. While preserving a considerable degree of autonomy in local affairs, the Gambian government indicated a willingness to surrender defence and foreign policy to the future federal government. Jawara proposed a new tier of authority above the two-state government, which would be a seven-man council of the alliance with powers to formulate common policies in these two important areas of defence and foreign policy. The Gambians were bent on being sovereign in their domestic affairs in order to protect their political, economic and cultural autonomy and the union proposal they suggested to the Senegalese went beyond a mere association of the two states. As a senior member of the future union the Senegalese did not nurse any fears of losing their cultural distinctiveness like the Gambians. They favoured a closely-knit union to be carefully worked out with The Gambia in order to avoid the problems that led to the collapse of the Mali federation. On a political level, they favoured Gambian representation in the Senegalese National Assembly rather than an additional layer of authority. Economically, the Senegalese favoured a customs union, which would eliminate the vexatious smuggling issue. The Gambian government saw in the Senegalese proposal for a customs union an attempt to infringe on the economic autonomy of The Gambia. They interpreted the political arrangements of having Gambians in the Senegalese National Assembly as attempt to make Gambians a permanent minority.

The union question with Senegal featured prominently during the London constitutional conference on the independence of The Gambia that took place on 22 July 1964 under the chairmanship of Duncan Sands, the British Secretary of State for Colonies. The future relations between The Gambia and Senegal were discussed and two draft agreements on cooperation in foreign affairs and defence were prepared for endorsement by the Legislature of The Gambia. The British government welcomed this move as progress on the part of the Gambian government to establish closer relations with Senegal.

Despite the colonial push and the efforts of the elite in the direction of integration, independence was achieved in February 1965 without the issue of union with Senegal being given any concrete form beyond the signing of protocols. The best alternative for The Gambia and Senegal in 1965 would have been independence and union if independence was to make any economic sense. The Gambian government signed a series of bilateral agreements with the British, which ensured continuous economic assistance after independence and this concealed the reality of the non-sustainability of the state for a long time.

Essentially, The Gambia acquired sovereignty in 1965 without definitively resolving the question of integration with Senegal. Gambians felt that as a minority and as Anglophones, pushing integration too far at the expense of their autonomy in an independence framework would lead to their being drowned by the majority Francophone Senegalese. The Anglophone Cameroonians were not so fortunate because they conceded to the idea of integration with Francophone Cameroon before working out the question of their autonomy as Anglophones. Did the evolution of Anglophone and Francophones in the postcolonial state vindicate the Gambians who had resisted integration with Senegal?

Anglophone-Francophone Relations in the Postcolonial Cameroon State

The immediate paramount question, which confronted a reunified Cameroon, was: which group was to give up its inherited cultural identity in favour of the other, Anglophone Cameroonians or Francophone Cameroonians? Could the two cultures co-exist without competition, conflicts and contradictions or could there be a possible fusion? Anglophones and Francophones had inherited different political, social, administrative and cultural traditions, which came to stand out conspicuously as their distinguishing modern identities.

In pursuing the reunification objective before independence the Anglophone statesmen had clearly indicated their determination to retain their Anglo-Saxon identity in the shape of their political culture and style, language, law, education and administration. During the Foumban Constitutional Conference that was held in July 1961 to determine a constitution for a reunified Cameroon, the head of the Anglophone delegation, J.N. Foncha stated that he had agreed with Ahidjo to rebuild a Cameroon nation with due respect 'to the existence of two cultures' and that they had proposed to design a federal constitution 'which would keep the two cultures in the areas in which they [existed] and blend them in the centre'. Foncha indicated that the centre would have very limited powers while the federated states would be allowed to continue 'as largely as they [were]'.⁸ Foncha was therefore envisaging a confederal constitutional framework. The identity issue was a particularly sensitive one for the Anglophone minority because they ran the risk of being at best dominated, and at worst submerged and obliterated by Francophone Cameroon which was ten times the size of the British Southern Cameroons 'with almost four times its population, immeasurably greater resources and a much higher level of social and economic development' (Le Vine 1976:273). Because of this disparity between the two

Cameroons, Foncha's KNDP advocated a loose federal union in which the autonomy and identity of the states would be protected.

President Ahidjo agreed with Foncha that the two Cameroons should unite on a federal basis because of obvious differences inherited from colonisation. However, the Francophone Cameroon Republic, which was already a sovereign state, was in a commanding and privileged position to dictate the terms of the union as the constituent authority (Bory 1968:13–15). In Ahidjo's own words, 'it became incumbent on the Republic of Cameroun [i.e. Francophone Cameroon], which already enjoyed international sovereignty and which possessed its own institutions, to revise its own constitution in order to form a union with the brotherly territory of the Southern Cameroons'.⁹ Ahidjo objected to a confederal system for a reunified Cameroon as being too loose to allow for greater interaction. He opted for a more centralised federal system and this was reflected in the 1961 union constitution. On 1 October 1961, the Federal Republic of Cameroon was born, comprising two states: the Federated State of East Cameroon, which was the former La République du Cameroun and the Federated State of West Cameroon, which was the former British Southern Cameroons.

