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British Cameroons and its Impact  
on Recurrence of Conflicts (1961-2018)**

**Joseph Bonglo Kingsley, Suffian Mansor,  
and Azlizan Mat Enh\***

**Abstract**

*This study focuses on the nature of integration in the former British Cameroons after the United Nations Plebiscite of 1961. This work analyses the nature of the integration by closely examining the socio-economic and political developments during the post plebiscite period. The paper argues that it was the source for the recurrence of conflicts in the former British Cameroons, particularly Sardauna and Kurmi Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Taraba State, and the Northwest Region of Cameroon. The effect included the destruction of lives and property and colossal humanitarian crises involving Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees. The study uses the qualitative-cum-historical*

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*method of research involving the descriptive collation and analysis of historical data to come out with its findings. The data sources consulted comprised of primary, secondary and tertiary or internet materials. However, the findings of the study revealed that the socio-economic and political development during the post plebiscite period planted the seed of disenchantment due to the outright violation of promises and treaties by the governments of Nigeria, Cameroon, Britain and the United Nations (UN). Similarly, the study indicates that this resulted in lack of meaningful development, political apathy, disunity, and violence. This created impact such as protest, violence, intellectual and legal approaches. The implications this has included the comprehension gap, wrong placement of trust and the search for solutions are some of the implications for Nigeria, Cameroon, Britain, and the UN. In conclusion, the study theoretically was able to shade more light and awareness on how the socio-economic and political development during the post plebiscite period culminated in pseudo integration and its impact and implications for the former British Cameroons. For practitioners it entails that researchers interested in the study area should adequately explore existing and new sources of data in order to exhume and reconstruct the real history causing recurrence of conflict in the study area. While policy makers are enjoined to pursue a genuine and sincere policy formulation and implementation in tandem with regulated motivations regarding*

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*integration policies in the study area as the pathway way to effectively mitigate the prevalence of conflicts.*

**Keywords:** Cameroon, Conflict, Nigeria, Post Plebiscite, Pseudo Integration.

## I. General Background

Taking a retrospect of events and applying historical binoculars tells so much about the British Cameroons. The territory which was located along west and central Africa is sandwiched between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Cameroon. Past antecedent reveals that the British Cameroons was initially a part of the German colony from 1902. But after it was defeated during the First World War (WWI) 1914-1919, the colony became a mandate territory of the League of Nations in 1922.<sup>1</sup> The territory was overseen on behalf of the League under the mandateship system by Britain and France. Britain and France decided to divide the territory into two namely, the West Cameroons and the East Cameroons and administered it separately. Sankem pointed out that Britain administered the Western portion, alongside its colony of Nigeria (Figure 1).<sup>2</sup> While France administered the Eastern portion, alongside its colony of Central Africa. Meanwhile, the outbreak of the Second World War 1939-1945 led to the collapse of the League of Nations and gave birth to the United Nations Organization (UNO) in 1945.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the mandateship system was transformed to

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert Leonard Peacock. *A History of Modern Europe 1789-1970*. United Kingdom: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, (1971): 294.

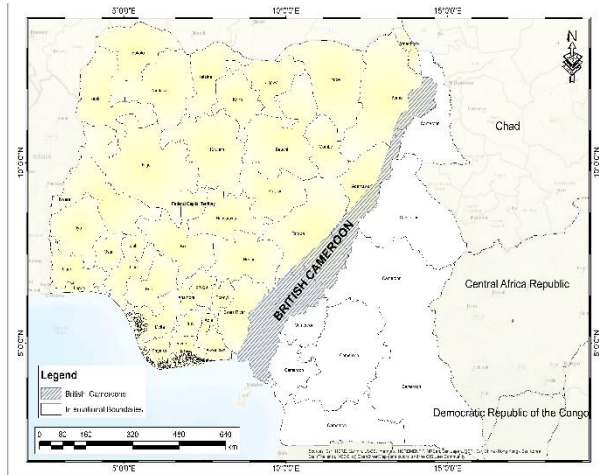
<sup>2</sup> Makem Yusuf Sankem. *The Politics of Chamba & Other Minorities in the Former Trustee (Kasah Amana): The Role of Gang Philip Makem II*. Nigeria: Tebish, (2005): 183.

<sup>3</sup> Harold W. Temperley and Author J. Grant. *Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (1789-1950)*. China: Longman, (1927): 410.

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trusteeship council. Incidentally, a new chapter began when colonialism started losing its grip on the continent of Africa and giving way to self-determination during the 1950s and 1960s. This development made Britain to consider granting independence to its colony of Nigeria on October 1, 1960. Similarly, France also proposed granting independence to its colony of Central Africa and East Cameroons on January 1, 1960.



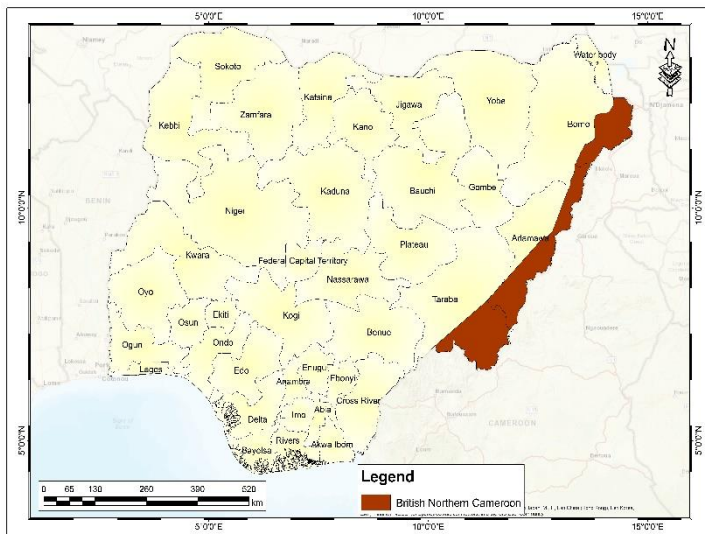
**Figure 1:** Map showing the British Cameroons. Source: Modified after Kirk-Greene, 1969.

Meanwhile, Tata stated that the above development made the Pan-African Movement to mount pressure on the UN concerning the future of the trust territories.<sup>4</sup> Britain had earlier informed the United Nations of its intention to end its trusteeship of the

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<sup>4</sup> John Nacatious Tatah. “A Memorandum submitted to the Judicial Commission of Inquiry in to the Gembu Riot of September, 1982.” (1986): 6-7.

Cameroon after its colony of Nigeria gains independence by October 1, 1960. This made the UN General Assembly to resolved that the people of the trust territory be granted the right to self-determination.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, during a special session of the trustee council meeting of the UN General Assembly in New York it was decided that a plebiscite be held in Northern Cameroons by November 11, 1959, to ascertain the wishes of the people (Figure 2).

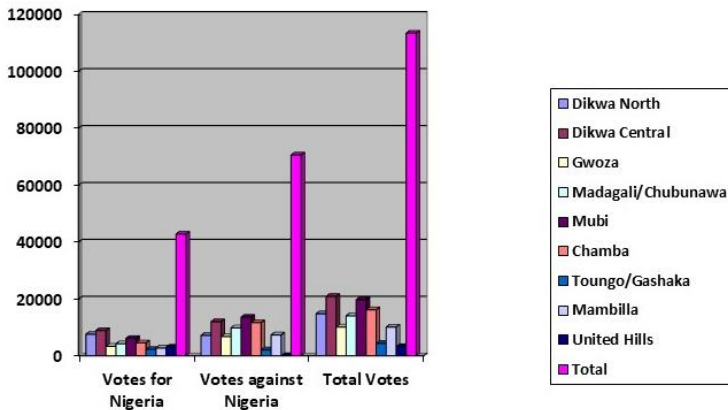


**Figure 2:** Map showing British Northern Cameroons. Source: Modified after Kirk-Greene, 1969.

<sup>5</sup> Tatah, "A Memorandum submitted to the Judicial Commission of Inquiry," 5-7.

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The UN appointed a plebiscite commissioner Dr. Djalal Abdoh who with his team conducted the plebiscite. The two options presented to the electorates were: (i) Do you wish the Northern Cameroons to be part of Northern Region of Nigeria when the Federation of Nigeria becomes independent on October 1, 1960? (ii) Are you in favor of deciding the future of Northern Cameroons at a later date? The result expressed the wishes of the people of the territory as follows: 42,788 voted for Nigeria and 70,546 voted against Nigeria.<sup>6</sup>



**Figure 3:** The result of the 1959 plebiscite in Northern Cameroons. Source: Trusteeship Committee Report on the Plebiscite of 1959 (U.N document T/1491 of November 1959).

<sup>6</sup> Anthony Hamilton Millard Kirk-Greene. *Adamawa Past and Present: An Historical Approach to the Development of a Northern Cameroons Province*. London, Cambridge University Press, (1969): iii-vi.

Meanwhile, the United Nations cancelled the plebiscite of 1959 and proposed that another be conducted in 1961. The reasons for the cancellation were because: (i) The result of the plebiscite was petitioned by the Emir of Adamawa (who is the traditional ruler) Province and Sir, Ahmadu Bello, the Premier of Northern Nigeria. (ii) The UN consulted the leaders of the different political parties in Southern Cameroons to take the decision.<sup>7</sup> Based on these reasons the UN resolved that another plebiscite should be conducted in the trust territories on February 11, 1961 (Figure 3). Under the leadership of Dr. Djalal Abdoh and his team the second plebiscite was successfully conducted. The questions tabled before the electorates were (a) Do you wish to attend independence by joining the Republic of Cameroon? or (b) Do you wish to attend independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria? The outcome shows that in the Northern Cameroons 146,296 voted for Nigeria, while 97,659 voted for Cameroon (Figure 4).<sup>8</sup> The result clearly indicates that the wishes of the people favored Nigeria during the plebiscite of 1961. On the other hand, Southern Cameroons choose Cameroon with a vote of 233,574, while those who voted Nigeria were 97,741 (Figure 6).<sup>9</sup> The result indicates that the wishes of the people of

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<sup>7</sup> Kirk-Greene. *Adamawa Past and Present*, v-x.

