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CONTENT ANALYSIS OF DONGA MANTUNG COMMUNITY RADIO'S COVERAGE OF THE ANGLOPHONE CRISIS:

1 JULY 2020 TO 31 DECEMBER 2020

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Journalism

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my late father Mr. Nfuh Alfred Ngala, himself a scholar who would have been proud to see me scale these academic heights and my amazing mother Mrs. Ngala Bridget Lawong. I also thank my father figure and mentor, Dr. Stuart Archibald whose tremendous support made this project possible and to my lovely, ever-supportive sister, Ngala Edabelle.

This work would not be possible without the tremendous guidance of my relentless supervisor, Alan Finlay and Prof. Franz Kruger of Wits University who read through the draft and made very useful suggestions. I also thank Dr. Lesley Cowling of Wits for her coaching as well as all my fellow Cameroonian journalists, especially the manager of Donga Mantung Community Radio, Mr. Ndi Richard for providing access to DMCR and Mr. Ngah Kristian and all staff of *The Guardian Post* newspaper in Yaounde as well as my friend Alvin Lontum for assisting with the graphs and diagrams.

Above all, I thank God Almighty for His amazing grace and provision in many ways in my life.

Abstract

What is today termed the "Anglophone Crisis" in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon is a nuanced problem dating back to the 1960s. It involves an on-going civil war between separatists and the government of Cameroon.

Simmering tensions between the warring parties i.e. government soldiers and separatists, boiled over in 2017 when separatists declared the independence of "Ambazonia" – their preferred name for the region (International Crisis Group, 2017). What followed was a brutal crackdown on both separatist fighters and civilians deemed by government forces to be in support of secession. The media have also been targeted and journalists have been jailed and others killed in relation to their reporting on the conflict (CPJ, 2017).

This study sought to understand how Donga Mantung Community Radio (DMCR) in the Northwest of Cameroon has reported on the on the conflict, through a content analysis of forty news bulletins aired between 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020. The bulletins were analyzed to understand how the news stories are framed, including the use of language to describe the different actors in the conflict and the dominant themes reported on in the conflict. It found that the station took an overwhelmingly pro-government position in the conflict. It also found that although it appears to take a position supportive of the well-being of community of listeners, the lack of a clear, independent editorial agenda results in reporting that does not always favour the safety and economic well-being of its listeners. Overall, it does not help to de-escalate the conflict by promoting a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Keywords: Ambazonia, Cameroon, Community Radio, Military, Separatists, Southern Cameroons
Word count: 24,445

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (MA) by Coursework and Research Report, in the Department of Journalism, at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

Hansel Wenda Ngala

14 March 2023.

List of Abbreviations

CACSC	Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium
CBS	Christian Broadcasting Service
CCMN	Cameroon Community Media Network
CGAI	Canadian Global Affairs Institute
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
CRTV	Cameroon Radio Television
DMCR	Donga Mantung Community Radio
FCFA	*Franc de la Communauté Financière Africaine*
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NCC	National Communications Council
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NWR	Northwest Region
RNI	*Radio Ndarasone Internationale*
RTLM	*Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines*
SWR	Southwest Region
WACC	World Association for Christian Communication

1

1.1 Introduction

This study analyses radio news coverage of "The Anglophone Crisis" in Cameroon by Donga Mantung Community Radio (DMCR), a community radio station based in Nkambe in the Northwest Region of Cameroon. Using content analysis and framing theory, and focusing on reporting between 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020, it tries to understand how DMCR positions itself in the conflict.

"The Anglophone Crisis" is a political problem in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon (an area that was formerly under British rule) stemming from complaints of political and economic marginalization by the Anglophone (English-speaking) population that resides in these two regions (Craig, 2020). The on-going insurgency that has left more than 800,000 people dead and led to the displacement of over a million others is regarded as one of the most neglected crises in the world according to the Norwegian Refugee Council (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2017).

Radio is relatively new in the Anglophone parts of Cameroon, with Radio Buea (now CRTV Radio, Buea) being the first station to be set up in the region in the early 1960s.

In the Donga Mantung administrative area, DMCR was the first radio station to be set up there in 2006. Prior to this, the locality was almost cut off from the rest of the country as TV signals could only reach there via satellite – and very few people could afford it (Wutofeh, 2017). For low-income people in the region's communities, newspapers are expensive and for a population that is nearly 60 percent illiterate (Wutofeh, 2017), a community radio station that addresses them in their mother tongue is the best means of mass communication.

After the Anglophone Crisis escalated between 2017 and 2018, many media outlets in the Northwest Region of Cameroon were shut down either by government authorities or for fear of reprisals from separatist fighters. DMCR is therefore the lone radio station still operating in the Donga Mantung administrative area or division in the Northwest Region of Cameroon. That being the case, it makes for a suitable choice for this study. As far as I can tell from the available literature, this study is the first of its kind using DMCR as a case study in the context of the on-going Anglophone Crisis.

1.2 Background to Cameroon's Northwest and DMCR

The Northwest Region of Cameroon is the third most populated region in Cameroon. Cameroon's regions were formerly called provinces. The capital city (and largest settlement) in the Northwest of Cameroon is Bamenda. According to Ngonga and Tume (2015), the region saw an increase in its population from about 1.2 million in 1987 to an estimated 1.8 million in 2010. According to Tume et al. (2018), the population density of 99.12 pers./km2 is higher than the national average of 22.6 pers./km2 and the urban growth rate is 7.95%, higher than the national average of 5.6%, while the rural growth rate is approximated at 1.16% (Lambi, 2001).

The region was created in 1972 (regions were formerly called provinces) with five administrative divisions— Bui, Donga-Mantung, Menchum, Mezam and Momo. Today, it has seven divisions.

According to RadioActive (n.d.) the UK-based NGO that helped set up the station; DMCR reaches more than 500,000 people with a schedule of news, health, education, social affairs, cultural and music programmes. RadioActive (n.d.) adds that the station broadcasts in twelve languages, providing details of vaccination programmes, free treatment centres and employment opportunities, as well as items such as births, deaths, council notices and lost property. It hosts a hip-hop show for budding DJs and a programme covering women's issues.

Though RadioActive (n.d.) states that before DMCR there was no radio on the FM dial in Nkambe, however there was Sky FM whose equipment was burnt because the owner was a member of the ruling party of President Paul Biya – seen in the area as being representative of the despised regime. Hence, when the station advocated for a resumption of schools (in defiance of separatists' calls for school boycotts); it was set ablaze. The act was condemned by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ, 2018). Prior to the arson, the station employed four staff to report and produce different kinds of programmes. Sky FM's signals were weakly received in parts of neighbouring Ndu, necessitating the setting up of a station like DMCR whose signals would reach the town well.

Savannah Frontier Radio, another radio station in Nkambe, was established with funds provided by the Hon. Awudu Mbaya, a member of parliament who comes from the area. Until it ceased broadcasting at the onset of the Anglophone Crisis, it focused on climate change awareness. Its closure and the burning to the ground of Sky FM, left DMCR as the lone radio station still in operation in the area.

1.3 Background to the Anglophone Crisis

While there are now two Anglophone regions in Cameroon (formerly called provinces), they used to simply be one territory under Cameroon's short-lived Federation (in existence from 1961 to 1972). Before unification with French Cameroon, the territory was a trusteeship of the United Nations administered through Eastern Nigeria. At the time, it was called the British Southern Cameroons. Under the Federation, today's Northwest and Southwest regions formed West Cameroon and French Cameroon was known as East Cameroon (Happi, 2020). There were two stars on the flag, representing the two territories that had come together to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon (Happi, 2020; Okereke, 2018).

Historians hold that the name "Ambazonia" (which separatists have sought to impose on the embattled regions) derives from Ambas Bay, a river estuary between the former British Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon (Mwakideu, 2017). The word "Ambazonia" was first used in 1985 as a territorial construct by Fon Gorji Dinka, a Southern Cameroonian attorney and activist (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997 as cited in Ekah, 2020), but didn't become popularized until October 1st, 2017, when separatists declared the "independence of Ambazonia" (Reuters, 2017; Amnesty International, 2017; Okereke, 2018).

The push to secede or separate from French Cameroon was brought on by the fact that Anglophone (English-speaking Cameroonians) felt marginalized in national affairs, both politically and economically (Craig, 2020).

Peaceful protests begun by lawyers and teachers in 2016, morphed into violence in 2017 when government soldiers used helicopter gunships to disperse crowds after the declaration of the "independence of Ambazonia" (Reuters, 2017). This came after government refused to give in to demands to return to the two-state Federation and outlawed the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium (CACSC) (Amnesty International, 2017; Nkongho, 2017) which had been in talks with the government. This was followed by an internet shut down which lasted over three months and is estimated to have cost FCFA 443 million (about 723,000 US Dollars) in just the first 15 days (Internet Without Borders, 2017).

Cameroon's leading English language newspaper, *The Guardian Post* in their December 2016 edition (The Guardian Post, 2016) published a front-page article that listed some of the most prominent cases of Anglophone margninalization. The article stated that after Biya's nearly 40 years in office, only 76 Anglophones had been government ministers in 34 years under President Biya, as opposed to over 700 Francophone (French-speaking) ministers within the same period; there were only 3 Anglophone army generals out of a national total of 33; there was no Anglophone Secretary General at the Presidency of Cameroon and no referral hospital in Anglophone Cameroon. The paper also pointed out the fact that no English-speaking Cameroonian had been minister of such influential ministries as the ministry of defense, ministry of finance or ministry of territorial administration (the equivalent of Home Affairs in South Africa). It further stated that the budget allocated for infrastructural projects in Anglophone regions was smaller in comparison to some Francophone regions that have even smaller populations (The Guardian Post, 2016).

It is also helpful to establish that while at a superficial level, an "Anglophone" in the Cameroonian context might sound solely like a reference to an English-speaking Cameroonian, this goes beyond that. Joseph L. Nfi, a lecturer at the University of Buea in the Southwest Region (SWR) of Cameroon culls arguments from other Anglophone Cameroonian scholars and maintains that:

> According to Ndobegang (2009) an Anglophone in Cameroon is not just someone who speaks English; not just someone whose parents lived in the former British Southern Cameroons; not just someone who has acquired Anglophone education or culture but precisely someone whose ancestry is Southern Cameroonian. Bobda (2001) clearly indicates that the term 'Anglophone' as it is understood in Cameroon, has mostly an ethnic connotation. It has very little to do with knowledge of the English language as an Anglophone in the Cameroonian sense does not need to know a word of English. This definition is more relevant because in Cameroon the concept of *Anglophone* is more ethnic, cultural and regional than linguistic. Anglophones are those Cameroonians whose ancestral origins and ethnic bases are in the former British territory of the Southern Cameroons whether they speak the English Language or not. The term is therefore exclusionary and limited to people of a defined territory, culture and history (Nfi, 2014).

This definition of who an Anglophone is in Cameroon, is useful for outsiders to better understand the nuanced and complex nature of identity that underpins the conflict in Cameroon's two Anglophone regions.

At the core then, it is really a conflict about an identity seen by Anglophone Cameroonians as being systematically eroded by the central government of Cameroon and driven in part by a sense of aggrievement over the loss of economic incentives, such as the oil found in this part of the country as well.

1.4 Historical Context of the Anglophone Crisis

Given that this study analyzed the contents of a radio station in the embattled region of the NW and SW of Cameroon, it is necessary to provide some historical context to the conflict and its nuances.

What is now termed "the Anglophone Crisis" (or sometimes as "the Anglophone Problem") is a resurgent issue that has lingered since the reunification of British and French Cameroons (International Crisis Group, 2017). The current phase of the conflict began in October 2016 with peaceful protests by lawyers and teachers protesting the imposed use of French in Anglophone courts and classrooms (Anchimbe, 2018).

Historically, there were two Cameroons during the colonial era and they were administered separately by the British who took about 20 percent (or one-fifth) of the territory and the French who took up about 80 percent (or four-fifth) of it (Dze- Ngwa, 2015; Nzume, 2004, p.6; Lon, 2017).

French Cameroun, a UN Trust Territory administered by France, obtained independence from France on 1 January 1960 as *la République du Cameroun* or the Republic of Cameroon, while British Southern Cameroons, a UN Trust Territory administered by the United Kingdom, was given the choice to gain independence by joining Nigeria to its west or French Cameroon to the east (Dze-Ngwa, 2015). A controversial UN-led plebiscite (Okereke, 2018) saw part of the territory (British Southern Cameroon) join French Cameroon on 1 October 1961, and part (British Northern Cameroon) join Nigeria, forming parts of today's Borno, Adamawa and Taraba states of Nigeria (Dze-Ngwa, 2015). The new name of the country formed by the merger between French Cameroon and Southern Cameroon was the Federal Republic of Cameroon (Anyefru, 2017). Under the Federation, what was formerly French Cameroon became East Cameroon and what used to be the Southern Cameroons became West Cameroon (Crisis Group, 2017; Asanga & Achiri, 2021). There were two stars on the tri-coloured flag, symbolizing the two territories that now formed the Federation (International Crisis Group, 2017)

However, in 1972, after the discovery of oil and natural gas reserves in Southern Cameroon (Lon, 2017), the then president, Ahmadou Ahidjo dismantled the Federation (in violation of the constitution) and renamed the entire Federation as "the United Republic of Cameroon" (Lon, 2017), thereby annexing West Cameroon or the former British Southern Cameroons in the opinion of activists. His successor, Paul Biya cemented this "annexation" in 1984 when he renamed the entire country "the Republic of Cameroon" – the name only French Cameroon or *la Republique du Cameroun* had obtained at her independence (Asanga & Achiri, 2021; Anyefru, 2017). Southern Cameroon was unilaterally split into two provinces, the Northwest and Southwest provinces (International Crisis Group, 2017).

