

THE ROLE OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY IN CONFLICTS: THE ANGLOPHONE CRISIS IN CAMEROON

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT: Civil Society has been at the heart of providing leadership especially in conflict and crisis. The Anglophone crisis is no exception, and this work seeks to examine their role in providing protection, leadership and other factors. This work also examines the root cause of the crisis as an ongoing situation which can be applied in other countries. The study also established that the roles of Civil Society Organisations have helped in calling for the respect of human rights, promoting social justice, promoting gender equality and equity, and promoting women's and children's rights in Cameroon. The study revealed that Civil Society Organisations have been effective in ensuring the practice of transparency and accountability, promoting people's empowerment, pursuing fair partnership and solidarity among others. The paper established some challenges faced by Civil Society Organisations in the conflict prone areas and identified measures that can be put in place to deal with these challenges.

Keywords: Civil Society Organisations, Conflict, Protection, Accountability

Le Rôle De La Société Civile Dans Les Conflits: La Crise Anglophone Au Cameroun

RÉSUMÉ: La Société civile a été au cœur de l'exercice du leadership, en particulier dans les conflits et les crises. La crise anglophone ne fait pas exception à la règle, et ce travail vise à examiner leur rôle en matière de protection, de leadership et d'autres facteurs. Ce travail examine également la cause profonde de la crise en tant que situation permanente qui peut être appliquée dans d'autres pays. L'étude a également établi que le rôle des organisations de la société civile a contribué à appeler au respect des droits de l'homme, à la promotion de la justice sociale, à la promotion de l'égalité et de l'équité entre les sexes et à la promotion des droits des femmes et des enfants au Cameroun. L'étude a révélé que les organisations de la société civile ont été efficaces pour garantir la pratique de la transparence et de la responsabilité, promouvoir l'autonomisation des personnes, poursuivre un partenariat équitable et la solidarité, entre autres. Le document a établi certains défis rencontrés par les organisations de la société civile dans les zones sujettes à des conflits et a identifié les mesures qui peuvent être mises en place pour relever ces défis.

Mots-clés : Organisations de la société civile, Conflits, Protection, Responsabilité

Introduction

The 1990s became the golden era for civil society movements, associations and organisations, fuelling fruitful and vast debates on the role of CSOs in local, national and global spheres. The involvement and activities of CSOs expanded worldwide. We can observe this from the rapid increase of funds by OECD countries via NGOs. In 1985 to 1986, the funding provided amounted to USD 3.1 billion per year and increased to USD 6.7 billion in 1999 and USD 7.1 billion in 2001 (Debiel and Sticht, 2005). According to OECD statistics from 2013, funding increased to USD 19.3 billion in 2011. Civil society became the bedrock in conflicts prone states. To help ensure sustainable peace in conflict-prone communities in some parts of the world, the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) cannot be overemphasised. One significant achievement of Civil Society Organizations in the League of Arab State (LAS) was their collective demand from LAS to take a tougher stand on human rights abuses in Syria in the conflict's heart. Subsequently, CSOs in Bahrain advocated for the creation of an Arab human right court by LAS that will enable CSOs to submit cases of human rights abuses and press for prosecution. Through this frantic role by CSOs in Syria and Bahrain, principal conflict agents could quell the conflict with.

The roles that civil society played varied in the manner in which they took part in providing services for the citizens across the cases. In Mindanao and Timor-Leste, CSOs and local leaders took part directly in early warning, civilian monitoring and inter-positioning. In Aceh and Southern Thailand, local civil society was mainly marginalised. They play an advocacy function by promoting peace. In Cambodia, the result is mixed: civil society was highly embedded in conflict prevention and mitigation, but the government now curtails its role in some ways. Civil society can wield the "power to expose" injustices and surface conflict non-violently. Several international CSOs, particularly in humanitarian relief, also operated in the country. By the mid-to-late 1990s, local CSOs emerged in fields like human rights protection and women's rights and violence against women. In recent years, there has been increased recognition of the role CSOs can play as partners with government and intergovernmental organisations in the conflict resolution and peace-building agenda (Barnes, 2006). Against this backdrop, it is important to examine the diverse interventions that civil society organisations undertake especially in crisis such as the anglophone crisis in Cameroon that will be worthy of replications in other warring countries and situations. Perhaps an interesting perspective for the reader might be to access the level of interventions that CSOs have done since the crisis started and how they have been felt across the Central Africa's sub region. The methodology used in this article is Key Informant interviews from the affected areas with an amalgamation of complimenting literatures from renowned scholars and authors.