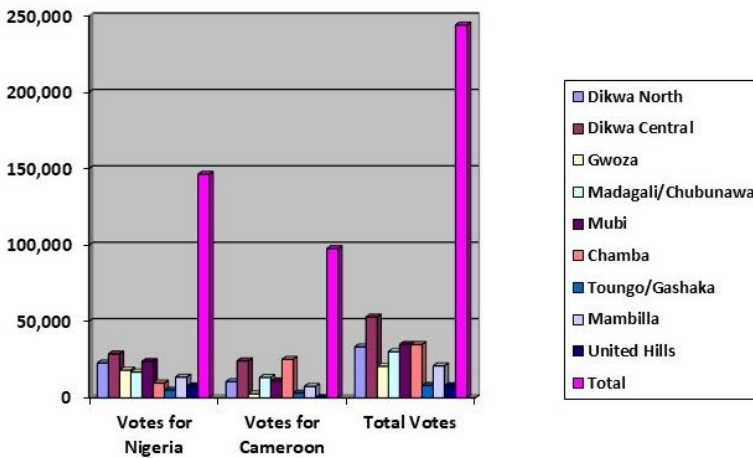
<sup>8</sup> Kirk-Greene. *Adamawa Past and Present*, iii-v.

<sup>9</sup> Bongfen Chem-langee. *The Paradoxes of Self-Determination in the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration: The Search for Identity, Well-being and Continuity*. New York: University Press of America, (2004): 174-175.



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Southern Cameroons favored the Republic of Cameroon with a wide margin.



**Figure 4:** The result of the 1961 plebiscite in Northern Cameroons. Source: Trusteeship Committee Report, United Nations Document T/1556 of April 1961.



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the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration: The Search for Identity, Well-being and Continuity,” 174-175.

The Republic of Cameroon protested the result of the plebiscite held in the Northern Cameroons stating that it was marked by irregularities and took it before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). When it could not make any head way, the UN General Assembly unanimously endorsed the result of the plebiscite on April 21, 1961.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the termination of trusteeship in Northern Cameroons was on June 1, 1961, and in Southern Cameroons on October 1, 1961. The territory was formally handed over to Nigeria at Mubi and to the Republic of Cameroon at Buea. But Britain and the UN failed to attend the talks and negotiations in Foumban (Cameroon) where authority was to be formally handed over to the leaders of the Republic of Cameroon President Ahmadu Ahijo and the Prime Minister of Southern Cameroons, Mr. John Foncha.<sup>11</sup> President Ahijo subsequently took advantage and detected the tone of the meeting as it pleased him. While this brought about the disappearance of the erstwhile British Cameroons, it transformed Nigeria and Cameroon in no small measure. The result was not only seen in the increased in the size of the territory, population and mineral

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<sup>10</sup> Tatab, “A Memorandum submitted to the Judicial Commission of Inquiry,” 7.

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan N. Sezah. *The Ambazonia Movement and its Political and Security Implications to Nigeria*, (M.A. dissertation, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria, 2000): 89-93.

resources, but also socio-culturally, politically and economically. However, the way Nigeria and Cameroon handled the gains indicates that they were gaps and teething issues in the post plebiscite period. The issues manifested themselves as symptomatic pseudo integration palaver.

The purpose of the study is to analyze whether the socio-economic and political development during the post plebiscite period in the former British Cameroons had impact upon the recurrence conflicts. In the light of the above this study attempt to address three key questions. Firstly, how was the nature of the socio-economic and political development during the post plebiscite period in the former British Cameroons? Secondly, what were some of the socio-economic and political development in the post plebiscite period in the former British Cameroons? Thirdly, what are the impact and implications of the socio-economic and political development in the post plebiscite period in the former British Cameroons? and then conclusion.

## **II. Literature Review**

The literature review was based on the objectives of this study. The literature review therefore addressed the following themes. Firstly, the nature of the socio-economic and political development during the post plebiscite period in the former British Cameroons. The works reviewed under this theme included P. Paglia (2007), N. E. Lenshie and A. Johnson (2012),

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N. E. Lenshie and A. S. Inalegwu (2012), A. Fonkem (2012), M. J. Njie (2019) and M. L. Ntesang (2015). However, these pieces of literature identify and agree that poor integration was a post plebiscite/independent problem in the study area and other parts of Africa. Therefore, the authors mostly narrated and highlighted the consequences of poor integration. But this research seeks to trace and comprehend why there was the problem of integration particularly in the study area?

Secondly, on some of the socio-economic and political development and their effect during the post plebiscite period in the former British Cameroons the following works were reviewed: A.H.M. Kirk-Greene (1969), J. C. Anene, (1970), Y. M. Sankem (2005), J. N Sezah (1984), N. J. Tatah (1983), J. N. Sezah (2000), J.N Sezah (1985), K. B. Joseph (2017), and C. A. Ebini (2019) among others. These literatures reveal there were certain episodes being witnessed by the people of the former British Northern and Southern Cameroons which affected them negatively. However, this research neatly and carefully paints the clear picture of the stages which explains the trends and how they affected the citizens of the study area. The third theme, the impact and implications of the socio-economic and political development during the post plebiscite period in the former British Cameroons looked at the following literatures: A.H.M. Kirk-Greene (1969), K. B. Joseph (2000), N.W. Ngah Louis (2001), and S.P. Anuye (2016), H. Kam Kah (2019), M.J. Njie (2019), and G. Akwen

(2021). These literatures disclose that there were various impact on the people of the study area. The goal of this study is to analyze the impact of the responses of the citizens of the former British Northern and Southern Cameroons to the concern authorities, Britain, and the UN.

Based on the above, it is clear and certain that there was a considerable dearth of literature on this theme. Similarly, it is this concern that shaped the perspective of this study. In seeking to fill this gap the study took a departure from previous research to address pseudo integration in the former British Cameroons by tracing its origin, examining the trends and effects, as well as the responses and impact.

### **III. Hypotheses**

This research upholds the following hypotheses:

- (i) The prevailing socio-economic and political developments in the former British Cameroons is a consequence of the pseudo integration policy generating persistent crises and conflicts.
- (ii) The prevailing socio-economic and political developments in the former British Cameroons is not a consequence of the pseudo integration policy generating persistent crises and conflicts.

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### **IV. Theoretical Framework**

The social identity theory<sup>12</sup> is the analytical tool for this study. The theory is appropriate because the citizens of the former British Cameroons are confronted with socio-economic and political barriers after deciding during the UN plebiscite of 1961 to joined Nigeria and Cameroon. This theory was developed by a British social psychologist, Henri Tajfel, and his team in the early 1970's. The goal is to 'specify and predict the 'circumstances' during which individuals think of themselves as individuals or members of a group as well as the consequences for the individual perceptions and the group behavior. The brain behind the social identity theory was for group membership to help and enable people to instill meaning in social situations or actions. The result was that group membership help people to define themselves and to determine how they relate with others.<sup>13</sup> In addition the social identity theory was conceived as an integrative theory that aims to connect cognitive processes with behavioral motivations. The primary focus of the theory at the beginning was on intergroup conflict and intergroup relationship, which made it to be referred to as the 'social identity theory of intergroup relations.' Meanwhile, the three psychological processes that explain how

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<sup>12</sup> Naomi Ellemers. "Social Identity Theory." Britannica, last updated February 16, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-identity-theory>.

<sup>13</sup> Ellemers, "Social Identity Theory."

individuals create and define their place in society are: social categorization, social comparison, and social identification.

The above analytical tool is very important in viewing and comprehending the dynamics of the integration palaver of the former British Cameroons. The intergroup relations between the citizens of the former British Cameroons (English-Speaking Cameroonians or Nigerians by Plebiscite) and Nigeria (Nigerians by birth) and Cameroon (French-Speaking Cameroonians) are based on circumstance that specify and predict the individual thinking of members of the respective groups. For example, the interrelations between the ‘French-Speaking and English-Speaking Cameroonians’ or ‘Nigerians by birth and Nigerians by Plebiscite’ is defined by some circumstances resulting from the perception members of the groups hold of each other. This entails that such a perception help explain the nature of the intergroup relations and why it affects integration.

Similarly, cognitive processes are deeply involved in giving meaning to social situations. In other words, the intergroup relations between the French-Speaking and English-Speaking Cameroonians and Nigerians by birth and Nigerians by Plebiscite were shaped by social categorization, social comparison, and social identity. The first stage upholds that group members consider themselves with others ‘as relatively interchangeable groups’ and not ‘separate, unique individuals.’<sup>14</sup> This means that

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<sup>14</sup> Ellemers, “Social Identity Theory.”



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intergroup relations are developed using interchanges or exchanges between individual or members of a group. This suggest that the situation of the former British Cameroons could be explored, and the respective individual and group members be guided to instill meaning in the social situation based on a proper context.

The second stage was associated with a group's "relative value or social standing" or its members.<sup>15</sup> The relative value of a group or its members is the interpretation obtained from being compared with other groups or its members. In the case of the citizens of the former British Cameroons, this was an absurd situation because they were being seen as second-class citizens compared to their other counterparts. Therefore, such a situation was abnormal, and provided the opportunity and need for a redress.

The third stage social identification portrays the attitude that people generally fail to perceive social situations or actions as separate observers.<sup>16</sup> This is so because the sense of who they are and how they relate with other groups inherently influences or becloud how they see individuals or members of the other group living around them. However, this reflects the position of the dominance of the French-Speaking Cameroonians and Nigerians by birth, who have continued to exercise undue influence and

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<sup>15</sup> Ellemers, "Social Identity Theory."

