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**Ideologies, Governance, and the Public Sphere in Cameroon**

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## **Abstract**

The foundation history of Cameroon, as a “nation-state”, was influenced by externally imposed factors, which also means that the foundation political philosophy on which the neo-colonial state in Cameroon rests is traceable to foreign sources. Hence, Cameroon has no indigenous philosophical basis of its existence out of which an indigenous world view should have emerged with its religion, art, literature, paintings, music, etc., to govern a public sphere that derives from and supports its reality. And since the “Kamerun Idea”, which was transformed into a neo-colonial political structure during the cold war for the same purpose of achieving a foreign economic objective like the original idea itself, one of the ways of achieving that desired goal was by dominating the public sphere with idiomatic expressions that claim to make life rather than being supportive of *reality*, which at the same time sought to destroy the foundation of all indigenous political philosophies yet with no intention to establish a universal ideal. The hypothesis adopted for this paper is that for the foreign foundation philosophy to be maintained and reproduced in the public domain for the survival of the foreign-oriented racket state there was the need to flood the public sphere with ideological mechanisms of public mediation for the effective epistemic control of the population, resulting in the emergence of a fractured and contested public sphere that selectively “favours” certain social categories for the success of the project of domination. This paper, which seeks to develop a theory that should explain the operation of the public sphere in a neo-colonial context, will thus examine, from a historical standpoint, the origins of a selected sample of some of the idiomatic expressions that govern the public sphere in Cameroon and the ideological options they represent as a methodological preference to showing their correlation with the project of domination, i.e., show how governance is mediated by the alienative role of an incoherent public sphere, dominated by representations of foreign ideologies, which does not seek to create a common consciousness in all citizens but rather help to maintain and perpetuate a fractured image of the Enlightenment, reinforced by a style of governance that thrives on a fractured public sphere, an understanding of which should illustrate a public sphere that facilitates the thriving of hybridised notions, critical for foreign interference, meddling, destruction, and domination within the overall project of “nation-building”. Attempts will also be made to show the role of trans-territorial influences in the “development” of the public sphere in Cameroon and how this has been changing over the years.

## **1. Introduction**

The public sphere in what became Cameroon during the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, emerging as a racket state, erected on a foreign foundation philosophy with its foundation history thus traceable to a foreign historical source, is dominated by a multiplicity of intersecting and conflicting mechanisms of public mediation. A large part of these represent sets of ideas of foreign origins which were introduced in that portion of Africa following the invasion of Africa by Europeans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – in addition to the earlier introduction of the Islamic public sphere in Africa by the invading Arabs who spilled out from the Arabian deserts since 640 following a new wave of awareness in the conquering role of Islam subsequent on the death of Muhammad in 632 – with the intention to ideologically arrest Africans for the success of the project of ecological invasion, political domination, and economic enslavement, all of which had the one objective being the robbery of Africa's natural wealth with the consent and participation of Africans themselves for the industrial and economic expansion of European countries and that of the North in general. Although none of these ideational representations may not seem to be pointing up to a clearly defined governing or dominant ideology as all of them compete for space, moderated by economic rather than discursive relations, thus helping to fragment the 'public' in a way that ensures the maintenance of a neo-colonial power structure which rather dislocates the site where the generation and flow of discussions that should balance the overbearing power of the neo-colonial state can be made, these contradictions find unity in a dominant ideology all the same.

This process, which has been undergoing rapid changes, beyond the control of Cameroonians who are mere subjects of foreign idioms, also seeks to destroy the indigenous basis on which a genuine depository of ideas could have emerged to govern the public sphere in Cameroon as a counterpoising dynamic to the project of domination by Europeans who achieve their goal through the collaborative assistance of their neo-colonial allies in power, yet with no intention to create common ideals for self-representation, resulting in a hybrid public sphere arbitrated by economic imperatives. Up until now political studies on Cameroon have focused neither on the realm of ideas, which has to do with the way Cameroonians have come to understand the world and how they are led by such ideas to go about their daily activities, nor on the structural operations of the public sphere. Yet the foundation from where Cameroonians draw the common sense notions with which they are able to manage the affairs of their daily existence is loaded with economic meanings which undercut the public sphere from operating as purely deliberative forums through which citizens can relate with the realm

of political power in policy conception, formulation, and implementation, being a fact of contemporary history.

This implies the absence of an indigenous world view which should have arisen from a purely indigenous philosophical predisposition to establish itself as the ideological base of the nation with all its various forms of idiomatic expressions such as art works, music, literature, poetry, religion, myths, symbols, paintings, code of ethics, etc., emerging to govern a discursive public sphere which should, in turn, return to nourish and thus enrich that foundation philosophy on which the nation rests, structured on a discursive public sphere. The idea was rather to develop a fractured or an incoherent public sphere which is rather flooded with alienative ideological mechanisms of public mediation which claim to make life; which claim to be responsible for the fabrication of the new person for the establishment of a new social order thus seeking to breathe a new order into being, though without overtly saying so, and thus not derived from an indigenous roots and therefore not supportive of any indigenous foundation philosophy yet still with no objective for the establishment of a universal model or ideal resulting in the emergence and blossoming of hybridised notions about the Enlightenment. The introducing of a utopian dimension to the subordinated peoples' understanding of history also sought and obtained the compliance of the Cameroon peoples to be incorporated into the neo-colonial power structure within which they 'unconscious' participate in a system of global division of labour which denies them what they themselves toil to produce.

This was vital for the project of domination in that it ensures the effective epistemic control of the population for the survival of the foreign-oriented racket state; a *superstructure* with all its ideological representations traceable to foreign origins intended to facilitate the project of racketeering and economic looting, over which were foisted neo-colonial allies during the cold war whose duty it was to keep on nourishing the foreign engineered foundation philosophy on which the neo-colonial political structure was enacted. An examination of the principal characteristics of a selected sample of some of the ideological mechanisms of public mediation which dictate the way in which the subordinated people of Cameroon have come to view history and their unconscious participation in it, and the historical processes through which such were imposed on the people by the invading Europeans within the framework of an overarching neo-colonial legal-political and ideological *superstructure* which combines the use of violence with the control of the realm of ideas for the purpose of achieving goals in the economic domain on behalf of Western industrial economies, and how it has created inequalities, could explain why Cameroon does

not stand on an indigenous foundation philosophy with its own system of ideas which govern a deliberative public sphere that is unconstrained by economic relations.

This was done from an historical standpoint as a methodological option intended to show not only how trans-territorial influences established and have been contributing over time to the ‘development’ of the public sphere in Cameroon, with Cameroon rather emerging as a broken copy of the Enlightenment, producing results that only benefit the governing class which rules over Cameroon aristocratically unopposed since the end of the national liberation struggle (in 1971), backed by countries of the North and their financial organisations who are the foreign backers of the repressive political structure on whose behalf it operates, but also how this experience or phenomenon is correlated with the project of domination. We begin by an understanding of the various concepts involved before moving on to show how the triple concepts of ideology, governance and the public sphere in Cameroon are interwoven. In doing that, it was necessary to go beyond the descriptive obviousness of an empiricist type to postulate a theory for a better understanding of the operations or ‘functioning’ of the public sphere in Cameroon as well as for the establishment of the *hidden link* between the seemingly contradictory spheres and the ruling ideology or governance in general.

## **2. Definition of Concepts**

### **(i) Ideology**

The term ideology was first coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy, who was one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century French theorists or *ideologues* in his *Mémoire sur la faculté de penser* (vol. 1, 1796-1798) and *Éléments d'idéologie* (1801), to refer to what he called the “science of ideas”. As a genetic theory of the ideas that dominate the human mind and governs the unconscious aspects of human behaviour it has since then undergone rigorous intellectual debates among various sociological traditions including those of the structuralist traditions, those of the Durkheimian school as well as those of the Weberian leaning. But as a sociological concept, it owes its origins in the works of Karl Marx (1818–1883) who gave the social phenomenon a Marxian interpretation in his sociological analysis of the structural dominant role of ideology in the subordination of the proletariats in England and France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. That Marxian interpretation of ideology has had an enduring impact in social scientific analysis till this day. In its broad-based form, ideology is used to refer to those assortment of ideas or philosophical propensities which structures the world for people in a given territorial context – a group, social category, class, institution, or any entity – and gives it meaning and provides

them with certain ways of looking at things as well as an identity and thus justifies their collective activities and existence as a body of people, becoming the invisible basis of their political, cultural, economic, or social life, which directs them on how their group should move as opposed to those outside their realm: it governs their unconscious.

An ideology, as an inclusive and consistent visualisation thus, or that invisible realm of ideas, that subliminal causality, from where people in a society or a substratum group within society draw their common sense notions, also defines and limits the actions of its individual members who owe it to themselves the responsibility to, based on the knowledge, skills, abilities, beliefs, or characteristics conferred on them by what they have, historically speaking, come to cling to or internalised as truths, which enables them to maintain, recreate, and perpetuate the self-identity of their group in competition with other groups. Ideology, as an imposition of perspective on reality by those who want to give the world a certain order and a sense of direction for themselves thus, has a long history that predates even written history, stretching many centuries back even before the day of Destutt de Tracy who only coined a term to describe a phenomenon that was as old as human existence on earth. Even in the historical analysis of Herodotus, Kwame Nkrumah saw ideological underpinnings.