Synopsis of the crisis

Cameroon was colonised by Germany, and after WWI was partitioned between Britain and France. Britain got 1/5 of the territory while France gained 4/5. However, in the early 1960s when the wind of decolonisation was blowing across the African continent, both colonial powers followed the movement and French Cameroon and British Cameroons achieved independence in 1960 and 1961, respectively. This placed the territories on a path to a unitary state which started when a Federal Republic of Cameroon was established in 1961. It had a flag with two golden stars, symbolising the two federated states. The resolutions that led to the establishment of the federal republic have been the subject of great discourse, as they provide the basis of how the country had to be governed. Before independence, the citizens of British Cameroons had the option of joining either the Republic of Cameroon or Nigeria. In a UN-supervised plebiscite, Southern Cameroons opted to join the Republic of Cameroon which meant the merging of two different cultures, values and ideas. The evolution from the federal state to the United Republic in 1972 and later to the Republic of Cameroon in 1984 weakened the promises and resolutions of the original agreement which was the federal structure. In 1984, the official name of the country was changed from the "United Republic of Cameroon" to the "Republic of Cameroon". Some Anglophones were opposed to this because it was the name adopted by French Cameroon when it attained independence in 1960. This led to several protests as it created a sense of loss of identity by the Anglophones. In 1985, Fon Gorji Dinka, an Anglophone lawyer, was arrested for issuing statements which called the government "unconstitutional" and for instigating Southern Cameroons to seek independence and be called Ambazonia, Konning & numnah (1997). The Anglophones felt marginalised. Over the years, they noticed the erosion of their Anglo-Saxon educational and judicial systems, values and cultures.

These accumulated grievances increased the frustrations of the people and led to constant strikes and demonstrations to seek the government's attention to provide solutions. The crisis escalated in 2016 because of strikes by Anglophone lawyers and teachers to which the government responded forcefully and only later tried to address the grievances. The summation of these problems which were neglected over the years, was the calls for the return to federalism while others called for outright secession.

This crisis has been the subject of several controversies, loss of lives and properties. The fertile soils of the two Anglophone regions have been for a long time, places of cultivation for agricultural products for local consumption, exportation and industrialisation. Schools, hospitals, touristic sites, markets and their daily activities have been disrupted and fear has become part and parcel of the lives of inhabitants in these regions. The mishandled cultural diversity has caused inequality and has laid the foundations for such a crisis.

The role of the civil society in the crisis's cause

Civil society as the "third sector" of society, distinct from government and business, and including the family and the private sphere or the aggregate of non-governmental organisations and institutions that

manifest interests and will of citizens. Sometimes the term civil society is used in the more general sense of "the elements such as freedom of speech and an independent judiciary, that make up a democratic society" (Collins English Dictionary). Recent years have witnessed a significant upsurge of organised private, non-profit activity in countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America (Salamon and Anheier, 1997; Salamon, 1994; Fisher, 1993; Brown and Karten, 1991). Long recognised as providers of relief and promoters of human rights, such organisations are now increasingly viewed as critical contributors to economic growth and civic and social infrastructure essential for a minimum quality of life for the people (Salamon and Anheier, 1997; Fukuyama, 1995; OECD, 1995). Despite the growing importance, civil society organization's in the developing world remain only partially understood. Even basic descriptive information about these institutions their number, size, area of activity, sources of revenue and the policy framework within which they operate is not available in any systematic way.

The civil society sector falls in a conceptually complex social terrain that lies mostly outside the market and the state. For much of the recent history, social and political discourse has been dominated by the 'two-sector model' that acknowledges the existence of only two actors in the market (for-profit private sector) and the state. This is reinforced by the statistical conventions that have kept the "third sector" of civil society organization's invisible in official economic statistics (Salamon et al., 2003). On top of this, the sector embraces entities as diverse as village associations, grassroots development organisations, agricultural extension services, self-help cooperatives, religious institutions, schools, hospitals, human rights organisations and business and professional associations. Worthy of note is the fact that, the civil society is a bridge between the state and the population through diverse means.

