THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

The Political Usages of International Law in Trust Territories: The Right of Self-Determination and Political Engagement in British Southern Cameroons (BSC)

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Abstract:
Although international law is necessary to regulate the process by which Trust Territories achieve statehood, its political dimension has often been overlooked. The aim of this research paper is to fill this gap by examining the political usage of the international law on the right of self-determination in Trust territories. The approach is based on the political instrumentalism of international law which regards the law on the right of self-determination as a political instrument or a tool for achieving territorial sovereignty. It finds that the absence of clarity on the right of self-determination was exploited by entrepreneurs of statehood in Trust territories to interpret territorial sovereignty in multiple and contending frames. The work is inviting the UN Trusteeship System to reconsider its role even after it must have fulfilled its mission of overseeing and endorsing the independence in Trust Territories. It emphasizes the importance of the political usage of the right of self-determination and provides an explanation to the origin of contested territorial sovereignty in some former Trust Territories.

Keywords: *British Southern Cameroons (BSC), political instrumentalism, Self-determination, Statehood, territorial sovereignty, trust territory*

1. Introduction

1.1. Context and Problem

The State of Cameroon today is a merger of two former Trust Territories—British Southern Cameroons (BSC) which voted in an UN-organised plebiscite to join French Cameroons, which was already independent as La Republic du Cameroun in 1961.[i] The Federal Republic of Cameroon was formed constituting of two federated States representing the two former Trust Territories.[ii] BSC became the West Cameroon Federated State and today, it represents the North West and South West Province/Regions following the abrogation of the federation. Nevertheless, among some Anglophone Cameroonians (referred herein as the peoples of former BSC); there is dissatisfaction with the union as expressed in 'new' demands of statehood that threaten the territorial sovereignty of the State.[iii] How can we explain the emergence of claims to territorial sovereignty in some former UN Trust Territories? How can we explain ceaseless quests of territorial sovereignty among Anglophone Cameroonians, as well as the widespread claims of infra-nationality across a range of African States and beyond, in spite of the official termination of the UN Trusteeship contract? How can we understand that States fabricated by UN System and recognized as such have difficulties to preserve their territorial sovereignty? Part of the answer could be found in the law on the right of self-determination and how it was interpreted by entrepreneurs of statehood.[iv]

This paper is an attempt to make sense of what is happening in the State of Cameroon, a former Trust Territory of the UN, today. It tries to identify and explain the instrumental use of international law by entrepreneurs of statehood in Trust Territories. It argues that entrepreneurs of statehood used the absence of clarity in the international law on the right of self-determination to engage politically in contending and often overlapping approaches to territorial sovereignty and statehood.

It is an attempt to describe the international legal foundation of politics from the standpoint of the right of self-determination in BSC/Cameroon. As a principle of international law, the right of self-determination was used by political entrepreneurs[v] to create a repertoire of clashing and overlapping political interests over which claims were laid to territorial sovereignty. The emergence of contentious politics in BSC is a product of the multiple frames that represented interpretations associated with the right of self-determination. As a principle of international law, self-determination institutionalized several different but related legal layers from which political entrepreneurs could lay claim for territorial sovereignty and statehood. In BSC shrewd political use was made of international law as a whole and the right of self-determination in particular. Virtually all principles on the right of self-determination including emergence as a sovereign independent State, free association with an independent State, and integration with an independent State on the basis of equality, represented factional interests that entrepreneurs of statehood sought to enhance through political means.

The paper is divided in two major parts. Part one examines the nexus between law and politics and focuses on the international law on the right of self-determination. In doing so, self-determination is examined as a principle of international law charged with political emotions. The legal but also political status of BSC as a territory in quest for territorial sovereignty is examined. Part two focuses on the political usages of the right of self-determination by entrepreneurs of statehood in BSC, and an attempt is also made to delineate the political outcome and implication of the instrumental use of that law. A conclusion raises issues about patterns of statehood in former Trust Territories under the influence of self-determination.

1.2. Nexus between (International) Law and Politics

Broadly speaking, law has often been studied and understood as a separate field from politics. Very little has been done to explore and if possible explain how related these two concepts are. It is obvious that there is a nexus between law and politics. However, the problem is determining which one of them plays a significant role in shaping society.

In an attempt to establish a potential nexus, some researchers pose the following questions: Is law a creature of the political order? Does law also structure politics? What are the relations between law and politics?[vi] Two contending responses have emerged. First, law structures politics by creating the political order and second, politics structures law and law depend on the force of politics. Politics often determines the law in the same manner that legal rules and constitutional principles shape the course and patterns of political relations.[vii] As a product of political negotiations, the contents of legal rules are laced with politics, and government exists only within the regulatory framework of the law.[viii]

There are two conditions under which politics and law clash: if a principle of law allows a decision of legal issues based on political criteria or vice versa and if a principle of law gives the right to the judiciary to take decisions on political issues using political criteria.[ix] Politics defines law in the sense that constitutional conventions and ratifications are part of the political process.[x] Law is a political decision taken by officials to endorse recognition. Haberm as understood the normative bases of constitutional democracy as the result of a deliberative decision-making process that the founders—motivated by whatever historical contingencies undertook with the intention of creating a voluntary, self-determining association of free and equal citizens.[xi] Founders of the right of self-determination identified, argued and recognised it as a means of positive law to legitimately regulate international life. In the same line, Bayles believes that politics must provide normative force to law and argues that if a just political order rests upon the consent of a majority of the people, then, just political order confers normative force to the constitution.[xii]

Law is also said to regulate the political order in a variety of ways. It can set a ceiling and/or a floor on politics.[xiii] Law sets a ceiling on politics when for example constitutional law imposes limits to the degree of engagement in political life, and sets a floor on politics when it creates more avenues for political action. The existence of a law can have significant effects on political considerations and actions. For example, a law that confers benefits to some people to the detriment of others creates avenues for contention. The self-determination law was essentially meant to confer socioeconomic and political benefits to the peoples of Trust Territories but in reality, it created vested interests upon which politics was played out. If a law is said to be bad or incorrect, it creates avenues for political action to repeal it. If that law is said to be good or correct, it still creates avenues for political action to safeguard it.