Ahidjo's federal constitution provided for an all-powerful federal government while the state governments were devoid of any real powers to justify their existence (Gonidec 1969; Gonidec & Breton 1976; Stark 1976; Benjamin 1972; Rubin 1971). As Jacques Benjamin put it: '*la constitution camerounaise de 1961 veut de type fédéré mais le concept de souveraineté des Etats fédérés n'y est pas mis en évidence*' (Benjamin 1972:4) (the Cameroon constitution was a federal type but the concept of the sovereignty of the states was totally absent).

The Cameroon federation was in reality a decentralised unitary state and French values quickly pervaded the federation at the expense of English ones.¹⁰ Ambroise Kom posits that apart from the two stars on the national flag to signify the existence of two federated states in the Cameroon federation, there was a preponderance of Francophone tradition: the highway code, money, and system of administration. As he puts it:

... En dehors de deux étoiles dorées qui, de 1961-1977, ornent la bannière rouge du drapeau du Cameroun pour souligner l'existence de deux Etats fédérés, la partie occidentale du pays adopte, sans la plupart des attributs de la partie francophone. Code de route, monnaie, système de gestion et d'administration qui s'imposent sont ceux de l'ancien Cameroun sous mandat français (Kom 1996:145).

The frenchification of the Anglophone federated state of West Cameroon created shock and disillusionment¹¹ but this was absorbed and disguised by

the existence and dynamism of the West Cameroon government in Buea composed of an executive and a bicameral legislature (the West Cameroon House of Assembly and House of Chiefs).¹² There was therefore a semblance of the exercise of power by the Anglophones in their state and at the federal level. At least there was a visible Anglophone government in Buea that was functioning and Anglophones could therefore claim a degree of political autonomy.

In 1972 Ahidjo dashed the hopes of Anglophone autonomists, who intended to have a say in national politics through their state legislatures—their House of Chiefs and House of Assembly—by introducing a unitary system of government. He achieved this goal through a nation-wide referendum with an overwhelming 99.97 per cent vote approval as results in one-party states often appear. Article 1 of the unitary constitution changed the official name of Cameroon from ‘Federal Republic’ to ‘United Republic’ of Cameroon and this was symbolised by a single star on the red band of the green, red, yellow national flag. The governments of the Federated States of West and East Cameroon disappeared and under law no 72/LF/6 of 25 June 1972, a mono-cameral National Assembly of 120 deputies was established. Under decree no.72-349 of 24 July 1972, the United Republic of Cameroon was administratively divided into seven provinces with the federated state of West Cameroon being divided into the North West and South West Provinces.

Clearly the unitary constitution provided a greater opportunity for Anglophone-Francophone interaction. But in an institutional set up, which was largely French-inspired, the Francophones naturally had the upper hand. The first generation of civil servants in postcolonial Cameroon had obtained their education and training in either exclusively English-inspired or French-inspired institutions. Thus, the Federated States of West and East Cameroon conveniently contained these monolingual civil servants. With the increasing frenchification of the Cameroon administration, culminating in the introduction of the unitary state, the assimilation and marginalisation of Anglophones became inevitable as French was given a higher premium than English in the administrative hierarchy.

In administrative appointments to positions of responsibility, Anglophones were generally made assistants to Francophones, the unwritten explanation being that Cameroon’s institutions were of French origin and tradition¹³ and not English. From this logic it was better for an Anglophone to be an assistant to a Francophone than to head a public institution because Anglophones needed time to familiarise themselves with French administrative practices. In other words, Anglophones needed to be totally assimilated to the French tradition if they were to qualify for top positions in the political and administrative hierarchy of Cameroon. Following this logic, it was therefore easier for the biblical camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for an

Anglophone to become a Minister or a Head of an important ministry or parastatal, not to talk of becoming the President of the Republic.¹⁴

That Anglophones, as a minority, were treated as second-class citizens was an open secret. They complained about domination, marginalisation and the steady but gradual erosion of their identity by the dominant Francophone culture. But there was no overt, forceful, popular or systematic reaction against this state of affairs during Ahidjo's totalitarian reign. The omnipresent totalitarian machinery crudely manhandled the few who dared, the most renowned case being Albert Mukong who spent over a decade in several political prisons in Cameroon for challenging Ahidjo's destruction of the federal constitution and the marginalisation of the Anglophones.¹⁵

The reintroduction of multipartyism in the 1990s was accompanied by the resurgence of secessionist sentiments among Anglophones (see for instance Konings 1996; Sindjourn 1996a; Kamto 1995; Kom 1995; Koning and Nyamnjoh 1997; Chiabi 1997; Chem-Langhee 1997), thereby qualifying Cameroon as a potential candidate for one of Africa's failed states. Anglophone Cameroonians started remonstrating as a monolithic block with the English language as a common identity (see in particular Nkoum-Me-Ntseny 1996) and this unquestionably poses a serious threat to the territorial integrity of Cameroon.