As concerns the Anglophone crisis, protest marches by Anglophone lawyers in September 2016, expressing their grievances on the practice of Common Law in Cameroon, was the herald of the Anglophone crisis. The absence of an English version of the OHADA documents, the creation of two separate divisions of the Common Law and Civil law, protecting the Anglophone minority as stated in the Constitution given the bi-juridical, bilingual and bi-cultural nature of Cameroon, the absence of a Common Law section at the supreme court, the absence of English law in the judicial system and the non-appointment of notaries in the Anglophone regions (Ngoh, 2019), were calls for concern. Again, they complained about the inequality in representation and recruitment of legal staff. The Minister of Justice, Laurent Eso, confirmed this by declaring in 2017 that the legal body had 1542 magistrates made up of 39 on secondment, 91 at the ministry and 1412 in courts. Within these personnel were 1256 Francophone magistrates for 227 Anglophones, 554 judicial officers with 499 being Francophones and 15 Anglophones. Even in the Anglophone regions, there were mostly Francophone magistrates with civil law background not respecting the common law background of the regions. For instance, of the 128 magistrates in the North West, 67 were Francophones, of the 27 magistrates in Bamenda, 21 were Francophones (Relief Web, 2017).

According to the International Crisis Group's report of 2017, the dispersal of protesters by the police and army, was characterised by arrests, physical violence on individuals and other varying incidents which led to riots and temporal internet shutdown. Similarly, subsequent strikes in November by teachers, were in the same vein protesting loopholes in the educational system and a show of solidarity. Some injustices which they decried included the improvement of working conditions, maintenance of the Anglo-Saxon educational subsystem, increased recruitment of teaching and support staff, relocation of francophone teachers with little or no mastery of English language yet teaching in Anglophone regions and the establishment of a higher teacher's training institute, only for the Anglophone regions. They equally complained about the accessibility of top professional schools to Anglophone students (Relief Web, 2017). The grievances from the lawyers and teachers can be considered the immediate causes of the crisis. After several ghost towns and strikes, the teachers and lawyers formed the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium (CACSC) incorporating civil society activists, lawyers and teachers to facilitate dialogue with the government. Some key leaders were later arrested, while a few others were released.

To address the grievances of the protestors, the government created an ad hoc committee led by the Prime minister, which was supposed to discuss the demands of the CACSC formed in December 2016. The demands made by the CASC had become the demands of the Anglophone community. Amongst those demands were an end to marginalisation, the return to federation, respect of the Anglo-Saxon legal and educational systems, unconditional release of those arrested during the strikes and riots and

the restoration of internet services in the Anglophone regions Tchoyi (2017). Several meetings were held, but the demands kept on increasing and no consensus was reached.

In January 2017, to mount pressure for the demands tabled to be considered, the leaders of the consortium introduced ghost town operations. Ghost towns were mainly characterised by submission to staying indoors on Mondays and alternative days declared by the consortium and later on Interim Government (IG) leaders. The manifestation of ghost towns in these regions, forced inhabitants to stay away from habitual activities on these days; rendering schools, offices, hospitals and businesses non-operational. Some special days on which ghost towns were declared include February 11th commemorating the youth day, 20th May, 7th October 2018 marking the presidential elections and the first weeks of September to prevent resumption of school activities in these regions. Following some of these developments, the CASC was outlawed and its leaders like Agbor Balla Nkongho (President of the Fako Lawyers Association), Paul Ayah Abine (Justice of the Supreme Court), Fontem Aforteka'a Neba (University Lecturer) and Mancho Bibixy (radio broadcaster) were arrested while others fled the national territory (Okereke, 2018). Some of these detained leaders were later released in August. According to prominent activist Agbor Balla, the lack of engagement in any form of dialogue following the release of the detained leaders, led to a massive protest in 2017 and the government's response to the protest instigated the proclamation of independence by separatists on October 1, 2017 (Nkongho, 2018). This further intensified the crisis, with the attacks on villages and subsequent evacuation of the inhabitants to other parts of the country and Nigeria. According to the OCHA report (2018), the high level of insecurity and rampant violence obliged over 400,000 people to move from their homes with around 351,000 IDPs. Fear of the unknown had become the order of the day, as the killings and kidnappings intensified. This had caused the inhabitants of these areas to move to bushes, nearby towns and even to Nigeria.