The law on self-determination was welcome initiative from inception. It enhanced political action to safeguard it when entrepreneurs of statehood in Trust Territories politicized it to obtain territorial sovereignty. Political action was again used to reify the self-same principle of self-determination after some flaws were identified in the independent State. In the late 50s, in BSC, entrepreneurs of statehood interpreted self-determination as becoming independent by joining another independent State. After the political union was formed, some Anglophones reemerged in the early 90s to contest the territorial sovereignty of the 'independent' State as if to say that the job of the UN Trusteeship Council in that territory was not over. Self-determination never meant that territorial sovereignty marks the end of its mission, at least not to the understanding of the political entrepreneurs concerned in this discourse. Self-determination was reinterpreted as a political means or pretext to engage in politics whenever possible given that it provided unlimited avenues for redefining territorial sovereignty.

In short, there are both normative and descriptive concerns in trying to establish the nexus between law and politics. The normative approach is concerned about how law regulates politics by directing it out of anomic path. The descriptive approach sees law as a political instrument entrepreneurs of statehood can always play around with. In any case, law and politics are intertwined although law makers and politicians sometimes think that they fulfill separate functions, which are only complementary, at best. This research suggests that law can only be applicable to the extent that politicians want it and to the extent that the law itself is not flexible. Any flexible legal disposition is elastic in character and this means it can be pulled from several directions. Self-determination as a legal principle provided a repertoire of political choices and expectations from which politics was played out and continued to be so even after territorial sovereignty was achieved. The law on self-determination was welcomed not only because it would have led to self-government/independence but also because it initiated an open access for unlimited reinvention of territorial sovereignty.

1.3. Political Instrumentalism of Law as Approach

This paper seeks to provide an analytical framework, the instruments, which can help explain the present condition of some former UN Trust Territories. Most African countries are former UN Trust Territories which achieved territorial sovereignty under the auspices of the UN; yet, many of them are weak and failing States.[xiv] Explanations to the current situation have insisted on the developmental approach which hinge on the poor institutionalization of political and economic structures.[xv] Others have argued that the present predicament of the continent is a consequence of the politics of

the 'belly'[xvi], whereas some think that personalization of political power, the failure of democratic transitions and resistance of clientelism are sources of instability in the continent.[xvii] While these approaches are relevant in their own right, an approach by the political instrumentalism of law cannot be overstated.

The paradigm of analysis is the political instrumentalism of law. This approach was influenced by questions arising from the empirical observation of present day realities in Cameroon and not from a preconceived notion of what ought or ought not to be analyzed. It refers to the process by which political actors seek to maximize their returns on the state of flexibility that sometimes characterize legal instruments. What this means is that the right of self-determination, prescribed more than one option to achieve statehood, which enabled entrepreneurs of statehood to initiate factional interest-based claims of territorial sovereignty. However, this could not have been possible without legal flexibility. Legal flexibility is understood in opposition to legal rigidity/absolutism. Flexibility suggests that the law lacks clarity. Political entrepreneurs have not taken this as weakness. Rather, the absence of legal clarity suggests a condition which offers opportunities for political entrepreneurs who know how to take advantage of it. The intention here is not to pass a judgment on a particular law, but to describe how it is calculated, measured and used as an instrument to create contending political and territorial identities. If international law on self-determination provides several conditions conducive to self-government/independence, it is in the place of this paper to see how these conditions were instrumentalized politically. Legal flexibility carries with it a notion of certainty—the feeling that at any time political entrepreneurs can return to it. Self-determination could have been seen as the end product of the UN Trusteeship System but in the minds of entrepreneurs of statehood, it meant a possibility of reinventing it anytime. Gaining independence by 'joining' as it was the case in BSC never meant achievement of territorial sovereignty. It meant the possibility of reinventing self-determination as right to demand new claims of statehood. The law gave the opportunity to entrepreneurs of statehood to institutionalize relativism in the understanding of the 'independent' State. This suggests that independence can change face at any time. Today it can mean standing alone, tomorrow it means joining another State, and so on, as entrepreneurs of statehood will deem it necessary. Self-determination can mean one thing today and tomorrow it means something else. BSC accepted a political union with an independent State at one point in time, as their own measure of self-determination, but shortly after, they were still to use the self-same self-determination law to question the validity of the union.

This paradigm is suitable to explain similar situations beyond Cameroon, such as in Sudan and Yugoslavia.[xviii] It also has a historical advantage in that it tries to explain contemporary processes in their proper historical context which makes it easy to understand historical continuities and discontinuities. Focusing alone on ethnicity, clientelism, politics of the belly etc. for example to understand threats to State security is not enough. The approach in this paper suggests that threats to territorial sovereignty in former Trust Territories is a consequence of a habit derived from interpreting the law in political terms—using it to develop clashing political frames that disregard a sense of common purpose. Nevertheless, this is under a condition where the law is flexible to a fault.

1.4. The Right of Self-Determination as Legal Principle with Political Implications

In practice, self-determination in modern historiography can be traced back to the mid 18th century with the American revolt against British rule and the overthrow of the French monarchy. This suggests that its origin is in the struggle against discrimination of (indigenous) peoples. It was initiated as struggle against arbitrary territorial expansionism and colonialism, which were identified as critical threats to world peace and security. It was no longer acceptable for States or institutions to incorporate activities and practices that undermine the status or conditions of indigenous peoples. However, it was in the 20th century, the century of the two Great Wars that it was introduced as a principle of international law to ease the creation of modern States.[xix] World War II in particular gave rise to the UN and "self-determination of peoples' was included in the UN Charter among the organisation's founding principle.[xx] In other words the UN Charter is the first international legal instrument to enunciate self-determination as a principle of international law.[xxi]The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples adopted by the General Assembly in 1960 by eighty-nine votes in favour, none against with nine abstentions, stated that; "all peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development"[xxii]