John Fru Ndi, an Anglophone resident in the Northwest provincial headquarters of Bamenda, obstinately launched a political party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF) on 26 May 1990, at a time when the government was not ready to concede to political pluralism. The whole incident was dramatised by tactless and irresponsible outbursts from overzealous Francophone government officials and the government media to look more like an Anglophone affair than the simple introduction of multipartyism. Monsieur Emah Basile, the Government Delegate of the Yaoundé Urban Council, and a member of the politburo of the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), openly alluded to Anglophones as *'l'ennemie... dans la maison'* (enemies in the house) while the Minister of Territorial Administration, Monsieur Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya arrogantly stated over the Cameroon Radio Television that *'ceux qui ne sont pas contents n'ont qu'à aller ailleurs'* (those who were unhappy could leave).

The government media, for its part, insinuated that the pro-democracy demonstration of students at the University of Yaoundé, on the evening of 26 May 1990, in support of the introduction of multipartyism, was an exclusively Anglophone affair. Anglophones were demonstrating for the reintegration of Anglophone Cameroon into Nigeria from which Anglophone Cameroon had separated under the aegis of a United Nations organised plebiscite in 1961. The students were accused of singing the Nigerian national

anthem and hoisting the Nigerian flag to demonstrate their yearning for, and fidelity to, Nigeria. Other leading members of the CPDM specifically and unambiguously condemned the Anglophones for 'treachery' and called on the government to mete out exemplary sanctions.

The action of the Cameroon government officials and media had, in essence, resulted in '*l'officialisation de l'identité Anglophone rébelle...*' (the officialisation of Anglophone rebel identity) (Sindjoun 1995:102). The shabby anti-Anglophone propaganda pervaded the Cameroon political landscape particularly in the months proceeding the launching of the SDF, and this contributed to the resignation of J.N. Foncha, the Anglophone architect of reunification, from the ruling CPDM party of which he was the first national Vice-President. In Foncha's melancholy words, he lamented that the Anglophones whom he had brought into the union with Francophones were been ridiculed and referred to as Les Biafrais¹⁶ (Biafrans), 'enemies in the house' and 'traitors'. The constitutional provisions which protected the Anglophones in the 1961 federal constitution had been discarded, and their voices drowned, while the rule of the gun replaced dialogue which Anglophones cherished very much (Foncha 1993). Foncha's resignation sounded like a bomb explosion and cast doubts on the future of the union.

In December 1990 the Biya administration finally bowed to pressures and introduced multiparty democracy alongside a certain degree of freedom of mass communication and association, including the holding of meetings and demonstrations (SOPECAM 1991). Various groups, associations and newspapers mushroomed, and started ventilating and articulating the problems affecting their respective communities or peoples. Anglophone newspapers and pressure groups boomed on selling the image of Anglophone Cameroonians as a marginalised and disadvantaged people.

The multiparty context of the 1990s also favoured the realignment of the Anglophones and Francophones of the southwestern quadrant who had fought for reunification into a political bloc. The 'grand southern alliance' of the people of the southwestern quadrant, which Ahidjo had been preventing from emerging, came into existence. These peoples found common cause in their exclusion from the presidency of Cameroon since independence despite the fact that they were the architects of the reunification of Cameroon. When Ahidjo, a northern Fulani Muslim stepped down from the presidency in 1982, he handed over power to Paul Biya, a Beti from southeastern Cameroon. This was a repeat of the same pattern when Andre-Marie Mbida, Francophone Cameroon's first Premier and of the southeastern Beti ethnic extraction, fell from power in 1957. Ahidjo, a Fulani northerner, succeeded Mbida, a southeastern Beti. Political leadership in Cameroon has therefore swung exclusively along the southeastern Beti to the northern Fulani and back to the

southern-eastern Beti axis. Anglophones and Francophones of the southwestern quadrant were therefore united to break this monopoly and exclusion from the presidency.