To assuage some grievances that had been raised, the government established the National Commission on the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (NCPBM) in 2017, aimed at fostering bilingualism in the country. Subsequently, a recruitment of 1,000 bilingual teachers was launched. The Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR) were also deployed to reinforce the operations led by the police and gendarmes (Okereke, 2018). The administrative structures in these regions have established mechanisms to monitor public conduct. The church authorities equally attempted to contribute to the peace process, by making plans to organise an Anglophone General Conference (AGC) since 2018. This initiative led by His Eminence Cardinal Christian Tumi, the President of the Cameroon Baptist Convention; Tih Pius, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon; Pastor Samuel Fonki, the Imams of Buea and Bamenda Central Mosques and supported by several activists, journalists and politicians, to discuss and recommend solutions to the crisis was not finally materialised (Journal du Cameroun, 2019).

The arrest of the consortium leaders turned the crisis to a cyber-led crisis. The Anglophone diaspora activists assumed the leadership of the struggle and began claims for secession, while the crusaders of federalism remained steadfast. What can be Anglophone nationalism became more prominent with the creation of varied groups whose sole aim was secession from the Republic of Cameroon. According to the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa & Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights report of June 2019, groups of armed civilians have emerged into structured insurgent groups and organisations, controlling most parts of the Anglophone regions. Some main groups include: Ambazonia Governing Council (AGC) which later became the Interim Government (IG), the Southern Cameroons Ambazonia Consortium United Front (SCACUF), the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC), the Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL), the Southern Cameroons Anglophone People's Organization (SCAPO) and the Movement for the Restoration of the Independence of Southern Cameroons (MORISC). Within these organisations, armed groups like the Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF) which is the military branch of the AGC and the Southern Cameroons Defence Forces (SCDF) are very active in the fight. These armed groups operate within localities composed of several fighters including men, women, young boys and girls forming smaller varied bands like the the Nso Liberation Army in Bui and the Red Dragons of Lebialem Defence Force.

In January 2018, the leaders of the IG were arrested in Nigeria and deported to Cameroon where they were imprisoned. Killings and many barbaric acts have been rampant since the crisis erupted in 2016. Administrative officials, security officials, civilians, separatists, foreigners and even church officials have been harmed by either the security forces or the separatists' fighters. On a visit to the South-West region in July 2018, the convoy of the Minister of Defence was attacked by separatist fighters. Casualties were

recorded on both sides, with the army killing some separatist fighters while some soldiers and a journalist were harmed (Enow, 2018). In November of the same year, 81 students and some staff members were kidnapped from a school in Nkwen in the North-west region (Lunn & Brooke-Holland, 2019). That same month according to CGTN (2018), a Kenyan missionary; Father Cosmas Omboto Ondari was killed in Kembong in the South-west region. Although eye witnesses blamed the military for the killing of the priest, the Minister of Defence; Beti Assomo stated officially, that the act was perpetuated by secessionists dressed in military uniform. This version was directly contradictory to that of the Bishop of the Mamfe Diocese; Bishop Andrew Nkea. According to Eustachewich (2018), earlier in October an American missionary Reverend Charles Trumann Wesco, was killed in Bambui in the North-West region, while driving his car with his wife. A report claims he was caught in a crossfire between the warring parties, hence making it difficult to apportion the blame. Under these happenings, on 30 November 2018, a National Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Committee was created to “provide a framework for receiving and reintegrating repentant ex-fighters of Boko Haram and members of armed groups in the North-West and South-West regions.” (PRC, 2018). The atrocities have been so rampant if some traditional rulers were forced to flee from their areas. This was the case in Lebialem on October 1, 2019, during the second anniversary of the “Ambazonian” independence celebration. Traditional rulers in Lebialem (a subdivision in the South-West region) were forced to flee.