By the principle of self-determination, the peoples of Trust Territories are entitled to their own territorial sovereignty i.e. the capacity to control their land and resources. In this respect self-determination is linked to self-identity and self-government. The international community recognized classical colonial institutions of government as contrary to self-government because they subjected people to alien rule, domination and exploitation.[xxiii] The consent of the peoples is of critical consideration when it comes to self-determination. The 'full measure of self government' was interpreted as a decision where the people concerned vote in free and fair elections to decide whether to: (a) Constitute themselves as a sovereign independent State; (b) Associate freely with an independent State or (c) Integrate with an independent State already in existence".[xxiv]

The political character of self-determination derives from the legal elasticity and complexity of it as principle. Its complexity is reflected in the many questions that the principle creates in the mind. As Emerson puts it, how are the people to whom the principle applies to be defined? Is it applicable only to people constituting a majority in a certain territory, or has a minority people an equal right? And if the majority decides one day today, may the whole or segmented of it decide differently tomorrow?[xxv] Self-determination created arenas of political struggle. It contained procedures for attaining statehood and sovereignty. It dealt with such themes as the acquisition of statehood, the justification and limits of territoriality, and the rights of Trusteeship States.[xxvi] These could only be achieved through political bargaining and

negotiation. The acquisition of statehood involves political bargain among contending social forces over 'who gets what, when, and how'. Koskenniemiexplains that statehood and together with it a set of territorial rights and duties are something external to the law, something the law must recognize but which it cannot control.[xxvii] Practically self-determination endows social entities with a right of revolution against the constituted authority of the State, and even to obligate the State to yield to the demand of the revolutionaries.[xxviii]

Self-determination as international law is substantial and objective only to the point that power politics permits. As a norm within the international political system, self-determination determines and is constantly determinable within the system. Statehood is more of a matter of fact with recognition being only declaratory and not constitutive of statehood. If States were created by an external act of recognition, argues Koskenniemi, this will introduce for existing States a political right to decide which entities shall enjoy the status of legal subjects.[xxix] Self-determination is recognition of the right to statehood of Trust Territories but it is with the power of political engagement that this legal principle can make sense.

Self-determination presumes that each Trust Territory has the liberty to define its own path to territorial sovereignty. In its most extreme version, it could mean the right of any group of disaffected people to break away at their pleasure from the main State to which they presently belong and establish a new State closer to their heart's desire.[xxx] The right of self-determination initiated the path to territorial sovereignty. It was interpreted in the most varied ways. These interpretations were political expressions of interests. It was within this framework that multiple frames of independence and territorial sovereignty were constructed by entrepreneurs of statehood in BSC.

1.5. British Southern Cameroons (BSC) as a Trust Territory

BSC has an international personality framed by historical circumstances and legal conclusions. Located in the armpit of Africa, the territory occupies a surface area of 43,000 square kilometers. Between 1858 and 1887, the territory was British but it was not considered as Southern Cameroons. It became part of the German Protectorate of Kamerun after 1887, when it was ceded to Germany following an arrangement with Britain. With the outbreak of WWI, British forces in alliance with French troops invaded the German Protectorate of Kamerun and captured the territory, and it became known as the British Cameroons, consisting of two separate parts, the Southern Cameroons and Northern Cameroons. Under articles 118 and 119 of the Versailles Treaties Germany renounced and relinquished all rights and title to all its oversea possessions, including Kamerun territory to which Southern Cameroons was a part. In 1916, German sovereignty came to an end when an Anglo-French treaty also known as Milner-Simon Declaration defined the international boundary between British and French Cameroons. In 1922, the League of Nations confirmed the territorial delimitation and placed it under the Mandate system. Nine years later, the Governor General of Nigeria and Governor General of French Cameroons further confirmed the territorial agreement. Between 1922 and 1945, BSC was a Class "B" territory of Mandate of the League of Nations and Article 22 of Versailles compelled the Mandatory power to accept and to undertake measures to apply wellbeing and development as a sacred trust of civilization.

Between 1946 and 1961, BSC was a British-administered UN Trust Territory equal in rank and status to other UN Trust Territories. Article 73 of the UN Charter spelt outthat the interest of inhabitants is paramount and accepted as a sacred trust and obligation to promote to the utmost. This article was reinforced by Article 76 b of the UN Charter that compelled Britain to promote the political, economical, educational and social advancement of the inhabitants.

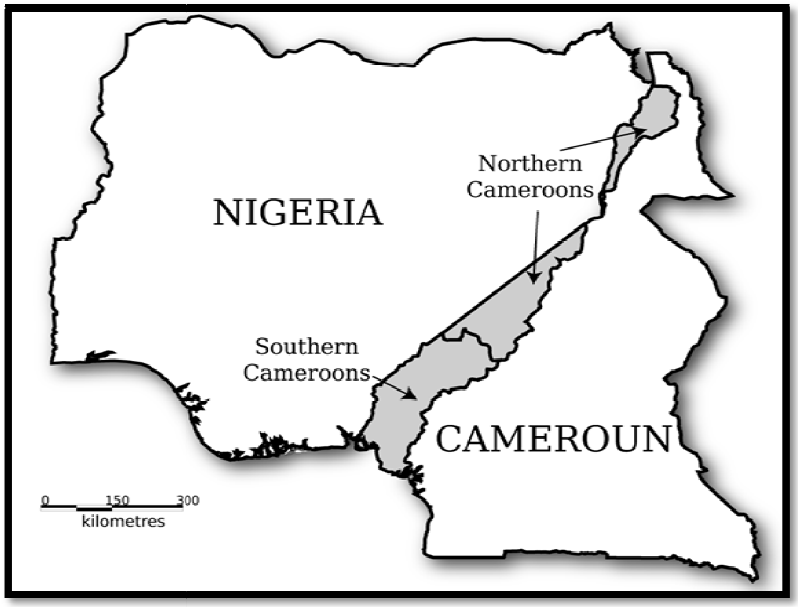

Figure 1: British Northern and Southern Cameroons.
Source: Cameroon Maps,
Source: www.Vincenthiribarren.Com/Borno/Dikwa/Maps/Nigcam.Png