Anglophone Cameroonians therefore felt that they had been sucked up and had lost the autonomy, natural resources and much of the freedom they enjoyed under the short-lived Federation.

The protests of 2016 that triggered the current crisis (and ensuing armed conflict) were the culmination of years of resentment over French Cameroon assimilation and domination (International Crisis Group, 2017) and not primarily an issue of language as is sometimes erroneously reported in the news. The Anglophone revolt was led by a consortium of teachers and lawyers who protested the domination of the English-language educational system and the Common Law judicial system by French-speaking government officials, teachers and lawyers. They demanded a return to the two-state federal system as the sole means to put an end to the marginalization of Anglophones in the educational and judicial systems (Caxton, 2017; Okereke, 2018).

After government outlawed the consortium, talks that had been taking place between both parties, collapsed and some of the protest leaders were arrested, followed by a shut down of the internet in the region (Caxton, 2017).

On September 22, 2017, and again on October 1, 2017; the Cameroon army used helicopter gunships and troops to fire on unarmed peaceful demonstrators (McAllister, 2017; International Crisis Group, 2017) in Bamenda, Kumbo, Buea, Mamfe and other towns in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon. Further repression and killings of unarmed demonstrators led to the emergence of various armed resistance groups that clashed with soldiers who were deployed to quell the demonstrations (International Crisis Group, 2017).

The media (including a lot of radio stations) have been targeted in the wake of the Crisis. At the start of the Crisis, Radio Hot Cocoa in Bamenda had its doors sealed by local government authorities for running a show about Anglophone grievances (CPJ, 2017) and Sky FM in the town of Ndu had its studio burned down by unidentified persons (CPJ, 2018), while Martin Fon Yembe, a member of the opposition party and a radio presenter in Nkambe died under circumstances that have been described as politically motivated according to Budi (2019). Yembe was denied access to a hospital in nearby Kumbo in October 2017 because authorities believed he supported the separatist cause and also because a travel ban had been imposed, making his access to hospital difficult (Budi, 2019). He died from teargas inhalation on October 2, 2017 (Budi, 2019). Budi states that Yembe's death, following a government-imposed ban on inter-town travel "was seen by many as the height of abuses on journalists by government or its agents during the Crisis" (Budi, 2019).

About a year after the suspension was handed down on Radio Hot Cocoa for discussing the Anglophone Crisis, a presenter at the same radio station was handed a three-month suspension (Budi, 2019) by the country's National Communications Council (NCC) which regulates media in the country, allegedly because of his outspokenness on the Anglophone cause.

Budi (2019) also chronicles the experiences of the then manager of the now-defunct Savannah Frontier Radio, George Tanko who had to flee to neighbouring Nigeria in 2017 after receiving threats from the local government administrator who deemed his reportage to be pro-separatist (Budi, 2019).

Government authorities have used a 2014 anti-terrorism bill that was enacted to deal with Boko Haram insurgents in the north of the country – against journalists. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) castigated this, stating that: "Cameroon is clearly using anti-state legislation to silence criticism in the press. When you equate journalism with terrorism, you create an environment where fewer journalists are willing to report on hard news for fear of reprisal" (CPJ, 2017).

1.5. Aim of Research

This study aims to determine how DMCR positions itself in the Anglophone conflict.

It will do this by using content analysis and framing theory to analyse news content in the radio station's bulletins aired in the timeframe of 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020.

1.6 Research Questions

The main research question is:

- How does DMCR position itself in the Anglophone Crisis?

In order to answer this question, I will ask among others:

- How frequently is the conflict reported on in its news broadcasts?
- What does the radio station choose to focus on in reporting on the conflict?
- Are there any dominant themes that emerge from the reportage?
- Can the language it uses be described as inflammatory or conciliatory?
- How does it refer to separatist fighters and how does it refer to soldiers?
- What does this say, if anything, about the role DMCR plays in the conflict as a community radio?

1.7 Rationale

This study adds fresh insight to the body of research work on the role of media in conflict situations in Africa in general and the Anglophone Crisis in particular. It is also useful as it will contribute new knowledge to academia and journalism on the role of community radio in an ongoing civil conflict in Cameroon – and Africa. It is a novel approach to studying this conflict as there are studies that have focused on other media-related aspects such as the role of social media in the Anglophone Crisis (Ngange & Mokondo, 2019); content analyses of various newspapers' coverage of the conflict (Tabe & Fieze, 2018; Fai, 2018); censorship in the Cameroonian media landscape (Ali, 2017), but there are very few studies that have addressed the conflict from the angle of content analysis of a community radio station or other broadcast mediums.

It can also be used as part of a comparative analysis in studying the role of radio in conflict situations in other African countries or other countries around the globe which are experiencing civil conflict.

The study will equally be useful to media policymakers who may not be very versed with the ambiguities of the conflict, hence it gives a proper understanding for policymakers, especially those within the broadcast spectrum.

Finally, it is also a rich and useful contribution for those studying the unravelling conflict from a journalistic perspective as it addresses issues surrounding legislation, regulation and the practice of journalism in Cameroon in the context of the Anglophone Crisis.

2

2.1 Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.2 History of Radio in Cameroon

Although radio broadcasting started relatively much later in the then Southern Cameroons, it was nevertheless prominent when Radio Buea started broadcasting in 1966 (Rogers, 2012). Prior to this, radio signals only reached Southern Cameroons via the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (Rogers, 2012), due to the geographic proximity of the territory to eastern Nigeria just across the border.

Radio broadcasting during colonial times in the two Cameroons evolved independent of each other. This was because what is now Donga Mantung Division of the Northwest of Cameroon used to be part of the former British Southern Cameroons and radio broadcasting in that territory was done separately by the British colonial authorities who administered the region from Eastern Nigeria (Muluh, 2012).

Since the region was smaller in size and population and was administered as part of Nigeria – and given that English was the official language of both the Southern Cameroons and Nigeria; people living in the Southern Cameroons listened to radio stations broadcasting from Nigeria and not French Cameroon. Radio Nigeria Enugu kept broadcasting into the territory well into the 1970s – nearly a decade after reunification with French Cameroon (Muluh, 2012).

However, radio broadcasting started a lot earlier in French Cameroon (Rogers, 2012) where a radio station was set up in the early 1940s. Rogers (2012) states that this station broke down before being revived in 1946 and then radio broadcasting shifted to the current capital city of Yaounde in 1955 and then more radio stations spread across the country.

According to Alobwede (2006), despite the plurality of radio stations in Cameroon, none has nationwide coverage apart from the state-run Cameroon Radio-Television (CRTV) Radio which has 10 regional stations and a central station in the capital city of Yaounde. He adds that in the 5-year period from 2000 to 2005, more than eighty radio stations were set up in Cameroon. Since then, even more stations have been set up, with Betz (2014) describing Cameroon as a radio-rich country because of the sheer number of radio stations in proportion to the country's population.

Citing statistics from CRETES, a local Francophone NGO based in Cameroon, Alobwede (2006) writes that most radio stations set up in Cameroon between 2000 and 2005 only had provincial coverage with the exception of the Centre Province where the capital city of Yaounde is located. In this province (now region), FM 94 has 22% of the coverage while in the Littoral Region where the largest commercial city of Douala is located, Equinoxe Radio has 27% of the coverage; while in the West and Northwest provinces, state-run CRTV takes most of the coverage with 23% and 29% respectively (Alobwede, 2006, p. 12).

According to the Cameroon Community Media Network (CCMN), some 120 CCMN individual and organisational members and CCMN-affiliated organisations and media houses operate 57 radio stations, 13 TV stations, 29 newspapers or magazines, 11 online news platforms, 4 communication organisations, 5 civil society organisations in 6 Cameroonian regions (formerly provinces) (CCMN, n.d.). This confirms the importance of radio in Cameroon's media landscape.

Prof. Steven Youngblood, director of the Centre for Global Peace Journalism at Park University in Missouri, USA; writing in the CCMN report on the separatist conflict in Cameroon, states that:

> Community media can facilitate dialogue among players in a conflict. They can do this at the smallest local level, and in such a way that the discussion itself is seen as productive rather than threatening. This is especially true for community radio stations, which are built upon a foundation of engaging citizens on subjects of importance for the entire community. For example, CBS Radio in Buea (SWR of Cameroon) provides regular programming analyzing the Anglophone crisis while providing a platform for civilized discussions from all parties. CBS Radio and its partner the Cameroon Community Media Network (CCMN) have sponsored a number of peace journalism workshops, seminars, lectures, and programs during the last two years championing a peace journalistic perspective (p.25).

In Cameroon, the exact number of community radio stations is not known, though some estimates put them at about 100 (Vojvoda, 2016). Vojvoda who in 2016 was a volunteer with the Christian Broadcasting Service (CBS) Radio in Buea, SWR of Cameroon, states that it is very complicated to define what a community radio station is in Cameroon as some are commercial, but call themselves "community", while others are run by individuals – with no community participation, but also call themselves "community radio station". He clarifies that despite the confusion in appellation, actual community radio stations tend to be found in rural parts of Cameroon where the residents have no regular newspapers or internet; hence, community radio stations "in these areas provide the only source of information people have about their culture, language, political, health, social and economic situation"; adding that they also provide a platform for dialogue in the midst of the Anglophone Crisis.

2.3 Radio in Conflict Situations in Africa

Youngblood (CCMN, n.d.) argues that community media play a crucial role in giving a voice to the voiceless masses when a conflict breaks out. He talks about the role played by radio in the war in Uganda by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), putting it thus:

> During the 20-year LRA war in Northern Uganda, several NGO's launched Mega FM in Gulu in Northern Uganda. Peace Insight reports about Mega's solutions efforts during the war: "Mega FM has several peace-building programmes including Dwog Cen Paco ('Come Back Home'), which calls on Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) members to abandon the rebellion and give themselves up for amnesty, Kabake ('Community Dialogue') and Teyat ('Stakeholders' Dialogue'). Open dialogue and call-ins with community members and rebel LRA soldiers have contributed to the return of several abducted children (p.24).

The role of the media (especially radio) in informing rural communities cannot be overemphasized in armed conflicts, as studies by Howard (2009), Momanyi (2015) and Betz (2004) indicate. These studies found that people in Zambia perceive and respond to conflicts largely the way the media – especially radio, report

on them. The media can either serve as an arbiter of peace or as an accelerator of conflict, like was the case with the infamous Radio Mille Collines which exacerbated the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Radio broadcasts pitted the Hutus and the Tutsis – Rwanda's only two tribal groups – against each other. Li (2004) writes that for some 100 days in the Spring and Summer of 1994, millions of Rwandans "witnessed, participated in or lived through a nationwide campaign of extermination, a collective effort whose rhythm was in many ways regulated by the broadcasts of Radio-Television Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM)" (p.1).

To this day within French-speaking circles, *mille collines* has come to be a synonym for any radio (or other media format) that advocates violence like the infamous Rwandan radio station did.

Radio has however proven more useful as a tool for promoting peace. The case of Radio Ndarason Internationale (RNI) which broadcasts from the Chadian capital N'Djamena to other Lake Chad Basin countries such as Nigeria, Cameroon and Niger – is quite outstanding. The radio was established in 2016 in a region that has been marred by conflict for decades. Given that residents of the Lake Chad Basin region share a common religion – Islam – and speak shared common languages across borders i.e. Kanuri, Kanembu and Boudouma, RNI was set up to reach these people particularly and to serve as a voice for peace in the war-torn region.

Under the 'About Us' section of their website, RNI states that:

> The main role of this radio is to serve as a tool against extreme violence. It serves as a platform to promote a local discourse among all actors affected by the current crisis in the Lake Chad region.
>
> Based on the assumption that dialogue is the necessary condition to find a peaceful solution which is lasting, which in turn leads us to a better quality of life.
>
> The radio serves as a mechanism to convince people that they have a future in the region. Put in broader terms – while it is believed that a better life is possible in the Lake Chad region, the need and desire to migrate in order to settle elsewhere diminishes (RNI, n.d.)

It goes on to note that "The radio, in partnership with the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) broadcasts content in Kanembu and Kanuri languages in order to help stabilize the Lake Chad region by stimulating constructive dialogue between everyone involved in the current crisis" (RNI, n.d.).

RadioActive (n.d.) which helped set up the RNI studio, notes that "the main role of this radio is to serve as a tool against extreme violence. It serves as a platform to promote local discourse among all actors affected by the current crisis in the Lake Chad region" (RadioActive, n.d.). The NGO also notes that within just a few years of broadcasting from Chad, ORB International, a US-based research organisation specialising in quantitative and qualitative research in complex environments conducted a survey which noted amongst others, the following:

a) Overall, listener support for extremism, violence and Boko Haram is decreasing since listening to Radio Ndarason International
b) Listeners are very positive about RNI's offerings and are particularly positive about broadcasts and content in the Kanuri and Kanembu languages; listeners appreciate RNI's role as a source of unbiased news

c) Listeners (in Chad) express a clear (89%) preference for more content from N'Djamena.

The radio station continues to be a crucial voice for peace and serves as a mediator of sorts between the warring parties, stimulating and encouraging dialogue between all those involved in the conflict in the region and maintains correspondents in Chad, Cameroon and Nigeria. According to Alliance Sahel (n.d.), the station broadcasts for 24 hours each day from its studios in Chad and Maiduguri, Northeastern Nigeria with 6 hours dedicated to content in the Kanembu and Kanuri languages (RadioActive, n.d.).

