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Decentralisation in Cameroon and the Anglophones' Struggle for Autonomy

Emmanuel Makia Epongo

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Supervisor: Professor Anthoni Van Nieuwkerk

Co-supervisor: Dr. John Khumalo

May 18, 2023

Abstract

In Cameroon, decentralisation was introduced in 1996 to promote development, democracy and good governance at the local level. However, decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government, resulting in a civil war in 2017. Therefore, this research explores how the implementation of decentralisation in the two Anglophone regions exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government. Despite the growing literature on decentralisation and conflicts, very little research has been conducted on conflicts arising from former independent colonial territories that reunited under a federal system and later evolved to a decentralised unitary system, a shortcoming addressed by this research. This study used qualitative methodology and a case study design. The research was conducted at the Kumba and Bamenda city councils in the Southwest and Northwest regions, respectively. Participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques for semi-structured interviews. Data from interviews, observation and archival documents were merged and analysed through thematic analysis. The findings suggest that decentralisation in the Anglophone regions is more of deconcentration than devolution. Understanding how decentralisation increased intrastate conflict between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government could have a broader significance for researchers, governments and policymakers seeking to mitigate conflicts, particularly in Africa, with diverse societies prone to intrastate conflicts.

Keywords: decentralisation, intrastate conflicts, mitigate conflicts, eroded autonomy, divided societies.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Emmanuel Makia Epongo

May 18, 2023

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents of blessed memory, Papa Epongo Paul Eyambe and Mama Esther Tua Epongo, who encouraged me to get a good education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to God for helping me to complete this thesis. Twenty-eight years ago, I left Cameroon by road to study law at the University of Witwatersrand, but I got stranded in the Democratic Republic of Congo. That experience changed my life and purpose. I thought I had failed, but God had a different plan. In 2013, my wife was transferred to the U.S. Consulate in Johannesburg, South Africa. While in Johannesburg, I applied to the Law School at Wits, but the Director sent my application to the Wits School of Governance, where I was accepted.

I thank my first supervisor, Dr. Manamela Matshabaphala, for his guidance before transferring to Wits Business School. I am grateful to the Director of the WSG for assigning me new supervisors. I sincerely thank Professor Anthoni Van Nieukerk for agreeing to supervise my thesis and the Co-supervisor Dr. John Khumalo. Without their assistance, this research would not have been possible.

I am eternally grateful to my wife for accepting the transfer to South Africa and for her moral and financial support. I am also grateful to my son, who did not take offence whenever I could not attend some of his social activities and basketball games because I had to work on my paper. I am grateful to the staff at the WSG secretariat and the faculty for their assistance throughout my study. I am also thankful to my late parents, Pa Epongo and Mama Esther, for encouraging me to continue my education.

Finally, I am grateful to all the participants who participated in my research, whose names cannot be mentioned here because of ethical considerations. Without you all, I would not have completed this research.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAC1	All Anglophone Conference 1
AAC2	All Anglophone Conference 2
AD	Administrative Decentralisation
CFA	African financial community
CDF	Common Decentralisation Fund
CPDM	Cameroon People's Democratic Movement
DO	Divisional officer
ECG	East Cameroon Government
ELECAM	Elections Cameroon
FC	French Cameroun
FEICOM	Special council support fund
FD	Fiscal Decentralisation
GD	Government Delegate
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
NA	Native Authority
NDF	National Decentralisation Fund
PD	Political Decentralisation

PIB	Public Investment Budget
SDF	Social Democratic Front
SDO	Senior Divisional Officer
SC	Southern Cameroons
SCNC	Southern Cameroons National Council
TB	Tender Board
UN	United Nations
WCG	West Cameroon Government

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

With the rise of intrastate conflicts worldwide, governments have adopted decentralisation as a popular strategy for mitigating conflicts in divided societies (Brancati, 2006; Fujikawa, 2021). This research is about the implementation of decentralisation in the two Anglophone regions of the Southwest and Northwest and their struggle for autonomy from the central government. The modern state of Cameroon was founded when British Southern Cameroons (hereinafter called Anglophones) joined French Cameroun (hereinafter called Francophones) as an autonomous territory in 1961 under a federal system. In 1996, Cameroon became a decentralised unitary state to promote development, democracy, and good governance at the local level. However, the implementation of decentralisation in the two Anglophone regions intensified intrastate conflicts, leading to the ongoing civil war in the Anglophone regions between Anglophone armed groups and the central government (Nwati, 2021; Nkongho, 2018). Therefore, this research explored how decentralisation exacerbated intrastate conflicts in Cameroon. This paper examined the design of decentralisation and the degree of autonomy devolved to the Anglophone regions by studying the Kumba and Bamenda city councils in the Southwest and Northwest regions, respectively. The findings suggest that the form of decentralisation implemented in the Anglophone regions is more of deconcentration than devolution because decentralisation has failed to transfer sufficient powers and resources to the Anglophones to manage their local affairs with limited

interference from the central government. Instead of decentralisation restoring the lost autonomy of Anglophones, it further eroded their autonomy, thus exacerbating intrastate conflicts. Autonomy is essential in conflict mitigation, especially for minority groups like the Anglophones with different preferences and spatially concentrated in a specific area and have different preferences (Fujikawa, 2021; Aime, 2020; Tranchant, 2007).

Decentralisation has the potential to reduce conflicts by empowering minority groups with independent decision-making powers to design and implement policies according to their preferences (Seabright, 1996; Hechter, 2000, Gurr, 2000, Brancati, 2006; Tranchant, 2007; 2016; Grasa & Camps, 2009; Burgess, 2011; Durante, 2017, Fukijawa, 2021). However, decentralisation could also intensify conflicts by eroding the autonomy of minority groups (Merera, 2007; Woodward, 2007; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009; Mbuagbo & Fru, 2011; Goodfellow & Lindermann, 2013; Marinzel, 2014) and by reinforcing ethnic and regional identities (Brancati, 2006; Eaton, 2006; Beland & Lecours, 2005; 2007; Colomb, Bakke & Tomaney, 2014). Therefore, it is contended that decentralisation increases conflicts when the central government erodes the autonomy of a minority group within a unitary state that previously enjoyed some form of autonomy before joining the host state. Adopting a theoretical framework which explains how decentralisation exacerbates intrastate conflicts in a decentralised unitary state could have a broader significance for governments and policymakers seeking to mitigate conflicts, particularly in Africa, with diverse societies prone to internal conflicts (Keller, 2007; Burgess, 2011).

This study is organised into seven chapters. Chapter one begins with the introduction and is followed by the background to the study, problem statement, purpose

of the study, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the research and definition of the terms. This chapter provides a general understanding of the concept of decentralisation and how governments are increasingly using decentralisation as an effective mechanism for managing intrastate conflicts. In this chapter, the researcher argues that decentralisation increases conflicts when the central government continues to erode the autonomy of a minority group that previously enjoyed some form of autonomy before joining the host state (Merera, 2007; Marinzel, 2014). Chapter two focuses on the literature review, assessing the ongoing debate and the conflicting themes, and the theory of decentralisation that guided this study. Decentralisation has the potential to either increase or reduce conflicts depending on the circumstance (Brancati, 2006). The researcher argues that the decentralisation laws and their implementation failed to ease conflicts owing to their weak design and poor implementation.

Chapter three outlines the methods section, including qualitative methodology, case study design, data collection method and data analysis and the justification for their selection. The researcher chose the qualitative methodology because this research is grounded in the interpretive paradigm, and researchers in the interpretive tradition seek to understand a phenomenon from the perspectives and experiences of participants. Chapter four is the write-up report of the thematic analysis. The chapter describes the process that was followed to analyse the data and produce the report. In producing the report, the researcher used the six-step process developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Chapter five presents the findings/results of the study. The key finding of this study is that the form of decentralisation implemented in the two Anglophone regions is more of deconcentration than devolution because the weak design and poor implementation of decentralisation

failed to transfer real power to the Anglophone regions. Chapter six deals with the discussion and recommendations. In the discussions, the findings are presented in the form of themes directly related to the research questions. The pattern of results is consistent with past studies on decentralisation in the literature. The chapter also discusses the study's limitations, provides suggestions for future research in the field and offers recommendations for policy intervention to mitigate the ongoing conflict. Chapter seven is the conclusion of the study. The chapter summarises the key research findings related to the research aim and questions and how the research helps address the gap in the study. This chapter also discusses the value and contribution of this research to the field of knowledge both in terms of theory and practice, The study ends with references and appendices sections.

1.2 Background to the Study

Since the end of the Second World War, intrastate conflicts have become the most common type of conflict rather than wars between nations (Bakke, 2008; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009). To prevent these types of conflicts, governments have turned to decentralisation as one of the tools for managing intrastate conflicts while preserving the territorial integrity of the actual state (Schrottshammer, 2006; Bakke, 2008; Keil & Anderson, 2018). Decentralisation is defined as

> the transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and the raising and allocation of resources from the central government and its agencies to field units of government agencies, subordinate units or levels of government, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, area-wide, regional or functional authorities, or non-governmental private or voluntary organisations (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1983:13).

This definition is relevant to this study because it shows intergovernmental fiscal relations and the relationships between the government and outside organisations, working together to make the government more efficient in providing public goods and services (Tiebouts, 1956; Oates, 1972). This concept of governance does not view decision-making as the exclusive domain of the central government but also as the right of citizens and the private sector to shape public policy (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). The assumption is that decentralisation would reduce intrastate conflict by empowering regional and local governments or minority groups to design and implement public policies according to their preferences (Tranchant, 2007; Brancati, 2006; Hechter, 2000; Gurr, 2000).

Decentralisation has been used in developed and developing nations to mitigate intrastate conflicts. Several scholars (Brancati, 2006; Tranchant, 2007; Bakke, 2008)

suggest that political decentralisation has been successful in reducing ethnic conflicts and secession in developed countries like Belgium, Spain, Canada, Switzerland, United Kingdom, as well as in developing countries like Brazil, Nigeria, India, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. African countries have also implemented decentralisation to promote stability, democracy, and development (USAID, 2010). However, Burges (2011) suggests that decentralisation has had a limited impact on containing intrastate conflicts, especially in Central Africa, the most undemocratic and unstable region, comprising mostly French countries, including Cameroon. Ndegwa (2002:16) describes the overall pace of decentralisation in Africa as "moderate", with the least decentralisation occurring in Francophone countries. In 1996, Cameroon adopted decentralisation, but it exacerbated conflicts, leading to a civil war in 2017 between Anglophone armed groups and the central government.

Numerous studies have been conducted on decentralisation and ethnic or regional conflicts (Brancati, 2006; Bakke, 2008; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009). These studies have found that decentralisation reduces conflicts by granting ethnic or regional groups autonomy (Lake & Rothchild, 1996; Tranchant, 2007, 2016; Durante, 2017; Fujikawa, 2021), sharing political power (Burgess, 2011; Grasa & Camps, 2009; Noris, 2008) and accommodating ethnic diversity (Miodownik & Cartrite, 2009; Yusoff, Sarjoon & Hassan, 2016). However, decentralisation increases conflicts by undermining the autonomy of local governments and ethnic or regional groups (Mbuagbo & Fru, 2011; Tambulasi, 2009; Merera, 2007; Goodfellow & Lindemann, 2013) and by empowering regional groups with resources to demand greater autonomy or secession (Brancati, 2006; Eaton, 2006; Beland & Lecours, 2005, 2007; Colomb et al., 2014). These studies have

focused on conflicts between governments and ethnic or regional groups seeking greater autonomy or independence.

However, very little research has been conducted to understand the relationship between decentralisation and conflicts between former independent United Nations Trust Territories that reunited under a federal system but later evolved into a unitary state, especially when their colonial histories, socio-cultural and political characteristics were different. The sparse research has created room for further research. Therefore, this study explored how decentralisation intensified conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government. If the ongoing conflict is unchecked, as Dahrendorf (1958) claims, it could intensify and lead to more deaths. Several studies (Tiryakian, 1998; Premdas, 2000; Marinzel; 2014) suggest that groups try to secede when governments fail to rectify conditions of discontent.

Hence, this research aimed to understand how decentralisation exacerbated intrastate conflicts in Cameroon. Before joining French Cameroon in 1961, the Anglophone territory was an autonomous region and under the federal system, Anglophones continued to enjoy some degree of autonomy. However, under decentralisation, Anglophone regions do not have any exclusive jurisdiction. Therefore, this research argues that decentralisation intensified intrastate conflicts by failing to restore the lost autonomy of Anglophones and further eroding their autonomy due to its poor design and implementation. For example, Eyoh (1998) and Anyefru (2011) claim that the Francophone-dominated government has used state laws to dismantle the autonomy and cultural heritage of the Anglophones. Research by Aime (2020) suggests that the Constitutional and legal framework of decentralisation under the 1996

Constitution, among other things, failed to address the perception of Anglophone marginalisation adequately. Mbuagbo and Fru (2011), based on the study of the 2004 Law implementing decentralisation in Cameroon, found that the appointment of government officials over regional and local authorities undermined the authority of elected mayors and councillors, thus resulting in conflicts. Similarly, Cheka (2007) claims that the appointment of government delegates in Cameroon to supervise regional and local authorities subverted the democratic principles of electoral accountability. According to the World Bank (2011:4), "Cameroon lacks an effective and an operational plan for decentralisation. Indeed, line ministries appear to regard decentralisation as a threat to the control over resources and their influence". Ndiva (2011:524) suggests that Cameroon's form of decentralisation "resembles more a false version of devolution than the real one". According to Fombad and Steytler (2019), the design of decentralisation in the form of deconcentration in Cameroon is a disguise for the central government to maintain power and control over regional and local authorities. Similar studies outside Cameroon (Tambulasi, 2009; Marinzel, 2014; Goodfellow & Lindermanne, 2013; Merera, 2007; Woodward, 2007; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009) also suggest that decentralisation exacerbates conflicts by eroding the autonomy of minority groups, especially those which have previously enjoyed some degree of independence before joining the host state.

Given the above discussion, this study suggests that the failure of decentralisation to restore the autonomy of Anglophones, coupled with a weak design and poor implementation, intensified intrastate conflicts, resulting in a civil war in 2017. Therefore, this research explored how decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the

Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government and proposed recommendations that could help mitigate the ongoing conflict.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The key problem addressed in this research is that the implementation of decentralisation in Cameroon in 1996 has exacerbated intrastate conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government, which led to a civil war in 2017. According to Ngoh (2011), Anglophones have been complaining about the erosion of their autonomy since independence. Therefore, during the constitutional debates leading up to the 1996 decentralised unitary Constitution, Anglophone leaders called for the government to return to federalism so that each territory would regain its autonomy (Munzu, 2016). Also, in 2015, Anglophone Common Law lawyers called for the government to return to a federal system. After the government rejected their requests, the lawyers organised a peaceful protest, but some of their leaders were arrested and tried in court for treason (Nkongho, 2018). That led some Anglophones to create self-defence groups to continue their struggle. On December 30, 2017, President Paul Biya declared war on the Anglophone armed groups (Nwati, 2021).

While most conflicts in the literature have been between central governments and ethnic or regional groups seeking greater autonomy or independence (Bakke, 2008; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009), very few studies have examined decentralisation and conflicts between former independent United Nations trust territories that reunited under a federal system but later evolved to a unitary state. Therefore, this study explored how

decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government. Previous studies on decentralisation intensifying conflicts have focused on minority's grievances against their central governments (Durante, 2017; Hechter, 2000; Gurr, 2000; Goodfellow & Lindemann, 2013; Merera, 2007; Mbuagbo & Fru, 2011) and decentralisation reinforcing ethnic and regional identities (Roeder 1991; Bunce, 1999; Brancati, 2006; Eaton 2006; Beland & Lecours, 2005; 2007; Colomb et al., 2014). However, these studies have not examined how the historical context influences the design of decentralisation to erode the autonomy of minorities with different colonial histories within a unitary state, thus leading to conflicts. Insufficient research has created the opportunity for further study.

The motivation for this research came from the desire to understand why decentralisation would mitigate intrastate conflicts in other countries but not in Cameroon. Therefore, this study explored how decentralisation intensified intrastate conflicts in Cameroon. The ongoing conflict is not only destroying human lives and property, forcing thousands of Anglophones to flee to Nigeria as refugees and displacing thousands of Anglophones from their homes, slowing down the economy and preventing children from attending schools regularly, but it is also encouraging kidnappings, rapping, looting, burning of villages, arms trafficking, and threatening the territorial integrity of the nation and regional peace (Nkongho, 2018; Nwati, 2021). After six years of fighting, over 6,000 people have died in the Anglophone regions, thousand displaced, about 600,000 children deprived of education and over 2.2 million people need humanitarian support (*International Crisis Group,* 2023, March 31). Therefore, understanding how decentralisation increased conflict between the Anglophone minority and the

Francophone-majority government could contribute new knowledge to conflict resolution and offer new insights to policymakers in Cameroon on how to contain the ongoing conflict and restore peace in the nation. To do this, the researcher conducted qualitative research with a case study design. Data collected was analysed through thematic analysis to propose policy interventions.

1.4 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how the implementation of decentralisation in the Kumba city council in the Southwest and Bamenda city council in the Northwest regions of the two Anglophone regions exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government of Cameroon since it was instituted in 1996. The following five objectives aim to fulfil the purpose of this study:

1. To explore how the implementation of decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government. Before reunification, Anglophones had a government, legislature, constitution, and judiciary and exercised control over their legal system, economy, education, politics and language. However, Anglophones have no exclusive jurisdiction on any subject matter under decentralisation.

2. To understand the meaning of decentralisation and how it is implemented in the Anglophone regions. According to section 2 (1) of the 2004 law, decentralisation

shall consist of devolution by the state of special powers and resources to regional and local authorities.

3. To understand the lived experiences of Anglophones under the decentralisation program. Several scholars claim that Anglophones have been marginalised, discriminated and even annexed by Francophones (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997; Eyoh, 1998; Anyangwe, 2009; Gorji-Dinka, 1985; Fanso, 2009; Kah, 2010; Ngoh, 2011), while others think that Anglophones have been treated as second class citizens and slaves (Anyangwe, 2009; Ambe,2021). Some Francophone elites have described Anglophones as "enemies in the house" and have called them "Biafrans", meaning foreigners from the Igbo region of Nigeria. They have also described Anglophones as "dogs", "roaches which need to be exterminated", "terrorists" about the armed groups and "two cubes of sugar in a basin" (Mukong, 1998:22; Ngamfon, 2020:1484)

4. To understand how Anglophones perceived the decentralisation program. Anglophones perceived the program as a sham because the poor design and implementation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones. According to Eyoh (1998) and Anyefru (2011), the Francophone-dominated government uses state laws to dismantle the autonomy and cultural heritage of the Anglophones. Anglophones also viewed the concentration of power with the central government as a political ploy by the Francophones to maintain control over Anglophones (Anyangwe, 2009; Gorji-Dinka, 1985; Fanso, 2013).

5. To identify the reasons motivating Anglophones to continue their struggle for autonomy. Anglophones were motivated to continue their struggle because of a poorly

designed decentralisation that resulted in the marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation of Anglophones (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997; Eyoh, 1998; Mukong, 1998, Anyangwe, 2009; Gorji-Dinka, 1985; Fanso, 2009, Ngamfon, 2020; Ambe, 2012)

1.5 Research Questions.

The research questions are derived from the five objectives in the purpose statement. Therefore, the following questions are set as guidelines to fulfil the purpose of this research. The main research question is

1. How did decentralisation exacerbate conflict between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government?

The sub-questions are

2. What is the meaning of decentralisation, and how is it implemented in the Anglophone regions?

3. What are the experiences of Anglophones under the decentralisation program?

4. How do Anglophones perceive the decentralisation program?

5. What reasons motivate Anglophones to continue their struggle for autonomy?

1.6 Scope of the Study

The purpose of this research was to explore how the implementation of decentralisation in the two Anglophone regions of the Southwest and Northwest exacerbated conflict between the Anglophone minority and the majority Francophone-led government. The specific subject investigated was the devolution of power by the state to the local government in the two Anglophone regions. The goal was to understand how the implementation of decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones, thus leading to intrastate conflicts. The study was conducted only in the two Anglophone regions, namely, at the Kumba city council in the Southwest region and the Bamenda city council in the Northwest region. Each city council has three sub-divisional councils within the city council area. The research was conducted in all six sub-divisional councils, including the two city councils. This research began in 2014 and will end in 2023. The researcher travelled to Cameroon in 2016 to conduct interviews in Kumba and Bamenda from January to March 2016. The study participants were all Anglophones who lived and worked in the two Anglophone regions. While some were selected for their knowledge and experience of the decentralisation program, others were chosen for their political activism. Using purposive and snowball sampling strategies, 49 key informants participated in the study (Merriam, 2002; Neuman, 2011; Wahyuni, 2012). The participants included representatives of the senior divisional officers (SDO) and government delegates (GD), mayors or their representatives, municipal treasurers, council secretary generals, councillors, activists, community leaders and academics. This study used qualitative methodology with a case study design. Data were obtained from

interviews, observation, and archival documents. The data were merged and analysed through thematic analysis (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

This study was not about the failures and successes of decentralisation in Cameroon; instead, it was about the implementation of decentralisation and the Anglophones' struggle for autonomy. Second, this research focused only on decentralisation even though there are other institutional designs for mitigating intrastate conflicts, such as federalism (Wolff, 2011), veto rights for minorities, proportional representation (Keil & Anderson, 2018) and consociational or other power-sharing arrangements (Lijphart, 2004; Norris, 2008; Burgess, 2011).

1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings of this research could add new knowledge to the field of decentralisation and conflict mitigation while also benefiting specific groups like the Anglophones, the government of Cameroon, policymakers, researchers, international organisations and countries interested in conflict mitigation in Africa. In the literature, decentralisation is perceived as an effective mechanism for conflict mitigation in divided societies, but in practice, decentralisation is more successful in reducing conflicts in some countries than in others (Brancati, 2006). Several scholars suggest that decentralisation reduces conflict when minority groups are empowered to meet their needs (Gurr, 2000; Grasa & Camps, 2009; Tranchant, 2007; Keil & Anderson, 2018). On the other hand, others are convinced that decentralisation intensifies conflicts when the central government erodes the autonomy of minority groups (Goodfellow & Lindemann, 2013;

Merera, 2007; Mbuagbo & Fru, 2011) and reinforces ethnic and regional identities (Brancati, 2006; Eaton, 2006; Beland & Lecours, 2005, 2007; Colomb et al., 2014). However, others maintain that decentralisation has the potential to either decrease or intensify conflicts depending on the particular circumstance (Brancati, 2006; Bakke, 2008; Siegle & O'Mahony, 2006).

While most of the research has focused on the relationship between decentralisation and ethnic or regional conflicts (Brancati, 2006; Bakke, 2008; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009), there has been little research on decentralisation and intrastate conflicts between former independent United Nations Trust Territories that reunited under a federal system but later evolved to a unitary state, a shortcoming addressed by this research. According to Schou and Haug (2005), studies on how decentralisation is used to manage conflicts and diversity in multiethnic states that have evolved into unitary states are lacking in the literature. In 1996, Cameroon adopted decentralisation to promote development, democracy and good governance at the local level. However, decentralisation exacerbated intrastate conflicts, resulting in a civil war in 2017. Therefore, this research explored how decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government. Before joining French Cameroon in 1961, the Anglophone territory was an autonomous region and under the federal system, Anglophones continued to enjoy some degree of autonomy. This research argued that decentralisation increased intrastate conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government because it failed to restore the autonomy rights of Anglophones. Second, the weak design and poor implementation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones, thus leading to a civil war in 2017.

Therefore, the findings of this study could add new knowledge to the field of conflict mitigation, which previous studies had not adequately addressed, thus narrowing the gap in the literature.

The findings of this study could also benefit researchers and academics. In a world where intrastate conflicts are on the rise, the responsibility of researchers and scholars, who are trying to resolve intrastate conflicts, has become more relevant (Bakke, 2008; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009). Scholars and practitioners of decentralisation hope to find new ways or insights to mitigate conflicts or prevent wars resulting from intrastate conflicts that threaten international peace. Therefore, the findings of this study could inspire other scholars to build on this study and improve on the findings by overcoming some of the limitations in the study. There is also a lack of consensus among scholars and practitioners regarding the effectiveness of decentralisation in mitigating conflicts in divided societies. Therefore, this research findings highlighting the importance of the historical context in designing and implementing decentralisation could advance the debate.

The ongoing conflict threatens the territorial integrity of the state of Cameroon as many activists and separatist groups are now demanding the independence of their territory, which they now call “Ambazonia” (Anyangew; 2017; Ngamfon, 2020; Nwati, 2021). Therefore, the findings of this study could help Cameroon's government understand why Anglophones continue their struggle for autonomy and respond positively. According to Lustick et al. (2004), when governments respond positively to the demands of disgruntled minorities, decentralisation can prevent secession while preserving the state’s territorial integrity. On the other hand, groups try to secede when

governments fail to rectify conditions of discontent and disregard mechanisms for regulating social conflicts (Dahrendorf, 1958; Tiryakian, 1998; Marinzel, 2014). Therefore, understanding Anglophones' grievances and empowering them to define their local affairs could encourage them to abandon their quest for independence, thus preserving the state's territorial integrity.

Mitigating the ongoing conflict could also help deepen democracy and good governance in the Anglophone regions where the conflict continues. According to Schou and Haug (2005), conflicts weaken local governance institutions and civil society because resources are diverted from these institutions to war efforts and areas of heavy fighting. Additionally, the ongoing conflict is affecting the economy of Cameroon; therefore, resolving this conflict is critical. According to the International Crisis Group (*ICG*, 2019, September 26), the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) and PAMOL, two of the country's biggest agricultural companies, have lost up to 80 per cent of their capacity. Also, pressure is being put on the Cameroon military as they are fighting incursions and cross-border raids and attacks in the Far North Region from Boko Haram, a radical jihadist group from Northern Nigeria. Furthermore, there are thousands of refugees in Cameroon from the Central African Republic (CAR) due to the conflict in CAR in 2012. Cameroon also shares a common border with Nigeria, which also has domestic conflicts, including the widespread activities of Boko Haram. The terrorist group has carried out attacks in the neighbouring countries of Cameroon, Chad and Niger. Due to the conflicts, refugees flee from Nigeria to Cameroon (Nwati, 2021). The Democratic Republic of Congo also experiences conflicts, forcing refugees to move to neighbouring countries,

including Cameroon (Kuku, 2019; Institute for Peace & Security Studies, 2020). Therefore, the findings of this study could also help promote regional peace and stability.

Anglophones could also benefit from this study if the government of Cameroon redesigns the decentralisation program to grant them their autonomy. First, ending the conflict would stop the killing of innocent civilians, restore peace in the regions and encourage IDPs and refugees to return to their homes. It will also enable all schools to reopen so students can continue their education and allow businesses and companies that closed down to return to the regions. Second, Anglophones and Francophones have different preferences in terms of language, law, education, political values, culture and social norms because of their colonial history (Brain & Eyongetah, 1974). Therefore, granting them autonomy will enable Anglophones to design and implement policies to produce group-specific public goods and services (Tiebout, 1956; Oates, 1972; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009).

Finally, more wars are fought worldwide from intrastate conflicts than interstate conflicts (Brancati, 2006; Bakke, 2008; Keil & Anderson, 2018). Therefore, the findings of this research could help international organisations and donor countries prevent or resolve conflicts, thus promoting international peace and stability in conflict-prone nations. Several studies (Bardhan, 2002, Shar & Thompson, 2004; Grasa & Camps, 2009) suggest that the World Bank has embraced decentralisation as a major governance reform program. According to Van de Walle (2003:6), the World Bank promotes national decentralisation policies, arguing that low-income countries should focus on “core public goods and services” and transfer other responsibilities to local governments, the private sector and voluntary organisations to meet the needs of their people. Cheema and

Rondinelli (2007) claim that the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and other international development organisations support decentralisation to strengthen democracy and promote good governance worldwide. Jan (2014) claims that the World Bank and IMF have also given financial and institutional support to decentralisation reforms throughout Africa. Researchers Keil and Anderson (2018) also claim that the UN Department for Political Affairs has a unit that supports decentralisation programs. Therefore, the findings of this study could provide new insights to local, regional and international organisations involved in conflict mitigation in divided societies.

1.8 Definition of terms

Decentralisation is defined as the

> transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and the raising and allocation of resources from the central government and its agencies to field units of government agencies, subordinate units or levels of government, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, area-wide, regional or functional authorities, or non-governmental private or voluntary organisations (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1983:13).

This definition is appropriate for this study for three reasons. First, it establishes an intergovernmental relationship within the government and a relationship between the government and private organisations. This definition does not only view decision-making as the exclusive domain of the central government but also as the right of citizens and the private sector to shape public policy (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). Second, this definition provides an institutional framework for citizen participation in local government through free and fair elections (Besley & Smart, 2007; Crook & Manor, 2000). Third, this definition promotes market-based ideas of decentralisation. Through these ideas, the central government strengthens the private sector, deregulates, and

privatises those activities that the private sector and civil society organisations could carry out more efficiently than public enterprises. This definition categorises decentralisation into four types or dimensions: political, fiscal, administrative, and economic decentralisation (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). Each type of decentralisation depends on the scope of authority transferred by the central government to local governments and the character and nature of the local governments receiving the authority. A key question in understanding a particular type of decentralisation is assessing the extent of central government control and local autonomy (Braathen & Hellevik, 2008). Therefore, distinguishing the different types and forms will clarify the definition of decentralisation (White, 2011).

1.8.1 Types of Decentralisation

There are four types: political, fiscal, administrative and economic or market decentralisation.

1.8.1.2 Political Decentralisation

It is a system of government that

aims to give more authority to citizens and their elected representatives in decision making and public administration. This concept is usually associated with pluralistic democracy and representative governance. Political decentralisation has also tended to support democratisation by providing more opportunities for citizens and their elected representatives to affect the creation and implementation of policies. Political decentralisation, in this sense, implies that the selection of representatives from local electoral jurisdiction allows citizens to better know their political representatives and allows elected officials to better know the needs and desires of their constituents. However, political decentralisation also requires constitutional or statutory reforms, development of pluralistic political parties, strengthening of legislatures, creation of local political units, and encouragement of effective public interest groups (Rondinelli, 1999: 2).

According to Brancati (2006), political decentralisation is associated with power-sharing arrangements among different levels of government, with each level having the power to legislate on at least one subject matter. Manor (2011) defines political or democratic decentralisation as the devolution of powers and resources from higher levels in political systems to elected bodies at lower levels. According to the author, if political decentralisation is to work well, three essential things must be present, namely, (1) substantial powers must be devolved unto elected bodies at lower levels; (2) substantial resources must be devolved unto elected bodies; (3) two types of accountability must be established: first, horizontal accountability of bureaucrats to elected representatives and downward accountability of elected representatives to their constituents. To the author, "If any of these three essentials is absent, the system will fail, if any is present but weak, the system will work less than well. We know of no exception to this set of principles" (Manor, 2011: 3).

1.8.1.3 Fiscal Decentralisation

It is commonly defined as the "transfer of fiscal power and resources from the central government to subordinate or quasi-independent (subnational) government units" (Boex, 2009: 2). According to Bahl (2008: 3), fiscal decentralisation is "the process of transferring budgetary authority from the central government to elected subnational governments to grant them the power to make decisions regarding taxes and expenses". Siegle and O'Mahony (2006) define fiscal decentralisation as the transfer of financial authority to the local level. It involves reducing conditions on the intergovernmental transfer of resources and giving local jurisdictions greater authority to generate revenue.

According to (Rondinelli, 1999), if local governments and private organisations are to carry out decentralised functions effectively, they must have adequate revenues transferred from the central government to local governments and the authority to make expenditure decisions. Therefore, under fiscal decentralisation, local government taxing and expenditure autonomy are critical in meeting the needs of the people.

1.8.1.4 Administrative Decentralisation

It refers to the

> transfer of responsibility for planning, financing, and managing certain public functions from the central government to subordinate units or levels of government, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, or area-wide, regional, or functional authorities. It seeks to redistribute authority, responsibility and financial resources for providing public services between levels of government (Rondinelli, 1999: 2).

Administrative decentralisation focuses on the degree of autonomy local governments enjoy and the extent of central government control over local government. The following issues can measure this level of authority: first, the degree of decision-making authority enjoyed by the local governments; second, the authority to hire and fire their staff and third, the power to make taxing and spending decisions or the authority to control public finances (Schneider, 2003). The literature classifies administrative decentralisation using deconcentration, delegation and devolution. The degree of autonomy each category enjoys differs. According to Schneider (2003), deconcentration involves the least degree of autonomy, delegation slightly more, and devolution the most autonomy. Another difference between these forms of administrative decentralisation is the relationship between the central and local governments.

Deconcentration involves a bureaucratic or hierarchical relationship; delegation involves a contractual relationship, and devolution involves an arm's length relationship (Schneider, 2003).

1.8.1.5 Economic or Market Decentralisation

Economic or Market Decentralisation shifts responsibility for functions from the public to the private sector. Market decentralisation allows functions that used to be done exclusively by the government to be performed by businesses, community groups, cooperatives, private voluntary associations, and other nongovernmental organisations. Privatisation and deregulation are the two forms of market decentralisation. Rondinelli, McCullough and Johnson (1989:72) claim that through privatisation and deregulation,

> some governments have divested themselves of responsibilities for functions either by transferring them to voluntary organisations or by allowing them to be performed by private businesses. In some cases, governments have transferred responsibilities to parallel organisations such as national industrial and trade associations, professional groups, religious organisations, political parties, or cooperatives. These parallel organisations have been given the responsibility to licence, regulate or supervise their members in performing functions that were previously performed or regulated by the government.

Under market decentralisation, voluntary organisations can be crucial in expanding access to services. They can be essential in delivering services to meet basic human needs. For example, private organisations can run daycare centres, nursery schools, health clinics, and homes for destitute children and provide vocational training, non-formal education, sports, and recreation programs (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1983).

Local governments can also privatise by contracting out some government administrative functions. For example, local governments can use private contractors to collect local taxes. Also, local governments can use private consulting firms to fill technical positions such as engineers and accountants since local government pay levels are often too low. These authors also claim that voluntary and religious organisations have been heavily involved in providing primary health care services in rural areas, where government health care programs are inadequate and private health care services are unavailable.

1.8.2 Forms of Decentralisation

In addition to the four types of decentralisation, there are also three forms of administrative decentralisation. With all the complexity and mixtures, it is essential to define these three forms of administrative decentralisation: deconcentration, delegation and devolution.

1.8.2.1 Deconcentration

Deconcentration is defined as

> handing over some amount of administrative authority or responsibility to lower levels within central government ministries and agencies. It is a shifting of the workload from centrally located officials to staff or offices outside of the national capital. Deconcentration, when it is more than reorganisation, gives some discretion to field agents to plan and implement programs and projects or to adjust central directives to local conditions, within guidelines set by the central ministry or agency headquarters (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1983:15).

According to the authors, deconcentration has been the most frequently used form of decentralisation in developing countries since the early 1970s. The distinguishing characteristic of deconcentration has been that the authority for transferring specific functions from the central government to local governments remains within the central government structure. Cheema and Rondinelli (2007:3) define deconcentration as the "shifting of administrative responsibilities from central ministries and departments to regional and local administrative levels by establishing field offices of national departments and transferring some authority for decision-making to regional field staff". Schneider (2003) states that under deconcentration, the central government retains authority over the field office and exercises that authority through the hierarchical channel of the central government bureaucracy. Secondly, the transfer of responsibilities changes the spatial and geographical distribution of authority but does not significantly change the autonomy of the entity that receives the authority. Finally, deconcentration allows only moderately more authority than centralised systems. According to Ozmen (2014), deconcentration is the weakest form of decentralisation used in unitary states.

1.8.2.2 Delegation

Delegation refers to

> the transfer of managerial responsibility for specifically defined functions to organisations that are outside the regular bureaucratic structure and that are only indirectly controlled by the central government. Delegation has long been used in administrative law. It implies that a sovereign authority creates or transfers to an agent specified functions and duties, which the agent has broad discretion to carry out. However, ultimate responsibility remains with the sovereign authority. In developing countries, responsibilities have been delegated to public corporations, regional development agencies, special function authorities, semi-autonomous implementation units, and a variety of parastatal organisations (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1983:19).

In delegation, “national governments shift management authority for specific functions to semiautonomous or parastatal organisations and state enterprises, regional planning and area development agencies, and multi-and single purpose public authorities” (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007: 3). According to Schneider (2003), delegation transfers policy responsibility to local governments or semi-autonomous organisations that are not controlled by the central government but remain accountable to it. The main difference between deconcentration and delegation is that the central government exercises its control through a contractual relationship that enforces the accountability of local governments. Therefore, delegation represents a slightly higher level of administrative autonomy for local entities than deconcentration. That is, delegation is a more extensive form of decentralisation.

1.8.2.3 Devolution

Devolution is defined as

> the creation or strengthening-financially or legally-of subnational national units of government, the activities of which are substantially outside the direct control of the central government. Under devolution, local units of government are autonomous or independent and their legal status makes them separate or distinct from the central government. Central authorities frequently exercise only indirect, supervisory control over such units. Normally, local governments have clear and legally recognised geographical boundaries within which they exercise an exclusive authority to perform explicitly granted or reserved functions. They have corporate or statutory authority to raise revenue and make expenditures. They should be perceived by local citizens as organisations providing services that satisfy their needs, and as governmental units over which they have some influence. Devolution establishes reciprocal and mutually benefitting relationships between central and local governments. That is, the local governments are not merely subordinate administrative units, but they have the ability to interact reciprocally with other units of government in the political system of which they are a part (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1983: 25).

Under devolution, the central government allows local government units to exercise power and control over the transferred policy. Devolution grants local units the greatest degree of autonomy than deconcentration and delegation. Local governments are only accountable to the central government as much as the central government can impose its will by threatening to withhold resources (Schneider, 2003). According to Cheema and Rondinelli (2007), devolution strengthens local governments by granting them the authority, responsibility, and resources to provide services and formulate and implement local policies. Devolution requires that local governments be given autonomy and be perceived as a different level of government over which the central authorities exercise little or no direct control (Rondinelli, McCullough & Johnson, 1989).

1.8.3 Autonomy

Another important concept in the decentralisation literature that warrants our understanding is autonomy. According to Zaharia and Bilouseac (2009), autonomy is the ability of local governments to make independent decisions within the law to solve the problems of their people with limited intervention from the central government. Local autonomy does not mean complete independence or separation from the central government. Instead, the principle of local autonomy provides local authorities with sufficient authority and freedom to manage local public affairs to meet their constituent's needs. Libonati (2001) holds the view that autonomy refers to the degree of discretionary authority delegated to local governments to determine their form of government and internal organisation: the functions they perform, the power to raise money, borrow and spend, and the power to fix employment conditions of their staff. In addition, autonomy

may refer to the local government's authority to initiate policy and enjoy immunity from the central government. According to Selee (2006), autonomy refers to the degree of powers: administrative, legislative, and judicial powers transferred to local authorities to provide certain essential functions such as building and maintaining roads and streets, providing drinking water and electricity, and obtaining resources to carry out their tasks. Lijphart (2004) suggests that autonomy means that minority groups have the authority to manage their internal affairs, especially in education and culture. To sum up, autonomy is the ability of local governments to manage and control their internal affairs with limited interference from the central government.

1.8.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the study's introduction, background, and problem statement. The chapter also discussed the purpose statement, the research questions, and the study's scope and significance. The chapter concluded by defining the key terms used in the study. The next chapter deals with the literature review and the theoretical frameworks.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Assessing decentralisation as an effective strategy for conflict mitigation.

2.1. Introduction

Decentralisation is increasingly being used as an effective strategy to mitigate ethnic conflicts and secessionism. However, decentralisation has been more successful in some countries than others (Brancati, 2006; Bakke, 2008). Therefore, assessing the effectiveness of decentralisation in mitigating conflicts in diverse societies has become increasingly relevant (Tranchant, 2007; Keller, 2007; Burgess, 2011). Decentralisation is defined as the

> transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and the raising and allocation of resources from the central government and its agencies to field units of government agencies, subordinate units or levels of government, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, area-wide, regional or functional authorities, or non-governmental private or voluntary organisations (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1983:13).

This definition is appropriate for this study because it emphasises intergovernmental relations and an external relationship between the central government and outside organisations. This definition is significant because governance is no longer viewed as the exclusive domain of the central government. Through decentralisation, citizens, civil society organisations and the private sector can also shape public policy (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). The objective is that the government, working with

citizens and outside organisations, will become more efficient in meeting the needs of the people, thus preventing intrastate conflicts (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007; Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1983).

However, there is a lack of consensus among scholars regarding the effectiveness of decentralisation in mitigating intrastate conflict. On the one hand, some scholars (Brancati, 2006; Diprose & Ukiwo, 2008; Bakke, 2008; Braathen & Hellevik, 2008; Siegle & O'Mahony, 2006) argue that decentralisation has the potential to either reduce or exacerbate conflicts depending on certain circumstances. On the other hand, other academics (Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009; Beland & Lecours, 2005; 2007; Goodfellow & Lindemann, 2013; Mbuagbo & Fru, 2011; Tambulasi, 2009) contend that decentralisation increases conflicts. However, other scholars (Lake & Rothchild, 1996; Bardhan, 2002; Tranchant, 2007; Burgess, 2011; Grasa & Camps, 2009) even maintain that decentralisation reduces conflicts. The following review of the literature on decentralisation and conflicts confirms the ongoing debate, discusses the conflicting themes and concludes that despite the increasing use of decentralisation to resolve intrastate conflict, the debate remains inconclusive, thus giving room for further research.

2.2 Decentralisation can either reduce or increase conflicts.

Although decentralisation is praised as an effective mechanism for conflict mitigation, decentralisation is more successful in reducing conflicts in some countries than in others due to particular circumstances. For example, Brancati (2006), based on a large-N statistical analysis of election results of regional parties in thirty democracies from 1985 to 2000, found that decentralisation has the potential "to decrease ethnic

conflicts and secessionism in democracies by bringing the governments closer to the people, increasing their opportunities to participate in government, and giving groups control over their political, social and economic affairs." Brancati's logic is that by empowering groups to pass legislation to protect their interests and concerns, decentralisation will prevent ethnic groups from fighting each other and reduce the incentive for regions to secede. However, decentralisation may indirectly increase ethnic conflicts and secessionism by encouraging the growth of regional parties, which can increase ethnic conflict and secessionism by reinforcing ethnic and regional identities, passing legislation favouring particular groups over others, and mobilising groups to engage in ethnic conflicts and secessionism. In the article, Brancati explains that the strength of regional parties is the key to understanding why political decentralisation is more successful in reducing ethnic conflict and secessionism in some democracies than in others.

Lublin (2012) in analysing the impact of decentralisation on ethno-regional party success using a multipronged approach, namely, a historical analysis, quantitative case studies of Italy and Spain, and a multivariate model of ethno-regional party success in 71 democracies from 1990 through 2011 argues that decentralisation does not consistently strengthen ethno-regional parties. In the article, Lublin demonstrates that ethno-regional parties derive no benefit from decentralisation in non-ethnically decentralised countries but notes that certain types of decentralised institutions may promote ethno-regional party success in ethnically decentralised countries. The author concludes that the impact of decentralisation on ethno-regional parties could be minimised or regulated by granting ethnic and regional minorities autonomy but not statewide influence. Miodownick and

Cartrite (2009), using an agent-based model to understand the effectiveness of political decentralisation on ethnopolitical mobilisation, found that weak and medium levels of decentralisation increase the potential for ethnopolitical mobilisation while a strong level of decentralisation dampens regional conflicts. In the article, the authors explain that entrusting regional elites with more responsibilities, under most circumstances, seems to be the most reasonable way to mitigate regional demands for autonomy. According to Schou and Haug (2005), studies on how decentralisation is used to manage conflicts in unitary states are lacking in the literature; therefore, empowering minority groups and ethnic or regional groups with the power and resources to protect their interest could help close the gap in the literature.

However, other scholars, who have studied the effects of decentralisation and regional parties on ethnic conflicts and secessionism, suggest that political decentralisation does not reduce ethnic conflict and secessionism; rather, it exacerbates it by reinforcing and strengthening ethnic and regional identities, and by recognising certain ethnic groups and legitimating them over others (Hardgrave, 1994; Kymlicka, 1998) or by empowering groups to make laws that discriminate against other ethnic or religious groups (Harowitz, 1991; Suberu, 1994), and by providing ethnic or regional groups with the resources such as a regional police force, legislature or media to engage in ethnic conflicts and secessionism (Roeder, 1991; Kymlicka, 1998; Bunce, 1999; Snyder, 2000; Cornell, 2002; Eaton, 2006). When the central government is weak, empowered regional governments can escalate their demands for secession. Several authors (Treisman, 1997; Hale, 2000; Bunce, 1999) suggest that a high degree of regional autonomy led to separatist movements in Russia in the 1990s. Bunce (1999) argues that the federal

structures of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia contributed to their collapse because they encouraged a shift in power from the centre to the regions, providing resources to regional actors for mobilisation.

The creation of new districts and the unequal distribution of power can dampen or intensify intrastate conflicts. In Uganda, where President Yoweri Museveni implemented decentralisation in 1986, Green (2008) found that decentralisation reduced national-level conflicts but increased local-level conflicts. In the article, Green explains that the decentralisation program was designed to transfer equal power to all five levels of local governments. However, in practice, power was concentrated only at the district level. The concentration of power and resources at the district level led to conflicts over district-level leadership positions. Likewise, Siegle and O'Mahony (2006) found that decentralisation has a differentiated effect on ethnic conflict. From their statistical analysis, the authors demonstrate that decentralisation programs that support elected leaders, higher local government expenditures, and employment opportunities are less likely to have ethnic conflicts. However, decentralisation measures in countries with higher local government taxes were more likely to experience ethnic conflicts.

Implementing decentralisation in countries with historical grievances and income inequalities among minority groups has produced mixed results. In a comparative case study in some towns in Nigeria and Indonesia where inter-group relations resulted in violent conflicts, Diprose and Ukiwo (2008) found that decentralisation mitigated conflicts by accommodating ethnic diversity and managing historical grievances by meeting the needs of the people. However, decentralisation resulted in violent conflicts with strong perceptions of unequal access to power and resources between ethnic and

religious groups. In explaining how economic factors shape demands for greater autonomy, Sambanis and Milanovic (2009) claim that more prominent, prosperous and resource-rich regions are more likely to demand sovereignty or policy autonomy than poorer regions. The authors also stated that ethnically distinct regions with low levels of autonomy would be more likely to engage in conflicts with their governments.

Decentralisation plays an ambiguous role in peacemaking and conflict management. Braathen and Hellevik's (2008) research on the role of decentralisation in peacemaking and conflict management processes claims that in some cases, decentralisation as a power-sharing arrangement could provide opportunities for peace and conflict management, while in other cases, power-sharing could trigger further conflict. From their review of several armed conflicts in Africa, the authors conclude that decentralisation leads to lasting peace when there is an interdependent relationship between the central and local governments. As the authors explain, such a relationship requires the central government to devolve powers and resources to local governments, maintain fiscal equity between local governments and ensure local governments are accountable.

Similarly, Bakke (2008), based on a study on how decentralisation can be peace-preserving, claims that decentralisation can be peace-preserving or exacerbate conflicts depending on the ethnic composition and wealth of a region. In exploring the conditions under which decentralisation could be peace-preserving, the author examined three case studies in which central governments had conflicts with subnational governments. These three conflictual centre-region relations included Moscow’s relationship with Chechnya, India's relationship with Punjab and Quebec’s relationship

with Canada. Using a combination of secondary and primary sources and interviews, the author found that decentralisation can reduce or increase ethnic conflicts depending on the ethnic composition and levels of wealth in a region. For example, decentralisation could mitigate conflicts if regions were granted fiscal and policy autonomy over issues such as language and religion important to minority groups' recognition, protection, and safety. However, resource-rich regions with low levels of fiscal decentralisation will fight for more financial autonomy. Bakke also found that ethnic groups that perceive the state as a threat to their survival or autonomy will also intensify ethnic mobilisation for autonomy. Marinzel (2014) suggests that wealthy regions or groups in an unequal society may want to succeed because they find it burdensome to subsidise the rest of the nation. For example, Catalonia, one of Spain's richest and most highly industrialised regions, wants to secede because they claim they are paying more taxes to the central government than they are spending on social programs or infrastructure.

2.3. Decentralisation has the potential to reduce conflicts.

In the past decades, decentralisation has become one of the most prominent tools for mitigating intrastate conflicts around the world (Bakke, 2008; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009; Keil & Anderson, 2018). In response to the rise of these types of conflicts, scholars and policymakers have developed institutional strategies such as regional autonomy or regional self-government, accommodation of ethnic diversity and power-sharing arrangements to resolve ethnic conflicts and secessionism. Decentralisation has been viewed as an effective conflict mitigation strategy granting ethnic or regional groups autonomy to control their local affairs. For example, Bakke (2008) claims that

decentralisation granted Northern Ireland a legislative assembly within the United Kingdom during the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, ending 30 years old religious conflict between the Protestants and the Catholics. Bakke added that in 2005, decentralisation also mitigated another 30-year-old conflict between the Indonesian government and the separatist Islamist Free Aceh rebels. The rebels agreed to give up their armed struggle in exchange for the right to establish regional self-government. According to Tranchant (2016), the relative success of decentralisation in countries like Switzerland, Canada and Belgium has given credence to autonomy as a conflict resolution strategy.

The institutional design of autonomy has been used to mitigate conflicts by protecting the identity and interest of marginalised minorities from central government intrusion and domination (Lake & Rothchild, 1996; Rothchild & Hartzell, 1999). Lake and Rothchild (1996) found that decentralisation plays a role in mitigating political conflicts by enabling local and regional authorities to have some degree of autonomous power within a larger state. In discussing the origins and management of ethnic conflicts, the authors claim that ethnic conflicts are not caused directly by inter-group differences, ancient hatreds or centuries-old feuds. Instead, ethnic conflicts are often caused when minority groups fear for their security and safety. In the paper, Lake and Rothchild highlight that politically marginalised groups who continue to fear majority domination and have experienced excessive state intrusion into their local affairs prefer autonomy because it places institutional limitations on the central government's authority. The authors conclude that marginalised groups view autonomy as a check and balance

mechanism to insulate their interests from the overreaching power of the central government.

Likewise, Rothchild & Hartzell (1999) claim that autonomy or self-government could also reassure minorities, who would otherwise worry that central governments can interfere with their local affairs. According to the authors, decentralisation enables groups to have control of their local affairs and provides important checks on the central government. By having a regional legislature with policy-making powers, minority groups can limit the central government's excessive intervention in their local affairs. Bakke and Wibbles (2006) suggest that "minority groups, fearful of being assimilated, integrated or worse still eliminated, having decentralised institutions helps improve their sense of stability, security and confidence in the state." Lublin (2012) suggests that decentration safeguards regions from central government power, protects their language and culture, and shapes regional economic development. According to Bardhan (2002), decentralisation is a strategy for diffusing social and political tensions and ensuring local cultural and political autonomy.

Autonomy enables ethnic or regional groups to legislate in some areas important to them, thus dampening their secessionist ambitions. For instance, Brancati (2006) claims that decentralisation reduces intrastate conflicts by granting autonomy to regions through regional legislatures. In the paper, Brancati explains that political decentralisation is a system of government in which there is a vertical division of power among multiple tiers of government that have independent decision-making power at least over one subject matter. The author concludes that decentralisation "reduces ethnic conflict and secession in democracies by bringing the government closer to the people,

increasing opportunities to participate in government, and giving groups control of their political, social and economic affairs." By enabling regions or ethnic groups to make laws to protect their interest and concerns, decentralisation prevents ethnic groups from fighting each other or trying to secede.

McGarry and O'Leary (1993) also note that in a truly decentralised system, minorities are given constitutional powers to "legislate on important areas, such as language, religion and education, while leaving other policy briefs-defence and fiscal policies-to the central government." In this sense, decentralisation is a conflict mitigation strategy because it provides embattled minority groups with legitimate channels to articulate their grievances, regulate important policy issues and protect their status. Likewise, Tranchant (2007), using decentralisation as an empowerment model, found that decentralisation can reduce ethnic conflict by empowering minority groups to control their local affairs. In the article, the author demonstrates that the empowerment of minority groups is easily reached if they are geographically concentrated in one region representing the majority or a significant minority of the population. The author explains that decentralisation will reduce ethnic conflicts by devolving power to minority groups to design and implement public policies according to their preferences. In another study, Tranchant (2016) found that regional autonomy is an effective tool for curbing conflict between local majority groups within a given population.

Autonomy arrangements have also been used as a compromise solution to mitigate violent self-determination struggles between ethnic minority rebels and national governments. Fujikawa (2021), based on the case study of Aceh in Indonesia, found that autonomy was used as a compromise solution between Aceh rebels who were fighting for

independence and the government of Indonesia that was unwilling to relinquish their sovereignty. In the article, Fujikawa pointed out that warring parties in ethnonational conflicts tend to be reluctant to resolve their conflicts for two reasons. First, national governments have no incentive to offer substantial concessions to ethnic minority rebels because rebels in ethnonational conflicts tend to be poorly armed and incapable of inflicting severe damage on the government. Second, rebels have difficulty believing national governments will be committed to any signed agreement in the long run. However, the national government of Indonesia accepted an autonomy arrangement with the Free Aceh Movement rebels because of the cumulative cost of the protracted conflict, and the rebels signed the agreement because of the backing of the international community. The agreement stated that Indonesia would remain a unitary state but would guarantee a certain degree of self-rule to the Aceh region. In this sense, autonomy is a compromise strategy between ethnic groups seeking self-determination and national governments protecting their sovereignty (Caspersen, 2017).

Likewise, research by Keil and Anderson (2018) highlights that autonomy arrangements can act as a compromise between warring parties by granting minority groups sufficient autonomy to control their economic, political and social affairs while preserving the state. Additionally, autonomy arrangements have also been used to prevent secessionist movements. According to Keil and Anderson (2018), separatist movements are found worldwide, and states have used decentralisation to derail their plans for independence. In the article, Keith and Anderson suggest that for some minorities, having a devolved parliament with law-making powers over a limited subject matter will be enough incentive to give up their ambition to secede. Similarly, Lustick et al. (2004)

suggest that granting autonomy to disgruntled minorities can prevent secession while preserving the stability of the central state.

Using decentralisation to accommodate ethnic diversity has been praised as a conflict mitigation strategy in diverse societies. Yusoff, Sarjoon and Hassan (2016), through the review of literature on decentralisation as a tool for ethnic diversity accommodation, found that decentralisation has been used to accommodate diverse ethnic groups in a larger political system where socio-cultural, economic and political differences exist. The findings indicate that granting minority groups greater control over their local affairs assures them that the government recognises their interests and concerns. The authors conclude that by giving minorities a voice in the government, decentralisation is viewed as a flexible strategy for accommodating the concerns and priorities of diverse ethnic groups within a larger population. Miodownick and Cartrite (2009:14) suggest that "policymakers may find that accommodation, rather than suppression or control, of the diverse interests of regions and groups" will mitigate intrastate conflicts while also protecting the integrity of the state. Lustick et al. (2004) suggest that although repression may work to suppress ethnopolitical movements in the short term, it does not effectively reduce the threat of secession.