However, BSC was not administered as an independent territory but as part of British Nigeria between 1916 and 1960. In 1954, the territory became a self-governing region within Nigeria because of increased institutional and political autonomy. In 1958, British government stated at the UN that BSC expected to achieve in 1960 the objectives of Article 76 b of the UN Charter, and the statement was endorsed by UN General Assembly Resolution 1282 (XIII) of 5th December, 1958. By October 1960, BSC was a full self-governing territory fully responsible for internal affairs except for defense. On 13th March 1959, General Assembly Resolution 1350 (XIII) recommended a plebiscite. On 16 October 1959, General Assembly ordered that the plebiscite be held not later than March 1961 and on 31 March 1960, Trusteeship Council Resolution 2013 (XXVI) requested Britain to hold talks with entrepreneurs of statehood to explain the implications of a plebiscite. On 11 February 1967 the UN-supervised plebiscite took place in BSC. The vote was a plebiscite on political status to enable the people of BSC progress from full measure of self-government to national independence. The vote went in favour of achieving independence 'by joining' Republique du Cameroun rather than Nigeria. On 21 April 1961, UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 1608 (XV) to give effect to the intention expressed by the people by endorsing the results, terminating British administration, and inviting the administering authorities, entrepreneurs of statehood in BSC and La Republique du Cameroun to initiate urgent discussions to implement agreed and declared policies of the parties concerned before 1 October 1961.

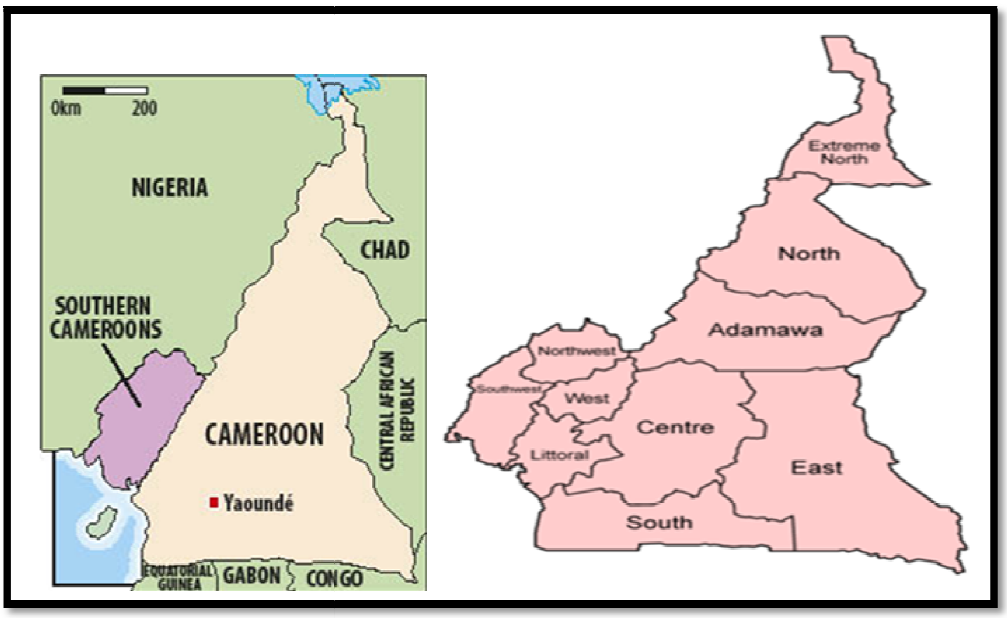

Figure 2: British Northern and Southern Cameroons as Northwest and South West Regions
Source: Z. Fogwe, Macmillan School Atlas for Cameroon, (Macmillan; 2015), P.6

From 17th to the 21st of July 1961 talks were held in Foumban (in La Republique du Cameroun) between the entrepreneurs of statehood from both territories and a federation was adopted as the structure of the State. Once the federation was adopted, BSC was no longer considered as Southern Cameroons in international law, rather, it became West Cameroon federated State, and later North West and South West Regions (See figure 2 above).

2. The Politicisation of the Right of Self-Determination in BSC

The right of self-determination was a law to recognise the transition status of Trusteeship States that could only be managed politically. BSC was one of the Trust Territories in which shrewd political use was made of the right of self-determination. It was politically instrumental in many ways. It enhanced political participation and became a weapon of political socialisation and mobilisation; it divided public opinion about what is meant by self-government and independence, and it questioned the role of the UN and administering authorities in determining peoples' right to territorial sovereignty. According to Fansothe debate over whether or not there is an Anglophone (minority) problem in Cameroon is rooted in the violations of the self-determination law.[xxxi]

The law on self-determination created a friend-adversary conception and perception of politics that all political groupings are oppositional—no adversaries, no politics. It was also reinvented politically as a law of "us" and "them"—looking at the world of politics purely from the "otherness". British Southern Cameroonians did not only see themselves as politically different or having different political outlooks but also saw Britain, France and the UN as the 'other'. Those who interpreted self-determination as reunification with French Cameroons perceived those of association with Nigeria as fundamental political adversary. It was on this register that politics created by the multiple usages of the self-determination law was played out in BSC.

Self-determination institutionalized several different but related legal layers from which political entrepreneurs could lay claim. Britain reinvented self-determination politically to mean administrative union of British Cameroons in Nigeria, France interpreted it as administrative union within French Union, and Southern Cameroons took it to mean the

formation of pressure groups and parties, the mobilisation of the population to attain statehood through an association with Nigeria, a reunification with French Cameroons or complete independence.