Societies in pre-colonial Africa, for example, which have been erroneously labelled in colonial ethnographic literature as “tribes” were actually people of diverse origins who came to inhabit a geo-political space through social contracts, not in the sense as postulated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau but by the sense in which historically structured groups amalgamated their differences and negotiated a common identity for themselves by themselves and as a result came to share one world view in their similarity and difference (see my *Fundamental Principles of the Fonship System of Government: A Structuro-Historical Anthropology of the Cameroon Western Grassfields*, 2008). States in pre-colonial Africa, as the example of the Western Grassfields pre-colonial nations show, were formed as associations where persons and groups freely joined and freely broke off for one reason or the other to either discuss their way into another nation or to negotiate the creation of a new one. Once the contract was sealed, they became unified by a single ideology that was imposed on themselves by themselves which structured reality for them and unified them under one nation expressed in one cultural system, one language, one religious tradition, supported by idiomatic expressions such as art, music, and symbols, etc., all of which served as ideological mechanisms through which they transmitted shared ideas and values as one people through associative practices for the exploration of their physical world for their collective well being.

To them, what was paramount was the direction society should go; the reproduction of the identity of the nation based on the reproduction of the material conditions of their existence since that assured them of their autonomy and independence around which their well being depended; around which the self was defined which, as a logical scheme of ideas, in the positive sense, around which they based their thoughts and actions, becoming an ideal way of life for them through which they categorised the world, expressed in a uniquely formulated language plus a complex set of artefacts and religion which articulated their ideology and upheld their independence and autonomy as an identity group, to make it suitable for them to live in. It conferred on them their provisos of existence which enabled them to manage similarity and difference perfectly well, giving an outward appearance of themselves as people from one ancestry; “tribes”.

In a study of the relationship between ideology and time in Bali Nyong’a of the Western Grassfields of Cameroon, Kini-Yen Fongot-Kinni (2006) demonstrates how the notion of time (*ndip*) in Bali Nyong’a is an idiomatic expression of an ideology which governs the people’s understanding of the world and makes reality more comprehensible for them, resulting from the foundation philosophy on which the people themselves had founded their nation as an association-state on a geographical location which formed its material base; its infrastructure, and serves as that common source of perceptual stimulation from where the population, including those who manage the governing organs, which emerge from the terms of the association, receives the ideas with which they tackle the challenges of their daily existence without resulting in any significant differences that make a difference. It was a context where, like elsewhere in pre-colonial Africa, ideology was applicable in a uniform and unproblematic manner: neutral.

While Karl Manheim maintains that ideology refers to the ‘collective unconsciousness’ of a people who seek to maintain the status quo in ways different from utopian thinking, unconscious about or even hostile to any alternative, Karl Marx, for his part, holds the view that an ideology is the world view of the dominant class imposed on the people with the intention to create a ‘false consciousness’ in the alienated groups; to transform human beings into “workers” who should have a misconception of their own interests in order to have an effective epistemic control over them in the production process and to maintain among them the necessary relations of production for the profit seeking motifs of capital. He postulated further that this was determined by the means of production which formed the base over which this dominant class superimposes a repressive *superstructure* on society, which included its ideology, its political system, its legal system, and its religion: its ideological

mechanisms for the reproduction of the relations of production. Louis Althusser, who introduced the structural understanding of ideologies, maintains that ideologies exist and reproduced in ideological state apparatuses which enable the different categories of people and substratum groups within society to effectively play their role while at the same time reproduce themselves as ‘labour’ through the capitalist system of education which ejects masses of ‘labour’ into the ‘labour market’, ready for exploitation by the capitalist system.

Karl Marx, from whom Althusser developed his views on ideology, maintains, in the *German Ideology*, that ideology is a pure dream manufactured for the alienation of labour. This description of ideology by Karl Marx could be perfectly in order given that state formation in the Western societies where he focused his observations was a result of an emergent bourgeoisie class which, having acquired the means with which to erect a ‘repressive state apparatus’, were now able to impose a *superstructure*; a repressive political system, law, and an assortment of ideologies including the religious, educational, political, legal, etc, backed by mechanisms of repression, on the material base or *infrastructure* which includes the rest of the population. This population, which constitutes mainly of the alienated groups, feeds the *superstructure* by way of definite relations of production crucial for the reproduction of the ‘whole’, in an endless sequence, enables the domination and the effective control and exploitation of the subjects in the production process as was aptly described by Friedrich Engels in *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* and by Marx himself in the *Communist Manifesto* and his other classical writings. This conception and constitution of the state, which emerges rather as a “machine” of repression, a repressive apparatus, for the political domination and for the economic exploitation of the subordinated ‘citizens’ or the subjected working classes by the bourgeois class, was also upheld later on by Lenin in *The State and Revolution*.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Lenin (1870–1924) gave a new breadth to Marxism by hypothesising that a revolutionary intellectual class, which he called the intelligentsia, would emerge to unravel the obscurantist tendencies embodied in the ideological imposition of the dominant class for the freedom of the subjugated peoples. Although Lenin himself epitomised that revolutionary intellectual class, which led to the February 1917 Russian revolution though materially and ideologically frustrated by his Western brothers for fear that it was going to have a domino effect and halt the global advancement of Western cupidity expressed through their invasion and destruction of non-European societies, the said intelligentsia, unfortunately, has, after Lenin, been economically incorporated into the very repressive bourgeoisie structure they were supposed to intellectually demystify or disarm, thus

mitigating a revolutionary struggle against political domination and economic enslavement since the real problem of the subordinated peoples has remained unknown to them, shrouded in Althusser's ideological state apparatuses through which subordinated peoples are held in a trance in reserve.

This is particularly the case in Cameroon, if not in all of Africa, where the population has come to believe in the utopian daydream of "development", a post-World War II concept that was coined for Africa by the West and imposed on the people through the neo-colonial power structure, which it uses to justify its existence as the people kept dreaming a dream and which claims to recognise the real interests of the subjected people. The subjection of the people to the daydream, under such fictitious states, instead prevents their real interests from being realised; it prevents them from discussing their way out and thus developing their own skills in producing their own natural wealth and raising their own capital for their own social and material transformation; where the whole idea of "modernity" or 'improvement in living conditions' itself hides its profit-seeking motives, especially in a world where the white man countries think that only money derived from them is legitimate and also that they are the only guarantors of development. This helps to reproduce the economic relations of production in Cameroon for the sustenance of the Western industrial economies: it keeps African peoples as subordinated "workers" for the dominant industrial economies of the West.

Kwame Nkrumah (1964) has maintained that ideology refers to that philosophy which has finally established itself in a society as a self-determining system of ideas that makes reality more intelligible, based on a general, positive, and organic principle, becoming the determining factor for their cognitive processes and the foundation of the normative system that explains how the people in that context understands and rationally transacts with reality, manifesting itself in the society's class structure, history, religion, and art (Nkrumah 1964: 59). And if we realise, therefore, that there are some ideologies which are neutral: not a result of a foreign imposition, which could either be implicit or explicit, written or unwritten, yet still serving as ideologies, deeply embedded in the sub-consciousness, directing groups of individuals within a territorial limit towards achieving practical goals for themselves by themselves in ways which distinguish them from those outside their group, it becomes evident that ideology became problematic in the West after the French Revolution of 1778-1779. It was the French Revolution of the 18<sup>th</sup> century which introduced the idea of "nation-building" in the West and rendered ideology problematic especially after the Napoleonic wars which demonstrated the conquering power of the nation-state in the West. Since then ideology became a useful instrument for Western societies to infiltrate, dominate, control, and enslave

other races of the world over the means of production particularly the Black race of Africa by imposing on them what they should believe in as real, determining how they should structure themselves and be discussing their terms of existence.

This has been the bitter experience with Africans in the hands of Europeans since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a period which corresponded to the end of physical confrontation between Europe and Africa and the beginning of an era of ideological manipulation though not without the use of repression. This was an age in which Western ideas became weapons directed against African peoples. And even the Cold War battle between the two ideological giants of the West (capitalism) and the East (communism) over the control of space in the former *third world* (today *second world*) particularly in Africa, which saw the destruction of the latter by the former, led to the triumph of neo-liberalism, a Western ideological disposition which, suffused with such doctrinal representations as democratisation, liberalisation, and privatisation, established a new kind of relationship between Africa and the imperialistic West which espoused the direct reinvasion and the complete destruction of Africa by countries of the North in the late 1980s, underpinning Western foreign policy and international relations.