<sup>16</sup> Ellemers, "Social Identity Theory."

become intolerant of the citizens of the former British Cameroons thereby resulting in socio-economic and political conflict. Therefore, for lasting peace to reign in the former British Cameroons, this situation needed to be addressed in tandem with the context of a proper social situation or identification.

In order to comprehend and appreciate the nature of the integration it is pertinent to link or connect the above cognitive processes with the behavioral motivation. The social identity theory postulates that social behavior is determined by the character and motivations of a person as an individual (interpersonal behavior) and by the persons group membership (intergroup behavior).<sup>17</sup> Based on the social behavior, most people often assumed a positive image of their groups. But as a result of the cognitive process, they pay more attention on the ‘positively valued traits, attitude and behaviors’ considered as the prominent features of the group. This situation had the tendency to cause members to downplay or focus less on the important characteristics of other groups. Similarly, this could affect the distribution of materials or outcome between groups. The situation in the former British Cameroons reflect these behavioral motivations between the French-Speaking and the English-Speaking Cameroonians and the Nigerians by birth and Nigerians by Plebiscite. Therefore, the behavioral motivations needed to be properly studied and understood. For it would help

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<sup>17</sup> Ellemers, “Social Identity Theory.”

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the authorities guide or moderate such motivations. In short, the authorities of Nigeria and Cameroon need to strike a balance because during the plebiscite Nigeria and Cameroon campaigned for the citizens of the former British Cameroons to join them. However, the failure to checkmate the behavioral motivations and strike a balance had a probability of generating crisis or conflict.

### **V. Conceptual Clarification**

The concept Pseudo Integration could be view from possibly three broad perspectives. The first is the sematology combination of *pseudo*, an adjective, and *integration*, a noun. Etymologically *Pseudo* is derived from the Greek *pseudes* or *pseudein* meaning false or to lie.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile according to the Collins Dictionary of English Language *integration* is a derivative from Latin *integrare* meaning parts.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, a combination of “false or to lie” and “parts” connotes quite a number of things. However, three key issues could be deduced. Firstly, it suggests that a part or section sees the incorporation or amalgamation by plebiscite with either Nigeria or Cameroon as some false situation or lies because of what it anticipated from the union which unfortunately could not come to fruition. In other words, based on expectations or promises and the reality, a part feels it was falsehood and lies that were on the campaign trail of the leaders who made a lot of

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<sup>18</sup> Patrick Hanks. *The Collins Dictionary of English Language*. Great Britain, Collins & Sons, (1985): 759.

<sup>19</sup> Hanks, *The Collins Dictionary of English Language*, 759.

unfulfilled promises during the plebiscite of 1961. Secondly, it implies that the perception of falsehood or lies was not discern early before the decision or action was taken to go into the amalgamation by plebiscite with Nigeria or Cameroon. This means that a part or section of the union or amalgamation only became aware of deceit after accepting or agreeing to join either Nigeria or Cameroon. Thirdly, it portrays the consciousness or awareness that a part perceives the union or amalgamation by plebiscite possibly to have been based on some tricks and deceit that it joined either Nigeria or Cameroon and which amount to a mere loss and not ready to concede.

A second view of Pseudo Integration could be derived from the opposite meaning of integration. In this sense it is the *de facto* act of not including a part or section when taking decisions and actions which are considered very important. This further suggest that the union or amalgamation by plebiscite to either Nigeria or Cameroon did not really or practically convey a sense of acceptance to a part or section over time. It is important to note that such a perception might probably had far reaching and unpleasant consequences for Nigeria and Cameroon.

Meanwhile in an ideal situation it was expected that integration should either take the form of acculturation or evolving deliberate government policies to ensure or promote genuine proper unity and peaceful co-existence for mutual benefits. But this was not so for sections of Northern and

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Southern Cameroons which joined Nigeria and Cameroon respectively. The reasons stated by Abubakar and Joseph might have been due to the following, unfulfilled promises and breach of agreements made by Nigeria and Cameroon, neglect of the area in terms of socio-political and economic development and lack of deliberate government policies to foster genuine integration.<sup>20</sup> However, despite the fact that it has now mark sixty-one years that the union or amalgamation by plebiscite took place, yet you still hear comments from highly place citizens of both Cameroon and Nigeria which calls for a rethink and also heart felt concern to rationale minds with milk of human kindness. In other words, the utterances and comments convey or indicate that pseudo integration seems to have been what was achieved in the study area. For example, Honorable Joseph Wirba a Cameroon parliamentarian quoted the statement made by a Cameroon State Minister who described the makeup of Cameroon hilariously and inhumanely portraying the size and power of the Francophones over the Anglophones. According to him, the Minister asked the question “what can few cubes of sugar do to a full bucket of water.” It was then the parliamentarian asked the Minister “who

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<sup>20</sup> Ahmadu Adi Abubakar and Kingsley Bonglo Joseph. “United Nations Decolonization in the Trusteeship Territory: A Case Study of the former Northern Cameroons.” (Paper Presented at the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN) Zonal Conference, Department of History and Archaeology, Taraba State University TSU, Jalingo), (2012): 3-4.

was the water and who was the cube of sugar?”<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Kam Kah stated that Francophones often used the following denigrating terms to describe Anglophones: “Biafrans” “enemies in the house” “come no go” and others.<sup>22</sup> He pointed out that this contributed to more tension and distrust in the country.

Furthermore, in Nigeria the former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar was taken to court by the Attorney-General of Nigerian, Abubakar Malami alleging that he was not a Nigerian citizen by birth and that he cannot contest in the 2019 presidential election.<sup>23</sup> Recently, the minister made a public statement that those who join Nigeria after 1960 are not the same with other Nigerian citizens. Statements of this nature are not only fallacious but send a lot of negative feelings and segregate against citizens who are from the affected areas. However, it is imperative to note that this parts that are sideline and belittled are very strategic and significant to both Nigeria and Cameroon as already noted. The effect of this attitude is that it reconfirms not only the veracity but also reinforces the pseudo integration phenomenon in the study area.

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<sup>21</sup> “Honorable Wirba in 2016.” *Cameroon News Agency*, October 1, 2021.

<https://www.facebook.com/CAMEROONNEWSAGENCY/videos/honorable-wirba-in-2016/549501582953872/>.

<sup>22</sup> Henry Kam Kah. “Come-No-Go/Le ennemi... dans la Maison’ Reflecting on on the Lingoes in Cameroon’s Urban History.” *Journal of Modern African History, Politics and Culture* 7, no. 1, (2019): 13-14.

<https://doi.org/10.26806/modafr.v7i1.185>.

<sup>23</sup> Linda Ikeji. “Abubakar Atiku is not qualified to run for President, he’s not a Nigerian by Birth.” (2019). <https://www.lindaikejisblog>.

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Thirdly, pseudo integration could be view as a form of neocolonialism by Nigeria and Cameroon with the de facto approval of the United Nations. This is because Nigeria and Cameroon made promises and treaties that they will fulfill with the United Nations as the umpire. Unfortunately, these agreements and promises were being violated in different ways and yet the umpire decided to deliberately be mute or ignore. Is this not an indication that the United Nations was condescending to the misnomer that national sovereignty is a cloak for allowing the violations of international law by nation states? However, several evidence abound which suggest that the United Nations has slept off or turned a blind eye being as an international watchdog. For instance, when Cameroon decided to scrap the Federal structure in 1972 (just 11 years after the plebiscite) which breach the agreement that gave birth to the Federal United Republic of Cameroon.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, this brought into effect a Unitary constitution by fraudulent means purposefully to benefit the Francophones over the Anglophones. Yet the United Nations was silent about these grave issues. Meanwhile, Nigeria also breaches the promises and agreement made to Northern Cameroons just fifteen years after the plebiscite.<sup>25</sup> For example, Nigeria unequivocally went contrary to its promise and in 1976 abolished the regional system and created twelve states (12) and

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<sup>24</sup> “The Two Alternative: a Southern Cameroons Gazette.” *Southern Cameroons Gazette*, (1960): 3-4.

<sup>25</sup> Sankem, *The Politics of Chamba*, 34.

deliberately split Northern Cameroons Province (known as Sardauna Province) into four states in Nigeria. This includes Bornu, Adamawa, Taraba, and Benue States.<sup>26</sup>

At this juncture, it is pertinent to note that the long period of insensitivity and negligent to resolved pseudo integration by the concern authorities and the UN paved ways for the recurrence of crises and conflict in the study area. In addition, the inability and failure to effectively mitigate this menace over time has made the area a cesspool for the recurrence of deadly crises and conflicts. Some of the notable crises and conflict witnessed in the area include: - the 1982, 2001 and 2017 conflicts in Sardauna Local Government Area (LGA) of Taraba State in Nigeria, the 1996 Kurmi demonstration in Kurmi LGA of Taraba State in Nigeria, the 1984 Matatsine uprising in Bornu and Adamawa States and the recent Boko Haram insurgency in Bornu State and part of Adamawa State (former Northern Cameroons). In the same vein, the 1991 political demonstrations witnessed heavy repression in the Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon and now the ongoing armed conflict between the Ambazonian separatists and the government of Cameroon since 2017 (former Southern Cameroons).

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<sup>26</sup> Sankem, *The Politics of Chamba*, 35.



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From the foregoing, this study therefore views pseudo integration as the act of negligence, pretense, and outright failure to fulfill promises, agreements and treaties by nation states or international organizations to its citizens or members which could probably result to crisis or conflict culminating in both short- and long-term consequences if not fully resolve and mitigated on time using acceptable methods for mutual cooperation and peaceful co-existence.