A Major National Dialogue was conveyed by the President and took place from the 30th September to the 4th October 2019 in Yaounde. Through this attempt, all stakeholders were invited to provide solutions to the crisis, including the separatists. Unfortunately, the separatists did not respond positively to the call and were absent possibly because in conveying the dialogue; the president laid emphasis on the fact that the dialogue will take place within the framework of the constitution (Major National Dialogue, n.d.).

Convincingly, the civil society through its justifiable claims has a huge role to play in the Anglophone crisis. Their demands which were only seriously addressed several years later came as an accumulation of several levels of frustrations and led to the escalation of the crisis. The frustration-aggression theory propounded by Dollard and Doob et al. in 1939 propounds that frustration can emerge when people of a community, group, or an individual does not have enough means to survive and this sets the bedrock for conflict or because of a feeling of inequality or marginalisation. From a psychological point of view set up by proponents of the theory, human beings rarely like being frustrated for a long period and when it occurs, they forget about their liaison with those causing the frustration, Breuer and Elson (2017). This therefore marks the important role of the civil society, for Cameroon specifically, it would have been easier for the government to attend to those needs/ demands when they were repeatedly tabled before 2016. All attempts made to stop the crisis since 2016 have not yielded positively till 2020. The government has quite attended to certain demands and made provisions to improve some faulty areas, but the crisis has been more damaging both for the inhabitants of the regions and the government.

According to the OCHA report (2018), the high level of insecurity and rampant violence obliged over 400,000 people to move from their homes with around 351,000 IDPs. The UNHCR report of March 2019, states that the consistent military operations and attacks from armed civilians, led to the outflow of over 35,000 refugees to the Nigerian borders and 437,000 IDPs. Over 530,000 IDPs were estimated as of September 2019 (OCHA, 2019) and 679,393 IDPs according to the UNHCR report of March 2020. The increasing number of IDPs from the crisis shows that the crisis has not yet end despite the multiple attempts from the government, individuals and the civil society.

Activities undertaken by Civil Society Organisations during the crisis

Having highlighted the role of CSOs in the outbreak of the anglophone crisis, one might be left with some questions about how these roles were undertaken by these organisations. We have therefore focused on some pertinent activities that can be undertaken within the crisis:

Protection

Although the function of protection of lives and property is the primary responsibility of government, CSOs have often been supporting the government in contexts where it cannot perform this primary function because of armed conflict. Civil society initiatives frequently emerge during the conflict and its

aftermath to protect citizen life, rights and property against threats by conflict actors or the state. Protection functions are performed by International Non-Governmental Organisations (I-NGOs) that support domestic civil society either indirectly, through their presence as monitoring watchdogs (Orjuela 2003), or directly through international accompaniment. Barnes (2005); Orjuela (2004); Eviota (2005) notes that Peace Brigades International, for example, sends outsiders into conflict zones to protect national peace or human rights, activists. Other examples are communities in the Philippines and Colombia that have negotiated zones of peace where no arms are allowed. This was the work by institutions such as CRS and other International NGOs in Cameroon.

TRESA (2005) also declares that another aspect of protection is supported to security-related interventions such as defining, small arms control, and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants. In Mozambique, churches launched a follow-up demobilization campaign after the official UN demobilization process had ended. More frequently, however, CSOs collaborate with government or donor-led efforts. The capacity of CSOs to perform the protection function is limited by contexts with a high level of violence and coercive state with a dysfunctional rule of law institutions.

Monitoring and Early Warning

The primary provider of services (including health and education) in any state is governed. To enhance the provision of such services, CSOs have to monitor the actions and policies of government to ensure it stays faithful to government's core objective of providing the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people. In conflict contexts, CSOs observe and monitor the activities of conflict actors to enhance accountability and a precondition for the protection and the advocacy/public communication functions of civil society. The primary focus of monitoring during armed conflict is on human rights violations. International and local groups can monitor the conflict situation and recommend decisioning-makers, provide information to advocacy groups, and provide inputs for early warning. This civil society function is relevant in all conflict phases, and its impact is maximized when all actors coordinate closely. To strengthen the early warning function, there is increasing cooperation between local, national and I-NGOs but also with regional organizations.