In an interview, David Smith, the initiator of the Radio Ndarason project and executive director of Okapi Consulting explains why radio is the best tool in helping resolve the conflict in the Lake Chad Basin:

> RNI is a platform for virtual dialogue. Lake Chad and the Great Sahel are places with an oral tradition, which is why radio works very well there. People have been talking and discussing to resolve problems for centuries. Radio allows the people of Lake Chad to communicate with each other in their own language. It is with their local expertise that we will identify the best way out of the crisis that has been plaguing the Lake Chad region for years.
>
> Radio is very powerful and very crucial in this region; it allows us to touch peoples' hearts and minds. With RNI, it is the first time that local languages are broadcast on the airwaves all around Lake Chad. It is a very powerful tool to deliver messages and discuss with the people around the lake region. To reach people and deal with issues they will understand, communication has to be oral because there are neither books nor newspapers. Radio is the only way to address issues, to be understood and to elicit a response from our listeners (Alliance Sahel, n.d.)

David Smith further in his interview, notes that radio has made such an impact in this region that even the residents there who have not had a formal education and have never been to any major city already know when RNI broadcasts in Hausa, (one of the local languages) and when the station switches to the BBC World Service.

According to Betz (2004), most African countries are in a transitional phase of development, making conflict one of the unavoidable fallouts on the road to both infrastructural development and democracy. She posits that "Radio has long been seen as an important tool in the social, economic and political mobilization of developing countries" (p.38).

Betz (2004) equally argues that the media (and especially radio) play an important part in the economic and political development of any emerging democracy where vast numbers of people in these countries tend to reside in rural areas. For example, in the DRC (one of Africa's most populous countries) 70% of the population of 100 million lives in rural areas (p.42).

She sees radio as an important tool in conflict resolution and the role of Radio Okapi in the resolution of the DRC's conflicts as indispensable. Betz references the Rwandan genocide where radio was used as a propaganda tool on a scale only preceded by the Nazis since World War II – to incite violence and then argues that if radio can be used in this manner, then it can equally be used as a tool for good like Radio Okapi in the DRC.

Betz (2004) writes about Radio Okapi:

> Set up in February 2002, Radio Okapi is a joint project of MONUC (the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo) and Hirondelle Foundation, a Swiss NGO. With a staff made up of mostly native Congolese journalists and broadcasters, Radio Okapi produces news, music, and information on MONUC activities; it has the goal of becoming the first media outlet to provide national coverage regardless of political affiliation reaching both government- and rebel- held territory, on FM and shortwave (p.44).

According to the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), Radio Okapi is the only radio in the DRC that acts as a link between government forces and rebels, offering a prospect of hope that the conflict can be resolved soon (WACC, 2016).

Citing a source, WACC (2016) states that Radio Okapi was created in the final years of the DRC's bloody, internal conflict which some have described as "Africa's first world war". According to Amadou Ba, the station's director, the radio was formed with an aim to "convince people that it's in their interest to lay down their arms," and now has grown to the point where it has approximately 25 million listeners, and employs 191 people (WACC, 2016).

Because freedom of expression is still greatly lacking in the DRC, Radio Okapi is changing that too. The station's more than 100 staff interview both militias and government sources and has become one of the few trusted sources of information in a conflict-torn country where misinformation is rife.

According to the station's director, Amadou Ba, "Radio Okapi is aware of the role it plays in the Congolese people's national reconciliation process. It is a major force for dialogue throughout the Republic and supports the people's efforts to promote the rule of law, and the economic, social, and cultural development of the DRC" (WACC, 2016).

Ba, adds that:

> A second defining feature is that Radio Okapi consistently demonstrates high professionalism by seeking information straight from its source. It strives for a more rigorous approach to how information is handled and how contributors are chosen. Radio Okapi upsets the established order. It gives a voice to everyone, from a government spokesperson to a peasant in the most remote corner of the country. It gives citizens the opportunity to not only make their needs and their views known, but also gives them a forum for disseminating constructive ideas (WACC, 2016).

This goes to prove that overall, radio is a reliable tool for peace building in conflict situations and also for educating the masses on social, economic and health issues. Radio when used properly, can contribute to nation building.

The following section will now discuss the framing and news value theories in relation to content analysis which is the chosen methodology for this research and will expatiate on how framing will be applied to this study while being complemented by news values.

2.4 Framing and Effects of Framing

This study was anchored on the Media Framing Theory. Framing was first postulated as a theory by Goffman in 1974 in his book *Frame Analysis*. Since then, journalism and media scholars have long been interested in how perceptions of issues and events are shaped by the process of "framing"— that is, the communicative process of highlighting and focusing on certain aspects of reality (Birkland & Lawrence, 2009).

According to Abonyi and Ohaja (2021), "the framing theory postulates that how a story is presented to the audience (the frame) influences how people choose to process, interpret and comprehend it" (pg.42).

Framing is usually seen as an extension of agenda setting theory because while agenda setting maintains that *what* the media focus on, will form topics which the public will deem as important and worth discussing (or the agenda), framing theory takes it further and suggests that *how* the media present issues (how they portray them) will affect *how* the audience view and judge (or make decisions) on those issues (Ghanem, McCombs & Chernov, 2009).

Framing is essentially unavoidable in communication, because the world is too dynamic to understand holistically if it is not broken down into sizeable bits. When things are changing at a constant rate and conflicts seem to be a regular occurrence, it can become easy to form opinions on them due to the continuous media coverage, thus framing becomes unavoidable.

An appropriate theoretical approach for this study was therefore media framing, because as Kim and Willis (2007) point out, journalists tend to rely on news frames to help present large amounts of information in easy-to-understand, interpretative packages when reporting on complex issues. This also ties with the chosen method of content analysis for this study as both processes complement each other.

However, in simplifying complex issues, journalists inevitably highlight certain aspects of an issue and make them more salient than others (Entman, 2004). Thus, this research will discuss which issues are being highlighted or made salient by DMCR in their coverage of the Anglophone Crisis in the Data Analysis section.

Framing has become a popular mass communication theory (Bryant & Miron, 2004) though there is no single, universally accepted definition of framing. The term generally refers to "the way events and issues are organized and made sense of" (Reese et al., 2001, p.7).

Frames can be shaped by political actors, by the media or they can be part of a broader cultural outlook (Gamson et al.,1992). A commonly cited definition of the term is provided by Entman (1993), according to whom framing means "to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman, 1993, p.3).

News framing has been theorized as involving sources, journalists and audiences and as a process that happens within four locations: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and culture; leading to encoding, interpreting, retrieving, constructing and processing news (Pan & Kociski, 1993; Entman, 1993).

Busby, Flynn and Druckman (2018, p.3) define framing in communication as "the way a speaker uses words, images, elements of an event, etc. to relay information." This kind of frame, they argue, is a product of the individual communicating information and reflects the ideas and goals of that individual. In other words, "a communicator...associates certain pieces of information and... omits potentially topic-relevant information in an effort to define the topic and purvey a set of judgments about it" (D'Angelo, n.d., p.1).

Based on the five frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), the content analysis of the news bulletins sought words, imagery and elements that shape favourability or un-favourability of the two parties in the Anglophone Crisis in DMCR's reportage of the conflict based on the collected data.

According to Steimel (2010), the news media can either consciously (or unconsciously) use a variety of frames to communicate news to their audiences. As an example, (Neuman, Just and Crigler, 1992) studied four prevalent news frames which are applicable to multiple news contexts viz the conflict frame, economic consequences frame, morality frame, and human-interest frame. Examining the issue further (Valkenburg, Semetko and de Vreese, 1999) added the responsibility frame and re-named the human impact frame as the 'human interest frame' as quoted in Evers (2016).

The following is a brief explanation of each of the five frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) which this study drew from in the categorization of the data:

i) **Human Interest Frame:** The human-interest frame are those stories that trigger an emotional response from the audience. In doing so, the human-interest frame focuses on personal problems and responsibilities (Semetko and Valkeburg, 2000; Aalberg and Beyer, 2015).

ii) **Conflict Frame:** News stories framed in terms of conflict tend to emphasize conflicts (either as armed or disagreements) between individuals, groups (as in this study between separatist fighters and soldiers) or organizations. These stories usually highlight differences of opinion or positions between the parties involved (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000; de Vreese, 2004). In this study, I referred to this frame as the 'War Frame' as seen in sections 4.1 and 4.9 of this research report.

iii) **Responsibility Frame:** The responsibility frame which I referred to as the 'Attribution of Responsibility Frame', is a frame that shows the responsibility of an individual, group or government in relation to a problem or issue. News stories framed in this manner usually give responsibility or blame to an individual, group or government for being the cause of an issue or problem (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000; Otieno, Spada & Renki, 2013).

iv) **Morality Frame**: The morality is for news stories that are framed in terms of morality, a reference to God or religious moral prescriptions (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). However, I took a slightly different approach to this frame and instead spoke of a 'peace frame' which were stories emphasizing peace from religious authorities in Cameroon in relation to the Anglophone Crisis or just stories that were framed in a manner that suggested an end to the bloodshed in the Anglophone regions and a bringing about of peace.

v) **Economic Consequences Frame**: Stories framed in this manner tell a story in terms of the financial consequences of an issue on a country, region, group etc and usually emphasize gains or profits versus loses (Neuman et al, 1992; de Vreese, 2004). Because of how limiting it could be in the context of this study, I instead chose to speak of the 'School Resumption Frame' which are stories with an economic side to them, but which highlighted schools as institutions under attack from separatists. I chose not to speak of 'economic consequences' per se because this study did not set out to measure the economic impact of attacks on schools, nor did I have the statistics to back such a claim. Also, the issue of 'ghost towns' in the region falls under this frame.

The way the media frame issues, affects the decisions and choices people make regarding those issues. For example, policy issues such as such as abortion (McCaffrey & Keys 2000; Ball-Rokeach et al. 1990), gun control (Haider-Markel & Joslyn 2001), climate change (Spence & Pidgeon, 2010), welfare (Nelson & Oxley 1999; Sniderman & Theriault 2004), and how these are framed; determine audience reactions. Research on gay rights, Brewer (2008) exposed individuals either to a media frame emphasizing equality or one highlighting morality. Brewer found that the equality and morality frames influence individuals' frames in thought, which in turn, alter overall opinions about gay rights. Individuals reading an equality (or morality) frame became more (or less) supportive of these rights (Brewer, 2008). Another policy example comes from Sniderman and Theriault (2004). The authors show that framing spending for the poor as an enhancing opportunity leads individuals to support spending, while framing it as increasing taxes

leads individuals to oppose spending.

Saleem (n.d., pp.134-135) notes that the literature on framing indicates that, (1) Media frames can play a vital role in stimulating opposition to or support for an event or issue, (2) Media frames provide moral judgment, causal interpretation and remedy/solution for media-focused problems , (3) Media frames generally represent specific ideology and (4) Media frames including attractive words, metaphors, phrases etc, also help to determine the "tone" of media coverage of an event or issue in a country.

Previous research on framing has taken several directions such as frame building (Scheufele, 1999), the cycle of frames (Miller & Riechert, 2001), cascading activation of frames (Entman, 2003) and the conflict frame building process (Bartholome et al., 2015).

Scheufele (1999) posits that scholars have attempted to understand why the media frame issues in certain ways. Zhang and Jin (2017) note that several frame-building factors have been identified, among which social norms or cultural values and organizational pressures/constraints may be particularly useful in understanding why news media from different cultures and/or media systems frame issues in different ways.

Cultural values influence the way people communicate (Triandis, 1995), which in turn may affect how the media frame issues. Collectivistic cultures embrace "contradictions among objects in a yin-yang field of constant change," thus communication tends to focus less on specifics and more on contexts (Gries & Peng, 2002, p. 175). As a result, thematic news framing in which an issue is placed in a larger social context may be preferred (Hook and Pu, 2006). In contrast, Western cultural reasoning is driven by formal logic, and communication in individualistic societies tends to focus on specific objects and categories (Gries & Peng, 2002). Consequently, Western media may prefer episodic framing in which issues are presented as specific events or individual cases (Kim et al., 2010).

2.5 News Values

News values is included as a peripheral theoretical framework in that it was useful in accounting for the prominence given to reports on the conflict, such as the frequency with which reports appeared.

News values basically refer to a set of criteria that editors and reporters use in determining that an event has "news worthiness" i.e. an event is worthy of being reported as "news". Schwarz (2006) states that the news selection process takes place within a nuanced and complex environment that is shaped by such factors as politics, the economy, socio-cultural, organizational and psychological variables. Schwarz (2006) further states that "one of the most influential explanations of journalistic news selection is the theory of newsworthiness which represents an interdisciplinary approach that integrates concepts of perception, professional and organizational routines, as well as the anticipation of audience interests" (p.45). Walter Lippman (1922) was the first to use the term "news value" as that quality of an event that makes it worthy of being reported as "news". Schwarz (2006) maintains that the concept of "news" is a social construct; or as Stuart Hall (as quoted in Fowler, 1991, p.12) puts it:

> "The media do not simply and transparently report events which are naturally newsworthy in themselves. News is the end product of a complex process, which begins with systematic sorting and selecting of events and topics according to a socially constructed set of categories".

Galtung and Ruge (1965) give a list of criteria that qualify an event as "news". These include:

1) Frequency: An event is more likely to be reported if its duration is close to how often the news medium publishes (or broadcasts).

2) Threshold: This refers to the number or "size" that is needed for an event to become newsworthy. For example, a plane crash involving 200 passengers from different countries would be more newsworthy than a plane crash involving four people from a local town.

3) Unambiguity: “Mysterious events as well as clear ones are newsworthy if they can be related to cultural stereotypes, where a stereotype is a socially-constructed mental pigeon-hole into which events and individuals can be sorted, thereby making such events and individuals comprehensible”.