2.1. Britain/France and the Self-Determination Logic of "Administrative Union"

The dissolution of the League of Nations in 1946 and the emergence of the UN placed British Cameroons and French Cameroons under the trusteeship system with Britain and France acting as trusteeship powers. According to Victor Le Vine, British and French acceptance of the trusteeship responsibility meant that they undertook to honour the political objectives stated in Article 76 of the UN Charter: "Progressive development towards self-government or independence".[xxxii]

However, neither the UN Charter nor the Trusteeship Agreements provided a clear definition of 'self-government'. This imprecision contained in the principle of self-determination did not only represent a fundamental inconsistency of the UN[xxxiii], but trusteeship powers took advantage of them to define and initiate their own path to statehood which sometimes contradicted the expectations of the trusteeship system. France for example took self-government to mean continuous French domination and twisted this law to suit her own purpose by administering her territories as part of metropolitan France. For example, it refused to grant legal status to Rassemblement Camerounais (RACAM) which was a French Cameroons movement and this was seen as proof that France was pursuing an "administrative union".[xxxiv]

Britain was the administering authority upon whom the UN Trusteeship gave the role of preparing British Cameroons for Independence. However, Britain intended to have British Cameroonians become Nigerians or French Cameroonians by default. She interpreted 'preparation' as partition and integration with Nigeria even though she argued that it was for administrative convenience. That is why she partitioned British Cameroons into British Northern and BSC and administered them as integral territories of Nigeria. The administration of BSC as an integral part of Nigeria was resented by Southern Cameroons entrepreneurs of statehood. It was within this framework that entrepreneurs of statehood organised themselves to articulate their own aspirations before the UN and to expose the intentions of administering authorities.[xxxv]

Furthermore, British logic of administrative union was expressed when she did not object UN Resolution 1352 that called for a plebiscite for Southern Cameroonians to attain independence by "joining" either Nigeria or French Cameroons. Instead, Britain was instructed to hold talks with entrepreneurs of statehood to elucidate them on the meaning of the phrase 'to achieve independence by joining'.[xxxvi] In early October 1960, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies held talks in London with a delegation of BSC Ministers and members of the opposition. In fact, between August and December 1960, several rounds of talks were held among entrepreneurs of statehood under the patronage of British authorities. These talks resulted in an Agreement, expressed in the form of Joint Declarations and Joint Communiqués, signed between Foncha and Ahidjo, who were the respective figurehead entrepreneurs of statehood in the two territories, and published. No significant effort was made on the part of Britain to encourage Southern Cameroons to attain independence without "joining" neither Nigeria nor French Cameroons. In fact, British and French complete or partial deviation from the rule of self-determination and the aspirations of Cameroons peoples led to the emergence of political organisations (pressure groups and parties) each of which sought to make of its own structure the organisational embodiment of statehood.

2.2. The Political Logic of Self-Determination as Integration with Nigeria

In BSC, self-determination laid the foundation of partisan engagement in politics. The logic of reunification was challenged by the logic of association or integration. The idea of 'association' or 'integration' came about as a result of the fact that BSC was already being administered as an integral part of Nigeria. Proponents of this option thought that self-determination or independence would be easily achieved and convenient with the present dispensation, if BSC was granted an autonomous status within the Nigerian Federation. The Kamerun National Congress (KNC) of Dr. E.M.L Endeley championed the option of self-determination as association with Nigeria. Initially, Endeley was in favour of reunification because he wanted to use it as an escape route from Nigerian connection[xxxvii] but along the line he thought that by opposing reunification in favour of association with Nigeria, he will maintain power. In July 1953, a Constitutional Conference was held in London and Endeley seized that opportunity to formulate a request for the unconditional withdrawal of BSC from the Eastern Region of Nigeria and its transformation into a separate region of its own within Nigeria.[xxxviii] The KNC participated and won 12 out of the 13 seats in the 1953 elections on the platform of BSC's neutrality in Nigerian politics and also a quasi regional status.[xxxix]

Promoting autonomy within the Nigerian Federation was interpreted as being anti-reunificationist. That is what Endeley turned out to do during his tenure of office, from 1953-1959. Endeley and his colleagues, came to perceive BSC as a distinct region developing within Nigeria (with whom they shared a common British tradition), and reunification was relegated to the background.[xl] In an attempt to explain why Endeley opposed reunification, Awasom writes that Endeley originally conceived reunification for the development of BSC, and for making the territory stand on its feet. However, when BSC acquired its own autonomy and started managing its own regional affairs, according to the British tradition in which it was groomed, the reunification idea became nothing more than "a barren political instrument in the hands of irresponsible and ambitious people".[xli]

Indications that Endeley's political option was integration with Nigeria are: his creation of the KNC that stood apart from the Kamerun United National Congress (KUNC) and French Cameroons Welfare Union (FCWU) which were in favour of reunification, his request for the creation of a separate status of BSC within Nigeria, his offer of regional autonomy within Nigeria during the 1953 campaign, his participating and winning the 1953 elections on platform of

benevolent neutrality but not total separation from Nigeria, and from 1953 to 1959 during his tenure of office, his continuance to offer integration as a product in the political market well into the 1959 general elections.

In the 1959 elections, the KNC and KPP[xlii], acting in alliance, campaigned on the platform of "association" with Nigeria. During one of the campaigns, N.N Mbile, leader of the KPP persuaded the people of Bakweri, Balondo, Bakossi, Baaghams, Bayangi, Banso, Mamfé, Nkambe and Wum Central not to support reunification saying that those who support reunification were people of the Stone Age. Together, the KNC and KPP formed the 'antithesis of reunification' between 1953 and 1959. During the plebiscite campaign, Endeley and his colleagues campaigned around attachment to British ways, general antipathy toward French ways, and a fear of terrorist (military rule) from French Cameroons. Unfortunately for them, the plebiscite was lost to pro-reunification activists.

2.3. The Political Logic of Self-Determination as Reunification with French Cameroons

Some entrepreneurs of statehood in BSC and French Cameroons interpreted self-determination as reunification with French Cameroons. This political offer was influenced by the desire to stay clear of Nigerian politics and willingness to regain the "one kamerun" status. It was the Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC) in French Cameroons and the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) in BSC that consistently supported the reunification option. Um Nyobe, a prominent leader of UPC, was among the first to denounce the colonialist game of divide-and-rule and plead for unity among Cameroonian nationalists stating that "we can't do anything without unity".[xliii] During the second UN Visiting Mission, the UPC presented 71 communications claiming reunification to be the most popular option but the mission rejected on grounds that masses of the population were not interested in the question and concluded in the report that the demand for unification is localised in some parts of Southern sections and even there the question is neither a popular demand among the people nor a lively issue.[xliv] In December 1952, Um Nyobe again presented the reunification case before the UN General Assembly. His speech and debates were printed in a pamphlet, "What the Cameroon People want" with thousands of copies being circulated. However, the suspicion people had of the UPC in BSC owing to the fact that it was banned in French Cameroons in 1955 and stigmatized as a terrorist group, did not really make the UPC to gain a firm political support among British Southern Cameroonians.