In the context of this paper, ideology has been used, not only in the Freudian conception of ideology which, like consciousness, has no history and thus eternal, to refer to the phenomenon as an eternal but mutable system of ideas which makes imposition and domination, as historical events, possible. As Louis Althusser contends, namely that ideology does not announce its name to the people whom it subjects, some pre-colonial nations of what is today called Cameroon, which have received some considerable attention in anthropological literature, such as those of the Western Grassfields, those of the Douala area, the Ewondo, etc., may never have had a term for the description of ideology, but they were fully aware of an inarticulate law which directed them and governed their “ways of knowing and doing”, which was the consequence of ideology. It was that invisible base of society which was centred around certain key values which subjects individuals to patterns of behaviour which they have come to eternalise overtime, observed into their subliminal which they unconsciously reproduce, which is what makes Bafut people different from Bamum people, or the Ewondo people different from the Nso’ people, which are all ideological communities which are governed by world views that derive from their ideological base, which may either be similar or different depending on the type of historical relationship that may exist between them, yet unknown to them what this base really is.

But following the 19<sup>th</sup> century European invasion of Africa, these ideological communities were transformed into subordinated categories under a fantasy, a deceptive

façade, a shield for Western criminality called a “nation-state” which claims social responsibility over subjected peoples thus maintaining its dominance and reproducing itself through new forms of ideological apparatuses imposed by it through which it subjects the people by making them believe that their survival is guaranteed by their dependence on foreign materialistic forces. The idea of ‘calling’ or ‘becoming’ may be applicable in all ideological situations where individuals are ‘called’ to ‘become’ believers of a desirable world view for a particular purpose and depending on what it guarantees them. But the subjection of the peoples under a dominant ideology, following the invasion of Africa by Europeans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was achieved by way of individuals being ‘called’ to ‘become’ members of an ideological category within the daydream for the reproduction of the conditions of production as well as the reproduction of the relations of production for the subsistence of the repressive state. With it came a dominant ideology which structures the world for its practitioners and pre-appoints individuals into it, as subordinated subjects, even before they are born.

And it must not escape our attention that an ideology is as eternal as the group that is practicing it, which means that: if an ideology is that intangible edict that has become part of a people’s unconsciousness and thus directs their ways as a group or as an institution, then the disappearance of that group or institution would mean the disappearance of that particular ideology. The reverse is also true in that the mutation or outright disappearance of an ideology would equally mean that the group would either cease to exist as an identity group or would undergo some structural mutation which may eventually lead to its disappearance, which is why the different pre-colonial nations of Africa, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, rose up like one person to resist the European invasion of the African continent because the practices of the invading Europeans contradicted the canons of the existing ideologies and meant an unintended alteration in their “ways of knowing and doing”.

This should also tell us something as to why the invading Europeans, backed by high firepower, subdued the African pre-colonial nations one after the other and imposed Western systems of thought on them: there was the need to forcefully co-opt Africans into the European barbaric world view in order to forcefully obtain their consent as ‘unconscious participants’ in the European enterprise of criminality against Black people. This should as well validate the argument that the inside to an ideology takes on a taken-for-granted status for those who have been co-opted into it and subordinated by it, which is why Europeans had to use force to co-opt African people into the European systems of ideas: to transform them into accomplices at different levels; through a system of ‘differentiated interpellation’, which subjects them to different interests domains which are seemingly contradictory yet unified by

their subjection to the interest of the governing elite on whom their survival and functioning depends. But again this has only resulted in what Fanon refers to as ‘dual consciousnesses’ in which colonised subjects adopt European attributes for one reason or the other while not completely forgetting what is essentially theirs. In the domain of language, for example, language being an ideological medium of expression through which a group is able to classify the world for effectively re-ordering it by way of communication, .i.e. expressing those ideas that ideology provides them with in order to make social life possible, Africans have become polyglots: speaking their mother tongues as well as one or more European languages in addition without being conscious of the fact that they were being ordered to do so by an interplay of dominant ideologies which have structured reality for them.

Since human behaviour is determined by that ideological disposition which transforms human beings as individuals into acting subjects, the concept of ‘differentiated interpellation’, which will be demonstrated latter on in this paper, should show how Western imposed systems of ideas, which were ideological forms of violence that backed the physical brutalities of European aggression on African peoples, operate in a neo-colonial context; how the foreign imposed political system, which changed the course of history in a negative direction for African peoples, relates with the population through the realm of ideas in achieving goals in the domain of the economics; how ideology in a neo-colonial environment corresponds to a mechanism of politics used by the political sphere to win over the public for political domination and economic exploitation, which sort of marked the end of history since the alienated and subordinated peoples of Africa, under neo-colonial political structures, were no longer free to chart any alternative course of history with its own meaning system for themselves in a fictitious world created and sustained by Western ideas; a world where Western ideas and disaster are synonymous, especially that ideology can be an effective instrument for domination since it is an invisible phenomenon that its victims would hardly be aware of its existence and influence in their activities. Whatever the case, the problems of contemporary Africa cannot be explained only as a direct outcome of ideology in itself.

There are a mixture of the Western world’s intentions towards Africans, which is also a subsidiary of the Western world’s avaricious tendencies, which pushes them to create disaster situations all over the world as they seek to control the whole world for their economic survival; as they seek to extend their empires to non-European lands in the course of which they deploy a combination of measures including enticement, fantasies, persuasion, distraction, deceit, diplomacy, and force to compel people, especially Africans who are so excited about ideas that originate from the white man countries to an extent that they foolishly

apply them to their lives uncritically. In so doing, they apply intentionally formulated destructive ideas, such as Christianity, Western education, liberal democracy; democracy being what Marx and Lenin have variously described as the ‘dictatorship of the bourgeoisie’, and the Structural Adjustment Plan, for example, on their lives with disastrous consequences. Being a by-product of an ideology nevertheless, which stems from, and responds to, white survivalism; whites can only do that if they must survive, which has been expressed in many forms for over five centuries now including trans-oceanic slavery/slave trade, colonialism, Great Wars, the imposition of agendas on African peoples for the reproduction of the relations of exploitation under European imposed engineered repressive states with ideologies serving as the opium of the subordinated and exploited peoples, and the out right armed robbery operations in non-European lands.

## **(ii) Governance**

Governance would refer to the type of relationship that exists between the government, i.e., the realm of political power, and the “public” and how this relationship affects the production process including the production of ideas as well as the other aspects of social life in general. In defining governance, in the context of this work, not necessarily in relation to its original Latin meaning of “steering”, we look at it as processes through which individuals and groups can act autonomously and independently in creating structures within which they can generate new ideas that help to enrich or shape public opinion for the establishment of a common understanding of common problems. We also look at how these processes, which include a feedback process, ensure a smooth mediation between the governing organs and the “public”; the extent to which each individual citizen is free within the state, the limits of power, and whether the final authority of the land rests with the people who can act as a body of people, through the medium of discussion on the theatre offered by the public sphere, to change the course of history once those who govern have resorted to the misuse of power; once the governing organs have not met with the people’s expectations. The critical question in governance is therefore that of how persons and groups within a community are able to arrive at a common judgement on issues of collective interests within a discursive space/structure freely created by them, not based on economic relations, in their attempt to shape policy and influence decision making.

## **(ii) The Public Sphere**

The public sphere would mean that inter-locking social space or arena which is shared by social actors from different backgrounds within society in conjunction with the cultures and structures that the people themselves construct into it which leaves an imprint on the daily lives of the members of the community for whom it operates and which, in turn, depends solely on their activities for its maintenance and reproduction. It is that sphere of public life where common sense ideas are produced, nurtured into public policy, and perpetuated as reinforcement to the people's world view; where the public sense of judgement is fashioned through the free congregation and discussion of the participants themselves who are able to arrive at a point of common understanding on issues affecting their lives and how these can be resolved neither through economic relations but by the free generation and exchange of ideas; that sphere which mediates between the private sphere, say of the family or the home, and the public sphere of the political realm through an interplay of ideas with no economic interests attached.

Yenshu Vubo (2006a) and Nfamewih Aseh (2008: 219), from the perspective of pre-colonial African states of the Western Grassfields of the Savannah region of West/Central Africa, have observed that the public sphere is that arena where the identity of the state, which embodies the social memory, is deliberated, renegotiated, maintained, and reproduced indefinitely into the future for social stability, orderliness, and continuity by way of the free associative practices of the people within an ideological community, outside the family; in a cross-lineage manner. In that case, the public sphere vehiculates public opinion as a pool of ideas with cultural codes created and shared by the people themselves for the maintenance and perpetuation of the identity of the state, thus not only cementing the moral bonds of solidarity among society members but also keeping the governing organs in close touch with the people whose ideological image they represent. Thus, in pre-colonial African societies the public sphere, incorrectly and derogatorily described in colonial ethnographic literature as "secret societies", connected people across families for the nurturing of public opinion and in the discussion of their differences which were gradually forged into a common identity, modelled around a shared world view based on a common ethical understanding of reality, which became embodied in the identity of the state, reflected and reproduced in its ideological vehiculators such as language, sculptural art, music, religion, symbols and meanings with ideological effects (see for example Warnier 1975; Nkwi 1976; Mzeka 1980).