### **VI. Data and Research Method**

This study employed the qualitative-cum-historical method of research involving the descriptive collation and analysis of historical data and the primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources of data consulted comprised of oral interviews, memorandums, legal reports, and archival materials. The importance of oral interview in this study was to corroborate with documented sources to ascertain the historical veracity of the event being considered from the present generation of some prominent individuals from the study area. The interviewees are from the study area and some even participated prominently in the plebiscite of 1961 which decided the fate of the Northern and Southern Cameroons. Some have held important positions in the governments of Nigeria and Cameroon and vividly witnessed the signs and symptoms of the theme under consideration. Therefore, their statements are from experiences and not armchair

altercations. The secondary sources of data used included documented materials like journals, periodicals, newspapers, magazines, conference papers, books and the tertiary or internet materials. Focusing on this theme, therefore, the research adopted the content analysis method in analyzing the data to come out with the findings of the study.

## **VII. Analysis and Findings**

### **A. Reasons for the Partition of the former British Cameroons into Two (Northern and Southern Cameroons)**

The British colonialist were the architects behind the partition of the former British Cameroons into two namely the British Northern Cameroons (BNC) and British Southern Cameroons (BSC). The development was informed by the proximity of the territory with the British colony of Nigeria when Britain assumed the administration of the territory as a mandate territory in 1922.<sup>27</sup> The reasons given by Britain was due to the differences in history and socio-cultural composition and for administrative convenience.

On the former, the British colonial officials who spearheaded the evolution of the Nigerian colony from the “southern and the northern protectorates” disclosed that the situation in the British

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<sup>27</sup> Sankem, *The Politics of Chamba*, 183.

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Cameroons was similar to Nigeria.<sup>28</sup> In other words, the coastal influence which marked the societies in the south was different from the far-removed hinterland communities in the north. The conclusion arrived at by the British officials was that southern Nigeria, particularly in the southeast, shared many similarities with BSC, while northern Nigeria had much in common with BNC.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, it was important to maintain the differences.

Based on the above, the latter purpose was pursued by the British officials. The reason advanced by them was that annexation of southeast Nigeria with BSC and northern Nigeria with BNC was administratively convenient and cost effective since they were lacking in manpower.<sup>30</sup> This development encouraged the movement of people across the two regions significantly and weakened the international boundary between Nigeria and the British Cameroons. Similarly, local administrative officers for the territory were mostly recruited from northern and southern Nigeria.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Joseph C. Anene. *The International Boundaries of Nigeria: The Framework of an Emergent African Nation*. London: Longman, (1970): 94–99.

<sup>29</sup> Chem-langee, *The Paradoxes of Self-Determination in the Cameroons*, 11-12.

<sup>30</sup> Chem-langee, *The Paradoxes of Self-Determination in the Cameroons*, 36.

<sup>31</sup> Chem-langee, *The Paradoxes of Self-Determination in the Cameroons*, 37.

## B. Colonial Legacies in the former British Cameroons

In a broader perspective this entire work represents the colonial legacies in the former British Cameroons. However, some of the specific colonial legacies include: the colonization by three (3) colonial powers, particularly witnessing of different colonial administrative, economic and educational policies. The colonization of the former British Cameroons by three (3) different colonial powers marks out the territory from the rest of Africa. This comprised of the Germans 1884-1914, Britain 1914-1961 and French 1914-1961.<sup>32</sup> Each of this colonial power left a mark on the territory. The German policy of administration was the paternalism. The reign was associated with the establishment of plantation economy which greatly boosted the general agricultural productivity, particularly in the southern Cameroons. This equally resulted in the construction of road networks, railways, airports, and general infrastructural development.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, more schools were open, and funding was provided for the mission schools.

The British adopted the indirect rule policy of administration in the territory from 1922 based on the Native Authority Ordinance of 1914 which was already in used in northern

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<sup>32</sup> Wongbo George Agime, *European Colonisation in Cameroon and its Aftermath, with Special Reference to Southern Cameroon, 1884-2014*. (M.A. thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, 2016): 57-96.

<sup>33</sup> Agime, *European Colonisation in Cameroon*, 75-77.

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Nigeria.<sup>34</sup> However, it was more successful in the BNC. But the BSC was administered by a Governor of the Southern Province and a Senior Resident.<sup>35</sup> Unlike the Germans who invested in the agriculture of BSC, the British deliberately neglected the growing economy which they inherited, and it dwindled and affected many who were beneficiaries. Equally, Britain inherited German schools but turned them to English schools by introducing the English system of education.<sup>36</sup>

The French colonialist oversee the eastern Cameroons as earlier pointed above. Its administrative policy was the assimilation and association. The most superior official at the regional level was the High Commissioner who supervise all other sections.<sup>37</sup> Economically, the French auctioned the asset inherited from the Germans. But improve the roads, railway, air services, enlarge the Doula seaport and encourage the production of cash crops such as coffee, cocoa, palm produce and others. Because of this the trade increase between 1922-1939 was about 500 percent.<sup>38</sup> In the education section, the French continued the foundation laid by the Germans and provision of subsidies to schools who operated in line with the accepted curriculum. They

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<sup>34</sup> Verkijika. G. Falso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges. Vol. 2, The Colonial and Post Colonial Periods*. London: Macmillan (1989): 84.

<sup>35</sup> Agime, *European Colonisation in Cameroon*, 95.

<sup>36</sup> Agime, *European Colonisation in Cameroon*, 81-82.

<sup>37</sup> Agime, *European Colonisation in Cameroon*, 88-89.

<sup>38</sup> Agime, *European Colonisation in Cameroon*, 88.

also permit the non-French schools to operate in the area and added more primary, secondary, and technical schools.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, education witnessed significant improvement in the French Cameroons.

In addition, the religious belief systems were also impacted on by the colonial activities. Initially, the inhabitants were pagans or animist<sup>40</sup> based on their traditional way of life. But external influence introduced new form of religious beliefs. During the precolonial period Islam infiltrated the area through the Sokoto Jihad (Holy War) which began in Hausa land in 1804. The jihad spread to other places and throughout northern Nigeria. As a result, the Adamawa Emirate (AE) was established in 1809 from where series of campaigns were launched on the pagan or animist tribes for them to accept Islam.<sup>41</sup> Because of the success recorded the AE expanded and covered the entire area. Therefore, Islam replaced the pagan or animist way of worship for the majority of the people. For the southern Cameroons the situation was different for it moved from the initial traditional religion to Christianity. This change was however the effort of the early of missionary who most resided at the shores of the Atlantic Ocean.

### **C. The Nature of the Socio-economic and Political Development during the Post Plebiscite Period in the**

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<sup>39</sup> Agime, *European Colonisation in Cameroon*, 87.

<sup>40</sup> Kirk-Greene. *Adamawa Past and Present*, 5.

<sup>41</sup> Abubakar Saad. *The Lambe of Fombina: A Political History Adamawa 1809-1901*. Kaduna: Ahmadu Bello University Press. (1979): 1-4.

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### **former British Cameroons**

To properly and vividly understand the nature of the socio-economic and political development during the post plebiscite period in the former British Cameroons, it will be important for us to have a germane historical context. This will not only enable us picture unfolding events in their proper sequence, but also give an insight of the reasons why such occurred. Moreover, this will also erase the supposition ignorantly held by some that the plebiscite was an end and not a means to an end. Indeed, it constituted a serious misnomer and anachronism in the historical spectrum of the study area.

Historically, one could possibly trace the inception and clear picture of pseudo integration in the British Cameroons by carefully taking a look at the evolution or formative stages of the socio-economic and political development of the area. The period of the beginning of colonial rule provides a unique and better purview for which to situate this discourse. The socio-economic and political state of the Northern Cameroons was considerably at a very low ebb under the Germans. This was largely due to the inability of the Germans to understand the historical configuration or events in the territory, prior to their possession of the colony. In other words, the wrong perception of the Germans on the autochthonous was the first grope into darkness. They strongly held the view that since the Fulani were in authority, they were the aboriginal rulers of the area. This assumption made the

Germans to believe that partnership with the Fulani was pivotal for them to fully succeed in governing the area. This mindset of the Germans has been clearly captured by Chem-Langee in these words:

...they perceived an apparently unified, extensive, and well organized quasi-feudal system ruled by the Fulani princes. This misperception was the basis of the German Adamawa administrative creed: to gain the loyalty of the Fulani princes, one must recognize their authority and rule through them... Also, German resident commissioners were instructed not to interfere with the internal management of local affairs but to confine themselves to maintaining German rule and keeping the peace between the non-Fulani and the Fulani in the region.<sup>42</sup>

It is very obvious from the above statement that the Germans were putting the cart before the horse which was quite an impossible task. For example, the Fulani rulers were involved in dire slave raid of the non-Fulani and non-Muslims groups. In effort to promote peace the Germans gave guns to Fulani who instead use it to wreck more havoc on the non-Fulani and non-Muslims communities. Therefore, the tension was only

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<sup>42</sup> Chem-langee, *The Paradoxes of Self-Determination in the Cameroons*, 40.



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getting worse until the outbreak of the First World War when Britain took over the area. It is however instructive to note that lack of stability hindered any meaningful project and development in the region. But what became the situation with the coming of Britain?

Meanwhile, it should be noted that both Britain and the United Nations had earlier expressed their intention for the Trust Territory when the Trusteeship Council took effect in 1947. Kirk-Greene quoted the aims and goals of the report at the opening session indicating that:

...a practical, workable system of international supervision of the administration of the Trust Territories...The United Nations and the Administering Authorities now solemnly join hands in the great venture of reassuring, by deeds, the inhabitants of the Trust Territories as to their future political, economic, social, and educational advancement, the ultimate realization of their aspirations towards self-government or independence.<sup>43</sup>

The above statement sounded so inspiring and hope assuring for the people of the trust territory, but in relative terms, it yielded little or no result. The British officials after taking over the

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<sup>43</sup> Kirk-Greene, *Adamawa Past and Present*, 45.