Foncha and his colleagues had a firmer and honest commitment to the idea of reunification. In 1955 Foncha formed the KNDP to take up the challenge of BSC gaining independence through reunification. It was devoted to breaking away from Nigeria and reuniting with French Cameroons. Leaders of the KNDP like Foncha (the chairman) and Augustin N. Jua were at first members of the KNC who had broken away not only because they opposed Endeley's connection to Nigeria but because reunification represented for them an alternative political ideology for political survival. As a matter of fact, in November 1955, the KNDP and UPC met in Bamenda and formed a reunification committee. Felix Moumié was elected President, and Foncha, Secretary and in 1956, an enlarged reunification committee was formed, including Foncha and Nde Ntumazah from the BSC, and Felix Moumié, Abel Kingé, and Ernest Ouandié, who were UPC leaders in exile from the French Cameroons.[xlv] In May 1958, Foncha travelled to the Bamileke Mungo and Douala Departments of French Cameroons to develop new contacts in support of reunification. In April 1959, Foncha was elected Prime Minister and made a general tour in BSC to canvass support for reunification. The KNDP used reunification to oppose the KNC-KPP by pressing for secession from Nigeria and reunification with Cameroons under the French Trusteeship. The KNDP plebiscite campaign revealed the extent to which Foncha and his colleagues were concerned about reunification. The campaign turned around xenophobia towards Nigerians and particularly Ibos, subnationalism among grassfields people who had come to consider Foncha and his KNDP as their own special spokesmen and consequently his government as their own private instrument. Indeed, Nigerian connection was unpopular in BSC because of the prevalent fear of Nigerian domination. On the issue Johnson writes:

> Agitating for reunification with the Cameroun Republic, Foncha, Muna, Agustine N. Jua, John H. Nanje, and Simon A. Mofor—all ethnically from the "grassfields"—converted on imperfectly articulated feeling of community with certain Cameroun peoples (Bamileké and Bamoun) into a conviction that "brothers" ought to be reunited. This feat was accomplished despite opposition of at least two local fon's (traditional rulers). Coupled with an appeal to a strong antipathy toward certain Nigerians (particularly the Ibo), the campaign paid off handsomely in Bamenda and substantially in Mamfe and Wum.[xlvi]

During the campaigns, Foncha and his colleagues emphasized the Nigerian domination of Cameroonians, displaying stones to voters which he claimed Nigerians had thrown at the BSC delegation in Nigeria, and this provoked anti-Nigerian sentiment.[xlvii] Foncha and his allies also capitalized on the name "Cameroon". They placed heavy emphasis on the name they advanced as proof that the country should join with French Cameroons and reject Nigeria.[xlviii] In fact, they claimed that "Cameroonians are not Nigerians" and the term "Kamerun" (as it was called under the Germans) was used throughout the campaign to emphasize that it was the restoration of the former German State that they sought. The KNC-KPP lost the 1959 elections by 51,425 (37 percent) of the votes. Foncha and his KNDP were brought to power but that never meant that the issue of self-determination for BSC was resolved.

2.4. Self-Determination as a Political Temptation for Complete Independence

The option of BSC attaining self-government as an independent State, that is neither joining Nigeria nor French Cameroons was not expressly thought of and made public until disagreement between Foncha and Endeley at the Mamfe all party and decisive conference of 1959. The Mamfe Conference was convened on the proposition of the 1959 UN Visiting Mission so that the two leading entrepreneurs of statehood (Foncha and Endeley) could resolve their differences and

present a common position at the 13th UN General Assembly. Instead, during the conference, more confusion was set in when Foncha and Endeley stood their grounds with the former even thinking of a continued trusteeship administration. It was in the midst of this political disagreement and confusion that Paul Kale, a member of the KPP in alliance with KNC stood and argued for an end to the Trusteeship Agreement even if it left BSC on its own. He said that

> By the terms of the Trusteeship Agreement the right to the enjoyment of self-government or independence had been guaranteed the Cameroons even if Nigeria had not set the ball rolling...I have even wondered why the plebiscite should be called at all... [[I]] hope that after the said plebiscite the Cameroons [will] be granted self-government without ties or apron strings either way. On the face of this one would therefore assume that the Cameroons has a right to the enjoyment of self-government independent of Nigeria.[xlix]

This 'new' position was a political temptation that had a brief contagious effect on some prominent political figures who attended the conference. The Fon of Bafut quickly bought over it when he said "To me the French Cameroons is 'Fire' and Nigeria 'Water.' Sir, [referring to the British High Commissioner for BSC, who was present at the conference] I support secession without unification".[l] Endeley briefly took up Kale's position but his burning desire was to embarrass Foncha's government by revealing a lack of dedication to its long-avowed program.[li]

In reality, Kale's position did not only catch everyone by surprise but it was unrealistic at that point in time. It was more desirable than feasible. It remained a mere political temptation in the sense that his colleagues saw with him but thought it was late and costly. This option came at a time when Endeley and Foncha had entrenched political positions and supporters. It would have been a credible political risk if any of them attempted to review. As Johnson puts it, what Endeley and Foncha feared most was neither reunification nor integration into Nigeria but rather losing their political following and thus power or the opportunity to gain by having their indecision and abandonment of their own programs too openly exposed.[lii] It was in the midst of this political impasse that the UN finally took the decision to organise a plebiscite.