4) Meaningfulness: Refers to a concern with countries, individuals or societies seen to be like oneself.

5) Consonance: This refers to a subset of events which people either expect to happen or want to happen, e.g. royal weddings and births in the UK.

6) Unexpectedness: An event is more newsworthy if it happens without warning or is unusual, e.g. a 100-year old recovering from COVID-19.

7) Continuity: After an event has been categorized as ‘news’, it continues to be news even though its largeness or importance may be less. Related ‘non-events’ which are part of the story will be covered.

8) Composition: Refers to the balance of a newspaper, i.e. an event will be more or less newsworthy depending on what else is available for inclusion.

9) Reference to elite nations: Refers to a ‘superpowers’ philosophy of the dominating status of the US and Canada, Japan, Europe and Russia in world political and cultural affairs.

10) Reference to elite people: Refers to the media's obsession with the rich and powerful or famous.

E.g. news that Michael Jackson molested boys at his Neverland Home in California.

11) Reference to persons: Also known as Personalisation. This refers to whenever events are seen as the actions of people or when events affect large numbers of people. For example, a typhoon that renders hundreds of families homeless would make news than if the typhoon blew itself out of proportion in the middle of an uninhabited desert.

1) Reference to something negative: It suggests that news takes for granted what is considered ‘normal’, and so prefers to make stories out of issues to do with crime, disaster, dissidence (the absurd) etc.

While Ivancheva (2011) states that there has been a lot of debate among scholars from a spectrum of disciplines including anthropology, sociology, linguistics, psychology and journalism itself as to what really can be considered news. Ivancheva (2011) states that the lexical definition of “news” is so vast that a statement like “Have you heard the latest news?” is open to several interpretations:

1. “Two people discussing the latest breaking news on TV, national or local newspapers, or;
2. The development of a news story that hit news reports some time ago;
3. The latest findings concerning some scientific research;
4. Two colleagues talking about the latest changes in their working place or a corporate gossip;
5. Spouses chatting about family issues;
6. Teenagers gossiping about a friend’s new relationship;
7. Elderly ladies commenting the development of the main characters’ life stories of their favourite soap opera;
8. The key question of a TV commercial where friends are sharing information about the irresistibly low interest rates of a bank” (Ivancheva, 2011, pgs.1-2).

3

3.1 Methodology

This methodology section explains the methods and approaches that I used in conducting the research. Kallet (2004) states that the methods or methodology section of a research project describes actions taken to investigate a research problem and the rationale for the application of specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process and analyze information applied to understanding the problem, thereby, allowing the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability.

3.2 Qualitative Content Analysis vs Quantitative Content Analysis

In academic research, there are two approaches to conducting content analysis. One is qualitative and the other is quantitative. Quantitative content analysis is informed by statistics or numbers, is more deductive and tends to be used more in hard sciences such as mathematics, physics or chemistry for example; while qualitative analysis is often powered by words, descriptors or narratives, is based more on inductive reasoning and is often associated with soft sciences such as anthropology, linguistics or journalism for example (Creswell, 2009; Elkatawneh, 2016; Yilmaz, 2013, p. 315; Barnham, 2015).

In conducting content analysis of a news story, inductive reasoning approaches the issue being studied with an open view, aiming to find or reveal possible frames, as in the case of this study on DMCR's content. According to Evers (2016), the advantage of an inductive approach in conducting content analysis is that "no frame will go unnoticed" even if it proves to be a time-consuming and laborious effort, the upside to this approach is its thoroughness."

Content analysis has a litany of uses, including revealing patterns in communication content among others, which is what this study did.

Due to its easy applicability to copious amounts of data, content analysis is regarded as the most useful method for getting a 'big picture' i.e. patterns or trends of media representations (Gerbner, in Deacon, et al. 1998, p.117). As a result, Lutz and Collins (1993, p.89) were able to identify that content analysis allows researchers to identify and compare the patterns of representation that are regularly unnoticed and elusive to detect. They posit that by so doing, researchers can systematically construct and identify the indicators of values and attitudes within the images (or text), rendering a suitable resource for making comparison across the contents of various news events, institutions or places (Bauer, 2000).

One of the purposes of this study was to seek patterns in the reportage of the DMCR bulletins that were analysed using a code sheet to determine the kinds of phrases (language used) and frequency of broadcast of content related to the separatist conflict. This is expatiated on in the data analysis section 5.1.

MacNamara (2005) holds that qualitative content analysis can, to some extent, be incorporated within or conducted simultaneously with quantitative content analysis. He gives the example that positive and negative words and phrases can be analysed to identify the tone of text, adding that analysts can record notations during coding in relation to contextual factors (p.14) which is what this study did. During coding, the researcher noted contextual factors that favour why certain issues are being highlighted more than others, why particular frames are being sought and also sought to understand why certain language was being used by the radio station and what the implications of such words/language are.

In view of the research question that this study to addressed, i.e. *How does DMCR position itself in the Anglophone Crisis;* this study uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The methodology was a qualitative content analysis of 40 news bulletins from 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020. DMCR news bulletins from the period 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020 were sampled given that this period is usually one of the most tense periods in the Crisis as 1 October is the independence day of Southern Cameroon and the region often gets heavily militarized on this date in an attempt by government to prevent pro-separatists from holding independence celebrations. It was also on this date in 2017 that separatists unilaterally declared the 'independence' of the region, sparking an armed crackdown that left at least four people dead in the city of Bamenda (Amnesty International, 2017). This was a turning point in the crisis as it saw the transition from a peaceful protest to an armed uprising. Because separatists are resolute every 1 October to observe the 'Independence Day' of 'Ambazonia", it was fitting to select this time period as there would be imminent clashes with security forces.

3.3 Data Collection

The radio station's management was approached to provide clips of news broadcasts aired on the radio between 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020. The criteria used was the news values criteria as well as the five frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) which helped in categorizing the bulletins into frames. This helped to inform the selection of the news bulletins as solely news content directly related to the Anglophone Crisis was focused on. Initially, it was quite difficult getting the requested data as this is a sensitive conflict that is not yet over and the radio station is in the middle of it all. I phoned the radio station manager after having sent him an email. This was for him to help confirm my identity as the email could have been from anyone.

We later set up a video call again on Whatsapp and he asked me more in-depth questions about my research topic, what university I was studying at, the name of my supervisor and the topic of my master's research project. Only when he was satisfied with my answers did he agree to provide me with the requested data. It took several more weeks to get all the data and especially the news bulletins specifically related to the conflict. Once I had received the data, I had to proceed to transcribe it to make analysis easier. Since some of the reports were aired in the local language which I understand, it made things easier I sent the radio station manager my proof of registration at Wits University as well as a copy of my Cameroon national Identity Card so he could confirm that I am actually a registered journalism student and not a government spy or working for any group that could put the radio station or its staff in danger.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Because this was primarily a content analysis, the research was considered low risk in terms of impact on research subjects. While an interview with the station manager was held, this was primarily to secure content, and was not a key emphasis of the research. The researcher completed the necessary ethics application form, which was approved by the Wits Centre for Journalism, and an ethics number was issued.

3.5 Limitations of Study

This study focused solely on the radio aspect of the conflict and not on other mediums such as online or TV content. Data was also for just a fixed window and not for the entire duration of when the conflict started, leaving room for more research that can therefore be conducted on those aspects. Also, the fact that the study analyzed the contents of just one radio station in the Northwest of Cameroon, gives future researchers the liberty to explore the option of doing similar research at other community radio stations, for example in the Southwest Region of Cameroon to see if they can compare their findings with what I gathered from DMCR in the NWR.

4

4.1 Data Analysis

This section discusses the data and how it was analyzed. Since this is a qualitative analysis focused on seeking out frames and categorizing them, I was able to identify eight (8) main frames from the collected data.

4.2 News Values and Framing

Because this study was based on both framing and news values, I only coded those bulletins that had a news value to them in relation to the Anglophone Crisis. Stories that had to do with community projects, religious issues, bereavements and other socio-cultural affairs with no direct links to the conflict were therefore disregarded, so that the content analysed was strictly related to the on-going conflict.

The timeline of news bulletins in the Appendix is representative of this.

Meanwhile, I identified eight (8) frame categories. The main frames identified were:

1) **War Frame:** These were stories that emphasized killings or attacks on anyone regardless of whether the military or Ambazonia fighters were responsible for this. There were 10 stories in this category.
2) **Peace Frame:** These were stories that emphasized peace or highlighted pathways to peace. There were 6 stories in this category.
3) **Terrorist Frame:** These were stories in which the news report/newsreader or government sources expressly referred to separatist fighters as "terrorist" or the colloquial term "Amba Boy" which is synonymous with 'terrorist'. There were 6 stories in this category.
4) **Military vs Ambazonia Frame:** These were stories in which the emphasis was on the two parties accusing or counter-accusing each other. This distinction had to be made because at face value, it would almost seem like the 'War Frame' category. Stories in this grouping have Ambazonia fighters accusing government soldiers of being behind an attack or government soldiers accusing the Ambazonia fighters of being behind an attack. Nine (9) stories fell in this category.
5) **School Resumption Frame:** These were stories that portrayed schools as institutions under attack by Ambazonia separatist fighters. They are categorized as a stand-alone frame because education is a very important and politicized matter in this conflict, making the analysis of such a frame necessary. There were nine (9) stories in this category.
6) **Apportioning of Blame to Separatists Frame:** These were stories that put blame on separatist fighters for an attack or killing. The blame often came from government sources and was equally reported on by DMCR. There were 17 such stories identified.
7) **Apportioning Blame to Military Frame:** These were stories that put blame on government soldiers for an attack or a killing. There were four (4) such stories that were identified.
8) **Praising the Military:** These were stories that portrayed government soldiers as the heroes or 'the good guys' fighting against 'enemies of the state and the people'. There were seven (7) stories in this category.

These frame categories are more elaborately explained on pages 32 and 33 of this document.

4.3. Timeline and Key Events

The table below shows the number of stories per month which DMCR aired in relation to the Crisis. The number of stories is equally represented in percentages which are further presented visually in Figure 4 (pie chart)

Month	Stories	percentage	
July	3	7,5	
August	2	5	
September	4	10	
October	11	27,5	
November	12	30	
December	8	20	
Total	40		

Figure 1

There was slow progression in the number of stories being broadcast generally in relation to the Anglophone Crisis between July 2020 to September 2020. From July to September, only a total number of nine (9) stories in relation to the Anglophone Crisis were broadcast over DMCR.

The graph below shows that there was a significant increase in the number of stories between October and November 2020:

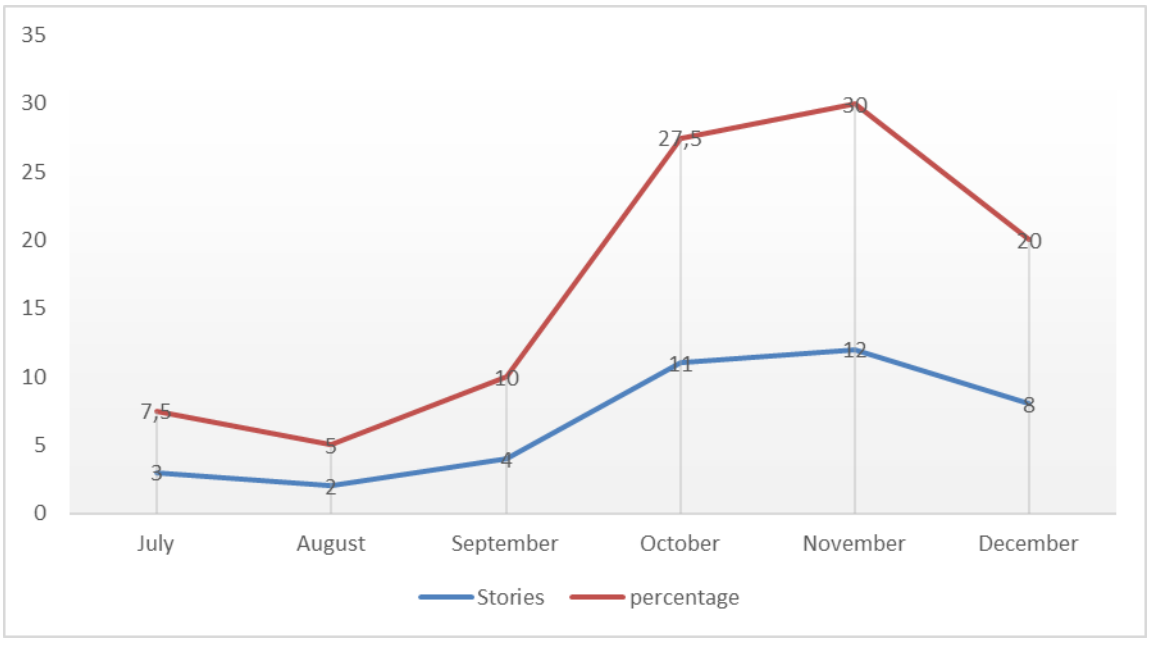

Figure 2

As indicated in the graph in Figure 2 above, there was a 27.5 to 30% spike in the number of stories aired between the months of October and November 2020. The reason for this can be explained by the imminent clashes between soldiers and separatist fighters as 1 October (the Independence Day of the former Southern Cameroons) approached. The last broadcast on the issue of the Southern Cameroons independence commemoration within this period was on September 29. It was a communique issued by the Governor of the Northwest Region calling on the population to "*avoid clashes with the military by staying indoors from September 29 to October 3, 2020*" as can be seen in bulletin # 9 on the timeline of bulletins.