Northern Cameroons barely did only very little to develop the area. Besides the system of administration which brought the non-Fulani and non-Muslims to rule at the grassroots, which won the goodwill of the locals, they could not really do much in the areas of education, social policy, and economic development. Chem-Langee described the poor state of the education level in these words:

In 1949, the British Representative on the Trusteeship Council declared that illiteracy in the remote northern part of the region was almost 100 percent. In 1958, when the United Nations was seriously considering independence for the Cameroons, Northern Cameroons had only 3 primary schools, 1 teacher training college at Mubi, several mission elementary schools, 2 holders of undergraduate diplomas in administration and native treasury accounts, and 1 university graduate with a B. Sc. Hon.<sup>44</sup>

Meanwhile, it could be deduced from the above facts that the Northern Cameroons was still seriously lacking and lagging behind in terms of any socio-economic and political development haven being a Mandateship and also Trusteeship Territory for 42

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<sup>44</sup> Chem-langee, *The Paradoxes of Self-Determination in the Cameroons*, 4-6.

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years. In addition, Britain made matters more complicated by diplomatically administering the region jointly with its Nigerian colony and equally evading financial burden. The result was that it obliterated the Anglo-German international boundary which divided the area; a development which made the Northern Native Authority (NNA) reminiscent of Jihadist victory which also elicited the tendency to remake history again. Sankem, asserts that it was the backwardness and outright neglect from both the Native Authority and Britain that made the people of the region to vote not to join Nigeria in the 1959 plebiscite.<sup>45</sup> Unlike Northern Cameroons, the Southern Cameroons was slightly different and more advanced under the German rule. Chem-Langee admitted that the Germans carried out a number of economic activities when he pointed out that:

*They developed an intra-regional trade system, carried out experiments on and developed cocoa, kolanuts, palm kernels, palm oil, ramia, rubber, and tobacco. They also established a botanical garden, constructed many buildings, roads, railroads and seaports, and provided a telegraph line, except between Government*

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<sup>45</sup> Sankem, *The Politics of Chamba*, 190-103.

*offices and the military airfields remained the dream of the German General Staff.*<sup>46</sup>

Considering the above statement, it is clear that Germany was able to get things right in the Southern Cameroons compared to the Northern Cameroons and established a good number of beneficial economic activities. Nevertheless, the British could not reasonably add to the effort made above. This is evidence in the report of the U N visiting mission in 1949 which described the state of the roads as “poor, inadequate and unsatisfactory.” In the educational aspect Southern Cameroons did not have adequate facilities but did fairly better than Northern Cameroons. For by 1938 it only had 6 Government, 19 Native Authority and 228 mission primary schools while only 53 were recognized, the Roman Catholic Mission opened the first secondary school in 1939 and the second in 1949 and it also had 6 elementary teacher training colleges and Government Trade Centre at Ombe.<sup>47</sup>

From the foregoing, it is very clear that Britain and the United Nations did not demonstrate enough sincere commitment to advance the socio-economic and political development to prepare the inhabitants of the Trust Territories to achieve self-government or independence. To make matter worse, both Britain and the U N evaded financial burdens. In other words,

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<sup>46</sup> Chem-langee, *The Paradoxes of Self-Determination in the Cameroons*, 50-56.

<sup>47</sup> Chem-langee, *The Paradoxes of Self-Determination in the Cameroons*, 54.

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unlike Germany which invested in the territory, Britain did not invest and neglected to manage what Germany had put in place, a situation that affected the general development of the territory significantly. In such a situation one should have expected that the U N visiting missions to called on the General Assembly to replace Britain or take any better measure that would enable it fulfilled it goals in the Trust Territories. Unfortunately, that was not done.

Moreover, it was under these deplorable conditions that the plebiscite took place. This implied that they were quite enormous challenges in the Trust Territory. Equally, it could also be inferred that the same wishy-washy attitude shown by Britain and the UN seems to have been copied by Nigeria and Cameroon after they later assumed the administration of the territory. It is therefore against this background that we shall carefully examine some socio-economic and political development of the post plebiscite period in the Northern and Southern Cameroons.

### **D. Some Socio economic and Political Development and their Effect during the Post Plebiscite Period in the former British Cameroons**

The major and dominant feature of the post plebiscite period was the failure of Nigeria, Cameroon, Britain, and the UN to perform their responsibilities. While Nigeria and Cameroon may be held liable for failing to fulfill their promises and agreements,

Britain and the UN could also be liable for the abandon and unfinished business which affected the consolidated process of the plebiscite.<sup>48</sup> Since it was upon these promises and agreement reached that the people of Cameroons voted during the plebiscite of 1961. The expectations of the inhabitants were that Nigeria, Cameroon, Britain, and the UN would honor their part of the agreements or promises. In other words, the high expectations held by the inhabitants of the Northern and Southern Cameroons were so firm and strong knowing fully well that they had the basis. For instance, here is the promise made by the Premier of Northern Nigeria late Sir Ahmadu Bello, who said that:

*My government has guaranteed that if you return to Nigeria, your country will continue to be a separate province, equal in all respects to all the other 12 provinces of the Northern Region. Both the Nigerian Federal Government and British Government have agreed to act as witnesses to this guaranteed. You the people of the Northern Cameroons have been informed of this guarantee.*<sup>49</sup>

Tata also ascribed this statement to the Premier after the result of the plebiscite of 1961 “We assure them that their trust will never be betrayed. And the promises given to them by my

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<sup>48</sup> Sezah, *The Ambazonia Movement*, 14-16.

<sup>49</sup> Kirk-Greene, *Adamawa Past and Present*, iii-vii.

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government before the plebiscite will be honored.” Furthermore, the Premier while celebrating the victory of Nigeria during the official handover of the territory at Mubi, welcome and assured the people of the Northern Cameroons in these words:

*I most sincerely welcome you to Nigeria and assure you at all times of the friendship of my government. The journey was long, but thanks to God that we have reached the end. Our brothers and sisters of the Trust Territory will now rejoin us in peace and unity.*<sup>50</sup>

Indeed, all the promises above and assurances made to the people of Northern Cameroons never saw the light of the day. In other words, the people of Northern Cameroons unexpectedly had their hopes dashed by Nigeria and Britain. This situation seems to suggest that the plebiscite was the end and any other thing after did not matter. Putting oneself in the shoes of people of the former Northern Cameroons it is clear that the situation obtainable is not in accordance with the spelled-out terms and conditions. Put differently, is the former Northern Cameroon a Province or State in Nigeria today as was promise and assured? No. Is the Federal government of Nigeria and Britain playing any role as guarantors to ensure the promises are fulfilled? No. This undoubtedly amounts to violation of conditions upon which the plebiscite was

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<sup>50</sup> Oje Oriere. “The Secession of the Southern Cameroons,” *Headline News*, May, (1981): 3-4.

promised, and it was for this motive Northern Cameroons join Nigeria.

The situation in the former Southern Cameroons appears gloomier. This is because it was an independent territory exercise authority as a quasi-autonomous state.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, the agreement which produced the Federal United Republic of Cameroon after the plebiscite clearly described the coming together of Republic of Cameroon and Southern Cameroons as a ‘union of two states. This was also admitted by President Ahmadu Ahijo during his speech at Buea, while celebrating the handover of the territory by the British commissioner. According to Ahijo the coming together of the two sides would be “laboratory test for an African union of states speaking English and French.”<sup>52</sup> Sezah pointed out the effect when Britain and the UN failed to attend the agreed negotiation at Fomuban which was to finally sealed the union agreement also transfer power to the leaders of the Republic of Cameroon, President Ahmadu Ahijo and the Southern Cameroon, Prime Minister Mr Foncha.<sup>53</sup> However, a passionate Parliamentarian Mr Thamson had earlier blame the British government for neglect, but also suggested the steps to take in

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<sup>51</sup> “Southern Cameroons Independence Constitution,” Federal Survey Department, Nigeria, 1958.  
<https://www.ambazonia.org/media/pdfs/Southern%20Cameroons%20Independence%20Constitution.pdf>.

<sup>52</sup> Oriere, “The Secession of the Southern Cameroons,” 5.

<sup>53</sup> Sezah, *The Ambazonia Movement*, 14-16.



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order to avert any gloomy future for the Southern Cameroons when he stated that:

*“One is bound to come to the conclusion that the Government have failed to take the problem of the Southern Cameroons sufficiently seriously...I suggest that even at this late stage the Government should send to the talks which are to be resumed in a day or so between the Cameroun Republic, the Southern Cameroons and Her Majesty’s Government, not a civil servant, but a Minister...but the situation demands the personal attention of a Government Minister to make sure that the necessary sense of urgency is given to trying to make a proper arrangement between the Cameroun Republic and the territory of the Southern Cameroons.”<sup>54</sup>*

Despite the call by this sage and British statesman the government ignored it and refused to attend this stage to consolidate the union arrangement. Incidentally, President Ahijo took the opportunity as a *de facto* head to detect the outcome as it

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<sup>54</sup> “Southern Cameroons Hansard.” UK Parliament, August 1, 1961.  
[https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1961/aug/01/southern-cameroons?\\_\\_cf\\_chl\\_f\\_tk=r0L20EoKFtL4m8FULW01E7CHXMQFByen23zHgs.jycg-1710163940-0.0.1.1-1770](https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1961/aug/01/southern-cameroons?__cf_chl_f_tk=r0L20EoKFtL4m8FULW01E7CHXMQFByen23zHgs.jycg-1710163940-0.0.1.1-1770).

please him. This possibly may be the reason for his subsequent actions and decisions. In other words, the failure of Britain and the UN to attend the talks between President Ahmadu Ahijo and Prime John Foncha is possibly what paved way for all that has taken place in the territory to this very moment. In addition, to still point out another case of violation one should pose this question. Is Cameroon presently still a Federal Republic of Cameroon as was documented in the Gazette? No.