Jürgen Habermas, after Plato who first explored the notion of *The Public*, in his theory on the structural transformation of the public sphere in Europe where a new civic society

emerged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that was compelled by a necessity for open business arenas where information and matters of common worry could be freely traded and examined, postulates that it is that social site or arena where meanings are expressed, circulated, and bargained and in that process collectively constituting “the public” into a body for the public monitoring of state authority by the people through informed and critical discourses. The public sphere, Habermas argues, is also that social forum where agendas for public discussions could be set through a display of opinions that are emancipated from the shackles of economic reliance. But following the emergence of the repressive bourgeois state in Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Habermas equally observed that the public sphere was transformed into a mere social site; a ‘bourgeois public sphere’, where the power of the absolutist state was represented to the people through mechanisms of public mediation; a new social arena that was governed by economic markets, state apparatuses, the media or the so-called democratic press (publishing enterprises and newspapers), and the so-called democratic associations, etc., wherein the public sphere gained its “economic independence” and was liberalised from the power of the state and that of the church, resulting in the decline of the public sphere since the “public” had become a consumerist one than one that was critical in giving society a sense of collective survival.

And in a neo-colonial context such as what appeals to our senses in Cameroon, where what is referred to as the “nation-state” is actually a racket state; wherein racketeering and the practices of thugery by the “elite” in collaboration with foreigners are its main objective or *modus operandi*, which is a fractured copy of the bourgeois state that emerged in Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was imposed on Africans by Europeans in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the public sphere is rather that captured social arena which structures our understanding of reality around employment or economic benefits in general; which forms and outlines the world for us to dwell in and believe in it as valid, as genuine, as authentic, by way of an intense selective interpretation and presentation of events which appeal to our emotions, thus setting the agenda for us, based on which we discuss our terms of being; based on which we come to know who we are and to fashion our lifestyles according to that agenda. In Cameroon, which is rather the locus of competing economic interests, languages, and ideologies, which have fractured the public sphere which is also weakened by its dependence on the political realm for its economic survival, the public sphere lacks that facility and vitality with which to build a collective will into a pool of a systematic body of ideas and to vehiculate a common public opinion for the communal survival of the population as a political community, free from foreign interference and dictatorship.

### **(iii) From the Perspective of a Theory to the Understanding of the Empirical**

Social phenomena, unlike natural phenomena, are articulated by invisible laws which can better be understood and explained by theoretically linking the empirical to the abstract. And the operations of the public sphere in a neo-colonial context, such as one empirically observes in Cameroon, could be demonstrated from the point of view of what I have coined here as the theory of ‘differentiated interpellation’ through which I seek to establish the “missing” relationship between the empirical and the abstract in relation to the project of domination. From the standpoint of the theory of ‘differentiated interpellation’, derived from Louis Althusser’s concept of *interpellation*, which is the process through which ideology manufactures the acting subject, I intend to demonstrate how the people themselves, as social actors, in their unconscious states, acting within identity groups, or what Louis Althusser refers to as “ideological state apparatuses”, adopt certain attitudes in accordance with certain ideological leanings which ascribes or confers on them certain skills or characteristics around which their identities are constituted and with which they are able to reproduce their differences, being what they have come to belief in; which has endowed their consciousness and transformed them into acting subjects, acting according to their ‘calling’, yet in accordance with the ruling ideology.

This should enable us to understand how this different ‘callings’, arising from the socio-technical division of labour, have culminated in a fractured public sphere in Cameroon; a public sphere with no drive for the building of a communal or collective consciousness for collective survival, and which does not aim at creating a universal model either since different social categories have been fabricated to pursue different interests, all strapped to the interests of the ruling aristocracy, thus facilitating the project of domination. This would mean that the neo-colonial state in Cameroon, which obeys the logic of a business enterprise and is both physically and ideologically repressive, achieves its goals by way of the socio-technical division of labour, which ensures that the interests of the subordinated categories are sustained and reproduced at the same time as they reproduce the material conditions of production.

It thus becomes relatively easy to “govern” a population which has been subjected to the ruling ideology, as in the case of Cameroon which has been described by Nyamnjoh (1999) as “a country united by ethnic ambitions and difference”, when they are made to pursue different interests which may seem contradictory but ultimately achievable from the

very source that governs those different interests, especially that in the case where the neo-colonial political structure has the political, legal, military, and material means to subject the population into a behaviour of 'false consciousness' by suppressing their interests and subsuming them into the neo-colonial power structure through political coercion and vague economic promises; the promise of an 'improvement in living conditions' which constitute the substance of the political agendas of the two successive regimes of Ahmadou Ahidjo and Paul Biya in which the regions (council areas and provinces) are kept at bay and played one against the other in their hope of receiving the "generosity" of the Santa Clausean state (see Nkwi and Nyamnjoh 1997).

This also becomes an instrument of politics through which the population is being deceived, through heavily flawed elections, into voting fortune seeking neo-colonialists to assume political offices with the hope that they will bring them an 'improvement in their living conditions, embodied in the euphemism of "development" which, unfortunately, is a process through which, including public service employment, the neo-colonial *superstructure* incorporates new elite into its system for the legitimisation of its project of domination and repression (see Alawadi Zelao 2005). Here we find a direct relationship between the various arrays of ideas that govern public life and the realm of politics and the economy. These various arrays of ideas, which play different but concomitant roles in maintaining the status quo, being a product of history which has been hidden from the social actors by those who control the realm of ideas with the intention being to enable the differentiated social categories (those of the medical corps, those of education, the legal professions, the police or defence in general, those in the domain of religion, legislators, etc.) in their struggle to produce the things that reproduces their various identities, unconsciously fashion out a materialistic history for the economic and political interests of the ruling class, guarantees the dominance of the neo-colonial state.

Accordingly, what the people hold as ideas are translated into "goods" for the neo-colonial economy, which rather benefits the ruling class, justified by the "invisible hand of history" or the abstract, reflected in the fractured image of the Enlightenment they have come to represent, necessary for the growth and expansion of the Western industrial economy. In that case, a public sphere that is governed by the theory of 'differentiated interpellation', such as what obtains in a neo-colonial context, disinterested individuals who pursue different economic interests do not engage in the discourse surrounding specific issues in such a way that could enable the discussions to be reproduced across the different interest groups to establish an all inclusive and consistent or dependable public sphere that can influence the

realm of politics and give society a new direction. The different “ideological state apparatuses” rather play dissimilar but associated roles in ideologically linking the interests of the “public”, which is reproduced by the “expectations” of the subjected people, to that of the ruling class, whose dominance is legitimised by the “proper functioning” of the various “ideological state apparatuses”.

Within such an incoherent and inconsistent public sphere which is controlled by its economic dependence rather than by reason; where the subordinated strata, which is economically dependent on the superordinate structure, is held in check by economic limitations and political intimidation with the required effect being their subjection to the neo-colonial state and hence the preservation of the status quo. In that case, the creation of awareness on matters of common interests or the construction of common meanings and cultural norms around which public opinion can be groomed for a discursive interaction that resonates across the entire society free from class control and critical for the reproduction of the social memory, is not the main concern of individuals and groups who are pursuing different interests, united by their efforts to cope with the repressive character of the neo-colonial political arrangement, with no ambition to arrive at a common judgement: they have no purpose to form a common opinion on the political destiny of society.

In Cameroon we observe a patchy public sphere which has rather been hijacked by the media (newspapers, TV, radio, the internet, books, paintings, etc.,) and economic forces through the “democratic” process which cultivates a “public” that has no conscious political influence on the way society should go; a helpless “public” which is bereft of reasoning due to its heavy reliance on external materialistic forces which ‘bacons’ them as individuals who are transformed into subjects of the ruling ideology. And the subordinated nature of the population to the neo-colonial political structure on which it heavily relies for its economic survival has rendered the task of curbing deviant behaviour in all domains a near impossible one due to the incompatibility of the various interests which compete in the public sphere for economic opportunities rather than for the generation of ideas that foster the political destiny of society.

However, the resultant effect of the application of a multiplicity of ideological devices in a neo-colonial context is that substratum groups within the population were to embark on the project of realising the goal of the repressive state by maintaining and perpetuating foreign ideologies among themselves with the hope of achieving some desired goals which were equally incited in the population by the very European invading forces which control outcome, thereby weakening their capacity to produce a single counterpoising force against

European invasion and domination. In that case, where the public sphere, as permitted or legally recognised by the ruling elite and patronised by it as part of its neo-colonial 'function' as a superordinate structure, instead emerges as a contested and contradictory arena where the discussions and deliberations which fashion public opinion do not empower the people with an ideological disposition or collective will, as a body of people who constitute the subordinate category, to challenge the invading powers or to overcome the project of domination by the State whose existence as a 'repressive machine' demands the deployment of both mechanisms of repression and those of ideological reproduction of the relations of surplus-value extortion.