Also, this period was characterized by a lot of back-to-school campaigns – an effort by the government to keep educational establishments open. The academic year in Cameroon runs from September to June and this period saw nine (9) stories focusing on educational establishments. This can be explained by the fact that authorities were attempting to persuade the population to send their children back to school as schools had by this time become a battle ground of sorts, with both parties using schools as political pawns to show their prowess as to who is in charge in the area.

The 9 stories on school resumption within this period are story number #13, #14, #15, and #18 which were all reported in the month of October 2020. Then in November 2020, there was story number #21, #22, #23, #27 and #30. This represented 4 stories on education or educational establishments for October 2020 and 5 stories on education or educational establishments for November 2020.

4.4. Statistics on Killings

Early in the DMCR news bulletins, stories about killings were already featuring in the content. From July to November 2020, there was a total number of 9 stories about the killing or deaths of civilians. In July, there were 2 stories about civilians killed. These were story #2 about two civilians who were killed by the military and story #3 which was a story about civilians being the ones who pay the price as fighting escalates between the military and separatist fighters.

In August, story #4 reported about government forces who tortured and killed civilians in Mankanikong and Mankwi villages in the Bafut Subdivision just outside the regional capital city of Bamenda.

In September, there was just 1 story as well. It was story #7 about a rare turn in events whereby the military tribunal in the capital city of Yaounde sentenced 4 soldiers to 10 years in prison each for their role in the killing of women and children in the Far North Region of Cameroon during the fight against terrorist group, Boko Haram. One other soldier was sentenced to 2 years as well. While the story was not directly related to the Anglophone Crisis, it was included in this study since DMCR reported on it and also because of the fact that government soldiers are concurrently carrying out the fight against Boko Haram terrorists as well as the Anglophone Crisis and the role of the military in the Anglophone regions is pivotal.

The month of October saw the highest number of killings with a total number of 4 stories about killings. The first killing in October was story #10 which aired on 6 October 2020 about an unidentified man who had been found dead in Three Corners of Ndu, a neighboring town to Nkambe where DMCR is located. The man was alleged by soldiers who killed him to have been an "Ambazonian" fighter.

The second killing in October 2020 was story #12 which aired on October 13 and was about the killing of a man named Shey Awudu in his 80s who was shot and killed when soldiers raided Luh Village when he was asleep in his home.

The third killing in October was story number 18 which was aired on 24 October. The story is about the killing of seven (7) schoolchildren at a school in Kumba, Southwest Region of Cameroon by "*unidentified armed men suspected*

to be Ambazonia terrorists."

The fourth killing was recorded on 30 October and was that of a worker of the Ndu Tea Estate who was killed in the Mbawnso area while traveling to his hometown in the Southwest.

Finally, the month of November recorded just 1 killing, and that was story #25 which aired on November 7 on DMCR about Pa Nformi whom others claim was "*killed by Amba Boys but others say that this was not the case*…".

In the month of December, there were 8 stories, but none of them recorded a killing that happened in December. Only story #34 and story #38 came close to being about killings. However, story #34 which aired on December 1 was about Ngwa Neba, a man who was arrested in connection with the killing of students at Kulu Memorial College in Kumba in November 2020. Story #38 was about the Ngarbuh Massacre which was carried out by government soldiers in February 2020 in the village of Ngarbuh, also in the Donga Mantung Division and DMCR reported on the trial of 3 government soldiers in Yaounde for having taken part in the massacre which was coordinated by Mbororo cattle herders, a semi-nomadic people who live in the Sahel and parts of West Africa. DMCR reported that the soldiers were standing trial because they killed 21 people when they raided the village and most of those killed were children.

4.5.1. Percentage and Frequency of Identified Frames

All the identified frames are presented in percentile range on the pie chart below:

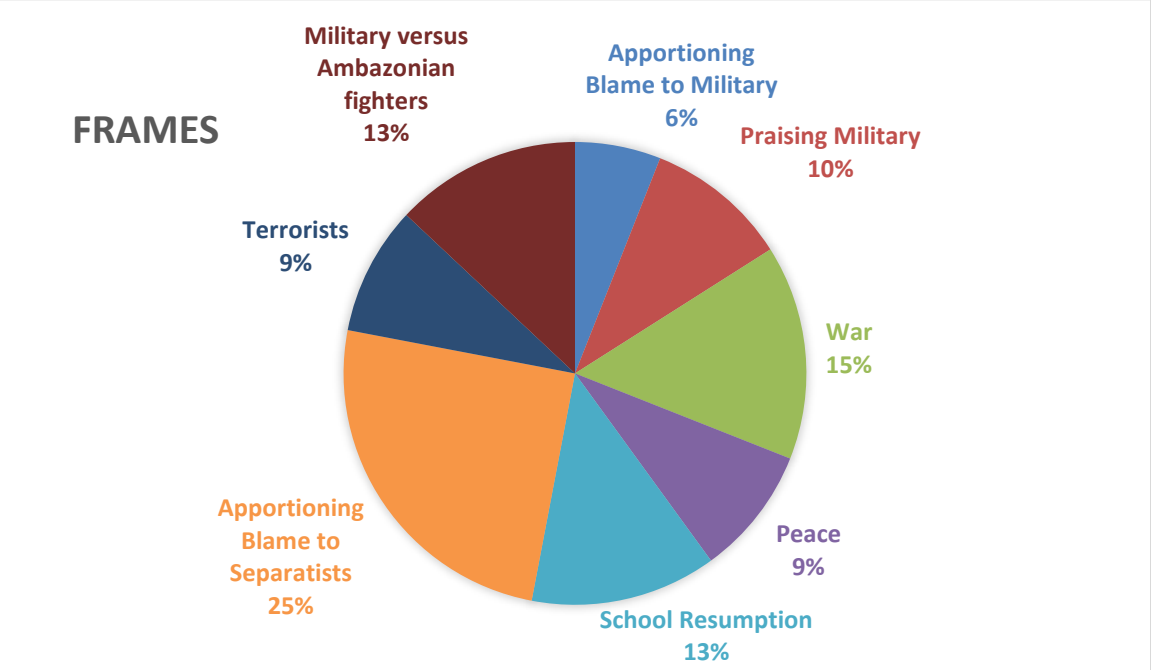

Figure 3

Figure 3 above shows the percentile breakdown of the eight (8) identified frames and as can be seen, the largest portion of stories were those which apportioned blame to separatist fighters, which out of the 40 news bulletins, took up 17 stories, representing 25% of the total number of stories. These were stories which suggested that separatist fighters were to blame for the war in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon.

4.5.2. Breakdown of Identified Frames

1) **War Frame:** These were stories that emphasized killings or attacks on anyone regardless of whether the military or Ambazonia fighters were behind this. There were 10 stories in this category, representing 25% of the bulletins. Stories under the war category were framed in a manner that portrayed fighting/conflict or imminent armed fighting between government soldiers and the Ambazonia separatist fighters.
According to Putnam and Shoemaker (2007), conflict is not new in media studies as the media for the most part, have a vested interest in conflict. They state that "in essence, conflict functions as both a type of and process for media framing" (pg.169).

2) **Peace Frame:** These were stories that highlighted peace or stressed on pathways to peace. There were 6 stories in this category, representing 15% of the total coverage. While just 6 stories fell into this category, this was a reflection of the depth of the conflict, showing that a genuine peace process is yet to be engaged in by both parties in the conflict themselves; as well as being an active frame in the news coverage by the media.
Johann Galtung, the Norwegian scholar often credited with coining the term 'peace journalism', argues that some media contribute in the polarization of certain conflicts through certain language orientations. According to Galtung (1965), 'peace journalism' is the opposite of 'war journalism' which only gives the opinion of the powerful or elite. Peace journalism "is oriented to conflict transformation, to inform with veracity, it cares for the opinion of the victims of the conflict, and it understands peace as a solution of a conflict where all the involved parties receive some benefits" (Galtung as cited in Gavilán, 2011).
In a previous essay submitted to Wits University on this topic, I argued that it seemed that Western media were more fascinated by the statistics of casualties than they were interested in emphasizing ways to peace in the Cameroon Anglophone Crisis.

3) **Terrorist Frame:** These were stories in which a news report expressly referred to separatist fighters as "terrorist" or the colloquial Cameroonian term "Amba Boy" which is synonymous with 'terrorist'. There were 6 stories in this category, again representing 15% of the reportage. 'Terrorist' is a word mainly used by the government to describe separatist fighters and separatist leaders (with the latter group mostly based in several Western countries for fear of arrest in Cameroon). 'Terrorist' in the context of this study was as used by both the military and by the radio station.

4) **Military vs Ambazonia Frame:** These were stories in which the emphasis was on conflict between government soldiers and Ambazonia fighters, or in which the Ambazonia fighters were accusing government soldiers of being behind an attack or government soldiers accusing the Ambazonia fighters of being behind an attack. Unlike the war frame, these were basically stories containing counteraccusations by both the military and or separatist fighters. There were nine (9) stories that fell in this category, giving a 22.5% representation. This was also a reflection of each side not wanting to be seen as the 'bad' side and an attempt to exonerate itself from blackmail by the other.

5) **School Resumption Frame:** These were stories that portrayed schools as institutions under attack by Ambazonia separatist fighters. There were nine (9) stories in this category, representing 22.5 % of the reportage. Stories framed in this manner often highlighted the need for education but were also framed in a manner that showed that politicians were using it to gain personal clout instead of pushing for a resolution of the conflict so that schools can then resume without any dangers being posed to teachers and students alike. Instead, separatist fighters were often framed as being the sole reason for the non-resumption of schools. For example, story # 6 and story #13 were framed in this manner.

6) **Apportioning of Blame to Separatists Frame:** These were stories that put blame on separatist fighters for an attack or killing. There were 17 such stories identified, representing 42.5 % of the coverage by. This was the frame with the highest number of stories in one category and this is quite significant because it helps show the trajectory of the conflict as it stands. These statistics also reveal that even though the government and politicians want a return to normalcy, they absolve the military of abuses in comparison to separatist fighters.

7) **Apportioning Blame to Military Frame:** These were stories that put blame on government soldiers for an attack or a killing. There were four (4) such stories that were identified. This represented just 10 % of the total number of stories. The four stories apportioning blame to the military were stories #4
#7; #12 and #38. This category of stories was very clear and left no room for confusion as to where they fell because they explicitly were about government soldiers killing civilians or separatist fighters or standing trial for previous killings as was the case particularly with two stories in this category i.e. story #7 and story # 38. Story #7 was about the sentencing of 4 soldiers for the killing of women and children in the Far North Region of Cameroon whom the military accused of being Boko Haram collaborators, while story #38 was similar in that it was about the trial of three soldiers accused of having taken part in the gruesome Ngarbuh Massacre where more than 21 people were killed in February 2020 (most of them being children) and accused by the military of collaborating with or being separatist fighters.

8) **Praising the Military:** These were stories that portrayed government soldiers as the heroes or 'the good guys' fighting against 'enemies of the state'. There were seven (7) stories in this category; representing 17.5 % of the total reportage. It was also quite telling because of the fact that the number of stories in this category outnumbered the number of stories in the 'Apportioning Blame to Military Frame' category. In most instances, stories in this category emerged where separatist fighters were being portrayed as the 'problem' and the military was portrayed as the 'answer'.

There were many stories that fell into alternating categories. It was not easy to simply fit stories into single categories as there were stories that fell sometimes into even more than 2 frame categories.
This overlapping of story categories therefore made it necessary for me as the researcher to come up with a table that showed what stories appeared in several frame categories.
It was better to do this because using venn diagrams would have meant a repetitive drawing of diagrams and using a pie chart or pie charts would also not have depicted this accurately.
Below is a table of the stories that overlapped into various frame categories. It is preceded by Figure 4 showing story #32 which overlapped into 4 (four) frame categories namely praising the military, apportioning blame to separatists, War and School resumption, making it the one story with the most overlapping frames:



Figure 4

As illustrated in Figure 4 above, story #32 fell into the praising the military frame and blaming of separatists because of the sentence in that story that said "*The military battalion of Donga Mantung has led a raid on the village of Luh in Ndu subdivision where separatist fighters have been carrying out illegal activities*…". That statement is two-pronged as it blames 'separatist fighters' for 'illegal activities'; and therefore praises the 'military' for the 'raid on the village of Luh' at the same time.

The school resumption frame comes in because of the line that says "…*Luh is one of the villages that maintains a notorious camp that is known to deter children from going to school*…" This sentence can be framed both as a school resumption frame but can also be seen as a frame apportioning blame to separatist fighters who are being framed in this case as being responsible for 'deterring children from going to school'.