The emergence of this alliance of the peoples of the southwestern quadrant was a demonstration of the vitality of deep-seated identities. John Fru Ndi's SDF gradually spread nation-wide but was more widely accepted by the peoples of the southwestern quadrant scattered all over Cameroon than others outside this ethnic and geographical bracket. They quickly distinguished themselves as the chief opponents of President Paul Biya, the heir of their 'traditional enemy', Ahmadou Ahidjo, by organising a series of politically motivated demonstrations and strikes under the Ghost Town campaigns in the early 1990s (cf. Awasom 1998, Monga 1993) with the aim of compelling Biya to convene a sovereign national conference *à la béninoise*.¹⁷

During the multiparty elections organised in Cameroon after the advent of multipartyism in 1990, the Anglophones and Francophones of the southwestern quadrant manifested a large degree of political homogeneity and solidarity as the bulk of their votes went to the SDF. Before the elections the desire for change was high, given the economic malaise the country was undergoing.¹⁸ John Fru Ndi was the popular favourite and the SDF propaganda machine created allies beyond the southwestern quadrant among other Francophones, especially migrants from Bamileke country and the littoral. Paul Biya obtained 39.9 per cent of the votes while John Fru Ndi scored 35.9 per cent with the bulk of his votes coming from the Anglophone North West and South West provinces and the Francophone West and Littoral Provinces (Sindjourn 1994, Awasom 1998).¹⁹ This esprit de corps prevailing amongst these peoples over political matters was so strong that the Beti para-military groups and ethnically biased newspapers nicknamed them the 'Anglo-Bamilekes'.²⁰

While the October 1992 presidential elections revealed the solidarity of the peoples of the southwestern quadrant beyond Anglophone-Francophone lines, the results also came to confirm the popular belief, particularly among Anglophones, that an Anglophone can never be the President of Cameroon but only a subordinate. Against SDF expectations, the Supreme Court, on 23 October 1992, proclaimed Paul Biya the overall winner of the elections²¹ (Dikalo, no. 037 of 31 August 1992). The proclamation of the results was terrible news for SDF supporters and the violence that followed the proclamation led to the imposition of a two-month state of emergency on the Anglophone provincial headquarters of Bamenda. It was widely believed among the Anglophones and SDF supporters that Fru Ndi's victory was 'stolen' in connivance with France because Fru Ndi was Anglophone.

The Biya government reacted to this mounting political disenchantment by announcing the organisation of a national debate on the revision of the 1972 unitary constitution, which had substituted the 1961 independence federal constitution of Cameroon (Kale 1998:1-2). This step was undertaken in a bid to diffuse political tension and establish national consensus. Anglophones seized this golden opportunity of revisiting the constitution by presenting a united front.

Four prominent Anglophones, namely Simon Munzu, Elad Ekontang, Benjamin Itoe and Carlson Anyangwe²² took the initiative to convene an All Anglophone Conference (AAC) 'for the purpose of preparing Anglophone participation' in the announced national debate on the reform of the constitution. Other issues related to the welfare of Anglophones, their posterity, territory and Cameroon as a whole were to be looked into (AAC 1993). Munzu, Ekontang, Itoe and Anyangwe turned out to be the ideologues of the Anglophone cause, or better still the *ingénieur identitaire de la communautaire Anglophone*, to use Sindjoun's elegant expression (Sindjoun 1995:90, 93). The Anglophone turnout for the conference was impressive and was indicative of their frustration and disillusionment with the union with Francophones. Over 5000 Anglophones attended, including academics, religious, business, traditional rulers and socio-professionals and the political elite.

The expectations of the convenors of the conference were high, just as the imaginations and the fantasies of the delegates ran wild about 'the persecuted pure Anglophones' and 'the tyrannical imperfect Francophones'. The All Anglophone Conference issued the Buea Declaration, which in essence called for a return to the federal form of government.

On 27 May 1993, a select AAC Anglophones Standing Committee of 65 members tidied up a draft federal constitution, which they submitted to the Biya government for consideration (Standing Committee of AAC:1993). President Biya snubbed the draft federal constitution, and in a series of interviews in Cameroon and France, he stated that federalism was inappropriate for a country like Cameroon.

Government's refusal to entertain the federal proposal of Anglophones pushed the Anglophone delegates to moot the possibility of outright secession.²³ Anglophones held another meeting, the Second All Anglophone Congress (AAC 11) in Bamenda on 29 April 1994, and resolved to proceed to the unilateral declaration of independence of Anglophone Cameroon if the Biya regime persisted in its refusal to engage in meaningful constitutional talks (Konings and Nyamnjoh 1997:221-27).

In essence, the construction of a centrifugal political identity of Anglophone Cameroon was a consequence of its frustration with the centralising tendency of the hegemonic Francophone state. Anglophones believed a return to the federal system of government would guarantee the protection of their Anglophoneness and provide political space for them to determine their own affairs.

The Anglophone pressure group, the Southern Cameroon National Congress, emerged from the dust of the All Anglophone Congress and quickly developed its motto, ‘the force of argument and not the argument of force’. This motto was intended to indicate the non-violent nature and method of the movement to achieve statehood for the Southern Cameroons. This agenda was new and was formulated from the failure of the Biya administration to exercise flexibility and imagination in handling the Anglophone problem.