Decentralisation as a power-sharing arrangement is often cited as a solution for mitigating ethnic conflicts and consolidating democracy in diverse societies. Lijphart (2004) states that power-sharing involves the participation of representatives of all significant communal groups in political decision-making, especially at the executive level. Norris (2008), in his seminal work on power-sharing institutions, found that power-sharing arrangements avoid winner-take-all elections and guarantee minorities a

voice in the government. With the assurance that they will not be dominated or excluded from the government, ethnic minorities are less likely to take actions that will undermine the territorial stability of the state. As explained by Norris, power-sharing arrangements encourage diverse societies to be more inclusive and tolerant of other groups because it deemphasises ethnic identities. Similarly, Burgess (2011), based on a study of power-sharing institutions in 48 Sub-Saharan African countries, found that decentralisation could help mitigate conflicts by including people from different minority groups in decision-making. Burgess found a strong and significant correlation between power-sharing institutions and democracy and stability in Sub-Saharan Africa. The author explains that decentralisation is an essential strategy for defending the interest and protecting the rights of spatially concentrated groups.

Similarly, Grasa and Camps (2009), in a study to understand the linkage between decentralised governance and conflict prevention, found that decentralisation reduces conflicts by including minorities in decision-making. Likewise, Siegle and O'Mahony (2006) suggest that the conflict-mitigation rationale for decentralisation in ethnically divided societies offers minority groups opportunities for participation and representation in government. A study by Lustick et al. (2004) indicates that representative types of power-sharing are more effective than repression of ethnopolitical movements in reducing the threat of secession. The authors argue that if governments respond positively to the demands of disgruntled minorities, secession could be prevented while preserving the state's territorial integrity. As the authors explain, power-sharing arrangements will encourage secessionist groups to feel confident in representing and protecting their interests and concerns, thus mitigating their demands for secession. However, Durante

(2017) suggests that regional autonomy alone might not reduce conflicts; instead, regional autonomy for a territorially concentrated ethnic group and governmental power-sharing with minority groups within the central executive is necessary for decentralisation to reduce ethnic conflict and secessionism.

Studies using decentralisation as a conflict mitigation strategy in pluralistic societies that have become unitary states are not common in the literature; therefore, these studies taking as a whole, which have used different institutional strategies such as autonomy to protect the identity and interest of marginalised minorities from central government intrusion and domination (Lake & Rothchild, 1996; Rothchild & Hartzell, 1999), accommodating ethnic diversities to include minorities in government (Yusoff, Sarjoon and Hassan, 2016) and using power-sharing arrangements which encourage diverse societies to be more inclusive and tolerant of other groups (Norris, 2008) could help close the gap.

2.4. Decentralisation can exacerbate conflicts

Although decentralisation is perceived as an effective mechanism for resolving intrastate conflicts, other scholars have adopted a more pessimistic view. For example, Snyder (2000: 327), discussing the violent dissolution of former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, stated that granting autonomy concessions has a “terrible track record” in resolving intrastate conflicts. Decentralisation can lead to ever-growing demands for greater autonomy or secession by empowering regional leaders who engage in ethnic conflicts, empowering groups to legislate discriminatory laws against other minorities and reinforcing ethnic or regional differences among groups. For example, research by

Colomb et al. (2014) suggests that decentralisation has led subnational movements with strong regional identities in Scotland in the United Kingdom, Catalonia in Spain, and Flanders in Belgium to intensify their demands for more autonomy or territorial independence. In the same way, Beland and Lecours (2005, 2007) claim that the implementation of social policies in Canada, the United Kingdom, and Belgium have also inspired regional leaders to demand greater autonomy for their regions.

Some scholars (Bunce, 1999; Synder, 2000; Riker, 1964) claim that decentralisation encourages ethnic conflicts and secessionism by providing regions with resources like regional legislatures and police that make it easier for groups to engage in ethnic or regional conflicts. Eaton (2006) claims that decentralisation, instituted to resolve the armed conflict that plagued Columbia for decades, allowed regional parties to win elections and mobilise resources to engage in regional conflicts. According to Keith and Anderson (2018), in trying to accommodate and protect ethnic and cultural identities, decentralisation may reinforce the very identities and cultural traits which minority groups claim make them different. Legislation which promotes the language and cultural characteristics of minority groups could deepen ethnic identities and ensure the continuation of ethnic differences. The authors explain that ethnic differences could erode any unity between minority groups, cement diverse identities, and promote differences among groups, thus contributing to political tension.

Decentralisation could increase conflicts when the central government undermines the authority of elected officials. For instance, Mbuagbo and Fru (2011), based on the study of the 2004 Law implementing decentralisation in Cameroon, found that the overreaching influence of government officials over regional and local authorities

undermined the authority of elected mayors and councillors, thus resulting in conflicts. The author also found that the decentralisation law needed to define the roles of appointed and elected officials clearly. The powers devolved by the state to local authorities were not exclusive. They were exercised concurrently by the central government and the local authorities. Therefore, conflicts occurred because each side interpreted the law in their favour. In another paper by Mbuagbo (2012) on urban governance policies in Cameroon, the author found a similar result of decentralisation intensifying conflicts between government representatives and elected mayors because of competing interpretations of the law. Similarly, in a study on the relationship between decentralisation and institutional conflicts at the local government level in Malawi from 2000 to 2005, Tambulasi (2009) found that poorly designed decentralisation increased institutional conflicts at the local government level. By reviewing primary and secondary data on decentralisation from government publications and newspapers and conducting interviews with government and elected officials, the author found that decentralisation did not transfer real power to local governments. Therefore, local government officials felt powerless in the exercise of their duties. As a result, conflicts occurred when they tried to assert their authority against central government intrusion. Tambulasi also pointed out that because the roles and powers of the councillors and parliamentarians were not clearly defined, power struggles occurred between the councillors and parliamentarians.

Decentralisation intensifies conflicts when the government refuses to share political power and resources with ethnic or regional groups. In exploring and assessing Ethiopia's democratisation and decentralisation experiment, Merera (2007:82) found that the "top-down approach of the ruling party" to maintain control over the Oromo people

instead of sharing political power and resources with the regional group exacerbates conflicts. The author conducted a case study of the Oromo people, the country's largest ethnic group. In the article, the author explains that the Oromo and the Southern Ethiopian People's regions produced coffee which constituted more than 60% of the country's foreign exchange earnings but was allotted a disproportionate share from the national treasury. Through interviews, focus group discussions, and official reports and publications, the author found that the central government was reluctant to evenly distribute national resources and share political power with the region, thus generating intrastate conflicts between the Oromo people and the central government. The Oromo people have been fighting for self-rule since the 1960s because of the marginalisation of their region. Erk (2014) claims decentralisation in Africa, specifically in South Africa, Ethiopia and Nigeria, has politicised local conflicts and increased competition and disputes between ethnic groups over land, water and natural resources.

Schou and Haug (2005) suggest that inequalities in the distribution of state resources for development projects can stir up envy between different regions, thus leading to ethnic conflicts in already polarised societies. Gurr (2000) suggests that ethnic minorities with no access to power tend to intensify their demand for independence from the central government. Durante (2017) claims that the government's mistreatment of minorities triggers ethnic conflicts. Premdas (2000) suggests that when ethno-regional and ethnonational groups are frustrated in their quest for recognition and resources, they usually fight against the central state. According to Woodward (2007), "economic deprivation, political neglect, and forced cultural assimilation have in recent years resulted in minority nations taking up arms to fight for the protection of their identity and

their independence from the host state." Decentralisation increases conflicts when there is a history of government discrimination and repression against ethnic minorities (Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009).

Decentralisation will likely increase intrastate conflicts when the central government erodes the autonomy of ethnic or regional groups that previously enjoyed freedom. Research by Goodfellow and Lindemann (2013) on the relationship between the national government and traditional institutions in Uganda suggests that decentralisation increased violence between the Buganda Kingdom and the central government because the central government infringed on the autonomy of the Buganda Kingdom. The introduction of decentralisation by President Museveni in the 1980s eroded the autonomy of the Buganda kingdom, which had enjoyed autonomy before joining Uganda's independence in 1962, by transferring part of the management of Buganda's land from their king's control to the central government. To the Buganda elites, the loss of their land meant a weakening of their kingdom's influence. While the Buganda kingdom wanted to preserve their autonomy and control their entire land, the central government wanted to weaken the kingdom's autonomy and institute a national land management program. Therefore, the clash of institutional interests between the Buganda Kingdom and the central government resulted in violent conflicts in 2009. The authors concluded that the refusal of the central government to allow the Buganda Kingdom to maintain their autonomy and control its land motivated the Buganda elites to continue their fight for self-rule. Manyak and Katono (2010) suggest that decentralisation increased conflicts in local governments in Uganda because President Museveni wanted to maintain political control over local governments. Similarly, Marinzel (2014) claims that the secessionist

desire within Catalonia stems from a history of the Spanish government eroding its regional autonomy. In the article, the author suggests that after General Francisco Franco came to power in Spain, his goal was to unite Spain and rid it of anything that encouraged disunity. Therefore, Catalonia's autonomy was revoked, its language was outlawed, and Catalan intellectuals were persecuted. The author concludes that the long history of persecution continues to inspire Catalonians to fight for independence. Seigle and O'Mahony (2006) claim that studies using context in analysing conflicts are lacking in the literature as two-thirds of intrastate conflicts have occurred in autocratic political environments; therefore, these studies which have examined the history of political persecution, oppression and discrimination against minority groups could help narrow the gap in the literature.

2.5. Conclusion

Intrastate conflicts remain a major problem in international politics today. To prevent this type of conflict worldwide, governments have turned to decentralisation as one of the tools to mitigate intrastate conflicts (Bakke, 2008; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009). Despite the increased use of decentralisation to resolve intrastate conflicts, the debate remains inconclusive (Smoke, 2003; White, 2011; Bakke, 2008). There is still no clear answer to why decentralisation is more successful in reducing conflicts in some countries than others. The literature review identified three conflicting themes held by scholars and practitioners regarding the effectiveness of decentralisation in mitigating conflicts.

On the one hand, several scholars have suggested that decentralisation has the potential to either reduce or increase conflicts depending on certain circumstances (Brancati, 2006; Bakke, 2008; Bunce, 1999; Synder, 2000; Suberu, 1994; Siegle & O'Mahony, 2006). On the other hand, some have argued that decentralisation has the potential to mitigate intrastate conflicts (Fujikawa, 2021; Durante, 2017; Burgess, 2011; Grasa & Camps, 2009; Tranchant, 2007, 2016; Yusoff et al., 2016). Others have maintained that decentralisation exacerbates conflicts (Goodfellow & Lindemann, 2013; Mbuagbo & Fru, 2011; Merera, 2007; Tambulasi, 2009; Eaton, 2006). Decentralisation is not a panacea to cure all kinds of intrastate conflicts. The use of decentralisation to mitigate conflicts in the developed and developing world has been widely documented. However, a major limitation of this literature is that numerous studies have focused mainly on the relationship between decentralisation and ethnic or regional conflicts. Therefore, further research is needed to understand the relationship between decentralisation and conflict arising from former independent colonial territories that reunited under a federal system but later evolved into a unitary state, especially when their preferences and interests differ.

2.6. The Theoretical Framework

This research is grounded in and supported by the theory of decentralisation. According to Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema (1983:13), decentralisation is defined as

> the transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and the raising and allocation of resources from the central government and its agencies to field units of government agencies, subordinate units or levels of government, semi-autonomous public

authorities or corporations, area-wide, regional or functional authorities, or non-governmental private or voluntary organisations.

This definition is relevant to this study, given its emphasis on intergovernmental fiscal relations and the relationship between the government, the private sector, and civil society organisations. This idea of intergovernmental fiscal relations refers to the distribution of powers and resources among the different levels of government. The main idea is to determine which public functions should be centralised and which should be assigned to subnational governments. Fiscal transfers make the government more efficient in providing public goods and services according to the people's preferences (Tiebout, 1956; Oates, 1972). This definition does not only view decision-making as the exclusive domain of the government but also as the right of citizens and civil society to shape public policy (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007; Besley & Smart, 2007; Crook & Manor, 2000). The assumption is that by empowering local governments to design and implement public policies according to the preferences of their people, decentralisation will reduce conflicts (Brancati, 2006; Tranchant, 2007; Hechter, 2000).

Historically, the literature on decentralisation and conflict mitigation is derived from the classical theory of fiscal federalism or the first-generation theory of fiscal federalism (FGFF) and the second-generation theory of fiscal federalism (SGFF). According to Porcelli (2009), the classical theory of fiscal federalism could be understood from two main contributors. The first contributor is Tiebout (1956), who developed Tiebout's model of local public good provision. According to Tiebout's model, local governments compete in offering a mix of tax and public goods to mobile households, who can "vote with their feet," that is, mobile citizens can decide where to live according to their preferences about tax and public goods. Tiebout's model indicates

that competition among local governments to provide public goods tailored to the tastes and preferences of mobile households will lead to efficiency in government.

The second major contributor is Oates's (1972) decentralisation theorem which solves the trade-off between the centralised and decentralised provision of public goods. In other words, which level of government should provide public goods and services to the people? Oates's (1972) decentralisation theorem holds that when preferences differ across regions and spillover effects are absent, it will be efficient for local governments to provide public goods. However, when the average preferences of citizens across different regions are equal and there is spillover, it will be efficient for the central government to provide public goods. In other words, decentralisation is preferred when tastes and preferences are heterogeneous and there are no spillovers across jurisdictions. However, centralisation is preferred with spillovers and no heterogeneity across all localities or jurisdictions. The classical theory assumes that since local governments are closer to the people, elected officials will know local preferences that central government bureaucrats may not know to efficiently produce public goods and services according to the preferences of their people (Oates, 2006a).

The second-generation fiscal federalism theory (SGFF) is an offshoot of the FGFF. According to Oates (2006b), the second-generation theory of fiscal federalism (SGFF) is an expansion of the Tiebout (1956) model with local politics added to it (Weingast, 2014). Unlike the first-generation fiscal federalism theory, which focuses only on intergovernmental fiscal relations, the second-generation fiscal federalism theory focuses on intergovernmental fiscal relations and the political processes of strengthening governance and electoral accountability at the local government level. Proponents of the

SGFF contend that electoral accountability is the main force through which fiscal decentralisation leads to a more efficient government (Besley & Smart, 2007; Boex, 2009). Crook and Manor (2000) argue that when elected decision-makers are closer to citizens who elect them, they face greater pressure than high-level officials to govern according to their constituents' wishes because they worry about re-election. The assumption is that decentralisation brings governments closer to the people, thus allowing citizens to elect and hold their leaders accountable. The threat of being removed from public office incentivises politicians to make decisions that align with their constituents' interests. In summary, both Tiebout's model (1956) and Oates's decentralisation theorem (1972) offer a theoretical framework in which decentralisation leads to the efficient provision of public goods and services, thus mitigating intrastate conflicts (Grasa & Camps, 2009; Tranchant, 2007).

2.6.1 **Decentralisation and Conflict Mitigation: Theoretical Considerations**

Tiebout's (1956) model, Oates' (1972) decentralisation theorem and the second-generation literature are relevant to this research because they provide the basic insights for understanding decentralisation as a conflict mitigation mechanism. For example, Tiebout's model argues that competition among decentralised governments in offering a mix of tax and public goods to mobile citizens will lead to government efficiency. The assumption is that decentralisation will reduce conflicts by efficiently providing public goods and services according to the needs of the people (Hechter, 2000; Gurr, 2000; Tranchant, 2007). Research by Grasa and Camps (2009) and Bardhan (2002) suggests that satisfying a population's basic needs is crucial in abating potential conflict.

Oates' (1972) decentralisation theorem has also been used to explain how decentralisation reduces conflict. Drawing from Oates' decentralisation theorem, decentralisation is preferred in conflict mitigation when groups have different preferences over public goods and services (Seabright, 1998; Tranchant, 2007). Research by Sambanis and Milanovic (2009) suggests that by giving ethnic groups the power and resources to produce group-specific public goods, they will give up their demands for sovereignty. Several studies (Bakke, 2008; Lustick et al., 2004; Fujikiwa, 2021) have suggested that demands for sovereignty or secession can be prevented by granting minority groups autonomy. According to Keil and Anderson (2018), secessionist movements are found worldwide. However, governments have used decentralisation as a conflict mitigation strategy to placate secessionist movements and derail their plans for independence.

Giving ethnic or regional groups autonomy to control their local affairs has been an effective conflict mitigation strategy (Bakke, 2008). According to Bardhan (2002), decentralisation is a means of diffusing social and political tensions and ensuring local cultural and political autonomy. Tranchant (2007:1), using an empowerment model of decentralisation, found that "decentralisation dampens all forms of ethnic violence for groups spatially concentrated enough and/or for groups having a local majority." Tranchant also found that giving groups more control over their local affairs in their regions protects them against predatory politics from the central government. Lake and Rothchild (1996) claim that politically marginalised groups who continue to fear majority domination and have experienced excessive state intrusion into their local affairs prefer autonomy because it places institutional limitations on the central government's authority.

Likewise, Rothchild and Hartzell (1999) claim that autonomy or self-government could also reassure minorities, who would otherwise worry that central governments can interfere with their local affairs. According to Hechter (2000), decentralisation can reduce intrastate conflicts by granting ethnic groups policy-making powers over issues important to their recognition, such as language, education, religion and culture. Similarly, Gurr (2000) suggests that the best way to prevent groups from seeking greater autonomy or sovereignty is to give them the legal, political, and material means to protect and promote their cultural practices specific to the regions.

The second-generation literature is also essential in explaining how decentralisation can mitigate intrastate conflicts. Decentralisation transfers power and resources from the central government to regional and local authorities, the private sector and civil society groups (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). Therefore, regional political elites, democratically elected officials and citizens are important actors in mitigating conflicts. Brancati (2006:1-2) suggests that decentralisation can "reduce ethnic conflict and secessionism in democracies by bringing government closer to the people, increasing opportunities to participate in government, and giving groups control over their political, social and economic affairs." McGarry and O'Leary (1993) also note that decentralisation resolves conflict when embattled minorities are given constitutional powers to legislate on specific areas such as language, religion and education. Miodownick and Cartrite (2009) maintain that a strong level of decentralisation dampens regional conflicts. In the article, the authors explain that entrusting regional elites with more responsibilities, under most circumstances, seems to be the most reasonable way to mitigate regional demands for greater autonomy.

Decentralisation reduces conflicts by giving ethnic minorities a voice in pluralistic democracies. Yusoff, Sarjoon and Hassan (2016) suggest that decentralisation has accommodated diverse ethnic groups in pluralistic political systems where socio-cultural, economic and political differences exist. The authors argue that by giving minorities a voice in the government, decentralisation is a flexible mechanism to accommodate the diverse interests and priorities of ethnic groups within a state, thus mitigating conflicts. Research by Siegle and O'Mahony (2006) indicates that the conflict-mitigation rationale for decentralisation offers minority groups opportunities for participation and representation in government. Norris (2008) claims that power-sharing arrangements guarantee minorities a voice in the government. With the assurance that they will not be excluded from the government, ethnic minorities are less likely to take actions that will undermine the territorial stability of the state. Likewise, Burgess (2011) and Grass and Camp (2009) claim that decentralisation reduces conflicts by fostering power-sharing agreements and including minority groups in the decision-making process in government.

However, the implementation of decentralisation can also exacerbate conflicts in diverse societies. A common argument is that decentralisation can lead to ever-growing demands for sovereignty or independence by empowering subnational governments, regional elites or regional political parties to control important policy areas (Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009). For instance, Brancati (2006) suggests that decentralisation can increase ethnic conflicts and secessionism indirectly by encouraging the growth of regional parties, which will, in turn, reinforce ethnic and regional identities, pass legislation that favours certain groups over others, and mobilise groups to engage in ethnic conflicts and secessionism. Other scholars also suggest that decentralisation

exacerbates conflicts by reinforcing and strengthening ethnic or regional identities to make laws that discriminate against certain ethnic or religious groups (Hardgrave, 1994; Kymlicka, 1998; Horowitz, 1991; Suberu, 1994) and by providing groups at the regional level with the resources to engage in ethnic conflicts and secessionism (Roeder, 1991; Kymlicka, 1998; Bunce, 1999; Snyder, 2000; Cornell, 2002; Eaton (2006).

When decentralisation weakens the central government's authority, empowered regional actors can intensify their demands for sovereignty, leading to the dissolution of the state or federation. Several authors have viewed this argument as the main reason for the breakdown of the former Soviet Union (Hale, 2000; Bunce, 1999; Roeder, 1991; Treisman, 1997). Colomb et al. (2014) suggest that decentralisation has led subnational movements with strong regional identities in Scotland in the United Kingdom, Catalonia in Spain, and Flanders in Belgium to intensify their demands for more autonomy or territorial independence. Likewise, Beland and Lecours (2005, 2007) suggest that implementing social policies in Canada, the United Kingdom, and Belgium inspired regional leaders to demand greater autonomy for their regions.

Decentralisation increases conflicts when the government refuses to share political power and resources with ethnic or regional groups. For instance, Merera (2007) claims that decentralisation in Ethiopia exacerbated conflicts because the central government refused to share political power and resources with the Oromo people, who constitute the largest ethnic group in the country. Likewise, Gurr (2000) suggests that ethnic minorities with no access to power intensify their demand for independence from the central government. Decentralisation increases conflicts when the central government undermines the authority of elected officials (Mbuagbo & Fru, 2011; Cheka, 2007;

Tambulasi, 2009). In addition, the wealth disparity among ethnic or regional groups could also be a source of political conflict because wealthy regions may find subsidising poorer regions a burden, thus increasing their demands for sovereignty (Marinzel, 2014; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009; Bakke, 2008).

Furthermore, Durante (2017) claims governments' mistreatment of minorities triggered ethnic insurgencies. According to Woodward (2007), "economic deprivation, political neglect, and forced cultural assimilation have in recent years resulted in minority nations taking up arms in order to fight for the protection of their identity and their independence from the host state." Moreover, Sambanis and Milanovic (2009) claim that demands for sovereignty may be greater in regions that have experienced independent statehood before being conquered or when there is a history of government discrimination and repression against ethnic minorities. Likewise, Goodfellow and Lindemann, 2013; Marinzel, 2014) suggest that decentralisation will likely increase intrastate conflicts when the central government weakens the autonomy of ethnic or regional groups that had previously enjoyed some degree of freedom.

In summary, even though decentralisation is praised as an effective mechanism for conflict mitigation, the empirical results are inconclusive. The contrasting arguments do not settle the debate.

Therefore, to advance the debate, this research builds on the argument that decentralisation has the potential to intensify conflicts in diverse societies. The current literature on decentralisation exacerbating conflicts is focused on grievance-based explanations (Bakke, 2008; Dipriso & Ukiwo, 2008; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009,

Mbuagbo & Fru, 2011; 2012; Merera, 2007; Tambulasi, 2009; Durante, 2017) and decentralisation empowering regional actors to engage in conflicts (Brancati, 2006; Eaton, 2006; Colomb et al., 2014; Beland & Lecours, 2005; 2007; Roeder, 1991; Suberu, 1994; Bunce, 1999; Snyder, 2000). In contrast, this study's theoretical claim focuses on the design of decentralisation, which failed to consider the historical context of the reunification of Anglophones and Francophones in 1961, thus resulting in intrastate conflicts. Instead of restoring the autonomy of Anglophones, which they enjoyed before joining French Cameroon or under the federal system, decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones. The decentralisation laws and their implementation failed to ease conflicts due to their weak and poor implementation.

Therefore, the theoretical discussion of this study shifts the focus away from the grievance and empowerment-based explanations to a designed-based explanation, without neglecting the fact that the design of decentralisation in Cameroon also resulted in grievances of marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation of the Anglophones. Before joining French Cameroon in 1961, the Anglophone region was a self-governing territory. The 1961 Federal Constitution granted the Anglophone region limited autonomy (Art. 6 (d)). In 1972, the federal government was abolished in favour of a unitary state, which eroded the autonomy of Anglophones and concentrated executive, legislative and judicial powers in the hands of the central government. In 1996, the government adopted decentralisation within the unitary state; however, it failed to restore the autonomy rights of Anglophones, to the disappointment of many Anglophones who had demanded a return to federalism during the All Anglophone Conference in 1993 and 1994. Second, the failure of the decentralisation design to accommodate their regional

difference and the poor implementation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones, thus intensifying intrastate conflicts.

There are three basic flaws of the decentralisation program. First, the Anglophone territory, which used to be a single political unit under the federal system, and two provinces under the 1972 Constitution, was transformed into two regions headed by appointed governors answerable to the president and not to the electorate. The councils are also supervised by appointed Senior Divisional Offices (SDO), who have direct control over them. The mayors do almost nothing without the approval of the (SDO). Second, the councils have no financial and administrative autonomy. They receive more than 80% of their budget from the central government. The mayors also have limited spending powers. They cannot spend over five million francs CFA ($10,000). Administratively, they cannot hire and fire all their employees. Third, the limited functions devolved to the councils are exercised concurrently with the central government. Even with the special status granted to the Anglophone regions in 2019, they do not have any exclusive jurisdiction. Section 2 (1) of the 2004 law states that decentralisation shall be by devolution but in practice, decentralisation is more of deconcentration because decentralisation has failed to transfer real powers and resources to the Anglophones to manage their local affairs with limited interference from the central government (Ndiva, 2011; Fombad & Steytler, 2019). The laws and principles of the design of decentralisation are ambiguous and contradictory, making it easier for the central government to maintain its control over councils.

These reasons imply that this research analysis will consider the historical context of reunification and data collected from the Kumba city council and the Bamenda city council in the two Anglophone regions, an issue to which we now turn.

2.6.2 The erosion of Anglophones' autonomy exacerbated conflicts

2.6.2.1 Historical Context

What is now called Cameroon was first a German colony known as Kamerun. However, after the defeat of Germany in WW1 by the Allied Powers, the territory was partitioned into two parts between France and Britain and administered under the League of Nations Mandate and subsequently under the United Nations Trusteeship Mandate. While France administered four-fifths of the territory called French Cameroun (Francophone territory) under the policy of assimilation, Britain through indirect rule (Harlech, 1941; Crowder, 1964; Le Vine, 1964; Mbeum, 2016; Ebune, 2016a; Miln, 1999), governed one-fifth of the territory which they divided into two, namely, British Northern Cameroons attached to Northern Nigeria and British Southern Cameroons (Anglophone territory) attached to the Nigerian Eastern House of Assembly in Enugu (Awasom, 1998; Ebune, 1992; Ngoh, 2011).

The leaders of Southern Cameroons did not want their territory attached to Nigeria. As a result, they formed pressure groups and political parties to fight for an autonomous region for their territory (Rubin, 1971; Ebune, 1992; Akara, 2015; Mukete, 2013). In 1953, a majority of the Southern Cameroons parliamentarians in the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons party (NCNC) formed a bloc of "Benevolent

Neutrality" during the 1953 crisis in the Eastern Nigeria House of Assembly, and resigned from the NCNC to form their own party, which fought for separation from the Eastern Region (Mukete, 2013). In response to their quasi-autonomous status in 1954, Dr. Endeley, their first Government Leader, while addressing school children on the first celebration of the Southern Cameroons National Day, described their aspiration with these memorable words, "This occasion, unique in itself, should be taken as our first step in self-determination and as a harbinger of many more to come. This was a climax to a long struggle by the men and women of this territory to be separated from Eastern Nigeria and to take an active part in the direction of their internal affairs" (Mukete, 2013:104). Endeley's statements revealed that the Anglophone leaders could not have fought so hard to be separated from Eastern Nigeria just to enter another union with Francophones where they would be subjugated again. In 1958 their territory became a regional self-governing territory with its prime minister and functioning government (Ebune, 1992). After French Cameroun gained independence on January 1, 1960, and Nigeria on October 1, 1960, Southern Cameroons became a self-governing territory, except for defence and foreign policy still under British control (Anyangwe, 2009).

Instead of preparing Southern Cameroons for separate independence according to article 76 (b) of the UN Charter, Britain working with the United Nations, imposed a plebiscite on the people of British Southern Cameroons to either join French Cameroun or Nigeria on the basis that Southern Cameroons was not economically viable to be an independent nation (Enonchong, 2007; Anyangwe, 2009; Mukete, 2013). During the campaigns leading up to the plebiscite vote on February 11, 1961, Dr J.N. Foncha, the Prime Minister of British Southern Cameroons and President Ahmadu Ahidjo of French

Cameroun, with the approval of the United Nations, France and Britain, signed a proposed federal constitution on October 14, 1960, stipulating the terms of reunification (See Appendix D). The proposed federal constitution stated that the federal government would have limited powers. In non-federal matters, the authorities of each federated state will have exclusive competence, and each of the federated states will have a Government and a Legislative Assembly. The agreement envisaged a limited federal government and two strong federated states.

In addition, President Ahidjo promised Southern Cameroonians that reunification would be based on equal status (Fonchingong, 2013) and that French Cameroon would never "impose a unitary state" on Anglophones (Fanso, 2009:13). With those assurances, Southern Cameroonians voted in favour of joining French Cameroun. On October 1, 1961, British Southern Cameroons gained independence by officially joining French Cameroun under a federal system. Therefore, reunification was not a blind joining; instead, it was a joining based on the terms of the signed agreement and the assurances they received from the Francophone elites (Anyangwe, 2009; Muna, 2017). However, during the Foumban Constitutional Conference in July 1961, the 1960 agreement was not discussed or debated. Instead, President Ahidjo presented a revised copy of March 4, 1960, French Cameroon Unitary Constitution to the Southern Cameroons delegation for discussion (Mbile, 1999; Aka, 2002; Ngoh, 2011; Achankeng, 2014; Aime, 2020). In addition, what became the official Constitution of the Federal Republic of Cameroon on October 1, 1961, was the final draft of the Yaoundé Tripartite Conference, which was debated and approved only by the National Assembly of French Cameroun and

unilaterally signed into law by President Ahidjo on September 1, 1961, (Ngoh, 2011; Anyangwe, 2009).

Given that the final draft of the 1961 Federal Constitution was only debated and adopted by the National Assembly of French Cameroun, the leaders of Southern Cameroons had no additional input into the final form of the Constitution of the Federal Republic. Furthermore, when President Ahidjo, acting as President of French Cameroun, without consulting the leaders of Southern Cameroons, unilaterally signed the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Cameroon on September 1, 1961, the Federal Republic of Cameroon did not exist. Moreover, when President Ahidjo signed the federal constitution, the British government was still the administering authority over Southern Cameroons. As the administering authority of Southern Cameroons, Britain and the United Nations were to be present at the Foumban conference, but they were absent (Mbile, 1999; Ngoh, 2011; Achankeng, 2014).

Before reunification, Anglophones and Francophones lived separately for more than 40 years, and during that period, Anglophones enjoyed autonomy over their territory. They had their constitution, ministerial government, bicameral legislature and judiciary. As an autonomous region, they controlled their language, economy, education, law, and politics (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974; Stark, 1976; Harlech, 1941; Crowder, 1964). Before the Foumban Conference in July 1961, Anglophone political leaders met in Bamenda in June 1961 and agreed that reunification should be based on a loose federation (Mbile, 1999; Aka, 2002) and during the Foumban Constitutional Conference in July 1961, both Foncha and Ahidjo reiterated their support for a federal system because the two territories were politically, economically and culturally different.

President Ahidjo said, “You know that even before the referendum and since then during our talks with Mr Foncha, we chose a federal framework. It was so because linguistic, administrative, and economic differences do not permit us to envisage seriously and reasonably a state of the unitary and centralised type.” On his part, Foncha said, “We have kept in mind that in our desire to rebuild the Kamerun nation, we must not, however, forget the existence of the two cultures. We have therefore proposed a form of Government which will keep the two cultures in the areas where they now operate and to blend them in the centre. The centre is deliberately given only very limited subjects, while the states are left to continue largely as they are now.” (*Southern Cameroons Information Service*, 1961, July 20)

These speeches suggest that Foncha and Ahidjo wanted the two territories to be united but separate because of their different colonial histories. Unfortunately, the 1961 Constitution did not contain the agreed terms of the 1960 proposed federal constitution. While Articles 5 and 6 of the 1961 Federal Constitution enumerated the subjects under the federal constitution, Article 38 stated that any subjects not listed in Articles five and six shall be of the exclusive jurisdiction of the Federated States. Article 6 (d) reserved customary courts to the West Cameroon Government. According to Ngoh (2004), the 1961 Federal Constitution did not contain a list of matters reserved for the federated states, except for customary courts given to the West Cameroon Government. However, Eyongetah and Brian (1974) claim that other subjects were left to the federated states by convention rather than by the constitution, namely, local government matters, social welfare, archives and antiquities, agriculture, forestry, co-operatives, internal trade, state public works and others.

However, after reunification, Ahidjo began using his broad powers to undermine the 1961 Federal Constitution (Ebune, 2016b; Stark, 1976). For example, President Ahidjo issued decree No. 61-DF-15 of 20 October 1961, divided the federation into six administrative regions and appointed Federal Inspectors over the regions (Ngoh, 2004; Owona, 2012). It is contended that the Federal Inspector in West Cameroon (Anglophone territory) even had more powers than the elected Prime Minister of West Cameroon, thus leading to conflicts (Brain & Eyongetah, 1974; Ngoh, 2011). Also, the 1961 Federal Constitution did not have any revenue-sharing formula. As a result, Southern Cameroons became dependent on the federal government for their financial survival (Ebune, 2016b; Stark, 1976). By September 1, 1966, Mr Ahidjo had abolished all multi-party politics in the federation and introduced a one-party system. On May 20, 1972, he abolished the federal system in violation of Article 47 (1) of the 1961 Federal Constitution, which prohibited any revision of the constitution that would impair the form of the state in favour of a unitary system and divided the federated state of West Cameroon (Anglophone territory) into two provinces. When Ahidjo resigned, his successor, President Paul Biya, continued to implement policies that further eroded the autonomy of the Anglophone minority. For instance, In 1984, President Biya changed the country's name from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon, the same name French Cameroun adopted upon her independence in 1960 (Gorji-Dinka, 1985; Anyangwe, 2009; Fanso, 2013).

In 1996, Cameroon became a decentralised unitary state. During the debates leading up to the 1996 Constitution, over 5000 Anglophones gathered during the first All Anglophone Conference (AAC1) in Buea, the capital city of Southern Cameroons, from

April 2-3, 1993, to call for a return to federalism. The Anglophone leaders subsequently drafted a two-state federal constitution, which stipulated a high degree of political, financial and economic autonomy for each territory, separation of powers, and rotation of the presidency and sent it to the government for consideration (Ngamfon, 2020). In 1994, the Anglophone leaders gathered again in Bamenda during the second All Anglophone Conference (AAC2) and threatened to secede if the government failed to respond to their demand for federalism (Konings & Njamnjoh, 1997; Munzu, 2016). According to Atem (2012), President Paul Biya rejected their request and signed into law the decentralised unitary Constitution on January 18, 1996. Under the federal system, though highly centralised (Stark, 1976; Ebune, 2016b), the Anglophone territory was a single political entity. In non-federal matters, the federated states had exclusive jurisdiction (Article 38 of the 1961 Constitution). However, under decentralisation, the Anglophone territory has been transformed from two provinces to two regions (Article 61 of the 1996 Constitution), and all power is with the national government. Although the two Anglophone regions of the Northwest and Southwest were granted a special status in 2019, the regional and local authorities in the Anglophone regions do not have exclusive jurisdiction on any subject matter, according to Section 18 of the 2019 General Code on Regional and Local Authorities.

According to the classical theory of fiscal federalism, decentralisation is preferred when preferences among groups are different across jurisdictions (Oates, 1972; Seabright, 1996; Tranchant, 2007). However, the decentralisation design failed to accommodate the socio-cultural, economic and political differences of the Anglophones (Yusoff et al., 2016). In addition, decentralisation did not empower them with more

control over their local affairs, even though they are concentrated in two of the ten regions (Tranchant, 2007). According to Aime (2020), the constitutional and legal framework of the 1996 Constitution has failed to address the challenges of Cameroon's dual colonial history, particularly the perception of Anglophones' marginalisation. Ngoh (2011) indicates that Anglophone leaders sent a secret memorandum to President Ahidjo after reunification, complaining about the erosion of their autonomy. Other studies (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997; Eyoh, 1998; Mukong, 1998; Anyangwe, 2009; Gorji-Dinka, 1985; Fanso, 2009) have also suggested that Anglophones are marginalised, oppressed, dominated, and even annexed by Francophone-majority.

To regain their autonomy, Anyefru (2011) claims that Anglophones have pursued peaceful means such as petition writing, peaceful protest, court litigations, diplomacy and dialogue to persuade the government of Cameroon to return to a federal system without success. Worried about the loss of autonomy to practise law under the common law system, Anglophone lawyers met in Bamenda in 2015 to discuss the future of the common law system in Cameroon, which has a dual legal system because of its colonial history. Anglophones practise common law, while Francophones are under a civil law system. The Anglophone lawyers complained about the government sending French-speaking prosecutors and magistrates who cannot speak good English to the courts in the Anglophone regions. Therefore, at their Bamenda conference, among other demands, they called for the government to return to a federal system to enable them to practise the common law. (Tande, 2015; Nkongho, 2018). When the government rejected their demands, the lawyers took to the streets to peacefully protest. They were joined by teachers who complained about the government sending French-speaking teachers who

could not speak proper English to schools in the Anglophone regions. University students, motorbike trade union members, activists, and ordinary citizens joined the lawyers and teachers. Unfortunately, the protesters were beaten, and their leaders were arrested by military personnel and tried at the military court in Yaoundé for treason, while others fled the country. As the political tension escalated, some Anglophones created self-defence groups and started attacking and killing the military. President Paul Biya declared war on the Anglophone armed groups in 2017 (Nkongho, 2018; Okereke, 2018; Nwati, 2021). A peaceful protest in 2016 suddenly became an armed conflict in 2017 (*International Crisis Group*, 2019, May 2).

2.6.2.2 Decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones

Autonomy refers to the ability of regional and local authorities or minority groups to make independent decisions, within the law, regarding the management of their local affairs with limited interference from the central government (Zaharia & Bilouseac, 2009; Libonati, 2001; Lijphart, 2004). Instead of restoring Anglophones' autonomy before joining French Cameroon in 1961 or under the federal system, it further weakened their autonomy due to its weak design and poor implementation. Here are the different ways through which decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones. First, decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones by not accommodating the historical specificities of their region, which enjoyed autonomy before joining French Cameroon in 1961 under a federal system. Before reunification, Premier Foncha, the leader of Southern Cameroons and former President Ahidjo, the leader of French Cameroun, signed an agreement on October 14, 1960, stipulating the terms of

reunification (See Appendix D). The document stated that “Each of the federated states will be ruled by a Government and will have a Legislative Assembly.” The agreement also stated that, “In non-federal matters, the Authorities of each of the Federated States will have exclusive competence.” The two leaders signed the agreement to preserve the autonomy of the two territories. As an autonomous territory, Anglophones controlled their language, economy, education, law, and politics (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974; Stark, 1976; Harlech, 1941; Crowder, 1964). However, after reunification, Ahidjo began dismantling the autonomy of the Anglophones (Owona, 2012; Ebune, 1992; Ngoh, 2011; Anyangwe, 2009). In 1972, Ahidjo abolished the federal government in favour of a unitary system. In 1996, decentralisation failed to accommodate the socio-cultural and political differences of the Anglophones, thus eroding their autonomy.

Second, the central government further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones by transforming the Anglophone territory that used to be a single political unit into two regions. Under the federal system, the Anglophone territory was a single political unit. The federated states of West Cameroon (Anglophone territory) and East Cameroon (Francophone territory) were independent territories. In 1972, former President Ahidjo abolished the federal system in favour of a unitary system and divided the Anglophone territory into two of the seven provinces. In 1996, Cameroon became a decentralised unitary state, and the constitution transformed two out of the ten provinces into two Anglophone and eight Francophone regions. Transforming the Anglophone territory that used to be a single political unit into two provinces and now into two regions has further weakened the territorial autonomy of the Anglophones.

Third, decentralisation has changed the form of government and the nature of the political institutions in the Anglophone regions. Under the federal system, Anglophones had a separate government with a prime minister and a legislative body with law-making powers. The people elected Premier Foncha and their legislators (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974; Ebune, 1992). However, under decentralisation, Anglophones do not have a separate government with a prime minister and a legislative body. Instead, their territory has been transformed into two regions (Art 61 of the 1996 Constitution). According to Sections 4 (4) and 16 (2) of the 2004 Law, regional and local authorities are deliberative organs, not legislative bodies, meaning they do not have the power to make laws to protect their interests and concerns. Section 3 (1) states, "The regional and local authorities of the Republic shall be regions and councils." Article 55 (3) of the 1996 Constitution and Section 10 (1) of the 2004 Law states that the government shall exercise supervisory powers over regional and local authorities. To ensure the uniform application of the decentralisation law, President Paul Biya appointed government delegates (GD) to head city councils (since 2020, city councils are now headed by elected mayors), senior divisional officers to supervise councils and governors to supervise regions.

The appointment of government officials over councils seems to contradict the democratic principles of representation and participation of citizens in their local affairs. The appointment of government officials deprives the people of selecting their leaders and holding them accountable. Article 55 (2) of the 1996 Constitution and Section 4 (2) says that elected leaders shall freely administer RLA, yet, the government appoints representatives over councils to undermine the authority of elected mayors. Mbuagbo and Fru (2011) claim that the overreaching influence of appointed officials over regional and

local authorities undermined the authority of elected mayors and councillors. Cheka (2007) suggests that appointing government delegates to supervise local authorities in Cameroon subverts democratic principles of electoral accountability. Furthermore, the government has created other institutional bodies to manage decentralisation. For example, the preamble of the 2004 Law mentions that state supervision of RLAs shall be exercised under the president's authority through the minister in charge of RLAs. Section 78 (2) of the 2004 Law states that the National Decentralisation Board chaired by the prime minister shall be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of decentralisation. Section 79 of the 2004 Law mentions the creation of an Inter-Ministerial Local Service Committee to monitor the decentralisation program. These multiple layers of political control undermine the authority of elected mayors and councillors, thus further eroding the autonomy of the Anglophone regions.

Fourth, decentralisation has not granted regional and local authorities in the Anglophone regions exclusive jurisdiction on any subject, even with the special status granted to the region in 2019. Under the federal system, though highly centralised (Ebune, 2016b; Stark, 1976), the federated states were given exclusive jurisdiction in non-federal matters (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974). However, under decentralisation, all power is vested with the national government. Only the National Assembly and the Senate, which the ruling party controls, can make laws for the entire nation. Section 2 (1) of the 2004 Law states, "Decentralisation shall consist of devolution, by the State, of special powers and appropriate resources to regional and local authorities." Section 4 (1) enumerates the competencies devolved to RLAs, economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development. However, Section 15 (2) states that the powers devolved

to RLAs shall be exercised concurrently with RLAs. Ndiva (2011) suggests that an intrusive and ubiquitous central government severely circumscribed the powers devolved to regional and local authorities. The decentralisation program is like a goat merchant who sells his goat to a customer but retains the rope to continue controlling the goat.

Fifth, decentralisation has not transferred adequate resources to the Anglophone regions. Autonomy also includes the financial ability of regional and local authorities or minority groups to fund decentralised priority projects. Fiscal autonomy refers to the power transferred to regional and local authorities to raise and spend money with limited control from the central government. The primary law governing financial matters for regional and local authorities under the decentralisation program is Law No. 2009/011 of 10 July 2009. Section 2 of the 2009 law and Section 4 (1) of the 2004 law states that regional and local authorities (RLAs) shall be endowed with administrative and financial autonomy to manage regional and local interests. However, councils in the Anglophone regions cannot raise enough local revenue through property taxes, business licences, user charges and market fees or receive adequate financial transfers from the central government through loans or grants to execute local projects. Many municipalities have huge gaps between projected and reported revenues (Aime, 2020). The central government has not placed councils in their budget, but Section 4 (1) of the 2004 Law says regions and councils shall have financial autonomy. Some mayors can only raise about 15 to 20% of their yearly budget. According to Aime (2020), the 1996 Constitution does not provide financial autonomy to RLAs in the Anglophone regions. This means councils rely on the central government for the remaining 80% to fund their priority projects.

In addition, mayors do not have expenditure autonomy. Mayors can only execute projects below five million francs ($10,000). For projects above five million, mayors refer those projects to the council's Tender Board (TB) to award to contractors. Also, some financial transfers from the central government to councils are earmarked credit cards, meaning the central government specifies what the mayors can do with the money. The law states that councils are financially autonomous, but mayors have limited decision-making powers. Additionally, mayors do not have a free hand in deciding where to locate projects assigned to councils from the national capital of Yaounde.

The extent of state control over RLAs and the degree of autonomy devolved to councils suggests that political motivation may have influenced the implementation of decentralisation in Cameroon. On November 2, 2019, President Paul Biya, during the Second Paris Peace Summit in France from November 11-13, acknowledged that the government has tried to assimilate Anglophones without success because the two regions have different identities due to their colonial histories. President Biya said Anglophones regions would be granted "special status" within the Republic of Cameroon to contain the conflict. In December, the President signed the 2019 General Code on regional and local authorities granting Anglophones a special status. However, the General Code did not devolve to the Anglophone regions any exclusive jurisdiction to accommodate the peculiarities of their region (Section 18 (2)). In addition, Section 3 (2) of the 2004 Law states that RLAs shall carry out their activities with due respect for national unity, territorial integrity, and the primacy of the State and Section 14 (1) states, "No regional or local authority shall deliberate outside its statutory meetings or on matters outside its jurisdiction or which undermine State security, law and order, national unity, or territorial

integrity." Many Anglophones believe that the Francophone elites had a hidden agenda to assimilate and annex their territory (Anyangwe, 2009; Mukong, 1998; Fanso, 2013).

Past studies also indicate that decentralisation has been implemented to gain political power and control over local governments (Crook & Sverrisson, 2001). Crook and Manor (2000:3) claimed that in "almost all decentralising governments, many high-level politicians and bureaucrats resent their loss of powers and resources." According to Smoke (2003), national elites partly implemented decentralisation as a political tactic to exercise control over local institutions. Similarly, Shah and Thompson (2004) suggest that implementing decentralisation may have more to do with political motivations than the long-run benefits of decentralisation. In addition, Yeboah-Assiamah (2014) claims that many African leaders adopt decentralisation in theory but fail to delegate real powers to subnational governments. Furthermore, Antwi-Boasiako (2010) suggests that the appointment of the heads of local governments by the central government provides little or no power to the grassroots. Crook (2003) suggests that the politics of ethno-regional conflicts influence decentralisation in Africa to either reinforce vested interest in existing patterns of patronage or challenge powerful local elites.

Several studies (Merera, 2007; Goodfellow & Lindemann, 2013; Marinzel, 2014) suggest that decentralisation intensifies conflicts when the central government erodes the autonomy of ethnic or regional groups that have previously experienced some form of autonomy before joining the host state. For instance, research by Sambanis and Milanovic (2009) indicates that the demand for sovereignty may be greater in regions that have experienced some degree of autonomy before joining a state. Merera (2007), through a case study of the Oromo people, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, found that

decentralisation intensified intrastate conflicts because the government refused to share political power and resources with the Oromo people, who had enjoyed some degree of autonomy before becoming part of the modern state of Ethiopia. Similarly, through a case study of the Buganda Kingdom in Uganda, Goodfellow and Lindemann (2013) found that the introduction of decentralisation by President Museveni in the 1980s eroded the local autonomy of the Buganda Kingdom, which had enjoyed autonomy before joining Uganda's independence in 1962. The authors explain that the refusal of the central government to allow the Buganda Kingdom to maintain their autonomy and control their land has motivated the Buganda elites to continue their fight for self-rule. In addition, Hechter (2000) claims that decentralisation increases conflicts when the central government infringes on a group's pre-existing freedoms. Furthermore, Marinzel (2014) suggests that the secessionist desires within Catalonia in Spain, which was once an autonomous region before the rule of General Francisco Franco from 1939 to 1975, stem mainly from a history of the persecution of Catalonian intellectuals and the repression of their language and culture.

These findings fit into this research because Anglophones also enjoyed autonomy before joining the Francophones in 1961. Instead of restoring their lost autonomy, decentration further eroded their autonomy (Eyoh, 1998; Mukong, 1998; Anyangwe, 2009; Gorji-dinka, 1985), thus resulting in a civil war in 2017. According to Cheema and Rondinelli (2007), decentralisation programs fail when local authorities lack the autonomy to make independent decisions. Mayors in the Anglophone regions lack the power and authority to make independent decisions. Most of the important decisions come from the capital city of Yaounde. Even basic decisions regarding constructing

boreholes and classrooms still come from Yaounde. According to Ngoh (2011), Anglophones have been complaining about the erosion of their autonomy since reunification. Eyoh (1998: 268) claims that Francophone elites have used state power to "erase the cultural and institutional foundations of the Anglophone identity". This study explored how decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government. The findings suggest that decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government, further eroding the autonomy of Anglophones. Instead of restoring the lost autonomy of Anglophones, it further weakened their autonomy due to its weak design and poor implementation, thus leading to a civil war in 2017.

2.6.2.3 Conclusion

Anglophones joined Francophones in 1961 as an autonomous territory under a federal system. Reunification was not based on blind joining but on a signed agreement and verbal assurances that the Anglophone territory would remain autonomous. However, the implementation of decentralisation in 1996 has further eroded their autonomy, thus intensifying conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government. The next chapter discusses qualitative research methodology and a case study design.

CHAPTER THREE

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study used qualitative research methodology because of the nature and focus of the research, particularly the aims, objectives and research questions. Qualitative research helps researchers understand a phenomenon from participants' perceptions and experiences. This study explored how the implementation of decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government. Therefore, as exploratory research, the aim was to explore the thoughts and experiences of participants about decentralisation, as opposed to confirmatory research, where the objective is to test a hypothesis. This chapter also explains the research process. It provides information about the research method as well as its justification. The chapter also describes the research strategy and the reason for the choice. The instruments used for data collection are described, and the procedures followed are also stated. The researcher also explains how participants were selected, the ethical issues that were followed, and the data analysis method.

3.2 Qualitative Research Methodology

This study used the qualitative methodology because this research is grounded in the interpretive paradigm. Choosing a particular research methodology depends on the

paradigm that guides the research activity. According to Tuli (2010), a research paradigm is a set of fundamental assumptions and beliefs about the nature of reality (ontology), the theory of knowledge (epistemology), and how that knowledge may be gained (methodology). In other words, a research philosophy or paradigm refers to a researcher's underlying beliefs or worldview regarding how data about a social phenomenon should be gathered, analysed and used. In the literature on research methodology in social science, the quantitative methodology belongs to the positivist paradigm, while the qualitative methodology belongs to the interpretive paradigm. Newman (2011) states, "The research methodologies represent different ways of looking at the world: ways to observe, measure and understand social reality." Merriam (1998) claims that before doing research, the researcher must examine his research orientation about the nature of reality, the purpose of doing research and the type of knowledge that can be produced. This study selected the interpretive paradigm because the researcher wanted to explore how the implementation of decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government from the perspective and experiences of participants. Interpretive researchers try to make sense of phenomena through the meaning that participants assign to them. It would have been impossible to choose the positivist paradigm for this study because this research is based on people's perceptions, experiences and opinions, which cannot be scientifically measured or represented in figures and graphs. Interpretivists researchers focus on how people feel and think and what motivates their actions and behaviour (Brink, 2018).

Another belief system that affects how researchers investigate reality is axiology, which deals with the role of values and the researcher's stance on the subject studied

(Wahyuni, 2012). Interpretivist researchers take the stance of the emic or insider perspective, which means they study social reality from the participants' perspective. The qualitative researcher aims to attain an insider's view of the group under study. Here the experiences and the values of both research participants and the researchers substantially influence the collection of data and its analysis. On the other hand, researchers of the positivist paradigm take the etic approach or the outsider perspective, separating the researcher from the subject being studied (Wahyuni, 2012). According to Tubey, Rotich and Bengat (2015), positivist researchers believe that they must remain detached from what they research. The positivist paradigm states that the researcher can observe reality objectively and that only one reality exists independent of the researcher. Positivist researchers view reality as independent, external, objective, and out there to be discovered using a scientific method. The philosophical basis is that the world exists and is knowable, and researchers can use the quantitative methodology to discover it. In contrast, the interpretive paradigm assumes that reality is observed subjectively and is unique to each observer or that reality can have multiple perspectives. The researcher cannot be detached from the studied social phenomenon (Wahyuni, 2012).

Interpretivist researchers believe that meaning is embedded in participants' experiences and that this meaning is mediated through the researcher's perceptions (Merriam, 1998). They do not accept that reality exists irrespective of people (Tuli, 2010; Tubey et al., 2015). According to Wahyuni (2012), interpretivists believe that reality and meaning are constructed by social actors and people's perceptions of it. Merriam (2002) suggests that reality is not fixed, single or agreed upon. Instead, there are multiple constructions and interpretations of reality in flux that change over time. Qualitative

researchers are interested in understanding those interpretations at a particular time and context. Therefore, qualitative research was chosen to enable the researcher to understand the implementation of decentralisation from the participants' perspectives.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), a research methodology is determined by the nature of the research question and the subject being studied. Therefore qualitative research was appropriate for this study because of the nature and focus of this study, especially the aims, objectives and research questions. This study explored how the implementation of decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government. The nature of the study is exploratory, and the objective was to explore the thoughts, feelings, experiences, motivations and perceptions of Anglophones about decentralisation intensifying intrastate conflicts, as opposed to confirmatory research, where the objective is to test a hypothesis or confirm a theory (Tuli, 2010). Exploratory research is undertaken when little is known about a particular phenomenon, when existing research results are unclear, or when a topic is highly complex. Several studies (Brancati, 2006; Bakke, 2008; White, 2011; Keil & Anderson, 2018) suggest that decentralised programs have received mixed results. Smoke (2003) and (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema (1983) claim that decentralisation is a complex concept implemented around the world in varying degrees and with different results.

Therefore, a qualitative approach was appropriate for this study because the research aim was to explore and discover a deeper understanding of the complex concepts of decentralisation from participants' perspectives. In this way, exploratory research can capture rich and detailed data and is often used to formulate theories and

identify patterns or themes; therefore, this kind of study tends to be inductive. The researcher starts from data to theory or from specific to general. Qualitative research was chosen because it also answers research questions about meaning, experience and perspectives, especially from the standpoint of participants. Qualitative researchers ask questions such as what, how or why of a phenomenon rather than how many or how much, which are answered by quantitative methods. The following research questions guided this study, (1) How did the implementation of decentralisation exacerbate conflict between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government? (2) What is the meaning of decentralisation, and how is it implemented in the two Anglophone regions? (3) What are the experiences of Anglophones under the decentralisation program? (4) How do Anglophones perceive the decentralisation program? (5) What reasons motivate Anglophones to continue their struggle for autonomy? The subjective opinions and perceptions from the interviews formed the primary data for this study (Kvale, 1996). A qualitative approach with how, why, and what research questions could offer additional insights into what gaps exist in implementing decentralisation or why one strategy was chosen over another (Crowe et al., 2011).