The tempting political option of self-determination as complete independence resurrected in the early 1990s, some thirty years after BSC 'joined' The Republic of Cameroun. Movements such as the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) for itself and on behalf of the people of Southern Cameroons emerged to demand a complete independence where a federation was impossible. From then henceforth, the people of North West and South West Regions, who were the people of BSC before October 1, 1961, are giving a second thought over complete independence as a political expression of self-determination.

2.5. The UN and the Political Logic of Self Determination as Settlement

Framed in contention, self-determination failed to enhance a common sense of purpose and direction among the entrepreneurs of statehood in BSC. There were no common grounds among the politicians and political organizations on the interpretation of nationalism and independence and of course the operationalization of the terms of the Trusteeship Agreement. The absence of consensus between Endeley, who favoured independence through an association with Nigeria, Foncha, who desired independence in a reunion with French Cameroons, and the Kale's tempting political position of complete independence without "joining", culminated in a decision of the UN General Assembly in May 1960 recommending separate plebiscites to be held in British Northern and Southern Cameroons. The plebiscite was a political option in the absence of a general agreement among all the major political parties regarding the constitutional future of the Territory.

The UN intervened in matters concerning statehood in BSC as inspector, settlor and supervisor. Its oversight function was to make sure by sending UN Visiting Missions that administering authorities (Britain and France) were effectively preparing the Trusteeship States towards self-government and independence. It used its Visiting Missions to tap information about the state of the Trust Territory. It was opened to the plights and grievances and tried as much as it could to resolve them.

The 13th UN General Assembly organised in February 1959 was devoted to the Cameroons question and was called "Cameroons Session". The General Assembly was expecting the entrepreneurs of statehood to present a consensus on the nature of territorial sovereignty that they have chosen. Shortly before the general elections of January 1959, the UN Visiting Mission to BSC recommended a plebiscite unless general agreement could be reached among all the major political parties regarding the constitutional future of BSC.[liii] But Foncha of the KNDP proposed and insisted that if a plebiscite were to be held the choice involved was only to be that between secession from and integration into the Federation of Nigeria. The KNC-KPP proposed and insisted that reunification be the alternative to continued association with Nigeria. The UN could only decide that a plebiscite would be held before April 1960. After fruitless attempts to reconcile the political forces in BSC, Resolution 1352 required that the plebiscite be held not later than March 1961 and in December 1960, the UN chose February 11, 1961 as date of the plebiscite.

Political disagreement over the issue of the plebiscite question also compelled the UN to formulate the plebiscite question in a way that represented the two major political options. It was then that Foncha and Endeley settled on the following UN-proposed questions: a) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria? OR b) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Republic of Cameroon?Following the results of the plebiscite, BSC voted massively in favour of reunification while Northern Cameroons voted to join Nigeria.[liv]

Area	For Cameroun Republic	For Nigeria	Total Votes	Margins
Southern Cameroons	233,571	97,741	331,312	135,830
Northern Cameroons	97,659	146,296	243,955	48,637
Totals	331,230	244,037	575,267	

Table 1: Results of United Nations Plebiscite in British Cameroons, February 1961
Source: Le Vine, 1971:16

Indeed, the organisation of a plebiscite was a political instrument used by the UN to give force to the international law on the right of self determination. It made the law on the right of self-determination objective and applicable. The plebiscite was interpreted as a valid and reliable political instrument to settle unresolved political issues in non-self governing territories. Cassese[lv] argues that though the UN upheld and applied the standards which have been expressed in Trusteeship Agreement, it placed a liberal interpretation of them which had to compel it to organise and supervise election or plebiscites in non-self governing territories before their accession to independence or their association or integration to other countries.[lvi] Following the results, Northern Cameroons decided to join Nigeria and BSC decided to join The Republic of Cameroun. The results were later endorsed by the UN General Assembly by virtue of Resolution 1608 (XV) of 21 April 1961.

3. Conclusion

3.1. Patterns of Statehood in Former Trust Territories

The law is a necessity in society but when it is flexible, it becomes object of political manipulation. The optional nature of self-determination as a principle of international law made it inherently political and its liberal nature made it contentious. The right of self-determination provided a base for its instrumentalism by political entrepreneurs of statehood in BSC. It was reinvented in contention within the framework of which three political offers with varying degrees of popularity emerged. It was interpreted and expressed in juggling terms and actions. It meant a movement back and forth between reunification, association/integration and outright independence.

Modern Cameroon today owes its existence particularly to the operation of the political forces of the Trusteeship System. However, although the national independent State is working towards the creation of and the intensification of the feeling of single national identity, at least in principle, some Anglophone Cameroonians have been working towards national separateness of identity.[lvii] Unfortunately, self-determination was never contained in the constitution of Cameroon so as to avoid intentions of breakaways. Anglophone Cameroon perceives itself as a nation-state different from the main State and they have been trying to carve out their own territorial sovereignty by reinventing self-determination law. Cameroon's further advance has been punctuated by a series of Anglophone contest of the State which derive from their awareness of the principle of self-determination and their ability to use it for political claims. This implies that the Trusteeship and post-Trusteeship State of Cameroon have not been able to vanish or submerge the difference self-determination created between BSC and French Cameroons. The modern State is failing to create a broader and sustainable national unity or it is doing so with difficulty, at best. The law on self-determination gave entrepreneurs of statehood in BSC the prospect to be involved and oriented in quite different frames of statehood which continues till date.