Although the SCNC adopted the motto of the force of argument, that did not spare them from government harassment in 1997 following an alleged attack on military installations in the Anglophone North-West Province in 1997. Its youth-wing President, Ebenezer Akwanga, was arrested, detained and subsequently tried and imprisoned for 20 years for allegedly possessing illegal weapons and engaging in acts of sabotage. More than a score of other SCNC activists were sent to the Yaoundé high security prison at Kondenge where they are serving long terms of imprisonment. The Biya administration refused all forms of dialogue with the SCNC and preferred to crush the movement by all means.

Because of government high-handedness in handling the SCNC, the Anglophones in the Diaspora, particularly the United States, reorganised themselves and opened a website, the www.scncforum under the coordination of J.J. Asongu, in 1999. The website encouraged discussions and updated its subscribers about developments in the Southern Cameroons on the struggle for statehood. The SCNC in the Diaspora decided to change the name of its discussion forum from SCNCforum to SCNATION in 2001. The change of name followed the unilateral declaration of the independence of the Southern Cameroons in December 2001 by Justice Alobwede, which was accompanied by a government crackdown on the secessionists. The independence declaration was treated as a non-event by the Biya administration and the Anglophones made no attempt to set up any governmental structures. The region only received troop reinforcement and was subjected to an undeclared state of siege. The SCNC in the Diaspora therefore transformed its website from SCNCforum to SCNATION. It proceeded to set up a High Commission in New York with J.J. Asongu as its first High Commissioner. To the SCNC, the status of the Southern Cameroons is a nation, which is under ‘the colonial

administration of La République du Cameroun', as they prefer to call Francophone Cameroon. They therefore view the relationship between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon as that between an independent state and an occupying Francophone colonial power. The Southern Cameroons is defined as a former United Nations Trust Territory that gained independence in 1961 and reasserted it in 2001 but is still being occupied by troops from colonial Francophone Cameroon. The struggle of the Southern Cameroonians, as they prefer to call Anglophone Cameroon, is the struggle for international recognition of their statehood and the expulsion of La République du Cameroun from their territory. The initiative for the progress of the Anglophone secessionist movement has therefore been displaced from the national arena to the Diaspora where it has a stronger and an unimpeded impulsion.

Independent Gambia and Senegal, the Protection of Colonially Inherited Values and the Prospects of Integration

Between Gambian independence in 1965 and the birth of the Senegambian federation in 1982, over 30 collaborative treaties were signed between Dakar and Banjul with great care taken not to infringe on the territorial integrity of each other and to protect the ruling elite. The most important of these were the defence treaty and the external representation agreement of 1965; the Treaty of Association of 1967 which created a Senegalo-Gambian Permanent Secretariat to service regular meetings of heads of government and ministers in order to promote technical cooperation, an economic treaty in 1970 and the establishment of the Gambia River Basin Development Organization in 1978 (Hughes 1991:2-3). The primary beneficiaries of these treaties were the ruling elites because of their narrow focus and their inability to create a genuine union of the two states. The relationship between The Gambia and Senegal was confined to sectoral agreements falling short of any political integration. But if union was perceived to favour the elite, they would have quickly struck a deal to achieve it.

On 30 July 1981, Kukoy Samba Sanyang displaced the Gambian ruling elite in a coup d'état while President Jawara was in England attending Prince Charles' wedding to Lady Spencer. The government acted promptly by soliciting Senegalese intervention under the 1965 Defence Agreement. The Senegalese military intervened and restored Jawara to power and this incident led to a binding political relationship with Senegal known as the Senegambia confederation.

The treaty of the Confederation allowed for the establishment of common political and administrative institutions, namely a President and Vice-President; a Council of Ministers, a Confederal Assembly elected indirectly

by the two national parliaments and a confederal secretariat, all funded by an annual budget paid for by the member states. The armed forces of the two countries were partially integrated to be stationed anywhere within the confederation. An economic and monetary union was created and external affairs and technical fields were coordinated by the two states (Hughes 1991:5-6). The confederal union between the two states was a direct consequence of the coup attempt against the Gambian ruling elite and was therefore a marriage of convenience and not conviction, as further events were to demonstrate.

The colonial past and size of the Gambia, and the reluctance of its political elite to be swallowed by Senegal under the pretext of greater integration, militated against the survival of the confederation, and it rapidly collapsed in August-October 1989. Gambia's refusal to accept a customs union with Senegal and a more rapid move towards complete economic integration was disturbing to Senegal. The Gambia was more bent on asserting itself and President Jawara on 1 August 1989 demanded that the post of confederal president and vice-president should rotate between the heads of state of the two countries. This demand was perceived by Senegal as a tactic to delay the achievement of greater integration. Senegal unilaterally decided to withdraw its security forces from The Gambia on 19 August 1989, ostensibly in response to security considerations with its Mauritanian neighbours with whom it had border clashes. This embarrassed the Gambian government. President Jawara of the Gambia therefore initiated the necessary legal measures to dissolve the confederation (Diene-Njie 1996:93-99; Hughes 1991:13-16; Sall 1992:19; Sall 1990). The collapse of the confederation was immediately followed by an economic blockade on The Gambia by Senegal before the subsequent normalisation of relations.