Qualitative research was deemed necessary for this study because it uses data collection techniques which capture soft data to answer research questions. This study did not use quantitative methodology because the researcher did not seek to capture precise numerical measurements or express data in quantities or amounts such as numbers, graphs, and formulas. Instead, the researcher was more concerned about getting a better understanding of how the implementation of decentralisation fueled intrastate conflicts by capturing soft data in the form of words, sentences, and quotes from the interviewees'

perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The research findings in qualitative studies are usually reported descriptively in words, while the research findings in quantitative studies are often represented quantitatively in numbers (Tuli, 2010; Tubey et al., 2015).

Using the qualitative method helped the researcher to understand the behaviour and actions of Anglophones in their struggle for autonomy. For example, during the interviews, some participants linked their experiences to memories or stories of Anglophones' struggle for autonomy under British rule. This kind of information would not have been picked up using a quantitative approach which uses numbers and statistics. However, qualitative research could provide insights that are beyond the bounds of quantitative research because it focuses on the thoughts, feelings, reasons and values of participants, which increases understanding of why things are the way they are in the social world and why people act the way they do (Tuli, 2010). Numerous studies (Ebune, 1992; Awesome, 1998; Ngoh, 2011; Mukete, 2013; Aka, 2015; Adig, 2017) suggest that Anglophones have been struggling for their autonomy since they were an integral part of Nigeria, and even after joining French Cameroon in 1961 (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997; Anyangwe, 2017; Munzu, 2016). The qualitative method helped the researcher gain a deeper meaning of the participant's answers. By looking at primary and secondary sources, where data is represented in non-numerical forms such as quotes, symbols, images, speeches and written testimonials, the qualitative method helped the researcher uncover the "why" of the Anglophone's mobilisation for their autonomy (Tuli, 2010).

The qualitative methodology employs data-gathering methods which enable rich and detailed or thick descriptions of a social phenomenon from participants' perspectives. Conducting interviews with multiple participants enabled the researcher to capture rich

and detailed data about the implementation of decentralisation. According to Tuli (2010), since qualitative researchers place a strong emphasis on understanding the world through first-hand experience, truthful reporting, and quotations of actual conversations from an insider's perspective, they employ data-gathering methods such as interviews which enable rich and detailed, or thick description of a social phenomenon by encouraging participants to speak freely about their experiences. Wahyuni (2012) notes that the main feature of an interview is to facilitate participants to share their perspectives, stories, and experience about a particular social phenomenon under study. In this study, interviews with multiple participants provided deeper insights into the decentralisation program. Interpretivist/constructivist researchers believe that interaction between the researcher and the studied participants can lead to "deeper insight into the context under study, adding richness and depth to the data" (Tubey et al., 2015:226). According to Tuli (2010), researchers using the qualitative methodology immerse themselves in a culture or group by observing its people and their interactions, often participating in activities, interviewing key informants, and analysing documents and cultural artefacts. The researcher spent three months in the field interacting with Anglophones and interviewing key informants to understand their experiences, stories and opinions on how the implementation of decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the central government. The objective was to understand the informant's thoughts, feelings and views about decentralisation.

Qualitative research has been criticised for lacking the rigour and credibility of quantitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Tuli, 2010; Wahyuni, 2012). According to Ulin, Robinson & Tolley (2004), positivist researchers use validity, reliability, objectivity,

precision, and generalizability to judge the rigour of quantitative study as they are intended to describe, predict, and verify empirical relationships in relatively controlled settings. On the contrary, qualitative researchers who aim to explore, discover, and understand social phenomena through social interaction cannot use the same criteria to judge research quality and outcomes. Reliability and validity are concepts used to evaluate the quality of research. These traditional concepts of reliability and validity cannot be used to assess qualitative research because qualitative research operates on completely different standards. Reliability refers to the consistency in measurements, whereas validity focuses on the accuracy or extent to which the research reflects the studied social phenomena (Wahyuni, 2012). However, qualitative researchers dispute the generalizability of results because reality can have multiple perspectives (Merriam, 2002). Research by Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggests that trustworthiness is the fundamental criterion for judging qualitative research. The researcher must provide a justifiable rationale for the chosen methodology and the data collection and analysis processes. In the article, the authors added that using an "inquiry audit" can enhance confirmability, meaning other researchers can confirm the accuracy of the findings and ensure that the data collected supports the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:317). Similarly, Creswell and Miller (2000) enumerated member checking, triangulation, thick description, peer reviews and external audits as some methods to maximise validity or credibility.

Regarding trustworthiness and credibility, this research has described and provided the rationale for selecting qualitative methodology and the processes involved in data collection and analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and provided detailed and rich

textual descriptions from interviews, supplemented by observation and archival documents. Triangulation through different data collection methods has also helped enhance this study's credibility. Second, this research has cited historical documents and referenced sources. Leaving a careful "audit trail" with precise citations will allow other researchers to verify the sources (Neuman, 2011:170). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), allowing external audits could also enhance the dependability of the data presented during the research process.

3.3 Case Study Design

Qualitative methodology has a variety of research designs or strategies (Patton, 1990; Creswell, 1998), but this study used the case study design because the primary purpose of the research was to understand the phenomenon of decentralisation from the participants' perceptions and experiences (Green, 2007; Brink, 2018). According to Merriam (2002), a case study is appropriate for a researcher whose primary interest is understanding a social phenomenon. In the article, the author identified eight commonly used approaches to qualitative research; basic interpretive, phenomenology, grounded theory, case study, ethnography, narrative analysis, critical, and postmodern-post structural designs. Merriam explains that case studies and other qualitative research approaches have common attributes. However, they also differ in how research questions are asked, sample selection, data collection and analysis, and write-ups are conducted. She concludes that since the unit of analysis determines whether a study is a case study, the case study design differs from other qualitative research strategies.

A case study is a "research approach used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life" (Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery & Sheikh, 2011:1). Yin (1994:13) said, "The all-encompassing feature of a case study is its intense focus on a single phenomenon within its real-life context." To Merriam (2002:8), a case study is "an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit as an individual, group, institution, or community." The definition of Merriam is more appropriate to this study because this research explored the devolution of powers and resources to regional and local authorities (RLAs) using the Kumba city council in the Southwest region and the Bamenda city council in the Northwest region as case studies. Each city council has three sub-divisional councils within its council area. Therefore, the researcher visited all eight sites during the three months of fieldwork. According to Creswell (2013), a multiple-case study design explores real-life multiple bounded systems through a detailed, in-depth data collection process involving multiple sources of information. The multiple-case study design was the best approach for this study because it allowed the researcher to understand, from multiple participants, how decentralisation was implemented at the level of the city councils in the two Anglophone regions.

This study is located within the interpretive paradigm because the researcher aimed to understand the implementation of decentralisation from participants' opinions and experiences. According to Brink (2018), interpretive researchers try to understand a social phenomenon through the meanings people assign to them. The interpretivists researchers see the world as constructed, interpreted, and experienced by people in their interactions with each other and with the wider social systems (Guba & Lincoln, 1985;

Tuli, 2010). According to Wahyuni (2012), interpretivists believe that reality is constructed by social actors and people's perceptions of it. The author explains that because human perspectives and experiences are subjective, social reality may change and have multiple perspectives. According to this paradigm, the nature of inquiry is interpretive, and the purpose of the inquiry is to understand a particular social phenomenon. It is not to generalise the findings to a population but to have a deeper understanding of the research problem in its unique context (Tubey, Rotich & Bengat, 2015).

The case study design was appropriate for this study because it allows an in-depth, multi-faceted investigation of a complex phenomenon in its real-life context. Decentralisation is a broad concept with many interrelated parts (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1983). Therefore, the researcher chose a case study design to understand the implementation of decentralisation in the Anglophone regions. Yin (2009) suggests that case studies can explain, describe, or explore events or a phenomenon in the everyday context in which they occur. According to Wahyuni (2012), a case study facilitates a deep investigation of a real-life contemporary phenomenon in its natural context. A case study is sometimes referred to as a "naturalistic" design as opposed to an "experimental" design in which the researcher seeks to exert control over and manipulate variables of interest (Tuli, 2010; Crowe et al., 2011). Merriam (2002) claims that the case study approach describes a social phenomenon in depth by concentrating on a single phenomenon or entity. Brown (2008) argues that case studies provide descriptive details and can increase understanding of a particular phenomenon.

Case studies are suitable for exploring and describing a social phenomenon in a bounded context. Miles and Huberman (1994:25) define a case study as "a phenomenon… occurring in a bounded context." Merriam (2002) states that a case study is a bounded, integrated system. The author also notes that the case study approach seeks to describe a phenomenon in depth by concentrating on a single phenomenon or entity (case). According to Baxter and Jack (2008), the boundaries indicate what will be included or excluded from the scope of the research project. In addition, Yin (2003) and Stake (1995) suggest that placing boundaries on a case helps researchers narrow their research projects. Similarly, Crowe et al. (2011) suggest that each case should have a predefined boundary which clarifies the nature and time covered by the case study (that is, its scope, beginning and end), the relevant social group, organisation, or geographical area of interest to the researcher, the types of evidence to be collected, and the priorities for data collection and analysis.

This case study was bounded by scope, time, context, location, geography, definition, and people. The scope of this study began when the decentralisation law was implemented in 1996 and ended when the interviews were completed in March 2016. However, to gain some background information, the period when Anglophones enjoyed autonomy under British rule was also highlighted. Where necessary, current changes to the decentralisation law were also included in the study. For example, in 2019, the two Anglophone regions were granted special status. Brown (2008) points out that the in-depth focus on the social phenomenon within a bounded system can help provide a holistic picture of a situation. According to Tellis (1997), case studies are suitable for analysing complex social phenomena from different perspectives. To better understand

decentralisation, the researcher interviewed mayors, councillors, council staff, community leaders, academics and activists. The views and opinions of these participants helped the researcher gain a holistic view of the decentralisation program.

This study was bounded by organisation, geography and people. Cameroon is divided into ten regions, corresponding to the 374 local government councils in the nation. Eight of the ten regions are Francophones, while two are Anglophone regions. Of the 374 councils, there are 360 councils and 14 city councils. The 374 councils are grouped into three main types: city councils, sub-divisional councils, and city councils. City councils serve urban areas, and their territories include those of sub-divisional councils. Government Delegates appointed by the president head the city councils (since 2020, elected mayors head city councils). Elected mayors supported by councillors lead sub-divisional councils. Elected mayors head councils which serve rural areas. The case studies were conducted only in the two Anglophone regions of the Southwest and Northwest, and only Anglophones living and working in the two regions were interviewed. According to Wahyuni (2012), a good case study should involve multi-sites to enable comparisons between the observed practices to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomenon.

The Kumba city council in the Southwest region and the Bamenda city council in the Northwest region constituted the case study in this research. Each city council has three sub-divisional councils within its area. The city councils in Kumba and Bamenda were chosen because the two city councils are located in the Anglophone regions fighting for their autonomy. Second, they are located in the Southwest and Northwest regions' biggest and most diverse cities. These diverse city councils provided access to

respondents. Third, since the decentralisation law is uniformly applied to all councils, these city councils in Kumba and Bamenda represented the councils in urban towns. Finally, ethical considerations of anonymity and confidentiality also influenced the choice of these city councils. Participants in these urban cities are more educated to make informed choices about participating in the study (Crowe et al., 2011).

The case study was bounded by definition. Devolution to sub-divisional councils constituted the unit of analysis. Merriam (2002) suggests that the unit of analysis, not the topic of investigation, characterises a case study. Likewise, Tellis (1997) states that the unit of analysis is a critical element in the case study since case studies focus on one or two issues essential to understanding a phenomenon. This study focused on devolution. Section 2 (1) of the 2004 Law implementing decentralisation states that decentralisation shall be by devolution of special powers and appropriate resources from the central government to regional and local authorities. Devolution refers to "the creation or strengthening, financially or legally, of subnational national units of government, the activities of which are substantially outside the direct control of the central government. Under devolution, local units of government are autonomous or independent, and their legal status makes them separate or distinct from the central government" (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1983:25). This definition indicates that under devolution, councils are supposed to be autonomous bodies with the power to make independent decisions with limited central government interference.

The case study approach allowed the researcher to collect data from multiple sources to enhance the study's credibility. Crowe et al. (2011) suggest that to develop a thorough understanding of a case, the case study design should involve the collection of

multiple sources of evidence, such as interviews, focus groups and observations. The authors also state that using multiple data sources increases a study's internal validity. According to Merriam (2002), more than one data collection method enhances the validity of research findings. Likewise, Yin (1994) suggests using multiple sources of evidence to ensure validity and Baxter and Jack (2008) state that multiple sources of evidence enhance data credibility. The primary data source in this research was interviews, supplemented by observation and archival documents. According to Crowe et al. (2011), approaching the same issue from different angles can help develop a holistic picture of a phenomenon.

Although used in various disciplines, the case study has limitations. The case study has been criticised for lacking scientific rigour and producing findings that can rarely be generalised (Crowe et al., 2011). However, Brown (2008) argues that case studies can provide rich and significant insights into events and behaviours of people. Stewart (2012), based on a research of case study articles published in six leading public management journals for five years in Australia, claims that case study research has a long and honourable history in governance-related research. Tellis (1997) pointed out that case study designs have been successfully used in sociology, and Merriam (1998) states that case studies have also been used in anthropology, history, psychology, and sociology. In addition, Brown (2008) claims that case studies have been used in education, policy research, political science, social work, and nursing. According to Crowe et al. (2011), some concerns can be addressed using theories, respondents' validation of the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation and findings, and transparency. That is, the researcher describes in detail the steps involved in the case selection, data collection, analysis,

interpretation, and reporting for readers to judge the trustworthiness of the case study. This research has described and justified the use of case studies to enhance the trustworthiness and validity of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.4 Method of Data Collection

Yin (1994) identified six primary data sources for case study research: interviews, documentation, archival record, direct observation, participant observation and physical artefacts. Merriam (2002) suggests that interviews, observation, and documents are the three traditional data sources in a qualitative research study. However, with the advent of computer technology and the World Wide Web, data can be collected online. According to the author, the study's questions determine the data collection method and which data sources will yield the best information to answer the research questions. Since qualitative researchers seek an understanding of a social phenomenon from the participants' perspective, qualitative research employs data-gathering methods which enable rich and detailed or thick descriptions of a social phenomenon being studied (Wahyuni, 2012). Therefore, interviews, focus group discussions, and observation are the most widely used data gathering method for researchers using qualitative research methodology (Tuli, 2010). According to Baxter and Jack (2008), using multiple data sources enhances data credibility. In this research, the primary source of data collection was interviews. To maximise trustworthiness and credibility, data from observation and archival documents supplemented interview data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Patton (2002), the method of collecting data from multiple sources, termed data triangulation, helps the researcher collect comprehensive, relevant information and cross-check their consistency to enhance the robustness of the findings.

3.4.1 Interviews

Interviews are among the most common strategies of data collection in qualitative research (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Jamshed, 2014). Interviews allow people to convey to others something from their own experiences and in their own words. Therefore, in a qualitative research interview, the researcher seeks to understand a social phenomenon from the participant's point of view in order to uncover the meaning of their experiences (Kvale, 1996). Green (2007) suggests that using qualitative methods means that the researcher generates data primarily in words, not numbers.

According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), qualitative interviews have been categorised as unstructured, structured, and semi-structured. Merriam (2002) claims that interviews are highly structured, unstructured, and semi-structured. The type of interview chosen depends on the study design and what the researcher wants to accomplish. Unstructured interviews are conducted with few, if any, pre-planned sets of interview questions. The researchers probe participants to obtain rich and in-depth information. Merriam (2002) states that the researcher has topics to explore in unstructured interviews, but neither the interview structure nor the questions are predetermined. According to Jamshed (2014), early pioneers of ethnography developed the use of unstructured interviews with key informants. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) claim that the most widely used unstructured interview originated from the ethnographic tradition of anthropology. Structured interviews are more rigid in their

format in that only predetermined questions are asked. With this type of interview, the researcher does not have opportunities to probe participants for new topics. This type of interview often produces quantitative data (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). In contrast, semi-structured interviews are conducted with predetermined questions with an interview protocol to help guide the researcher through the interview process. This form of interview maintains some structure, hence the name semi-structured interviews. The interview is also conversational (Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2001).

The semi-structured interview was suitable for this research because it allowed the researcher to capture rich, detailed information about decentralisation. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) argue that a semi-structured interview enables the researcher to capture rich and detailed information about the social phenomena being studied to answer the research questions. In the article, the authors explain that the format encourages participants to provide detailed descriptions of their experiences of the phenomenon under study, and it allows the interviewer to gain a deep understanding of the studied phenomenon from the opinions and experiences of the interviewees. According to Wahyuni (2012), semi-structured interviews allow interviewees to share their perspectives, stories and experiences of a studied social phenomenon. The participants, who are practitioners in their field, will pass on their knowledge to the researcher through the interview process. Through this approach, the interviewer has an interview guide with key pre-planned questions to elicit the necessary information from the interviewees. Even though the interviewer has predetermined questions, the interview is designed to be conversational, with questions from previous responses to gain new insights into the opinions and experiences of the participants. Guion et al. (2001) suggest

that the conversational nature of the interview will allow the researcher to do additional probing to understand the opinions and experiences of the participants.

The ability to probe and ask follow-up questions also influenced researchers' choice of semi-structured interviews. Guion et al. (2001) argue that the semi-structured interview allows the researcher the flexibility to ask follow-up questions and seek clarification and understanding throughout the interview process. According to Wahyuni (2012), the semi-structured format keeps the interviews flexible and adaptive to new information. When new questions or topics arise during the interview, the conversational nature of the discussion gives the interviewer the flexibility to probe the participant for additional details. (Guion et al., 2001). As a result, the reporting and analysis reflect the participants' views. Kvale (1996) claims that semi-structured interviews give the researcher some control to keep steering and defining the conversation with the interviewees. The ability to control the dialogue will enable the researcher to focus on the research purpose to capture the right amount of data to answer the research questions (kvale, 1996). According to Guion et al. (2001), the format will allow the researcher to observe the interviewees' facial expressions, body language and tone of voice.

Choosing the semi-structured interview as a data collection method allowed the researcher to give interviewees the freedom to answer questions in their own words. The main feature of an interview is to encourage the interviewee to share their opinions and experiences in their own words on a particular social phenomenon being studied (Wahyuni, 2012). According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), the interviewer’s task is to obtain information while listening and encouraging the participants to speak. Semi-structured interview formats use open-ended questions to gain a deep insight into

the interviewee's perception of the studied phenomenon (Green, 2007). According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), semi-structured interviews are organised around predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between the researcher and the interviewees. Guion et al. (2001) suggest that open-ended questions must be worded so that the interviewee will expound on the subject being studied, not just answer yes or no. To the authors, many open-ended questions begin with why or how, allowing interviewees to answer the questions from their perspectives and in their own words. Kvale (1996) suggests that researchers should use open-ended questions to elicit detailed information from participants because qualitative research seeks meaning and understanding of human actions. This study used open-ended questions to encourage participants to speak freely on how the implementation of decentralisation intensified intrastate conflicts.

The semi-structured interview was deemed suitable for this research because it helped the researcher schedule interviews in advance at a designated time and place where the interviewee was comfortable enough to give honest answers (Green, 2007). According to Jamshed (2014), semi-structured interviews are used with individuals or groups. Finally, the semi-structured format enabled the researcher to take notes, listen attentively and probe for more details (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Written notes may include observations of both verbal and non-verbal behaviours as they occur. According to Guion et al. (2001), during the interview, the researcher should try to interpret what is being said and should seek clarity and understanding throughout the interview.

3.4.1.1 Sequencing of the Interviews

In the original plan, the interviews were to begin with government representatives like the Senior Divisional Officers (SDO) and Government Delegates (GD). They are directly involved in the implementation of decentralisation. The SDO supervises all the councils in the division. The GD is the head of the city council, with three sub-divisional councils within the city council area. The second group on the list was government employees in councils, such as the Secretary Generals and Municipal Treasurers. They have the expertise on how the decentralisation program is implemented and how fiscal transfers are made to councils to execute priority projects. The third group was elected mayors, councillors, and quarter heads who worked directly with the people. They know how the law works in real-life situations. Academics who specialise in Anglophone history and politics were the fourth group. The Anglophone activists fighting for the autonomy of Anglophones were the fifth group on the list. However, the whole plan changed when the fieldwork began because of scheduling problems. The researcher spent three months interviewing participants according to availability (See Appendix C for sample interview questions).

3.4.1.2 Data

This research obtained data from interviews, participant observation, and archival documents. The primary source of data came from interviews. Initially, the researcher was not planning to observe any council meetings. However, while on the field, the researcher was invited to attend an informal meeting hosted by Kumba 2 council on a campaign to “keep Kumba clean”. The researcher attended the meeting where he got

first-hand experience of an informal council meeting attended by the mayor, councillors, council staff and community leaders. Data was also collected from archival documents. Interview data were collected by handwritten notes, later typed, and stored in a computer with a strong password to protect the participants' confidentiality and anonymity. Data from interviews, participant observation and archival documents were merged and analysed through thematic analysis to identify commonly repeated patterns and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Baxter & Jack, 2008)

3.4.1.3 Sampling Strategy

This research used both purposive and snowball sampling techniques to select participants for the study. Participants were chosen based on their knowledge of the decentralisation program and political activism in the Anglophones' struggle for autonomy. The sampling strategy depends on whether the researcher is attempting to develop findings that are generalisable to a population or not. A qualitative research approach often has a small sample size, whereas quantitative research relies on large, representative samples (Newman, 2011). According to Merriam (2002), qualitative research seeks to understand the meaning of a phenomenon from participants' perspectives. Therefore, selecting a sample size from which the research questions can be answered is essential. A small sample size means the researcher can be more selective in choosing participants. This selection process is called a purposive or purposeful sample (Merriam, 2002). Patton (1990:169) suggests it is important to select "information-rich cases for the study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term

purposeful sampling." According to Neuman (2011), purposive sampling is used to better understand a phenomenon being studied.

Similarly, Wahyuni (2012) suggests that purposive sampling chooses information-rich participants to answer the research questions. In addition, DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) suggest that the interviewees should be homogenous and share similarities related to the research questions. In this regard, all participants were Anglophones from the two English-speaking regions. This study also used a snowball sampling or networking method to interview participants based on a referral system (Wahyuni, 2012). The snowball sampling technique was used because the researcher did not know most participants, so the participants were recruited through a referral process. Second, most frontline activists belong to political organisations and groups that the government monitors and oppresses. Therefore, using the snowball or chain referral sampling strategy provided access first to respondents who were accessible and then to those in their social networks who were known to the original respondents (Neuman, 2011).

3.4.1.4 Author positionality

Before presenting the findings of this study and in the spirit of self-reflexivity, I acknowledge that I was born in the Southwest region of Cameroon, one of the two regions where this research was conducted and where the ongoing civil war is being fought. I completed primary and secondary education in the Southwest region before proceeding to the University of Yaounde, in the French region, where I did undergraduate studies in English Private Law. While in the university, from 1990-1993, national

opposition parties and civil society organisations, in response to increasing demands for democracy in Africa in the early 1990s, also planned protests known as “ghost towns” to force the government of Cameroon to institute constitutional reforms. I witnessed some protests, including the big one at the “Parliament ground” on campus, which was violently suppressed by the military and resulted in the temporary closure of the university. The Anglophone struggle for greater autonomy began immediately after independence (Ngoh, 2011) but intensified during national unrest and protests in the 1990s. To stop the protests, the government adopted a decentralised unitary constitution in 1996, divided the country into ten regions, and devolved special powers to regional and local authorities.

I did not participate in the protests because I left the country in 1994 but returned in 1999 to work for a faith-based organisation in the capital city of Yaounde for about five years before travelling to the United States to pursue graduate studies in law and government. For over ten years, I have been working in the field of international relations and diplomacy, and one of the challenges in international politics is the rise of intrastate conflicts. To mitigate these types of conflicts, governments are increasingly using decentralisation as one of the strategies for conflict mitigation while preserving the state’s territorial integrity (Bakke, 2008; Keil & Anderson, 2018).

One of the epistemological assumptions of the interpretive paradigm is that researchers seek to understand a phenomenon from the perspective and experiences of participants (Tuli, 2010; Brink, 2018; Caulfield, 2019). My experience in the Southwest region helped me develop trust with some participants and to gain an insider’s perspective on how decentralisation is implemented in the Anglophone regions. I

acknowledge that because I grew up in the Southwest region, it is likely that my positionality has influenced the interpretation of the data. However, to avoid bias, thematic analysis was data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 1990), and excerpts from interviews were also included. The love for the place where I grew up, the opportunity to return home to visit my family, my curiosity to understand why decentralisation is more effective in some countries than others, and my commitment to peace necessitated this research to offer possible solutions to mitigate the Anglophone crisis, which is destroying human life and property, hindering students from attending school regularly, displacing citizens, and forcing others to flee as refugees into neighbouring countries, and threatening the peace and stability of the nation (Nwati, 2021; *International Crisis Groups*, 2019, September 26).

3.4.1.5 Participants

Using purposive and snowball sampling strategies, 49 key informants participated in the study. In qualitative research, participants are selected because they can provide rich and detailed descriptions of their perspectives and experiences to enrich the researcher's understanding of the studied phenomenon (Green, 2007; Merriam, 2002). Qualitative research aims to contribute to the researcher’s knowledge of the phenomena under study rather than generalising the finding to a larger population (Neuman, 2011). Therefore, there were some inclusion criteria used for participating in the study. First, participants were to be Anglophones working and living in the two Anglophone regions of the Southwest and Northwest. Second, participants were to have some knowledge and experience of the decentralised system. The original design of the study targeted 35-40

participants. However, as the study progressed, the number increased to 49 to capture the relevant data to answer the research questions. According to Merriam (2002), in a qualitative study, data collection is carried out simultaneously with data analysis to enable the researcher to make adjustments when necessary. The number of participants interviewed was dictated by the information obtained during the interview process. Interviews were conducted until data reached a point of saturation, where adding new participants did not give the researcher any new insights.

Of the 49 participants, the researcher interviewed one representative from the office of the senior divisional officer (SDO) in Kumba, one in Bamenda, and one from the office of the government delegate (GD) in Kumba and one in Bamenda. The Researcher also interviewed three secretary generals, five municipal treasurers, five mayors or their representatives, nine municipal councillors, nine community leaders, six academics and eight activists. The elected officials and community leaders were from the ruling and opposition parties. However, the majority were from the opposition party because most of the sub-divisional councils were controlled by the opposition party. Appointed government delegates headed the two city councils in Bamenda and Kumba. Out of the six sub-divisional councils, only one was controlled by an elected mayor of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) party. The remaining five were in the hands of the main opposition party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF). The participants were of both genders, but most were men (39 men and ten women). Seven of the eight activists belonged to the same group. The researcher increased the number to understand why Anglophones were motivated to continue their struggle for autonomy.

The age of the participants ranged from about 30-65 years. Of the 49 participants, 21 were interviewed in the Northwest region, while 28 participated in the Southwest region. Decentralisation is a complex concept; therefore, the researcher had to interview diverse participants to get a holistic view of the implementation process (Cohen & Peterson, n.d).

3.4.1.6 Procedure

After obtaining ethics clearance from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Witwatersrand and an official letter from the Wits School of Governance to conduct the research (see Appendix E), the researcher travelled to Cameroon to conduct one-on-one interviews with participants. Upon arrival, the researcher went to the office of the Senior Divisional Officer (SDO) in Kumba to seek permission to conduct research in the city council and sub-divisional councils in Meme Division (see Appendix G). The researcher repeated the same process at the office of the SDO in Bamenda, Mezam Division (See Appendix F). After the official permissions were approved, initial contacts were made with a representative at the SDOs office in Kumba and Bamenda. Contacts were also made at the offices of the Government Delegates and mayors in Kumba and Bamenda. Other participants were also recruited through a referral process. Once the participants agreed to be interviewed, each participant had an appointment at a convenient time and place for both the participant and the researcher. Green (2007) suggests that qualitative research helps the researcher schedule interviews in advance at a designated time and place where the interviewee is comfortable enough to answer the research questions honestly. According to Denzin and

Lincoln (2005), qualitative research emphasises the importance of conducting research in its context. As a result, almost all the participants were interviewed at their homes or offices, except for five interviews conducted at the home of the researcher's relative in Bamenda and one in a public space (football field after a practice session) in Kumba.

The interviewer began the interviews with a brief introduction and an explanation of the purpose of the study to put the interviewee at ease (Guion et al., 2001). Afterwards, participants received a package containing an information sheet and a consent form. The information sheet stated the purpose of the research, why the participants were contacted and the nature of their participation. The consent form outlined the purpose of the study, how data will be collected and used, the length of the interview, protection of the participant's identity, options for participants to either continue or withdraw from the interview at any time and notification that participants will receive no compensation. The participants were also informed that there would be no videotaping or audio recording. Before the interviews began, participants read and signed the information sheet (See Appendix B) and the consent form (See Appendix A). Each participant was assured full confidentiality and anonymity, which is why participants' real names are not mentioned in the study.

The researcher conducted all the interviews in English, except for a few pithy statements made by participants in Pidgin English to emphasise their points. Conducting the interviews in English enabled the researcher to capture the words and meanings conveyed by the participants from their experiences. However, whenever participants spoke in Pidgin English, the information was translated during the note-taking. Translating those Pidgin English words will enable the readers to understand the plain

meaning constructed by the participants. During the interview process, the researcher treated each participant with respect and the semi-structured format allowed participants to speak freely in their own words. According to Kvale (1996), interviews can help a researcher understand a social phenomenon from the participant's point of view and uncover the meaning of their experiences. As an Anglophone, who shares a similar historical background with participants, it was not too difficult to establish a good rapport with participants and engage in a frank conversation about the subject of investigation. However, some of the participants, especially those of the ruling party, were not fully open and transparent. Also, some municipal treasurers were unwilling to share information about their council's budget. Given that the interviews were conversational, the researcher asked follow-up questions and probed for additional information but generally allowed those participants to volunteer information. The interviews lasted approximately an hour, and the researcher took handwritten notes, which were later typed on a computer and secured with a strong password. The research analysis was not computer-assisted; rather, it was done manually. In this research, transcribed data was read many times to discover re-emerging themes across the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.4.1.7 Time Horizon

This study used a cross-sectional design. Time is an important factor in every research endeavour. Therefore, researchers have two options: a cross-sectional study or a longitudinal study. The researcher's choice will depend on the research aims, objectives and questions. In a cross-sectional study, the researcher collects data from multiple

participants just once or at a specific point in time, but in a longitudinal study, the researcher collects data from the same subjects repeatedly over a period of time, perhaps after a few weeks or several months or decades (Thomas, 2020). While a cross-sectional study gives a snap-short of the population at a specific point in time, a longitudinal study enables researchers to observe for stability or change in a group's perspective regarding a topic over some time (Neuman, 2011). Another important factor influencing a researcher's choice is time and cost. Longitudinal research tends to be time-consuming, complicated and more expensive, whereas cross-sectional research may not be expensive and does not take much time (Neuman, 2011). This study used the cross-sectional design because interviews were conducted once over a period of three months.

3.5.1 Documentation

This study used archival documents to provide supplementary data, clarify data (Abbott, Shaw & Elston, 2004) and corroborate evidence gathered from interviews (Tellis, 1997). According to Merriam (2002), documents such as photographs or cultural artefacts can be written, oral, or visual. Also, public records, personal documents and physical materials are documents which researchers can analyse. Documents were important because they contained background information and historical insights for understanding the context in which the decentralisation law was conceived and implemented. Apart from providing contextual richness to this research, documents also assisted in crafting interview questions (Bowen, 2009). The primary documents cited in this study include the 1996 Constitution and the 2004 law on the Orientation of Decentralisation. The 1960 proposed federal constitution signed by President Ahidjo and

Prime Minister Foncha was merged with the interviews and observation and analysed. This document was important in understanding the root cause of the ongoing conflict in Cameroon. The 1960 agreement stipulated the terms of reunification. Therefore, reunification was not a blind joining (Anyangwe, 2009) but a joining based on a written agreement (See Appendix D).

Abbott et al.(2004) argue that documents present few privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality issues because they identify individuals or institutions that publish them. In most cases, they are in the public domain. In addition, Bowen (2009) suggests that many documents are readily available in the public domain, especially since the advent of the Internet, and are sometimes obtainable without the author's permission. Furthermore, this study relied on documents because they are an unobtrusive and non-reactive method of data collection (Abbott et al., 2004; Bowen, 2009). According to Merriam (2002), the strength of documents as a data source is that they pre-exist in the research setting and do not alter the setting in ways that the interviewer can. In addition, documents do not depend upon the whims and caprices of human beings whose cooperation is essential for collecting data (Merriam, 2002). Archival records are also used. They consist of documents, maps, official and private letters, audio and video tapes, and Internet-based materials collected from government agencies and academic institutions. According to Schwartz and Cook (2002:1), archival records "represent enormous power over memory and identity, over the fundamental ways society seeks evidence of what its core values are, and have been, where it has come from, and where it is going." Overall, the researcher's goal was to find and collect relevant and quality documents and archival records containing the evidence to add, verify and corroborate the interview data (Bowen,

2009). Whether pre-existing or research-generated, documents have valuable insights and clues into the social phenomenon under study. However, documents may sometimes contain insufficient details to answer the research questions because they were produced for other purposes (Abbott et al., 2004; Bowen, 2009). Also, documents are sometimes not retrievable, or access may be deliberately blocked (Yin, 1994).

3.5.2 Participant Observation

It is a widely used data collection method in qualitative studies. Marshall and Rossman (1989:79) define observation as "the systematic description of events, behaviours, and artefacts in the social setting chosen for the study." According to Kawulich (2005), participant observation has been used in various disciplines like anthropology, sociology, and education to collect data about people, processes, and cultures in qualitative research. According to Jamshed (2014) and DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), ethnographers gather data through participant observation and record field notes as they observe from the sidelines or join in the activities of those they are studying. The interviewer elicits more information about the meaning of observed behaviours, interactions, artefacts, and rituals as he learns more about the environment.

In designing this research, participant observation was not included as one of the data collection methods. However, during the fieldwork, the researcher was invited by Kumba 2 council to attend one of their informal meetings on "keep Kumba clean", which lasted for about two hours. The researcher attended the meeting to get a first-hand experience of how councillors and community leaders interacted. The researcher listened to the discussions, observed the attendees and took notes. According to Newman (2011),

participant observation requires researchers to devote many hours to direct personal contact with their study participants. This is why observation was not part of the original plan of the study. However, the informal council meeting the researcher attended briefly helped the researcher cross-check data collected from interviews.

According to Merriam (2002), data from observation represent a first-hand encounter with the phenomenon under study rather than a second-hand account obtained in an interview. The author also notes that observation is the best data collection technique when participants are not able or willing to discuss the phenomenon under study. Likewise, Green (2007) claims that direct participation in and observation of a social phenomenon being studied is one of the best research data collection methods. The author suggests that the data collected must be descriptive so that readers can understand what happened and how it happened. According to Green (2007), data collected from observation can also help design interview questions and the appropriate person to contact for interviews. For example, the researcher identified key participants while observing the interactions during the Kumba 2 council meeting. At the end of the meeting, the researcher approached some attendees to schedule interviews with them.

Participant observations help researchers to observe events that informants may be unwilling to share or notice information that participants had described in interviews, thereby making researchers aware of inaccuracies or consistencies in the data set (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). While conducting interviews for this research, some participants revealed that councillors had taken deliberation on ordering the Kumba government delegate (GD) to sell old waste trucks and buy new ones, but the GD did nothing. At the informal Kumba 2 meeting, councillors complained about the lack of

good waste disposal trucks in Kumba because the GD failed to act on the council deliberation. This information confirmed what some participants said in the interviews about the GD having a different vision and priorities for the city.

The different visions for the city's administration led to power struggles between the mayors and the GD, thus leading to conflicts at the municipal level. Participant observation can increase the validity or credibility of the study as observations may help the researcher better understand the context and phenomena under study (Kawulich, 2005). According to Wahyuni (2012), credibility deals with the accuracy of the data to reflect the observed social phenomena under study. The researcher also heard what was said in the interviews about selling old waste trucks to buy new ones for waste disposal during the informal Kumba 2 council meeting, thus making the information credible. According to Kawulich (2005), validity is stronger with other data collection methods like interviews, documents and focus groups. This study used semi-structured interviews, archival records, and participant observation as data collection methods.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

In qualitative studies, researchers collect data through interviews, focus groups, observation, written materials, and audio-visual materials. In this study, interviews were the primary source for gathering data to answer the research questions, supplemented by documents and participant observation data. According to Abbott et al. (2004), documents present few ethical issues because they identify individuals or institutions that publish them, and in most cases, they are in the public domain. Grinyer (2009) suggests that in cases where documents are already in the public domain, any reader can undertake

a secondary analysis without obtaining the author's consent. Similarly, Driscoll and Brizee (2012) argue that researchers do not need authors' permission for publicly available documents. However, Neuman (2011) suggests that primary sources occasionally raise ethical questions of privacy and confidentiality. Therefore, to overcome these ethical issues, this researcher cited all primary and secondary sources so that other researchers could verify the references (Neuman, 2011). Researchers have also expressed ethical concerns regarding using emerging technologies such as digital audio and video recordings and digital images. According to Banister (2007), researchers planning to use digital tools must obtain informed consent from participants. Participants must be informed that they can review the various types of files and give final approval before publication. Participants must also know the venues in which the data may be published. Regarding the ability to withdraw from the study, the author suggests that participants must know that they can withdraw once data collection is finished or withdraw data from websites or other distribution media if they feel exploited or threatened.

In contrast, interviews raise serious ethical questions about protecting the rights of research participants. According to Orb et al. (2000), the research process creates tension between the research's benefits and the participants' rights to maintain privacy. Qualitative research seeks to describe a social phenomenon from the participant's points of view through interviews or observation. Therefore, the researcher's goal is to listen to the voice of the participants or observe them in their natural environments (Orb et al., 2000). In qualitative research, the personal interaction between the researcher and participants in interviews or observation has ethical implications. Therefore, research

involving people's participation in their everyday environment requires an awareness of the ethical issues that may result from such interactions (Orb et al., 2000).

Ethics, therefore, is concerned with doing what is good and avoiding what is harmful to research participants. For example, interviewing victims of violence may trigger painful memories, which might cause the participant to be distressed during the interview. The moral obligation of the researcher is to stop the discussion and refer the participant for counselling. Stopping the interview suggests that the researcher understands the participants' vulnerability and rights (Orb et al., 2000). Therefore, the protection of the rights of participants in any research is important. Orb et al. (2000) suggest that ethical dilemmas from an interview are difficult to predict, but the researcher needs to be aware of sensitive issues and potential conflicts of interest. In addition, interviews pose legal risks to researchers and participants in some countries. Researchers may be required by law to report certain information about child or elder abuse, drug trafficking or crimes, and courts may subpoena the researcher's records.

Therefore, the difficulties inherent in qualitative research can be minimised using well-established ethical principles (Orb et al., 2000). According to Wahyuni (2012), the interviewer should start the interview by briefly explaining the aim of the interview and emphasising the confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary nature of the interview. Orb et al. (2000) identified three ethical principles: autonomy, beneficence, and justice, which this researcher followed. The principle of autonomy states that participants have the right as autonomous persons to accept or refuse to participate in a study voluntarily. Therefore, the autonomy principle concerns respecting participants' rights (Green, 2007). Respect

for participants' rights involves the right to be informed about a study, the right to decide whether to participate freely and the right to withdraw from the study without penalty.

According to Orb et al. (2000), in a qualitative study, this principle of autonomy is expressed by informed consent, which deals with the respect for the privacy of participants. This principle requires the researcher to obtain the consent of participants, including their right to be informed about the study and their right to participate and withdraw at any time without penalty. Green (2007) suggests that participants must freely consent to the study without being coerced or unfairly pressured. Likewise, DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) suggest that participants can disengage from a research study anytime. Guion et al.(2001) indicate that at the beginning of the interview, it is important for the researcher to make a brief introduction and explain the purpose of the study to put the participants at ease. Also, the researcher should obtain the interviewee's permission if he plans to audio record the interview. Therefore, before conducting interviews for this study, the researcher obtained the consent of participants, explained to the participants the intent, nature, and importance of the research (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006), and provided sufficient facts to enable respondents to decide whether to participate or withdraw from the study (Banister, 2007).

The second principle is beneficence. This principle involves doing good for others and preventing unintended harm to participants. The principle of beneficence deals with the confidentiality and anonymity of the identity of research participants. To reduce the risk of unanticipated harm to participants, researchers have a moral obligation to conceal and protect the identity of participants. Green (2007) suggests that it is essential to protect the identity of participants. If collected, the participant's identity must always be

protected. According to Orb et al. (2000), using pseudonyms can overcome these ethical dilemmas. During an interview, a participant could share information that may threaten his job security or expose him to unintended harm. Therefore, the shared information must remain anonymous and protected from those whose interests conflict with the participants (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). In addition to concealing the identity of participants, the semi-structured interview format also helps to verify and clarify any sensitive issues during the interviews (Guion et al., 2001). However, confidentiality and anonymity can be breached by legal requirements in cases where the researcher's data are subpoenaed for legal purposes (Orb et al., 2000). In this study, participants' identities were concealed from the data collection phase to the analysis phase and will remain concealed.

The third principle is justice. This principle has to do with fairness and equality. This principle requires researchers to avoid exploiting and abusing participants for personal gain. In addition, the researcher should not put an additional burden on an already vulnerable or powerless group of participants (Orb et al., 2000). DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) suggest that one way to overcome this is for researchers to acknowledge the contributions that respondents make to the success of their research. In keeping with this principle, this researcher acknowledged all those who participated in this research without mentioning their names. Finally, to overcome these ethical dilemmas, especially if the information will jeopardise participants' jobs or expose them to political repression, this researcher did not use the true names of any of the participants. The Researcher did not pay or promise to pay any participant for participating in this research.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

According to Kawulich (2004), although there are many different techniques for analysing qualitative data, there is no prescribed method. However, the author argues that the chosen method must stem from the research questions, the study's theoretical foundation, and the appropriateness of a technique that will make sense of the data. This study used thematic analysis because it is used to analyse text such as interview transcripts (Caulfield, 2019) and large amounts of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The primary data source in this research was interviews complemented by observation and documents. Therefore, the data captured from the interviews, observations and documents were converged in the analysis process rather than treated separately (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

3.6.1 Thematic Analysis

There are various approaches to conducting thematic analysis. However, this research used the most common approach that follows the six-step process developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The six steps include: (1) familiarising with data, (2) coding, (3) searching themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. The thematic analysis makes use of codes. A code is a brief description or a label assigned to what is being said in an interview. The purpose is to identify and summarise important ideas or concepts within a data set, such as an interview. The process of assigning codes is called coding, where you categorise data to allow the researcher to develop themes and patterns of meaning. A theme is a topic, ideas, concepts or patterns of meaning that repeatedly emerge within a data set.

Therefore, grouping codes into themes summarises sections of data that could help answer research questions and achieve research aims and objectives.

Thematic analysis refers to “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data.” (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79). It involves the search for and identification of common themes that extend across a data set. In other words, thematic analysis is about analysing the themes within your data set to identify meaning. Identifying every possible theme in the data is unnecessary, but it is important to focus on the key aspects that relate to the research questions. According to Green (2007), the thematic analysis looks across all the data set to identify the common issues that reoccur and identify the main themes that summarise all the views collected. Similarly, Bowen (2009) suggests that thematic analysis involves a careful, more focused reading and reviewing of documents or texts. The researcher looks at the selected data set, coding and categorising it based on their characteristics to uncover themes pertinent to the phenomenon under study. The author notes that thematic analysis is a form of pattern recognition within the data, with emerging themes becoming the categories for analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis is a foundational qualitative data analysis method. In the article, the authors claim that although thematic analysis shares common features with other approaches like discourse, narrative and content analyses, a thematic analysis should be viewed as a foundational method for qualitative analysis. As a foundational method, Braun and Clarke suggest that thematic analysis should be the first qualitative method of analysis that researchers should learn because it provides essential skills useful in conducting other forms of qualitative analysis. They argue that qualitative researchers should consider thematic analysis as an independent and

reliable qualitative approach to analysis. In addition, Braun and Clarke suggest that thematic analysis provides a rich and detailed yet complex account of the data. They conclude that thematic analysis, though not defined as a named qualitative method of analysis, is a widely used qualitative analytic method within and beyond psychology as many analyses are essentially thematic

Thematic analysis was suitable for this study because the researcher aimed at understanding how decentralisation intensified intrastate conflicts from participants' opinions and experiences. According to Caulfield (2019), thematic analysis is appropriate when the researcher is trying to find out something from people's views, experiences, feelings, knowledge, and values from qualitative data like interviews and conversations. In addition, thematic analysis is appropriate for answering the what, how, and why research questions. The research questions in this study are phrased in the how and what format; therefore, it was natural to use a thematic analysis. For example: How did decentralisation exacerbate conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government? What is decentralisation, and how is it implemented in the Anglophone regions? How do Anglophones perceive the decentralisation program? What are the experiences of Anglophones under the decentralisation program? What reasons motivate Anglophones to continue their struggle for autonomy? These examples of the research questions centre on participants' subjective experiences and aims to assess participants' views, opinions and experiences.

The flexibility in sorting large amounts of data was another reason for using thematic analysis. Different participants were interviewed to collect data to answer the research questions. The semi-structured interviews generated a large amount of data from

49 key informants. As a result, thematic analysis was beneficial in sorting the large amount of data set into themes that were easier to digest and interpret (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions. It represents some degree of patterned response or meaning within the data set.

There are different overarching theoretical approaches to thematic analysis. The choice of approach depends on the type of data you are analysing and what you are trying to achieve with your analysis. According to Braun and Clark (2006), a good thematic analysis ensures that the interpretations of the data are consistent with the theoretical framework. There is a distinction between the inductive and the deductive approaches. This means that themes or patterns within data can be identified as either inductive or deductive, and it is possible to take more than one approach. The deductive thematic analysis tends to be driven by the researcher's theoretical or analytical interests in the topic; that is, it is analyst-driven, while the inductive thematic analysis is data-driven or data determine themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to the authors, an inductive approach means that the themes identified are strongly linked to the collected data set or themes that emerge from the data set. Therefore, inductive analysis is coding the data without trying to fit the data into a pre-existing coding framework or the researcher’s analytical preconceptions. In this regard, thematic analysis is data-driven (Braun & Clarke; Patton, 1990). Likewise, Thorne (2000) suggests that the inductive approach uses data to generate ideas or themes (Thorne, 2000). Caulfield (2019) suggests that the inductive approach allows the data to determine your theme. This study used the inductive approach because the themes were mainly derived from the data.

There is also the distinction between semantic and latent themes. This distinction deals with the level at which themes are identified. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that the thematic analysis focuses exclusively on one level. It is either a semantic or latent thematic analysis. According to the authors, under the semantic approach, themes are identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data. The analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant said or what is captured in the data. In contrast, the latent approach goes beyond the surface meaning of the data. It starts to identify the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data. This research used the semantic approach because themes were identified according to the overt or surface meaning of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This research used a combination of inductive and semantic approaches because themes were data-driven, and the researcher aimed to analyse the stated, explicit opinions and experiences expressed by participants. However, ideas or concepts from the theory of decentralisation were not completely ignored.

Furthermore, there is a distinction between the positivist and interpretive/constructivist paradigms. A researcher with a positivist paradigm regards reality as something “out there”, an independent reality in the world that can be discovered using a quantitative methodology (Tubey et al., 2015). Positivist researchers do not regard themselves as important variables and remain detached from the studied phenomenon. Research findings in quantitative studies are usually represented in numerical data. On the other hand, interpretive researchers do not view reality as something “out there” which exists irrespective of people; rather, they see reality as a human construct (Tuli, 2010). The interpretive research paradigm views reality and

meaning-making as socially constructed and holds that people make their own sense of social reality. They see the world as constructed, interpreted, and experienced by people in social interactions (Tubey et al., 2015).

Researchers within the interpretive paradigm are concerned about uncovering or deconstructing the meanings of a phenomenon being studied. According to Thorne (2000), they are more focused on why a phenomenon operates the way it does (interpretation) than how it does (explanation). They aim to understand why things are the way they are in the social world and why people act the way they do (Tubey et al. l, 2015). The basic assumption of the interpretive or constructivist paradigm is that meaning is embedded in the participants' experiences, and this meaning is mediated through the researcher's perceptions (Merriam, 2002). The findings are usually reported descriptively using words. (Tubey et al., 2015). Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that under the constructivist or interpretive paradigm, meaning and experience are socially produced rather than inherent within individuals. Therefore, thematic analysis conducted within a constructivist framework focuses on the sociocultural contexts and structural conditions which enable the participants to provide their experiences. The researcher's goal was to understand how decentralisation increased conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone majority-led government from the participants' perspective, thus necessitating thematic analysis.

This study followed the six-step process of thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) to analyse the data set. The process begins during the data collection phase and ends with reporting the content and meaning of the themes. Braun and Clarke (2006:15) state that "analysis involves a constant moving back and forward between the

entire data set, the coded extracts of data that you are analysing, and the analysis of the data that you are producing. Writing is an integral part of the analysis, not something that takes place at the end….” Therefore, as data was being collected, the researcher started reading, rereading, jotting down preliminary codes, and thinking of potential patterns of meaning.

The first step is familiarisation with the data. The researcher's goal at this stage is to know the depth and breadth of the data. In qualitative research, data analysis is done simultaneously with data collection to enable the researcher to make the necessary adjustment during the data collection process (Merriam, 2002). The collection process is followed by immersion, which involves reading and rereading the data collected to understand it. During the fieldwork, interviews were conducted, and one informal council meeting was attended. So, the initial steps of the familiarisation process with the data involved reading the data as interviews were conducted. After that, all the interviews were transcribed, including the notes from the informal council meeting and the 1960 proposed federal constitution. As data was typed, the researcher continued to read the data, noting initial ideas, searching for meaning and marking ideas for coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step two is generating initial codes. Coding for this research was done manually. This step involved reading through the data and identifying interesting aspects of the data items that formed repeated patterns or themes across the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Caulfield (2019), coding means highlighting sections of the data set, usually phrases or sentences, and using shorthand labels or codes to describe their content. Neuman (2011) suggests that researchers focus on the data and assign code labels for

themes. Data items that were relevant and repeatedly emerged to form patterns or themes across the data set were highlighted. The highlighted texts from each data item were copied and used as data extracts. Codes were then derived from segments of the data extracts. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that all data extracts must be coded. Each code describes the idea or feeling expressed in that part of the text.

Step three is searching for themes. This step begins when all data has been initially coded and collated, and there is a long list of the different codes identified across the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This phase involves sorting the different codes into potential themes. Several codes are combined to form a theme. Neuman (2011) states that the focus is more on the initial coded themes than the data. The researcher examines the created codes to identify patterns and develops themes (Caulfield (2019). Themes are broader than codes; therefore, the researcher combines several codes into a single theme. The data and the themes identified were directly relevant to the research questions.

Step four is reviewing themes. This phase involves the refinement of the themes. At this stage, some themes might not be real themes if there is insufficient data to support them; others might be combined to form one theme, while others may be broken down into separate themes. Data within themes should cohere meaningfully and form a coherent pattern. Also, there must be clear distinctions between themes, and the researcher must consider the validity of individual themes to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this phase, the themes must accurately represent the data (Caulfield, 2019). The six themes identified in step three were reduced to five themes.

Step five is defining and naming themes. During this phase, the themes are defined and further refined for analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this

phase involves identifying the essence of each theme and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures. A detailed analysis will be conducted and written for each theme. Each theme should tell a story and indicate how it fits the overall story about the data and the research questions. The researcher must identify whether the themes contain sub-themes as part of the refinement. According to Caulfield (2019), defining themes means formulating what each theme means and how it helps in understanding the data. For example, fiscal transfers could be further refined as the council's revenue autonomy. The five themes identified in step four were reduced to four themes and their sub-themes.

Step six is producing the report. In this phase, the researcher tells the story of the data in a way that convinces the reader of the merit and validity of the analysis. The write-up must provide sufficient evidence of the themes within the data, that is, citing enough data extracts to demonstrate the prevalence of the theme across the data set. The interpretations and analytic points must be consistent with the data extracts. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the data extracts need to be woven within the analytical narrative to illustrate the story being told about the data convincingly. The analytical narrative should go beyond the data description to make an argument in relation to the research questions. Though distinct, each theme is linked to the overall research questions. The analysis, where relevant, is broadened from a descriptive to an interpretive level, relating the claims to existing literature. The analytic claims must be grounded in, but must also go beyond, the overt or explicit meaning of the data, even for a semantic-level analysis like this study (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.6.2 Applying the Six-step Process by Braun and Clarke

3.6.2.1 Step 1: Familiarising with the data set

The researcher's goal at this stage is to know the depth and breadth of the data. To achieve this goal, the researcher read and reread the data to get familiar with it.

3.6.2.2 Step 2: Generating initial codes from all the data.

The researcher highlighted relevant phrases and sentences in the data set. The highlighted texts from each data item were copied and used as data extracts. Codes were then derived from segments of the data extracts.