On the contrary, each ideological sphere has tended to perceive their political and economic survival as depending on those foreign material forces which introduced them to the foreign ideologies, culminating in a state of general dependence; wherein the public sphere has been weakened by its economic dependence; where persons and groups, who inhabit a land rich in natural wealth but which is rapidly being depleted by foreigners who exploit it almost for free, with the use of the cheap 'labour power' of the fragmented public, for the industrial and economic expansion of countries of the North, are motivated by a consumerist attitude; what Karl Marx refers to as the 'fetishism of commodities', which has killed their ability to be rationally critical of the foreign origins of their plight. As a result, they instead gear their activities towards attracting the benefits of "modernity" or what has generally come to be referred to as "development aid" or "foreign assistance" from those very foreign sources, which promised them "modernity" or "development", thereby unable to challenge foreign domination which is accomplished with the assistance of the allies or puppets of neo-colonialism in power whose political and economic agendas are equally geared mainly towards attracting "foreign partners" in "nation-building", based on the elusory drive to 'improve on the living conditions of the population', being the centre of the ruling ideology; the absolute subject in the ruling ideology, for the interpellation and subjection of Cameroonians who must be made to believe that everything has to be that way, with no alternative (see Ahmadou Ahidjo 1964: 55; Paul Biya 1986: 17).

It is this absolute subjecting subject around which the dominant ideology is centred, structurally speaking, which in the light of ensuing events determines not only the type of institutions/structures which are established in Cameroon but also the nature of the public sphere. In other words, it is this key element in the ruling ideology which has structured the public sphere in Cameroon as the dominant ideology seeks to reach out to all Cameroonians. Thus in the public sphere, which is a fragment of different contradictory ideological spheres

in what was established in the post-colony against the wishes of the people who are still being persuaded and forced to accept such fictitious arrangements as genuine, plus the fact that these generate inequalities and disproportionate risks since it is highly selective, the common sense ideas that animate ‘public’ discussions are instead centred on “foreign aid” as the only means through which the people can, as they have come to believe it to be so, realise their newly derived utopian thinking as enfolded in the concept of “development”, being an unconscious reproduction of the ruling ideology. Hence, what was a Western coinage intended only to cool off the post-World War II independent struggles that engulfed Africa in the late 1940s and spanned the next two decades, has become the foundation philosophy for the Cameroonian people’s mistaken belief in their own interests.

To keep this utopian thinking about a “development bliss” alive, being the foreign foundation philosophy on which the neo-colonial state in Cameroon was enacted, albeit by violence, becoming the ruling ideology, and in conformity with the hypothesis adopted for this paper, the public sphere was flooded with ideological mechanisms of public mediation for the effective epistemic control of the alienated groups; crucial for the maintenance and reproduction of the ruling ideology for the survival of the foreign-oriented racket state, resulting in the emergence of a fractured and contested public sphere that selectively “favours” certain social categories for the success of the project of domination. To understand how this historical process, which was based on the materialistic conception of ideology of which Louis Althusser says makes use of the ‘lacuna discourse’, which hides that which is actually intended, established in the alienated peoples of Cameroon a ‘mistaken conception of interest’, and since we are delving into the scientific study of the abstract; a study of how the invisible realm structures the visible world beyond the consciousness of the acting subject, a domain which is still unexplored in the area of political studies in Cameroon, I will begin my expose by first discussing how and why the foundation philosophy on which Cameroon was established is traceable to a foreign source before elaborating on how that gave rise to a subordinated public sphere for the transformation of individuals into subjectified subjects. This has been adopted as a scientific attitude of methodically moving from the empirical to extrapolating the abstract, invisible law, which can be validated by an empirical examination of the facts of history.

### 3. The Historical Origins of the “Kamerun Idea” and the Imposition of a Superstructure

Suffice it to enliven the discussion by beginning from the notion that the need to reproduce the productive forces within and under definite relations of production indefinitely alongside the reproduction of the material conditions of production for the continuous growth and expansion of the Western industrial economies necessitated the imposition of a *superstructure* on the peoples of this portion of Africa which became Cameroon. For its purpose, a dominant political ideology became that invisible phenomenon which structured the Cameroonian world into different spheres for the interpellation and thus for the subjection of Cameroonians to that dominant political ideology for the realisation of that need. Therefore, the original Cameroon idea itself; that foundation philosophy on which Cameroon was erected by the Germans and was realised by the French and the British during the cold war, is part of the overall idea in which Europeans saw Africa as a vast land of economic potentials and possibilities and set out to explore as well as to exploit it to the fullest by the use of local labour which was to be reproduced indefinitely on the spot.

The way of achieving that goal was by establishing encapsulating structures which have been nicknamed as “nation-states” in Africa whose existence was to be assured by repression for the reproduction of the productive forces as well as the reproduction of the relations of production for the industrial West, which stimulated them into being, in the course of their production or as an integral part of their systems of production with wages or salaries only serving as a means for the reconstitution of ‘labour’<sup>1</sup> and education for the reproduction of labour through its offspring. And since Africans generally did not attach a lot of importance to the notion of physical boundaries by way of communities caging themselves within fixed geographical spaces, Europeans, who ignored the African concept of ideological boundaries in which boundaries were coterminous with ideological communities and varied according to the demographic progression of political entities (see, for example, Nfamewih Aseh 2008a), went ahead to partition the entire continent south of the Sahara desert among themselves with specifications drawn up by them at the Berlin Conference of 1884 amongst which was the rule that effective European occupation must be seen in terms of a heavy military presence and a flurry of administrators. In doing that, Europeans assumed, as Columbus did on the Far West in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, that the land of Africa was *terra nullius*;

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<sup>1</sup> The theory of good accounting practice demands that labour must not be well paid for if that happens the firm will collapse: capitalism will collapse. This can only be so because the total value of what labour produces is not intended for redistribution to labour but for accumulation by the owner of the firm. Hence, labour can receive only that small fraction of it which is barely indispensable for its upkeep or subsistence and for its reproduction through the capitalist system of education in which labour strains to educate its children which, unfortunately, only ensures the continuity of the capitalist system: it ensure that the firm is continuously provided with labour.

without any political form and without a government hence belonging to nobody, especially that Europeans did not regard Africans as human beings.

And even when they do, they classify Africans as people whose humanity qualifies them to be enslaved only if not use high firepower to exterminate them, which is what brought about the three hundred years of trans-oceanic slavery and slave trade (from 1600-1900) in which millions of Africans were processed in chains to the West where they slaved under all forms of unimaginable inhuman conditions, resulting in the deaths of millions of others, to produce the wealth of the industrial economic nations of the West which is today being given to Africans as loans and are being put under duress to pay back with heavy interests. Yet the bourgeois economist still makes African peoples believe, unscientifically, that foreign capital is indispensable for African development of which social interdependence, based on the freewill exchange of items of economic, cultural, human and other types on equal terms, which was one of the structural principles of the pre-colonial African peoples, must not be confused with dependence or subjection which has come to characterise political life in post-colonial Africa as the particular case of Cameroon has tended to show.

By the 15<sup>th</sup> century when Europeans had developed the disposition to “start thinking” like human beings, following the wave of awareness that was ignited by the Renaissance that began in Florence, Italy, and spread throughout Europe, which also became the basis for the invention, by Europeans, of pseudo-scientific theories and religious dogmas which justified the inferiority of Africans. These were popularised in a way that gave moral justification for the outpouring of their innate hatred for Africans. The first of this outward expression of hatred for Black people was the trans-Atlantic slave trade and slavery which began in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and spanned three centuries until the West came to a realisation that the Black population that had already been transported into America as slaves, including the West Indies and the two European continents, were almost outnumbering that of the whites and so decided to halt the transportation of black slaves to the West in what was pretentiously styled as ‘the abolition of slave trade’. The great depression of the 1870s in Europe also gave an additional push for Europeans, who desperately needed external material inputs, from sources outside the frontiers of the industrial West, to create social scientific theories that were based on their racial prejudices against Blacks and so justified the transformation of slavery into what became known as ‘colonialism’, which entailed the invasion and political domination of Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Europeans for the very reason that imposed the demand for slavery and slave trade: labour and natural resources for the expansion of the Western industrial economy.

Based on that conceptual framework, in July 1472 when the Portuguese who were the first Europeans to visit the Atlantic Coast in general and the Wouri estuary in particular where they were welcomed by the Douala people with local dishes of shell fish or prounds, caught from the Wouri River, the visiting Portuguese thereafter named the Wouri River *Rio dos Cameroes*, meaning the river of abundant shell fish: a way of announcing the existence of a profitable natural resource in that river in the same way as the other interloping Europeans had also announced the Gold Coast or the Ivory Coast. As a sequel to that, the Germans, who arrived in 1884, took up the Portuguese term of *Cameroes* to coin the German appellation *Kamerun* to designate that vast panorama, made up of a constellation of existing nations, they had carved out and reserved, as their “protectorate”, for their exploration, exploitation and for the exportation of proceeds there from back to Germany for the benefit of the German ailing industrial economy of that time, being the source of the ‘Kamerun idea’ which was transformed into a neo-colonial *superstructure* after World War II by the French for the same purpose as the original German idea itself as shall be discussed in the next few paragraphs.