The dissolution of the confederation in 1989 meant a return to the kind of institutional relationship that existed before the federation in 1982. In other words the special relationship that was established in the Treaty of Association in 1967 was revived.

The advantages of the integration of Senegal and The Gambia are too evident and had been underscored by several specialised studies (cf. Maiga 1993, Barry 1998). It is no secret to the Senegalese and Gambians that experts from the UN in the early 1960s had stressed the benefits to be derived from jointly harnessing the waters of the River Gambia and the integration of transport and communications. The River Gambia can be used to export the iron ore deposits in Eastern Senegal. Full Senegambian integration would benefit the peoples of the two territories tremendously but the Gambian elite nursed the fear that the more populous and developed Senegalese would

sacrifice their interests. This is not actually the case. With reference to the ideal of regional integration, Barry argues that:

the point is not to modify the existing frontiers. It is to unify existing states in ways that enables the zone's people and natural regions to rediscover their homogeneity within a vast supranational framework. Only such a framework, capacious enough to nurture grassroots initiative and autonomy, can help solve the crucial problem of industrialization, agricultural modernization, education, and the development of our cultural identity through the promotion of the study of African languages. It makes no sense to redraw existing boundaries. We must abolish them. That is the way to expand our economic and political system, in an internally driven process of integrated development based on precise knowledge of active, complementary relationships between the zones different natural regions and the diversity of its resources and populations (Barry 1998: xii-xiii).

Despite the benefits that union between Senegal and The Gambia would generate, and the current deteriorating economy of the Gambia, even an appreciation of the NEPAD philosophy within the Gambian political elite is doubtful. NEPAD is publicly nicknamed 'kneecap' and ridiculed. What is even more ironical is the attitude of one of NEPAD's chief proponents, President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal. Wade has done little or nothing concrete to encourage closer ties with The Gambia, implying that he has no Senegalese-Gambian policy. On assuming power in Senegal in April 2000, Wade pursued a vigorous highly publicised pan-African campaign and is the brain-child of the OMEGA plan, which is incorporated into NEPAD (Kouam). Relations with the Gambia have rather been deteriorating, leading to the Senegalese closure of its frontiers in 2002—an action that brought untold hardship to the fragile Gambian economy. During Wades's visit to The Gambia on 10 October 2004, 24 following the *La Joola* ferry accident, which cost the lives of over 800 Senegalese, Wade, like President Yahya Jammeh of Gambia, openly declared the inseparability of their two economies, not in French or English but in the African Wolof language which is a lingua franca in the capital city of Banjul and adjacent Senegal. Yahya Jammeh even went ahead to declare that the African Union should emanate from Senegambian regional relationship while Wade was talking in an absent-minded manner about reinforcing the defunct Senegambian confederation. If Senegal and The Gambia, which it literally sandwiches, do not have a mind-set for greater concrete integration, then the NEPAD ideology might have to be revisited and reactivated as far as the two states are concerned. Yet informal trans-frontier trade flows between The Gambia and Senegal both day and night in spite of official and bureaucratic obstructionism. The problem of the integration of the two territories therefore lies with the force of inertia of

their political elite and not their populations. The Francophone Senegalese and the Anglophone Gambians might parrot the NEPAD and African Union ideologies but they remain a distant dream and demonstrate the resilience of post-colonial boundaries and mind-sets and the man-made difficulties of the integration of African countries with different colonial backgrounds.

Summary and Suggestions

The paper has examined the problems Anglo-Saxonism and Gallicism pose in nation building in Africa. Despite Cameroon's British and French colonial background, the two territories defied the colonial divide and reunified because of memories of their common German colonial past. But The Gambia preferred to acquire its independence first before exploring the prospects of integration with Senegal. Postcolonial interaction between Anglophones and Francophones in Cameroon has been shaped by deep-seated linkages and the colonial inherited languages of English and French, which constitute their modern identities. In a bid to protect their Anglophoness, Cameroon's Anglophones negotiated union with Francophone Cameroon on a federal basis. The federal experiment was discarded after a decade in favour of a unitary state. Under the unitary political order, Anglophones were subjected to the weight of their Francophone counterparts as the French language and culture was given more prominence than English. Being an Anglophone in Cameroon was therefore a disadvantage. The frustration of the Anglophones is compounded by the refusal of the hegemonic Francophone government to consent to the idea of a federal union with the advent of political liberalisation in the 1990s. Francophone alliance with Anglophones during election periods should be seen more as an attempt by disadvantaged Francophone groups to grab political power than a recognition of the Anglophone problem. Anglophone pressure groups have therefore opted for secession at the time the integration of the African continent is high on the political agenda of the African political elite.