Table 1: *Generating initial codes*

Extracts	Codes
Group 1 participants: SDO Representatives (2) The Senior Divisional Officer (SDO) must approve all municipal deliberations. He advises during deliberations. Council deliberations are only executed after they have been approved by the SDO. The SDO is the eye of the State over councils. The SDO's role is to make sure that the laws of the State are followed.	SDO must approve all council decisions Adviser State representatives over councils

The SDO listens to councillors, but he ensures that council decisions are in line with state laws. During council meetings, he can give advice, but when it is not accepted and the deliberation comes for approval, he will not sign it. From time to time, the SDO can intervene to advise when the councillors are not acting in conformity with prescribed texts. He plays an advisory role during council sessions so that councillors can make decisions in conformity with existing law. By doing this, he is already supervising the decentralisation process by advising the councillors to make deliberations in conformity with the law. The SDO is the representative of the State at the councils. He protects the interest of the State. The laws are ambiguous, and the tendency is for people to interpret them in their favour, causing conflicts. Those who attend council meetings with the SDO entourage, as the custom is, receive fuel money. Not all the ministries have transferred competencies, and not all competencies from ministries have been fully transferred as well. The decentralisation program is a gradual process so not all competencies have been transferred. The fact that power has been transferred to councils does not mean that the State cannot intervene. The power transferred to the councils is not exclusive. Even though some competencies have been transferred, a lot of	Conformity to state laws Uniformity of decisions Observer Supervisor/oversight role Intervention Limited council power Protects state interests Ambiguous law Conflicts Fuel money Devolved competencies Gradual process Concurrent jurisdiction Local control National policy

decision-making is still done at the central administration in Yaoundé. Because of this, mayors do not have a free hand in deciding where to locate projects according to the needs of the people. The creation of City Councils was a political move to curb the power of councils. The government introduced Government Delegates (GD) to control the powers of the councils. There is no effective decentralisation in Cameroon because decisions still come from Yaoundé and the SDO still has the authority to sanction the decisions of mayors. He still lords it over them. In the event of conflicts, the GD or mayor can refer the matter to the SDO for arbitration.	Control over mayors Limit mayors' powers Yaoundé makes final decisions SDO controls mayors SDO is a mediator
Group 2 Participants: GD Representatives (2) The GD is appointed by presidential decree to work with mayors of councils who feel that they are elected while GD is appointed; consequently, there are always conflicts. When there is a conflict between the Kumba city councils (KCC) and the sub-divisional councils (SDCs), the city councils take precedents. If the SDCs deliberate on a matter and the KCC is also interested in the matter, the GD has precedent; that is, the decision of the SDCs shall not contradict the GD. This can lead	Conflicts between GD and mayors Local conflicts

to too much fighting, a lot of fighting because a ruling party appointee is coming to control them. The mayors think that the GD and the SG were appointed; therefore, this is an ideological conflict and antagonism between the mayors and GD.	Ideological conflicts
KCC also assesses, collects, and retains local taxes.	Own revenue
The GD can recruit only Cat 1-6, but Cat 1-6 staff with higher qualifications can be reclassified. It is easy to recruit but difficult to dismiss. Cat 1-6 may be easy, but Cat 7-12 need the minister's signature. They have the authority to recruit and terminate staff according to the law.	Limited power to hire and fire staff
First, the CG has been implementing the law progressively since 2004 up till now. It seems that there is no willingness for the government to decentralise.	Gradual process in implementing decentralisation.
The CG has not placed councils in their budget, and they say councils are autonomous bodies. This is like selling a goat and still holding the rope. The law suggests that councils are financially autonomous but the council cannot pay contractors directly from their own accounts.	Lack of political will Council's lack of financial autonomy
There are some councils that are relying only on the FEICOM money because they do not have other stable sources of revenue	Perception

Mayors feel that they have won the election while GDs who have not been appointed to lord over them. There are also conflicts in areas of collecting revenue. Kumba 1 claims that the Kumba city council (KCC) is collecting revenue where they are supposed to collect Thoroughfare Tax (TFT); consequently, they have taken the KCC to court. The government collects these taxes and then redistributes them to all councils. Councils must request technical assistance before staff with specialised skills may be sent to councils from the central government. Some of the competencies have been transferred, but the accompanying resources have not been transferred; thus it becomes difficult to execute projects. This 11 February celebration is not a council event but a national event. However, BCC is now using its meagre resources to support the event instead of focusing on projects that will meet the needs of the people. Other projects come from elites who lobby the State to send projects to their constituents. Some of these projects are not according to the priority needs of the councils but according to the strength of the elites in lobbying the state government.	Councils rely on the government for finances. GD lords over mayors Conflicts in collecting local revenue Redistribution of taxes Councils lack qualified staff Councils lack resources to execute projects SDO's unethical behaviour

	Elite Influence in lobbying the government
Group 3 participants: Council SGs (3) The financial assistance comes in the form of credit cards and they are earmarked. The Central government specifies what the councils should do with the money on behalf of the ministries. Mayors have the authority to execute projects below 5 million and not for projects above 5 million CFA. For eight years here, we have not published council documents, citizens do not come, and they do not care. Council meetings are open to the public, but only a few attend. In council meetings, citizens cannot make contributions, but they can make complaints to their councillors. There is conflict in the collection of revenue because the laws are ambiguous, and the interpretation is fluid. Presently, Kumba 1 is at loggerheads with KCC because there are certain taxes that we collect and others that they collect. There is a problem over who should collect revenue over a particular area. The Decentralisation fund is inadequate. The council is given responsibilities without the necessary funds to operate. For	Earmarked projects National planning Mayors have limited expenditure power. Council documents are not accessible to the public Citizens can not participate in council meetings/ Local conflicts because of ambiguous laws Lack of resources

projects below five million, the mayor does not award the contract to the TB. He can choose anybody to do it. But for projects above five million, the award must be done through the Tender Board. For CAT 7-12, staff, the mayor sends the decision to terminate the SDO who visas it and then sends it to Yaounde	Councils lack funds Mayors lack decision-making power over projects
When there is a conflict between the GD and the Mayor, you invite the SDO who plays the role of pacifier not providing any lasting solution. Since the law is not clear, it is difficult even for the SDO to provide a lasting solution to local conflicts between the GD and the mayors.	SDO mediates conflicts between GD & mayors
The transfers of competencies do not match the resources councils receive. The laws are ambiguous and the tendency is for people to interpret them in their favour, causing conflicts.	Councils lack finances
If you are a mayor, you may feel uninterested because you are not the one in charge, and you may be discouraged. Payments are not done by the council. The vouchers and support documents are done by the council but the actual payment is done at the regional treasury in Buea.	Ambiguous laws cause local conflicts Mayors lack decision-making power
The mayor takes care of the fuel of the SDO and his entourage. Our system is corrupt, the SDO is a civil servant, and his salary should take care of him. But from common practice, the SDO requests fuel before attending council meetings. Some are even bold to say if you do not send fuel, they will not attend. The	Unethical practices

money should be sent in advance. If the SDO does not attend the meeting, nothing happens to him. The SDO signs all council deliberations; so, if the mayor does not send his fuel money, the SDO might not sign council deliberations.	Fuel money for the SDO approval
So, the transfer of competencies is done at the level of the ministries. Some ministries are doing it while others are dragging their feet. It is a gradual process.	SDO's approval power Lack of political will
The GD and mayors cannot work together without conflict because they are coming from two different political backgrounds. They govern over the same population within the same territory without clearly distinct responsibilities.	Dragging feet GD & mayors have different ideologies
The government gives the GD more lucrative sources of revenue. So, from the start, the elected mayor is already angry. He is elected but the GD is appointed. The council raised locally only about 20% of its total budget in 2015 and almost the same amount in 2016.	Undefined roles Resource allocation between GD & mayors Local revenue
Local problems are quickly attended to. The mayor is closer to the people and can easily solve their problems. Local problems are easily resolved and this will improve the economic, social, and cultural well-being of the people.	Decentralisation brings government closer to people
The Action Plan is a control mechanism that constrains the mayor. It shows what the mayor can do for that fiscal year. The	

Action Plan is deliberated by the municipal councillors and approved by the senior divisional officer.	AP controls over mayors
The mayor cannot employ above Cat 7 staff but what he does is that he employs someone under Cat 6 and that staff can be reclassified.	Recruiting council staff
The Mayor said that the minister told them that they must come to Yaoundé about 12 times a year to lobby for projects.	
Role of councils before 1996: Councils were in charge of the removal of waste, street lighting, provision of water, sporting facilities, leisure and culture	National planning Council's role before 1996
The mayor can fix local taxes after deliberation with the councillors at council meetings. The use of Simba Software in accounting records helps the MT, SG and mayor to know what the council receives and spends on.	Local control by technology
The public attends council meetings to listen only. They are observers only. They cannot contribute directly, but they can make their complaints and observations to their councillors, who are their representatives, and only the councillors can table the complaints of their constituents at council meetings. Councillors vote for their mayor and two deputies. The citizens complain to their councillors, who then bring their concerns to council sessions.	Limited citizen participation at councils Councillors vote mayors Councillors are mediators

The law says the council must publish resolutions, but we don't because the people don't ask us. For the two years that I have been here, only one person from the civil society has come to the council to examine our books and see how the budget is implemented, which means that people are ignorant of the law. The SDO, DO, security agents, and divisional delegates are present in all council meetings. The mayor can recruit only Cat 1-6. For Cat 7-12, the mayor recruits and sends the document to the SDO for approval and then to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation (MTAD). CAT 1-6. At this level, the mayor can dismiss staff for misconduct. But the mayor has to send justification to the SDO, who must approve before removal. For categories 7-12, At this level, the mayor sends letters through the SDO to the MTA D	Citizens are ignorance of law Security presence at council meetings Mayors have limited powers to hire and fire staff
Group 4 participants: Municipal Treasurers (5) The Taxation department collects some municipal taxes and forwards them to FEICOM to redistribute as assistance or subventions to councils. FEICOME also gives loans to councils and councils do not pay any interest on those loans. FEICOM pays subvention quarterly, but the money is not regular. FEICOM is a support fund for councils. The money they send to councils is not earmarked for specific projects. The amount from FEICOM	National taxing power FEICOM makes transfers to councils Transfers from FEICOM are not earmarked

varies depending on the population of the council municipality. FEICOM is the principal financial bank for councils. Councils borrow/take loans from FEICOM and payback. The law says council records are open to the public, but the common citizen does not know whether they can access those records. However, the council does not really give the record if people come. Council sessions are open to the public, but the people only listen, and they cannot propose new ideas or participate. The public's proposal or participation must go through their municipal councillor. In Bamenda, we have two opposition councils and one council belonging to the ruling party. The councillors in the opposition party do not recognize and respect the authority of the GD because he was appointed by the ruling party. FEICOM gives the council additional tax FEICOM quarterly. The criteria for redistribution are based on the population of the council area. The amount is not regular and it is not fixed. The councils can borrow or take loans from FEICOM, and equipment project loans and the council will agree on the modality of repayment and FEICOM will take the money at the source, the additional council taxes. The mayor has the discretion to spend the money however he wants. Council collects and deposits in a	Grants, loans from FEICOM FEICOM is council's bank Limited access to council's records Low civic activism Conflicts between councillors and GD Councils can borrow and take loans from FEICOM Mayor's discretionary powers

regional account. and FEICOM redistributes to all councils equally. State transfer Credit=PIB. It comes with specific instructions. This money comes in the form of credit cards and it is regular. It comes with specific instructions. Mayors have no discretion. Subventions from City Councils and mayors have discretion. Sixty per cent of the council's budget is used for functioning expenditure, while forty per cent is used for investment expenditure. The central government fixes rates, and the criteria are uniform for the whole country. First, we receive subvention from the Kumba city council in the sum of five million CFA ($10,000) each quarter and 20,000 CFA ($40000) each year for general use. Second, dues from building permits and it depends on the construction of buildings in the whole KCC area. Local Communal taxes, mayors have discretions. For local taxes like query tax, cattle tax, market fees, transit tax, parking tax, and advertising tax, the councils assess, collect, and keep. It varies but average say 20%. Subventions from the city council. This comes quarterly, with five million FCFA ($10000) per quarter, a total of 20 million FCFA ($ 40000). The mayor has the discretion	PIB funds are earmarked Subventions from city councils National planning Subventions from city councils Local taxes about 20%

to spend the money however he wants. Global tax: mayors have discretion on how it is spent. The Council itself can fix and collect taxes, fees and charges and keep. The council collects quarry fees and penalty fees from defaulters. However, these sources do not give the council adequate money to initiate and complete projects within the council. Common Decentralisation Investment Grant received from the State=CDF. The amount is not fixed. This money is earmarked for specific projects, so it cannot be used for other projects. And control will come for the projects at the end of the year. This money comes from various ministries that have decentralised specific competencies. The credit cards come with specific instructions, with the amount and the project. Yaoundé makes these decisions, not the councils. The mayor is the first vote holder; that is, he signs that the project is completed and the contractor should be paid. National Decentralisation Fund. The NDF is divided into recurrent and investment funds. Recurrent is for the payment of salaries and buying of office equipment, while investment fund is for projects. For recurrent expenditure, the mayor has discretion, but for the investment fund, the payments are already specified by	Council can fix local taxes Insufficient funds from local taxes CDF is earmarked Credit cards come from Yaounde Control of the funds NDF is earmarked

the State. The fund comes for specified projects, so the mayor does not have any discretion to spend it. National Decentralisation Fund (NDF). They provide financial assistance with specific instructions for specific projects from the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation and from the Ministry of Public Contracts. The decentralisation law has been implemented piecemeal. It is like selling a goat and still holding it with a rope. Mayors have the right to recruit and dismiss erring staff except those that the central government transferred to councils.	NDF funds come with specific instructions Piecemeal implementation of decentralisation Mayors have limited control over staff
Group 5 Participants: Mayors & Rep (5) The election is poorly done. It is only managed by the government. At times, the results are even known before they are officially read by the supreme court. Any election organised by ELECAM cannot be free and fair and transparent because all the senior officials are members of the CPDM and appointed by the president. Mayors can borrow from national banks based on our collateral security. For us to borrow, we need a deliberation from the councillors. To borrow from international banks, we need consent	Unfair elections Mayors have limited borrowing power

from the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation.	
Mayors have the authority to borrow money from the national and international banks with the consent of the ministry of territorial administration and decentralisation.	Mayors can initiate projects below 5 million.
I initiated a road project and culvert costing 30 million CFA ($60,000) and then referred it to the Divisional TB to award the contract to a competent contractor. The councils have the authority to decide where the projects should be carried out. The mayor looks for a contractor, and the engineers of Public Works prepare Tender documents and do the supervision because the amount is over 5 million. It is only the Ministry of public works that gives us the power to decide. But other ministries decide on projects already and send them to councils without councils' input.	Projects above 5 million are sent to Tender Board
KCC collects advertisement tax, building permit tax, and market rents; they collect rents from all parks in Kumba, and the SDCs are left with little or nothing to develop their own municipality.	City councils have more lucrative sources of revenue
Following the 1997 first multi-party council elections, SDF won most of the big towns, and the government decided to create the post of GD to oversee these big towns.	GD positions initiated to curtail mayors' power
We have two masters who are not elected, the SDO and the GD.	SDO & GD control over mayors

Yes, for projects below 5 million CFA, mayors have the authority to initiate and complete them at their discretion. But for projects above 5 million, the mayor initiates but hands it over to the Tender Board to award to contractors. However, the mayor is still the authorising officer responsible for supervising the work until it is complete and approved.	Mayos have limited expenditure power
Yes, the highest level of employment is cat 6. If you have a degree, the council employs you at Cat 6 and then reclassifies those with higher certificates. There must be a deliberation before employment and the budget for it: Cat 1-6. For Cat 7-12, we can employ cat 6 and then reclassify through the ministry of MTA&D. Dismissal: For CAT 1-6 staff, the mayor prepares a decision to terminate, Labour and SDO must approve before dismissal. For CAT 7-12, the mayor sends it to SDO and he sends it to Yaounde for final approval.	Mayors have limited authority to hire and fire staff
I cannot be the DO and see the opposition win. The DO was intimidating people. One of my councillors even caught a man buying votes and the police were called and he was arrested and taken to the police station.	Unfair elections
The GD is the city mayor. He has the same functions as the mayors. But all the principal sources of revenue like markets, parks, and building permits are under the control of the GD.	GD has better sources of local revenue

Since we have the same functions but the principal sources of revenue are under the city council, when we try to create new income-generating sources, it leads to conflicts.	Creation of new sources of income creates conflicts
We lack the necessary technicians, just three engineers are attached to Kumba city councils, Mbonge and Konye councils. Since we have a high demand for the technicians to take them out of the office for a job, they are being paid; we give them tips to assist councils with their coverts, bridges, and roads.	Councils lacked qualified staff Unethical behaviour
So, to frustrate and punish SDF, the population of Kumba was reduced in the last census and since the Additional Council Tax and Public Investment Budget is calculated as a function of the population, Kumba is not receiving what it is supposed to receive because of these misleading numbers. The population is greater than the revenue sent to the division.	Kumba council receiving fewer transfers from the government Population is greater than revenue received
Any election organised by ELECAM can't be free, fair, and transparent because all the senior officials of ELECAM are members of the CPDM party and appointed by the president. In Cameroon, we have what is known as advanced democracy; that is, the results of elections are known before elections are organised.	Unfair elections
The councillors during their first session, elect their executives=the mayor, deputies, and committee members.	Councillors elect mayors

The central government has now centralised the assessment and collection of taxes, and then they will give what is necessary to councils.	Centralised tax system
When the council sends a list of projects to the central government through the different ministerial departments, sometimes they will not look at it, but people with connections in Yaoundé will go there and fight for projects.	Elite influence in projects
Each year the council prepares their project proposals and sends them to the ministry concerning that project. Each ministry will receive all the projects, prioritise them, and then send them to the ministry in charge of collecting all projects. If the projects are approved by the central government, they will then send them back to the councils in the form of a Credit Card, which suggests that the central government has approved the projects.	Central planning of projects
What the council raised locally averaged about 15-20% in 2015 and 2016.	Local revenue
Citizens can attend council meetings but they are not allowed to make contributions. Their voices are heard through their councillors, who are the go-between the people and the council.	Citizens voice
The councillors elect the mayors and the people elect the councillors on the party list.	Party-list system

Group 6 participants: Councillors (9)	
According to council laws, councillors elect mayors in their first session. Councillors have the authority to elect their mayor under the supervision of the SDO. Once the executive is elected, the SDO endorses the list and sends it to MTA &D for approval. However, in the SDF, after the council is won, councillors who are interested in leadership positions apply to the National Executive Council (NEC). NEC selects the aspiring mayors and deputies as well as the GC following certain criteria. As per SDF, it is the party that finally selects the mayors and their deputies and GC, not the councillors per se. But sometimes, the councillors may reject the choice of NEC and impose their own candidates.	Councillors elect mayors under the SDO's supervision SDF party influences the selection of mayors
Now when we win, the councillors meet privately and have an internal arrangement to choose those who will be mayors, deputies, and GC. The list is then sent to the Investiture Committee (IC) for approval. Councillors who aspire to be mayors, deputies and GC must apply to the National Executive Committee (NEC). After approving the list, NEC sends the list to the Investiture Committee (IC), which gives the final approval. But sometimes, the councillors can unanimously reject a candidate proposed by either NEC or IC. If the councillors are satisfied with the list, they keep it. If they are not, they can protest by voting for the candidates of their choice. Step two is rarely done except where the councillors have a solid reason to reject	Councillors meet privately to select mayors. Councillors can reject the party's choice for mayor Party's role in selecting mayors

the decision of NIC. However, the party plays an important role in selecting and appointing mayors according to the party's interests.	
Citizens are allowed to attend but they do not have any say in the plenary session. The people can attend council meetings but they cannot make contributions because the councillors represent them in these meetings.	Limited citizens' voice
Yes, after five years. But sometimes, the president, when there is an emergency or disturbance in the country, can extend the mandates of councillors.	President's authority to fix election dates
Councillors in Cameroon are elected through a list system; that is, each political party comes up with a list of councillors on the day of the election. The various party lists compete and the winning list forms the councillors in a council.	Choosing councillor
Citizens do not directly vote for councillors but they vote for a party list. Therefore, councillors are not accountable to the people. When there are many aspirants in a Ward, there are internal primaries and the district comes to supervise. Only members of the ward who have been paying their dues are required to vote, respecting the other clauses. The winner of the primary is endorsed by the ward and the district confirms and the person is put on the list. The list must go through a rigorous process by the party.	Party-list system Accountability of councillors

The GD is answerable to the powers that appointed him. Therefore, he behaves like a super mayor in Kumba. Mayors must effectively manage their municipality well to be re-elected. But the GD is answerable to the president and not to the electorate. So, there is a power struggle between elected mayors and GD.	GD Accountability Power struggle between GD & mayors
The City council controls most of the revenue-generating sectors of the municipality, which is why we take expensive projects to the CB. The City Council also receives state subventions more than the Sub-divisional councils.	City councils have lucrative revenue sources
The GD carries out projects at the CC at his discretion. Because the GD executes projects at his discretion, there is a conflict between the GD and the mayors and between the GC and the GD because he neglects their PP. The GD has the power to do only the projects that he wants and there is nothing councillors can do.	GD implements projects he wants
The decentralisation program in Cameroon is only on paper because the implementation process is very poor as a result of too many bottlenecks.	Bottlenecks
The municipality needs a borehole, but Yaoundé sends contractors to Kumba, but the contractors go first to the governor before coming to see the mayor. When they come, the mayor must look for a place for them, and the council pays. The	Central planning on projects

contractors came from Yaoundé for field study and the digging of the borehole and they came with their workers. The mayor was not even aware that they were coming. Even the people on whose compound the borehole was to be dug were not informed; so, how will they give their land?	
The government allocates projects without understanding the needs of the people. The leaders sit in Yaoundé and construct a toilet without knowing the needs of the school. Someone in Yaoundé sends a project without knowing the priority needs of the people. If Yaoundé had consulted with the mayor, the mayor could have asked the head of the school.	Citizens needs
I saw instances where the ruling party was trying to corrupt the electorate. I even reported the matter to the police at the polling station and the police sent the women who were collecting money from my own sister, who is in the CPDM to corrupt citizens who were already in line to persuade them to vote for CPDM. The CPDM members were given out 2000 CFA to buy the conscience of this vulnerable electorate.	Buying votes Money for votes
The administration creates polling stations in prisons, police camps and gendarmerie central police stations. When you oppose them in such locations, they will beat you and you can't control those places, so the election is not free and fair.	Threats during voting Polling stations in police buildings

In remote places, the chiefs threaten people with their juju to vote for CPDM. In towns like Kumba, young people are given money to vote for CPDM.	Intimidation during voting Buying of votes
Elections cannot be free and credible when the ruling party is the player and the referee at the same time.	Player & referee in elections
Sometimes, ballot boxes are destroyed or stolen. People do not go to bed, we run around to make sure that the ballot boxes arrive at the counting commission, sleeping there to make sure the counting is done properly. I leave my house at six am, and I return at six am the next day.	Stolen ballot boxes
The SDO is like the moderator or adviser. He advises during deliberations. The SDO must approve all council deliberations before they are executed. Most of the contracts above 5 million go to the SDO for approval and he would unlikely approve a contract without knowing who the contractor is. But contracts below 5 million are at the discretion of the mayors.	SDO's approval powers Adviser
Each council session is preceded by a council committee session where citizens can make complaints or suggestions but they cannot speak or make contributions during the plenary sessions. However, citizens don't even know or attend these committee sessions. So, it is left for the councillors to select and approve the PP. We invite the citizens to committee meetings because it is during committee meetings that projects are discussed and	Limited citizen participation

designed, and a report is prepared to be adopted in the plenary session. But they do not come because they do not know that it is their right to attend such meetings. Secondly, at times, they do not see any financial gains. Ignorance prevents them from attending council sessions, and the culture and norms of politics where everybody is looking for financial gains and the belief that only people with money can do politics. Citizens do not attend committee meetings. They may only come as observers during the plenary sessions. Citizens may direct their complaints through their councillor but they do not participate in deliberations. Getting citizens to participate is difficult because they look for financial gains. As chairman of the Development Committee, I hold meetings with the quarter heads (QH) and the people in my zone every three months. During these meetings, the people identify their needs and the priority projects. I then take this information to the various committees of the council and debate their needs, making a report to be read at the plenary session for adoption. The ZDC takes their priority projects to the mayor's office, which then forwards them to the various committees for consideration.	Low civic activism because of ignorance of the law Councillors represent citizens Selecting projects Citizens Identify PP Councillors take PP to council meetings

Citizens can attend council meetings, but they cannot make contributions because the councillors represent them in these meetings.	Limited citizen participation in council meetings
After the deliberations are prepared, the councillors sign and the SDO must approve it before it is executed by either the GD or the mayor.	SDO approves all council deliberations
In council meetings, the SDO is the Supervisory Authority. This means that the council needs his authority to sit in session and for the budget to be validated. Second, the SDO needs to sign and approve all projects before they are executed. Because of this, the mayors are like their houseboys. The SDO is like a landlord with mayors working on his farm. The SDO is like a landlord, “Chef Terre” and the mayors are like his tenants. He is like a landlord and the mayors are like his house boys because he instructs them and the mayors execute.	SDO must approve all council sessions & decisions SDO is like a landlord
The GD and the SDO stand for continuity, whereas the mayors stand for change. Here is where the battle line is drawn. The conflict in council management is between those who want change and those who do not. The real conflict is between change and continuity. If the powers and resources are devolved to the mayors, then the offices of the GD and the SDO will become useless. The GD and SDO are answerable to those who nominate them.	Local conflicts SDO & GD are accountable to the central government

At times the SDO may reject a council deliberation on the grounds that it was not well worded or drafted, but if you give him kickbacks, he approves it. After the election, the mayor is supervised not only by the party but also by the SDO, who can either oppose the mayor or collaborate with him. If the mayor does not oil his hands, he can frustrate his projects because the SDO approves all council deliberations. Meme Division has five councils, and the SDO must attend all council sessions.	Oversight power of SDO Unethical behaviour SDO attends all council meetings
The Ministry of Public Contracts chooses contractors under the PIB; the mayor does not choose contractors. Under the Public Investment Budget, the governments, through the ministries, send contractors to build projects, and the ministry pays for everything. The role of the council is to supervise. The mayor must approve the site and the completion of the work. The mayor does not know the contractor, and he does not choose the contractor, but he must approve his work before he is paid.	National planning Top-down Lack of coordination with mayors
Decentralisation is like a smokescreen; you hear, but you cannot see clearly what is happening.	The impact of decentralisation is not felt.
Competencies have been transferred, but the councils do not control the resources, for example, if the council must build a classroom, the contractor is chosen by the Ministry of Public Contracts.	National planning

If the mayor of Konye has a project and other mayors have similar projects to execute at the same time, the mayor who is the highest bidder wins. The Divisional Delegation of Public Works has just two or three skilled engineers for road works. They are assigned to approve projects. The mayor who has the money gives and the technicians, and they go. Human resources are inadequate.	Lack of unqualified staff Unethical behaviour Highest bidder wins
The technicians in public works are to approve. At times, the contractors might tip the engineers, and they will approve projects that are poorly executed. The technicians are government staff and the contractors are selected by the Ministry of Public contracts. So, the mayor is helpless in between. Sometimes a contractor is based in Yaoundé, but he is executing a project in Akwaya.	Poorly executed projects
The mayor pays for the fuel of the SDO to attend council meetings and to sit in as Supervisory Authority. For the 20th May celebrations, the government has a budget, but the SDO will still ask the mayors to support public ceremonies. At times, mayors prefer to spend money on these public ceremonies than on PP to avoid problems with the SDO, who must approve council deliberations or municipal decisions.	Unethical behaviour Councils meagre resources
Sometimes, if the SDO sends back a deliberation, it is very difficult for the mayor to call back all the councillors. The SDO is	SDO's unethical behaviour

a landlord. He manages the council as he desires. He creates room for a crisis to arise and then exploits the circumstances to make money.	SDO's unethical practices Oil the SDO's hand
Decentralisation is only on paper, and it is ineffective. The decentralisation program is not effective because there is a lack of political will, and the transfer of competencies is slow. In Cameroon, we have SDO and GD who obstruct and slow down the process of decentralisation.	Decentralisation is ineffective
When projects are assigned from Yaoundé to the councils, because of bottlenecks, the contractors are forced to bribe their way through, thus spending a substantial amount of the approved money, and the remaining amount does not properly do the job. As a result, projects are poorly executed, and some of the projects are even abandoned.	Poorly executed projects Abandoned projects
Because projects are still approved in Yaoundé without the knowledge of the mayor, the mayors do not have full authority to supervise the projects even though they are the authorising officers. With these projects approved by Yaoundé, the mayor has limited authority to control and approve the work of contractors who are paid by Yaoundé.	National planning in executing projects Helpless mayors
The SDO is the eye of the state over councils. Our greatest plea is for the central government to scrap the position of the GD or if	SDO is state rep over councils

they have to maintain it, let it be an elective position because he will be answerable to the people.	End appointment of GD
Group 7 participants: Community leaders (9) After the list is complete, the various parties compete on the day of the election, and the people vote for the party of their choice. When these councillors are elected, they in turn, elect their mayors and deputies. The opposition can easily win in the cities, but in the rural areas, the chiefs intimidate people to vote for the ruling party CPDM. Polling stations are not supposed to be in private homes and in the houses of chiefs and QH. The law says devolution is practised in Cameroon but what is really practised in Cameroon is deconcentration, not devolution, because the system is like a merchant who sells you a goat, but he holds the rope. You cannot talk of devolution when the GD is appointed because he is accountable to the appointee. (CPDM) The elected councillors are the ones who propose PP to the executive. The people have no say because the councillors hardly hold meetings with the QH and the people in order to know their priority needs. Councillors hardly inform the citizens of council deliberations. The citizens are in a total blackout for they do not know what happens at council meetings.	List system Councillors vote mayors and deputies Voter intimidation Polling stations in private homes deconcentration Appointment of GD Citizens are in total blackout

Since citizens do not participate in council meetings, there is a total blackout between the mayors, councillors, and citizens. The citizens are ignorant of whatever is taking place in the council. The elected councillors are the ones who propose PP to the executive. The people have no say because the councillors do not hold meetings with the QH and the people in order to know their priority needs.	Limited citizens' participation
Yes, elections are held after every five years, but sometimes they might be extended by presidential decree because of political instability.	President fixes election dates
The QH with the local councillors go round the blocks in the quarter and try to discuss with the blockheads about their needs, interest, and PP for councillors to take to their council sessions. I have attended just once during the budget session. We were just observers, not participants. They want contributions to pass through committees who then prepare reports to be read at the plenary session for adoption.	Citizens are observers in council meetings
We hardly see our councillors. They hardly consult us before their meetings and they hardly inform us of their deliberations. But when it is time for elections, they tell us that we should give them our votes. When we write to the mayors and deputies, and even councillors, they do not bother to come. One of our problems is	Councillors are not accountable to voters Citizens hardly get feedback from councillors

that we do not hear from our elected officials, and they do not listen to us for advice.	
The conflicts between the mayor and the GD slow down the decentralisation process. What is the reason for the conflict? Ignorance of the text governing the decentralisation process. As a result, mayors and GD give different interpretations of the law, which then leads to conflicts.	Local conflicts due to ignorance of the law.
The source of the conflict between the mayor and the GD comes because they do not understand the limits of their powers and their functions. This is because the law is ambiguous, giving room for multiple interpretations.	Ambiguous laws led to local conflicts
There is too much “mago, mago”, that is, too much cheating. (1) Some people vote more than once (2) Party leaders buy vote (3) polling stations in the houses of chiefs and QH. Some polling stations operate outside public places, e.g., chief palaces. Some polling station officers are corrupt.	Election fraud Buying votes
It is in Yaoundé where the rigging is done, “they play their mago, mago”, that is, cheating, and the Supreme Court declares the winners and it is difficult to change the results.	Voter fraud done in Yaoundé
Yes, elections are held after every five years, but sometimes they may be extended by a presidential decree because of political instability.	Elections after every five years

The law stipulates that the mandate for councillors is five years, but the same law gives the president the power to decide when and how to call for elections, for example, because of the Bakassi crisis, the last mandate that ended in 2013 was extended for one year. It was to end in 2012 but it was extended to 2013	President fixes election dates
Origin of the appointment of GD: where the president's people are not powerful or cannot maintain total control, the head of state who has the yam and the knife appointed GD to oversee what the opposition was doing. By doing so, he limited the power and influence of mayors.	GD position limited power of mayors
The militants of the party form a list to represent the party during elections. The party leaders select the best militants of the party to create a list to defend the interest of their party. It is the party that influences the make-up of the list, the party chooses people they think can win.	Party influences the list system
The primaries are done within the parties to select their potential councillors. The people at the grassroots do not play any part in directly electing their councillors. Councillors are chosen at the party level after their primaries. From among the councillors, the mayor is chosen by the party.	Party members vote councillors Councillors vote mayors
They are just fair. The ruling party has been careful in organising elections in Bamenda, which is the headquarters of the	Elections are fair in Bamenda

opposition. The ruling party has been careful in organising elections in Bamenda. They try to make sure that it is fair because the outcome may lead to trouble.	
The general population does not attend Bamenda 2 council meetings or the BCC meetings. The QH and village councillors do not attend these meetings as well. However, they may call us for a meeting for a particular project they may want to do. But at the level of the quarter councils, the citizens play a part in that they raise questions on the issues that concern them. During these meetings, the citizens identify PP, which are taken to municipal council meetings by their councillors.	Citizens don't attend council meetings Citizens identify PP
The councillors are not accountable to the people; they are accountable but to the mayor and their parties. They do not come to the population for any advice. This body, the council, is a money-making body; they do not consult the local population. The local population cannot query their councillors.	Citizens have limited contact with their councillors
Residents of the quarter do not attend council meetings. We do not go directly to the council meeting, but we write through our councillor if we have a complaint to make to the mayor.	Citizens don't attend council meetings
How does one become a councillor? Citizens apply through their parties and the parties conduct primaries and select aspiring councillors, and send their names to MTAD for approval. After the approval, the party list is published and the people vote on	Party members vote for their councillors

election day, and the people on the winning party list become councillors. Decentralisation causes conflict because the GD is from another party and the mayor of Bamenda 2 is from another party. At the top, there is no community interest but party interest. With the party's interest, the GD will make sure that SDF fails and is voted out for CPDM to be brought back. This is the underlying battle that is going on between the parties at the top. Our councillor does not give us feedback from council meetings. Since my three years in this position, our councillor has not given us feedback, but during the election, they will come and seek our support. The Councillors and mayors and GD do not listen to our voice because our complaints about water for four years now have not been answered. Since our councillor won the election, I do not know where he is, and I have never seen him again.	Party ideology causes local conflicts Voters don't get feedback from councillors Councillors are not accountable to citizens Councillors don't listen to voters
Group 8 participants: Academics (6) Under British rule, it was all indirect rule, the creation of Native Authority (NA) to bring the government closer to the people. They enjoyed a quasi-autonomous government within the federation of Nigeria. The NA had autonomy. We also had the West Cameroon House of Chiefs. Public opinion differs. My opinion is for the country to go back to federalism. I will support a 10-state	Indirect rule Quasi-autonomy Return to 10-federalism

federation. At Foumban, revenue allocation was never discussed. As a result, the Foumban constitution had no clause on revenue allocation in the Federation from 1961 to 1972. West Cameroon operated at the mercy of the federal government. The house is divided. If decentralisation should work, the people must elect their officials. Accountability is the core of decentralisation. If there is no accountability, the whole thing falls apart. The unitary system before 1996 was a highly centralised system. In contrast, the French system was highly centralised, whereas SC was a decentralised system, two distinct political systems. Centralisation has been the genius of the French system. The French political culture favours the intervention of the central government in the affairs of the local people. If you are loyal, you will be rewarded in their system. Anglophones have experienced marginalisation since reunification. It is a political term, which in the context of Cameroon, means that Anglophones are removed from the centre and lever of power. They are not equally represented in power. Anglophones are not equally appointed as ministers, senior civil servants, and senior members of the CPDM political party.	SC relied on the government for financial needs No revenue allocation formula Divided house Accountability is the core of dec. The English system is decentralised The French system favours centralisation. The French system intervenes in local administration Loyalty in the French system Marginalisation of Anglophones

Anglophones are marginalised. The present setup is not working. The SDO, DO and GD are appointed and all of them are CPDM members. Their role is to suffocate the local governments. But mayors are elected by the people. The SDO, DO and GD and appointed governors are obstacles to the practice of decentralisation	Appointed officials obstruct decentralisation
Decentralisation today is just on paper. The government does not have the willpower to implement decentralisation.	Lack of political will
Most texts are in French. Public exams and training programs are in French. At the University of Buea, the text comes from Yaounde in French.	English language is marginalised
But in Cameroon, it is the SDO that controls the activities of local councils.	SDO controls mayors
The government lacks the political will to implement the decentralisation process. The government is not sincere, they want to remain in control through the appointment of SDOs and GDs	Lack of political will Remain in control
Anglophone agitation is due to a poorly designed decentralised system. There is a symbiotic relationship between decentralisation and the Anglophone struggle for autonomy.	Conflicts due to poorly designed decentralisation
Anglophones are being marginalised in terms of appointment and language. Our Francophone brothers are very unfair to us. They	Anglophones are marginalised

are provoking us, and when Anglophones react, they will accuse us of violence and secessionist tendencies whereas it is the government provoking Anglophones.	
Anglophones feel that decentralisation will destroy their culture and their educational and legal systems. Already, we feel marginalised; so, when it was announced, cries and protests came from many Anglophones.	Destruction of Anglophone culture
Important ministries are not given to Anglophones.	Anglophones are denied important jobs
Common law lawyers are advocating for a return to Federalism. SC had quasi-autonomy in 1954	Return to federalism
Ahidjo appointed Federal Inspectors who were answerable to him and not to the prime minister of West Cameroon. So, the Federal Inspector was always clashing with P.M. Jua. As of September 1, 1966, Ahidjo had suppressed all political parties in Cameroon.	Ahidjo eroded Anglophones' autonomy
In 1972, Ahidjo's dream of unification was realised when he announced that Cameroonians would vote in a plebiscite. As a result, all federal institutions were dismantled. After 1972, there was nothing like Southern Cameroons. Cameroon was divided into seven provinces. SDOs were being appointed. People will be better off if Anglophones secede. We feel marginalised. In 1984, Biya changed the name of the country to the Republic of Cameroon.	Ahidjo abolished the federal system Anglophone territory was divided Secession is better for Anglophones.

How do Anglophones plan to achieve their autonomy? (1) One group will say succession (2) Federation of two states or 10 states (3) Remaining in the Union, mostly held by those who have positions in government and are seeking higher positions. Some have argued for federalism, others for separation, and others have pushed for decentralisation.	Plans to achieve autonomy
Group 9 participants: Activists (8) Many Anglophones do not find anything good in the Decentralisation law. This is because the law has created 10 permanent regions. Councils are supervised by the SDO appointed by the president. These same councils have GD lording it over them. Most instructions for governance still come from the central government through the Governor, SDO, DO and GD. Therefore, decentralisation is a smoked screen. Anglophones are marginalised because they are not considered full-fledged Cameroonians by the system in place. The condition that continues to motivate us to fight for our autonomy is marginalisation. We are marginalised because most of the important jobs are taken by French Cameroonians. All official documents are in French, while the English versions are sometimes not available.	10 permanent regions SDO controls councils GD lord over mayors National planning Marginalisation & discrimination of Anglophones English language is marginalised

Anglophones are motivated to fight for their autonomy because they are called Biafrans, and the fact that we are considered second-class citizens in our country of birth.	Fighting for autonomy Second-class citizens
Anglophones are treated by French Cameroun as pure slaves. The condition that continues to motivate us is marginalisation. Anglophones are marginalised because we are annexed, and our land and resources are exploited.	Social discrimination Annexation Exploitation
There are key ministries that are considered no-go zones for Anglophones. Most lucrative jobs are reserved only for French-speaking Cameroonians, even in corporations in Anglophone territories like SONARA. Marginalisation is the reason why for 54 years, no Anglophone has been considered competent to be president, even though in 1992, Ni John Fru Ndi, an Anglophone, won the presidency, but his victory was denied.	Exclusion from key jobs & power Marginalisation
Premier Foncha did not advocate for integration. He advocated for a separate but equal federated state.	Equal federated states.
Decentralisation is a plot to dissolve the international borders between the Anglophone and Francophone territories because they are talking about regions. Anglophones perceive the idea of decentralisation as a trick by Francophones to continue their annexation of the Anglophone territory.	Annexation

There is no proper decentralisation in Cameroon because there cannot be a mayor and a GD in the same council area. Where the GD exists, the mayors have no powers.	Mayors have limited power
I think decentralisation in Cameroon is just a sham. If we were to accept decentralisation as an alternative to our sovereignty, it will not work because our elected mayors are being controlled by appointed SDO and GD. How then do you talk about decentralisation because he is going to pay allegiance to his masters, the persons who appointed him and not the electorate? Anglophones want equality with the Francophones, equal opportunities, access to public institutions, and public services.	Decentralisation is a sham GD accountability to central government Anglophones want equal opportunity
We are continuing our struggle for autonomy because we do not have equal opportunities like our Francophone brothers in public institutions, professional schools, and colleges. If we do not have our independence, I do not think that our off-springs will ever live in a free Cameroon.	Fighting for autonomy Equal opportunities
There is no legal instrument or Union treaty which joins or binds the SC and LRC as one nation or state. This is the sufficient reason why the nationhood of SC was restored legally, officially, and constitutionally on Thursday, October 1, 2015.	No legal union treaty Restoration of SC
The Republic of Cameroon is an armed occupier of our territory.	Annexation
Through decentralisation, Anglophones have not been able to protect their culture, way of life, education, legal system,	Anglophones unable to protect interests

language and cherished values, whereas SC came into this ill-fated union as an independent state. She was not part of LRC. SC came into the Union on equal status with LRC.	Independent state Equal status
The SDO is appointed, the GD supervises the mayors, and the Governor is also appointed; so, decentralisation is a farce. The government gives with one hand and takes back with the other hand.	Decentralisation is a farce
The perception that Anglophones are second-class citizens dehumanises them, and it is the greatest form of marginalisation. Utterances from French elites describing Anglophones as enemies in the house, Biafra's is also dehumanising.	Second-class citizens Disparaging speech Marginalisation
We want a federal structure. That is our focus.	Return to federalism
My client was arrested and taken to court and the witness for the prosecution, a policeman, was speaking in French in the South West Region. I complained to the State Counsel, the prosecutor of the state, that my client does not understand the French language and the case was adjourned to tomorrow, March 9, 2016.	English language is marginalised
We are an independent country and we want LRC to get out of our territory. We don't want autonomy with LRC because we are an independent country with defined international boundaries. We are fighting for the restoration of the independence of SC.	Independent territory Restoration of autonomy

As far as Anglophones are concerned, decentralisation is ineffective. For example, in Kumba, the opposition party controls all the three councils, but the SDO has to approve all council deliberations.	Decentralisation is ineffective SDO approves all council decisions
Group 10: Participant observation The purpose of the meeting was on a campaign to keep Kumba clean. The Quarter Heads (QH) and Zonal Development Committee (ZDC) chairpersons were asked to go back and mobilise their people to keep Kumba 2 clean. The participants discussed water problems in their communities, keeping the streets clean and removing waste. People removed dirt from the streets and gutters, but there are no waste trucks to evacuate the waste to dump sites. Our major problem is how to collect and dispose of the waste. The GD has not sent a vehicle to the Fiango market to collect waste. We have asked the GD to sell old waste trucks and buy two new ones but nothing has happened. We go to Yaoundé to lobby. The minister said that we must come to Yaoundé about 12 times a year to lobby for projects in our municipalities.	Keep Kumba clean campaign Community leaders are intermediaries Local challenges Waste collection No waste collection trucks No accountability from GD Mayors lobby for projects

Group 11: Proposed 1960 federal constitution	
"Considering that in the event of the result of this plebiscite being in favour of Reunification the application of this reunification on a federal basis allowing for the particular conditions of each group, could not be automatic but gradual."	State peculiarity Federation Separate autonomy
"The Federal State in the first stage will have power to deal with matters listed below as a minimum: public freedoms, nationality, national defence, foreign affairs, higher education, immigration and emigration, federal budget, posts, and telecommunications. A list of powers which would fall within the competence of the Federal Government in the second stage will be set out in the Constitution."	Limited government Exclusive competence Shared powers
"In non-federal matters, the Authorities of each of the Federated States will have exclusive competence."	Separate government
"Each of the Federated States will be ruled by a Government and will have a Legislative Assembly."	Two state federations
"The Federation will be created by the Cameroun Republic and the Southern Cameroons under British Trusteeship."	

3.6.2.3 Step 3: Searching for themes.

At this stage, different codes were combined to form six overarching themes.

Table 2: *Searching for themes*

Decentralisation	**National Policy**	**Local Government**	**Conflict**	**Perception**	**Motivation**
Deconcentration	Conformity	Elected officials	Ambiguous laws	Holding a rope	Marginalisation
Decentralisation is ineffective	Uniformity	SDO approval powers	Different ideology	Dragging feet	Federalism
Closer to the people	Intervention	Supervisor	Undefined duties	Piecemeal	Assimilation
Concurrent jurisdiction	State reps.	Adviser	Ignorance of law	Selling a goat	Annexation
Devolved competencies	Competencies	Unethical practices	Conflict of power	Bottle necks	Dominationation
Undefined roles	Gradual process	SDO Lord over mayors	Agitation	Smoked screen	Second-class citizens
Resource redistribution	Concurrent jurisdiction	State rep over councils	Resource allocation	Ineffective dec.	Hate speech
Gradual process	Political will	Own revenue	Local control	Destroy culture	Secession
Upward accountability	Resource redistribution	Staff control	Unclear responsibilities	10 regions	Subordination
Downward accountability	Elite influence	Lacks specialised staff	Power struggle	Plot	Discrimination
20% local revenue	Earmarked	Lack resources	Limited council power	Trick	Autonomy
80% CG revenue	Specifications	Lack spending power	Marginalisation	Sham	Equality
	Lobby	Lack local activism	Federalism	Farce	Statehood
	Control	Employment	Eroded autonomy	Federation	Independence
	National planning			Separate autonomy	Equal opportunity
	Central planning			State peculiarity	
				Democracy	
				Limited gov't	

No financial autonomy No administrative autonomy Elected officials are supervised CG control over councils Power remains with the state List system SDO oversight powers SDO direct control Dec is a gradual process Earmarked projects Credit cards	Credit cards Loans Grants Transfers National Taxing power Centralization Accountability Lack of coordination Top-down Loyalty Remain in control	Local taxes Participation Transparency Published reports Councillors vote mayors Party influence Earmarked funds Discretionary Borrowing powers Insufficient funds Unfair election Voter intimidation Buying votes Initiate & complete projects Hire & dismiss staff Unqualified staff Observers only	Secession Discrimination Equality Statehood Independence Equal opportunity Biafrans Second-class citizens Slaves Domination	Exclusive competence Share powers Separate gov't Two state federation	

		Accountability Threats Stolen ballots Information blackout Election rigging Limited feedback Waste trucks intermediaries			

3.6.2.4 Step 4: Reviewing themes.

This phase involved reviewing and refining themes to form a coherent pattern. The six themes were reduced to five overarching themes.

Table 3: *Reviewing themes*

Decentralisation	**National Policy**	**Local Government**	**Conflict**	**Perception**
Deconcentration Decentralisation is ineffective Closer to the people	Conformity Uniformity Intervention	Elected officials SDO approval powers Supervisor Observer	Ambiguous laws Different ideology Undefined duties	Holding a rope Dragging feet Piecemeal

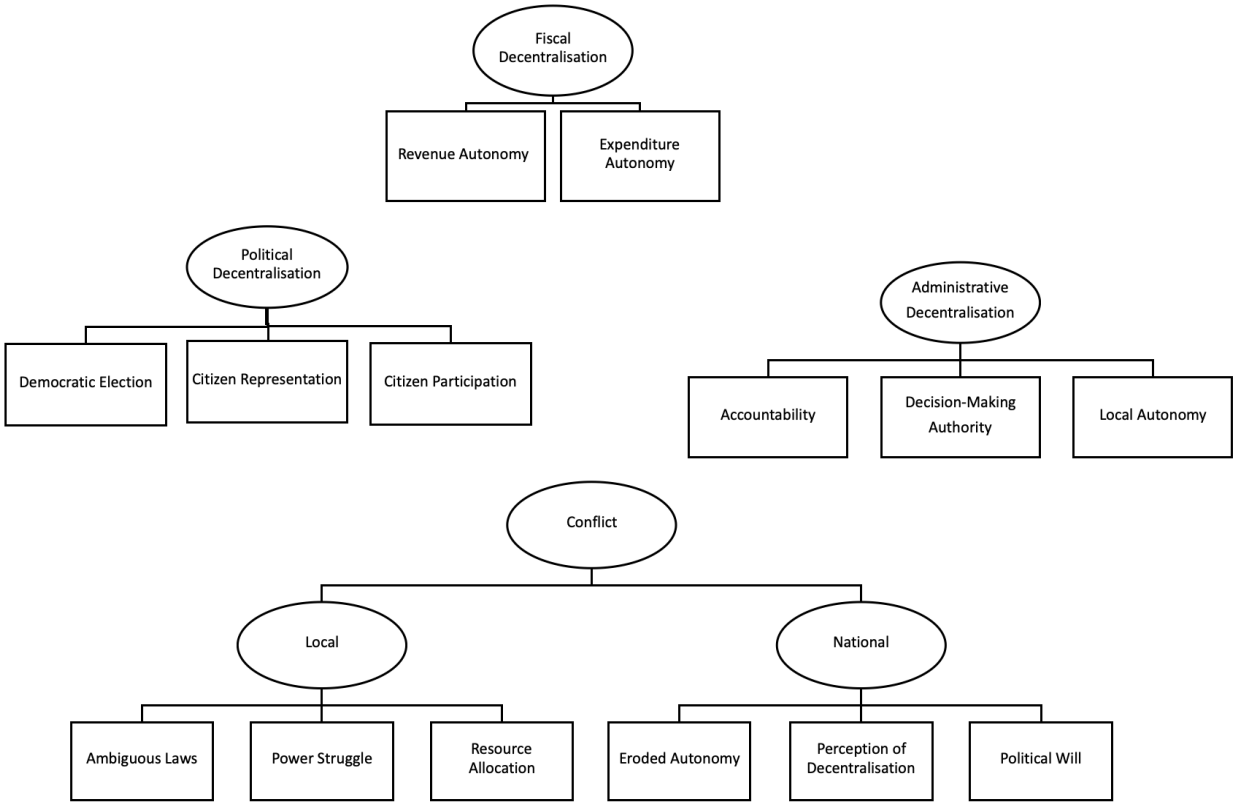
Concurrent jurisdiction	Competencies	Adviser	Ignorance of law	Selling a goat
Devolved competencies	Political will	Mediator	Conflict of power	Bottle necks
Undefined roles	Elite influence	SDO unethical practices	Agitation	Smoked screen
Resource redistribution	Earmarked	Protects state interest	Resource allocation	Goat merchant
Gradual process	Lobby	SDO as lord	Local control	Destroy culture
Upward accountability	Central planning	SDO as state rep	Unclear responsibilities	10 regions
Downward accountability	Credit cards	Local control	Power struggle	Plot
20% local revenue	Loans	Own revenue	Limited council power	Trick
80% CG revenue	Grants	Staff control	Marginalisation	Sham
No financial autonomy	Transfers	Specialised staff	Federalism	Federation
No administrative autonomy	National Taxing power	Lack resources	Eroded autonomy	Separate autonomy
Elected officials are supervised	Centralization	Lack spending power	Secession	State peculiarity
CG control over councils	Accountability	Lack local activism	Discrimination	Democracy
Power remains with the state	Lack of coordination	Employment	Equality	Limited gov’t
	Top-down	Local taxes	Statehood	Exclusive competence
	Yam & Knife	Participation	Federated states	Share powers
	Loyalty	Transparency	Independence	Separate gov’t
	Remain in control	Published reports	Equality opportunity	Two state federation
		Councillors vote mayors	Biafrans	
		Party influence	Second-class citizens	

List system SDO oversight powers SDO direct control Dec is a gradual process Earmarked projects Credit cards		Security presence at council meetings Discretionary Non-discretionary Borrowing powers Insufficient funds Unfair election Voter intimidation Buying votes Initiate & complete projects Hire & dismiss staff Unqualified staff Observers only Threats Stolen ballots Information blackout Election rigging Limited feedback Waste trucks intermediaries	Slaves Domination Exploitation	

3.6.2.5 Step 5: Defining and naming themes:

At this stage, the research must have a satisfactory thematic map or table of the data. This phase involves defining and further refining themes for analysis and analysing the data within them. The five themes described in phase four were broken down into four major themes and sub-themes, as seen in diagram 1 below.

Diagram 1: *Defining and naming themes*



3.7.3 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the methodology section. An explanation of the qualitative methodology, case study design, method of data collection and ethical considerations were also discussed. The chapter also discussed the method of data analysis and described the six-step process of doing thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke. The next chapter will focus on the six-step, producing the thematic analysis report.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRODUCING THE REPORT OF THE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the thematic analysis report. Writing up the report is the six-step in conducting thematic analysis using the process developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The findings are presented in the form of themes. This chapter also provides evidence of the themes from the data. In analysing the data, four overarching themes with sub-themes were identified. All the themes and sub-themes are separate but interrelated to tell a unified story of the data. The study aimed to explore how the implementation of decentralisation increased conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-led majority government. The objective was to understand decentralisation from participants' perspectives and experiences. Therefore, thematic

analysis was suitable for coding and analysing data to identify themes and meanings based on the research questions.

4. 2 Methodology

This section describes the process that was followed to analyse the data and produce the report. The research analysis was not computer-assisted; rather, it was done manually. According to Owan and Bassey (2018), there is no significant difference in the results when using manual or computerised techniques in analysing data because both techniques produce reliable and dependable results, except that computerised techniques are faster in managing and analysing data. The study investigated how the implementation of decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government. The focus of the investigation was on devolution. The ongoing conflict is between Anglophone armed groups and the central government in the two Anglophone regions of the Northwest and the Southwest. Therefore, the research was conducted only in the two Anglophone regions, and the participants were Anglophones who worked and lived in those two regions. Participants were selected through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The 49 key informants who participated in the research were selected from different age groups, gender, profession and political parties. Qualitative research was chosen for this study because it helped the researcher gain a deeper and holistic view of decentralisation from the experiences, opinions, knowledge and perspectives of multiple participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Tuli, 2010). This research started in 2014 and will end in 2023.

Data from interviews were collected over a period of three months, that is, from January to March 2016.

Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis is useful when analysing large amounts of data. Therefore, thematic analysis was suitable in this study because the semi-structured interviews generated a large amount of data from 49 key informants. Second, thematic analysis was selected because it is usually applied to texts such as interviews (Caulfield, 2019). Since the researcher attempted to understand decentralisation from the participant's point of view and uncover the meaning of their experiences (Kvale, 1996), much time was spent analysing the data to ensure that the findings accurately described the meaning that participants attached to decentralisation. As described in chapter three, thematic analysis was conducted according to the six steps developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The process began during the data collection phase and ended with reporting the content and meaning of the themes. Braun and Clarke (2006:15) state, “Analysis involves a constant moving back and forward between the entire data set, the coded extracts of data that you are analysing, and the analysis of the data that you are producing. Writing is an integral part of the analysis, not something that takes place at the end….” Therefore, as data was being collected, the researcher started reading, rereading, jotting down preliminary codes, and thinking of potential patterns of meaning.

After the interviews were completed, the handwritten notes were typed and stored on the computer with a strong password. The researcher continued to read and reread the data throughout the coding process, naming of themes and analysis process. In the first step of the analysis, the researcher read and reread the material to get familiar with the

entire body of the data. The second step involved the development of codes. The researcher highlighted relevant phrases and sentences in the data set. The highlighted texts from each data item were copied and used as data extracts. Codes were then derived from segments of the data extracts. The third step involved sorting the different codes into potential themes. The researcher combined the related codes to develop six overarching themes. The fourth step involved reviewing and refining the themes to form coherent patterns. At this stage, the six overarching themes were reduced to five themes. Defining and further refining themes for analysis was done in the fifth step. During this process, the five themes were further reduced to the final four themes with sub-themes.

The first three themes represent the three dimensions/types of decentralisation. The first theme is political decentralisation with sub-themes of democratic elections, citizen representation and citizen participation. The second theme is fiscal decentralisation with revenue autonomy and expenditure autonomy sub-themes. The third theme is administrative decentralisation with sub-themes of accountability, decision-making authority, and local autonomy. The fourth theme is termed conflict, with two sub-themes of local and national conflicts. Under local conflicts, the sub-themes are ambiguous laws, resource allocation and power struggles. Under national conflicts, the sub-themes include eroded autonomy, political will, and perception of Anglophones. In the literature, the three types of decentralisation are separate but interrelated; therefore, the analysis may contain overlapping ideas (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1983; Schneider, 2003; Manor, 2011).