The activities of Britain and the UN also glaringly contributed to the hurly-burly and derailment process in the Trust Territory. Measuring the antecedents which marked the territory from after the First World War when it became a Mandate and later Trust Territory after the Second World War and the assurances and role of Britain and the UN it is obvious that a betrayal or some treacherous activities occurred. This is buttressed in a reconsideration and close re-examination of the statement made by Kirk-Greene. This however implies that the implications of the plebiscite for UN and Britain were grave. Kirk-Greene succinctly reported the assurances by the UN and supported by Britain that:

*...a practical, workable system of international supervision of the administration of the Trust Territories...The United Nations and the Administering Authorities now solemnly join hands in the great venture of reassuring, by*

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*deeds, the inhabitants of the Trust Territories as to their future political, economic, social, and educational advancement, the ultimate realization of their aspirations towards self-government or independence.*<sup>55</sup>

From the above statement, the facts are certainly clear that Britain and the UN are to be blame for the episode in the Trust Territory not only for the post plebiscite period but before and during the plebiscite. Similar, the above statement assured the people of self-government or independence and not plebiscite. It could be deduced therefore, that some shenanigans snaked in from the corner with the option of plebiscite. Unfortunately, even the General Assembly could not discern the wrong writing on the wall but embraced and celebrated it as the right solution to the Trust Territory.

Therefore, it could be observed from the above scenario that the citizens of the former Trust Territory were full of high expectations and hope based on the promises and treaties/talks made by Nigeria, Cameroon, Britain, and the UN. This also suggest that it was the turn of Nigeria, Cameroon, Britain, and the UN to fulfill the promises and agreement made to the citizens of the Northern and Southern Cameroons since they had carried out their part of the agreement during the plebiscite of 1961. In other

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<sup>55</sup> Kirk-Greene. *Adamawa Past and Present*, 54-57.

words, after the pomp and pageantry was over, the reality gradually began to dawn on the people of the former Trust Territory revealing to them the consequences of the choices they made.

In addition, the Northern and Southern Cameroons suffered neglect from both the Nigeria and Cameroon governments. This was much seen in the lack of provision of basic infrastructures and amenities like schools, hospitals, roads, pipe born water, electricity etc. This simply implied that like Britain did (as seen above) so also did Nigeria and Cameroon followed suit by not deliberately making effort to provide basic infrastructures in the study area. This sad situation was likely to make the inhabitants of the former Trust Territory to be full of disappointment, regret, and frustration. Similarly, it means that the people were still faced with a lot of untold hardship and suffering after participating in the plebiscite with high hopes. This dominant feature of the post plebiscite period was properly captured by the late Ambassador Emmanuel Njiwa in these words:

*“After the plebiscite Saradauna Province was abandon for long by Nigeria, since it was not connected to other parts of the country. This*

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*made the area to continue to carry out its  
activities with Cameroon as before”<sup>56</sup>*

The above statement indicates the poor state and condition of basic amenities and infrastructure during the post plebiscite period in the study area. This also suggest that the failure of Nigeria and Cameroon governments compelled the people of the border communities to revisit their pre-plebiscite ties in order to meet their basic needs for survival.

Poor integration process was another dominant theme that featured prominently in the post plebiscite period. Just like the way promises made were not fulfilled, and the area suffered neglect, so also was the integration process neglected. Expectedly formal steps should have been taken by the government of Nigeria and Cameroon through making some deliberate policies with specific goals to promote integration and unity among the people of the two states in order to achieve an enduring togetherness and peace. Ngah, admitted that the inhabitants had to struggle to fused themselves into the socio-cultural, economic and political *milieu* a process which made them to be vulnerable to

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<sup>56</sup> Joseph Bonglo Kingsley. *A History of Trans-Border Economic Relations between Sardauna Local Government Area of Taraba State, Nigeria and the Northwest Province of Cameroon 1961-1991*. (M.A. thesis, Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria. 2017): 46.

device discrimination and setbacks.<sup>57</sup> Suffice it to say that integration was merely captured as statements on paper. But the effective implementation was missing and did not create a positive sense of understanding and togetherness after the plebiscite. For instance, it was only in the 1963 Constitution of Nigeria that make mention of the issue of citizenship for those who participated in the plebiscite of 1961.<sup>58</sup> Other versions of the Nigerian Constitution are silent about this important event. Ordinarily one would expect that a clause should be enshrine concerning the plebiscite in order to balance the different foundations that make up Nigeria. Similarly, integration suffered a major setback in the Republic of Cameroon because the government discarded the federal structure which brought the two sides together. According to Ebini, this development made some leaders of Southern Cameroons to ceased to see the union with Cameroon as legal union since the government violated the

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<sup>57</sup> Joseph Ngah, field researcher interview by the researcher on “Conflict Mediation on part of the northern borderland of Nigeria and Cameroon” March 13, (2021). Audio. He is 120 years, Retired Headmaster and pioneer Teacher from the Mambilla Plateau, Sardauna LGA. He participated in the United Nations plebiscite of 1961 in the Northern Cameroons as the Returning Officer. He is one of those who open the first Primary School in the area in 1954. He is honored with the traditional title of Dan-Masani Panso by the Panso Traditional Council.

<sup>58</sup> “The 1963 Constitution of Nigeria,” Global Citizenship Observatory. <https://data.globalcit.eu/NationalDB/docs/1963%20Constitution%20of%20Nigeria.pdf>.

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agreement by replacing it unilaterally.<sup>59</sup> In addition, since, the government of Cameroon could not make it well known to its citizens, the Francophones termed the Anglophones with all sort of denigrating names such as Biafran, Come no go and enemies in the house and many others. It is therefore certain that such development could only be sending the message of pseudo integration or citizenship.

Another theme which unfolded during the post plebiscite period was the problem of second-class citizenship. The issue was more or less noticeable when one considered such things as some actions of the two governments, attitude of some highly placed government officials and also the general attitude of citizens who are ignorant.<sup>60</sup> Where the two governments were guilty was when you compared the socio-economic and political development in terms of provision of the necessary basic infrastructures and amenities as well as political appointments in the study area with those of the rest of the country. Nonetheless, the issue would have expectedly been addressed during the pre-plebiscite period through public education and enlightenment of citizens and to later consolidate it. In addition, the provision and implementation of integration policies by governments of Nigeria and Cameroon would have nib such issues in the bud.

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<sup>59</sup> Chritain A. Ebini. *Policy Alternative for the Cameroon Conflicts with View on Abolishing the Federation*. Ph.D. dissertation, Walden University, (2019): 27.

<sup>60</sup> Ikeji, "Abubakar Atiku is not qualified to run for President."

It is obvious that the above enumerated issues had various consequences on people of the study area. Some of the effect include the following: - Absence of meaningful development in the study area. This was probably because of the long ill precedence of lack or poor development inherited from Britian.<sup>61</sup> Unfortunately, this same precedent was also adopted by Nigeria and Cameroon after the plebiscite. For it is pointed out elsewhere that after the plebiscite, the area suffered neglect from Nigeria and Cameroon. In other words, the lack of development which plague the study area from the period of British take over in 1915 perpetually affected the general development pattern of Northern and Southern Cameroons.

Similarly, general political apathy and despondency was also another consequence of the post plebiscite period. This was probably due to the attitude of the governments of Nigeria and Cameroon in failing to fulfill the promises and treaties made before the plebiscite.<sup>62</sup> Such attitude also had the tendency to reinforce the pseudo integration perception among the citizens of the study area. In other words, the attitude of Nigeria and Cameroon governments possibly affected the trust and confidence of citizens of Northern and Southern Cameroons negatively, hence despondency for people of the former British Cameroons.

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<sup>61</sup> Chem-langee, *The Paradoxes of Self-Determination in the Cameroons*, 60-64.

<sup>62</sup> Sankem. *The Politics of Chamba*, 195.



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Furthermore, disunity and violence were also the effect of the post plebiscite period in the study area. For example, in Cameroon, the situation promoted and deepens division and discrimination between the Francophones and the Anglophones.<sup>63</sup> However, by the 1990s they were political violence in Northwest and Southwest Province of Cameroon. In addition, the ongoing activities of the Ambazonian separatists have also dealt a blow to the socio-economic and political live of Southern Cameroon. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the result was that the interior areas, came under the control of the separatists for most government officials fled away to the divisional or regional headquarters for safety.<sup>64</sup> This also disrupted the normal social life, for the schools are close down, stay at home orders were issued to the inhabitants, markets did not open frequently and night clubs and beer parlors do not operate freely. The conflict also displaced so many people from the region, as IDPS and refugees to Nigeria. The number of IDPS were about 2,000,000 and the refugees were about 1000,000.<sup>65</sup>

Unfortunately, violence from the Boko Haram sect also broke out in parts of the Northeast Nigeria, which was the former

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<sup>63</sup> Kam Kah, "Come-No-Go/Le ennemi...dans la Maison," 15.

<sup>64</sup> UNOCHA Report. "Cameroon a Peaceful Protest that Turned into a Crisis, UN Humanitarian." May 13, (2019). [www.unocha.exposure.co](http://www.unocha.exposure.co).

<sup>65</sup> Kelvin Mkwei, Field research interview by the researcher on "Conflict Mediation on part of the northern borderland of Nigeria and Cameroon" March 15, 2021.

Northern Cameroons. However, it should be noted that Boko Haram violence was motivated by other factors which do not suggest they were seeking for self-government or independence for the former Northern Cameroons from Nigeria. The goals of the group were more or less revolving on social grievances and Islamic religion issues.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, the violence situation has greatly affected Bornu and parts of Adamawa States in Nigeria. Besides the loss of lives, it fueled mass displacement of population within and across the international borders of Nigeria. It scattered Nigerian refugees to two countries, namely the Far North of Republic of Cameroon and the Republic of Chad. The UNOCHA report stated that about 120,000 Nigerian refugees were in the area and also that the number of security incidents linked to Non-State Actors Groups (NSAGs) in the Far North region increased by 90 per cent to 400 events in 2019.<sup>67</sup> It also attributed that most of the security incidents occurred in the areas bordering Nigeria and Mayo-Tsanaga division in Cameroon. This possibly suggest that the NSAGs may be from Nigeria or not.