Advocacy and Public Communication

Advocacy according to (Aall 2001; Paffenholz 2003) is one of the core functions in peacebuilding and primarily a role for domestic civil society. Civil society can articulate the interests of social groups, especially marginalized groups, and create communication channels to raise public awareness and facilitate the inclusion of issues in the public agenda. Most peacebuilding schools assume that the influence of civil society on conflict management is indirect and limited to an advocacy and communication role, and applying pressure on negotiating parties and advocacy for specific issues. Advocacy is not only very relevant to peacebuilding but is also mainly conducted most times by CSOs with high levels of effectiveness. Advocacy is relevant in all phases of conflict, but its nature will vary according to conflict phases. During the conflict, civil society advocates for peace agreements, against violence and human rights violations, for broad-based participation in the peace process, and specific issues.

Information campaigns and opinion polls can link the public at large with official negotiation processes (Accord 2002) or official parallel civil society forums can provide a more direct link to Track 1 negotiations (Stanley and Holiday 2002; Armon et al. 1997). In the post-conflict phase, civil society advocacy focuses on implementing the peace agreements, or specific conflict issues such as violence, gender, or the need for a culture of peace (Orjuela 2004; Jeong 2005). Independent media play an important role in peacebuilding by reaching a broad range of the population, facilitating public communication, expanding the audience for advocacy campaigns Richmond (2006) and raising awareness on the need for and feasibility of non-violent solutions. Disseminating objective and non-partisan information (on mass killings, human rights violations, and truth and reconciliation efforts) is a critical media contribution to peacebuilding. Richmond (2006) also declares that the media, however, can also perpetuate ethnic stereotypes and fuel further hostilities and violence. In Rwanda, for example, radio Mille Collines preached hatred and helped orchestrate the genocide. The most effective form of advocacy is mass mobilization for large-scale change, such as the end of the war or authoritarian rule. The main limiting factors for advocacy are linked to the shrinking space for CSOs to act and a highly restricted media.

Socialization

The socialization function is not only performed by the civil society as leadership for socialization is provided by other institutions including the school, church, political parties and the family.

The socialization function of civil society aims to inculcate a culture of peace in divided conflict societies by promoting attitude change toward peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation. Most activities adopt a conflict resolution approach and include dialogue projects, reconciliation initiatives, peace education, exchange programs and peace camps, conflict resolution training and capacity building. Research (Anderson and Olson, 2003; Paffenholz 2003) suggests that civil society initiatives which support attitude change and a culture of peace are only effective when they can reach a critically large number of people. The precondition for effectiveness of socialization initiatives is low level, or the absence of, violence. The civil society, in supporting the socialization process, engages with influential pre-existing institutions such as schools. The main limiting factors for socialization revolve around the shrinking of space for CSOs to act and policies against freedom of association.

Social Cohesion

It is logical for conflict contexts to be sharply divided between distinct groups that often transcend the main adversarial groups. Enhancing social cohesion is, therefore, an important civil society function in peacebuilding, as conflict usually destroys bridging social capital. Restoring bridging social capital can help to curb inter-group violence, and revitalise group interactions, interdependency and solidarity (Jeong 2005; Orjuela 2004; Paffenholz 2003). Putnam (2002) maintains that engagement and participation in voluntary associations have the potential to build and strengthen social capital, but rather than building bonding ties within groups, the aim should be to build bridging ties across adversary groups i.e., a 'conflict-sensitive social cohesion' function.

Research by World Vision (O'Reilly 1998) confirmed the importance of bridging social capital, identifying how development projects helped increase levels of contact, interaction and communication across geographic, religious, ethnic, cultural and class divide. This led to improved cooperation, unity and interdependence between groups. Although systematic evidence is lacking, CSOs conflict sensitive social cohesion initiatives may have greater potential to influence peacebuilding.

Research in India (Varshney, 2002) found that ethnically mixed organizations were effective in building bridging ties across ethnic groups, leading to an institutionalised peace system that facilitated the control of violence. The precondition for the effectiveness of social cohesion initiatives is again a low level, or absence of, violence. It enhances the effectiveness of social cohesion when initiatives are aimed at bringing people together for a common cause. The main limiting factor for social cohesion is extreme levels of violence.