4. 3 Producing the report

Step six is producing the report. The write-up must provide sufficient evidence of the themes within the data, citing enough data extracts to demonstrate the prevalence of the theme across the data set. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the data extracts need to be woven within the analytical narrative to convincingly illustrate the story being told about the data. The analytical narrative should go beyond the data description to make an argument in relation to the research questions. Though distinct, each theme should be linked to the overall research questions. The analysis, where relevant, is broadened from a descriptive to an interpretive level, relating the claims to existing literature. The analytical claims must be grounded in the data. However, they must also go beyond the overt or explicit meaning of the data, even for a semantic-level analysis like this study (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.3.1 Political Decentralisation

It refers to the transfer of power and resources from the central government to the local government. The goal is to empower citizens and their elected officials in the local government's decision-making process. The theme emerged throughout the interviews and observation data. There were three ways in which the discussion on political decentralisation manifested, namely, democratic elections, citizen representation and citizen participation.

4.3.1.1 Democratic Elections

Free, fair, and credible elections promote democracy at the local government level. It empowers citizens and their elected officials in local government administration; consequently, the way elections were organised and conducted was identified as a recurring sub-theme. Participants agreed that elections were held regularly except when there was an unforeseen disaster. For instance, Interviewee Nkuman, a community leader, said, “Yes, elections are held after every five years, but sometimes it might be extended by presidential decree because of political instability.” Interviewee Tony, a councillor, agreed and said, “The law stipulates that the mandate for councillors is five years, but the same law gives the president the power to decide when and how to call for elections, for example, because of the Bakassi crisis, the last mandate was to end in 2012, but it was extended to 2013.” Another councillor, Interviewee Franton, confirmed by saying, “Yes, after five years. But sometimes the president, when there is an emergency or disturbance in the country, can extend the mandate of councillors.” This means that the president has enormous powers to fix election dates unilaterally.

However, regarding the fairness and credibility of the election, the data revealed a mixed message. While a few respondents said that elections were fair and credible, most of the participants claimed that council elections were not free, fair and credible. Regarding those who claimed that elections were fair, a community leader, Interviewee Nito, stated, “The ruling party has been careful in organising elections in Bamenda. They try to make sure that it is fair because the outcome of an unfair election might lead to trouble.” Another community leader, Interviewee Andy, supported that claim, “In my view, the voting and counting of the votes are transparent. It is done openly, and after the

results are announced, there is no fighting." On the other hand, Interviewee Jeanfan, a councillor, said, "Elections cannot be free and credible when someone [the ruling party] is the player and the referee at the same time." Interviewee Samba, a deputy mayor, claimed that "Any election organised by ELECAM, cannot be free, fair and transparent because all the senior officials are members of the CPDM and are appointed by the president." Another mayor, Interviewee Nakon, claimed that a government appointee said, "I cannot be the District Officer and see the opposition win." A councillor, Interviewee Temba, gave his own first-hand experience by noting, "Sometimes, ballot boxes are destroyed or stolen. People do not go to bed. We run around to make sure that ballot boxes arrive at the counting commission and sleep there to make sure the counting is properly done. I leave my house at six am, and I return at six am the next day." Another councillor, Interviewee Willy, said, "I saw instances where CPDM [members were] trying to corrupt the electorate. I even reported the matter to the police at the polling station. The CPDM [members] were given out 2000 CFA [about $5] to buy the conscience of these vulnerable electorates."

Voters were equally intimidated by supporters of the ruling party and government officials. This is what Interviewee Kolbe, a councillor, said, "In remote places, the chiefs will threaten people with their juju to vote for the ruling party." Interviewee Franton, a councillor, said, "The administration creates polling stations in prison, police camps and gendarmerie central police stations. When you oppose them in such locations, they will beat you, and you can't control those places, so the election is not free and fair." Interviewee Mase, a community leader, also opined, "It is in Yaoundé where the rigging is done. They play their "mago mago", [a pidgin English word meaning election rigging

or fraud], and the Supreme Court declares the winners, and it is difficult to change the results." Interviewee Esoda, another community leader, agreed and said, "Some people vote more than once, party leaders buy votes, and polling stations operate outside public places, for example, in chief's palaces and police stations. There is too much election "mago mago", [a pidgin English word for election rigging, or cheating in elections]." Interviewee Charton, a mayor, agreed and said, "Elections are poorly done. It is only managed by the government. At times, the results are even known before they are officially read by the supreme court." Free and fair elections are supposed to empower citizens to select and elect their representatives. But in the Anglophone regions, the elections did not appear to be free and fair. Weingast (2014) suggests that elections allow citizens to choose their elected officials.

The assumption of decentralisation is that it brings governments closer to the people, thus allowing citizens to elect and hold their leaders accountable. Besley and Smart (2007) state that elections provide accountability in two ways: the selection effect and the incentive discipline effect. Through the selection effect, voters have the power not to re-elect bad incumbents. Through the incentive discipline effect, bad incumbents have the incentive to improve government efficiency to increase their chances of being re-elected. This means that without free and fair elections, citizens will be unable to reward good leaders by re-electing them and punish bad incumbents by not re-electing them. Additionally, if elections are not free and fair, bad incumbents will have no incentives to improve local government efficiency to increase their chances of being re-elected. (Crook & Manor, 2000)

4.3.1.2 Citizen Representation

Political decentralisation creates avenues for local representation. Citizens define and protect their interests by competing in local elections. The concept of citizen representation is often associated with pluralistic and representative government (Reilly, 2000). In a diverse society, representation is how political parties gain access to power through elections. Representation creates political space for different groups to be included in the governance process. In Cameroon, councillors are elected by universal suffrage through a mixed list system. Electing councillors begins at the level of each party. At this level, only party militants can vote for aspiring councillors. Interviewee Willy, a councillor, described it this way; "Only members of the ward who have been paying their dues are required to vote for aspiring councillors. The winner of the primary is endorsed by the ward, and the district confirms his victory, and the person is put on the party list." Once the parties complete their lists and the elections are announced, the potential councillors start campaigning. The party that wins the election chooses its councillors and mayors from that list. Interviewee Bitop, a community leader, described it like this, "Citizens apply through their parties, and the parties conduct primaries and select aspiring councillors and send their names to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation for approval". Interviewee Bitop continued by stating that "After the approval, the party list is published and the electorate vote on election day, and the people on the winning party-list become councillors." Interviewee Willy, a Councillor, agreed and said, "Councillors in Cameroon are elected through a list system; that is, each political party comes up with a list of councillors on the day of the

election. The various party lists compete, and the winning list forms the councillors in the council."

This means citizens play a limited role in selecting their councillors and mayors through the mixed list system. This is how Interviewee Mase, a community leader, explained the situation, "The party leaders selecCitizensate a list to defend the interest of their party. It is the party that influences the make-up of the list because the party chooses people they think can win." After the elections, it is only the councillors, influenced by their party bosses, who select their mayors. Therefore, citizens do not directly vote for their mayors, deputies and councillors; instead, they vote for a party list. The councillors on the winning list then vote for the mayors and their deputies. The head of the council is the mayor, who is elected by and from among the councillors. By law, councillors have the authority to elect their mayors and deputies under the supervision of the Senior Divisional Officer (SDO). But in practice, the parties influence the selection process. This is how a councillor, Interviewee Tony, characterised it, "The party chooses the mayor, their deputies and the councillors toe the party line by endorsing those who have been chosen by the party." Another councillor, Interviewee Jeanfan, said, "The party plays an important role in selecting and appointing mayors according to the party's interests." Interviewee Willy, a councillor, also said, "Now, when we win, the councillors meet privately and have an internal arrangement to choose those who will be mayors, deputies and grand councillors. The list is then sent to the Investiture Committee for final approval." Free and fair elections address the issue of representation in diverse societies, enabling different groups to access political power. Therefore, a democratic election is one of the obvious indicators of political decentralisation (Schneider, 2003). Weingast

(2014) suggests that elections allow citizens to influence their destinies by choosing one group of politicians over others. Citizens also use voting in elections to protect their rights and interests. However, implementing decentralisation in the Anglophone regions has not empowered citizens to hold their elected leaders accountable.

4.3.1.3 Citizen Participation

Political decentralisation also aims to empower citizens to influence council decisions. However, citizens have limited opportunities to influence council decisions. In Cameroon, councils are deliberative organs; they are not law-making bodies. They only deliberate on the budget, selecting and implementing development projects for their communities. Council meetings are open to the public, but citizens cannot directly participate in the debates. Interviewee Belo, a councillor, stated, “The people can attend council meetings, but they cannot make contributions because the councillors represent them in these meetings.” Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, said, “Council meetings are open to the public, but only a few people attend. In council meetings, citizens cannot make contributions, but they can make complaints to their councillors.” A mayor’s representative, Interviewee Laticia, noted, “Citizens can attend council meetings, but they are not allowed to make contributions.” A community leader, Interviewee Mase, agreed and said, “Citizens are allowed to attend, but they do not have any say in the plenary session.” Interviewee BT1, a treasurer, also claimed that “Council sessions are open to the public, but the people only listen, but cannot propose new ideas or participate. The public’s proposal or participation must go through their municipal councillor.”

Citizens must be able to organise and articulate their concerns and interests to influence public policy. But in the Anglophone regions, citizens have limited opportunities to influence public policy because they cannot participate directly in council meetings. If they have a complaint, they have to pass it through their councillors. Interviewee Fonan, a councillor, said, "Citizens come into council sessions as observers. They may direct their complaints through their councillor, but they do not participate in deliberations." In the keep Kumba 2 clean-up campaign meeting that the researcher attended, ordinary citizens were not in attendance. Only the mayor, council staff, councillors and community leaders were present. After the meeting, the participants were told to inform the people in their communities of the decisions of the meeting. That meeting confirmed data from interviews that community leaders and councillors were the mediators between citizens and council executives.

A community leader, Interviewee Bitop, remarked, "Residents in the quarter do not attend council meetings, but we write through our councillor if we have a complaint to make to the mayor." Another community leader, Interviewee Nkuman, gave his testimony by stating, "I have attended just once, the budget session. We were just observers, not participants. The councillors want our contributions to pass through council committees which will prepare reports to be read at the plenary session for adoption." This means that implementing decentralisation in the Anglophone regions has not empowered citizens to influence public policy directly, and it has not created opportunities for citizens to participate directly in local governance. Brancati (2006) claims that decentralisation reduces ethnic conflict and secession by bringing the

government closer to the people, increasing opportunities to participate in government, and giving groups control of their political, social and economic affairs.

Citizens also had limited opportunities to push for the implementation of their projects at council meetings. Here too, citizens relied on their councillors to fight for their projects to be approved at council meetings. This is the testimony of Interviewee Kolbe, a councillor who said, “As Chairman of the Zonal Development Committee, I hold meetings with the quarter heads and the people in my zone every three months.” Councillor Kolbe continued, “During these meetings, the people identify their needs and their priority projects. I then take this information to the various committees of the council.” Interviewee Nkuman, a community leader, confirmed, “The quarter heads and the local councillors go around the blocks in the quarter to discuss with the blockheads about their needs, interests and priority projects for councillors to take to their council sessions.” Another community leader, Interviewee Nitop, stated, “During quarter meetings, citizens identify projects which are taken to municipal councils by their councillors.” Citizens could identify priority projects, but they could not directly defend the implementation of those projects during council meetings. This indicates that decentralisation has not empowered citizens in the Anglophone regions to protect their interests and concerns.

Citizens had limited contact with their elected councillors, making it difficult to influence public policy. Interviewee Nkuman, a community leader, said, “We hardly see our councillors. They hardly consult us before their meetings, and they hardly inform us of their deliberations. When we write to the mayors, deputies, and councillors, they do not bother to come.” Councillor Nkuman also remarked, “One of our problems is that we

do not hear from our elected officials, and they do not come to us for advice." The lack of accessibility to councillors and mayors, who are the people's representatives in council meetings, poses a challenge for citizens to shape public policy and contribute to the local administration. Interviewee Topi, a community leader, said, "Since our councillor won the election, I do not know where he lives, and I have never seen him again."A community leader, Interviewee Mako, complained, saying, "Councillors hardly inform citizens of council deliberations. Therefore, citizens are in a total blackout because they do not know what happens in council meetings." Interviewee Topi, a community leader, agreed and said, "Our councillor does not give us feedback from council meetings. For three years in this position, our councillor has not given us feedback, but during the election, he will come and seek our support." This means that councillors have not been effective mediators between ordinary citizens and council executives, thus depriving citizens of the opportunity to influence local politics directly. The participants viewed decentralisation as a sham because the design has not empowered citizens to influence public policy. Yeboah-Assiamah (2014) claims that many African leaders adopt decentralisation in theory but fail to delegate real powers to subnational governments.

In conclusion, political decentralisation is supposed to empower citizens to elect and hold their leaders accountable. Additionally, through political decentralisation, citizens are supposed to directly influence public policy to protect their interests and concerns, but the implementation of the decentralisation program in the Anglophone regions has not empowered the people to be actively involved in defining their local affairs.

4.3.2 Fiscal Decentralisation

The theme of fiscal decentralisation repeatedly emerged in the interviews. Fiscal decentralisation has two sub-themes, namely, revenue autonomy and expenditure autonomy. For a sub-divisional council to make independent decisions, it must have both revenue and expenditure autonomy.

4.3.2.1 Revenue Autonomy

Section 4 (1) of the 2004 law states that regions and councils shall be endowed with administrative and financial autonomy to manage regional and local interests. Financial autonomy means that councils have sufficient resources to carry out projects in their municipality, but in practice, councils depend on the central government for their financial survival. Council revenue consists of the transfer of credit cards, taxes, subventions, assistance, grants, and loans from the central government, subventions from the city council and its own local sources of revenue. Councils receive block grants from the national government through the Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance, known by its French acronym, FEICOME. Interviewee BT1, a municipal treasurer, said, “FEICOM is the principal financial bank for councils. Councils borrow and take loans from FEICOM and pay back.”

Another treasurer, interviewee BT3, mentioned, “Councils can borrow or take loans from FEICOM, equipment project loans, and the council will agree on the modality of repayment and FEICOM will withdraw the money at source.” Interviewee BT3 continued, “FEICOM gives council additional tax quarterly. The criteria for redistribution

are based on the population of the council area. The amount is not regular, and it is not fixed." Interviewee BT1, a municipal treasurer, agreed and said, "The amount from FEICOM varies depending on the population of the council." Because the central government has guaranteed financial autonomy to councils, it has implemented a national tax policy to redistribute resources to councils. Interviewee Samba, a deputy mayor, stated, "The central government has now centralised the assessment and collection of taxes, and then they will give what is necessary to councils." Interviewee KT1, a municipal treasurer, said, "The central government fixes tax rates, and the criteria are uniform for the whole country." Another treasurer, Interviewee BT1, claimed, "The Taxation department collects some municipal taxes and forwards them to FEICOM to redistribute as assistance or subventions to councils."

Councils also receive financial assistance from the Public Investment Budget (PIB). Interviewee KT1 mentioned, "This money comes in the form of credit cards, and it is regular. It comes with specific instructions. Mayors have no discretion." Councils also receive financial support from the Common Decentralisation Investment Grant (CDIG) for investment purposes within the municipality. According to Interviewee KT3, a municipal treasurer, "The amount is not fixed. This money is earmarked for specific projects, so it cannot be used for other projects." In addition, councils also receive money from the National Decentralisation Fund (NDF). Interviewee BT3 said, "They provide financial assistance with specific instructions for specific projects." Most of the financial transfers that councils receive from the government are earmarked for specific projects. This means that mayors lacked the power to make independent decisions on how to spend money. According to Cheema and Rondinelli (2007), devolution strengthens local

governments by granting them the authority, responsibility, and resources to provide services and formulate and implement local policies. However, in the Anglophone regions, mayors lacked financial autonomy.

Furthermore, sub-divisional councils receive subventions from city councils. Interviewee KT2, a municipal treasurer, said, “First, we receive subvention from Kumba city council in the sum of five million CFA ($10,000) each quarter, 20000 million CFA ($40000) each year for general use. Second, dues from building permits, and it depends on the construction of buildings in the whole KCC area.” Another municipal treasurer, Interviewee BT3, agreed, “Councils receive quarterly subventions which are fixed and equal [to all councils], five million per quarter and 20 million yearly.” Global tax is another source of council revenue. According to Interviewee BT3, a municipal treasurer, “Council collects and deposits in a regional account, and FEICOM redistributes to all councils equally.” Concerning subventions from city councils, mayors have discretionary powers to spend the money.

Councils also have the power to collect local taxes. However, before the council can collect local taxes, they must first pass a deliberation. Interviewee Bando, a council secretary-general, said, “The mayor can fix taxes after a deliberation with councillors at the council meeting.” Interviewee BT3, a municipal treasurer, said, “The council itself can fix and collect taxes, fees and charges and keep.” However, these sources of revenue did not give the sub-divisional councils adequate money to manage their affairs. For example, Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, said, “The council raised locally about 20% of its total budgets in 2015 and almost the same amount in 2016.” Interviewee Laticia, a mayor’s representative, said, “What the council raised locally averaged about

15-20% in 2015 and 2016. Interviewee BNGD, a representative of the government delegate, complained, “Some of the competencies have been transferred, but the accompanying resources have not been transferred; thus, it becomes difficult to execute projects.” Interviewee Rosaline, a council secretary-general, claimed, “The decentralisation fund is inadequate. The council is given responsibilities without the necessary funds to operate. Interviewee Lene, another council secretary-general, agreed and said, “The transfer of competence does not match the resources councils have received.” Interviewee KSGD said, “There are some councils that are relying only on the FEICOM money because they do not have other sources of income.” Interviewee KSGD continued, “The central government has not placed councils in their budgets, but they say that councils are autonomous bodies.” This means that the councils in the Anglophone regions relied on the central government for their financial survival.

The decentralisation law also states that mayors can borrow money. Interviewee Charton, a mayor, said, “Mayors have the authority to borrow money from the national and international banks with the consent of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation.” Another mayor, Interviewee Nakon, agreed and said, “Mayors can borrow from national banks based on our collateral security. For us to borrow, we need deliberation from the councillors. To borrow from international banks, we need the consent of the minister of territorial administration and decentralisation.” However, it is difficult to borrow money, especially from external banks. According to Schneider (2003), an indicator of fiscal autonomy is increased local revenue to meet local preferences. However, in the Anglophone regions, the local revenue of sub-divisional councils plus government transfers was insufficient to meet the people's needs. The lack

of financial resources suggests that councils could not execute their priority projects to meet the needs of the people. According to Grasa and Camps (2009), designing decentralisation to meet the needs of the people is critical in abating conflicts.

4.3.2.2 Expenditure Autonomy

Expenditure autonomy gives the mayor the authority to spend council money with limited interference from the government. The money that the councils receive from the government can either be a fixed amount or an irregular amount. It can also be discretionary for general usage or earmarked for specific projects. For example, Interviewee BT3, a municipal treasurer, said, "FEICOM gives [to councils] additional council taxes quarterly. The money is not regular, and it is not fixed. The mayor has the discretion to spend the money however he wants." Another municipal treasurer, Interviewee BT1, agreed and said, "FEICOM is a support fund for councils. The money they send to councils is not earmarked for specific projects." Regarding subventions from the city councils to sub-divisional councils, Interviewee KT3, a municipal treasurer, said, "This comes quarterly, five million FCFA ($10000) per quarter, the total is 20 million FCFA ($ 40000). The mayor has the discretion to spend the money however he wants."

However, other sources of council revenue go to councils with specific instructions on how the money should be used, for example, money from the Public Investment Budget (PIB). Interviewee KT1, a municipal treasurer, said, "This money comes in the form of credit cards, and it is regular. The money comes with specific instructions, and the mayors have no discretion." Another financial source for the council which is also earmarked is the Common Decentralisation Investment Grant or Fund

(CDIG). Interviewee KT3, a municipal treasurer, said, “The money is sent purposely for investment within the municipality. This money is earmarked for specific projects, so it cannot be used for other projects. This money comes from various ministries that have decentralised specific competencies.” In describing transfers from the National Decentralisation Fund (NDF), Interviewee KT3, a municipal treasurer, said, “The NDF is divided into recurrent and investment funds. Recurrent is for the payment of salaries and buying of office equipment, while investment fund is for projects. For recurrent expenditure, the mayor has discretion, but for the investment fund, the payments are already specified by the State.”

The finances in the council budget are used for recurrent expenditure and investment expenditure. A municipal treasurer, Interviewee KT1, said, “Sixty per cent of the council’s budget is used for functioning expenditure while forty per cent is used for investment expenditure.” Interviewee KT3, a municipal treasurer, stated, “For recurrent expenditure, the mayor has discretion, but for investment funds, the payments are already specified by the state. According to the decentralisation law, mayors have discretionary authority to spend only on projects that are below five million CFA ($ 10,000). For projects above five million CFA, the mayor must refer the projects to the council’s internal Tender Board (TB), made up of five statutory members responsible for awarding government contracts. For every project, which might last for at least 90 days before it is awarded, the TB sits four times, and the members receive sitting allowances per session. For councils that do not have TBs, their mayors pay for the sitting allowances of the TB members. Regarding the mayor’s expenditure authority, Interviewee Nakon, a mayor, said, “Yes, for projects below five million, mayors have the authority to initiate and

complete projects at their discretion, but for projects above five million, the mayor initiates but hands over to the TB to award to contractors." Interviewee Rosaline, a council secretary-general, said, "For projects below five million, the mayor does not send the contract to the TB. He can choose anybody to do it. But for projects above five million, the award must be done through the Tender Board." This means that the mayor's expenditure powers are limited. According to Tranchant (2007), decentralisation improves the welfare of minority groups or local governments if it empowers them to design and implement public policies according to their needs.

Even though the TB awards projects above five million, the mayor remains the authorising officer responsible for supervising the work until it is completed and approved. However, the creation of TBs has diminished the expenditure authority of mayors. Here is how Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general described the situation, "If you are a mayor, you may feel uninterested because you are not the one in charge, and you may be discouraged. Payments are not done by the council. The vouchers and support documents are prepared by the council but the actual payment is done at the regional treasury in Buea." Interviewee KSGD, a representative of the government delegate, agreed and said, "The law suggests that councils are financially autonomous, but the council cannot pay contractors directly from their own account." Section 7 of the 2004 Law states that any devolution of power from the State to the RLAs shall be accompanied by the necessary resources and means for the normal exercise of the power so devolved, but in practice, councils did not have enough resources to meet the needs of their constituents. In addition, mayors did not have expenditure autonomy because most

of the projects sent to councils were already earmarked, and projects above five million were referred to the Tender Board.

In sum, revenue and expenditure autonomy are the most obvious indicators of financial autonomy, but in Cameroon, the councils in the Anglophone regions did not enjoy financial autonomy. The lack of financial and expenditure autonomy is one of the ways that the central government has eroded the autonomy of Anglophones, thus leading to conflicts.

4.3.3 Administrative Decentralisation

It refers to the level of autonomy granted to local governments by the central government. The theme repeatedly reemerged in the interviews and observation. The sub-themes are accountability, decision-making authority, and local autonomy.

4.3.3.1 Accountability

There are two types of accountability: downward and upward accountability. Downward accountability refers to the ability of citizens to hold their elected officials accountable, while upward accountability focuses on central government supervision, not control, of local government performance (Ndegwa, 2002). The assumption of decentralisation is that it brings the government closer to the people so citizens can hold their elected officials accountable (Cabral, 2011; White, 2011; Crook & Manor, 2000; Besley & Smart, 2007). Regarding downward accountability, elected officials must be

able to account for their decisions. Therefore, meaningful answerability means that elected officials must be able to justify their decisions and disclose all relevant information that informed their decisions. In this regard, transparency and access to information are key components of accountability (Ndegwa, 2002). Under the decentralisation law, citizens can access council documents, but in practice, council documents are not easily accessible. For example, Interviewee Rosaline, a council secretary-general, said, "For eight years in this council, we have not published council documents, citizens don't come [to inspect our books], and they do not care." Interviewee Bando, another council secretary-general, said, "The law says councils must publish deliberations, but we do not because the people do not ask us. For two years I have been here, only one person from the civil society has come to the council to examine our books and see how the budget is implemented." Interviewee Benkem, a councillor, agreed and said, "We invite citizens to council meetings, but they do not come because they do not know that it is their right to attend such meetings. They do not see any financial gain in attending. Some believe that only people with money can do politics."

Sometimes, councils were unwilling to open their books to the public. Interviewee Rosaline, a council secretary-general, stated, "The law says council records are open to the public, but the common citizen does not know whether they can access those records. However, the council does not really give out the record even if the people come." Interviewee BT1, a municipal treasure, said, "The law says council records are open to the public, but the common citizen does not know whether they can access those records. However, the council does not give the record if people come." Monitoring and evaluating the activities of elected officials were challenging because of ignorance of the

law and the lack of citizens' civic responsibility coupled with the unwillingness of councils to open their books for inspection.

The mixed list system made downward accountability even more complicated. Through the list system, citizens do not directly vote for individual councillors or mayors; instead, they vote for a party list containing the names of aspiring councillors. Therefore, in such a system, the elected officials are more loyal to their party than the electorate. This means it was difficult for citizens to hold individual councillors and mayors accountable. As a result, incompetent councillors were not afraid that citizens could remove them from office since they were voted in through a list system. Interviewee Laticia, a mayor's representative, said, "The councillors elect the mayors, and the people elect the councillors on the party list." One community leader, Interviewee Nito, said, "The councillors are not accountable to the people; they are accountable to the mayor and their parties. They do not come to the population for any advice; they do not consult the local population. The people cannot even query their councillors." Interviewee Topi, another community leader, complained that "The councillors and mayors and government delegates do not listen to our voices because our complaints about water for the past four years now have not been answered." Interviewee Willy, a councillor, said, "Citizens do not directly vote for councillors, but they vote for a party list. Therefore, councillors are not accountable to the people." According to Bahl (2008), accountability to local voters is perhaps the most crucial element of a decentralised system of government. Councils must be locally elected, but if the local leadership is appointed, they will not be accountable to the people but to their appointees. The threat of being removed from public office incentivises politicians to make decisions that align with their constituents' interests.

However, downward accountability will fail if citizens can not hold their elected officials accountable. Interviewee P1, a university lecturer, said, “Accountability is the core of decentralisation. If there is no accountability, the whole thing falls apart.” Crook and Manor (2000) argue that when elected decision-makers are closer to citizens who elect them, they face greater pressure than high-level officials to govern according to their constituent’s wishes because they worry about re-election.

Upward accountability focuses on central government supervision, not control, of local government performance. The supervisory functions of the central government have to do with oversight of local government performance. The primary mechanisms for local government supervision include regular audits and monitoring and evaluation standards. There are two ways in which the central government supervises local government. The first way is through regular external audits. Regarding regular external audits, Interviewee KT3, a municipal treasurer, said, “This money [from CDF] is earmarked for specific projects, so it cannot be used for other projects because control officers will come for the projects at the end of the year.” Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, said, “We have control from the National Anti-Corruption Commission and from the audit bench of the Ministry of Finance.” Apart from external controls, the central government also uses internal measures like transferring municipal treasurers (MT) and secretary generals (SG) to councils. Interviewee Bando, a council secretary-general, said, “The MT is the council’s accountant who must double sign all the financial transactions of councils. The SG is the technical advisor to the mayor. He knows all the domains, laws and regulations.” The central government also uses technology to monitor the revenue and expenditure of councils. Interviewee Bando continued, “The use

of Simba Software in accounting records helps the MT, SG and mayor to know what the council receives and spends."

Another internal way the central government supervises local government performance is by appointing Senior Divisional Officers (SDO) as State representatives over the councils. Interviewee KISOD, a government representative, said, "The SDO is the State's representative over councils. He protects the interest of the State." Another government representative, Interviewee BISOD claimed, "The SDO is the eye of the State over councils." Interviewee Chaba, a councillor, confirmed, "The SDO is the eye of the State over councils." The SDO attends all council meetings. He is accompanied to these meetings by an entourage composed of the District Officer (DO), Divisional Delegates, Commissioner of Police and security agents. According to the law, councillors are supposed to meet three or four times a year but in practice, they only meet two or three times, namely, during the budget session, administrative session and an emergency session if the need arises. Without the SDO's approval, councillors cannot hold their sessions. Interviewee Willy, a councillor, noted, "The SDO approves all council sessions. If he does not give the go-ahead, councillors cannot meet.".

During the budget session, the councillors deliberate on the council's annual budget. During the administrative account session, the councillors discuss the mayor's performance during the year. In these meetings, the SDO acts as an observer, supervisor, and advisor to councillors and mayors. Interviewee KISOD, a government representative, said, "During council meetings, he can give advice, but when it is not accepted, and the deliberation comes for approval, he will not sign it." Interviewee KISOD continued, "He plays an advisory role during council meetings so that councillors will take decisions in

conformity with the existing text." Interviewee BISOD, a government representative, agreed, and said, "The SDO's role is to make sure that the laws of the State are followed. In his supervisory role, he approves all municipal deliberations." Interviewee Willy, a councillor, stated that, "The SDO must approve all council deliberations before they are executed." Interviewee KISOD, a government representative stated that, "From time to time, the SDO can intervene to give advice when the councillors are not acting in conformity with prescribed text." This means that the SDO is actively involved in the administration of councils. Mbuagbo and Fru (2011) claim that the overreaching influence of appointed officials over regional and local authorities undermined the authority of elected mayors and councillors, thus leading to local conflicts.

In sum, devolution is supposed to empower citizens to hold their elected officials accountable, but the mixed-lists voting system makes it difficult for citizens to do so. Also, devolution is supposed to insulate minority groups or local governments from excessive central government intrusion, but in the Anglophone regions, the SDO exercised direct control over all councils' activities.

4.3.3.2 Decision-making Authority

Sub-divisional councils are elected bodies headed by mayors. One of the areas where mayors exercise authority within their jurisdiction is through project initiation and implementation. Mayors have the power to initiate and complete projects that are below five million francs CFA ($ 10,000). However, for projects above five million, mayors can only initiate but must refer those projects to the council's Tender Board (TB) to award to contractors. Interviewee Nakon, a mayor, said, "Yes, for projects below five million CFA,

mayors have the authority to initiate and complete projects at their discretion. But for projects above five million, the mayor initiates but hands over to the TB to award to contractors." Interviewee Charton, another mayor, claimed that he initiated a project above five million and then handed it over to the TB, "I initiated a road project and culvert costing 30 million CFA ($60,000) and then referred it to the Divisional TB to award the contract to a competent contractor." This means mayors have limited powers in initiating and completing projects to meet peoples' needs.

Mayors also have the power to hire and fire categories (CAT) 1-6 staff. The highest level of qualification at the council is the General Certificate of Education (GCE), Ordinary Level (OL). However, the council can still employ people with higher degrees and then reclassify them later. The council has three categories of staff: CAT 1-6 and CAT 7-12 staff, and staff transferred from the central government to councils, such as municipal treasurers and secretary generals. The mayor has the authority to recruit and dismiss staff that fall under CAT 1-6 with the permission of the SDO. But before recruiting such staff, there must be a need for the position at the council and a council deliberation authorising the mayor to recruit the said staff. Interviewee Bando, a secretary-general, said, "The mayor can recruit only categories 1-6. For CAT 7-12, the mayor recruits and sends the document to the SDO for approval and then to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation." Interviewee Nakon, a mayor, said, "Yes, the highest level of employment is category 6. For categories 7-12, we can employ as category six and then reclassify through the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation (MTAD)." Regarding the dismissal of categories 1-6 staff, Interviewee Bando, a secretary-general, said, "At this level, the mayor can dismiss staff for

misconduct. But the mayor has to send justification to the SDO, who must approve before removal." For categories 7-12, Interviewee Bando, a council secretary-general, said, "At this level, the mayor sends letters through the SDO to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation." Interviewee Nakon, a mayor, noted, "For CAT 1-6, the mayor prepares a decision to terminate, Labour and SDO must approve before dismissal. For CAT 7-12, the mayor sends it to the SDO, and he sends it to Yaounde for final approval." Interviewee Rosaline, a secretary-general, agreed, "For CAT 7-12 staff, the mayor sends the decision to terminate to the SDO, who visas it and then sends it to Yaounde." The mayors' inability to hire and fire all council staff suggests that the mayors were not fully in charge of the council's administration.

In conclusion, according to the decentralisation law, regional and local authorities shall be administered freely by elected officials, and they shall be endowed with administrative and financial autonomy to manage regions and councils. However, almost nothing was done in the councils without the government's permission or supervision and approval.

4.3.3.3 Local Autonomy

Local autonomy refers to the extent to which sub-divisional councils can make autonomous decisions with limited central government interference. According to Section 4 (4) and Section 16 (2) of the 2004 Law, councils are deliberative organs, not legislative bodies. This means that councils do not have the power to make laws to control their municipality. Only the central government can pass laws for the whole nation. Councils

in the two Anglophone regions do not have the powers to legislate on any subject, and they do not have any exclusive jurisdiction on any subject. According to Section 4 (1), the central government transferred limited functions to councils to promote economic, social health, educational, cultural and sports development. However, the powers transferred to councils are not exclusive to the councils. They are exercised concurrently by the government and councils, according to Section 15 (2). Interviewee BISOD, a government representative, said, "The fact that power has been transferred to councils does not mean that the State cannot intervene in council affairs. The power transferred to the councils is not exclusive." During the interview, Interviewee BISOD explained that "Even though some competencies have been transferred, a lot of decision-making is still done at the central administration in Yaoundé." While observing the "Keep Kumba Clean" campaign, the mayor said, "The minister said that we must come to Yaounde about 12 times a year to lobby for projects in our municipalities." This means that ultimate decision-making authority over councils remained with the central government. According to Rondinelli et al. (1983), the distinguishing characteristic of deconcentration is that the authority for transferring specific functions from the central government to local governments remains within the central government.

Ministries with devolved competencies send financial assistance to councils through credit cards earmarked for particular projects. Interviewee Rosaline, a council secretary-general, said, "The financial assistance comes in the form of credit cards, and they are earmarked. The central government specifies what the councils should do with the money on behalf of the ministries." This form of financial assistance limited the authority of the mayors in initiating and implementing projects. For some projects like

constructing roads, schools, and healthcare facilities, councils lacked the qualified staff to implement those projects. As a result, councils were forced to work with the field offices of those ministries. Interviewee Nakon, a mayor, said, “We lack the necessary technicians; just three engineers are attached to the Kumba city council and Mbonge and Konye councils.” Concerning qualified staff, Interviewee KSGD, a government representative, said, “Councils must request technical assistance before staff with specialised skills are sent to councils from the central government.” This indicates that the central government is unwilling to relinquish power to councils to hire qualified staff.

National planning also undermined the autonomy of councils. As a decentralised unitary state, the central government implements policies for the entire nation. Decisions on some projects are still approved in the capital city of Yaoundé. This process undermines the autonomy of councils. Interviewee Jeanfan, a councillor, said, “Because projects are still approved in Yaoundé without the knowledge of the mayors, the mayors do not have full authority to supervise the projects even though they are the authorising officers.” Councillor Jeanfan continued, “With these projects approved from Yaoundé, the mayor has limited authority to control and approve the work of contractors who are paid from Yaoundé.” Another councillor, Interviewee Kolbe, agreed and said, “The government allocates projects without understanding the needs of the people. The leaders sit in Yaounde and say construct a toilet without knowing the needs of the school.” Interviewee BISOD, a government representative, said, “Even though some competencies have been transferred, a lot of decision-making is still done in Yaounde. Because of this, mayors do not have a free hand in deciding where to locate projects.” The mayors are the authorising officers, but they do not choose contractors under the Public Investment

Budget (PIB) program, yet they must supervise and approve their work. Interviewee Benkem, a councillor, described the situation this way, “Under the PIB, the government through the ministries send contractors to build projects, and the ministry pays for everything. The mayor does not know the contractor, and he does not choose the contractor, but he must approve his work before he is paid.”

In order to uniformly implement the decentralisation program in the country, the president appoints senior divisional officers (SDOs) as State representatives over councils. As a state representative, the SDO performs oversight functions over councils to ensure that the actions of mayors and councillors conform to the law on decentralisation. Interviewee KISOD, a government representative, said, “The SDO is the representative of the State at the councils. He protects the interest of the State.” Interviewee BISOD, another government representative, said, “The SDO’s role is to make sure that the laws of the State are followed.” The mayors and councillors cannot officially meet without the SDO’s approval. Interviewee Willy, a councillor, said, “The SDO approves all council sessions. If he does not give the go-ahead, councillors cannot meet.” Another councillor, Interviewee Benkem, said, “In council meetings, the SDO is the supervisory authority. This means that the councillors need his authority to sit in session and for the budget to be validated”.

Even though mayors are the elected heads of councils, they could not carry out any project without the SDO’s approval. Interviewee BISOD, a government representative, said, “Council deliberations are only executed after they have been approved by the SDO.” Interviewee Willy, a councillor, agreed and said, “The SDO must approve all council deliberations before they are executed. Another councillor,

Interviewee Benkem described the situation as follows, “The SDO needs to sign and approve all projects before they are executed”. Councillor Benkem described the working relationship between the SDO and the mayors in this way, “The SDO is like a landlord with the mayors working on his farm.” Interviewee P3, a university lecturer, said, “But in Cameroon, it is the SDO who controls the activities of the local councils.” Decentralisation is supposed to insulate local governments from excessive central government intrusion (Lake & Rothchild, 1996). But in the Anglophone regions, the SDO directly intervenes in the councils’ affairs.

The appointment of Government Delegates (GD) by the president as mayors of city councils also undermined the authority of elected mayors. Government Delegates are not answerable to the electorate but to the president who appointed them. A government representative, Interviewee KISOD said, “The creation of city councils was a political move to curb the power of councils. The government introduced the position of government delegates to control the powers of councils.” Interviewee Charton, a mayor, claimed that “Following the 1997 first multi-party council elections, the Social Democratic Front won most of the big towns, and the government decided to create the position of GD to oversee these big towns.” A community leader, Interviewee Mase, agreed and stated, “Where the president’s people were not powerful or could not maintain total control, the head of state who has the yam and the knife decided to appoint GDs to oversee what the opposition was doing. By doing so, he limited the powers and influence of mayors.” The president appointed government delegates to control the opposition and continue his firm grip over the people. Interviewee P1, a lecturer, said, “If

decentralisation must work, the people must appoint their own officials. Accountability is the core of decentralisation. If there is no accountability, the whole thing falls apart."

The government delegate (GD) did not seem to listen even to the councillors because he was not accountable to the people. An attendee at the "Keep Kumba Clean" campaign noted, "We have asked the GD to sell old waste trucks and buy two new ones, but nothing has happened." Since the government delegate was not elected, he did not fear the pressure from the councillors. Interviewee Fonan, a councillor, described the situation this way, "Government delegate is answerable to the powers that appointed him. Therefore, he behaves like a super mayor in Kumba." One of the subtle ways through which the central government controls councils is by allocating lucrative sources of revenue to the government delegate. Interviewee Chaba, a councillor, said, "The city councils control most of the revenue-generating sectors of the municipality." Interviewee Nakon, a mayor, agreed and said, "The GD is the city mayor. He has the same functions as mayors. But all the principal sources of revenue like markets, parks and building permits are under the control of the GD." This suggests that the sub-divisional councils depended on the city council and the government for their financial resources.

The decentralisation law states that councils shall have financial autonomy to handle matters within their jurisdiction, but in practice, councils in the Anglophone regions lack financial autonomy. Interviewee KSGD, a government representative, said, "The central government has not placed councils in their budget, but they say that councils are autonomous bodies. This is like selling a goat and still holding the rope." Interviewee KSGD continued, "The law suggests that councils are financially autonomous, but councils cannot pay contractors directly from their own account." The

transfer of competencies to councils did not match the resources received by the councils. Interviewee Rosaline, a council secretary-general, said, “The decentralisation fund is inadequate. The council is given responsibilities without the necessary funds to operate.” Interviewee BNGD, a government representative, said, “Some of the competencies have been transferred, but the accompanying resources have not been transferred; thus, it becomes difficult for councils to execute projects.” Some mayors saw the lack of funds as a means by which the government was punishing opposition mayors. One of those mayors, Interviewee Nakon, described his frustration by saying, “So, to frustrate and punish SDF, the population of Kumba was reduced in the last census and since the Additional Council Tax and Public Investment Budget is calculated as a function of the population, Kumba is not receiving what it is supposed to receive.” Without financial autonomy, councils in the Anglophone regions could not enjoy local autonomy. Therefore, decentralisation intensified conflicts by eroding the autonomy of the Anglophones.

The senior divisional officer's oversight role also curtailed the councils' financial autonomy because the councils' scarce resources were diverted to other projects. This is how Interviewee BNGD, a government official described the situation, “This 11 February celebration is not a council event but a national event. However, the Bamenda city council is now using its meagre resources to support the event instead of focusing on projects that will meet the needs of the people.” Interviewee Benkem, a councillor, agreed and said, “For 20th May celebrations, the government has a budget, but the SDO will still ask the mayors to support public ceremonies. At times, mayors prefer to spend money on these public ceremonies than on priority projects to avoid problems with the

SDO who approves council decisions." The SDO used his oversight role to sometimes engage in unethical behaviour. Because of the SDO's firm grip over councils, the mayors were forced to do things they would otherwise not do. The SDO's oversight role gave him undue influence over the mayors. Interviewee Benkem, a councillor, said, "The SDO is like a landlord, he manages the councils as he desires. He creates room for a crisis to arise and then exploits the circumstances to make money." The oversight functions of the senior divisional officer undermined the authority of elected mayors to manage their councils properly.

Also, the mayors paid for the SDO's transportation to attend council meetings. Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, said, "The mayor takes care of the fuel of the SDO and his entourage. The SDO requests fuel before attending council meetings. Some are even bold to say if you do not send fuel money, we will not attend." Interviewee KISOD, a government official, said, "Those who attend council meetings with the SDO's entourage, as the custom is, receive fuel money. Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, said, "The SDO signs all council deliberations; so if the mayor does not send his fuel money, the SDO might not sign council deliberations". The SDO used his approval and rejection powers of council deliberations to force mayors to behave unethically. Interviewee Benkem, a councillor, explained that "Sometimes, the SDO will say to the mayor that the deliberation was not well worded. But the SDO was present at the council meeting. Why did he not object? Because it is difficult to call back councillors in session, the mayors are forced to tip the SDO." Interviewee P3, a university lecturer, described the impact of government appointees on the council as follows, "Senior divisional officers, district officers and government delegates are

appointed, and all of them are CPDM members. Their role is to suffocate the local governments." The senior divisional officer's oversight functions undermined the councils' autonomy and created opportunities for influence peddling, political interference, and excessive state control over councils. Past studies (Crook & Sverrisson, 2001; Crook & Manor, 2000; Smoke, 2003; Antwi-Boasiako, 2010) suggest that decentralisation has been implemented as a mechanism for gaining political power and control over local governments.

To summarise, the first three key themes of political, fiscal and administrative decentralisation directly answered the research questions about the meaning of decentralisation and how it is implemented in the Anglophone regions, as well as the lived experiences of Anglophones under the decentralisation program. Decentralisation did not empower citizens to influence public policy. Mayors lacked financial, expenditure and administrative autonomy to govern councils. The appointment of government officials over councils undermined the authority of elected officials. Finally, the appointment of government officials deprived the people of electing and holding their leaders accountable.

4.3.4 Conflict

The theme of conflict often emerged in the interview. The decentralisation program resulted in local and national conflicts. Local conflict is analysed through the sub-themes of ambiguous laws, resource allocation and power struggle. National conflict

is analysed through the sub-themes of eroded autonomy, lack of political will and perception of decentralisation

4.3.5 Local Conflicts

This conflict occurred at the local government level between government appointees and elected officials because of the ambiguous nature of the decentralisation laws, the uneven allocation of resources and power struggles between government delegates and mayors.

4.3.5.1 Ambiguous Laws

This has to do with the fact that the decentralisation laws are not clearly defined in the areas of resource allocation and the responsibilities of elected and appointed officials. As a result, there were power struggles between government appointees and elected officials, thus leading to conflict at the local government level. Interviewee Rosaline, a council secretary-general, said, “There is conflict in the collection of revenue because the laws are ambiguous and the interpretation is fluid.” Because the laws are ambiguous, the government delegate (GD) and the mayors frequently interpret the law in their favour, thus intensifying local government conflicts. Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, said, “The laws are ambiguous, and the tendency is for people to interpret them in their favour, causing conflicts.” The SDO resolves conflicts between the

mayors and the GD, but sometimes it is difficult for the SDO to solve conflicts because the law on decentralisation is ambiguous. This is how Interviewee Rosaline, a council secretary-general described the situation, “When there is a conflict between the GD and mayors, you invite the SDO who will play the role of a moderator. Since the law is not clear, it is difficult, even for the SDO, to provide a lasting solution to local conflicts between the GD and the mayors.”

Also, conflicts occurred at the local government level because the law on decentralisation does not clearly define the responsibilities of elected and appointed officials. Section 2 (1) of the 2004 Law states that decentralisation shall be by devolution of special powers and resources to councils. However, Section 15 (2) of the same law states that devolved powers to councils shall not be conclusive. They shall be exercised concurrently by the State and local authorities. Local conflicts occurred because mayors and government delegates (GD) did not understand the limits of their power. The ambiguous nature of the decentralisation law gave room for different interpretations, leading to conflicts. Interviewee Esoda, a community leader, said, “The source of the conflict between the mayor and the GD comes because they do not understand the limits of their powers and their functions. This is because the law is ambiguous, giving room for multiple interpretations.” Interviewee Mako, another community leader, suggested that the source of the conflict is due to ignorance, “What is the reason for the conflict? Ignorance of the text governing the decentralisation process. As a result, they give different interpretations of the law, which then leads to conflicts.” Allowing the mayors and government officials to exercise concurrent powers over the same functions blurs the distinction between the powers devolved to councils and those retained by the central

government. This confusion led to local conflict. Interviewee Benkem, a councillor, described the situation in these words, “The GD and the SDO stand for continuity, whereas the mayors stand for change. The real conflict in council management is between those who want change and those who do not. If powers and resources are devolved to the mayors, the offices of the GD and SDO will become useless.”

4.3.5.2 Resource Allocation

Government delegates (GD) ran city councils, while mayors head sub-divisional councils (since 2020, elected mayors head councils). There are three sub-divisional councils under a city council area; therefore, allocating resources to GD and mayors is challenging because mayors govern only a particular council area, while GDs govern all the people under the three council areas. The mayors complained about the way resources are allocated under the decentralisation law. Interviewee Nakon, a mayor, said, “The GD is the city mayor. He has the same functions as the mayors. But all the principal sources of revenue like markets, parks, and building permits are under the control of the GD”. Mayor Nakon continued, “Since we have the same functions, but the principal sources of revenue are under the city council, when we try to create new income-generating sources, it leads to conflict.” The decentralisation law allocates more lucrative sources of revenue to government delegates. Interviewee Chaba, a councillor, said, “The city council controls most of the revenue-generating sectors of the municipality, which is why we take expensive projects to the city board. The city council also receives state subventions more than the sub-divisional councils.” Interviewee Charton, a mayor, said, “Kumba city council collects advertisement tax, building permit tax, market rents, they collect rents

from all parks in Kumba, and the sub-divisional councils are left with little or nothing to develop our own municipalities." Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, agreed and said, "The government has decided to give the GD more lucrative sources of revenue. So, from the start, the elected mayor is already angry." The allocation of revenue sources is complicated because GD and mayors govern the same population. Therefore, local conflicts also occurred over the location where GD and mayors collected taxes because the areas controlled by mayors also fall under the city council's jurisdiction. Interviewee KSGD, a government representative, said, "There are also conflicts in areas of collecting revenue. Kumba 1 claims that Kumba city council is collecting revenue where they are supposed to collect Thoroughfare Tax; consequently, they have taken the Kumba city council (KCC) to court." Interviewee Rosaline, a council secretary-general, said, "Presently, Kumba 1 is at loggerheads with KCC because there are certain taxes that we collect and others that they collect. There is a problem over who should collect revenue over a particular area." This implies that sub-divisional councils rely on the government for their financial needs because they lack lucrative local revenue sources.

4.3.5.3 Power Struggle

The president appointed Government Delegates (GD) to head city councils, while mayors were elected to head sub-divisional councils created within the city council's area. When the GD and the mayors belong to different parties, there is potential for more power struggles leading to conflicts than when they are of the same party. Interviewee BT1, a municipal treasurer, said, "In Bamenda, we have two opposition councils and one council belonging to the ruling party. The councillors in the opposition party do not

recognise and respect the authority of the GD because he was appointed by the ruling party." Interviewee KSGD, a government representative, said, "The GD is appointed by presidential decree to work with mayors of councils who feel that they are elected while GD is appointed; consequently, there is always conflict." Interviewee KSGD continued, "This is an ideological conflict and antagonism between the mayors and the GD."

Party affiliation was also responsible for the power struggle between the GD and the mayors of the opposition party. Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, said, "The GD and mayors cannot work together without conflict because they are coming from two different political backgrounds. They govern over the same population within the same territory without clearly distinct responsibilities." Interviewee Andy, a community leader, agreed and said, "Decentralisation causes conflicts because the GD is from another party and the mayor of Bamenda 2 is from another party." Interviewee Andy continued, "At the top, there is no community interest but party interest. This is the underlying battle that is going on between the parties at the top."

The power struggle between the GD and the mayors and councillors in the opposition party intensified because they had different visions for the city. Interviewee Chaba, a councillor, characterised the situation as follows, "The GD carries out projects at the city council at his discretion. Because the GD executes projects at his discretion, there is a conflict between the GD and the mayors because he neglects their projects. The GD has the power to do only the projects that he wants, and there is nothing councillors can do." The mayors argued that the law should have favoured them because they are accountable to the people, whereas the GDs were convinced that the law should favour them because they head the city councils, including sub-divisional councils within the

city council area. Interviewee KSGD, a government representative, said, “This is an ideological conflict and antagonism between the mayors and the GD.” Interviewee Fanton, a councillor, said, “Mayors must effectively manage their municipalities well to be reelected. But the government delegate is answerable to the president and not to the electorate. So there is a power struggle between elected mayors and GD.”

The researcher also observed the issue of different visions regarding the management of the city during the Kumba 2 council meeting. Attendees at the meeting complained that the government delegate had not provided the council with waste trucks. One councillor in the meeting said, “People remove dirt from the streets and gutters, but there are no waste trucks to evacuate the waste to dump sites.” Another attendee said, “There are no vehicles to collect the dirt because the government delegate who collects rents from Fiango market has not come to Fiango market to collect the waste.” Another councillor in the meeting said, “Our problem is how to collect and dispose of the waste. The GD has not given us vehicles to solve this problem for three years and some months. The GD has not sent a vehicle to Fiango market to collect wastes.” The councillors took deliberation ordering the GD to sell old waste trucks and buy new ones, but the GD did not implement the councillors' decision. A councillor in the meeting said, “We have asked the GD to sell the old waste trucks and buy two new ones, but nothing has happened.”

The question of political control also led to conflict between the GD and mayors. The mayors felt they were elected while the GD was appointed to undermine their authority. Interviewee KSGD, a government representative, described it this way, “Mayors feel that they have won elections while GDs are appointed to lord over them.”

That way of thinking fueled conflicts between the GD and mayors. Interviewee KSGD also said, “If councils deliberate on a matter and the GD is also interested in the matter, the decision of the councils shall not contradict the decision of the GD. This can lead to too much fighting, a lot of fighting because the mayors feel that a government appointee is coming to control them.” Winning elections at all costs and promoting party interest were other reasons for generating local conflicts. The GD wanted the opposition mayors to lose elections. A community leader, Andy described it this way, “Decentralisation causes conflicts because the government delegate is from another party and the mayor of Bamenda 2 is from another party. With the party's interest, the GD will make sure that SDF [mayor] fails and is voted out for a CPDM [mayor] to be brought back.”

The mayors sometimes had conflicts with the SDO as well. The oversight powers of the SDO made the work of the mayor more difficult. The mayor would give in to his demands to avoid conflicts with the SDO. This is how Interviewee Benkem, a councillor described the mayor's dilemma, “After the election, the mayor is not only supervised by the party but he is also supervised by the SDO who can either oppose the mayor’s activities or collaborate with him. If the mayor does not oil his hands, he can frustrate his projects because the SDO approves all council deliberations.”

In brief, decentralisation exacerbated conflicts at the local level because of the ambiguous nature of the decentralisation laws, the unequal allocation of resources and power struggles between mayors and the government delegate. The decentralisation laws and their implementation failed to ease conflicts due to the weak design and poor implementation.

4.3.6 National Conflict

National conflicts occurred because of the erosion of the Anglophones' autonomy, the lack of political will to devolve power to the Anglophone regions and the Anglophones' perception of decentralisation.

4.3.6.1 Eroded Autonomy

The sub-theme of eroded autonomy frequently reemerged in the interviews. The erosion of the autonomy of Anglophones by the Francophone-majority government exacerbated conflicts, resulting in a civil war in 2017. Instead of restoring the autonomy of Anglophones that was abolished with the federal system in 1972, decentralisation further weakened the autonomy of Anglophones due to the weak design and poor implementation. The Anglophones' autonomy has been further eroded in five ways: first, decentralisation has further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones by not accommodating the historical specificities of their region, which enjoyed autonomy before joining French Cameroon under a federal system in 1961. Before reunification, Premier Foncha, the leader of Southern Cameroons and President Ahidjo, the leader of French Cameroun, signed a proposed federal constitution on October 14, 1960, stipulating the terms of reunification (See Appendix D). The document stated that "Each of the federated states will be ruled by a Government and will have a Legislative Assembly." The agreement also stated, "In non-federal matters, the Authorities of each of the Federated States will have exclusive competence." The document was signed because Anglophones and

Francophones lived separately for over 40 years. During that period, Anglophones enjoyed autonomy over their territory, and the leaders wanted each territory to remain autonomous because of their colonial history. As an autonomous region, Anglophones controlled their language, economy, education, law, and politics (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974; Stark, 1976; Harlech, 1941; Crowder, 1964). Under the federal system, the federated states had exclusive jurisdiction in non-federal matters, but under decentralisation, the Anglophone regions do not have exclusive jurisdiction on any subject, even with the special status granted to their region in 2019. In 1996, the decentralised unitary Constitution did not consider the historical context of reunification. Interviewee A2, an activist, said, "Premier Foncha did not advocate for integration. He advocated for a separate but equal federated state." Interviewee P4, a university lecturer, said, "Anglophones feel that decentralisation will destroy their culture and their educational and legal systems." The failure of decentralisation to restore the lost autonomy of Anglophones and to accommodate the sociocultural and political differences of Anglophones has further eroded their autonomy. Several studies indicate that decentralisation increases conflicts when the central government erodes the autonomy of minority groups, especially those that have previously enjoyed some degree of self-rule (Merera, 2007; Goodfellow & Lindemann, 2013; Marinzel, 2014).

Second, the Anglophone territory, which used to be a single political unit, was transformed from a federated state to two regions. The Anglophone minority joined the Francophone majority under a federal system in 1961 as an independent and autonomous territory. However, after reunification, Ahidjo began dismantling the territorial autonomy of the Anglophone territory (Owona, 2012; Ebune, 1992; Ngoh, 2011; Anyangwe, 2009).