Among some Anglophone Cameroonians today, the territorial identity created by Trusteeship System seems to be the determinative factor of self-determination. The definition of the 'self' is being associated with territorial origin and belonging i.e. original belonging to BSC. The new concept of statehood in present day North West and South West Regions is strongly linked to territorial entity rather than a community of like-minded people. Although the wishes of Southern Cameroonians were ascertained through a plebiscite under the auspices of the UN, they have been expressing dissatisfaction and are threatening to quit the main State. Are they free to do so? If yes, what are the possible consequences? Is the Trusteeship Council still authorized to intervene in such internal State matters even though its task is officially known to have ended? Is it not time for the UN to reform self-determination laws and bring back the Trusteeship Council in such matters? Certainly expressions of dissatisfaction against the post Trusteeship State imply that the self-determination mission of the UN is not yet over, at least, or that it failed in its mission or entrepreneurs of statehood gave it a different mission. If the right of self-determination is to be made meaningful, it must be sharply delimited, states Rupert Emerson.[lviii] He goes further to state that the more strictly the peoples to whom it is to be applied and defined, the more possible it becomes to make something of it as a right which can be stated with reasonable precision and given institutional expression. It is the contention of this paper that the self-determination that was framed from inception was not the best because it never set limits as to its interpretation and consideration, although it was driven by feelings of sympathy for democracy. It is the opinion of this paper that to concede to people and in particular minorities the right of withdrawing from the community to which they belong, because it is their wish or their good pleasure, would be to destroy order and stability within States and to inaugurate anarchy in international life, and as Emerson puts it, it would be to uphold a theory incompatible with the very idea of a State as a territorial and political entity.[lix]

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[i] See Le Vine, V. T., The Cameroon Federal Republic (Ithaca and London; Cornell University Press, 1971), p. 41.

[ii] Ibid.

[iii] For details see Anyangwe, Carlson, Betrayal of Too Trusting a People: The UN, the UK and the Trust Territory of the Southern Cameroons (Bamenda: Langaa RPCIG, 2009); Konings, P., and Nyamnjoh, F-B, Negotiating an Anglophone Identity: A study of the politics of recognition and representation in Cameroon (Leiden and Boston; Brill, Afrika-Studiecentrum Series, Vol. 1, 2003); and Mukong, A., (Ed.) The case for the Southern Cameroons (Yaoundé; Cameroon Federalist Committee, 1990).

[iv] Entrepreneurs of statehood are understood as a kind of political entrepreneurs who influence the emergence, formation and/or transformation of States in a decisive way. In British Southern Cameroons it denotes specific local politicians striving to develop statehood by making shrewd use of the opportunity offered by the international law on self-determination.

[v] Robert Dahl defines political entrepreneurs as individuals who take advantage of available opportunities to alter the distribution of power in a situation of political competition. See R.A. Dahl, Who governs? Democracy and power in an American city, New Haven Yale University Press, 1961)

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[xii] Bayles, Ibid.

[xiii] For details on the concepts of ceiling and floor on political participation, see S. Verba, et al., Participation and political equality: A seven-nation comparison (Chicago and London; University of Chicago Press, 1978)

[xiv] See W.I. Zartman (Ed.), LEffondrement de l'Etat: Desintegration et Restauration du Pouvoir Legitime (Manille; Nouveaux Horizons, 1997)

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[xxiii] Anaya, Ibid, p.109.
[xxiv] Cop & Eymirlio¤lu, "The Right of Self-determination in International Law towards the 40th Anniversary of the Adoption of ICCPR and ICESCR" (Perceptions, 115-145, 2005:120).
[xxv] Emerson, Ibid. p. 298.
[xxvi] Crawford, Ibid.
[xxvii] M. Koskenniemi, The Politics of International Law (Oxford; Hard Publishing Ltd., 2011:14)
[xxviii] Emerson, pp. 297-298.
[xxix] Koskenniemi, Ibid. p. 38.
[xxx] Emerson (pp.298-299).
[xxxi] V.G. Fanso, "Constitutional problems in the construction and legality of the unitary state in Cameroon", (Cameroon Journal on Democracy and Human Rights, Vol.3, No.2, 4-16, 2009)
[xxxii] Le Vine, Op.cit.
[xxxiii]Michla Pomerance, Self-Determination in Law and Practice: The New Doctrine in the United Nations (The Hague; Boston, 1982)
[xxxiv] Willard Johnson, The Cameroon federation: Political integration in a fragmentary society, (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 1970:128)
[xxxv] Ibid. p.116.
[xxxvi] On 31 March 1960 the Trusteeship Council adopted Resolution 2013 (XXVI) requesting the British government to take appropriate steps, to ensure that Southern Cameroonians are fully informed, before the plebiscite, of the constitutional arrangements that would have to be made, for the implementation of the decisions taken at the plebiscite. Britain was therefore duty bound to inform Southern Cameroons, of the conditions of joining offered by the Nigeria and French Cameroons.
[xxxvii] N. F. Awasom, "The reunification question in Cameroon history: Was the bride an enthusiastic or reluctant one?" (Africa Today, Vol. 47, No. 2, Indiana University Press, pp. 90-119, 2000).
[xxxviii] Ibid.
[xxxix] This quasi regional status meant that Southern Cameroons had achieved a measure of self-government with a House of Assembly and an Executive Council at Buea, its capital, and Endeley became the Leader of Government Business, instead of Premier, because the Southern Cameroons was not yet a full region.
[xl] Awasom, Op.cit.
[xli] Ibid.
[xlii] This support from the KPP culminated in an ideological alliance known as the KNC-KPP alliance which later became Cameroon Peoples National Congress (CPNC).
[xliii] Johnson, Op. cit. p. 127.
[xliv] Ibid.
[xlv]Awasom, Op.cit.
[xlvi] Johnson, Op.cit. p.170.
[xlvii] Ibid.
[xlviii] Ibid. p. 150.
[xlix]Ibid. p.145.
[l] Awasom, Op.cit, and Johnson, Op.cit.
[li] Ibid.
[lii]Ibid. Pp.146-147.
[liii] Ibid. p.144.
[liv] Northern Cameroons voted against reunification because majority of them were not simply willing to reunite. Their spokesmen had expressed no desire for separation from the Northern Region of Nigeria. See Le Vine, op.cit. p.14.
[lv]Cassese, Op.cit. p.76.
[lvi] It is interesting to note that plebiscites were also held in British Togoland in 1956, French Togoland in 1958, British Northern Cameroons in 1959 (which was posponed to 1961), Rwanda-Urundi in 1962, the Cook Island in 1965, Equatorial Guinea in 1968, Papua New Guinea in 1972, the New Zealand Territory of Niue in 1974, the Ellice Island in 1974, (the voters decided to become a separate territory under the name of Tivalu), the Northern Marianas in 1975, and French Comores Island in 1974 and 1976.
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