Intermediation and Facilitation

An important civil society function is to intermediate between interest groups and the state. Local facilitation by CSOs is highly relevant during all phases of conflict peacebuilding. This is often performed by community leaders (such as traditional or religious leaders) or by Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) who facilitate dialogue between conflict parties and the community or between community and returnees. In peace-building, intermediation and facilitation can take place not only between the state and citizens but also between conflict parties, within groups and on different levels of society. The major activities within this function are facilitation initiatives (formal or informal) between armed groups and between armed groups and communities or development agencies. Intermediation can be performed by international and/or domestic civil society. Paffenholz (1998) declared that domestic civil society has little involvement in direct facilitation between conflict parties, especially when it involves actual peace negotiations, as this role is primarily played by external parties, especially governments (Norway in Sri Lanka) or multilateral agencies (UN in Guatemala).

He further revealed that sometimes this role can be taken up by international CSOs as with Comunita di Sant'Egidio in Mozambique or the Geneva-based NGO Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, which facilitated the first negotiations in Aceh (Paffenholz, 1998). Domestic CSOs can play a facilitation role at several levels, including between civil society and conflict parties at the village or district level (e.g., civil society representatives negotiated the release of citizens by armed groups in Nepal); to bring conflict

parties to the negotiation table (e.g., the Inter-Religious Council in Sierra Leone got government and rebels to agree to peace talks in the late 1990s), to negotiate peace zones or violence-free days (e.g., the churches in El Salvador negotiated peace days in order to carry out a child vaccination campaign; between aid agencies and conflict parties to deliver services directly to communities (Orjuela 2004). Jeong (2005) revealed that in some conflict zones, local civil society acts as mediators or facilitators where the government or foreign aid structures cannot operate (e.g., Nepal) or where national or I-NGOs need facilitation to better understand the local context. Civil society has unique potential in peacebuilding, but analysing CSOs from an actor-oriented perspective denies one a deeper understanding of its contributions to peacebuilding.

Functional analysis of CSOs in peace-building brings to focus the Utstein peacebuilding palette and shows the relevance of CSOs in supporting peacebuilding initiatives from the four components of the palette which is identified to include: security, socio-economic foundations, political framework and reconciliation and justice. The civil society has proven to be a major factor in delivering the objective of peacebuilding from this perspective. The main enabling and disabling conditions for CSOs peacebuilding functions comes from the possibility of a coercive state, the level of violence, and level of influence from strong regional actors. Thus, the engagement of the international community in initiatives that can reduce violence and enhance protection and supporting initiatives that can strengthen the creation of an enabling environment can secure the fundamental precondition for CSOs to act.

An appropriate starting point for more effective engagement of CSOs in peacebuilding is that civil society is viewed not from an 'actor-oriented' perspective but from the perspective of their functions. In view of this, the strategy must therefore seek to build the capacity of the civil society sector as much as those of their government and must emphasize a sustained rather than ad hoc engagement. We should structure the basis for this strategy to promote mutual benefit and respect and seek to draw on their wide outreach and mobilizing capacity to support peacebuilding initiatives. Ultimately, it should be based on recognition of the fact that to sustain peacebuilding efforts, all available capacities in the polity need to be mobilized. The civil society sector is a critical resource. Despite the functions of CSOs in peacebuilding, its support cannot replace political actions, particularly in the areas of protection, socialisation and service delivery.

This functional perspective highlights seven primary functions that CSOs can play in peacebuilding. While these functions cannot be said to be exhaustive, there, however, lay a foundation for a broader exploration of the functions of CSOs in peace-building. The functions of CSOs are closely related, as a result, CSOs may be active in one or more functions, providing a lead role in some and supportive roles in others. The State, for instance, is mainly responsible for protecting lives and property, and socialization occurs not only in voluntary associations but also in the family, classroom and political parties. The Social Development Network (2006) declares that CSOs has a comparative advantage in functions related to socialization, the culture of peace and social cohesion. Protection, monitoring and accountability, and advocacy and public communication functions are complementary and their effectiveness depends on collaboration with other actors. In line with Utstein (2004) peacebuilding framework, CSOs takes on different functions and roles in the transition from conflict to peace, and indifferent conflict phases. During conflict or its immediate aftermath, priority is on protection, monitoring, and advocacy and public communication. Reconciliation, the culture of peace, and peace education functions are more long term, and thus likely more relevant in the post-conflict phase.