His first move was to divide the federation into six administrative regions and to appoint Federal Inspectors over those regions, thus leading to political tensions. Interviewee P5, a university lecturer, said, "Ahidjo appointed Federal Inspectors who were answerable to him and not to the prime minister of West Cameroon. So, the Federal Inspector was always clashing with P.M. Jua." In 1972, Ahidjo abolished the federal system in favour of a unitary system and divided the Anglophone territory into two of the seven provinces. Interviewee P5, a university lecturer, said, "After 1972, there was nothing as Southern Cameroons. Cameroon was divided into seven provinces." In 1996, the form of the state was changed again from a unitary state to a decentralised unitary state. Under the 1996 Constitution, the country was divided into ten regions, with the Anglophone territory transformed from two provinces into two of the ten regions. The transformation of the Anglophone territory from a federated state into two provinces and then into two regions has further eroded the territorial autonomy of the Anglophones. Interviewee A1, an activist, said, "Many Anglophones do not find anything good in the decentralisation law. This is because the law has created ten permanent regions." According to Eyoh (1998) and Anyefru (2011), the Francophone-dominated government has used state laws to dismantle the autonomy and cultural heritage of the Anglophones.

Transforming the form of government and political institutions in the Anglophone regions is the third way in which decentralisation has further eroded their autonomy. Under the federal system, the Anglophone territory had a separate government with a prime minister and a bicameral legislature with law-making powers to raise taxes (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974). However, under decentralisation, Anglophones no longer have a separate government, and the regions and councils are deliberative organs, not

legislative bodies. Governors head the two regions. Government delegates run city councils, and senior divisional officers supervise sub-divisional councils, all appointed by the president. Interviewee P3, a university lecturer, said, “But in Cameroon, it is the senior divisional officer who controls the activities of local councils.” All the appointed officials are answerable to the president and not the electorate. Interviewee P1, a university lecturer, said, “Accountability is the core of decentralisation. If there is no accountability, the whole thing falls apart.” Interviewee Benkem, a councillor, said, “The government delegate and the senior divisional officer are accountable to those who nominate them.” According to Bahl, (2008), accountability to local voters is the most crucial element of a decentralised system of government. Councils must be locally elected, but if the local leadership is appointed, they will be accountable to their appointees rather than the electorate.

Fourth, decentralisation has further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones by not empowering their regions with the power to pass legislation on important issues specific to their regions. Under the federal system, the federated states had exclusive jurisdiction over non-federal matters. However, under decentralisation, regions and councils have no exclusive jurisdiction over any subject, even in matters of law and education that triggered the ongoing civil war. Section 15 (2) of the 2004 Law states that the powers transferred to regional and local authorities are not exclusive. Interviewee BISOD, a government representative, said, “The fact that power has been transferred to councils does not mean that the State cannot intervene. The powers transferred to councils are not exclusive.” Sections 4 (4) and 16 (2) of the 2004 law also state that regions and councils are deliberative bodies, not legislative bodies. They do not have the power to make laws

on any subject. Only the national government can make laws for the entire nation. Brancati (2006) suggests that by enabling regions or ethnic groups to make laws to protect their interests and concerns, decentralisation prevents ethnic groups from fighting each other or trying to secede. Similarly, McGarry and O'Leary (1993) also note that in a truly decentralised system, minorities are given constitutional powers to "legislate on important areas, such as language, religion and education, while leaving other policy briefs-defence and fiscal policies-to the central government." However, decentralisation has not empowered the Anglophone regions to make laws to protect their interests and concerns within the larger Francophone population, thus resulting in conflict.

Fifth, decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones by not granting their regions financial autonomy. Anglophones joined Francophones in 1961 as an autonomous territory with a functioning government and a bicameral legislature with powers to raise taxes and spend money. However, the 1961 Federal Constitution did not mention any revenue allocation formula for the federated states, thus making the West Cameroon government (Anglophones) dependent on the federal government for their financial survival (Stark, 1976; Ebune, 2016b). Interviewee P1, a university lecturer, said, "The Foumban constitution had no clause on revenue allocation in the federation from 1961-1972. Therefore, West Cameroon operated at the mercy of the federal government." Under decentralisation, the Anglophone regions lack financial autonomy. Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, said, "The council raised about 20% of its total budgets in 2015 and almost the same amount in 2016." Interviewee Laticia, a mayor's representative, said, "What the council raised locally averaged about 15-20% in 2015 and 2016. Interviewee Rosaline, a council secretary-general, claimed, "The decentralisation

fund is inadequate. The council is given responsibilities without the necessary funds to operate. Interviewee Lene, another council secretary-general, agreed and said, “The transfer of competence does not match the resources councils have received.” Interviewee KSGD, a government official, said, “The central government has not placed councils in their budgets, but they say that councils are autonomous bodies.” The councils in the Anglophone regions rely on the central government for their financial survival. The implementation of decentralisation has eroded the financial autonomy of the Anglophones, thus intensifying conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the central government.

4.3.6.2 Lack of Political Will

The theme of lack of political will resurfaced many times in the interviews. According to Section 2 (1) of the 2004 Law, decentralisation is implemented by devolution. Devolution means that local governments are given autonomy and are considered a separate level of government over which the central government exercises little or no direct control (Rondinelli, McCullough & Johnson, 1989). However, ultimate authority over councils in the Anglophone regions remains with the central government. Government appointees exercised direct control over councils' activities. Interviewee BISOD, a government official, said, “From time to time, the SDO can intervene [during council meetings] to give advice when the councillors are not acting in conformity with the prescribed texts.” Cameroon became a decentralised unitary state in 1996. However, the decentralisation laws only went into effect in 2004, eight years after the 1996 Constitution was adopted. According to public statements by Marafa Yaya in 2009, Minister of State, Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation, the

government began transferring competencies only in 2010. However, by the time the interviews for this research were completed in March 2016, only some ministries had transferred competencies. Therefore, the decentralisation program has been a gradual process. Interviewee BISOD, a government representative, said, “Not all the ministries have transferred competencies, and not all competencies from ministries have been fully transferred as well. The decentralisation program is a gradual process.” Interviewee KSGD, a government representative, said, “The central government has been implementing the law progressively since 2004 up till now. It seems that there is no willingness for the government to decentralise.” According to Lontum (2021), decentralisation has been ineffective because of the lack of political will and inertia from the national government.

A council secretary-general, Interviewee Lene, said, “The transfer of competence is done at the level of the ministries. Some ministries are doing it, while others are dragging their feet. It is a gradual process.” The government has been slow in implementing the decentralisation program. Interviewee BT3, a municipal treasurer, said, “The decentralisation law is implemented piecemeal. It is like selling a goat and still holding it with a rope.” As a decentralised unitary state, even though some powers have been transferred to local governments, the central government still takes most of the decisions. Interviewee BISOD, a government official, said, “Even though some competencies have been transferred, a lot of decision-making is still done at the central administration in Yaoundé.” Interviewee BISOD added that “There is no effective decentralisation in Cameroon because decisions still come from Yaoundé and the SDO still has authority to sanction decisions of mayors. He still lords it over them.”

Another example of the lack of political will is that the powers transferred to councils are not exclusive. Interviewee BISOD, a government official, said, “The fact that power has been transferred to councils does not mean that the State cannot intervene. The powers transferred to the councils are not exclusive.” The fact that councils have no exclusive jurisdictions on some issues allows the central government to intervene in the local affairs of councils. Interviewee P2, a university lecturer, said, “The French political culture favours the intervention of the central government in the affairs of the local people”. Another area where the ruling elites are unwilling to relinquish political power is the subject of project selection and implementation. Each year, councils prepare their list of priority projects and send them to the ministries concerned. Interviewee Laticia, a representative of the mayor, said, “If the projects are approved by the central government, they will send them back to the councils in the form of credit cards.” The credit cards are earmarked for specific projects and with specific instructions which the councils must follow. Interviewee KT3, a municipal treasurer, said that “The credit cards come with specific instructions, with the amount and the projects. Yaoundé makes these decisions, not the councils.” Because Yaoundé makes the final decisions, mayors who wanted their projects approved travelled to Yaoundé to lobby the ministers. Interviewee Charton, a mayor, said, “The minister told us that we must come to Yaoundé 12 times in a year to lobby for projects.” Interviewee Kolbe, a councillor, said, “The government allocates projects without understanding the needs of the people.” These examples suggest that the central government is unwilling to let go of its power over councils.

The law also says that councils shall have financial autonomy, but in practice, councils do not have adequate resources to execute priority projects. Without financial

autonomy, councils will continue to depend on the central government for their financial resources. According to Voufo and Tametong (2021), the resources transferred to local authorities in taxes, grants, and own resources must be managed freely. However, this freedom remains an illusion because of the principle of the unity of the treasury, which promotes the centralisation of the financial operations of all public entities. This implies that in a financial crisis, the government will prioritise its expenditure over that of decentralised units. Interviewee Rosaline, a council secretary-general, said, "The council is given responsibilities without the necessary funds to operate." Another council secretary-general, Interviewee Lene, agreed and said, "The transfer of competencies does not match the resources that councils receive." The law also states that elected boards shall freely administer councils. However, appointing senior divisional officers (SDO) and government delegates (GD) over councils suggests that the central government is not ready to relinquish its control over councils. Interviewee Charton, a mayor, said, "We have two masters who are not elected, the senior divisional officer and the government delegate." Interviewee A4, an activist, said, "There is no proper decentralisation in Cameroon because there cannot be a mayor and a GD in the same council area. Where the GD exists, the mayors have no power." Interviewee P3, a lecturer, claimed, "The government lacks the political will to implement the decentralisation process. The government is not sincere. They want to remain in control through the appointment of senior divisional officers and government delegates."

Finally, promoting national planning and unity are other reasons for the lack of political will to devolve power to the Anglophone regions. Ngo (2022) argues that the transfer of powers from the State to local authorities does not give local authorities the

freedom to disregard guidance on national unity. Sections 3 (2) of the 2004 Law states that regional and local authorities "shall carry out their activities with due respect for national unity, territorial integrity and the primacy of the State." Section 10 (2) states, "The State shall ensure the harmonious development of regional and local authorities…." and Section 14 (1) states, "No regional or local authority shall deliberate outside its statutory meetings, or on matters outside its jurisdiction or which undermine State security, law and order, national unity or territorial integrity." Instead of accommodating the socio-cultural and political differences of the Anglophones, the Francophone ruling elites favour national unity, thus intensifying intrastate conflicts. Decentralisation is likely to increase intrastate conflicts when the central government erodes the autonomy of ethnic or regional groups that previously enjoyed autonomy (Merera, 2007; Goodfellow & Lindemann, 2013; Marinzel, 2014).

Regarding the promotion of harmonious development of the regions and council, Interviewee Samba, a deputy mayor, said, "The central government has now centralised the assessment and collection of taxes, and then they will give what is necessary to councils." The central government is still making many decisions for regional and local authorities (RLAs). To apply the decentralisation laws uniformly across the country, the government appoints governors and senior divisional offices to supervise RLAs. Interviewee BISOD, a government representative, said, "Even though some competencies have been transferred, a lot of decision-making is still done at the central administration in Yaounde." In his supervisory role over councils, the senior divisional officer (SDO) ensures that council decisions are in agreement with State laws. Interviewee KISOD, a government representative, said, "The SDO listens to councillors [during council

meetings], but he ensures that council decisions are in line with state laws." The lack of political will suggests that the design of decentralisation was not intended to devolve actual power to the Anglophones, thus intensifying intrastate conflicts. According to Cheema and Rondinelli (2007), decentralisation programs fail when local authorities lack the autonomy to make independent decisions.

4.3.6.3 Perception of Decentralisation

The theme of perception came up often in the interviews. Perception refers to how Anglophones viewed the decentralisation program. Their views were informed by their history under British rule and their experiences under the decentralisation program.

First, participants perceived decentralisation as a sham because the design of decentralisation has not transferred sufficient power and resources to the Anglophone regions to control their local affairs. Interviewee A3, an activist, said, "I think decentralisation in Cameroon is just a sham. If we were to accept decentralisation as an alternative to our sovereignty, it will not work because our elected mayors are being controlled by government delegates and senior divisional officers" Interviewee A8, an activist and human rights lawyer, said, "SDO is appointed, the GD supervises the mayors, the governor is still appointed, so; decentralisation is a farce. The government gives with one hand and takes back with the other hand." Another activist, Interviewee A1, said, "Councils are supervised by SDO appointed by the central government. These same councils have GD lording it over them. Most instructions for governance come from the central government through the governor, SDO, DO and GD."

Decentralisation by devolution is supposed to grant autonomy to councils, but in practice, the government is unwilling to lose its tight grip on councils. A government official, Interviewee KSGD, said, “The central government has not placed councils in their budget, but they say councils are autonomous bodies. This is like selling a goat and still holding the rope.” A municipal treasurer, Interviewee BT3, agreed and said, “The decentralisation law is being implemented piecemeal. It is like selling a goat and still holding it with a rope.” A councillor, Interviewee Benkem, said, “Decentralisation is like a smokescreen, you hear about it, but you cannot see clearly what is happening.” Another activist, Interviewee A4, noted, “There is no proper decentralisation in Cameroon because there cannot be a mayor and a government delegate in the same council area. Where the government delegate exists, the mayors have no powers.”

Section 2 (1) of the 2004 Law states that decentralisation is by devolution but in practice, what has been implemented leans more on deconcentration than devolution. Under devolution, regional and local governments are viewed as independent and autonomous political entities over which the central government exercises little or no direct control (Rondinelli, McCullough & Johnson, 1989), but under deconcentration, decision-making authority remains with the central government over field offices of government ministries and regional and local governments. To maintain direct control over councils, the central government appointed representatives over councils. A Councillor, Interviewee Willy, said, “The SDO approves all council sessions. If he does not give the go-ahead, the councillors cannot meet. The SDO must approve all council deliberations before they are executed.” Interviewee KISOD, a government official, said, “The SDO is the representative of the State at the councils. He protects the interest of the

State." Another government official, Interviewee BISOD said, "Council deliberations are only executed after they have been approved by the SDO." In addition, the devolved powers to councils are exercised concurrently by the central government. Interviewee BISOD, a government official, said, "The powers transferred to councils are not exclusive."

In a devolved system, local governments exercise power and control over transferred competencies, but under deconcentration, ultimate authority over transferred competencies remains with the central government (Rondinelli, McCullough & Johnson, 1989). The oversight functions of the SDO made the councils dependent on the central government for almost everything, from holding council meetings to financial support. Interviewee P3, a university lecturer, said, "In Cameroon, it is the senior divisional officer who controls the activities of local governments." The central government has maintained its firm grip over councils through the president's appointment powers.

Second, participants viewed decentralisation as a political ploy by the central government to continue its control over Anglophones. During the constitutional debates leading up to the adoption of decentralisation, the Anglophone political leaders appealed to the central government during the All Anglophone Conferences in 1993 and 1994 to return to a federal system so that the Anglophone and Francophone territories would regain their autonomy, but the government rejected their appeal in favour of a decentralised unitary system in 1996 (Atem, 2012; Munzu, 2016). In 2016, Anglophone common law lawyers appealed to the government to return to federalism so they could freely practise the common law, but their appeal was also rejected. Interviewee A8, an activist and human rights lawyer said, "We want a federal structure. That is our focus."

Anglophones preferred a federal system because it would allow them to control their local affairs with limited interference from the central government. Interviewee A2, an activist, said, “Premier Foncha did not advocate for integration. He advocated for separate but equal federated states.”

Even after Cameroon became a decentralised unitary system in 1996, the general rules applicable to decentralisation only went operational in 2004. The first competencies were devolved in 2010, 14 years after decentralisation was adopted. As of 2016, when the interviews for this research were completed, not all the competencies were devolved, and not all the ministries had devolved their competencies. Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, said, “So, the transfer of competencies is done at the level of the ministries. Some ministries are doing it while others are dragging their feet. It is a gradual process.” Interviewee BT3, a municipal treasurer, said, “The decentralisation law is being implemented piecemeal. It is like selling a goat and still holding it with a rope.” Interviewee P3, a lecturer, said, “The government is not sincere. They want to remain in control through the appointment of SDOs and GDs.” Participants viewed the gradual process as a delaying tactic by the Francophone ruling class to continue their domination over Anglophones. According to Voufo and Tametong (2021), even though the government began transferring competencies in 2010, the principles of complementarity, subsidiarity and concomitance allow the State to maintain its control over local authorities.

Third, Anglophones viewed decentralisation as a system designed to marginalise and discriminate against them. Interviewee P2, a history lecturer, claimed that “Anglophones have experienced marginalisation since reunification. It is a political term,

which in the context of Cameroon, means that Anglophones are removed from the centre and levers of power" Interviewee P2 continued, "They are not equally represented in power. Anglophones are not equally appointed as ministers, senior civil servants and senior members of the CPDM political party." Another lecturer, Interviewee P4, agreed and said, "Important ministries are not given to Anglophones." Interview A1, an activist, said, "We are marginalised because most of the important jobs are taken by French Cameroonians." Another activist, Interviewee A4, said, "There are key ministries that are considered no-go zones for Anglophones. Most lucrative jobs are reserved only for French-speaking Cameroonians, even in corporations in Anglophone regions such as SONARA." Interviewee A4 continued his lamentation by claiming that "Marginalisation is the reason why for 54 years no Anglophone has been considered competent to be president, even though in 1992, Ni John Fru Ndi, an Anglophone, won the presidency, but his victory was denied." Participants claimed that the decentralisation law mistreated Anglophones. Interviewee A3, an activist, said, "Anglophones want equality with the Francophones, equal opportunities and access to public institutions and into public services." Resource exploitation is another area where Anglophones felt that they were marginalised. Interviewee A4, an activist, said, "Anglophones are marginalised because we are annexed, and our land and resources are exploited." This means that Anglophones have been denied access to power and employment opportunities. Several studies (Gurr, 2000; Merera, 2007; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009; Durante, 2017) suggest that decentralisation increases conflicts when the central government refuses to share political power and resources with minority groups.

In addition to marginalisation, participants claimed that Anglophones were socially discriminated against under decentralisation. Interviewee A4, an activist said, "Anglophones are treated by French Cameroonians as pure slaves." Another activist, Interviewee A1, said, "Anglophones are motivated to fight for their autonomy because they are called "Biafrans" and the fact that we are called second-class citizens in our country of birth." Interview A1 continued, "Anglophones are marginalised because they are not considered full-fledged Cameroonians by the system in place. A human rights lawyer and activist, Interviewee A8, said, "The perception that Anglophones are second-class citizens dehumanises. This is the greatest form of marginalisation." Participants also complained about the marginalisation of the English language. An activist, Interviewee A1, said, "All official documents are in French while the English versions are sometimes not available." In addition, French is spoken in courts in the Anglophone regions. Interview A7, an activist and lawyer, said, "My client was arrested and was taken to court, and the witness for the prosecution, a policeman, was speaking in French in the Southwest region". Interviewee A7 continued, "I complained to the State Counsel that my client does not understand the French language and the case was adjourned to tomorrow, March 9, 2016." Decentralisation increases conflicts when there is a history of government discrimination and repression against ethnic minorities (Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009; Marinzel, 2014; Durante, 2017). According to Woodward (2007), "economic deprivation, political neglect, and forced cultural assimilation have in recent years resulted in minority nations taking up arms in order to fight for the protection of their identity and their independence from the host state." The decentralisation laws increased intrastate conflicts because, to the disappointment of the

Anglophone political elites who had called on the government to restore federalism so that each region would maintain their autonomy, it failed to restore their previously lost autonomy rights. Second, the decentralisation laws and their implementation failed to ease conflicts owing to their weak design and poor implementation.

In sum, the fourth theme of conflict directly answered the research questions about the lived experiences of Anglophones, their perception of decentralisation, the reasons that motivate them to continue their struggle for autonomy and how the implementation of decentralisation exacerbated intrastate conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government. Decentralisation exacerbated intrastate conflicts by failing to restore their lost autonomy and further eroding their autonomy due to poor design and implementation. The continued erosion of Anglophones' autonomy resulted in the marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation of Anglophones. Anglophones viewed decentralisation as a sham and a political ploy by the Francophone ruling elites to continue to maintain control over them.

4.3.6.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the report of the thematic analysis of the data. The report was organised in the form of themes. Four key themes were identified: political, fiscal, and administrative decentralisation and conflicts, including their sub-themes. All the themes and sub-themes were explained and supported by evidence in the form of quotations from the data. The first three themes of political, fiscal and administrative decentralisation directly answered the research question about the meaning of decentralisation and how it is implemented, as well as the lived experiences of

Anglophones. The fourth theme of conflict directly answered the research questions about the lived experiences of the anglophones, their perception of the decentralisation program, the reasons motivating their struggle for autonomy and how decentralisation exacerbated intrastate conflicts. The next chapter will present the results of the thematic analysis of the data.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and describes the key findings of this research based on the thematic analysis of the data. The key problem addressed in this research was that decentralisation increased conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government. Therefore, conducting this research and proposing recommendations to mitigate the ongoing conflict was important. The main research question is: How did the implementation of decentralisation exacerbate conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government? The sub-questions are: What is the meaning of decentralisation, and how is it implemented in the two Anglophone regions? What are the experiences of Anglophones under the decentralisation program? How do Anglophones perceive the decentralisation program? What reasons motivate Anglophones to continue their struggle for autonomy? Therefore, the study aimed to explore how the implementation of decentralisation increased conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-led majority government.

Understanding how decentralisation intensified intrastate conflicts in Cameroon could add new knowledge to the field of conflict mitigation.

This chapter also presents the four key findings relevant to the research aims, objectives and questions. These findings are presented in a theme-based structure, with each theme supported by extracts from the data. The findings are presented in the following order: first, decentralisation is more of deconcentration than devolution. Second, decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones. Third, decentralisation marginalised, discriminated and assimilated Anglophones. Fourth, decentralisation increased conflicts. These themes are interrelated, and they tell a unified story that answers the research questions.

5.1.1 Decentralisation is more of deconcentration than devolution.

This study found that the form of decentralisation practised in the Anglophone regions is more of administrative deconcentration than devolution because decentralisation has not transferred sufficient powers and resources to the Anglophone regions to manage their local affairs with limited interference from the central government. This theme focused on the meaning and the form of decentralisation implemented in the Anglophone regions. There are four types of decentralisation in the literature: political, fiscal, administrative, and economic/market decentralisation, as shown in Table 1 below. Also, administrative decentralisation has three forms, deconcentration, delegation and devolution, as shown in Table 2 below. The 1996 decentralised unitary Constitution (Articles 55-62) and four subsequent legislations are the primary laws that govern the decentralisation program in Cameroon, namely, (1) Law

No. 2004/17 of 22 July 2004 on the Orientation of Decentralisation. (2) Law No. 2004/18 of 22 July 2004 to lay down the rules applicable to councils. (3) Law No. 2004/19 of 22 July 2004 to lay down rules applicable to regions and (4) The 2019 General Code on regional and local authorities in Cameroon. Apart from the 1996 Constitution and subsequent legislations, three principles underpinned the transfer of authority from the central government to the regional and local authorities (Edou, n.d; Owono, n.d). These principles are (1) The principle of subsidiarity, which states that transferred competencies should be exercised at the territorial level most appropriate or closest to the population concerned. (2) The principle of progressiveness/graduation states that the transfer of competence should be spread over time and given in bits. (3) The principle of complementarity/additionality states that the transfer of competence by the State does not preclude the State from exercising those same powers. In effect, the authority is exercised concurrently by the State, regions and councils.

Cameroon is divided into ten regions, corresponding to the 374 local government councils in the nation. Eight of the ten regions are Francophones, while two are Anglophone regions. Of the 374 councils, there are 360 councils and 14 city councils. The 374 councils are grouped into three main types: city councils, sub-divisional councils, and city councils. City councils serve urban areas, and their territories include those of sub-divisional councils. Government Delegates appointed by the president used to head the city councils (since 2020, elected mayors have governed city councils). Elected mayors supported by councillors lead sub-divisional councils. Elected mayors govern councils which serve rural areas. This research was conducted in the city councils of Kumba in the Southwest region and Bamenda in the Northwest region, respectively.

Section 2 (1) of the 2004 Law on the orientation of decentralisation states that "Decentralisation shall consist of devolution, by the State, of special powers and appropriate resources to regional and local authorities." Section 2 (2) states that "Decentralisation shall constitute the basic driving force for the promotion of development, democracy and good governance at the local level." Article 55 (2) of the 1996 Constitution and Section 4 (1) states that regional and local authorities "shall be endowed with administrative and financial autonomy for the management of regional and local interests". And the mission of the regional and local authorities shall be to "promote economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development in their respective areas of jurisdiction". Section 18 of the 2004 Law suggests that all four types of decentralisation apply in Cameroon to some degree, but the final form leans more toward administrative deconcentration than devolution.

Article 55 (2) and Section 4 (2) states that regional and local authorities shall be administered freely by elected officials; however, government officials exercise direct control over councils, according to Article 55 (3). Interviewee BISOD, a government representative, said, "The senior divisional officer's role is to make sure that the laws of the State are followed." Another government representative, Interviewee KISOD, agreed and said, "The senior divisional officer listens to councillors [during council meetings], but he ensures that council decisions are in line with State laws." Interviewee BISOD, further said, "From time to time, the senior divisional officer can intervene to give advice when the councillors are not in conformity with prescribed texts." The supervisory functions of the senior divisional officer (SDO) allowed him to directly intervene in the local affairs of the councils. The appointment of government officials to supervise local

authorities undermines the authority of elected mayors to manage the affairs of their councils. Antwi-Boasiako (2010) argues that the appointment of government officials deprives the local people of the opportunity to elect leaders of their choice, but allowing the local people to elect their leaders makes the government more accountable to the local population.

Usually, mayors and councillors are required to meet two or three times in a year. However, mayors and councillors could not meet without the SDO's approval. Interviewee Willy, a councillor, said, "The SDO approves all council sessions. If he does not give the go-ahead, councillors cannot meet." Also, even though mayors are the elected heads of councils, they could not carry out any project without the SDO's approval. Interviewee BISOD, a government representative, said, "Council deliberations are only executed after they have been approved by the SDO." Interviewee Willy, a councillor, agreed and said, "The SDO must approve all council deliberations before they are executed." The SDO controlled almost all the activities of the local councils. Interviewee P3, a university lecturer, said, "But in Cameroon, it is the SDO who controls the activities of local councils." Apart from the SDO supervising councils, the government also appointed government delegates (GD) to head city councils. Interviewee A1, an activist, said, "Councils are supervised by the senior divisional officer appointed by the central government. These same councils have government delegates lording it over them." Interviewee P3, a university lecturer, said, "The government is not sincere; they want to remain in control through the appointment of senior divisional officers and government delegates." Mbuagbo and Fru (2011) suggest that the appointment of

government officials over regional and local authorities undermined the authority of elected mayors and councillors, thus resulting in conflicts.

The devolved competencies from the central government to RLAs are exercised concurrently by the central government and local authorities. For example, Interviewee BISOD, a government representative, said, “The fact that power has been transferred to councils does not mean that the State cannot intervene in council affairs. The power transferred to the councils is not exclusive.” Interviewee BISOD further explained that “Even though some competencies have been transferred, a lot of decision-making is still done at the central administration in Yaoundé.” Under devolution, local governments exercise power and control over devolved competencies. However, in councils in the Anglophone regions, central government officials carry out those same responsibilities. According to Brancati (2006), local governments exercise exclusive jurisdiction in at least one subject, but in Cameroon, councils in the Anglophone regions do not have any exclusive jurisdiction on any matter, even with the special status granted to the regions. Another government representative, Interviewee KISOD said, “There is no effective decentralisation in Cameroon because decisions still come from Yaounde and the SDO still has authority to sanction decisions of mayors.” During the “Keep Kumba Clean” campaign, the mayor said, “The minister said that we must come to Yaounde about 12 times in a year to lobby for projects in our municipalities.” In the Kumba and Bamenda city councils, the senior divisional officer was directly involved in implementing decentralisation. Cheka (2007) claims that appointing government delegates in Cameroon to supervise regional and local authorities subverts the democratic principles of electoral

accountability. These examples suggest that the oversight functions of the SDO undermined the authority of elected mayors to govern their councils.

Decentralisation is supposed to empower citizens to hold their elected officials accountable but in Cameroon, the implementation of decentralisation has not empowered citizens to hold their elected leaders accountable. Through the list system, citizens do not directly vote for individual councillors or mayors; instead, they vote for a party list containing the names of aspiring councillors. Interviewee Willy, a councillor, said, "Citizens do not directly vote for councillors, but they vote for a party list. Therefore, councillors are not accountable to the people." Interviewee Laticia, a mayor's representative, agreed and said, "The councillors elect the mayors, and the people elect the councillors on the party list." Therefore, in such a system, the elected officials are more loyal to their party and government officials than the electorate. One community leader, Interviewee Nito, said, "The councillors are not accountable to the people; they are accountable but to the mayor and their parties. They do not come to the population for any advice; they do not consult the local population. The people cannot even query their councillors." Another community leader, Interviewee Topi, complained, "The councillors and mayors and government delegates do not listen to our voices because our complaints about water for the past four years now have not been answered." Electoral accountability is essential for decentralisation to work effectively. Interview P1, a university lecturer, said, "If decentralisation should work, the people must elect their officials. Accountability is the core of decentralisation. If there is no accountability, the whole thing falls apart." Several studies (Crook & Manor, 2000; Besley & Smart, 2007; Bahl,

2008; Manor, 2011) suggest that electoral accountability is essential in decentralised systems.

In addition, citizens could not influence public policy. Council meetings were open to the public, but citizens could not participate directly in the debates. Interviewee Belo, a councillor, said, “The people can attend council meetings, but they cannot make contributions because the councillors represent them in these meetings.” Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, said, “Council meetings are open to the public, but only a few people attend. In council meetings, citizens cannot make contributions, but they can make complaints to their councillors.” A representative of a mayor, Laticia, noted that “Citizens can attend council meetings, but they are not allowed to make contributions.” A community leader, Mase, agreed and said, “Citizens are allowed to attend, but they do not have any say in the plenary session.” Interviewee BT1, a treasurer, also claimed that “Council sessions are open to the public, but the people only listen, but they cannot propose new ideas or participate. The public’s proposals or participation must go through their municipal councillor.”

Citizens could not influence public policy because the central government implemented policies for the entire country. For example, a government representative, Interviewee KISOD said, “There is no effective decentralisation in Cameroon because decisions still come from Yaounde, and the SDO still has authority to sanction decisions of mayors.” Another government representative, Interviewee BISOD further explained, “Even though some competencies have been transferred, a lot of decision-making is still done at the central administration in Yaoundé.” In Cameroon, the central government is directly involved in implementing decentralisation in regional and local authorities

because it is following a policy of harmonious development of all the regional and local authorities, according to Section 10 (2) of the 2004 Law.

As explained by Rondinelli, McCullough and Johnson (1989), devolution means that local governments are given autonomy and are considered a separate level of government over which the central government exercises little or no direct control. In contrast, deconcentration occurs when the central government shifts responsibilities from the central government for certain services to field offices of central government ministries. According to Schneider (2003), under deconcentration, the central government retains authority over the field office and exercises that authority through the hierarchical channel of the central government bureaucracy. Rondinelli, Nellis and Chema (1983) suggest that under deconcentration, authority for transferring specific functions from the central government to local governments remains with the central government. The difference between devolution and deconcentration is that deconcentration involves the least degree of autonomy transferred to RLAs while devolution involves the most degree of autonomy transferred to RLAs (Ozmen, 2014).

Another difference is the relationship between the central government and the local governments. Deconcentration involves a bureaucratic or hierarchical relationship between the central governments and their field offices, while devolution involves an arm's length relationship between the central government and RLAs. (Schneider, 2003). According to Ozmen (2014), deconcentration is the weakest form of decentralisation and is mostly used in unitary states. Rondinelli, Nellis and Chema (1983) claim that deconcentration has been the most frequently used form of decentralisation in developing countries since the early 1970s. In Cameroon, the implementation of decentralisation in

the Anglophone regions is more of deconcentration than devolution because decentralisation has not transferred sufficient power and resources to councils to manage their local affairs with limited intervention from the central government.

A somewhat surprising finding was that decentralisation expanded the functions of local governments. Before 1996, the government of Cameroon was highly centralised. As a result, power was concentrated in the capital city of Yaoundé and all policies were designed and implemented from the capital. Interviewee P2, a university lecturer, said, "The unitary system before 1996 was a highly centralised system. Centralisation has been the genius of the French system." From 1972 to 1995, the powers of the mayors were very limited to performing ceremonial duties like officiating marriages and signing birth and death certificates (Ckeka, 2007). However, under the decentralisation law, the powers of mayors have been expanded. Here is how Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, described the council's function before 1996. He said, "Councils were in charge of the removal of waste, street lighting, provision of water, sporting facilities, leisure and culture." However, under decentralisation, the powers of mayors have been expanded. Section 4 (1) of the 2004 Law states that the mission of the councils shall be to promote economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development. Even though the functions of councils have been expanded under decentralisation, councils do not have exclusive jurisdiction over devolved powers. Interviewee BISOD, a government official, said, "The fact that powers have been transferred to councils does not mean that the State cannot intervene. The powers transferred to councils are not exclusive."

In addition, the interviews revealed that decentralisation brought the government closer to the people. Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, said, "The mayor is

closer to the people, and he can easily solve their problems." However, under deconcentration, authority for transferring specific functions from the central government to the local government remains with the central government (Rondinelli, Nellis & Chema, 1983). In the Anglophone regions, government representatives over councils directly intervened in the local affairs of councils. When asked to describe how decentralisation was implemented, Interviewee Mako, a community leader, said, "The law says devolution is practised in Cameroon but what is really practised in Cameroon is deconcentration, not devolution because the system is like a merchant who sells you a goat and he still holds the rope." Even though some competencies have been transferred to councils, the principle of complementarity and the appointment of government officials over councils undermined the authority of elected officials. Therefore, the form of decentralisation in the Anglophone regions is closer to deconcentration than devolution because the power and resources devolved to the Anglophone regions have failed to empower elected officials to make independent decisions with limited government interference. According to Fombad and Steytler (2019), the design of decentralisation in the form of deconcentration allows the central government to exercise control and power over councils. The weak design and poor implementation have failed to empower mayors to respond to the needs of their constituents. According to an African proverb, the form of decentralisation in the two Anglophone regions could be likened to a goat merchant who sells a goat but continues to hold on to the rope to control the goat.

To conclude, almost nothing was done at the councils without the senior divisional officers' permission, supervision, and approval. The SDO exercised direct

control over the local affairs of the councils. Therefore, the implementation of decentralisation in the Anglophone regions is more of deconcentration than devolution.

Table 1. *Four types of decentralisation*

Political Decentralisation	Fiscal Decentralisation	Administrative Decentralisation	Economic Decentralisation
Democratic elections	Taxing power. Expenditure power	Local government autonomy	Privatisation Deregulation
Devolve powers & resources to local government (LG), LG exercises at least one exclusive jurisdiction	LG relying less on financial transfer from the central government (CG)	Accountability of LG to Central government & Citizens	Voluntary org. Private business
More powers to citizens or elected officials in decision-making		Efficiency in implementing public policies	

Table 2. *Administrative Decentralisation*

Administrative Decentralisation

Deconcentration	Least degree of autonomy to local government (LG). Often used in developing and unitary states. Transfer authority to field offices or subordinate units of government. The central government retains authority over field offices and exercises that authority through the hierarchical channels of the central government bureaucracy. Decision-making power remains with the central government
Delegation	Slightly more autonomy to LG or semi-autonomous organisations. Practice in many developing countries. Transfer authority to LG or semi-autonomous organisations which are not controlled by the central government but remain accountable to it for their decisions for public functions. Ultimate authority remains with the central government (CG).
Devolution	Greatest degree of autonomy to LG Transfer of power to quasi-autonomous bodies at the local level, which elects their leaders and are largely outside the control of the CG and directly accountable to the local people. LGs are autonomous or independent from CG. The CG exercises little or no control over LG. LG exercises power and control over transferred competencies, LG exercises exclusive jurisdiction in at least one area LG have decision-making power in local affairs, they have the power to formulate and implement local policies, and they have the power to raise money and make expenditure decisions

5.1.2 Decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones

This research revealed that the implementation of decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of the Anglophones. Instead of restoring the lost autonomy rights that Anglophones enjoyed before reunification and under the federal system, decentralisation further eroded their autonomy due to poor design and implementation. According to Fombad (2018), the success or failure of decentralisation depends on the specific design. This theme describes how the implementation of decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones, thus leading to intrastate conflicts.

First, decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones by transforming their territory, which used to be a single political entity, into two fragmented regions. On October 1, 1961, Anglophones officially joined Francophones as an independent state under a federal system. However, in 1972, Ahidjo abolished the federal system and divided the entire nation into seven provinces, splitting the Anglophone territory into two provinces. Interviewee P5, a university lecturer, said, “After 1972, there was nothing as Southern Cameroons. Cameroon was divided into seven provinces.” In 1996, the decentralised unitary Constitution transformed the country into ten regions, changing the two Anglophone provinces into two of the ten regions. Interviewee A1, an activist, said, “Many Anglophones do not find anything good in the decentralisation law. This is because the law has created ten permanent regions.” Another activist, Interviewee A4, agreed and said, “Decentralisation is a plot to dissolve the international borders between the territories of the Anglophones and the Francophones.” Interviewee A4 continued, “Anglophones perceive the idea of decentralisation from Francophones as a trick to continue their annexation of the Anglophone’s territory.” Under the federal

system, the Anglophone territory was a single political unit, but under decentralisation, the Anglophone territory was transformed into two regions.

Changing the administrative structure and political institutions in the Anglophone regions was the second way through which decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones. Under the federal system, Anglophones had a separate government with a prime minister and a legislative body with powers to make laws, raise local taxes and spend money (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974). However, Anglophones do not have a separate government and a legislative body with law-making powers under decentralisation. Only the government can make laws for the entire nation under decentralisation. Section 3 (1) of the 2004 Law states that regional and local authorities shall be regions and councils. According to Section 4 (4) and 16 (2) of the 2004 Law, these regional and local authorities are deliberative organs, not legislative bodies. As a deliberative body, councils do not make laws. Regarding the administration of RLAs, Governors head regions while senior divisional offices supervise councils. Section 67 (1) of the 2004 Law states, "The Governor shall be the delegate of the State in the region." Section 67 (2) states, "The Senior Divisional Officer shall exercise the supervisory authority of the State over councils." Section 67 (5) states, "The Governor and Senior Divisional Officer shall be sole authorities empowered to speak on behalf of the State before councils or boards of the regional and local authorities of their administrative units." The president appoints governors and senior divisional officers (SDO), and the appointees are accountable to the president. Interviewee A8, a human rights lawyer, said, "The SDO is appointed, the GD supervises the mayors, the governor is also appointed; so, decentralisation is a farce. The government gives with one hand and takes back with the other hand."

Third, decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones by not granting the regions any exclusive jurisdiction on any subject, even with a special status granted to their region in 2019. Goodfellow and Lindemann (2013) suggest that decentralisation will likely increase intrastate conflicts when the central government erodes the autonomy of ethnic or regional groups that previously enjoyed some degree of autonomy. According to Marinzel (2014), the secessionist desire within Catalonia stems from a history of the Spanish government eroding its regional autonomy. Section 4 (1) of the 2004 Law states that the mission of the regional and local authorities shall be to "promote economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development in their respective areas of jurisdiction." However, Section 15 (2) states that the special powers devolved to councils shall be exercised concurrently by the central government and the authorities. Interviewee BISOD, a government official, said, "The fact that power has been transferred to councils does not mean that the State cannot intervene. The powers transferred to the councils are not exclusive." However, Brancati (2006) and McGarry and O'Leary (1993) claim that in a decentralised system, the central government grants local governments the power to legislate in some matters.

The fourth way through which decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones is by failing to devolve financial and administrative autonomy to their regions. Financially, councils rely more on the central government for their survival. Interviewee KSGD, a government representative, said, "The central government has not placed councils in their budgets, but they say that councils are autonomous bodies." Another government representative, Interviewee BNGD, complained, "Some of the competencies have been transferred, but the accompanying resources have not been

transferred; thus, it becomes difficult to execute projects." Interviewee Rosaline, a council secretary-general, claimed, "The decentralisation fund is inadequate. The council is given responsibilities without the necessary funds to operate." Councils lacked the financial resources to carry out their projects. Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, said, "The council raised locally about 20% of its total budgets in 2015 and almost the same amount in 2016." Interviewee Laticia, a mayor's representative, said, "What the council raised locally averaged about 15-20% in 2015 and 2016. Therefore, the councils in the Anglophone regions rely on the government for about 80% of their yearly budget.

Regarding administrative autonomy, mayors do not have the independent decision-making power to hire and fire all council staff. Interviewee Nakon, a mayor, said, "We lack the necessary technicians; just three engineers are attached to Kumba city council, Mbonge and Konye councils." Another participant from the government, Interviewee KSGD, a representative of the government, commented that "Councils must request technical assistance before staff with specialised skills are sent to councils from the central government." Unlike the central government, councils lacked qualified staff because they lacked the authority and resources to hire such staff (Bardhan, 2002; Prud'homme, 1995; Tanzi, 2002). Interviewee Bando, a council secretary-general, said, "The mayor can recruit only categories 1-6. For categories 7-12, the mayor recruits and sends the document to the SDO for approval and then to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation." Concerning the dismissal of categories 1-6 staff, Interviewee Nakon, a mayor, said, "For categories 1-6 staff, the mayor prepares a decision to terminate, Labour and SDO must approve before dismissal. For categories

7-12, the mayor sends it to SDO, and he sends it to Yaounde for final approval." Interviewee Rosaline, a council secretary-general, agreed, "For categories 7-12 staff, the mayor sends the decision to terminate to the SDO, who visas it and then sends it to Yaounde." In implementing the decentralisation program, the mayors do not have the complete power to hire and fire all council employees.

Another way decentralisation has further eroded the autonomy of the Anglophones is that mayors do not have expenditure autonomy for all projects. Mayors do not have the authority to make independent decisions to implement projects above five million francs CFA ($10,000). Interviewee Nakon, a mayor, said, "Yes, for projects below five million CFA, mayors have the authority to initiate and complete projects at their discretion. However, for projects above five million, the mayor initiates but hands over to the TB to award to contractors."

To sum up, the implementation of decentralisation has further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones by transforming the form of government and political institutions in their regions. Additionally, decentralisation has not devolved any exclusive jurisdiction on any subject to the Anglophone regions. Under decentralisation, mayors lack financial and administrative autonomy to respond to the needs of their constituents.

5.1.3 Decentralisation marginalised, discriminated and assimilated Anglophones.

This research found that the erosion of the Anglophones' autonomy resulted in the marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation of Anglophones. This theme describes the lived experiences of Anglophones under decentralisation. Under the federal system,

federated states had exclusive jurisdiction over non-federal subjects (Article 38 (1) of the 1961 Constitution). However, under decentralisation, Anglophones have no exclusive jurisdiction on any matter. As a result, they are marginalised, socially discriminated against and assimilated (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997; Ngoh, 2011). Participants viewed decentralisation as a system which has marginalised Anglophones. According to Ngoh (2011), immediately after reunification, Anglophone political leaders sent a confidential memorandum to former President Ahidjo complaining of their absorption, domination and marginalisation by the Francophone majority (Ngoh 2011).

In Cameroon's politics, marginalisation means exclusion from political power and job opportunities in the central government. Interviewee P2, a university lecturer, described marginalisation in the following way, "Anglophones have experienced marginalisation since reunification. It is a political term, which in the context of Cameroon, means that Anglophones are removed from the centre and levers of power" Interviewee P2 continued, "They are not equally represented in power. Anglophones are not equally appointed as ministers, senior civil servants and senior members of the CPDM political party." The further erosion of their autonomy has resulted in Anglophones not being appointed to important ministries. Another lecturer, Interviewee P4, agreed and said, "Important ministries are not given to Anglophones." An activist, Interviewee A4, said, "There are key ministries that are considered no-go zones for Anglophones. Most lucrative jobs are reserved only for French-speaking Cameroonians, even in corporations in Anglophone regions such as SONARA." Interviewee A4 continued his lamentation by claiming that "Marginalisation is the reason why for 54 years no Anglophone has been considered competent to be president, even though in

1992, Ni John Fru Ndi, an Anglophone, won the presidency, but his victory was denied." Gurr (2000) suggests that ethnic minorities with no access to power tend to intensify their demand for independence from the central government. Durante (2017) claims that the government's mistreatment of minorities triggers ethnic conflicts.

Participants claimed that the decentralisation law denied Anglophones equal opportunity with Francophones. Interviewee A3, an activist, said, "Anglophones want equality with the Francophones, equal opportunities and access to public institutions and into public services." Interviewee P2, a university lecturer, said, "If you are loyal, you will be rewarded in their system." The interviews also revealed that marginalisation was one of the reasons why anglophones continued their struggle for autonomy. Interviewee A1, an activist, said, "The condition that continues to motivate us to fight for our autonomy is marginalisation. Another activist, Interviewee A3, agreed and said, "We are continuing our struggle for autonomy because we do not have equal opportunities like our Francophone brothers in public institutions, professional schools and colleges." Mbuagbo and Akoko (2004) claim that appointments to strategic positions in government and state corporations in Cameroon are determined by the degree of political loyalty demonstrated by the individuals or groups.

Participants also claimed that the English language was marginalised, as explained by Interviewee A1, an activist who said, "All official documents are in French while the English versions are sometimes not available." Interviewee P3, a university lecturer, said, "Most texts are in French. Public exams and training programs are in French. In the University of Buea, texts come from Yaounde in French." In addition, the French language is spoken in courts in the Anglophone regions. Interview A7, an activist

and lawyer, said, “My client was arrested and was taken to court, and the witness for the prosecution, a policeman, was speaking in French in the Southwest region”. Interviewee A7 continued, “I complained to the State Counsel that my client does not understand the French language and the case was adjourned to tomorrow, March 9, 2016. ”

Second, the study found that Anglophones were socially discriminated against by the Francophones. Interviewee A4, an activist, said, "Anglophones are treated by French Cameroonians as pure slaves.” Another activist, Interviewee A1, said, “Anglophones are motivated to fight for their autonomy because they are called “Biafrans”, and the fact that we are called second-class citizens in our country of birth.” Interview A1 continued to explain that “Anglophones are marginalised because they are not considered full-fledged Cameroonians by the system in place.” A human rights lawyer and activist, Interviewee A8, said, “The perception that Anglophones are second-class citizens dehumanises. This is the greatest form of marginalisation.” Some Francophone elites have described Anglophones as “enemies in the house” and have called them “Biafrans”, meaning foreigners who came from the Igbo region in Nigeria. They have described Anglophones as “dogs”, “roaches which need to be exterminated”, and “terrorists” in reference to the armed groups and “two cubes of sugar in a basin” (Mukong, 1998:22; Ngamfon, 2020:1484). Past studies suggest that decentralisation increases conflicts where there is a history of oppression and social discrimination against minorities (Woodward, 2007; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009; Marinzel, 2014).

Third, the study found that Anglophones were afraid of being assimilated and dominated by the Francophone majority. Interviewee A4, an activist, said, “Anglophones perceive the idea of decentralisation as a trick by Francophones to continue their

annexation of the Anglophone territory." Interviewee A7, an activist and lawyer, said, "We are an independent country, and we want La Republic du Cameroun to get out of our territory." Decentralisation has not protected Anglophones from central government intrusion. An activist, Interviewee A7, said, "Through decentralisation, Anglophones have not been able to protect their culture, way of life, education, legal system, language and our cherished values." Before the civil war, the Anglophones had been petitioning the government to return to a federal system so that they could control their local affairs, as expressed by Interviewee A8, an activist and human rights lawyer who said, "We want a federal structure. That is our focus." Several studies have shown that ethnic conflicts occur when minority groups fear for their safety and security (Lake & Rothchild, 1996; Rothchild & Hartzel, 1999).

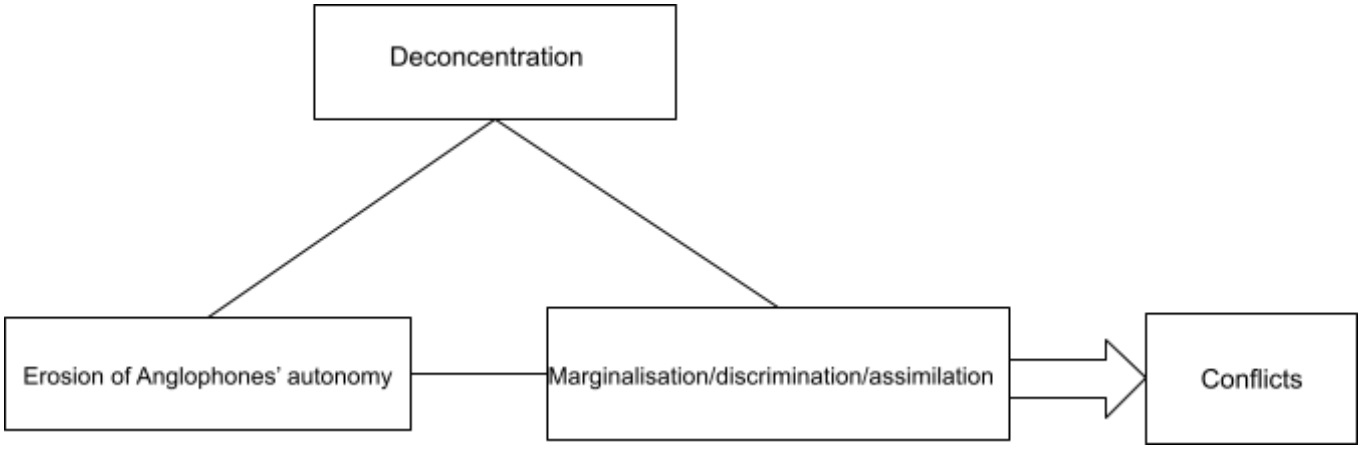
In sum, the erosion of the Anglophones' autonomy resulted in marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation. These grievances against the state motivated the Anglophones to continue their struggle for autonomy.

5.1.4 Decentralisation increased conflicts.

This study found that the implementation of decentralisation increased conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government by failing to restore the autonomy of Anglophones abolished by the 1972 unitary constitution and further eroding their autonomy owing to the poor design and implementation of decentralisation. This theme describes how poor design and implementation of decentralisation further eroded the Anglophone autonomy, exacerbating intrastate conflicts, as shown in Figure 1 below. The implementation of decentralisation in the

Anglophone regions is more of deconcentration than devolution because decentralisation failed to devolve adequate power and resources to the Anglophone regions (Manor, 2011). The erosion of their autonomy resulted in the marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation of Anglophones. Therefore, a poorly designed decentralisation, combined with the grievances of Anglophones against the state, mobilised Anglophones to continue their struggle for autonomy, finally leading to a civil war in 2017.

figure 1



The poor design and implementation of decentralisation increased local conflicts because of the ambiguous nature of the decentralisation laws, uneven allocation of resources between mayors and government delegates (GDs) and power struggles between the mayors and GDs. First, the laws implementing decentralisation have not clearly defined the responsibilities of appointed and elected officials, thus leading to local conflicts. Interviewee Esoda, a community leader, said, "The source of the conflict between the mayor and the GD comes because they do not understand the limits of their

powers and their functions. This is because the law is ambiguous, giving room for multiple interpretations." Because the laws are ambiguous, the mayors and the government delegates interpreted the law to favour them, thus leading to local conflicts. Interviewee KSGD, a government representative, said, "The government delegate is appointed by presidential decree to work with mayors of councils who feel that they are elected while government delegates are appointed; consequently, there are always conflicts." Allowing the mayors and government officials to exercise concurrent powers over devolved functions blurs the distinction between the powers devolved to councils and those retained by the central government, thus leading to local conflicts.

Second, regarding resource allocation, the mayors complained that the government allocated more lucrative sources of revenue to the government delegate (GD) than to mayors. Interviewee Nakon, a mayor, said, "The GD is the city mayor. He has the same functions as the mayors. But all the principal sources of revenue like markets, parks, and building permits are under the control of the GD". Mayor Nakon continued, "Since we have the same functions, but the principal sources of revenue are under the city council, when we try to create new income-generating sources, it leads to conflict." Interviewee KSGD, a government representative, agreed and said, "There are also conflicts in areas of collecting revenue. Kumba 1 claims that Kumba city council is collecting Thoroughfare Tax; consequently, they have taken Kumba city council to court." The uneven allocation of resources was a major source of conflicts between the mayors and the government delegate at the local level.

Third, power struggles between the mayors and the government delegate (GD) were another source of local conflicts. Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general,

said, “The GD and mayors cannot work together without conflict because they are coming from two different political backgrounds. They govern over the same population within the same territory without clearly distinct responsibilities.” Local conflicts occurred because the mayors and the government delegates came from different political parties. Interviewee Topi, a community leader, said, “Decentralisation causes conflicts because the government delegate is from another party and the mayor of Bamenda 2 is from another party. At the top, there is no community interest but party interest.” The different political ideologies regarding the city's management were a source of conflict between the mayors and the government delegate. Sometimes, the government delegates' vision and priorities differed from those of the councillors and mayors, thus leading to conflicts. For example, the councillors and mayors in Kumba took deliberation in 2014, asking the government delegate to sell old waste trucks and buy new ones, but the government delegate was reluctant to implement the deliberation. A participant at the Kumba 2 informal meeting said, “We have asked the government delegate to sell old waste trucks and buy two new ones, but nothing has happened.” The different visions of the mayors and government delegates regarding the administration of the city council exacerbated local conflicts.

The poor design and implementation of decentralisation also resulted in national conflict because it further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones. According to Fombad (2018), the failure or success of decentralisation will often depend on the specific design and the consideration of factors like diversity and character of ethnic groups, colonial legacies, and wealth distribution, among other factors. A university lecturer, Interviewee P3, said, “Anglophone agitation is due to a poorly decentralised system. There is a

symbiotic relationship between decentralisation and the Anglophone struggle for autonomy."

The erosion of the Anglophones' autonomy has also resulted in the marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation of Anglophones, thus contributing to national conflict. Marginalisation has motivated Anglophones to continue their struggle for autonomy. Interview A1, an activist, said, "The condition that continues to motivate us to fight for our autonomy is marginalisation." Some studies suggest that decentralisation increases conflicts when the central government refuses to share political power and resources with minority groups (Gurr, 2000; Merera, 2007; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009).

Discrimination against Anglophones was another reason that motivated Anglophones to continue their struggle. An activist, Interviewee A1, said, "Anglophones are motivated to fight for their autonomy because they are called "Biafrans", and the fact that we are called second-class citizens in our country of birth." Decentralisation increases conflicts when there is a history of government discrimination and repression against ethnic minorities (Marinzel, 2014; Durante, 2017).

Finally, Anglophones were determined to continue their struggle because they feared Francophone-majority assimilation and domination. Interviewee A2, an activist, said, "Premier Foncha did not advocate for integration. He advocated for a separate but equal federated state." The desire for freedom and the restoration of their autonomy motivated Anglophones to continue their struggle. Interviewee A3, an activist, said, "We are continuing our struggle for autonomy….If we do not have our independence, I do not

think that our off-springs will ever live in a free Cameroon." Another activist and lawyer, Interviewee A7, said, "We are fighting for the restoration of the independence of Southern Cameroons." According to Muna (2017), Anglophones knew they were a minority, so they advocated for a federal system to keep each territory autonomous.