Olukoshi (2001) argues that in this age of intensifying globalisation, Africa's future centres on a choice between closer regional cooperation and integration at the expense of the continued pursuit of haphazard individual national strategies. But cooperation must start between neighbouring states and expand beyond, and the most important ingredient for this cooperation is the necessary political will of the elite. The Anglophoness of the Gambians and the Francophoness of the Senegalese effectively obstruct the realisation of the ideals of the African Union at bilateral level. But to this fact must be added the greed, ineptitude and lack of imagination of the political elite. The Gambia and Senegal are too similar and too intertwined to stand as two independent states. This argument may even be taken further to include the

Greater Senegambian region comprising Senegal, The Gambia, Mali, Guinea Conakry, and Guinea Bissau.

Barry argues that the states in the Greater Senegambian region with a population of less than 30 million are burdened with six presidents, hundred of ministers and ambassadors, and thousands of civil servants and parliamentary representatives, all clinging resolutely to their national privileges. His cogent diagnosis is that 'this top-heavy state apparatus is now the main obstacle to regional integration policies [embodied in NEPAD and the AU and] designed to end our common misery, requiring us to pool our energies to achieve a better future' (Barry 1998:xiii). The African elite is simply hampered by their colonial past from pursuing meaningful integration.

If Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon had to discuss reunification as sovereign states, elite rivalry and jealousy would have crippled that effort. But the Anglophone problem is increasingly worrying and threatens the union.

The Gambia and Senegal, which badly need each other, have resisted forging an economically relevant union for the betterment of their populations because of the obstructionism and the poverty of the imagination of the elite. Abdou Diof saved President Jawara from being ousted from power in 1981 and went ahead to guarantee his security with Senegalese gendarmes. Within the context of Senegambia federation, Senegal was inside Gambia and vice-versa. Abdou Diof as a senior partner in the confederation and even his successor, were dwarfed in their thinking owing to their colonial mind-set as Francophones and failed to concretely move forward the union between the two states when Senegal had all the instruments in achieving such a noble objective. The Senegalese leadership needed to have combined imagination, tact, and steadfastness to push the union through because of the overwhelming benefits to be derived from it.

Abdoulaye Wade appears more interested in philosophising and paying lip service to NEPAD while erecting an iron curtain between Senegal and The Gambia. If union with Senegal's neighbour that is situated right inside its stomach is appearing so distant, what can NEPAD mean in real terms to Africa? The prospects of NEPAD and the AU are promising but they must be achieved between neighbouring states, regardless of their colonial past, especially when the peoples of these states share common deep-seated linkages, as is the case between Senegal and The Gambia.

The realisation of the noble ideals of the AU will not come about through speeches and majority consent of the elite but by a well designed osmotic process where the strong shall provide benevolent and pragmatic leadership and pull the rest through the wilderness of misery to the promised land of plenty in a wider continental framework. If Otto Von Bismarck was to consult all the petty and irrelevant German states on the issue of German unity, a

great German nation that shook the world twice in less than half a century would have never seen the light of day. But a united Africa would be an oasis of peace and prosperity and would help rehabilitate the shattered image of the African.

Notes

1. The idea of the African Union being advocated in the 2000s is a plausible one but it is still largely on paper like the defunct OAU. The xenophobia of Côte d'Ivoire's Laurent Gbagbo is a disturbing example among others, and is the antithesis of the movement toward continental unity.
2. The title of Johnson's book captures the fragmentary nature of the Cameroonian society (cf. Johnson 1970).
3. In 1957, the UPC was banned in the Southern Cameroons and the leadership of the party moved to Cairo and later to Guinea-Conakry and Ghana.
4. For a similar attitude of the behaviour of ethnic groups split by the colonial divide, see Asiwaju 1984a. The Gambian, Edward Small, exiled himself to French Senegal in the 1920s where he was agitating in terms of Senegambia as if it was a single territory.
5. The British government threatened to withhold the 'Golden key' to the Bank of England if British Cameroons failed to join the Federation of Nigeria with which the British Cameroon was jointly administered (Tata 1990: 134–136).
6. Interview with Foncha at his Nkwen residence, December 1997. Bamileke business interests, and Soppo Prisso, supported the weight of the reunification campaign.
7. The British Northern Cameroon, like Ahidjo's native Northern Cameroon region, had fallen sway to Usman dan Fodio's nineteenth century jihad (Njeuma 1978) and both neighbouring regions were religiously and ethnically intertwined with British northern Nigeria. The presence of the agents of the Sardauna of Sokoto, the great Muslim spiritual leader, determined the pro-Nigerian outcome of the plebiscite votes in the area.
8. Buea National Archive, Vc/b (1961/2), Foumban Conference, 17 to 21 July 1961. In a similar bid to create a Senegambian union in 1981, The Gambia by virtue of its diminutive size vis-à-vis Senegal and its Anglo-Saxon inherited values opted for a confederation as a guarantor of survival as a distinct entity (cf. Johnson 2002).
9. Buea National Archive, Vc/b (1961/2), Foumban Conference 17 to 21 July 1961.
10. By the end of 1962 the federal government had taken over the few areas allowed under the control of the federated states by the constitution.
11. This was reflected in the writings of the learned Dr Bernard Fonlon, and the pronouncements of Anglophone statesmen, especially Prime Minister A.N.