Meanwhile, the post plebiscite period further slowdown the process of development of bond of genuine togetherness which was pivotal for citizens of Northern Cameroons and Nigeria and

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<sup>66</sup> Gabriel T. Akwen. *Human Rights Consequences of Boko Haram Terrorism and Nigerian Government Counterterrorism Approaches*. (Ph.D. dissertation, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2021): 23-30.

<sup>67</sup> UNOCHA Report. "Cameroon Situation Report for 2021." <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/cameroon/>

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also Southern Cameroons and Cameroon.<sup>68</sup> This resulted from the inability of the governments of Nigeria and Cameroon to evolved deliberate integration policies and ensure the implementation of it. Unfortunately, the process was left to chances and became largely confronted by divisional tendencies which in effect hindered the bond of togetherness. In short it appears that this opportunity was not harness appropriately by Nigeria and Cameroon to build lasting unity and realised the gains associated with genuine national bond.

Carefully considering the situation above, it is evidently clear that the post plebiscite period was ladened with issues which seriously called for the attention and intervention of the governments of Nigeria and Cameroon, but they instead stayed aloof. This suggests that Nigeria and Cameroon might have thought that plebiscite was the end of everything and therefore soon went on to sleep. If that was the case, what happened to citizens of Northern and Southern Cameroons?

### **E. The Impact and Implication of the Socio-economic and Political Development of the Post Plebiscite Period in the former British Cameroons**

Haven examined in detail the picture of the episode in the study area by viewing at the plebiscite process, what constituted the nature of the socio-economic and political development

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<sup>68</sup> “Honorable Wirba in 2016.”

during the post plebiscite period and some socio-economic development thereafter, that brings us to the issues and trends which suggests or indicates the responses of citizens or indirectly linked to the former British Cameroons as well as their impact. It is important to note that even though the citizens of the former Northern and Southern Cameroons suffered various disabilities under the Nigeria and Cameroon authorities, yet the degree of response varied. But certainly, the common denominator for both was the clear yearning for the unfulfilled promises and treaties. This seems to be the gun powder upon which the territory is seating and manifesting symbolic signs and symptoms. It is against this background, that this section highlights on the activities expressing the responses of citizens of the former British Cameroons. Some barrage of the worse cases of recurrences of conflict with gruesome consequences have been witnessed in the territory. Parts of what was formerly Southern Cameroons before joining Cameroon in 1961 has been punctuated by series of thundering crises and conflict such as the 1991 political demonstrations which saw loss of lives, imprisonment of members of opposition party and heavy repression cases in the Northwest and Southwest Regions. Perhaps the most worrisome and intractable in the same Regions is the ongoing armed conflict between the Ambazonian separatists and the government of Cameroon since 2017. Similarly, sections of what was formerly Northern Cameroons before becoming part of Nigeria has equally come under the claws of gruesome recurring crises and conflict.

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They comprised of the 2017, 2001 and 1982 conflicts in Sardauna Local Government Area and the 1996 Kurmi demonstration in Kurmi Local Government Area of Taraba State in Nigeria. Others include the Boko Haram insurgency in Borno State and parts of Adamawa State. See figure 1.4.

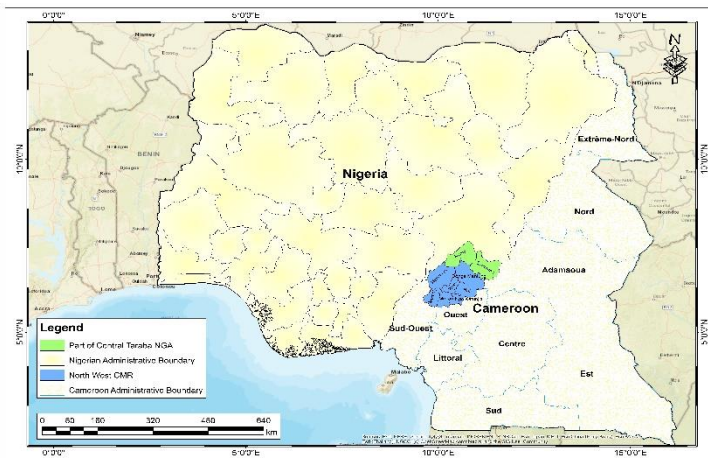


Figure 4: Map showing Taraba State's Sardauna and Kurmi LGAS and Northwest Region within their border location in Nigeria and Cameroon. Source: Nigerian Dataset 2014.

The first impact from the socio-economic and political development during the post plebiscite period was that some inhabitants of the area employed protest against Nigeria and Cameroon authorities. For instance, in Cameroon some dissatisfied Anglophones continued to mark the October 1, 1960, as Independence Day and held match passes, a celebration which the government was against. Furthermore, with the launching of

the All Anglophone Conference in 1990 government security agencies began to clamp down on members of the group, but other new groups kept springing up.<sup>69</sup> For Nigeria, the inhabitants of United Hills particularly Kurmi Local Government Area (LGA) mounted a demonstration due to negligence and lack of development in 1996 and hoisted the Cameroon flag and burn down the police station.<sup>70</sup> However, Isa added that the youths also issued a quick notice declaring that all the Nigerian security agencies should leave the territory within twenty-four (24) hours. Nigerian government hurriedly adopted the necessary peaceful measures and listened to the demands of the protesters. In order to resolve the issue Nigerian government granted the area the status of a Local Government Council and it became known as Kurmi Local Government Area of Taraba State.<sup>71</sup> It is instructive to note that the above are indications that there were issues that Nigeria and Cameroon needed to address or else it could probably degenerate if not properly look into.

Besides, violence was another impact of the socioeconomic and political development in the study area. For instance, this

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<sup>69</sup> Fonkem Achankeng. "The Southern Cameroons Nationalist Conflict: A Destiny in the Shadow." *African Peace and Conflict Journal*, 5 no. 2, (2012): 45.

<sup>70</sup> Adamu Isa, Field research interview by the researcher on "Conflict Mediation on part of the northern borderland of Nigeria and Cameroon" October 28, (2022). Audio.

<sup>71</sup> Solomon Musa, field research interview by the researcher on "Conflict Mediation on part of the northern borderland of Nigeria and Cameroon" October 29, (2022).

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began to unfold when the government of Cameroon refused to listen and address the demands of the inhabitants of the area and the situation became very precarious to handle. Meanwhile, the current armed conflict in Cameroon, started when Anglophone Lawyers and Teachers observed that the government of Cameroon was transferring Francophone Lawyers and Teachers to the Region who did not know the common law which was in use in the area.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, the Francophone Teachers could not speak English Language at all. Therefore, the union of Anglophone Lawyers and Teachers wrote to the government, but they were given deaf ears. It was then they decided to organize a peaceful protest which was clamped down by the military with a lot of fatalities. In other words, the military gun down armless civilians without any remorse. This callous and unprofessional action attracted the attention of the commercial motorcycle riders, taxi drivers, motor park touts and the general commoners. They began to use stones against the military and later graduated to cutlasses but when they saw the situation was getting worse, they took double barrel guns. As the Ambazonians forces hijack the movement they are now carrying A. K. 47 and rocket launchers against the Cameroon military.<sup>73</sup> Perhaps if the Cameroon government had chosen peaceful diplomacy rather than gun boat

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<sup>72</sup> Isaac Manjo, field research interview by the researcher on “Conflict Mediation on part of the northern borderland of Nigeria and Cameroon” July 17, (2021).

<sup>73</sup> J. M. Njie. “Is the Conflict in Anglophone Cameroon an Ethno national Conflict?” (2019) <https://www.e-it.info/2019/08/26/>.

diplomacy may be the situation could not have degenerated to the present level. In short, the armed conflict has lasted for nearly seven (7) years.

Furthermore, intellectual response is another impact resulting from the socio-economic and political development in the study area. Many books, articles, newspapers, magazines and researches materials have been written on the study area thereby exhuming a lot of issues. Some of the books which have vividly captured the entire episode and some top government classified information which has been banned by the government include: C. Ewumbue-Monono (2018) *Delicate Negotiations for Reunification: A Tribute Cameroon Budding Diplomacy 1959-1963*, K. M. Abang (2020) *Southern Cameroons Negotiating an Existence*, G. A. Obiozor (1984) article *Political Development in the United Republic of the Cameroun* and others.<sup>74</sup> This has continued to create awareness and sensitization on the various activities that possibly took place and resulted in the present state. In addition, the major international media houses particularly BBC, CNN and *AL-jazeera* have attracted a lot of interest in covering the development in the study area more particularly Southern Cameroon. Because of the conflict situation in Southern Cameroons which has caused great humanitarian crises and attracted the attention and presence of international

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<sup>74</sup> Mark Lokong, field research interview by the researcher on “Conflict Mediation on part of the northern borderland of Nigeria and Cameroon” July 23, (2021).



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humanitarian organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Another impact of the socioeconomic and political development is the legal action. Some citizens of the area have instituted court suit against the Republic of Cameroon and Britain. For example, the leaders of the Southern Cameroons instituted a court case in a Federal High Court in Nigeria to ascertain whether it was legally right for Southern Cameroons to seek for self-determination. However, the court ruling indicates that the pronouncement of the court favored the Southern Cameroons' leaders.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, the African Commission for Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) also listened to the case brought before it by leaders of the Southern Cameroons. Finally, the Commission advice the two parties on ways to resolve the dispute but the Cameroon government ignore it.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, Mr. Makweley Lysongo also instituted a legal action against the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Government of La Republique Du Cameroun in September 2017. The claimant reason was to seek "relief against Her Majesty's Government and the Republic of Cameroon on the basis of wrong alleged to have been done by the

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<sup>75</sup> Court Ruling by Abuja High Court on the Right of Southern Cameroons to Self-Determination, (March 5, 2002).

Source: Kevin Mgwanga Gunme et al v. Cameroon, ACHPR Decision 266/03. African Human Rights Analyzer, May 27, 2009.