Overall, a poorly designed decentralisation and Anglophone grievances of marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation against the central government led to local and national conflicts.

5.1.5 Conclusion

This chapter identified four key findings related to the research objectives and research questions. The findings were organised into themes, with each theme supported by quotes from the data extract. The four key findings presented a unified story of how the erosion of the Anglophone's autonomy exacerbated intrastate conflicts. The themes were discussed in the following order: First, the research found that the form of decentralisation in Cameroon is more of administrative deconcentration than devolution. Second, the study revealed that the implementation of decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones. Third, decentralisation marginalised, discriminated and assimilated Anglophones. Fourth, decentralisation increased local and national conflicts. Overall, the implementation of decentralisation increased conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone majority by failing to restore the lost autonomy of Anglophones and further eroding the autonomy of Anglophones. In the next chapter, the researcher will interpret and explain the meaning of the findings.

CHAPTER SIX

THE DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings directly related to the research aims and research questions. The researcher interprets and explains what the findings of the analysis mean in relation to the research questions and how the findings fit into the existing literature. The chapter also restates the research problem and summarises the key findings that directly relate to the research questions. From an organisational perspective, the four key findings are structured in the form of themes, as in the results chapter, and supported by evidence from the data. The chapter also discusses the study's limitations, proposes new directions for future research and offers recommendations for policy intervention.

6.2 Discussion of the findings

In 1996, Cameroon became a decentralised unitary state to promote development, democracy, and good governance at the local level. However, decentralisation intensified conflicts, which plunged the nation into a civil war in 2017. Therefore, this research was conducted to understand how decentralisation intensified intrastate conflicts in Cameroon and to propose policy solutions that could help mitigate the ongoing conflict. To do this, the researcher conducted qualitative research with a case study design. There are five research questions raised in this study. The main research question is: How did decentralisation exacerbate conflict between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government? The sub-questions are: What is the meaning of decentralisation, and how is it implemented in the Anglophone regions? What are the experiences of Anglophones under the decentralisation program? How do Anglophones perceive the decentralisation program? What reasons motivate Anglophones to continue their struggle for autonomy? Therefore, this study aimed to explore how the implementation of decentralisation intensified conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government.

6.2.1 Summary of the four key findings

This study suggests that decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government by failing to restore the lost autonomy of Anglophones and further eroding their autonomy due to poor design and implementation. There are four key findings of the present research. The findings are presented in the form of themes directly related to the research questions. First, the research found that the form of decentralisation implemented in the Anglophone regions

is more of deconcentration than devolution because local authorities lack the power and authority to make independent decisions regarding the management of their local affairs. Under devolution, the central government exercises little or no control over RLAs, whereas, under deconcentration, decision-making power remains with the central government over field offices of ministries and regional and local authorities (Schneider, 2003; Rondinelli, McCullough & Johnson, 1989). Second, the research revealed that decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones in five ways: first, the design of decentralisation did not accommodate the socio-cultural and political differences of the Anglophones. Second, decentralisation transformed the Anglophone territory that used to be a single political unit into two of the ten regions. Third, decentralisation transformed the form of government and political institutions in the Anglophone regions. Fourth, decentralisation did not devolve any exclusive jurisdiction on any matter specific to the Anglophone regions, and fifth, decentralisation did not grant financial autonomy to the Anglophone regions.

The third key finding is that decentralisation marginalised, discriminated and assimilated Anglophones. Anglophones are excluded from political power and denied important job opportunities in the central government. In addition, they are treated as second-class citizens, and Francophones gradually absorbed their institutions. Fourth, the research found that decentralisation increased both local and national conflicts. The design and implementation of decentralisation increased local conflicts because of the ambiguous nature of the decentralisation laws, uneven allocation of resources and power struggles between mayors and the government delegates. The design of decentralisation also resulted in national conflict because it eroded the autonomy of Anglophones. The

erosion of the Anglophones' autonomy resulted in marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation of Anglophones. Therefore, a poorly designed decentralisation combined with Anglophones' grievances against the central government led to local and national conflicts.

6.2.2 Interpretation and implications of the results

The four key findings are organised and discussed in the form of themes as in the results chapter.

6.2.2.1 Decentralisation is more of deconcentration than devolution

To answer the second research question regarding the meaning of decentralisation and how it is implemented in the Anglophone regions, this study examined the form of decentralisation and the degree of autonomy transferred to councils. Sections 2 (1) and 7 of the 2004 Law state that decentralisation shall consist of the devolution of special powers and appropriate resources from the central government to regional and local authorities (RLAs). In practice, however, the implementation of decentralisation in the Anglophone regions is more of deconcentration than devolution because decentralisation has failed to transfer sufficient power and resources to councils to manage their local affairs with limited central government involvement. In a devolved system, local governments are viewed as autonomous political entities, exercising power and control over devolved competencies but deconcentration involves the transfer of some decision-making authority from central government officials to field officers (Rondinelli,

Nellis & Cheema, 1983). In Cameroon, local governments in the Anglophone regions do not have exclusive jurisdiction over any devolved competencies. Interviewee BISOD, a government representative, said, “The fact that power has been transferred to councils does not mean that the state cannot intervene in council affairs. The power transferred to the councils is not exclusive.” Under devolution, local governments exercise power and control over devolved competencies with little or no control from the central government, but in Cameroon, the central government performs those same responsibilities devolved to local governments. According to Schneider (2003), deconcentration involves the least degree of autonomy, while devolution involves the most degree of autonomy transferred to RLAs. Deconcentration is considered the weakest form of decentralisation and is mostly used in unitary states and developing countries (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1983; Ozmen, 2014). According to Schou and Haug (2005), governments in unitary states use decentralisation to erode ethnic identity and solidarity.

Additionally, Section 4 (1) states that regional and local authorities shall be “endowed with administrative and financial autonomy”, but in practice, the mayors relied on the central government for their financial survival and instructions to hire and fire all council staff. Interviewee Bando, a council secretary-general, said, “The mayor can recruit only categories 1-6 staff. For categories 7-12, the mayor recruits and sends the document to the senior divisional officer for approval and then to the ministry of territorial administration and decentralisation.” Regarding the dismissal of council staff, Interviewee Nakon, a mayor, said, “For category 1-6 staff, the mayor prepares a decision to terminate. Labour and senior divisional officers must approve before dismissal. For categories 7-12, the mayor sends it to the senior divisional officer, and he sends it to

Yaounde for final approval." Councils also lack qualified staff. As a result, councils have to depend on staff in field offices of government ministries. Interviewee Nakon, a mayor, said, "We lack the necessary technicians; just three engineers are attached to Kumba city council, Mbonge and Konye councils." Concerning the councils' finances, Interviewee KSGD, a government representative, said, "The central government has not placed councils in their budget, but they say that councils are autonomous bodies." Another participant, Interviewee Rosaline, a council secretary-general, agreed and said, "The decentralisation fund is inadequate. The council is given responsibilities without the necessary funds to operate." This finding indicates that mayors do not have financial autonomy and the decision-making powers to hire and fire all council staff.

The execution of priority projects was another area where the mayors lacked decision-making authority. The mayors could initiate and implement projects below five million francs CFA ($10,000). However, projects above five million were referred to the Tender Board (TB), a government body responsible for awarding government contracts. Interviewee Nakon, a mayor, said, "Yes, for projects below five million, mayors have the authority to initiate and complete projects at their discretion, but for projects above five million, the mayor initiates but hands over to the Tender Board to award to contractors." This finding demonstrates that mayors do not have expenditure autonomy to execute all projects in their municipality.

Furthermore, Article 55 (2) of the 1996 Constitution and Section 4 (2) of the 2004 Law states that regional and local authorities shall be administered freely by elected officials, but in practice, councils in the Anglophone regions are supervised by appointed officials. Under devolution, the central government exercises little or no control over

local governments, which are considered autonomous and separate from the central government. However, the central government exercised direct control over councils in the Anglophone regions through senior divisional officers. Interviewee KISOD, a government representative, said, “The senior divisional officer is the representative of the state over councils. He protects the interest of the State.” Councillors cannot hold their official meetings without the senior divisional officer’s approval. Interviewee Willy, a councillor, noted that “The senior divisional officer approves all council sessions. If he does not give the go-ahead, councillors cannot meet.” The SDO also attends all council meetings. During council meetings, the SDO can directly intervene in the discussions of councillors and mayors to make sure that council decisions are in line with State laws. Interviewee KISOD, a government representative, stated, “From time to time, the senior divisional officer can intervene to give advice when the councillors are not acting in conformity with prescribed texts.” In his supervisory role, the SDO must approve all municipal deliberations. Interviewee Willy, a councillor, said, “The senior divisional officer must approve all council deliberations before they are executed.” This means that the SDO is actively and directly involved in controlling the local affairs of the councils.

Apart from appointing senior divisional officers, the government also appoints delegates over city councils (since 2020, elected mayors govern councils). The Kumba city council and the Bamenda city council have three sub-divisional councils within their council area. The government delegate governed the city council, while elected mayors head the sub-divisional councils to govern the same population. Interviewee A1, an activist, said, “Councils are supervised by the senior divisional officer appointed by the president. These same councils have government delegates lording it over them.” The

appointment of government officials is an attempt by the central government to maintain control over local governments, as explained by Interview P3, a university lecturer who said, “The government is not sincere. They want to remain in control through the appointment of senior divisional officers and government delegates.”

One interpretation of this finding is that the design of decentralisation aimed to concentrate power with the central government to control local governments. Interviewee P3, a university lecturer, claimed that “The government lacks the political will to implement the decentralisation process. The government is not sincere. They want to remain in control through the appointment of senior divisional officers and government delegates.” This idea is supported by the fact that the central government continued to make decisions for local governments. Interviewee BISOD, a government official, explained that “Even though some competencies have been transferred, a lot of decision-making is still done at the central administration in Yaoundé.” Another government representative, Interviewee KISOD, agreed and said, “There is no effective decentralisation in Cameroon because decisions still come from Yaounde and the senior divisional officer still has authority to sanction decisions of mayors.” In the Anglophone regions, the central government is directly involved in controlling the affairs of the councils, and decision-making authority over local governments remains with the central government.

Another interpretation of this finding is that the appointment of government delegates over city councils was politically motivated to limit the power and influence of mayors. Interviewee Mase, a community leader, said, “Where the president’s people could not maintain total control, the head of state, who has the yam and the knife, decided

to appoint government delegates. By doing so, he limited the power and influence of mayors." Interviewee Charton, a mayor, agreed and said, "Following the 1997 first multi-party council elections, SDF won most of the big towns, and the government decided to create the position of government delegate to oversee these big towns." The appointment of government delegates undermined the authority of elected mayors. Interviewee A1, an activist, said, "Councils are supervised by senior divisional officers appointed by the president. These same councils have government delegates lording it over them." The appointment of government officials perpetrates central government control over councils. This means that councils are accountable and dependent on the central government for almost everything.

This finding has helped answer the research question about the meaning of decentralisation and how it is implemented in the Anglophone regions by explaining the degree of autonomy transferred to councils and the extent of central government control over councils. A key question about decentralisation is the extent of central government control over subnational governments and local autonomy. According to Premdas (2000), true decentralisation involves a real loss of the central government's power and control over local governments and a true gain of local government power. Schneider (2003:2) argues that "central entities play a lesser role" in decentralised governments. Therefore, the real debate on decentralisation centres on the locus of power in government. In the Anglophone regions, the locus of power remains with the central government even though the law states that decentralisation shall consist of devolution. For example, Interviewee A1, an activist, said, "Most instructions for governance come from the central government through the governor, senior divisional office, divisional officer and

government delegate." When asked about the form of decentralisation practised in Cameroon, Interviewee Mako, a community leader, said, "The law says devolution is practised in Cameroon but what is really practised in Cameroon is deconcentration, not devolution because the system is like a merchant who sells you a goat but holds the rope." This suggests that the Francophone ruling elites are reluctant to devolve power and resources to the Anglophone regions. Therefore, the form of decentralisation in Cameroon is more of deconcentration than devolution.

This pattern of results is consistent with past studies on decentralisation in Cameroon. For example, Ndiva (2011:524), in a study of local government under Cameroon's decentralisation regime, found that the decentralisation program in Cameroon "resembles more a false version of devolution than the real one." Similarly, Lohkoko (2013:6) claims that the decentralisation program in Cameroon is "more of a myth than a reality" because a greater percentage of the local government fund comes from the central government. The International Crisis Group described the decentralisation process in Cameroon as "fake decentralisation proposed by Yaoundé" (*International Crisis Group*, 2019, May 2). According to a World Bank report (2011:4), "Cameroon lacks an effective strategy and an operational plan for decentralisation. Indeed, line ministries appear to regard decentralisation as a threat to their control over resources and influence". A study by Cheka (2007) suggests that appointing government officials to supervise regional and local authorities subverts the democratic principles of electoral accountability. Likewise, Mbuagbo and Fru (2011) claim that the overreaching influence of appointed officials undermined the authority of democratically elected mayors and councillors.

This finding also supports the claim in the literature that deconcentration is mostly used in unitary states. According to Ozmen (2014), deconcentration is considered the weakest form of decentralisation and is mostly used in unitary states. Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema (1983) claim that deconcentration has been the most frequently used form of decentralisation in developing countries since the early 1970s.

Furthermore, this finding supports the argument in the literature that decentralisation could be politically motivated. Past studies indicate that decentralisation has also been implemented to gain political power and control over local governments (Yeboah-Assiamah, 2014; Smoke, 2003). Antwi-Boasiako (2010) suggests that many African leaders have adopted decentralisation in theory but have failed to transfer real powers to local governments. A study by Crook and Manor (2000:3) claims that in "almost all decentralising governments, many high-level politicians and bureaucrats resent their loss of powers and resources". According to Smoke (2003), national elites partly implement decentralisation as a political tactic to exercise control over local institutions. Similarly, Shah and Thompson (2004) suggest that the implementation of decentralisation has more to do with political motivations than the long-run benefits of decentralisation. In addition, Crook and Sverrisson (2001) also argue that political control motivates ruling elites to implement decentralisation. Moreover, Crook (2003) claims that decentralisation in Africa is influenced by the politics of ethno-regional conflicts to either reinforce vested interest in existing patterns of patronage or challenge powerful local elites.

In conclusion, the decentralisation law states that decentralisation shall consist of the devolution of power and resources from the central government to regional and local

authorities but this research found that the implementation of decentralisation in the Anglophone regions is more of deconcentration than devolution because decentralisation has not transferred sufficient power and resources to councils. This finding also supports the claim in the literature that deconcentration is mostly used in developing countries and unitary states like Cameroon.

6.2.2.2 Decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones

This finding answers the main research question, which is: How did decentralisation exacerbate conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone majority government? To answer this question, this study examined the historical context of reunification and the design of decentralisation. The finding suggests that decentralisation exacerbated intrastate conflicts in Cameroon by failing to restore the lost autonomy of Anglophones when the federal state was abolished in 1972 and further eroding their autonomy due to its poor design and implementation in 1996

First, decentralisation failed to restore the lost autonomy rights of Anglophones to the disappointment of Anglophone political actors who had called on the government to return to federalism during the All Anglophone Conferences in 1993 in Buea and 1994 in Bamenda (Munzu, 2016). Before reunification, Premier Foncha, the leader of Southern Cameroons and former President Ahidjo, the leader of French Cameroun, signed a proposed federal constitution on October 14, 1960, stipulating the terms of reunification (See Appendix D). The agreement stated, “Each of the federated states will be ruled by a Government and will have a Legislative Assembly.” The agreement also stated, “In non-federal matters, the Authorities of each of the Federated States will have exclusive

competence." As an autonomous territory before reunification, Anglophones had control over their language, economy, education, law, and politics (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974; Harlech, 1941; Crowder, 1964). In 1996, the decentralised unitary Constitution did not consider the historical context of reunification. Interviewee P4, a university lecturer, said, "Anglophones feel that decentralisation will destroy their culture and educational and legal systems." When Cameroon became a decentralised unitary state in 1996, the Francophone ruling elites failed to honour the 1960 agreement. As a result, the design of decentralisation did not accommodate the socio-cultural and political differences of the Anglophones, thus failing to restore their autonomy.

Instead of restoring the autonomy of Anglophones, decentralisation further eroded the autonomy due to its poor design and implementation. First, In 1996, Cameroon became a decentralised unitary state, and the constitution transformed the two Anglophone provinces into two regions. Interviewee A4, an activist, said, "Decentralisation is a plot to dissolve the international borders between the Anglophone and Francophone territories because they are talking about regions." Another activist, Interviewee A1, said, "Many Anglophones do not find anything good in the decentralisation law. This is because the law has created ten permanent regions". This means that the central government used decentralisation as a political tool to further erode the territorial integrity of the Anglophone region that used to be a single political unit into two regions.

Second, decentralisation has transformed the form of government and the nature of the political institutions in the Anglophone regions. Under the federal system, Anglophones had their own government with a prime minister and a legislative body with

law-making powers (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974; Ebune, 1992). However, under decentralisation, Anglophones do not have a separate government with a prime minister and a legislative body. According to Sections 4 (4) and 16 (2) of the 2004 Law, the regional and local authorities are deliberative organs, not legislative bodies. Section 3 (1) states, "The regional and local authorities of the Republic shall be the regions and councils." Section 10 (1) says, "The State shall exercise supervisory powers over regional and local authorities." The president appoints governors to head the region and senior divisional officers to supervise councils. Interviewee KISOD, a government representative, said, "The senior divisional officer is the representative of the State over councils. He protects the interest of the State." As a deliberative body, councils deliberate on their annual budget and the selection and execution of priority projects, which the senior divisional officer must sign before they are implemented. Interviewee BISOD, a government official, said, "Council deliberations are only executed after they have been approved by the senior divisional officer." Interviewee Willy, a councillor, agreed and said, "The senior divisional officer must approve all council deliberations before they are executed." The senior divisional officer, through Anglophone region's his oversight role over councils, exercised direct control over council activities. This means decentralisation has not insulated councils in the Anglophone regions from direct central government interference in their local affairs.

Third, decentralisation has not granted regional and local authorities in the Anglophone regions any exclusive jurisdiction on any matter, even with the special status granted to the region in 2019. Under the federal system, the federated states were given exclusive jurisdiction in non-federal matters (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974). But under

decentralisation, all power is vested with the national government. Only the national government can make laws and implement policies for the entire country. To uniformly implement these policies, the central government devolves specific powers to regional and local authorities. Section 4 (1) of the 2004 Law enumerates the competencies devolved to RLAs, namely, economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development. However, Section 15 (2) states that the powers devolved to RLAs shall be exercised concurrently by the State and the authorities. Interviewee BISOD, a government official, said, "The fact that power has been transferred to councils does not mean that the State cannot intervene in council affairs. The power transferred to the councils is not exclusive." Interviewee BISOD explained that "Even though some competencies have been transferred, a lot of decision-making is still done at the central administration in Yaoundé." This means that under decentralisation, decision-making authority remains with the central government over councils, even with basic subjects like the construction of boreholes and classrooms.

Fourth, decentralisation has not devolved appropriate resources to regional and local authorities in the Anglophone regions. Section 2 (1) and Section 4 (2) of the 2004 Law states that regional and local authorities shall be given appropriate resources to carry out their functions, but in practice, regional and local authorities in the Anglophone regions do not have financial autonomy. Interviewee KSGD, a government representative, said, "The central government has not placed councils in their budgets, but they say that councils are autonomous bodies." Another representative of the government, Interviewee BNGD, complained that "Some of the competencies have been transferred, but the accompanying resources have not been transferred; thus it becomes

difficult to execute projects." Interviewee Rosaline, a council secretary-general, claimed that "The decentralisation fund is inadequate. The council is given responsibilities without the necessary funds to operate." Councils lack the financial resources to carry out their projects. Interviewee Lene, another council secretary-general, agreed and said, "The transfer of competence does not match the resources councils have received." These examples suggest that the poor design and implementation of decentralisation have further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones because the territorial autonomy has changed, the political institutions have been transformed, councils lack the financial resources to implement their priority projects and the devolved powers are not exclusive to the councils. Several studies indicate that decentralisation increases conflicts when the central government erodes the autonomy of minority groups (Merera, 2007; Goodfellow & Lindemann, 2013; Marinzel, 2014).

This finding could be explained by the idea that the Francophone ruling elites preferred national unity over granting autonomy to the Anglophone regions. To promote national unity, decentralisation has been used as a tool to further erode the autonomy of Anglophones. Instead of restoring the lost autonomy of Anglophones, it further eroded their autonomy due to its poor design and implementation. Schou and Haug (2005) suggest that governments in unitary states often use decentralisation to erode ethnic identity and solidarity. The Francophone ruling elites failed to honour the 1960 agreement with the Anglophone leaders, which stipulated that each territory would have a separate government and a legislature (See Appendix D). The idea of national unity seems to be the underlying philosophy of the 2004 Law on the orientation of decentralisation. For example, Section 3 (2) of the 2004 Law states, "The regional and

local authorities…shall carry out their activities with due respect for national unity, territorial integrity, and the primacy of the State." Article 55 (4) of the 1996 Constitution and Section 10 (2) states, "The State shall ensure the harmonious development of all regional and local authorities on the basis of national solidarity, regional and council potentials and inter-regional and inter-council balance." Section 14 (1) states, "No regional or local authority shall deliberate outside its statutory meetings, or on matters outside its jurisdiction or which undermine State security, law and order, national unity, or territorial integrity." This suggests that the Francophone ruling elites preferred national unity over the autonomy of the Francophone and Anglophone territories. Ngo Tong (2022) argues that the transfer of powers to local authorities does not allow them to disregard national unity guidelines.

Another evidence of this idea of national unity is found in the history of French Cameroun. Francophone political leaders cherish the principle of territorial integrity. This concept is rooted in French Constitutional law since 1789, and in the Jacobin jargon, it is described as "one and indivisible". French Cameroun adopted the Jacobin jargon into their political documents as a French colony. For example, before their independence, French Cameroun passed law no. 59/56 of 31 October 1959 stating that, "Cameroun shall be an independent, one and indivisible Republic." Article 1 of their 1960 Constitution stated that, "Cameroun is a Republic that is one and indivisible" (Owona, 2012). Drawing from their political history, Francophone leaders insisted on including the word that Cameroon is "indivisible" in the 1961 Federal Constitution, but it was rejected by the Anglophones (*Southern Cameroons Information Service,* 1961, July 20). But in 1972, when Ahidjo abolished the federal constitution in favour of a unitary constitution, Article

1 of the 1972 Constitution read, “The United Republic of Cameroon shall be one and indivisible.” Article 1 (2) of the 1996 decentralised unitary Constitution states that, “The Republic of Cameroon shall be a decentralised unitary state. It shall be one and indivisible.” It is worth noting that the architect of the 1996 Constitution, Professor Joseph Owona, wrote his PhD thesis on the concept of the indivisibility of the state under French Constitutional law and the political life of France since 1789 (Owona, 2012). Given these facts, many Anglophones believed that the Francophone elites had a hidden agenda to assimilate and annex their territory (Anyangwe, 2009; Mukong, 1998; Fanso, 2013). Their suspicions may have been put to rest when French President Emmanuel Macron invited President Paul Biya to attend the Second Paris Peace Forum moderated by Mo Ibrahim, chair of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, from 11-13 November 2019 in Paris. On November 12, Mr. Biya admitted that the Francophone majority planned to integrate Southern Cameroons completely into the French system, but they have not been successful because of the cultural difference due to their colonial history. As a result, he announced that Anglophones would be granted a special status within the unitary state to end the ongoing conflict.

On December 24, 2019, President Biya signed the General Code on Regional and Local Authorities (General Code), granting special status to the two Anglophone regions (*Cameroon Journal*, 2019, November 12). However, granting special status to the Anglophone regions has not conferred on the regions any exclusive jurisdiction on any subject matter. Section 327 of the 2019 General Code states that the Northwest and Southwest regions shall have a special status. Section 18 (1) states that local authorities shall exclusively exercise power devolved by the state. However, Section 18 (2)

contradicts Section 18 (1) by stating that, notwithstanding subsection (1) above, the state may exercise the powers so devolved. This means that the devolved powers are exercised concurrently by the state and local authorities. Section 18 (2) of the 2019 General Cod is the same as Section 15 (2) of the 2004 Law. Instead of addressing the autonomy needs of the anglophones (Burton, 1998, 1999), President Biya is more concerned about national unity. Since the ongoing crisis began in 2016, President Biya has used the phrase "Cameroon is one and indivisible" repeatedly and on different occasions, apparently as a warning to the Anglophones that their demands for federalism or secession will not be accepted. For example, President Biya said in his 2016 end-of-year speech, "Do I need to repeat this? CAMEROON IS ONE AND INDIVISIBLE! It shall so remain." In his 2017 end-of-year speech, President Biya proclaimed these words, "Let us remain worthy of our legacy, of a united Cameroon, standing tall, proud and jealous of its freedom." President Biya, in his swearing-in-ceremony as president for a new seven-year mandate in 2018, said, "It is obvious that the secessionist ambition undermines our Constitution, which establishes the indivisible nature of our Republic. President Biya said, in his September 2019 speech to the nation, "The future of our compatriots in the North-West and South-West Regions lies within our Republic. Cameroon will remain one and indivisible."

The concern of the Cameroon government that decentralisation could lead to secession fits with the existing literature (Brancati, 2006; Bakke, 2008; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009). The government of Cameroon may be concerned that granting more power to the Anglophone regions could lead to demands for greater autonomy or secession because Anglophones had threatened to secede in 1994 if the government failed

to return to a federal system (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997). According to Colomb et al. (2014), decentralisation has empowered subnational movements with strong regional or national identities in Scotland in the United Kingdom, Catalonia in Spain, and Flanders in Belgium to intensify their demands for more autonomy or territorial independence. Similarly, Beland and Lecours (2005, 2007) claim that the implementation of social policies in Canada, the United Kingdom and Belgium has inspired regional leaders to demand more decentralisation or autonomy for their regions. Economic reasons can also cause rich regions to secede. According to Anyangwe (2017), the Francophone's interest in the Anglophone regions is based on their huge natural resources. Sambanis and Milanovic (2009), using data from 48 countries, found that richer and most populous regions are associated with higher demands for autonomy. Research by Brancati (2006) suggests that decentralisation encourages the growth of regional parties, which can mobilise support for their secessionist agenda. Eaton (2006) argues that decentralisation provides resources to regional parties to engage in regional conflicts.

This finding also supports the argument in the literature that decentralisation increases conflicts when the central government erodes the autonomy of ethnic or regional groups that have previously experienced some form of autonomy before joining the host state. For instance, research by Sambanis and Milanovic (2009) indicates that the demand for sovereignty may be greater in regions that have experienced some degree of autonomy before joining a host state. Merera (2007) suggests that decentralisation increased conflicts between the Oromo people and the Ethiopian government because the government refused to share political power and resources with the Oromo people, who had enjoyed some degree of autonomy before becoming part of the modern state of

Ethiopia, Similarly, through the case study of the Buganda Kingdom in Uganda, Goodfellow and Lindemann (2013) found that the introduction of decentralisation by President Museveni in the 1980s curtailed the local autonomy of the Buganda kingdom, which had enjoyed autonomy before joining Uganda's independence in 1962. The authors explain that the refusal of the central government to allow the Buganda Kingdom to maintain their autonomy and control its land motivated the Buganda elites to continue their fight for self-rule. In addition, Hechter (2000) claims that decentralisation increases conflicts when the central government infringes on a group's pre-existing freedoms. Furthermore, Marinzel (2014) suggests that the secessionist desires within Catalonia in Spain, which was once an autonomous region before the rule of General Francisco Franco from 1939 to 1975, come from a history of persecution and erosion of the Catalan language and culture.

In summary, decentralisation exacerbated intrastate conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government by failing to restore the autonomy rights of Anglophones, which they enjoyed before reunification and under the federal system and further eroding their autonomy due to its poor design and implementation, which failed to incorporate the specificities of their region.

6.2.2.3 Decentralisation marginalised, discriminated and assimilated Anglophones

This finding answers research questions three and four, which focus on the lived experiences of Anglophones under decentralisation and their perceptions of the decentralisation program. This finding suggests that the erosion of Anglophones'

autonomy resulted in the marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation of Anglophones. Additionally, participants perceived decentralisation as a sham because its design has not devolved actual power to their regions. Also, participants viewed decentralisation as a political ploy by the Francophone ruling elites to perpetuate their control over Anglophones.

First, decentralisation resulted in the marginalisation of Anglophones. Anglophones joined Francophones in 1961 under a federal system as an autonomous territory. However, immediately after reunification, the government of Southern Cameroons wrote a confidential memorandum to former President Ahidjo complaining that Anglophones were being marginalised, absorbed and dominated by the Francophones (Ngoh, 2011). In Cameroon's political history, marginalisation means the exclusion of Anglophones from political power and important job opportunities. This is how Interviewee P2, a university lecturer described marginalisation. He said, "Anglophones have experienced marginalisation since reunification. It is a political term, which in the context of Cameroon, means that Anglophones are removed from the centre and levers of power" Interviewee P2 continued by stating, "They are not equally represented in power. Anglophones are not equally appointed as ministers, senior civil servants and senior members of the Cameroon People's Democratic Party." This means that under decentralisation, Anglophones are excluded from participating in decision-making at the highest level and from holding important ministerial positions. An activist, Interviewee A4, stated that "There are key ministries that are considered no-go zones for Anglophones. Most lucrative jobs are reserved only for French-speaking Cameroonians, even in corporations in the Anglophone regions such as SONARA."

Participants claimed that under decentralisation, Anglophones are not given equal opportunities as Francophones. Interviewee A3, an activist, said, “Anglophones want equality with the Francophones, equal opportunities and access to public institutions and into public services.” This means Anglophones are not equally represented in the government and public institutions.

Eyoh (1998) claims that Anglophones are excluded from the most important government and official party positions and are discriminated against in employment opportunities in the private sector. Similarly, Mukong (1998:20) claims that since reunification, no Anglophone has been president of Cameroon. When an Anglophone allegedly won the 1992 presidential election, “he was robbed of victory because of his Anglophone background.” This sentiment was also expressed by Interviewee A4, an activist, who opined that “Marginalisation is the reason why for 54 years no Anglophone has been considered competent to be president, even though in 1992, Ni John Fru Ndi, an Anglophone, won the presidency but his victory was denied.” The Guardian Post, No. 1847 of March 16, 2020, claimed gross marginalisation of Anglophones in the State protocol. According to the paper, the prime minister, who is an Anglophone, is fifth in line. The first is the president of the republic, a Francophone. The second is the President of the Senate, a Francophone. The third is the Vice President of the Senate, a Francophone. The fourth is the President of the National Assembly, a Francophone. The sixth is the President of the Constitutional Council, a Francophone. The seventh is the President of the Economic and Social Council, a Francophone and the eighth is the President of the Supreme Court, a Francophone. Additionally, in case of death or incapacitation of the president, his successor shall also be a Francophone. According to

Article 10 (3) of the 1961 Constitution, the successor of the president used to be the vice president of the federation, an Anglophone but in Article 6 (a) under the 1996 Constitution, the successor to the president of the Republic is the President of the Senate, a Francophone. These examples reveal the level of marginalisation of Anglophones in Cameroon.

Second, Anglophones are discriminated against under decentralisation. Interviewee A4, an activist said, "Anglophones are treated by French Cameroonians as pure slaves." This means that Anglophones are treated as second-class citizens. Another activist, Interview A1, complained that "Anglophones are marginalised because they are not considered as full-fledged Cameroonians by the system in place." A human rights lawyer and activist, Interviewee A8, said, "The perception that Anglophones are second-class citizens dehumanises. This is the greatest form of marginalisation." Some Francophone elites have described Anglophones as "enemies in the house" and have called them "Biafrans", meaning foreigners who came from the Igbo region of Nigeria. Other Francophones have called Anglophones "dogs", "roaches which need to be exterminated", and "terrorists" in reference to the Anglophone armed groups and "two cubes of sugar in a basin" (Mukong, 1998:22; Ngamfon, 2020:1484). Disparaging Anglophones with these despicable words could worsen the relationship, thus prolonging the ongoing conflicts.

Third, decentralisation resulted in the assimilation and domination of the Anglophones by the Francophone majority. Interviewee A4, an activist, said, "Anglophones perceive the idea of decentralisation as a trick by Francophones to continue their annexation of the Anglophone territory." Under decentralisation, the senior

divisional officer exercises direct control over the local affairs of councils. For example, Interviewee KISOD, a government official, said, “During council meetings, he can give advice, but when it is not accepted, and the deliberation comes for approval, he will not sign it.” Anglophones fear the assimilation and domination of the Francophone majority. Interviewee A7, an activist and lawyer, said, “We are an independent country, and we want La Republic du Cameroun to get out of our territory.” Bakke and Wibbles (2006) suggest that for “minority groups, fearful of being assimilated, integrated or worse still eliminated, having decentralised institutions helps improve their sense of stability, security and confidence in the state.” However, the form of decentralisation in Cameroon has not protected Anglophones from central government intrusion into their local affairs. An activist, Interviewee A6, said, “Through decentralisation, Anglophones have not been able to protect their culture, way of life, education, legal system, language and our cherished values.” According to Lublin (2012), decentralisation safeguards regions from central government power and allows them to protect their language and culture. However, in Cameroon, decentralisation has not insulated councils in the Anglophone regions from central government intrusion.

In addition, this finding answers the research question regarding Anglophones’ perception of the decentralisation program. Before the reunification in 1961, Francophone leaders assured Anglophones that reunification would be based on equality with Francophones and that French Cameroon would never “impose a unitary state” on them (Fanso, 2009:13, Mukete, 2013). However, they are marginalised, discriminated against and assimilated under decentralisation. These experiences have made Anglophones view decentralisation as a sham because the design of decentralisation has

not transferred sufficient power and resources to the Anglophone regions to control their local affairs without interference from the central government. Interviewee A3, an activist, said, “I think decentralisation in Cameroon is just a sham. If we were to accept decentralisation as an alternative to our sovereignty, it will not work because our elected mayors are being controlled by government delegates and senior divisional officers” Another activist and human rights lawyer, Interviewee A8 said, “The Senior divisional officer is appointed, the government delegate supervises the mayors, the governor is also appointed; so, decentralisation is a farce. The government gives with one hand and takes back with the other hand.” Section 4 (2) of the 2004 Law states that elected officials shall freely govern regional and local authorities (RLAs), but in practice, RLAs are controlled by government appointees.

Second, participants viewed decentralisation as a political ploy by the Francophone ruling elites to perpetuate central government control over them. Interviewee BT3, a municipal treasurer, said, “The decentralisation law is being implemented piecemeal. It is like selling a goat and still holding it with a rope.” This means that Francophone ruling elites are reluctant to relinquish political power to the Anglophone regions. Interviewee P3, a lecturer, agreed and said, “The government is not sincere. They want to remain in control through the appointment of senior divisional officers and government delegates” Participants viewed the gradual process of implementing decentralisation as a delaying tactic by the ruling class to continue their domination over Anglophones.

Taken together, these findings suggest that decentralisation was not designed to share political power with the Anglophones because it has excluded the Anglophones

from the levers of power and important job opportunities. Additionally, decentralisation has resulted in the discrimination and assimilation of the Anglophones. The Anglophones and Francophones have different preferences because they lived separately for over 40 years (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974; Bongfen, 1976; Kale, 1967). However, the decentralisation program has not given Anglophones the power and resources to protect their socio-cultural, economic and political differences. According to Brancati (2006), decentralisation reduces ethnic conflict and secession by giving minority groups control over their political, social and economic affairs. Similarly, McGarry and O'Leary (1993) suggest that in a truly decentralised system, minorities are given constitutional powers to "legislate on important areas, such as language, religion and education, while leaving other policy briefs, defence and fiscal policies, to the central government." However, in Cameroon, Anglophones have no exclusive jurisdiction on any matter to protect their sociocultural and political differences. Siegle and O'Mahony (2006) suggest that the conflict-mitigation rationale for decentralisation in divided societies offers minority groups opportunities for participation and representation in government. The authors explain that granting minority groups greater control over their local affairs assures them that the government recognises their interests and concerns. According to Grasa and Camps (2009) and Burgess (2011), decentralisation mitigates conflicts by including people from different minority groups in the decision-making process. As explained by Norris (2008), granting minorities a voice in the government assures them that they will not be dominated or excluded from the government, which could incentivise minorities not to take actions that will undermine the territorial stability of the state.

These findings are consistent with the claim in the literature that decentralisation increases conflicts when there is a history of government marginalisation, discrimination, assimilation and repression against ethnic minorities (Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009; Marinzel, 2014). Gurr (2000) suggests that ethnic minorities with no access to power tend to intensify their demand for independence from the central government. Similarly, Durante (2017) claims that the government's mistreatment of minorities tends to trigger ethnic conflicts. A study by Marinzel (2014) claims that the secessionist desire within Catalonia stems from a history of the Spanish government's oppression and attempts to erode their regional autonomy. Similarly, Premdas (2000) claims that when ethno-regional and ethnonational movements are frustrated in their request for recognition and resources from the central government, they will try to secede. Goodfellow and Lindemann (2013) claim that decentralisation increased conflicts by eroding the autonomy of the Buganda Kingdom. In exploring and assessing the decentralisation experiment in Ethiopia, Merera (2007:82) found the "top-down approach of the ruling party" to maintain control over the Oromo people instead of sharing political power and resources with the regional group exacerbated conflicts. Woodward (2007) claims that "economic deprivation, political neglect, and forced cultural assimilation have in recent years resulted in minority nations taking up arms in order to fight for the protection of their identity and their independence from the host state."

6.2.2.4 Decentralisation increased conflicts

This finding answers research question five, which deals with the reasons that motivate Anglophones to continue their struggle for autonomy. The results suggest a combination of reasons that intensified conflicts. First, the failure of decentralisation to restore the lost autonomy of Anglophones. Second, a poorly designed decentralisation, which failed to accommodate the historical specificities of the Anglophones, led to local and national conflicts. Third, Anglophone grievances of marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation against the Francophone-majority government fueled the national conflict. These reasons have motivated Anglophones to continue that struggle for autonomy, leading to local and national conflicts.

First, the failure of decentralisation to restore the lost autonomy of Anglophones intensified intrastate conflicts. Before reunification, the Anglophone territory was a self-governing region (Ngoh, 2011; Ebune, 1992). From 1961 to 1972, the Anglophone region enjoyed some degree of autonomy (Eyongetah & Brian, 1974). Article 6 (d) and 38 (1) of the 1961 Federal Constitution granted Anglophones authority over subjects like the Customary courts and non-federal matters. With the introduction of the 1972 unitary Constitution, which concentrated executive, legislative and judicial power in the hands of the central government, their autonomy was lost. Therefore, decentralisation exacerbated intrastate conflicts because it failed to restore the lost autonomy rights of Anglophones which were abolished by the 1972 unitary Constitution.

Second, the decentralisation laws and their implementation failed to reduce conflicts owing to their poor design and implementation. According to Fombad (2018),

the success or failure of decentralisation hinges on the specific design adopted to fulfil its objectives. The poorly designed decentralisation led to local conflicts because of the ambiguous nature of the decentralisation laws, the uneven distribution of local resources and power struggles between the mayors and government delegates. First, the laws implementing decentralisation are ambiguous. For example, Section 15 (1) states that the competencies devolved to regional and local authorities (RLAs) are not exclusive. They are concurrently exercised by the State and authorities. However, the law does not specify the functions performed by RLAs and those retained by central authorities. Consequently, there were conflicts between the mayors and the government delegates (GD) regarding the discharge of their responsibilities. Interviewee Esoda, a community leader, said, "The source of the conflict between the mayor and the GD comes because they do not understand the limits of their powers and their functions. This is because the law is ambiguous, giving room for multiple interpretations." This means that the laws implementing decentralisation have not clearly defined the responsibilities of appointed and elected officials, thus leading to local conflicts.

Second, regarding the distribution of local resources between the majors and the government delegate, the law allocates more lucrative sources of revenue to appointed government delegates than to elected mayors, thus resulting in conflicts. Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, said, "The government gives the government delegate more lucrative sources of revenue. So, from the start, the elected mayor is already angry." As elected officials, mayors felt they needed more resources because they were answerable to the people, while the government delegates were not. Interviewee Nakon, a mayor, said, "The government delegate is the city mayor. He has the same functions as

mayors. But all the principal sources of revenue like markets, parks, and building permits are under the control of the government delegate." Therefore, the uneven allocation of local resources was a source of conflict at the local government level.

Third, the power struggles between the mayors and the government delegate were another source of local conflict. For example, in Kumba, there are three sub-divisional councils that are governed by the opposition party but the president appointed a member of his ruling party to be the government delegate at the Kumba city council, which covers the same geographical area as the three sub-divisional councils. Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, said, "The GD and mayors cannot work together without conflict because they are coming from two different political backgrounds. They govern over the same population within the same territory without clearly distinct responsibilities." This means that the party affiliation of the government delegate and the mayor was a source of local conflict. In some instances, the government delegates' vision and priorities differed from those of the councillors and mayors, thus leading to conflicts. For instance, the councillors and mayors decided in 2014 that the government delegate should sell old waste trucks and buy new ones, but the mayor refused. A participant at the Kumba 2 informal meeting said, "We have asked the government delegate to sell old waste trucks and buy two new ones, but nothing has happened." The competing visions of mayors and the government delegates regarding the city's administration were a source of conflict.

In addition, the poorly designed decentralisation also led to national conflict because it further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones. Decentralisation eroded the autonomy of the Anglophones in five ways. First, the design of decentralisation did not

accommodate the socio-cultural and political differences of the Anglophones. It failed to consider the historical context of reunification. Anglophones joined Francophones as an autonomous territory in 1961 under a federal system. Under the federal system, the federated states had exclusive jurisdiction in non-federal matters, but the Anglophone regions do not have exclusive jurisdiction on any subject under decentralisation (Article 38 (1) of the 1961 Constitution and Section 15 (2) of the 2004 law). Interviewee P4, a university lecturer, said, "Anglophones feel that decentralisation will destroy their culture and educational and legal systems." The failure of the decentralisation design to accommodate the socio-cultural and political differences of Anglophones further eroded their autonomy, thus intensifying conflict.

Second, decentralisation transformed the Anglophone territory, which used to be a single political unit, into two regions. The division of their territory angered many Anglophones, as described by Interview P4, a university lecturer who said, "Anglophones feel that decentralisation will destroy their culture and their educational and legal systems. Already, we feel marginalised; so, when it was announced, cries and protests came from all Anglophones." Anglophones were unhappy because, in 1993 and 1994, they had called on the government to return to a federal system so that each territory could be autonomous. Interviewee A1, an activist, said, "Many Anglophones do not find anything good in the decentralisation law. This is because the law has created ten permanent regions" Under the federal system, the Anglophone territory used to be a single political unit, but under decentralisation, the Anglophone territory has been transformed into two regions.

Third, decentralisation also transformed the form of government and political institutions in their region. Under the federal system, the Anglophone territory had a separate government with a prime minister and a legislature with powers to make laws and raise taxes (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974). But under decentralisation, the Anglophones do not have a separate government. Governors lead the regions, the councils are supervised by senior divisional officers (SDO), and city councils are headed by government delegates (GD), all appointed by the president. Interviewee KISOD, a government representative, said, "The senior divisional officer is the representative of the State over councils. He protects the interest of the State." Interviewee A1, an activist, said, "Councils are supervised by the SDO appointed by the president. These same councils have GD lording it over them." In addition, Section 4 (4) and Section 16 (2) of the 2004 Law state that regions and councils are deliberative, not legislative bodies. That means they can not make laws. Only the national assembly can make laws for the entire nation.

Fourth, decentralisation has not granted regional and local authorities in the Anglophone regions any exclusive jurisdiction on any matter, even with the special status granted to their regions in 2019. Under the federal system, the federated states were given exclusive jurisdiction in non-federal matters (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974). But under decentralisation, the Anglophone regions have no exclusive jurisdiction on any subject. Section 4 (1) of the 2004 Law enumerates the competencies devolved to RLAs, namely, economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development. However, Section 15 (2) states that the powers devolved to RLAs shall be exercised concurrently by the central government. Interviewee BISOD, a government official, said, "The fact that

power has been transferred to councils does not mean that the State cannot intervene in council affairs. The power transferred to the councils is not exclusive." Interviewee BISOD explained that "Even though some competencies have been transferred, a lot of decision-making is still done at the central administration in Yaoundé." This means that under decentralisation, decision-making authority over councils remains with the central government.

Fifth, decentralisation has not granted financial autonomy to the Anglophone regions. Interviewee Lene, a council secretary-general, said, "The council raised locally about 20% of its total budgets in 2015 and almost the same amount in 2016." Interviewee Laticia, a representative of the mayor, said, "What the council raised locally averaged about 15-20% in 2015 and 2016. Interviewee Rosaline, a council secretary-general, claimed that "The decentralisation fund is inadequate. The council is given responsibilities without the necessary funds to operate. Interviewee KSGD, a government official, said, "The central government has not placed councils in their budgets, but they say that councils are autonomous bodies." This indicates that councils in the Anglophone regions relied heavily on the central government for their financial survival.

Apart from the poor design and implementation of decentralisation, the Anglophone grievances of marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation against the central government contributed to national conflict. These grievances against the State motivate Anglophones to continue their struggle for autonomy. For example, Interviewee A1, an activist, said, "The condition that continues to motivate us to fight for our autonomy is marginalisation. We are marginalised because most of the important jobs are taken by French Cameroonians." Another activist, Interviewee A3, said, "We are

continuing our struggle for autonomy because we do not have equal opportunities like our francophone brothers in public institutions, professional schools and colleges." Regarding social discrimination, Interviewee A4, an activist said, "Anglophones are treated by French Cameroun as pure slaves." Another activist, Interview A1, said, "Anglophones are motivated to fight for their autonomy because they are called "Biafrans", and the fact that we are considered second-class citizens in our country of birth." The fear of assimilation is another reason for Anglophone mobilisation. Interviewee A4, an activist, said, "Anglophones perceive the idea of decentralisation as a trick by Francophones to continue their annexation of the Anglophone territory."

In brief, a combination of factors, including the failure of decentralisation to restore the autonomy of Anglophones, a poor design and implementation of decentralisation which failed to consider the socio-cultural and political differences of Anglophones and Anglophones' grievances of marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation all led to local and national conflicts.

This finding highlights the importance of the design of decentralisation in conflict mitigation. Decentralisation is perceived as an effective mechanism for conflict mitigation. However, decentralisation has been more successful in some countries than others (Brancati, 2006; Bakke, 2008). One of the reasons is that decentralisation is a broad concept with many interrelated parts (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1983; Cohen & Peterson, n.d). Because of its complexity, decentralisation has been applied in varying degrees and with different results (Smoke, 2003; Tanzi, 2002; Cabral). Research by Fombad (2018) claims that the success or failure of decentralisation depends on its specific design. According to Grasa and Camps (2009), designing decentralisation to

meet the basic needs of a population is crucial in abating potential conflicts. Manor (2011) suggests that most designs of decentralisation include a mixture of the different types of decentralisation, namely, fiscal, political and administrative decentralisation. However, the emphasis that is given to each type, how they interrelate, and the details of how each type should function differ considerably. However, the author explains in the article that if decentralisation is to work well, three essential things must be present, namely, (1) substantial powers must be devolved unto elected bodies at lower levels; (2) substantial resources must be devolved unto elected bodies; (3) two types of accountability must be established: first, horizontal accountability of bureaucrats to elected representatives and downward accountability of elected representatives to their constituents. To the author, "If any of these three essentials is absent, the system will fail, if any is present but weak, the system will work less than well. We know of no exception to this set of principles" (Manor, 2011:3). Therefore, this finding indicates that the design of decentralisation can either increase or decrease conflicts.

This finding aligns with previous studies in the literature, which claim that poorly designed decentralisation leads to conflicts. Tambulasi (2009), based on a study on the relationship between decentralisation and institutional conflicts at the local government level in Malawi from 2000 to 2005, found that poorly designed decentralisation increased institutional conflicts at the local government level. In the study, the author found that the decentralisation program did not transfer real power to local governments. Therefore, local government officials felt powerless in the exercise of their duties. As a result, conflicts occurred when they tried to assert their authority against central government intrusion into the internal affairs of the local government. Tambulasi also pointed out that

the roles and powers of councillors and parliamentarians were not properly defined. As a result, there were power struggles between the councillors and parliamentarians, leading to conflicts at the local government level. Similarly, Green (2008), based on a study of the creation of new districts and the distribution of power among the five local government levels in Uganda, found that decentralisation reduced national-level conflicts but increased local-level conflicts. In the article, Green explains that the decentralisation program was designed to transfer equal power to all five levels of local governments, but in practice, power was concentrated only at the district level. The concentration of power and resources at the district level led to conflicts over district-level leadership positions.

This finding is also consistent with the claim that decentralisation intensifies conflicts when the government marginalises, discriminates and assimilates minority groups. Gurr (2000) suggests that ethnic minorities with no access to power intensify their demand for independence from the central government. Similarly, Merera (2007) claims that decentralisation exacerbated conflicts when the central government of Ethiopia refused to share political power and resources with the Oromo people. According to Sambanis & Milanovic (2009), decentralisation increases conflicts when there is a history of government discrimination and repression against ethnic minorities. Durante (2017) claims that the government's mistreatment of minorities tends to trigger ethnic insurgencies. Woodward (2007) states that “Economic deprivation, political neglect, and forced cultural assimilation have in recent years resulted in minority nations taking up arms in order to fight for the protection of their identity and their independence from the host state.” A poorly designed decentralisation that failed to accommodate the

historical specificities of the Anglophones and their grievances against the central government led to local and national conflicts.

6.2.2.5 Limitations of the study

There are four potential limitations regarding the results of this study. First, using a small sample size in qualitative research means that the findings cannot be generalised (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Second, during the interviews, there was a lack of access to financial data in councils. The council treasurers were not comfortable disclosing the council's financial data. This made it difficult to know the exact amount of revenue that councils received yearly from the central government and what councils were able to raise locally. Also, most activists came from one group because many lived in fear. This made it difficult to secure interviews with activists from other groups. Those who participated recommended only those within their social networks; therefore, the information provided by activists was limited only to the activities of their organisations. As a result, the number of activists interviewed was increased to eight to understand their struggle in-depth. The other 41 participants were government officials, elected councillors and mayors, municipal treasures, council secretaries-general, community leaders and academics. Of the 49 participants, 39 were men, and only 10 were women. The researcher interviewed 21 participants in the Northwest and 28 in the Southwest regions. This study could have been strengthened by interviewing more women and activists from other groups.

Third, participants' opinions about Cameroon's future form of government were divided. Some participants supported federalism, others supported secession, and others

wanted decentralisation to continue. Therefore, conducting a survey could have helped determine which form of government was supported by most of the Anglophones, thus enhancing the study's trustworthiness (Patton, 2012; Wahyuni, 2012). Fourth, the scope of the research was limited because it was conducted only in the Bamenda city council, with three sub-divisional councils in the Northwest region, and in the Kumba city council, comprising three sub-divisional councils in the Southwest region (Merriam, 2002). These two regions were chosen because only the Anglophone regions are fighting for their autonomy from the central government. Despite these limitations, sufficient time was spent analysing the data to ensure that the research findings accurately reflect how participants constructed the meaning of their experiences under decentralisation. Additionally, the present study has enhanced our understanding of the relationship between decentralisation and conflicts between former independent colonial territories that reunited under a federal system but later evolved into a unitary state.

6.2.2.6 Suggestions for future research in the field

In terms of future research, there is a need for additional research to be conducted on the topic of decentralisation and conflict mitigation in Cameroon. Decentralisation was instituted in Cameroon in 1996, but the implementation exacerbated intrastate conflicts. Therefore, this study explored how decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the francophone-majority government. The study found that decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the central government by failing to restore the lost autonomy of Anglophones and further eroding their autonomy owing to its poor design and implementation. The results of this study fit in with the findings of previous research (Merera, 2007; Goodfellow &

Lindemann, 2013; Marinzel, 2014; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009), which suggest that decentralisation intensifies conflicts when the central government erodes the autonomy of ethnic or regional groups. This research was conducted only in the two most populated cities in the Anglophone regions, the Bamenda city council in the Northwest region and the Kumba city council in the Southwest region. The Bamenda city council and Kumba city council each have three-sub divisional council areas. Therefore, other researchers can build on this research and improve on the findings by overcoming some of the limitations in the study such as the scope and the research method. First, there are two levels of government in Cameroon: national and local. The local government is made up of regions and councils. Additionally, there are three types of councils: city councils, sub-divisional councils and councils. Councils lack the status granted to city councils, and elected mayors head them. Sub-divisional councils are council areas created within any city council area, and elected mayors also head them. City councils serve urban areas, and most city councils have two to three sub-divisional council areas and are led by appointed government delegates. Therefore, there are two possibilities for future research on this topic. First, future research can be conducted in councils located in rural areas or in sub-divisional councils located in other parts of the Anglophone regions. Also, researchers can conduct research at the regional level led by appointed governors. In addition, researchers can conduct research in councils or regions using different demographic groups.

Second, conducting mixed-methods research on this topic is another potential area for future research. During the interviews, participants were divided over their nation's future form of government. Some participants supported federalism, others supported

secession, and others wanted decentralisation to continue. Therefore, conducting a survey could have helped determine which form of government was supported by most Anglophones. This study can be strengthened by another researcher conducting mixed methods research.

Despite these limitations, the present study has enhanced our understanding of the ongoing debate on whether decentralisation is an effective conflict mitigation strategy. Understanding how decentralisation increased conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government could add new knowledge to conflict mitigation and offer new insights to policymakers seeking to mitigate conflicts in divided societies. Hopefully, this study will stimulate further research on this important topic.

6.2.2.7 Recommendations for policy intervention

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are proposed for policy intervention.

The ongoing conflict continues to pose a threat to the territorial integrity of the nation of Cameroon and regional security. Many Cameroonians have died, and many more will die if this conflict does not end soon. Six years of conflict have killed over 6,000 people in Cameroon's two Anglophone regions, displaced hundreds of thousands, deprived nearly 600,000 children of education and about 2.2 million need aid (*International Crisis Group*, 2023, March 31). The government declared war on Anglophone armed groups in 2017, but the conflict has not stopped. Protracted conflicts could lead to distrust between the warring factions, with each side trying to consolidate

their gains. The government is counting on a military victory while the Anglophone armed groups continue to fight for their autonomy. Therefore, the best way to resolve this political conflict is through inclusive dialogue, not the continuation of the civil war.

The government of Cameroon has taken some positive steps to end the crisis by convening a national dialogue in 2019; however, the international community and the Anglophone armed groups were not invited (*International Crisis Group*, 2023, March 31). At the end of the national dialogue, the participants recommended, among other things, a "special status" for the two Anglophone regions. The national assembly passed their recommendation into law, and President Biya signed it as the general code of regional and local authorities in December 2019. However, the content of the 2019 general code is similar to the 2004 Law, except for new provisions like the special status, the return of the House of Chiefs and the appointment of Public Independent Conciliators over the Anglophone regions. The 2019 general code does not grant the Anglophone regions and councils financial autonomy and exclusive jurisdiction on any subject matter, even in education and law, which triggered the ongoing crisis in 2016 (Section 18 (2) and Section 20.