Jua (see parliamentary debates, particularly West Cameroon House of Assembly Debates, 1965).

12. The dynamism of the government of the Federated State of West Cameroon was reflected in the formation of eleven cabinets and a change of three prime Ministers, John Ngu Foncha 1961–1965, Augustin Ngom Jua 1966–1968, and Solomon Tandeng Muna 1968–1972. Furthermore, clashes between and within Anglophone political parties diverted the attention of Anglophones from the realities of assimilation. (For details on intra and inter-party squabbles in West Cameroon, see Ardener 1967: 285–337).
13. The preponderance of French in its east while dependencies and its ubiquitous technical advisers in government ministries ensure a French orientation of public administration as well.
14. The 1992 presidential elections, which were apparently won by an Anglophone, John Fru Ndi, but hijacked by the Francophone incumbent, Paul Biya, attests to this. The American embassy in Cameroon and the National Democratic Institute in Washington exposed the flawed nature of the elections.
15. For details on Albert Mukong's saga see Albert M. Mukong, *Prisoner without a Crime*, Paris: Nubia, 1989; *My Stewardship in the Cameroon Struggle*, Bamenda: Nooremac Press, 1992; *The Case for the Southern Cameroons*, Enugu: Chuka Printing Press, 1990. In 2002 the Biya government, under pressure from international human rights organisations, recognised the Cameroon government's violation of Albert Mukong's human rights for decades and in an unprecedented move, it compensated him with over 100 million francs CFA.
16. This was an allusion to the Biafran secessionists who had unsuccessfully attempted to secede from the Nigerian Federation and plunged the country into a three-year civil war, 1967–1970.
17. This is the Benin rite of passage from one-party rule to democracy that Cameroonians were advocating. In Benin Republic social and economic unrest resulting from the insolvency of the treasury compelled President Mathieu Kerekou to convene a national conference in February 1990 of 488 delegates who soon declared themselves sovereign. The conference stripped Kerekou of all his powers, suspended the constitution, dissolved the National Assembly, created the post of Prime Minister, and drafted a new constitution which allowed presidential term limits and multi-party elections (Fomunoyoh 2001: 37–50).
18. An unprecedented economic crisis hit Cameroon after 1987. In 1993 and 1994 civil servants witnessed double salary cuts of over 70 per cent in addition to a 50 per cent devaluation of the Cameroon Franc (CFA).
19. Similarly the bulk of the local Government Areas and parliamentary seats won by the SDF in 1996 and 1997 elections respectively were obtained within the southwestern quadrant (Sindjoun 1994; Awasom 1998).

20. During the Ghost Town campaigns of the early 1990s, spearheaded by the SDF, pro-Beti newspapers particularly *Le Patriote* and *Le Temoigne* were overtly hostile to the 'Anglo-Bamis' whom they saw as the principal threat to the political survival of their kinsman, President Biya. A tract circulating titled 'Operation Delta' threatened the 'Anglo-Bamis' with death if they did not evacuate Yaoundé and Beti land.
21. The elections were marred by several irregularities, which even the Supreme Court of Cameroon could not conceal and did not go beyond declaring its incompetence to address them. The Washington-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) was critical of the organisation of the elections and blamed shortcomings squarely on President Paul Biya. (See National Democratic Institute for International Affairs [NDI] 'Report on Cameroon Democratization Process', Washington DC, October 1992).
22. Munzu and Anyangwe were University Professors of law at the University of Yaounde II. Benjamin Itoe was a Magistrate and a former Minister of Justice while Elad Ekontag was a practising lawyer. These four lawyers came into the limelight during the famous tripartite conference of October-November 1991, which was convened by the Biya government to diffuse tension in the country after a protracted period of civil disobedience campaigns organised by opposition parties (cf. Awasom 1998).
23. The Anglophone leadership actually set 1 October 1996 as the day for the declaration of independence for Anglophone Cameroon. The threat turned out to be a bluff because nothing actually happened on that day except the speech of Ambassador Henry Fussong, the Chairman of the Anglophone Movement for Sovereignty known as the Southern Cameroon National Council (SCNC). Fussong invited Southern Cameroonians to celebrate 1 October 1996 as a day of prayers during which a special prayer should be made to God to 'save Anglophones from political bondage'. He stated that the independence of the Southern Cameroons was 'non-negotiable and irreversible' (*Cameroon Post*, 8-14 October 1996).
24. For details on the visit and speeches made, see *The Daily Observer*, 11 October 2001.

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