Although the first German trading post was set up in Douala in 1868 by the German shipping company Woermann, the landing of the Germans on the Wouri Estuary in 1884 during the era of the European scramble for Africa, marked the beginning of seismic events that were to give birth to a repressive *superstructure* and the spinning into existence of disjunctive urban settlements to serve as European business centres, were to characterise social life within it during the post-colonial period. Their one-sided agreements signed with the Douala kings constituted the legal basis for the Germans to annex the land. Realising this grand deception the Douala people rose up against the Germans in what became the Douala/German war of 1884-1885. After conquering the Douala people the Germans moved inland, towards the foot of the Cameroon Mountain where they found a treasure in the rich volcanic soils of the Mount Cameroon region where they established their headquarters and from where they extended their criminal practices to establish Yaoundé (a distorted form of Ewondo) as their main trading centres in 1888. At the foot of the Mountain the Germans met with stiff resistance from the Bakweri people who inhabited the area prior to the arrival of the Germans, which is today known as Buea. Under Kuva Lekenye, the Bakweri people held the Germans to a serious fight that lasted four years from 1891 to 1895. After defeating the Bakweri people as they did the Douala people, the Germans, under the spiritual guidance of the Basel Mission, set up horrible laws that gave them the handle to seize over 60.000 acres of land from the Bakweri people around the Mountain and the Douala peoples of the coastal plains, which extended right down to the Mungo Valley, on which they established large scale

plantations that almost covered the entire coastal region, occupying almost all the volcanic-rich fertile lands of the Atlantic Coast.

Wherever the Germans went they met with solid resistance, which produced the erupting effects that Africa as a whole experienced during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the Bangwa land under Fon Asonganyi Fontem in 1900, in Bafut under Fon Abumbi during the Bafut/Mankon resistance struggle against the Germans in 1901, in Kom where Fon Ngam led the Kom people to resist the German invasion for seven good years, in Nso, in Esu, in the Ewondo land of what is today Yaoundé in 1896, 1907, etc., it was a season of unprecedented fighting against the Germans that the people had never known before. But the Germans, with high firepower unleashed terror and conquered them one after the other and seized both land and slaves to produce for them resources for the German ailing industry. Eventually, as accounts by Rudin (1958), and plantation reports indicate, by 1913 about 195 Germans and German firms had established plantations and small scale industries, and were enslaving some 80.000 slaves in the plantations, factories, and the public works under very cruel conditions, especially that the cruelties and brutalities reminiscent of the slave trade era characterised the German invasion of Cameroon as flogging backed forced labour. Between Yaoundé and Kribi there were some 20.000 slave-labourers who were serving as porters.

Before 1953, the German plantations around the Mount Cameroon region, which became the CDC (Cameroon Development Corporation) plantations in 1947, alone was hosting over 32.000 slave-workers, drawn from the hinterlands of the Mount Cameroon region including what is today Francophone Cameroon and even parts of the present day Eastern Nigeria, in the German plantations who were slaving under the rains and the tropical heat for a near uncompensated labour, which was also backed by flogging, to produce palm oil, pepper, palm kernel, coffee, cocoa, banana, tea, rubber, tobacco, etc., which were shipped to Europe in metric tonnes as raw material for the burgeoning European industries. Out of that total number of slave-workers that were in the German plantations, over 10.000 of them were from the Western Grassfields alone who, between 1913 and 1914, had been transported to the coast as slaves on foot, without food, and under chains. Many of them died along the way before they could get to the coast and those that successfully arrived an 8 % death rate was recorded among them in the plantations as well as in the public works where they used their bare hands to dig roads, construct bridges as well as build rail way lines that linked their commercial centres, and since they lived in squalors that were provided as housing in the plantations with neither proper feeding nor medical care. Unfortunately for the Germans the European scramble over the patches of the Ottoman Empire, after it collapsed, led to the

outbreak of World War I, which involved Africa and Africans only because of the European colonial presence on the continent, during which the French, eager to regain its possessions from Germany, allied with the British and ejected the Germans from Kamerun in 1916 and shared the territory amongst themselves.

Both the French and the British administered their respective Cameroon territories as Class B mandated territories of the League of Nations although the French transform it into a French colony. When the British took over the German plantations, claiming that it was “enemy property”, including that tiny fraction of Cameroon’s territory on which the German plantations were located, which became known as the Southern Cameroons, they administered it as part of the Southern Province of Nigeria between 1922 and 1946. It became part of Eastern Nigeria from 1947 to 1958 when they elected the first Prime Minister according to the designs and wishes of the first London Constitutional Conference of 1957, achieving a “quasi-regional” status in 1953 when the first elections were held in the Southern Cameroons. Meanwhile, the French, who took over the larger portion of the Cameroonian soil with claims over its people and all its resources and mineral wealth, following that 1916 event, were poised to beat the record of the Germans in terms of colonial rapacity and arbitrary practices against local peoples.

That resulted in the independence struggles following the launching of the national liberation movement in Douala on April 10, 1948 which was banned by the French in 1955 before giving a free rein to terror in Cameroon in which French soldiers deploy high firepower, including tanks and mortal shells, and mercilessly massacred many thousands of Cameroonians who were only struggling to defend their land with very rudimentary weapons. When they finally retreated in 1958, in 1960 they transformed physical brutalities into a contract in which France signed Accords with the neo-colonial regime of Ahidjo which gave the French the rights to take total control of almost all the internal affairs of Cameroon. Although the French had also adopted a kind of indirect rule system in which they had integrated their own portion of Cameroon into the ensemble of the French Equatorial Africa, which became UDEAC and today CEMAC, they also opted for an assimilationist style through which the Cameroonians of that part of the territory were taught to believe that they were part of the greater France and so were made to believe that they were equal in status to French citizens, being a classical example of the Marxian idea of ‘false consciousness’ in which people are alienated from themselves and made to believe to be what they are not; drenched in a mistaken conception of history.

The February 11, 1961 plebiscite transformed the 'Kamerun idea' into a federation of what became known as the Federal Republic of Cameroon, made up of West and East Cameroon. The federal structure was abolished in 1972, reverting the territory to its near "original" status as was mapped out by the Germans though not without losing some portions of it both to Nigeria and to the French Equatorial Africa – including those portions of the Central African territories that were conceded to Germany by France in 1911 following the Treaty of Fez of November 4, 1911 as settlement of the Agadir Crisis – where the two sister territories were evolving under different colonial practices. Before then, the post-World War II reforms, which gave a semblance of freedom to the colonised people around the world, ignited the independence struggle and led to the creation of the national resistance movement in Cameroon on April 10, 1948. This was known as the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC) which, from its inception, sought for the re-unification of the two halves of Cameroon as a precondition for the territory's accession to independence. In its struggle to free the territory from France and Great Britain, the colonialists, with the collaboration of local allies, systematically eliminated all its leaders between September 1958 and January 1971 when the last leader of the movement was killed in a public firing squad in Bafoussam as was designed by the French and executed by Ahmadou Ahidjo, a local collaborator.

Meanwhile, at the heat of the resistance, the French retreated in 1958 after having appointed the first black Prime Minister in the person of André Marie Mbida on May 9, 1957 to take over the duties formerly held by a succession of French Governors, leading to what was referred to as the independence of East Cameroon on January 1, 1960 when the French took the back seat but ruling indirectly through a black president who was Ahmadou Ahidjo at the time appointed by French High Commissioner Pierre Messmer on February 18, 1958 to take over from Mbida who had started expressing ideas that were contrary to the 'Kamerun idea', which was that of creating a social formation for the subjection of Cameroonians for the ultimate reproduction of the conditions of production for the industrial West. After the granting of "independence" to East Cameroon by the French, negotiations continued between the British and the French to bring the "Anglophone" territory into the French concocted political arrangement, leading to the October 1, 1961 re-unification drama, the day "Anglophones" claim to have gained their own "independence" by becoming part of the Cameroon federation composed of the conflictual linguistic categories of "Francophones" and "Anglophones", and then to the May 20, 1972 referendum, after which the territory was known as the United Republic of Cameroon. It became known simply as the Republic of Cameroon following a Presidential Decree of 1984 which sought to re-establish the original

German idea in its geographical sense and with the same political implications: the subjection of Cameroonians under a dominant ideology which ensures the reproduction of the conditions of production for the health of the industrial economies of the West.

After having shown the historical origins of the “Kamerun Idea” and how it was physically transformed into a neo-colonial political structure by way of physical repression during the cold war for the same purpose of achieving a foreign economic objective like the original idea itself, we now examine how the ideological repression and imposition was achieved. This should lead us to understand how one of the ways of achieving that desired goal was by dominating the public sphere with idiomatic expressions that claim to make life rather than being supportive of *reality*, which at the same time sought to destroy the foundation of all indigenous political philosophies yet with no intention to establish a universal ideal because if that happens ‘labour’ will be liberated and the Western industrial economies, in their global dominance, will collapse.

This should lead to the nadir of the enigma that has fragmented the Cameroonian world into incoherent ideological spheres or into ideological state apparatuses which serve as instruments of (ideological) repression, and show how these are subjected to the dominant ideology for the benefit of the industrial economies of the West which survive through the collaborative assistance of the local elite in power whose duty it is to ensure that Cameroonians are perpetually subjected under the dominant mode of production, being what governance in a neo-colonial context is all about. It should also show how Cameroonians by themselves, with a mistaken consciousness about their interests, being a result of history which hides its intentions from them, are “obeying” the orders of the neo-colonial (repressive) state. And by ideologically fragmenting the public sphere for economic purposes only: in search of that utopia which holds for them the promise of ‘improvement in living standards’, they are reproducing the dominant ideology of the ruling clique which makes foreign interference, meddling, destruction, and domination possible.