Given that the war frame was earlier defined as any story that emphasized killings by either the military or separatist fighters, story #32 fell into this category as well because the story stated that "*The raid which took place two days ago led to the death of six separatist fighters and others fled*…"

The table below shows the rest of the stories which overlapped into different frame categories and the frames into which they overlapped:

NUMBER OF TIMES IN THE NEWS	Story number	CONTENTS OF NEWS ITEM	FRAMES
2	2	Earlier today, government forces raided Munkep Village in Esu, in Fungom Sub-Division, Menchum Division of the Northwest region, found along the border with Nigeria. They burned mattresses in the local hospital and killed two civilians by name Duh Patrick Biame and Nfua Godlove Alang. They were searching for Ambazonian terrorists according to some sources	Terrorist Apportioning blame to sep
2	10	A man whose names are yet to be made known has been found dead in Ntamruh quarter. According to eye-witness accounts, he was alleged by soldiers who were stationed in the area to be an "Amba Boy". Shots rang out about 5:40 PM on Monday and when residents of the area woke up the next morning, they saw the man in a pool of his own blood. He had a talisman on one of his wrists. Some unconfirmed accounts maintain that he was a mentally deranged man from Mbiyeh village who had wandered out of his compound while others say he was an Amba Boy. His names are yet to be released and it remains to be confirmed whether soldiers shot him on purpose or whether he was killed by a rival militia. Some of the groups have been known to turn on each other	Terrorist Apportioning blame to sep
2	11	Some 12 victims kidnapped and held hostage by the Ambazonia terrorist Ayekeh and later freed by elements of the Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR)have been reunited with their families. The former hostages were reunited with their families at Taaku on Wednesday October 14 after they were rescued from the bush and airlifted by helicopter. They spent the night at the military base where they received medical attention. The freed hostages thanked the military and the government of Cameroon for their intervention and narrated that during their captivity, they were severely tortured and were to be killed on the day they were rescued if they failed to pay the ransom of 1.6 million Francs each for the purchase of guns as demanded by their captors.	Terrorist Apportioning blame to sep
2	18	Seven children have been murdered at a school in Kumba by unidentified armed men, suspected to be Ambazonia terrorists. The ruthless attack happened sometime after 5pm when some of the students stayed behind after closing hours to study. The Minister of Secondary Education condemned the attacks and said the perpetrators will be brought to justice. The men wore masks acted like a hit squad and not Amba Boys according to some social media users, while others have called for an end to the violence regardless of who is behind it. Separatist fighter groups are yet to comment on the incident but the government has been swift to lay blame on them. However, the Ambazonia Interim Government's spokesman said that *La Republique* soldiers orchestrated the killings. We will update you with details of that story as we get them	Terrorist Apportioning blame to sep
2	22	Nine students of Kulu Memorial College in Limbe, SW region of the country have been released. They were suspected to have been kidnapped by Ambazonia terrorists although this has not yet been confirmed. Some of their buildings were also burnt to the ground by the Ambazonians as a means to instill fear in others for daring to disrespect them. The 9 students were	Terrorist Apportioning blame to sep

		kidnapped while on their way to school on Tuesday since Mondays are now ghost town days in the Anglophone regions	
2	24	The Fon of Nso has been kidnapped by unidentified gunmen suspected to be Ambazonians. In a viral video that is being shared online, the Fon is seen being interrogated by the Boys who warn him not to participate in the upcoming regional elections. The Fon is said to have been kidnapped in Ndop on his way to his palace in Nso. This is the second time that the same Fon has been kidnapped by Ambazonian fighters. We will provide details as they emerge	War Apportioning blame to sep
2	29	This is a communique from the Delegate of Transport. It states that the road from Nkambe to Kumbo has been blocked by Amba Boys and their collaborators and therefore road users are being urged to avoid using this road and take the alternative road going through Bafoussam. The Delegation warns that those who decide otherwise are doing so at their own risk as these people terrorize road users and pressure them into parting with their hard-earned cash. While there is security, road users and drivers are being called upon to collaborate with security forces	Apportioning blame to sep Praising Military
2	30	UNICEF has expressed concerns about increasing violence on schools in the NW and SW regions of Cameroon where separatists are waging a war against the state. In a press release dated 6 November 2020, UNICEF stated that "Since the resumption of the school year less than a month ago, there have been multiple reports of kidnappings, harassment and killings affecting students and teachers" and went on to cite attacks on schools and learners in Kumbo (Bui division), Fundong (Boyo division) and Limbe (Fako division). The UNICEF Regional Director for West and Central Africa, Marie-Pierre Poirier, condemned the attacks on schools: "Schools are places of learning where children should feel safe and protected. We call on all parties to protect all children, at school or in their communities and to uphold the principles of the Safe Schools Declaration, which calls for stopping attacks on schools, education facilities and personnel"	Military vs amba School resumption
4	32	The military battalion of Donga Mantung has led a raid on the village of Luh in Ndu Subdivision where separatist fighters have been carrying out illegal activities preventing the population from going about their normal activities. The raid which took place two days ago led to the death of six separatist fighters and others fled to neighboring villages. Luh is one of the villages that maintains a notorious camp that is known to deter children from going to school and kidnapping people from Nkambe in exchange for ransom. Some of those kidnapped were even shot dead. This raid follows the one that was carried out in Ntamruh, Ndu Subdivision after separatists set fire on a local's compound and disappeared upon the arrival of security forces.	War Apportioning blame to sep School Resumption Praising military
2	35	Regional elections are taking place across the National Territory at the behest of President Paul Biya. This is the first time such elections are taking place in the country. Secessionists have warned the populations in the NW and SW to steer clear of the polls in an attempt to render the elections ineffective. Government has promised that security will be available in all polling stations in the NW and SW for those wishing to vote.	War Apportioning blame to sep
2	36	There is a fear of possible violence after the ruling CPDM party was declared winner of the December 6 regional elections. According to international media reports, turnout was very low in the Anglophone regions where violence between separatists and soldiers has left many dead on both sides. So far, the	War Military vs amba

		CPDM has not had the results contested by any other party that partook in the elections.	
2	37	In a related development, traders at the Bamenda Main Market have agreed to end "ghost towns" on Mondays as from 2021. The "ghost towns" have mainly paralyzed economic and other social activities in the town and across the entire Anglophone region. The mayor of Bamenda, Vincent Ndumu told reporters that he was there to protect them and that the security of traders was guaranteed as they feared harassment, kidnapping and even sometimes far worse from the Amba Boys	Apportioning blame to sep Peace
2	38	The trial of three soldiers alleged to have taken part in the Ngarbuh Massacre on 14 February 2020 is set to begin in Yaounde today. The massacre coordinated by Mbororo grazers who acted as vigilantes led to the deaths of 21 people, most of whom were children. They were killed when soldiers came to the village in search of secessionists but did not find them and instead shot indiscriminately. The government initially denied security force members were involved. The move while it falls short of expectations is generally welcomed	Peace Apportioning blame to military

In concluding this section therefore, it is helpful to recall the main research question for this research which is *How does DMCR position itself in the Anglophone Crisis?* and to look at this through the sub-research questions that the study sought to find answers to viz *How frequently does it (DMCR) report on the conflict in its news broadcasts?*" and *What does the radio station choose to focus on its news broadcasts?*
These questions will be more thoroughly examined in the next chapter and also give meaning to the data that has been analyzed in this chapter and then give some recommendations.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This section discusses the findings from the data that was analysed in Section 4 above and assesses what the data shows. This discussion of the findings takes place with the main research question in mind, that is *How does DMCR position itself in the Anglophone Conflict?* and is supported in this discussion by the sub-research questions "*How frequently does DMCR report on the conflict in its news broadcasts?*" and *What does the radio station choose to focus on it its news broadcasts?*

5.1 Findings

The data analysed 40 news bulletins aired on DMCR between the 3 July 2020 and 29 December 2020. With regards to how frequently the radio was reporting on the conflict, the data revealed that the peak of reporting on the conflict was between October and November 2020 with a total number of 12 broadcasts in the month of November and 11 in October respectively.

There was one story not directly related to the Anglophone Crisis, but it directly involved the military and the killing of civilians in the north of Cameroon in 2015 during the military's fight against Boko Haram terrorists. The soldiers were filmed shooting unarmed women with babies strapped to their backs. The women were accused of being "Boko Haram collaborators". The content of individual news stories was analysed. These news stories were analysed and the frames, patterns and themes in the content were sought for.

Basing the approach on the five (5) frames of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), I was able to identify eight (8) frames. The research focused on the qualitative aspects, seeking to draw meanings from the 40 news bulletins from DMCR gathered over the six-month period of 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020. This six-month window was chosen because this is the period during which students in the Anglophone regions usually write the General Certificate of Education (GCE) exams, often provoking attacks from separatist fighters since 2017 as separatists now see all schools that are still functional in the region as being government property and 'betraying' their cause. Also, 1 October and the weeks leading up to and after that date are a sensitive period as it is the day considered by separatists to be the official 'independence day' of the former Southern Cameroons (today's Northwest and Southwest regions). Therefore, the period chosen is likely to produce a higher number of stories on the conflict for analysis.

5.2. Key Findings from the Data and Research

5.2.1. Pro-government position

Overall, DMCR takes a pro-government position in the conflict through its reporting. This can be seen in several respects as detailed below.

5.2.2. The station's emphasis on winning the war but not solving the conflict

The station's content suggests that there is an interest by government soldiers to win the war by killing as many separatist fighters as possible, instead of seeking to address the roots of the conflict. This would explain, why out of 40 news stories in the bulletin, a total of 7 news stories portrayed government soldiers as the 'good guys'. Stories under the 'Praising the Military' frame were reported by the station in a manner that suggested that military intervention was the solution to the conflict. These stories such as #28, were framed in words such as "Both the Fon and the Cardinal are unharmed and were escorted by soldiers in full armoured gear to Nso…".

The use of the word 'terrorist' by DMCR also indicates the radio's bias against separatist fighters which could also be an indication of the fact that the station sees itself as an entity that is trying to survive in the midst of a war which government has largely attributed to the separatists. Therefore, the adoption of this term by the station could also be interpreted as the station trying to stay on the side of government authorities who have the power to revoke its broadcast license and order local government authorities to shut down the station if they feel that its reportage is anti-government or too-pro separatist. It is a clear reflection of the media caught in the middle (CPJ, 2017).

5.2.2.1. The station's use of the term 'crisis'

The data shows that the station repeatedly refers to the conflict as a 'crisis', rather than a civil war, which downplays the seriousness of the conflict and largely limits outside intervention.

Lewis and Haberson (2016) state that:

"Contemporary affairs in the region have frequently been discussed in the language of crisis, yet this characterization is often applied without attention to context, timing, or outcomes. In common usage, a crisis indicates a chronic, deep-seated challenge of security, governance, or economic viability" (pg.3). This is the same view held by the Canadian Global Affairs Institute (CGAI), a think tank which has conducted extensive research and made recommendations on the conflict in Cameroon.

The data revealed armed fighting between Cameroonian government soldiers and various Ambazonian groups and while the Cameroonian government has remained intransigent in getting into talks that would involve a political settlement of the conflict, the government is accused by CGAI of downplaying the severity of the conflict and never addressing it as a civil war. The CGAI argues that 'civil war' is the right word for the conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon:

> "For years, the Cameroon government and international organizations have purposely refrained from referring to the conflict as a NIAC (non-international armed conflict) or civil war. Current interpretations of what constitutes a NIAC fail to capture the dynamics of the war in Cameroon and other places where the old model of one or two centralized military-political organizations fighting against a national government (think Biafra in 1967-70, or UNITA against the MPLA in Angola until 2002) offers a clear-cut definition of organized opposition" (Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2022).

The government-run Cameroon Radio Television (CRTV) which is the main government news outlet, along with the state-run publication, *Cameroon Tribune*, all expressly refer to a 'crisis' but not a 'civil war' and this may explain why the government has refused to take part in talks which Canada offered to mediate (Crisis Group, 2023).

5.2.2.2. Quoting only government sources

Another proof of how the radio station's pro-government stance is indicated in how sources it quotes are often government officials or politicians with close ties to the government and never giving air time to separatist fighters or separatist leaders.
This sort of balanced and objective reporting is absent from DMCR's coverage and makes it hard for the station to play a mediator role which would help build trust between the conflicting parties and leave it up to listeners to make up their mind about the conflict. Research conducted elsewhere has found that, more often than not, parties in a conflict try to control the media narrative and look good and the media sometimes falls prey to these machinations of constantly highlighting one side of the conflict to the exclusion (or vilification of the other parties). For example,

Zhukov and Baum (2016), state that "How we respond to a civil conflict depends on what we know about it. That, in turn, depends on where we get our information". The duo studied the dynamics of the Russian annexation of Crimea in the Ukraine in 2016 and found that there was a lot of 'conflict reporting bias'. In an example that could be applied to the case of DMCR in Cameroon, they write that "We find that actor-specific reporting bias can profoundly affect both statistical inference and public opinion. According to data from Ukrainian sources, rebels are more likely than the government to unilaterally escalate violence. According to rebel sources, the opposite is true." They further observed that by over-reporting on the actions of one side and under-reporting on the actions of another side, the media affect the conflict outcomes and outside intervention in helping to resolve the conflict.
The above observation by Zhukov and Baum (2016) is equally true of how DMCR has covered the Crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, giving more latitude to government sources and soldiers and less to separatist fighters and other pro-separatist leaders.
While most of the separatist leaders have fled to the US, Europe and Canada as well as South Africa, the station can get a hold of them through social media as most of them have social media platforms and are very vocal. For example Eric Tataw, Tapang Ivo and Chris Anu are well-known Ambazonia frontline advocates based in the US whom the station can easily get access to. While moderates like Barrister Agbor Balla who was a key figure in the creation of the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium (CACSC) is based in the SWR of the country and makes a lot of other media appearances.

5.3. Anti-separatist position

The station takes a position in opposition to the separatists. This can be seen in the following observations.

5.3.1.1.The station campaigns for schools to resume

As mentioned in the research, schools play a central part in the conflict and this explains why both the separatist fighters and government authorities are engaged in a tug of war over who controls them. The data revealed a strong preference for school resumption in DMCR's content, and this can potentially be seen as an important part of its focus on the well-being of the community (although, as discussed below, with limitations). For example, the station runs a radio 'school' to keep classes going on, albeit in an unconventional manner. The station has educative programmes aimed at children of school-going age who cannot attend classes because of insecurity, hence programmes on the radio act like a sort of 'school' for them. Also, the fact that there were nine news stories; mostly campaigning for a resumption of classes in schools, also indicates that the station positions itself as a voice for the resumption of schools. As indicated in Section 1.5, education is at the heart of the ongoing Anglophone Crisis as teachers and lawyers demanded a cessation of the use of French in classrooms before lessons could continue.