As conflicts end and public institutions gradually recover, the dynamics between citizens, CSOs, and the state change. Overall, the capacity of CSOs to function properly is shaped by internal institutional factors including international partnerships and the enabling environment in which CSOs operate. The real rise of civil society as a centre of an intellectual and political discussion came about when a social order of a community was challenged by the progress of a market economy (Howell and Pearce, 2001). This issue was central in various classical theories of civil society expounded by thinkers of the past, including Locke and Hegel. Since a recent revival of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s, the diversity of its theories has further been amplified with works of contemporary theorists, such as Gellner, Hall, and Taylor (Kumar, 1993). The various sets of civil society definitions within the western thought can be subsumed under two traditions: liberal and communitarian (Cohen and Arato, 1995).

Although the civil society through the demands of the lawyers and teachers in 2016 and the CASC has an important role to play in the outbreak of the crisis, the fact that the crisis has made it difficult for CSOs to operate in the regions cannot be undermined. Conclusively, it is important to note that several local CSOs have been carrying some of these activities in order to minimise the effects of the crisis to no avail. This is mainly because the Anglophone crisis is quite complex because it generated from the demands of a minority to an armed conflict whereby separatists kill, kidnap and abuse of both Anglophone locals and francophones. Similarly, the army has been accused of diverse atrocities on civilians. In such an environment, it is difficult for the civil society to operate because both parties are hostile to the Anglophone community they claim to protect.

Conclusion

From the article, the reader can observe that Civil Society has been positively involved in helping societies and communities to reach their full potentials. The study established that advocacy and campaigns have a significant influence on the anglophone crisis in Cameroon, and civic engagement has a significant effect on the people, while CSOs participation also has a significant influence entirely. The study identified some measures that can be put in place to deal with the challenges that CSOs face in their work in Cameroon. Among the measures identified in the work were reducing government interference, provision of sufficient funding, capacity building and using the non-partisan approach.

The study concludes that if these measures are adhered to, CSOs will be efficient and effective, trustworthy and reliable, impartial and independent. Though the country has hundreds of formal civil society groups; most of them are not institutions. Not that institutions are a priori good. Institutions can be bad. Institutions have greater potentials for organizational autonomy, coherence of mandate, functional boundaries and reliability of procedures and adherence to them.

Civil society organizations without these features have constrained capacities for exacting accountability. And these are the features that most civil society groups lack in the country.

Most formal civil society groups do not have administrative and financial rules. A huge number of civil society organizations in Cameroon are one-man owned, existing for accessing foreign aid. Also, civic organizations in Cameroon have very weak financial resource base. The weakness here is related more to lack of regular financial input than to the amount of money civil society groups irregularly get. It is more like too much money at one time, and too little money at another time. Too much money leads to absorptive capacity problems, too little money leads to the unsustainability of programmes. Another critical formal civil society deficit relates to information and evidence management. Civil society groups and leaders make very little effort to get and understand key state policy documents. Research and investigations are hardly part of CSOs information and evidence gathering agenda. When a CSO goes public with a particular issue, radio, workshops, and newspaper advertorials make up the narrow spectrum of their skills.

Civil society groups show a huge lack of specific skills for interfacing with and engaging the central state, donors, or other civil society groups. Civil society engagements with the state on many issues are almost always driven by external support opportunities. There is always an external hand that helps to articulate entry point opportunities. What this means is that many other issues requiring civil society attention may lay unattended in the absence of external support opportunities. Even when civil society groups have identified a particular issue and are engaging the state on it, lack of negotiating and lobbying skills usually distract from their abilities to ensure change. Civil society groups often resign to the pessimism that nothing will come out of their accountability demands, or resort to ad hoc, unstructured, and uncivil ways. Sometimes, physical confrontation with agents of the government has been part of civil society's negotiation of change in their social accountability demands.

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