#### **4. The Emergence of a Public Sphere as a Display of Ideological Mechanisms for Political Domination and Economic Exploitation**

The public sphere in what finally emerged as the neo-colonial state of Cameroon, from the historical process just narrated, was rather a display of ideological mechanisms for the control of public opinion than a social arenas where Cameroonians could, on their own and outside the control of economic relations and political dominance, influence matters that affect their own destiny through the medium of discussion and negotiation. This way of

looking at the public sphere as a display of idiomatic expressions for the effective epistemic control of the population is informed by the view that for the foreign foundation philosophy on which the neo-colonial structure was enacted to be maintained and reproduced in the public domain for the survival of the foreign-oriented racket state there was the need to flood the public sphere with ideological mechanisms of public mediation for the alienation of the population. This resulted in the emergence of a fractured and contested public sphere which selectively “favours” certain social categories for the success of the project of domination especially that the idea of social responsibility (salvation, modernisation, civilisation, development, etc), which constituted that foundation philosophy on which the neo-colonial state stands, was just a dream; a fleeting illusion since the “Kamerun Idea” was to satisfy colonial interests and colonial interest only.

For a clearer understanding, it would be necessary to discuss in detail the historical processes through which the public sphere within the newly imposed *superstructure* became flooded with mechanisms of public mediation of foreign origins for the effective epistemic control of the population for the survival of the neo-colonial state; a *superstructure* which emerged to serve the needs of a dominant mode of production, reinforced by a style of government that thrives on a fractured public sphere in which the structures and cultures that are built into the public sphere have neither indigenous roots no intended to galvanise public opinion into a self-sustaining ideology for national development by the people themselves based on their understanding of the world as defined by they themselves. The overriding question that should guide the discussion here is: if the emerging industrial economy of the West depended on slave labour, why did it not collapse after the abolition of slavery and slave trade?

We begin from the understanding that the Haitian Revolution that was launched on August 14, 1791 by Boukman, a former Black slave, was to set in motion a chain of processes in the West that were to terminate in the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (and not slavery). It had put to question and balked the whole idea of slavery and slave trade as was perpetuated by the West as a means of economic production. Unfortunately, the abolition of slave trade as a physical form of violence, which was a response to the moral question tagged against the evils of slavery and slave trade by the Haitian Revolution, turned out to be an act that concealed its historical mission, a pompous display of falsehood from calculating factory owners whose only intention was to give an impression to the whole world that some moral progress was being made in the West. Consequently, a new dimension had to be given to the phenomenon to water down the moral implications that have been exposed by the Haitian

Revolution. This was by transforming it into a more palatable form of slavery; a refinement of slavery, in which victims could unconsciously accept participating in it without compulsion, within its established structures. And this was to be achieved ideologically; by hiding its empirical tendencies, by the application of a non-physical form of violence, which could explain why the public sphere in what became Cameroon emerged as a deluge of new idiomatic expressions that claim to make life thus imposing a new philosophy for the establishment of a new repressive order: an epistemic hold-up, rather than derive from an indigenous political philosophy which upholds the inherent dignity of man and woman and to be supportive to its reality.

From the discussion on ideology above we realise that ideology is that invisible basis of society which models for the people in that context what they should believe in and unquestioningly hold it as true and thus act according to its edicts and prescriptions. And as Louis Althusser points out, ideologies exist in apparatuses, which corresponds to our definition of the public sphere, where they are reproduced for their continuous ‘interpellation’ of individuals into subjects who obligatorily abide by its logic for what they do. Although ideological state apparatuses may sometimes seem to be outside the topography of political practices, they are always subjected to the public sphere of political power. And the need to establish ideological state apparatuses in the colony for political conquest followed immediately after the hypocritical abolition of slave trade, which was championed by the English liberals who were inspired by and supported the American Revolution and was upheld by the British government.

This was also necessitated by the need to establish a new kind of (“acceptable”) relationship with slaves who should henceforth, under definite relations of production, willingly offer their ‘labour’ for the continuous growth and development of Western industrial economies. Hence, the first of these ideological state apparatuses that was established in the post-colony as a mechanism for public mediation: for the ideological ‘interpellation’ and subjection of individuals in the colony one after another into ideological subjects, was the church whose establishment in what became Cameroon followed the events of between 1883 and 1899 when the Atlantic Coastline of West Africa was teeming with missionary activities in their struggle to ‘rescue’ Africans from a rudimentary culture who were helplessly bound for hell: to assure for an ‘improvement in the living conditions of those degenerate heathens in Africa’.

That thus justified the colonial invasion of the continent, in exactly the same way as it justified slavery and slaver trade, and secured the grounds for the introduction of a repressive

political system on African peoples by the invading Europeans together with its ideology, which has, unobservably, structured the contemporary African world for Africans to live in and believe in it as valid, as being a design of God. Among the many missionary bodies which had overrun the Atlantic Coastline of West Africa in general and the Wouri estuary in particular during that period, with a definite mission to 'soften' the grounds for the imposition of an encumbering *superstructure*, were representatives of the English Baptist Missionary Society from Britain where parliament had ratified a resolution for the abolition of slavery trade.

There was the Pallottine Mission to Kamerun, a Roman Catholic mission that was established by the German and Swiss-run Pallotines in 1886 on condition that they did not pose any threat to the already established Protestant Basel Mission which accompanied the German invasion of the Wouri estuary in 1884. There was also the German Baptist as well as the French catholic groups which came in later on. On October 25, 1890 eight Pallotine priests arrived Douala. On arrival the Pallotine priests encountered hostility from the Presbyterian missionaries who were already stationed in Douala and were thus forced to set up shop in Marienberg near Edea on the outskirts of Douala along the Douala-Yaoundé highway. Within 13 years they opened missions and schools in Kribi, Edea, Douala, Batanga, Jaunde, Ikassa, Minlaba, Sasse, Bota, Dschang, Ossing (Mamfe), and Deido in Douala, and a convent in Bonjongo.

The English Baptist missionaries who had arrived earlier in 1883 had established mission stations in Douala and Bimbia shortly before the German invasion. But unlike the Baptist who adopted a piecemeal or gradual approach in church planting, the Roman Catholic Church opted for an absolutist approach, in territorial terms. Ecclesiastically, Kamerun, under the Germans, belonged to the Apostolic Vicariate of Gabon. In 1890 it was broken off and was established as a separate Apostolic Prefecture, which became an Apostolic Vicariate in 1904 though applicable only to the south of the territory since the north was made to be part of the Apostolic Vicariate of Sudan/Central Africa which was separated in 1914 and transformed into the Apostolic Prefecture of the Adamawa. Whatever the case, the order in which the churches were set up and the approach the different denominations adopted is not very important. We can leave that historical detail for the historians. Suffice it to note that it was during this period that local people were coming to terms with Christianity, as an ideology, and the church, which was to become a major mechanism for public mediation in the post-colony, for the first time.

And as an ideological weapon directed against the indigenous peoples of that portion of the African soil which became Cameroon, the church, as established by those four competing missionary organisations and as an ideological state apparatus, it vehiculated the ideology of Christianity which set the tone for anarchism and thus social atomism by condemning the cultural institutions which served as deliberative mechanisms for public mediation for the strengthening of bonds of solidarity necessary for communal existence while at the same time emphasising on salvation as being a personal matter. The public sphere of the church, and Christianity as an ideology, may seem to have no relationship with the political realm but they play a political role in that by destroying the authentic world of African peoples, a foundation for the establishment of hybridised notions crucial for the thriving of the neo-colonial political arrangement is made possible. The destruction of the African social system with the Christian ideology and the forceful establishment of the church as a public sphere, which has remained contested till this day, was thus a pre-condition for anarchy, which facilitated the introduction of liberalism and democracy; the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, within the neo-colonial ad hoc state, which Cameroonians are being persuaded to accept as a valid form of social organisation.

While the church, as an ideological state apparatus, as established by different missionary bodies took off on a conflictual foundation, Christianity, as an ideology, establishing for the people an imaginary relationship between them and their material condition with no bearings on the latter by the former. Structurally, and for the imaginary transposition and deformation of the local people's conditions of existence which brought about an alienation in the imaginary, the missionaries, with a tinge of social responsibility, presented themselves before the local population as messengers of God to people who did not know God; people sent to 'call' them out of darkness, out of their sinful nature into light, to become part of the Magnificent Body of Christ. "You were yet sinners, "uncivilised", while God loved you and gave his only begotten son to die on the cross for you. All you need do is to love Him and be saved (from your uncivilisation). Amen", was the interpellation that rang out to the "natives" who were made to believe, as a matter of absolute truth, that they were sinners saved by the grace of God only and so must define their lives on the basis of that belief.