However, Ambazonia separatist fighters saw all schools as a representation of the state, hence they forbade schoolchildren from going to school, with some students even getting attacked and some schools getting burnt down. There were several days too when the radio station was off air due to separatist-imposed lock downs known locally as 'Ghost Towns', usually on Mondays but also on any other days the separatists deem to be a day the central government may want Anglophones to participate in activities which to the separatists are 'unjust', such as school resumption in September and National Day activities on May 20.
The DMCR data showed a preference for education in two ways: First, the station (through high profile politicians) called on parents to send their kids to school and secondly, it also sought to highlight attacks on schoolchildren. For example, news stories #6, #13, #14 and #15 all have to do with efforts to encourage a return to school; while stories #18, #22, #27 and #32 all have to do with attacks on schoolchildren and kidnapping of students and teachers. There is equally story #30 in which the station reported about UNICEF expressing concern over increasing attacks on schools.

5.3.1.2. Referring to separatists as 'terrorists'

It is generally expected that journalists should be neutral in their reporting and in times of conflict, they are expected to diffuse tensions and one way they can do this is by how they refer to those involved in the conflict. However, this study found that there was a significant use of the term 'terrorist' by both government sources which the station quoted as well as by the station's own newsreaders. This tone in reportage would indirectly discredit the cause of separatists as they are by this moniker, responsible for the violence.

The government of Cameroon has been accused of using the term 'terrorist' to describe all those who oppose it and critics have argued that to tag separatist fighters in the Anglophone regions as 'terrorists' is to equate them with the ISIS-linked terrorists in operating in the Far North of Cameroon and northern Nigeria and this is an unfair comparison because these are mostly peasant farmers, university drop-outs and other unemployed young Cameroonians who were driven to pick up arms with no formal training against the government unlike Boko Haram terrorists whose aim is to instill Sharia and fear in the population by indiscriminately targeting all public spaces where they can spread their message of rule by terror. It was for this reason that when the US government found that military aid which it was providing to the Cameroonian army for the fight against Boko Haram up north, was being diverted to the Anglophone regions, the US announced it was cutting over 17 million US Dollars in military assistance to Cameroon "including funds for radars, four defender-class patrol boats, nine armored vehicles, training programs for C-130 airplanes and helicopters and the withdrawal of an offer for Cameroon to be a candidate for the State Partnership Program" (Browne & Hansler, 2019).

Since DMCR seems to take its cues from official government sources, it seems to be following this path of referring to fighters as 'terrorists' even though it is supposed to be non-judgemental as a media outlet serving its listeners, regardless of their political opinions.

5.3.2. Ambivalent positioning in relation to the community's well-being

Facing direct threats to closure both from the government and the separatists, and despite what appears to be a position supportive of the community, the station can be said to overall have an ambivalent or shifting position in relation to the community's well-being. This is, for example, already suggested by its downplaying of the economic impact of the conflict. However, the following observations similarly suggest this ambivalence.

5.3.3. Ambivalence in relation to school resumption and community safety

On the one hand, a clear pro-government slant is evident in the station's reporting. For example, the station reports on raids carried out by government soldiers as if these are necessary for the well-being of the community, but almost simultaneously warns the public to stay indoors in the period leading up to 1 October. It seems contradictory that the station re-echoes demands by politicians for parents to send their children to school despite the dangers this exposes the students and pupils to. This is sort of contradictory rhetoric is evident for example in bulletins #6 and #9 with the former asking parents to "shun fear and send their children to school" and the latter calling on the same people to "avoid clashes with the military by staying indoors"; with the government retaining strict control over the station and reserving the right to simply revoke its broadcasting license should the reportage be deemed too pro-separatist (see Literature Review section on this issue), but at the same time the station could face threats from separatists should they feel that the reportage is too pro-government.

5.3.4. The station's downplaying of the economic toll of the war

The radio station is supposed to be a medium to inform and educate people on the consequences which fighting between soldiers and separatist fighters is having on the Anglophone regions. This could assuage the public to more actively advocate for a return to normalcy and to end all the shut downs that have been declared by separatist fighters every Monday since 2017.

This closure of all economic activities in both Anglophone regions has affected the daily cost of living in these areas. DMCR as a trusted medium should highlight the long-term consequences of the war on the general development of these regions and especially in the Donga Mantung administrative area where literacy rates are significantly low, infrastructure is in disrepair or completely absent and the life expectancy is estimated at 58 according to the WHO and only by being a voice of reason can DMCR help bring about these changes, and not positioning itself on one side of the spectrum.

As can be seen in section 1.4, the economy in the Anglophone regions took a heavy fall when the internet (a crucial part of the economy with a lot of businesses that rely on internet connectivity) was shut down in January 2017. From the data, only two stories, namely #29 and #37 had any clear reference to the economy – an essential part of any country's functioning. Story #29 was a press release from the local representative of the minister of transport, asking locals to use an alternate road while story #37 was about traders at the Bamenda Main Market complaining that shut downs on Mondays have affected their businesses, but the radio station did not take this further by explaining to its listeners that these shut downs on Mondays are damaging to the economy.

5.3.5. An emphasis on conflict reporting, rather than peace

Of the total coverage (40 news stories) only 6 (six) stories emphasized peace or the need for peace. This suggests that DMCR does not play as strong a role as it could in de-escalating the Crisis.

Stories about international organizations calling for peace or being willing to mediate in the conflict were not a key aspect of the DMCR news bulletins and this is an indication that in spite of the fact that in a time of war when the station could act as a mouthpiece for peace, it is instead tightly controlled by local government officials. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) condemned the government's use of an anti-terrorism legislation (Cameroon's Ministry of Justice, 2014) i.e. the Suppression of Acts of Terrorism law that was enacted on 23 December 2014 to combat Boko Haram in northern Cameroon – and extending it to apply to journalists who were reporting on the Anglophone Crisis in Anglophone Regions. The government's tight control of information is a reflection of how media in the embattled Anglophone regions are restricted from fairly and accurately reporting on the conflict, and serving as vehicles for promoting peace between the warring sides.

5.4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study analyzed 40 news bulletins aired on DMCR radio between July 2020 to December 2020 under the research question *How does DMCR position itself in the Anglophone Crisis?* and an analysis of the data was done with the key sub-research questions *What does the radio station choose to focus on in its news bulletins*? and *Can the language it uses be described as inflammatory or conciliatory?*
The data analysis and findings concluded that armed fighting and a lack of emphasis on peace is predominant in DMCR's coverage of the conflict. The radio station has a biased leaning towards a pro-government side due to a number of factors which restrict it from being an independent and objective radio station, impartially reporting on the conflict for fear of sanctions from the local government authorities.

The data also suggests an undefined editorial perspective overall in relation to the conflict, which as already mentioned, makes the station to prioritize education, but at the risk of schoolchildren's lives. This demonstrates that the radio lacks a clear editorial policy that supports its independent coverage of the conflict and is rather caught in the middle of the conflict like most civilian institutions in the two Anglophone regions. This lack of a clearly defined editorial policy positions it as a tool in the hands of the government instead and it fails to live up to its mandate which is to be a balanced, objective voice.

The research equally found that the radio station could potentially serve as a critical link between the government, soldiers, the public and Ambazonia separatist fighters. However, unlike Radio Ndarason Internationale and Radio Okapi in Chad and the DRC with similar conflict situations respectively; DMCR has not actively used the leverage which radio offers in such times of conflict to act as a bridge between warring parties and even actively tailoring programmes aimed at separatist fighters, which would help de-escalate the war by asking them to lay down their arms. This has worked in Uganda where Mega FM in the town of Gulu targets Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) fighters with 'come home' messages (see Section 2.3 of this research report). However, in the case of DMCR the data suggests a rather strong pro-government stance, the result of factors ranging from censorship to lack of a clearly defined editorial agenda at the station, as seen by its mixed messaging when it calls for students to return to school, in defiance of the separatists, but endangering the lives of those school children at the same time. This can also be understood by the fact that the station's presenters are themselves members of the community who are also directly affected by the conflict, with some of them having children of school-going age and being concerned about future prospects for their children should they be deprived of an education. Also, there is the fact that some of them eke out a living from the radio station and should the station get closed down by authorities, that would leave them with no source of a livelihood and they would risk migrating to larger French-speaking cities as internally displaced persons (IDPs) as most other Anglophones have done in the past few years.

Since this was a study based on the media framing theory, the researcher was able to identify eight main frame categories, namely the war frame, peace frame, terrorist frame, military accusing Ambazonia frame, school resumption frame, apportioning blame to separatists frame, apportioning blame to the military frame and praising the military frame. The researcher found that there were 17 stories that cast blame for the conflict on Ambazonia separatist fighters – an indication of how the radio positions itself as a pro-government tool, though it is supposed to be an independent, community-owned and community-run radio station.
While not a government-owned radio station, DMCR is nevertheless under the firm hand of the Cameroonian authorities and for fear of having its broadcast licence revoked, it unwittingly takes a pro-government stance in its reporting, overtly using inflammatory language such as 'terrorists' in referring to separatist fighters, an indication that it has not positioned itself as an objective mouthpiece for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.
Also worth noting is the ambivalence in the reporting which could be confusing to listeners as the station calls for schools to re-open and yet does not call for a ceasefire first, putting learners and teachers at risk should gunfights erupt in or around school campuses while classes are going on.

DMCR remains the most trusted source for information among local residents in Nkambe and other surrounding villages where the station's signals reach, and this means that it still has the opportunity to change the trajectory it's been on and start educating both separatist fighters and locals about the dangers of war and also to tailor programming that is suitable to help de-escalate the conflict. Programmes that highlight the long-term consequences of war on mental and physical health, the economy and education are needed to help the audience (a vast majority of whom are small-scale, uneducated farmers), to better comprehend and make sense of what the conflict is doing to them as well as the long-term consequences of war on infrastructural development in the locality.

This is an ongoing conflict and there are still dynamics that may affect the outcome of the conflict. Key among them is the fact that Cameroon's president Paul Biya has been in power for 40 years and turned 90 in February 2023 (at the time of submitting this research report) and that means his stepping down from power (or death) would create a vacuum of power and leave room for his successor to choose how he wants to negotiate with Ambazonian separatist fighters on the ground in the Anglophone regions as well as with various Ambazonia leaders based in Europe and North America (International Crisis Group, 2022).
In the past, Switzerland offered to mediate in talks and more recently in January 2023, Canada (which is bilingual in English and French like Cameroon), also offered to broker a peace deal between separatists and Cameroon's central government and this seems to be the most promising way out of the conflict that has raged on for about seven years today.

Appendix

This section contains the 40 new stories aired on Donga Mantung Community Radio between 1 July 2020 and 31 December 2020. As can be seen in the bulletin, the first news broadcast in July 2020 took place on 3 July and the last broadcast was on 29 December 2020. There are three rows showing the year, month and day of broadcast of each news item. At the end of each news story is a number showing what story number it is, this helps identify the individual story during discussion in the Data Analysis section as well as under the Findings Section.

Year	Month	Day	News Event
		3	Ambazonian leader in jail, Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe revealed that nine of them met with government representatives to discuss COVID-19 ceasefire. While assuring his supporters that 'it is either independence or independence', the government of Cameroon has said claims of a negotiation ongoing is not consistent with reality, adding that Ambazonia fighters should drop their weapons against civilians. [1]
2020	**July**	9	Earlier today, government forces raided Munkep Village in Esu, in Fungom Sub-Division, Menchum Division of the Northwest Region, found along the border with Nigeria. They burned mattresses in the local hospital and killed two civilians by name Duh Patrick Biame and Nfua Godlove Alang. They were searching for Ambazonian terrorists according to some sources. [2]
		28	An international human rights NGO called Amnesty International has released some documents dating back to 2019 which reveal that civilians in the Northwest and Southwest are the ones bearing the brunt of the violence between various armed groups and the military. According to the organization, more than 100 villages have been destroyed as a result of fighting between the military and soldiers. [3]
2020	**August**	12	On Sunday, August 9, 2020, government forces entered into Mankanikong and Mankwi in Bafut subdivision, Mezam division, tortured and killed civilians. They allegedly looted and killed two civilians after breaking into houses by smashing doors and windows. A picture circulating on social media shows property broken around homes in the village along with blood stains on most of them. [4]

		26	The leadership of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) have re-iterated their willingness to advocate for peace in the Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon. Rev. Miki Hans, Synod Clerk of the PCC was speaking during a church service in Buea on Sunday the 23. The Education Secretary of the PCC, Mr. Njie Samuel also called on parents to shun fear from those who don't want their children to be educated and send them to school. [5]
		15	One week after the official school resumption date, the number of students and pupils in classrooms remains timidly low. The Member of Parliament for Donga Mantung, the Hon. Ngala Gerald has however called on parents to shun fear from Ambazonian terrorists who want to deter their children from a bright future and send the kids to school. He has promised that the military is on ground to ensure the safety of the students on campus. [6]
2020	**September**	23	The military court in Yaounde has sentenced 4 soldiers to 10 years in prison and 1 other to 2 years for the brutal killing of 2 women and 2 children in 2015. While the sentence breaks the norm of impunity for military abuses, the potential impact of the trial in setting accountability standards was compromised because the trial and sentencing took place behind closed doors and lacked transparency according to some human rights NGOs. [7]
		29	A contingency of BIR soldiers from the Nkambe Military Base have been stationed all over Nkambe town. This ahead of October 1 which separatist leaders and fighters have declared must be observed all over the NW and SW regions of Cameroon. [8] NW Governor Lele l'Afrique issued a communique yesterday that called on all law-abiding Cameroonians to avoid clashes with the military by staying indoors from September 29 to October 3, 2020. [9]