<https://caselaw.ihrda.org/en/entity/tlr2ip4iug?page=1>.

<sup>76</sup> "African Commission for Human and Peoples Rights ruling, Southern Cameroons: The Banjul Communique." Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization, May 23, 2005. <https://unpo.org/article/2534>.

United Kingdom to the people of the former British Southern Cameroons (BSC).” The ruling by the High Court of Justice in Britain however stroke out the case on the grounds that the court lacks the jurisdiction to listen to the case.<sup>77</sup> In addition, the UNO State group led by Professor Martin Chia not having been to court are also alleging that the failure of the Britain to domestic the result of the Plebiscite in accordance with the United Nations Charter as an instrument in the UN Secretariat made the plebiscite of 1961 illegal under international law. Based on this premise the group is calling for the UN regularization and reinstatement of independence for the Northern and Southern Cameroons.<sup>78</sup>

Looking at the above responses, it is very clear that they indicate and convey a message of disenchantment and clamor for a change by the citizens of the former Northern and Southern Cameroons. If Nigeria, Cameroon, Britain, and the UN are quick to revisit the promises and treaties made before the plebiscite, it could settle the squabble being manifested above. But if the concerned parties deliberately ignore the responses and maintain the apple cart, then it is possible that they might be taken aback in the future by what they considered inconsequential and immaterial.

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<sup>77</sup> Thomas Reuters, “Complaint Over 1961 Plebiscite:United Kingdom’s Court gives Verdict.” *Cameroon Tribune*, November 25, 2018.  
<https://www.cameroon-tribune.com...>

<sup>78</sup> Martins Chia Ateh. “Cameroon-UNO State Steering Workshop Paper,” (2011): 4-6.

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Some of the possible implications that the socio-economic and political development of the post plebiscite period in the former British Cameroons has for Nigeria, Cameroon, Britain and the United Nations are as follows:-First and foremost, since Nigeria, Cameroon Britain and the UN perceived the plebiscite of 1961 to have been an end rather than a means to an end, this entails that they is a gap between them and the citizens of the former Northern and Southern Cameroons. This is a pointer that potential chaos was looming and that there was no guarantee of lasting peace or future togetherness created by the amalgamation through plebiscite. It also means that the solution of plebiscite was wrongly prescribed by British, and the United Nations based on the manifested signs and symptoms.

Furthermore, the inability of Nigeria, Cameroon, Britain, and the UN to astutely manage the post plebiscite period intelligently on a clean score sheet left a deep negative impression on the integrity test for the concerned parties. It holds therefore that the citizens of the study area place their trust to the wrong partners, a situation which is reflected in the forms of responses shown by them in possibly searching for a true solution.

Similarly, the degeneration of situation in Southern Cameroons resulting to armed conflict implies that if Nigerian government go the wrong direction in addressing the demands of the citizens of the study area, the situation in the Northern Cameroons might also degenerate and become unpredictable.

Equally important is the fact that negligence by Nigeria and Cameroon to squarely address citizenship status of the inhabitants of the study area constitutionally, implies that the inhabitants of the study area are not Nigerians and Cameroonians. In short this gives room for the citizens to make a case challenging and claiming outright denial of citizenship as an alibi to ferment greater trouble, thereby indicating upsurge in instability.

In addition, the choice by the United Nations and United Kingdom to violate and ignore the aberrations as well as crises and conflict in the study area suggest not only that they are living in self-denial but also betrayed the fundamental principles upon which the UN was founded. This presupposes the fact that the study area may also chose to take the steps deemed fit to solve its problem a situation which could be quite inhumane but necessary if respite is not made available.

Meanwhile, from the available evidence it is crystal clear that the last minutes careless rush from the activities of Britain and the UN is the catalyst which triggered all the bizarre episode being witnessed in the study area presently. It means therefore that in order to cure the wounds caused by this act, they must take responsibility by admitting their fault to the people of the former British Cameroons and then chat a better course.

Finally, since there is no more a hiding place for Nigeria, Cameroon, Britain, and the UN, before the international community, it means that the unfinished business should be

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revisited again. This implied that the concerned parties should come together in a sincere talk and commitment to identify the grave spots and resolve the ceaseless torrents of crises and conflict in the study area.

### **VIII. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study has carefully examined the phenomenon of pseudo integration of the former British Cameroons and its impact upon conflict by particularly looking at the Sardauna and Kurmi LGAs of Taraba State, Nigeria, and the Northwest Region in Cameroon. This was carried out under three themes: (i) the nature of the socio-economic and political development during the post plebiscite period in the former British Cameroons. (ii) some socio-economic and political development during the post plebiscite period in the former British Cameroons. (iii) the impact and implication of the socio-economic and political development of the post plebiscite period in the former British Cameroons. Findings of the study on the first theme indicates that the socio-economic and political development of the area from the colonial period suffered negligence from the various colonial authorities especially under the Britain administration. This was evidence in the fact that the territory witnessed some level of development particularly in the Southern Cameroons. The German colonialist developed an intra-regional trade system, carried out experiments on and

developed cocoa, kolanuts, palm kernels, palm oil, ramia, rubber, and tobacco. They also established a botanical garden, constructed many buildings, roads, railroads, and seaports. But under the British the situation was different. In the same vein, during the post plebiscite era, Nigeria and Cameroon governments also followed the same path as Britain regarding the socio-economic and political development of the area. On the second theme, the findings revealed that the issues which were witnessed and affected the people included: - the failure to fulfilled promises and treaties made by Nigeria, Cameroon, Britain and the UN, negligence from Nigeria and Cameroon, poor integration process and the problem of second-class citizenship. Some of the chain effects of the above were absence of meaningful development, apathy and despondency and recurrence of violence among others. From the third theme, the findings show that this had impact and implications such as: protest against Nigeria and Cameroon authorities, use of violence against authorities, intellectual responses and legal approach.

Similarly, the relationship indicates that the authorities of Nigeria and Cameroon were living in forgetfulness or denial of the circumstance which brought English-Speaking Cameroon to join Cameroon and Northern Cameroons to be part of Nigeria. This situation however, relegated the citizens of former British Cameroons to second class citizens and denial them the rights which they were promise during the plebiscite of 1961. This difficult situation was made waste by the fact that the authorities

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of Nigeria and Cameroon did not do anything to checkmate the motivation from the Nigerians by birth and the Cameroonians by birth. This often made the Nigerians by Plebiscite and the Cameroonians by Plebiscite to exercised or claim their rights which could result to conflict or crisis and amounting to social disorder or chaos.

Therefore, summing up the above trends the study identified the implications this has on the study area based on the roles of Nigeria, Cameroon, Britain, and the UN. The implications comprised of the following: - firstly, the perception of the plebiscite as an end and not a means by the concern parties created the avenue for tension and the recurrence of crises and conflict. Secondly, the ongoing armed conflict in Cameroon was a lesson to the government of Nigeria. That is to employ sincere and credible approach in addressing issues in the former Northern Cameroons or go contrary wise and trigger another intractable reaction. Thirdly, the disappointment experience from Nigeria, Cameroon, Britain, and the UN created a negative impression in the minds of people of the study area. Fourthly, it is also clear that citizenship questions were still unresolved comprehensively, an indication that this provided an *alibi* for a lot of unpredictable actions from people of the study area. Fifthly, the silence of the UN over the various violations by Britain, Nigeria and Cameroon was as endorsement of illegality. This had the possible effect of compelling the inhabitants of the territory to take the laws in to

their hands and chat out their future which could be disastrous and unlawful. The sixth issue remains that since the last minutes rush to end the Trusteeship by Britain and the UN was the pandora's box for the present situation in Southern Cameroon, reasoning demands that Britain and the UN should take responsibility by admitting their fault. The seventh is that as the roles of Britain, UN, Nigeria, and Cameroon in the former British Cameroons is revealed to the international community, it behooves that calls be made for a high-power delegation and committee be constituted at the UN to revisit the unfinished business with serious commitment in order to end the atrocities going on in the Southern Cameroons.

Based on the above findings it is clear that if the signs and symptoms identified are timely address, this will improve the peace building process in the study area. This could also impact positively, on the socio-economic fortunes of the area. But if they are ignored then, it possibly suggests a nose diving in the peace building process, a situation which could breed a lot of devastation and uncertainty in the future. Some of the recommendations made by this study in order to resolve the complex issues in the study area are as follows: -

To turn around the table of the broken promises by Nigeria, Cameroon, Britain, and the UN, and to commence a treatment of the wounds caused, all the parties must admit their limitations. It



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is only through this way a demonstration of sincere and fresh commitment could be evolved in the former British Cameroons.

A high-power delegation and committee should be constituted at the UN Security Council and General Assembly to investigate the situation of the former British Cameroons from the pre-plebiscite to the post plebiscite period.

The UN Security Council should invoke its powers to ensure a call for cease fire in the ongoing armed conflict in Southern Cameroon to bring to an end the civil atrocities being committed by the government forces and the Ambazonian separatists.

A mediation committee to ensure a round table discussion between the Government of Cameroon and the Ambazonian separatists should be formed by the UN in collaboration with the African Union (AU) and other key international partners and regional groups in order to have a balance perspective and to resolve the ongoing armed conflict.

Other members of the international community should emulate the European Parliament and join their voices in efforts to ensure that the undemocratic actions and policies of the governments of Nigeria, Cameroon, Britain, and the UN in the study area are condemned.

The government of Nigeria and Cameroon must give priorities to comprehensively address the issues on citizenship, promote socio-economic development by providing the necessary

infrastructures and amenities. In addition, the Parliaments of Nigeria and Cameroon should make laws that should restrain government officials and their citizens from actions and statements which suggest and reinforces pseudo integration.

African Union should constitute a high-power delegation to call the authorities of Nigeria and Cameroon to order regarding their responsibilities to the people of the former British Camerons and take serious measures against them, where changes were not being notice.

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