Before the national dialogue, the government created the Commission on Bilingualism and Multiculturalism in 2017 to promote the two official languages and cultural diversity in the nation. The government also organised a humanitarian support fund in 2018 of about 12.7 billion CFA francs for the Anglophone regions and launched the recruitment of more bilingual teachers. Furthermore, the government created a common law section at the Supreme Court to handle appeals from lower courts. Similarly, the government created a common law section at the National School of

Administration and Magistracy to train more judicial and legal officers. To fast-track the decentralisation process, the government established a separate ministry called the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Government in 2018. In addition, in 2018, the government created the National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee (NDDRC) for repentant fighters (Caxton, 2017; Okereke, 2018; Ambe, 2021). These efforts from the government are commendable, but there is still room for improvement to restore peace in the nation.

Six important lessons from this research could be implemented immediately by policymakers to mitigate the ongoing conflict. First, it is recommended that the government revise and improve the current design of decentralisation to devolve autonomy to the Anglophone regions. Autonomy will grant Anglophones the power and authority to make independent decisions with little intervention from the central government. Autonomy arrangements can act as a compromise between warring parties by granting disgruntled minority groups sufficient autonomy to control their economic, political and social affairs while also preserving the state's territorial integrity (Brancati, 2006; Keil & Anderson, 2018). For example, in Indonesia, Fujikawa (2021) found that an autonomy arrangement was used as a compromise solution between Aceh rebels who were fighting for independence and the government of Indonesia which was unwilling to relinquish its sovereignty. The agreement stated that Indonesia would remain a unitary state, but would guarantee a certain degree of self-rule to Aceh. The rebels had difficulty believing that the government of Indonesia would be committed to any signed agreement in the long run. However, they accepted the arrangement because of the backing of the

international community. This same strategy can be used in Cameroon to end the ongoing civil war.

Therefore, it is recommended that the government of Cameroon should convene an international peace conference, which will include the Francophone ruling elites, the Anglophone elites, including the leaders of the armed groups, the United Nations, which organised and approved the 1961 plebiscite results, Britain and France as former colonial administrators, to address the ongoing armed conflict. As Burton (1989) warned, people or groups will resort to wars or other means of violence if their needs are denied by society. The situation in Cameroon may be less complicated because of a prior agreement and verbal assurances that Francophone political leaders made to the Anglophone leaders before reunification in 1961. Premier Foncha of Southern Cameroons and President Ahidjo of French Cameroun signed an agreement in 1960 that was sanctioned by the United Nations, Britain and France, stipulating that the two territories would remain autonomous because of their distinct political and cultural differences. President Ahidjo also made verbal commitments to the Anglophone leaders that French Cameroon would never annex Southern Cameroons (Anyangwe, 2009; Fanso; 2013; Mukete; 2013; Muna, 2017). However, former President Ahidjo and his successor President Paul Biya reneged on those commitments, thus leading to the ongoing civil war. Therefore, to end the conflict, the Francophone ruling elites should be willing to honour their written and verbal commitments to the Anglophones by improving the current design of decentralisation to reflect the 1960 agreement. Just like in Indonesia, where the backing of the international community helped broker an autonomy agreement, that same strategy could also be helpful in Cameroon.

The second strategy is to empower Anglophones with appropriate resources and power to design and implement policies according to their preferences. A study by Tranchant (2007) suggests that the empowerment of a minority group is easily achieved if they are concentrated in one region in which they represent a majority of the population. Anglophones are a geographically concentrated group of people occupying two of the ten regions in Cameroon. Similarly, Lijphart (2004) suggests that for divided societies with geographically concentrated groups, a federal system is an excellent way to provide autonomy for those groups. Researchers Chia, Saturnin and Nkeneh (2020) suggest that decentralisation is not only an efficient instrument for conflict mitigation but it can also prevent future conflicts and contribute towards equitable distribution of wealth and balanced development. Therefore, granting Anglophones territorial autonomy and empowering them with the power and resources to design and implement policies specific to their regions, like education, law, politics, economy, language, and culture, could motivate them to give up their struggle for independence or secession. Under the current design of decentralisation, Anglophones do not have exclusive jurisdiction over any subject matter. Because they cannot protect their culture, language, education and legal systems, they fear being assimilated, integrated or absorbed by the majority Francophone population, thus leading to the ongoing conflict. Lake and Rothchild (1996) suggest that politically marginalised groups who continue to fear majority domination and have experienced excessive state intrusion into their local affairs prefer autonomy because it places institutional limitations on the overreaching power of the central government. Therefore, empowering Anglophones and granting them autonomy could help improve their sense of security and confidence in the state and reduce their

incentives to break away from the nation (Brancati, 2006; Bakke & Wibbles, 2006; Lublin, 2012; Keil & Anderson).

A power-sharing arrangement between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government is the third strategy that could mitigate the ongoing conflict. Power-sharing will include the Anglophone minority group at the highest level of the decision-making process in the nation. According to Burgess (2011), power-sharing institutions like decentralisation offer different groups opportunities to participate in government and allow diverse groups within plural societies to protect their rights and defend their interests. However, under the current form of decentralisation, Anglophones are denied access to power and resources. They are marginalised, socially discriminated against and assimilated, thus resulting in a national conflict (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997; Mukong, 1998; Ngamfon, 2020). According to Premdas (2020), when ethno-regional and ethnonational groups are frustrated with the central government with their request for recognition and resources, they will try to secede. Therefore, to contain the ongoing conflict, the current design of decentralisation should be revised to share power and resources with the Anglophone regions. Power-sharing arrangements could guarantee the Anglophone minority a voice in the government. It could give Anglophones opportunities for representation and participation in government. With the assurances that they will not be dominated or excluded from the government, Anglophones may be less likely to take actions that will undermine the territorial stability of the state. Norris (2008) explained that power-sharing arrangements encourage diverse societies to be more inclusive and tolerant of other groups. Similarly, Siegle and O'Mahony (2006) suggest that the conflict-mitigation rationale for decentralisation in

ethnically divided societies offers minority groups opportunities for participation and representation in government. According to Lustick et al. (2004), representative types of power-sharing are more effective than repression of ethnopolitical movements in reducing the threat of secession. The authors argue that if governments respond positively to the demands of disgruntled minorities, secession could be prevented while preserving the state's territorial integrity.

Fourth, it is recommended that decentralisation should accommodate the socio-cultural and political differences between the Anglophones and the Francophones due to their colonial history. Tranchant (2007) suggests that in mitigating intrastate conflicts, decentralisation may be desirable if decentralised jurisdictions have different preferences over public goods. Anglophones and Francophones lived apart for over 40 years under different colonial administrations, and during those years, they developed two different cultures, languages, political institutions, and legal and educational systems. However, the decentralisation design did not accommodate the historical specificities of the Anglophone regions. As a result, Anglophones have complained that they are being marginalised, assimilated and dominated by the Francophone majority population, thus intensifying conflicts. Munzu (2016) claims that the Cameroon government's intransigence toward resolving the Anglophone problem has radicalised many Anglophones. Similarly, Konings and Nyamnjoh (2000) suggest that the failure of the government to dialogue with Anglophones has provoked some Anglophone groups to use violence against the state. Lustick et al. (2004) argue that although repression may work to suppress ethnopolitical movements in the short term, it does not effectively reduce the threat of secession. Because of this, Miodownick and Cartrite (2009) suggest that

"policymakers may find that accommodation, rather than suppression or control, of the diverse interests of regions and groups" could mitigate intrastate conflicts while also protecting the integrity of the state. Yusoff et al. (2016) claim that decentralisation has been used to accommodate diverse ethnic groups in a larger political system where sociocultural, economic and political differences exist, thus preventing intrastate conflicts.

Fifth, to strengthen democracy and electoral accountability, it is recommended that the government put an end to the appointment of government officials over regions and councils in the Anglophone regions, as well as the appointment of 30 out of the 100 senators. The appointment process deprives the people of the power to choose their leaders and hold them accountable electoral accountability is an essential principle of decentralisation. The appointment of government officials over councils also suggests the unwillingness of the government to relinquish its control over councils. Furthermore, appointing government officials adds to the many levels of political control over the regions and councils. The oversight functions of these appointees sometimes lead to corruption and waste of the meagre resources of the councils. Political autonomy and electoral accountability are core principles for any decentralised system to function properly (Besley & Smart, 2007; Boex, 2009; Bahl, 1998; Manor, 2011; Crook & Manor, 2000). Under a decentralised system, citizens must be able to elect their own leaders. If there is no electoral accountability, decentralisation will likely fail. The power struggle between appointed and elected officials led to institutional conflict at the local level (Green, 2008; Mbuagbo & Fru, 2011; Tambulasi, 2009). Therefore, to mitigate conflicts, it is recommended that the government end the appointment of civil servants to supervise

regions and councils in the Anglophone regions.

Finally, it is recommended that those who have committed egregious human rights violations on both sides should be held accountable to deter others from committing heinous crimes against innocent civilians. Some members of the Anglophone armed groups are exploiting the civil war to resort to the kidnapping of civilians for ransom, burning of government buildings, trafficking of arms and killing soldiers. On the other hand, some members of the Cameroon military are also committing heinous crimes like raping women and girls, stealing and destroying peoples' property, killing innocent civilians, and burning down schools and villages with people inside their homes. As a result of the ongoing civil war, children in some areas have been hindered from going to school because of insecurity. Businesses have been impacted, and many people have lost their jobs. Many Anglophones have fled to neighbouring Nigeria as refugees, and many have been internally displaced. Regional instability is also a call for concern as Boko Haram fighters are also crossing the border to attack residents in Northern Cameroon. The Cameroon government is fighting a war on two fronts, and these wars are depleting the scarce resources of the nation that could be used to improve the lives of all Cameroonians. The ongoing war threatens human life, the destruction of property, the economy, the territorial integrity of the state and regional security. Therefore, it is hoped that these recommendations will be considered in mitigating the ongoing conflict.

6.2.2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher interpreted and explained the meaning of the results as they relate to the research questions and how the results fit into the existing literature. Four key findings emerged from the data, and they are all organised in the form of themes

and supported by quotes from the data. The four themes are interrelated, and they tell a unified story of how the implementation of decentralisation in the Anglophone regions exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government by failing to restore the lost autonomy of Anglophones and further eroding their autonomy due to a poor design and implementation. The chapter also discussed the study's limitations, proposed recommendations for future research and offered recommendations for policy intervention. The next chapter is the conclusion section, where the main contribution of this research will be highlighted.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will conclude the study by summarising the key research findings related to the research aim and questions, as well as how the research helps address the gap in the study. This chapter also discusses the value and contribution of this research to the field of knowledge both in terms of theory and practice. It discusses how the findings fit with previous studies in the literature and how the research findings can be applied in the real world.

7.2 Summary of the key findings

Four key findings emerged from the study. First, the study found that the form of decentralisation implemented in the Anglophone regions is more of deconcentration than devolution because decentralisation has failed to transfer sufficient power and resources to the Anglophones to manage their local affairs with limited interference from the central government. In a devolved system, the central government exercises little or no control over local governments (Rondinelli, McCullough & Johnson, 1989; Schneider, 2003), but in the Anglophone regions, the central government exercises direct control over councils through government appointees and ultimate authority for devolved functions remains with the central government. Also, in a devolved system, local governments have at least one subject matter in which they have exclusive jurisdiction (Brancati, 2006; McGarry & O'Leary, 1993), but in the Anglophone regions, devolved competencies are exercised concurrently by the State and local governments.

Second, the study found that instead of restoring the lost autonomy of Anglophones after federalism was abolished in 1972, decentralisation further eroded their autonomy owing to its poor design and implementation in 1996. First, decentralisation did not accommodate the socio-cultural and political differences of Anglophones. The design of decentralisation failed to consider the historical context of reunification. Second, decentralisation transformed the Anglophone territory that used to be a single political unit into two regions. Third, decentralisation transformed the form of government and political institutions in the Anglophone regions. Under the federal system, the Anglophone territory had a separate government led by a prime minister and a bicameral legislature with powers to make laws and raise taxes (Eyongetah & Brain,

1974). However, under decentralisation, regions and councils are deliberative organs, not legislative bodies. Only the national assembly can make laws for the entire nation. Fourth, the Anglophone regions have no exclusive jurisdiction on any subject matter despite the historical specificities of their regions. Fifth, decentralisation has not devolved financial and administrative autonomy to the Anglophone regions.

The third key finding of this research is that decentralisation resulted in the marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation of Anglophones. The implementation of decentralisation excluded Anglophones from power and important job opportunities in the government. In addition, some Francophone ruling elites viewed Anglophones as second-class citizens and foreigners in their own country of birth. They disparaged Anglophones by calling them despicable names like slaves, dogs, terrorists, Biafrans or foreigners and two cubes of sugar in a basin (Mukong, 1998:22; Ngamfon, 2020:1484). Fourth, the study revealed that decentralisation increased conflicts both at the local and national levels. The design and implementation of decentralisation increased local conflicts because of the ambiguous nature of the decentralisation laws, uneven allocation of resources and power struggles between mayors and government delegates. The design of decentralisation also resulted in national conflict because it eroded the autonomy of Anglophones. The erosion of the Anglophones' autonomy resulted in marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation of Anglophones.

7.3 How the research aims and objectives were fulfilled

This study explored how the implementation of decentralisation in the Anglophone regions exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government. Cameroon became a decentralised unitary state in 1996 to promote development, democracy, and good governance at the local level. However, the implementation of decentralisation intensified intrastate conflict, which finally plunged the nation into a civil war in 2017. Therefore, this study aimed to understand how decentralisation increased intrastate conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government and propose solutions to mitigate the ongoing conflict. The results indicate that decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government by failing to restore the lost autonomy of the Anglophones after federalism was abolished in 1972 and further eroding their autonomy due to the poor design and implementation in 1996. In addition, the erosion of the Anglophones' autonomy also resulted in marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation of Anglophones. Therefore, a poorly designed decentralisation which did not consider the historical context of reunification and Anglophones' grievances against the state exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government.

This study solves the research problem in four ways: first, this research proposes that the current design of decentralisation should be revised and improved to accommodate the historical, political and cultural diversity of the Anglophone regions. The present decentralisation design has not incorporated Anglophones' socio-cultural and political differences, thus leading to intrastate conflicts. Yusoff et al. (2016) suggest that

decentralisation has accommodated diverse ethnic groups in a larger political system where socio-cultural, economic and political differences exist. Miodownick and Cartrite (2009) suggest that accommodation, rather than suppressing the diverse interests of ethnic or regional groups, could mitigate intrastate conflicts while protecting the state's territorial integrity. Second, this research proposes that the Anglophone regions should be granted autonomy. Lake and Rothchild (1996) suggest that decentralisation reduces conflicts by enabling local and regional authorities to have autonomous power within a larger state. Since the erosion of the Anglophones' autonomy increased intrastate conflict, restoring their autonomy could mitigate the ongoing conflict and restore peace to their regions.

The third way to address the research problem is to empower Anglophones with power and resources over matters specific to their regions like education, law, language, politics and culture (Mcgarry & O'Leary, 1993; Brancati, 2006). Tranchant (2007), using decentralisation as an empowerment model, found that decentralisation can potentially reduce ethnic conflict by empowering minority groups that are spatially concentrated in a region to control their local affairs. The fourth strategy is to share political power and resources with the Anglophone regions (Norris, 2008; Grasa & Camps, 2009). Burgess (2011), based on a study of power-sharing institutions in 48 Sub-Saharan African countries, found that decentralisation could help mitigate conflicts by including people from different minority groups in the decision-making process.

This study has five objectives, and the researcher explains how each was achieved. First, the main objective of this study was to explore how decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone majority

government. This objective was answered by examining the design of decentralisation. The findings suggest that decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government by failing to restore the lost autonomy of Anglophones after federalism was abolished in 1972 and further eroding their autonomy owing to the poor design and implementation. There are five ways decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones: first, decentralisation eroded Anglophones' autonomy because the design did not consider the historical context of reunification. As a result, the design failed to accommodate the socio-cultural and political differences of the Anglophones. Second, decentralisation eroded the autonomy of Anglophones by transforming their territory, which used to be a single political unit, into two fragmented regions.

Third, decentralisation eroded the autonomy of Anglophones by transforming the form of government and political institutions in their territory. Under the federal system, Anglophones had a separate government led by a prime minister and a bicameral legislature with powers to make laws and raise taxes (Eyongetah & Brian, 1974), but under decentralisation, Anglophones do not have a separate government and regional and local authorities are deliberative organs, not legislative bodies. In addition, regions are led by governors and councils are supervised by senior divisional officers, all appointed by the president. Fourth, despite Anglophones' socio-cultural and political differences from Francophones, decentralisation has not devolved any exclusive powers to the Anglophone regions to manage their local affairs. Under the federal system, the federated states had exclusive jurisdiction in non-federal matters, but under decentralisation, devolved competencies are exercised concurrently by the state and local authorities.

Fifth, under decentralisation, the Anglophone regions do not have financial and administrative autonomy. Therefore, decentralisation increased intrastate conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone majority government by failing to restore Anglophones lost autonomy in 1972 and further eroding their autonomy because of the poor design and implementation in 1996.

The second objective was to understand the meaning of decentralisation and how it is implemented in the Anglophone regions. This objective was achieved by examining the form of decentralisation, the scope of authority transferred to the Anglophone regions, and the level of central government control over councils. The result indicates that the form of decentralisation implemented in Cameroon is more of deconcentration than devolution because decentralisation failed to transfer adequate power and resources to the Anglophone regions to manage their local affairs (Manor, 2011). Section 2 (1) of the 2004 Law states, “Decentralisation shall consist of devolution, by the State, of special powers and appropriate resources to regional and local authorities.” Section 4 (1) states that regional and local authorities “shall be endowed with administrative and financial autonomy for the management of regional and local interests.” However, councils do not have financial and expenditure autonomy. Councils relied on taxes, loans, grants, and credit cards from the central government to survive. According to Lohkoko (2013:6), decentralisation in Cameroon is “more of a myth than a reality” since the funds of most local governments come from the central government. Regarding expenditure autonomy, mayors could only spend on projects that were below five million francs CFA ($10000), while projects above five million were referred to the Tender Board.

Concerning administrative autonomy, mayors could only hire and fire categories 1-6 staff with the permission of the senior divisional officer (SDO). For categories 7-12 staff, mayors had to seek the permission of the SDO and the Minister of Decentralisation. In addition, Section 4 (2) says elected mayors shall freely administer councils, but in practice, councils are supervised by senior divisional officers who must approve all council meetings and deliberations. Concerning devolved competencies to councils, Section 15 (2) states that the powers devolved upon regions and councils are not exclusive. In a devolved system, councils are granted exclusive jurisdiction in at least one area (Brancati, 2006). But in the Anglophone regions, the devolved powers are concurrently shared with the central government, thus weakening the autonomy of RLA. Because the central government retains authority over councils and directly intervenes in their local affairs, the form of decentralisation implemented in Cameroon is more of deconcentration than devolution (Rondinelli, Nellis & Cheema, 1983; Schneider, 2003).

The third objective was to understand the lived experiences of Anglophones under the decentralisation program. This objective was answered by examining the impact of the erosion of the Anglophone's autonomy. The finding suggests that the erosion of Anglophone autonomy resulted in marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation of Anglophones. Marginalisation in the context of Cameroon means that Anglophones are excluded from political power and important job opportunities in the central government, the private sector and within the ruling political party. Most lucrative and important jobs are given to French Cameroonians, even in public corporations in the Anglophone regions. The English language is also marginalised. All official documents are in French, while the English versions are sometimes unavailable. Under the decentralisation

program, Anglophones are treated as foreigners and second-class citizens in their own country of birth. They are called slaves, two cubes of sugar in a basin, dogs, terrorists, Biafrans or foreigners (Mukong, 1998:22; Ngamfon, 2020:1484). Under decentralisation, the Anglophones are assimilated. The central government transferred Francophone teachers who could not speak proper English to schools in the Anglophone regions and Francophone magistrates and judges who were not fluent in English to courts in the Anglophone regions. The erosion of the Anglophones' autonomy resulted in marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation of Anglophones, thus intensifying conflicts.

The fourth objective was to understand how Anglophones perceived the decentralisation program. Anglophones perceived the decentralisation program in two ways. First, participants perceived the decentralisation program as a sham because the design has not devolved real power and resources to councils to manage their local affairs (Tambulasi, 2009; Green, 2008). Section 2 (1) of the 2004 Law states that decentralisation shall be by devolution but in practice, decentralisation is more of deconcentration than devolution. For example, in a devolved system, local governments have at least one subject matter in which they have exclusive jurisdiction (McGarry & O'Leary, 1993; Brancati, 2006), but in the Anglophone regions, the devolved competencies are exercised concurrently by the central government and local authorities. Participants noted that although competencies have been devolved, many decisions were still made in the capital city. Mayor Charton even stated that the minister in charge of decentralisation told mayors to visit Yaounde about 12 times in a year to lobby for projects. This indicates that ultimate decision-making authority over councils remains

with the central government. Second, Anglophones viewed decentralisation as a political ploy by the central government to maintain control over their regions. Section 4 (2) states that elected officials shall freely administer local authorities, but in practice, senior divisional officers supervise councils. The appointment of government officials over regions and councils suggests that the government lacks the political will to devolve power to local authorities. Some participants likened the decentralisation process to a merchant who sells a goat but continues to hold the rope. This expression suggests that the central government is unwilling to relinquish its power over regional and local authorities.

The fifth objective was to identify the reasons that motivate Anglophones to continue their struggle for autonomy. First, the study revealed that decentralisation motivated them to continue their struggle by failing to restore their lost autonomy and further eroding their autonomy owing to its poor design and implementation. Second, the study also revealed that the erosion of Anglophone autonomy resulted in marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation, which contributed to national conflict. Decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones in five ways. First, the design of decentralisation did not accommodate the socio-cultural and political differences of Anglophones. Second, decentralisation transformed the Anglophone territory that used to be a single political unit into two fragmented regions. Third, decentralisation transformed the form of government and political institutions in the Anglophone territory. Fourth, decentralisation has not devolved exclusive jurisdiction on any matter to the Anglophone regions despite their historical specificities. Fifth, decentralisation has not granted financial autonomy to the Anglophone regions. Also, the erosion of the autonomy of

Anglophones resulted in marginalisation, discrimination and assimilation. Participants said that the condition that motivates them to fight for autonomy is marginalisation and the fact that they are treated as second-class citizens in their own country. Therefore, the failure of decentralisation to restore the autonomy of Anglophones, and a poorly designed decentralisation that failed to consider the historical context of reunification and Anglophones' grievances against the state, motivates Anglophones to continue their struggle for autonomy.

7.4 Contribution of this study to theory and practice

The findings of this research could contribute new knowledge to the field of decentralisation and conflict mitigation while also providing new insight to policymakers and governments, researchers and academics who are interested in conflict mitigation in divided societies, particularly in Africa, with diverse societies prone to internal conflicts (Keller, 2007; Burgess, 2011). Decentralisation is widely perceived as an effective mechanism for mitigating intrastate conflicts. However, the empirical results are inconclusive (Brancati, 2006; Bakke, 2008; White, 2011). The literature reveals three different positions held by scholars. The first group of scholars hold the view that decentralisation has the potential to either increase or reduce conflicts depending on the circumstance (Diprose & Ukiwo, 2008; Bakke, 2008; Braathen & Hellevik, 2008; Siegle & O'Mahony, 2006; Green, 2008; Lublin, 2012). Those in the second group suggest that decentralisation increases conflict by eroding the autonomy of minority groups (Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009; Marinzel, 2014; Goodfellow & Lindemann, 2013;

Mbuagbo and Fru, 2011; Tambulasi, 2009; Merera (2007), or by reinforcing ethnic or regional identities (Brancati, 2006; Eaton, 2007; Beland & Lecours, 2005; 2007; Colomb et al., 2014; Harowitz, 1991; Suberu, 1994), while scholars in the third group contend that decentralisation reduces conflicts (Bardhan, 2002; Burgess, 2011; Grasa & Camps, 2009; Lake & Rothchild, 1996; Fujikawa, 2021). Most of these studies have focused on conflicts between ethnic or regional groups seeking greater autonomy or independence from their central governments (Brancati, 2006; Bakke, 2008; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009).

Despite the growing literature on decentralisation and ethnic or regional conflicts, little research has been conducted on decentralisation and conflicts between former independent colonial territories that reunited under a federal system and later evolved into a decentralised unitary state, especially when their socio-cultural and political characteristics differ. To narrow the gap, this research explored how the implementation of decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government. The results suggest that decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government by failing to restore their lost autonomy and further eroding the autonomy of Anglophones due to its weak design and poor implementation.

Decentralisation further eroded the autonomy of Anglophones in five ways: first, the design of decentralisation did not accommodate the political, historical and cultural differences of the Anglophones. It failed to consider the historical context of reunification. Second, decentralisation transformed the Anglophone territory that used to be a single political unit into two regions. Anglophones joined Francophones in 1961

under a federal system as an independent and separate territory, but decentralisation has transformed their territory into two of the ten regions.

Third, decentralisation has transformed the form of government and political institutions in the Anglophone regions. Under the federal system, the Anglophone territory had a prime minister and a bicameral legislature with powers to make laws, raise taxes and spend money, but under decentralisation, regions and councils are deliberative organs, not legislative bodies, meaning they cannot make laws. Only the national government can make laws for the entire nation. Also, regions and councils are supervised by government appointees who exercise direct control over councils, thus undermining the authority of elected officials. Fourth, under the federal system, the federated states had exclusive jurisdiction in non-federal matters (Eyongetah & Brain, 1974), but under decentralisation, devolved competencies to councils are exercised concurrently by the central government and local authorities. Fifth, under decentralisation, the Anglophone regions do not have financial autonomy. Without the appropriate resources, councils cannot meet the needs of the people, thus reducing conflicts. Therefore, the findings suggest that decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government by failing to restore the autonomy of Anglophones that ended when federalism was abolished in 1972 and further eroding their autonomy due to a poor design and implementation. According to Schou and Haug (2005), studies on how multiethnic states that have evolved into unitary states use decentralisation to manage diversity and conflict are lacking in the literature. Research by Siegle and O'Mahony (2006) also suggests that context in analysing decentralisation is important, as two-thirds of intrastate conflicts

have occurred in an autocratic political environment. Therefore, this study's findings could narrow the gap in the literature.

The findings of this study support the argument in the literature that decentralisation intensifies conflicts when the central government erodes the autonomy of minority groups, especially those that have previously enjoyed some degree of autonomy before joining the host state. For example, Merera (2007), through a case study of the Oromo people, found that decentralisation increased conflicts between the Ethiopian government and the Oromo people because the central government refused to share political power and resources with the Oromo people, who had previously enjoyed some degree of autonomy before becoming part of the modern state of Ethiopia. Similarly, through a case study of the Buganda Kingdom in Uganda, Goodfellow and Lindemann (2013) found that decentralisation increased conflicts between the Ugandan government and the Buganda elites because the government of President Museveni refused the Buganda Kingdom, which had enjoyed autonomy before joining Uganda's independence in 1962, the right to maintain their autonomy and to control part of their land. Hechter (2000) claims that decentralisation increases conflicts when the central government infringes on a group's pre-existing freedoms. Furthermore, Marinzel (2014) suggests that the secessionist desires within Catalonia in Spain, which was once an autonomous region before the rule of General Francisco Franco from 1939 to 1975, originate from a history of the persecution and erosion of the Catalonian language and culture.

Policymakers and governments could also use this study's findings because intrastate conflicts pose a threat to peace and the territorial integrity of states. According to Bakke (2008), governments increasingly use decentralisation as one of the tools to

contain the rise of intrastate conflicts in divided societies. Therefore, the findings of this research could provide policymakers and governments with new insight into how to mitigate intrastate conflicts in unitary states.

There are four ways in which policymakers and governments could use this result to mitigate conflicts in divided societies. First, since the results indicate that decentralisation increased conflicts by failing to restore the autonomy of Anglophones and continued eroding their autonomy owing to poor design and implementation, the solution is to grant autonomy to minority groups or local governments. According to Bakke (2008), a 30-year-long conflict was resolved in 1998 when Northern Ireland was granted autonomy within the United Kingdom. In 2005, another 30-year-old conflict between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement ended when the rebels were granted regional autonomy (Bakke, 2008; Fujikawa, 2021). Autonomy arrangements could act as a compromise strategy for governments that are unwilling to give up their sovereignty and for minority groups that are determined to achieve their autonomy. Restoring the autonomy of minority groups who were autonomous before joining a host state could motivate them to give up their struggle for secession. Lustick et al. (2004) suggest that by granting disgruntled minorities autonomy, secession can be prevented while also preserving the stability of the host state.

Second, since the findings suggest that decentralisation intensified conflicts because the design did not consider the socio-cultural and political differences of the Anglophones, the solution is to accommodate ethnic or regional differences. Incorporating group differences into the design of decentralisation could mitigate conflict in divided societies. Yusoff et al. (2016) suggest that decentralisation has been used to

accommodate diverse ethnic groups in a larger political system where socio-cultural, economic and political differences exist. This means that in designing and implementing decentralisation programs, policymakers or governments should not only focus on the form and type of decentralisation, but they should also consider the historical or political context in which decentralisation is implemented. Research by Siegle & O'Mahony (2006) suggests that the context of analysing decentralisation and conflict is important because two-thirds of inter-communal and civil conflicts have occurred in autocratic political environments. Persecuting minority groups instead of accommodating their group differences could escalate conflicts. According to Keil and Anderson (2018), a growing body of literature suggests that it is not only minorities who threaten the territorial integrity of states but it is also central governments who try to prevent the self-determination claims of minorities by oppressing them instead of accommodating their historical differences. According to Woodward (2007), "economic deprivation, political neglect, and forced cultural assimilation have in recent years resulted in minority nations taking up arms in order to fight for the protection of their identity and their independence from the host state." Because of this, Miodownick and Cartrite (2009) suggest that "policymakers may find that accommodation, rather than suppression or control, of the diverse interests of regions and groups", could mitigate intrastate conflicts while also protecting the integrity of the state.

Third, empowering minority groups or local governments with legislative power over issues specific to their region could mitigate intrastate conflicts. For example, Brancati (2006) suggests that decentralisation reduces conflicts by granting local governments or minority groups the power to control their "political, social and economic

affairs." The author explains that by "enabling groups to protect their interests and concerns, decentralisation prevents ethnic groups from fighting each other…and reduces the incentives for regions to seek their independent states." Hechter (2000) claims that decentralisation can contain nationalist conflicts by granting ethnic groups policy-making power over matters central to their recognition and existence, such as language, education, religion and culture. Similarly, Gurr (2000) suggests that decentralisation can reduce conflicts by giving national groups the legal, political, and material means to protect their interests and concerns in their regions. Tranchant (2007), using decentralisation as an empowerment model, suggests that decentralisation reduces conflicts by empowering minority groups with the power and resources to design and implement policies according to their preferences.

Fourth, since the findings of this study suggest that decentralisation increased conflicts because it did not share political power with the Anglophones, the solution is to share political power and resources with minority groups. For example, Norris (2008) claims that power-sharing arrangements guarantee minorities a voice in the government. With the assurance that they will not be dominated or excluded from the government, ethnic minorities are less likely to take actions that will undermine the territorial stability of the state. In the paper, the author explains that power-sharing arrangements encourage diverse societies to be more inclusive and tolerant of other groups. Burgess (2011), studying power-sharing institutions in 48 Sub-Saharan African countries, suggests that decentralisation could help mitigate conflicts by including people from different minority groups in the decision-making process. Similarly, Grasa and Camps (2009), in a study to understand the linkage between decentralised governance and conflict prevention, found

that decentralisation reduces conflicts through power-sharing mechanisms. Applying all four strategies together or combining these strategies could help mitigate conflicts in divided societies.

The findings of this research could also benefit Anglophones if the government grants them regional autonomy. Anglophones are people geographically concentrated in two of the ten regions where they constitute a majority of the population. As a result, it is easier to devolve specific powers to the Anglophones to control their group-specific interests and concerns (Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009). According to Tranchant (2007), the empowerment of minority groups is easily achieved if they are spatially concentrated in a region representing the majority population. In the paper, the author explains that decentralisation reduces conflict by empowering minority groups with the power and resources to design and implement policies according to their preferences. Therefore, empowering Anglophones could help contain the ongoing conflict and restore peace to their regions.

Academics and researchers could also benefit from this study's findings. Despite the proliferation of the literature on decentralisation and conflicts, there is a lack of consensus among scholars and practitioners regarding the effectiveness of decentralisation in mitigating conflicts in divided societies. The empirical results are ambiguous (Bakke, 2008; White, 2011). Additionally, most of the studies in the literature have been between ethnic and regional groups seeking greater autonomy or independence from their central governments (Bakke, 2008; Sambanis & Milanovic, 2009). Very little research has been done on decentralisation and conflicts between former independent colonial states that reunited under a federal system but later evolved into a unitary state.

According to Schou and Haug (2005), studies on how decentralisation is used to manage conflicts and diversity in multiethnic states that have evolved into unitary states are lacking in the literature. Therefore, the findings of this study could help advance the debate on decentralisation and conflicts in divided societies. In addition, other researchers can build on this study to improve the results by overcoming the limitations raised in this research.

7.5 Conclusion

Although decentralisation is widely perceived as an effective mechanism for conflict mitigation, decentralisation is not a panacea for solving all intrastate conflicts. However, the present study has enhanced our understanding of decentralisation and conflicts arising from two former independent colonial territories that came together under a federal system but later evolved into a unitary state. The findings suggest that decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government by failing to restore their lost autonomy and further eroding their autonomy due to poor design and implementation. In designing and implementing decentralisation, it is hoped that policymakers will not only focus on the type and form of decentralisation but they will also consider the political and historical context of the country implementing decentralisation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

TOPIC: DECENTRALISATION IN CAMEROON AND THE ANGLOPHONES' STRUGGLE FOR AUTONOMY.

Emmanuel M. Epongo
Wits School of Governance

University of Witwatersrand
1 Jan Smuts Ave, Johannesburg, South Africa

Dear Participant,

My name is Emmanuel Epongo. I am a PhD student at Wits School of Governance, under the supervision of Professor Anthoni Van Nieuwkerk. This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

I would like to invite you to take part in this research. Your participation is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. I am now going to explain the study to you. Please feel free to ask any questions that you may have about the research, and I will be happy to explain anything in greater detail.

Many countries around the world are adopting decentralisation as an effective mechanism for conflict mitigation. In Cameroon, decentralisation was adopted in 1996 to promote development, democracy, and good governance at the local level. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore how decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government. This research is aimed at contributing to the knowledge of decentralisation and conflict mitigation.

The interview is designed to ask you a few questions about the decentralisation process. The interview will take approximately an hour to complete. There will be no audio or taping but the researcher will take notes during the interview process.

All the information you provide will be kept confidential and used for the purpose of this study only. The researcher will assign code names or numbers to the participants and all data will be kept in a locked file in the personal possession of the researcher. Your responses to the questions will be anonymous. Your confidentiality will always be protected. In case the research is published, no personally identifying information will be disclosed to the public

There is no foreseeable risk in participating in this study. Your participation is voluntary and you may decide to withdraw at any time without any consequences. You will receive no compensation for participating in this study.

If you have further questions about this research at any time, you may contact the researcher at +306945021109 or at emmanuelepongo@yahoo.com or my supervisor, Professor Anthoni Van Nieuwkerk at anthoni.vannieuwkerk@wits.ac.za or on +27117173927.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether to participate or not. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving any reason. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT

I have read and I understand the provided information, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time, without giving a reason and without penalty. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form to sign. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

---------- ---------

Participant's name (printed) & signature Date

---------- ---------

Name of the person obtaining consent & signature Date

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

TOPIC: DECENTRALISATION IN CAMEROON AND THE ANGLOPHONES' STRUGGLE FOR AUTONOMY

My name is Emmanuel Epongo, a PhD student at Wits School of Governance, University of the Witwatersrand. My research is supervised by Professor Anthoni Van Nieuwkerk and it has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

I would like to invite you to take part in this research on "Decentralisation in Cameroon and the Anglophones' struggle for autonomy." Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information.

Decentralisation was adopted in 1996 to promote development, democracy, and good governance at the local level. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore how decentralisation exacerbated conflicts between the Anglophone minority and the Francophone-majority government. This study is aimed at contributing to the knowledge of decentralisation and conflict mitigation.

The reason you are contacted is because of your knowledge of the decentralisation law and how it is being implemented. The interview is designed to ask you a few questions about the decentralisation program. The interview will last for approximately an hour. All the information obtained during this study will be confidential and anonymous. Names are not recorded anywhere, and nothing can be attributed to you personally.

We hope that you can take part in this study. You will receive no compensation for participating in this study. Your participation is voluntary and you may decide to withdraw at any time without any consequences.

If you have any questions, you may contact me at emmanuelepongo@yahoo.com

Thank you so very much for your willingness to take part in this research.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Researcher

Appendix C: Interview questions

The interview questions in this study came from the five research questions, which reflect the study's theory and design.

1. Senior divisional officers

What is the purpose of the decentralisation program?

How would you assess the implementation of the decentralisation program?

What is your role in the implementation process?

How do Anglophones feel about the decentralisation program?

What fiscal transfers do sub-divisional councils receive from the central government?

2. Government delegates

How is the decentralisation program being implemented?

What is your role in the implementation process?

What are the challenges in implementing decentralisation?

How does the Government Delegate collaborate with elected mayors?

What financial transfers do sub-divisional councils receive from the city council?

3. Secretary generals

How are council records and meetings open to the public?

What kind of authority do mayors have to execute council projects?

What competencies have been transferred to councils?

Do council employees have technical, managerial, and financial skills?

4. Municipal Treasurers

What authority do councils have to tax and retain all local revenue?

How do councils collect enough taxes locally to meet their expenditure?

What kind of financial transfer do councils receive from the central government?

What financial transfers are earmarked or discretionary?

5. Mayors

What authority do mayors have to initiate and complete projects?

What taxing and expenditure powers do mayors have?

What powers do mayors have to hire and dismiss employees?

What powers do mayors have to borrow money?

How are council elections free, fair, and credible?

6. Municipal Councillors

How are municipal councillors elected?

How are mayors elected?

How are council records and meetings open to the public?

How are council elections free, fair, and credible?

How do Anglophones perceive the decentralisation program?

What are the experiences of Anglophones under decentralisation?

7. Community Leaders

How are municipal councillors elected?

How are mayors elected?

How are council records and meetings open to the public?

How are council elections free, fair, and credible?

How do Anglophones perceive the decentralisation program?

What are the experiences of Anglophones under decentralisation?

8. Academics

What kind of autonomy did Anglophones have under British rule?

How was the Anglophone system different from the Francophone system?

How is the decentralisation program implemented?

What are the experiences of Anglophones under decentralisation?

How do Anglophones perceive the decentralisation program?

9. Activists

What motivates Anglophones to continue their struggle for autonomy?

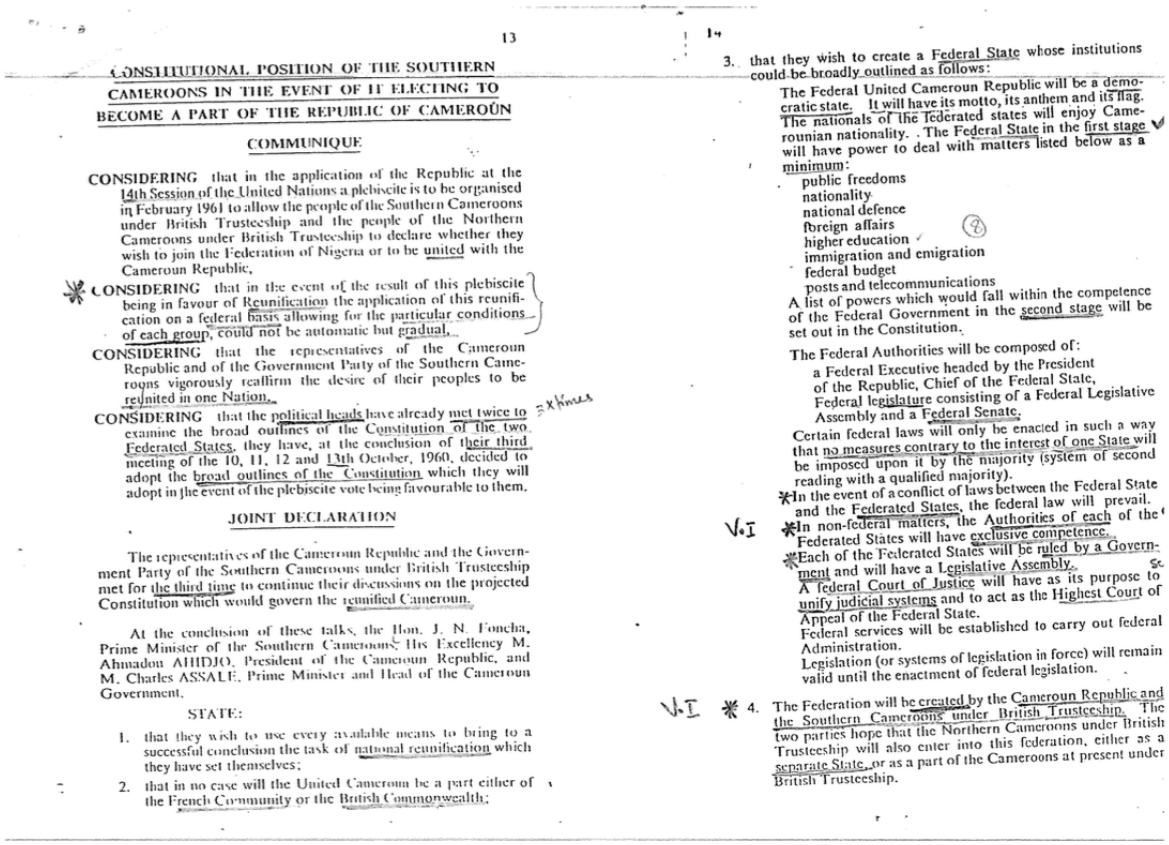
What kind of autonomy did Anglophones have under British rule?

How will Anglophones achieve their autonomy?

What are the experiences of Anglophones under decentralisation?

How do Anglophones perceive the decentralisation program?

Appendix D: Proposed 1960 Federal Constitution



13

CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION OF THE SOUTHERN CAMEROONS IN THE EVENT OF IT ELECTING TO BECOME A PART OF THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROUN

COMMUNIQUE

CONSIDERING that in the application of the Republic at the 14th Session of the United Nations a plebiscite is to be organised in February 1961 to allow the people of the Southern Cameroons under British Trusteeship and the people of the Northern Cameroons under British Trusteeship to declare whether they wish to join the Federation of Nigeria or to be united with the Cameroun Republic,

CONSIDERING that in the event of the result of this plebiscite being in favour of Reunification the application of this reunification on a federal basis allowing for the particular conditions of each group, could not be automatic but gradual,

CONSIDERING that the representatives of the Cameroun Republic and of the Government Party of the Southern Cameroons vigorously reaffirm the desire of their peoples to be reunited in one Nation,

CONSIDERING that the political heads have already met twice to examine the broad outlines of the Constitution of the two Federated States, they have, at the conclusion of their third meeting of the 10, 11, 12 and 13th October, 1960, decided to adopt the broad outlines of the Constitution which they will adopt in the event of the plebiscite vote being favourable to them.

JOINT DECLARATION

The representatives of the Cameroun Republic and the Government Party of the Southern Cameroons under British Trusteeship met for the third time to continue their discussions on the projected Constitution which would govern the reunified Cameroun.

At the conclusion of these talks, the Hon. J. N. Foncha, Prime Minister of the Southern Cameroons; His Excellency M. Ahmadou AHIDJO, President of the Cameroun Republic, and M. Charles ASSALE, Prime Minister and Head of the Cameroun Government,

STATE:

1. that they wish to use every available means to bring to a successful conclusion the task of national reunification which they have set themselves;
2. that in no case will the United Cameroun be a part either of the French Community or the British Commonwealth;

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3. that they wish to create a Federal State whose institutions could be broadly outlined as follows:

The Federal United Cameroun Republic will be a democratic state. It will have its motto, its anthem and its flag. The nationals of the federated states will enjoy Camerounian nationality. The Federal State in the first stage will have power to deal with matters listed below as a minimum:

- public freedoms
- nationality
- national defence
- foreign affairs
- higher education
- immigration and emigration
- federal budget
- posts and telecommunications

A list of powers which would fall within the competence of the Federal Government in the second stage will be set out in the Constitution.

The Federal Authorities will be composed of:

a Federal Executive headed by the President of the Republic, Chief of the Federal State, Federal legislature consisting of a Federal Legislative Assembly and a Federal Senate.

Certain federal laws will only be enacted in such a way that no measures contrary to the interest of one State will be imposed upon it by the majority (system of second reading with a qualified majority).

In the event of a conflict of laws between the Federal State and the Federated States, the federal law will prevail.

In non-federal matters, the Authorities of each of the Federated States will have exclusive competence.

Each of the Federated States will be ruled by a Government and will have a Legislative Assembly.

A federal Court of Justice will have as its purpose to unify judicial systems and to act as the Highest Court of Appeal of the Federal State.

Federal services will be established to carry out federal Administration.

Legislation (or systems of legislation in force) will remain valid until the enactment of federal legislation.

4. The Federation will be created by the Cameroun Republic and the Southern Cameroons under British Trusteeship. The two parties hope that the Northern Cameroons under British Trusteeship will also enter into this federation, either as a separate State, or as a part of the Cameroons at present under British Trusteeship.

5. In the event of the Southern and Northern Cameroons voting in favour of reunification, those entrusted with the responsibility of the affairs of the Unified Cameroons would, through mutual agreement, specify the manner in which the populations of the Cameroons would be asked to express their opinion on the Federal Constitution.

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

The representatives of the government party of the Southern Cameroons under British Trusteeship, led by the Hon. J. N. FONCHA, Prime Minister, on their return from London where they had talks with the United Kingdom Minister for the Colonies on the future of their territory, had on the 1st and 2nd December a fourth meeting with the delegation of the Cameroun Republic, led by the President of the Republic, Ahmadou AHIDJO.

The two parties were in full agreement :

1. *that* the United Nations General Assembly has stated with clarity the two questions which will be put at the time of the plebiscite on the 11th February, 1961, *i.e.*,
   (*a*) Do you wish to attain independence by Unification with the Independent Federation of Nigeria; or
   (*b*) Do you wish to attain independence by Unification with the Independent Cameroun Republic.
2. *that* the two delegations whilst in agreement with the interpretation of the second question which was accepted in London, regret that the representatives of the Northern Cameroons were not present at this Conference and ask:
   (*a*) that immediately after the plebiscite and in the event of the people voting in favour of unification with the Cameroun Republic, a Conference should be held attended by representatives of the Cameroun Republic and the Southern and Northern Cameroons,
   (*b*) that this Conference, at which representatives of the Trusteeship Authority and possibly those of the United Nations would be present, would have as its aim the fixing of time limits and conditions for the transfer of sovereign powers to an organisation representing the future Federation.

Signed FONCHA *Signed* AHIDJO

Appendix E: Ethics Clearance Certificate & Wits Permission Letter

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Epongo

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H15/07/11**
PROJECT TITLE	Decentralization in Cameroon and the Anglophone's struggle for autonomy
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Mr E Epongo
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Wits School of Governance/
DATE CONSIDERED	24 July 2015
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
EXPIRY DATE	01 November 2018

DATE 02 November 2015 **CHAIRPERSON** J. Knight
(Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Dr M Matshabaphala

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

Epongo
Signature

11 / 13 / 2015
Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

WITS SCHOOL OF GOVERNANCE
UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Research Office:
Phindile Mohanoe
Tel: 011 717 3133
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PhD Convener:
Dr Horacio Zandamela
Tel: 011 717 3692
Email: horacio.zandamela@wits.ac.za

Research Director:
Prof Pundy Pillay
Tel: 011 717 3501
Email: pundy.pillay@wits.ac.za

Friday, 30 October 2015

To whom it may concern

This confirms that **Mr. Emmanuel Epongo** student number **762664** is registered for the Doctor of Philosophy in Management at the Wits School of Governance.

The title of the Research proposal is: **DECENTRALIZATION IN CAMEROON AND THE ANGLOPHONE'S STRUGGLE FOR AUTONOMY.**

It is recommended that he be given assistance in terms of information for resarch purposes towards his PhD Degree. The information will be used for research purposes only.

Yours sincerely

Dr Horacio Zandamela
Supervisor & PhD Convenor

Appendix F: Authorisation Letter to do research in Bamenda.

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace-work-Fatherland
NORTH WEST REGION
MEZAM DIVISION
DIVISIONAL OFFICE BAMENDA
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICE (LDS)

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix-Travail-Patrie
REGION DU NORD-OUEST
DEPARTEMENT DE LA MEZAM
PREFECTURE DE BAMENDA

BORDEREAU RECAPITULATIF DES PIECES ADDRESSEES
MAIL ENCLOSURE SLIP ADDRESSED

REF N°: 27 / MES/E.29/LDS

The Senior Divisional Officer Mezam
Le Préfet du Département de la Mezam

A/TO:

The Mayor, Bamenda I Council.

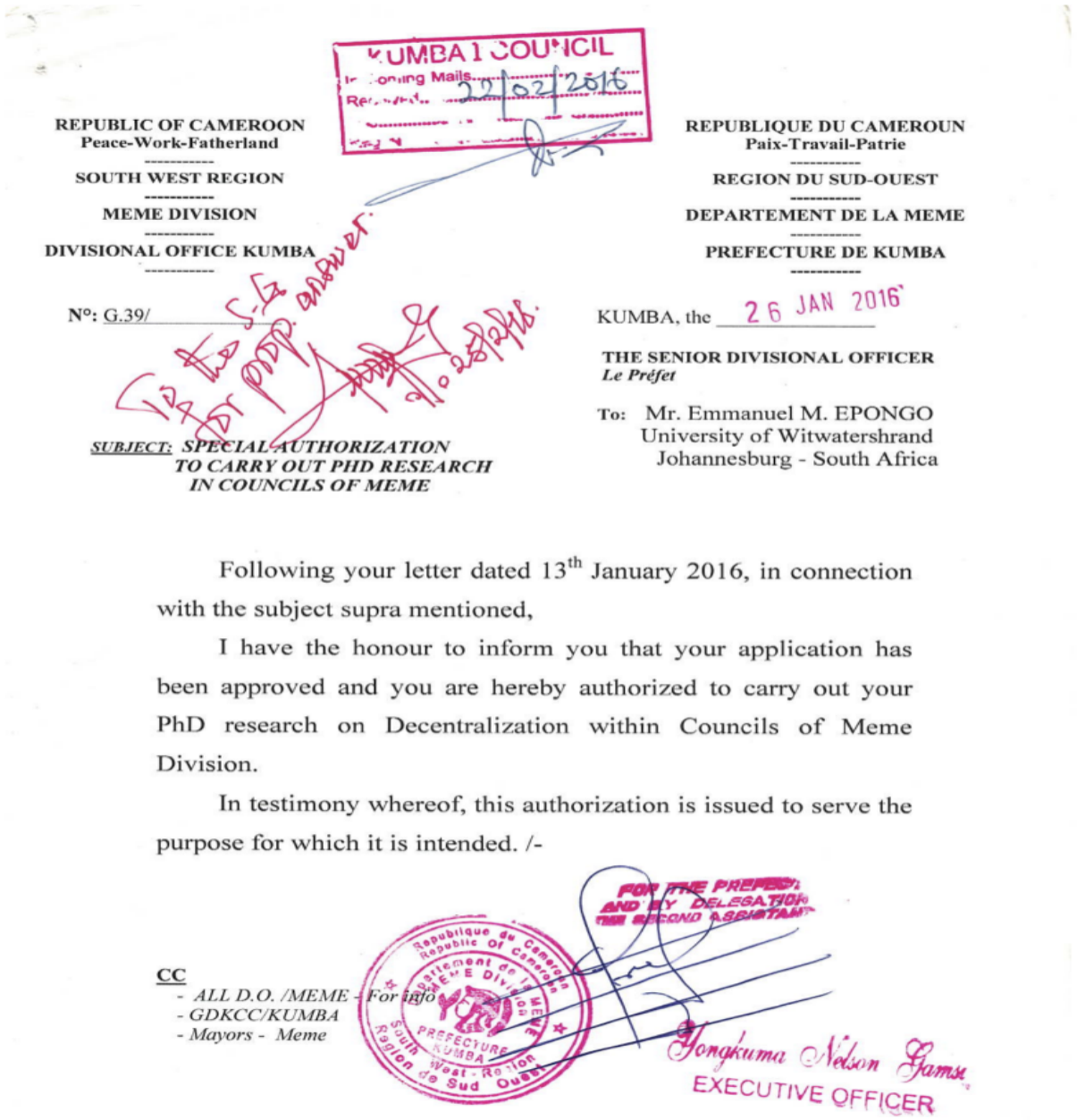
NO.D'ORDRE *SERIAL NO.*	SOMMAIRE *DESCRIPTION*	NOMBRE DES PIECES *QUANTITY*	OBSERVATIONS *REMARKS*
01	I transmit herewith, letter of permission dated **13th January 2016** from **Mr. Emmanuel M. EPONGO** of Wits School of Governance, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg-South Africa, and bearing on the subject **"Permission Letter to Conduct Research".**	01	**For your information and necessary collaboration for the success of his research work.**

RECU LE _____ ***A*** _____
RECEIVED ON ***AT***

BAMENDA, THE 04 FEB 2016

PREFECT
For The Prefect of MEZAM and by Delegation,
The 2nd Assistant Prefect

Appendix G: Authorisation Letter to do research in Kumba



KUMBA 1 COUNCIL
Incoming Mails
Received 22/02/2016

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace-Work-Fatherland

SOUTH WEST REGION

MEME DIVISION

DIVISIONAL OFFICE KUMBA

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix-Travail-Patrie

REGION DU SUD-OUEST

DEPARTEMENT DE LA MEME

PREFECTURE DE KUMBA

N°: G.39/

KUMBA, the 26 JAN 2016

THE SENIOR DIVISIONAL OFFICER
Le Préfet

To: Mr. Emmanuel M. EPONGO
University of Witwatershrand
Johannesburg - South Africa

SUBJECT: *SPECIAL AUTHORIZATION TO CARRY OUT PHD RESEARCH IN COUNCILS OF MEME*

Following your letter dated 13th January 2016, in connection with the subject supra mentioned,

I have the honour to inform you that your application has been approved and you are hereby authorized to carry out your PhD research on Decentralization within Councils of Meme Division.

In testimony whereof, this authorization is issued to serve the purpose for which it is intended. /-

FOR THE PREFECT AND BY DELEGATION THE SECOND ASSISTANT

Republique du Cameroun Republic Of Cameroon
Département de la MEME Division
PREFECTURE KUMBA
South West Region Région du Sud Ouest

Yongkuma Nelson Gamsa
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

CC
- *ALL D.O. /MEME - For info*
- *GDKCC/KUMBA*
- *Mayors - Meme*