		6	A man whose names are yet to be made known has been found dead in Three Corners. According to eye- witness accounts, he was alleged by soldiers who were stationed in the area to be an “Amba Boy”. Shots rang out about 5:40 PM on Monday and when residents of the area woke up the next morning, they saw the man in a pool of his own blood. He had a talisman on one of his wrists. Some unconfirmed accounts maintain that he was a mentally deranged man from Mbiyeh village who had wandered out of his compound while others say he was an Amba Boy. His names are yet to be released and it remains to be confirmed whether soldiers shot him on purpose or whether he was killed by a rival militia. Some of the groups have been known to turn on each other. [10]
2020	**October**	13	Some 12 victims kidnapped and held hostage by the Ambazonia terrorist Ayekeh and later freed by elements of the Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR)have been reunited with their families. The former hostages were reunited with their families at Taaku on Wednesday October 14 after they were rescued from the bush and airlifted by helicopter. They spent the night at the military base where they received medical attention. The freed hostages thanked the military and the government of Cameroon for their intervention and narrated that during their captivity, they were severely tortured and were to be killed on the day they were rescued if they failed to pay the ransom of 1.6 million Francs each for the purchase of guns as demanded by their captors. [11] Shey Awudu a man in his 80s who was shot and killed when Luh village was raided by soldiers has been laid to rest today. Pa Awudu was asleep in his home when he woke up to the sound of gunshots on October 10 and in the midst of the commotion ran towards soldiers who had come in search of separatist fighters alleged to be hiding in the area. He was hit by two bullets in the chest and died on the spot. He leaves behind his two wives and 9 children and 14 grandchildren. He was a leader at the local mosque. [12]

			The population of Ndu subdivision turned out massively on the 8th of October in Ntumbaw with laureates from Nkambe and Nwa to receive scholarship awards offered by Dr. Fuh Calistus Gentry aimed at encouraging back-to-school in the subdivision. Since the Anglophone Crisis started in 2016, schools have mostly remained closed. Around 470 students received school bags, books, pens, pencils, rulers and cash prizes for their excellent performance in end-of-course exams like the First School Leaving Certificate and the GCE. [13]
		15	In the same vein, children from Ako Subdivision, another area hard-hit by the school boycott for the past 4 years were given special attention by Dr. Fuh Calistus. Close to 2 million Francs was spent on the scholarship, school bags, pens, pencils and rulers for more than 50 children who braved the odds and threats from separatist fighters to return to school this academic year. [14]
2020	**October**		The Member of Parliament for Donga Mantung Central Constituency, Ta Nformi Ngala has led a march of the population of Nkambe to affirm their support for the legitimate president, His Excellency President Paul Biya and say "No to Insurrection" and "No to School Boycotts". He donated more than school 600 bags and over 1000 books for children to go back to school. [15]
		16	Staff of Ndu Baptist Health Center have begun a three-day health campaign to educate the population on how to reduce trauma on women and children in a conflict zone. The idea, according to a press release from the Director of CBC Health Services, is aimed at mitigating the effects of gunshots, wounds and other effects which war has on civilians. The campaign is funded by the US Embassy in Yaounde and is taking place in other hotspots of the Anglophone Crisis. [16]

		22	Cameroonian asylum seekers in the US have refused to sign their own deportation papers citing fear of death upon arrival in Cameroon. The asylum seekers said they feared what will happen to them upon their arrival in Cameroon because most of them had cases pending in US courts The Guardian reported. They fled Cameroon due to increasing violence and bloodshed as soldiers and Ambazonia fighters continue to clash in the NW and SW regions. [17]
2020	**October**	24	Seven children have been murdered at a school in Kumba, SWR by unidentified armed men, suspected to be Ambazonia terrorists. The ruthless attack happened sometime after 5pm when some of the students stayed behind after closing to study. The minister of secondary education condemned the attacks and said the perpetrators will be brought to justice. The men who wore masks acted like a hit squad and not Amba Boys according to some social media users, while others have called for an end to the violence regardless of who was behind it. Separatist fighter groups are yet to comment on the incident but the government has been swift to lay blame on them. However, the Ambazonia Interim Government's spokesman said that La Republique soldiers orchestrated the killings. We will update you with details of that story as we get them. [18]
2020	**October**	28	Staff of Ndu Baptist Health Center are still in shock following an unannounced search of their premises by elements of the local BIR military base. According to the chief of center for the health center, the military were informed that the health center was treating separatist fighters who were injured during gun battles with soldiers. She told DMCR however that the health center is a Christian institution and doesn't have any political affiliations with either side, but takes an apolotical approach to dispensing healthcare regardless of who needs it. The search of the small health center lasted a little over 15 minutes after which staff and patients were left shaken. Similar searches have been conducted at other Baptist health centers and hospitals like Mbingo and Banso. [19]

		30	A worker of Ndu Tea Estate by name Fang Denis was killed in Mbawnso area two days ago while traveling to his hometown in the Southwest. Mbawnso is a village of Bui Division that shares a boundary with Donga Mantung Division. The deceased was taken off a bus and killed around the bushes in the area by gunmen, allegedly members of the separatist fighter group of the area. An eyewitness said he was the only person taken off the bus and killed for working for the Ndu Tea Estate whose manager is a sworn enemy of the local separatists. Passengers traveling to Bamenda now pass through the West Region, avoiding the main road through Nso because of insecurity caused by separatists. [20]
2020	**November**	4	Suspected Ambazonia mercenaries have attacked Kulu Memorial College in Kumba, SW region. The attack took place earlier today. The BBC reported that the unidentified men who could be seen in amateur videos carrying cutlasses, appeared to belong to one of the Ambazonia factions. The men asked the teachers and students to strip naked before asking them in Pidgin English to run for their lives and not return to school again. This is a developing story and we will provide you with details as we get them. [21]

Nine students of Kulu Memorial College in Limbe, SW region of the country have been released. They were suspected to have been kidnapped by Ambazonia terrorists although this has not yet been confirmed.

Some of their buildings were also burnt to the ground by the Ambazonians as a means to instill fear in others for daring to disrespect them. The 9 students were kidnapped while on their way to school on Tuesday since Mondays are now ghost town days in the Anglophone regions. [22]

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In a related development, the Delegate of Secondary Education for Donga Mantung Division, has called on parents to leave fear behind and send their children to school. In a communique issued today, the Delegate says that illiterates residing in bushes should not be the ones to determine the future of our children and that military patrols will ensure the safety of the children and that no parent has any excuse for not sending his or her children to school. [23]

5

The Fon of Nso has been kidnapped by unidentified gunmen suspected to be Ambazonians. In a viral video that is being shared online, the Fon is seen being interrogated by the Boys who warn him not to participate in the upcoming regional elections.
The Fon is said to have been kidnapped in Ndop on his way to his palace in Nso. This is the second time that the same Fon has been kidnapped by Ambazonian fighters. We will provide details as they emerge. [24]

The funeral of Pa Nformi has taken place at his home in Ntamruh followed by traditional rites. Pa was a title holder and was well-known in the market area in Nkambe. Pa was still very active right up into his 90s. Others assume that he was at least 100 years old but it is difficult to say.

7

Pa who was not very mentally stable had been found dead in front of a drinking spot. Others claim he was killed by Amba Boys but others say that this was not case. He will be greatly missed in the village. [25]

Some 48 Cameroonians who fled to the US and sought asylum there will be deported back to Cameroon today US officials have announced.

The move by the Trump administration to deport the asylum-seekers to Cameroon has been condemned by both groups and individuals in the US as well as in Cameroon.

The asylum-seekers fled Cameroon because of constant clashes between the military and Ambazonia fighters though most of them are activists of the Southern Cameroons movement who have been critical of the government. Another batch of asylum seekers that was deported last month are still being reported missing. The government of Cameroon has not yet commented on the issue. [26]

Eleven teachers have been kidnapped by unidentified, armed men in Kumbo, chief town of Bui Division.

Initially, the gunmen, suspected to be Ambazonia fighters, had taken 12 teachers along with pupils of Presbyterian School Kumbo but later released the one teacher with the schoolchildren.

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) says that the remaining eleven teachers were released without a ransom having been paid and that no one was hurt. The released captives are now undergoing medical examination. [27]

The Fon of Nso has been released after five days in captivity. The traditional ruler of the Nso people was kidnapped by Ambazonian gunmen on the 5th of November alongside Cardinal Tumi of the Catholic Church. Both the Fon and the Cardinal are unharmed and were escorted by soldiers in full armoured gear to Nso. The news has brought much relieve to the Nso people and those of Bamunka where he was kidnapped and it was feared that this may lead to inter-tribal conflict between the two villages in the midst of the Anglophone crisis. No ransom was paid for the Fon’s release. [28]

A communique from the Delegate of Transport states that the road from Nkambe to Kumbo has been blocked by Amba Boys and their collaborators and therefore road users are being urged to avoid using this road and take the alternative road going through Bafoussam.

The Delegation warns that those who decide otherwise are doing so at their own risk as these people terrorize road users and pressure them into parting with their hard-earned cash. While there is security, road users and drivers are being called upon to collaborate with security forces. [29]

12

UNICEF has expressed concerns about increasing violence on schools in the NW and SW regions of Cameroon where separatists are waging a war against the state. In a press release dated 6 November 2020, UNICEF stated that "Since the resumption of the school year less than a month ago, there have been multiple reports of kidnappings, harassment and killings affecting students and teachers" and went on to cite attacks on schools and learners in Kumbo (Bui division), Fundong (Boyo division) and Limbe (Fako division).

The UNICEF Regional Director for West and Central Africa, Marie-Pierre Poirier, condemned the attacks on schools: "Schools are places of learning where children should feel safe and protected. We call on all parties to protect all children, at school or in their communities and to uphold the principles of the Safe Schools Declaration, which calls for stopping attacks on schools, education facilities and personnel". [30]

13

Christians of St. Regina Pacis Parish in Ngarum, Nkambe subdivision have taken place in a mass to pray for peace in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon.

The mass which was officiated in the open air prayed for the head of state and also for Amba Boys in the bushes and soldiers and the focus was that a common ground would be found and that solutions would be found to the nearly three-year conflict that has caused so much loss of lives and property. The church has on several times condemned the violence from either side. [31]

		15	The military battalion of Donga Mantung has led a raid on the village of Luh in Ndu Subdivision where separatist fighters have been carrying out illegal activities preventing the population from going about their normal activities. The raid which took place two days ago led to the death of six separatist fighters and others fled to neighboring villages. Luh is one of the villages that maintains a notorious camp that is known to deter children from going to school and kidnapping people from Nkambe in exchange for ransom. Some of those kidnapped were even shot dead. This raid follows the one that was carried out in Ntamruh, Ndu Subdivision after separatists set fire on a local's compound and disappeared upon the arrival of security forces. [32]
2020	**December**	1	Today is being observed the world over as World AIDS Day under the theme, "Global Solidarity, Shared Responsibility". The Minister of Health, Dr. Manaouda Malachie is scheduled to hold a press conference to address this global disease and also to address the situation in the Anglophone regions where HIV patients have had irregular access to their ARVs as a result of the conflict. [33] A man by the name of Neba Ngwa has been arrested in Kumba in connection with the killing of seven school children at Kulu Memorial College. The man is said to have been part of the gang that killed the seven children while they were studying after school. [34]
		6	Regional elections are taking place across the National Territory at the behest of President Paul Biya. This is the first time such elections are taking place in the country. Secessionists have warned the populations in the NW and SW to steer clear of the polls in an attempt to render the elections ineffective. Government has promised that security will be available in all polling stations in the NW and SW for those wishing to vote. [35]

There is a fear of possible violence after the ruling CPDM party was declared winner of the December 6 regional elections.

According to international media reports, turnout was very low in the Anglophone regions where violence between separatists and soldiers has left many dead on both sides.

So far, the CPDM has not had the results contested by any other party that partook in the elections. [36]

10 In a related development, traders at the Bamenda Main Market have agreed to end "ghost towns" on Mondays as from 2021. The "ghost towns" have mainly paralyzed economic and other social activities in the town and across the entire Anglophone region.

The mayor of Bamenda, Paul Achobong Tamebeng told reporters that he was there to protect them and that the security of traders was guaranteed as they feared harassment, kidnapping and even sometimes far worse from the Amba Boys. [37]

The trial of three soldiers alleged to have taken part in the Ngarbuh Massacre on 14 February 2020 is set to begin in Yaounde today. The massacre coordinated by Mbororo grazers who acted as vigilantes led to the deaths of 21 people, most of whom were children.

14 They were killed when soldiers came to the village in search of secessionists but did not find them and instead shot indiscriminately. The government initially denied security force members were involved. The move while it falls short of expectations is generally welcomed. [38]

Students are going on Christmas holidays today across the national territory. This is taking place in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Anglophone secessionist crisis that saw the first term lasting only for 3 months instead of four as in the past.

18 Armed separatist fighters have attacked several schools across the NW and SW which they refer to as Ambazonia and this has generally affected school attendance in the region as most students have fled to Francophone regions.

We wish them all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year in advance. [39]

29	The Head of State, President Paul Biya is expected to address the nation tomorrow at 8:00pm in his traditional end-of-year speech. Among other things, it is expected that he will address the ongoing conflict between separatist fighters and government soldiers that has led to the loss of so many lives and the damage of property. It should be recalled that in December 2017 while returning from a trip abroad, Biya declared war on the secessionists. We shall relay the speech live tomorrow to you from the national station of the CRTV. [40]

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