To transform the local people as individuals into subjects of the Christian ideology through the process of interpellation, emphasis was laid on the allusion that anyone who hesitated to answer to the 'call' ran the risk of missing the heavenly train bound for the Eternal Glorious Kingdom. For those who will fail to believe, they will face a disastrous

consequence being life in an eternal scorching inferno hereafter. That alone, however, could not have produced the desired effect of transforming individuals one and all into subjects subjected to the dominion of Christ who was presented as white and so as the only son of God, being the subjecting subject who commands and interdicts those who believe in him to adopt corresponding attitudes and patterns of behaviour. Where the local people offered resistance, the administrators used military force to ensure compliance. Everywhere local people expressed their opposition to it with Christianity becoming a discordant issue in the colony. In Kom, for example, as Evans (1927) recorded, the entire population of Kom together with the Fon of Kom offered resistance. But the colonial administrators made use of the military presence in the colony to force it down the throats of the local people as a way of “tuning the discordant note” (Evans 1927: 1, 2). Another strategy was that moneys were raised and the new converts were encouraged to increase their Sunday offerings so that evangelism could be intensified. And following that intensification local people were converted and subjected to the ideology of Christianity, vehiculated today by a floury of churches of different denominations with seemingly conflictual missions but being different versions of the same thing.

As social arenas or interlocking spaces which are shared by social actors, the thousand and one churches that litter every street corner in Cameroon today, competing for public space for the marketing of salvation, do not serve as forums for discussion and negotiation: they do not serve the people the need to constantly engage themselves in the discussion, negotiation, and the remoulding of their different opinions or held views about their own very existence which they can reformulate into policy or recast into a common pool as a systematising vision. They rather serve as a public sphere which recruits individuals from different backgrounds intended for transformation or conversion into ideological subjects who are then subjected to the dominant ideology, thereby claiming to be making life; claiming to be dispensing salvation, rather than deriving from an indigenous foundation philosophy and thus not being supportive to it. On the contrary, the church established itself in that portion of the African soil by seeking to destroy all indigenous foundation philosophies, therefore, distorting reality with imaginary or falsified depictions of the world which have no relationship with the local people’s real conditions of existence but which have come to dominate their imaginations and have thus enslaved them. Unfortunately, the church as an ideological state apparatus which serves employment needs also produces its own elite who depend entirely on the church for their employment thus unconsciously reproducing the subjecting ideology of Christianity, which is also the foundation for anarchism.

There may seem to be no visible relationship between the religious ideology of Christianity and the neo-colonial state or there may as well seem to be a contradiction between Christianity as anarchism and as a subjecting ideology. Yet those 'hidden' relationships exist all the same, which makes the church an ideological state apparatus in the sense in which Louis Althusser had described them. The 'hidden' relationship, which also clarifies the contradiction, between Christianity and the neo-colonial state is established by the fact that all Christian denominations, in spite of all the denominational differences inherent in their outlooks, while condemning the cultural traditions of local people for the purpose of making social atomism possible for invaders to be able to pick and chose their collaborators, teach submissiveness (in ways different from the principles or norms of the authentic religious traditions of local peoples which emphasises the intrinsic worth of all human beings).

By submitting to imaginary depictions (Jesus Christ, Mary, the Apostles, etc) with the hope to find salvation and turning the other cheek to those who slap, converts are being unconsciously subordinated to the neo-colonial state, which was established in Cameroon by the very Europeans who had set up the church as an ideological state apparatus for the imaginary transposition of the local people's real conditions of existence, and thus accepting and even participating in the reproduction of the domineering role of the repressive neo-colonial state which, as a business enterprise, does not seek to establish any universal ideal: the neo-colonial state, whose duty is to encourage the reproduction of hybridised notions for its own survival, seeks to achieve the dynamic unity of all the social segments of Cameroon by merely propagating the notion of "development" as a moral virtue which it falsely lays claim to, derived from the foundation philosophy of 'improving on the lives of the heathens' as was established by the repressive Christian theology which claims social responsibility like all other foreign imposed ideological state apparatuses.

Perhaps an examination of the historical process through which a foreign concept of education; the capitalist system of education, was established on the Cameroonian soil and how schools, which are the ideological state apparatuses for the vehiculation of the foreign ideology of education for the reproduction of skilled labour for the survival of the Western industrial economies under the neo-colonial state, would further elucidate the point. For a better understanding of this point, it would be important to bear in mind that Western industrial economies which have always depended on slave labour have never and does not embody the needs of 'labour' as historically defined by the people themselves but have always imposed the needs on 'labour' as defined by the insatiable demands of profit. And so

the need to develop productive forces outside the factory gate, in foreign lands, in its diversified but unified form, is at the origins of the Western system of education in Cameroon, which explains the more why the West hypocritically called for the abolition of slave trade was necessary at a given point in history: a new idea had developed in which the reproduction of an on-the-spot slave labour was necessary, which had to go beyond the mere provision of the “minimum material conditions” for its survival to include the reproduction of ‘competent’ labour in its diversified form, suitable to ‘unconsciously’ perform varying tasks according to the diversified profit desires of Western industrial economies.

For how long were they going to keep on transporting Africans in chains to the West to work as slaves in the plantations and in the burgeoning factories, especially when the Haitian Revolution had exposed the blatant racial and immoral implications involved in slavery and slave trade plus the fact that the number of Africans that had already been transported to the West as slaves were already outnumbering the white population? It was time to develop a new strategy which was not to abolish the need for labour power if the factories were not to grind to a halt but rather to reproduce skilled labour on-the-spot in diversified domains for the continuous growth and expansion of the Western industrial economies. And since the real historically determined causes for European presence in Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had to be hidden from the local people, the German adventurer Gustav Nachtigal who first arrive the Wouri estuary in 1884 went into a one-sided agreement with the coastal chiefs whom he made to sign a document asking Germany to “protect” the territory from other Europeans, which then legitimated his criminal activities in the Cameroon coast, approved by the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885. By 1912 the Germans, who had established extensive plantations in the coastal plains of Cameroon from where they were exporting rubber, palm oil, tobacco, cocoa, and bananas, etc., back to Germany in metric tons for the German ailing industries, using forced labour in the same manner as it obtained in the plantations in the West. Such practices on African soil met with stiff resistance and needed pacification.

There needed to be a shift from the use of brute force by the invading Germans to social projects that were to be embodied in the civilisation propaganda. The most of these social projects was education which the Germans first modelled around agriculture as a way of “teaching” Africans to willingly take up “jobs” and “posts” in the plantations, on African soil, as “workers”, void of any ethical implications. The “natives” did not need to be forced and beaten to work anymore. They needed to be taught certain skills to enable them take up slavery as a profession without being conscious of the fact that they were actually doing so.

That needed to be done away from the plantations so that those who “qualified” had to apply to “work” against a minimum wage which was barely enough to enable the “workers” to reproduce themselves by paying for their children’s school fees and other school needs as well as compulsory taxation which was made to be payable only in cash and so uprooted family heads to go and unwillingly offer their labour for minimum wages to be able to pay, and for European bottled beer which was an integral part of plantation life. Colonial education also included what was called technical education, first introduced in Ombe, near the German plantations, as Ombe Trade Centre in 1952, though by the Americans, to train low level skilled “workers” for the repairs and maintenance of plantation equipment and for the European factories in Douala. Domains such as mining, for example; the secret of Western global economic dominance, remained secret domains and mining techniques, no matter how rudimentary, was a preserve of the whites who needed only unskilled manpower for the minefields and quarry operations hence, the exclusion of mining techniques from the colonial school curriculum.

Through education the practices of physical brutalities and flogging were removed and “working” in the plantations became a ‘favour’ from the white man who selected those he wanted from amongst the lot, the “educated” as well as the “uneducated”, to serve different purposes within a new system of hierarchies where the “educated” had more value. This set in motion a process of voluntary migration in which people left the hinterlands for the coast to look for “work” in the plantations; to sell their labour power to the white man. There was also a rush for “education” and those who were “educated” and could speak the white man’s language; the language of domination, were employed as clerks, overseers, managers, etc., and made to supervise those who had only their labour power to offer, the “uneducated”. A new era of voluntary slavery was dawning and those who were selected went to town with the story of how “the white man loves us”.

It was also through education that the Germans were to “educate” Cameroonians to know themselves: as subordinates to the white race. The Germans sought to “educate” the blacks that they were still polygamists, for example, and that “God” was against it (see Rudin 1938). The “natives” were also to know themselves as subordinates to the Germans by learning to speak German<sup>2</sup> which was also what was taught in the makeshift schools besides agriculture and the Christian ideology for the subjection of the “rebellious natives” to the

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<sup>2</sup> Language signifies autonomy and independence and those who are co-opted into a language community become subservient to the native speakers of that language. In the same measure, those who lose their mother tongue lose their autonomy and independence for language is ideology in its expressive form which ‘calls’ or transforms individual into subjects who act according to its rules .

lordship of the (white) son of God. And in the mistaken belief of submitting themselves to the (white and only) son of God the “natives” subjected themselves to the Germans; through a system of education which also taught them skills that made them useful as “workers”; the providers of labour only, in the production process. The capitalist system of education was gaining grounds in the colony and the business of education itself was undertaken by those who seemingly had no connection with production, away from the plantations: the missionaries who quickly inundated the West African Coastline with makeshift schools (also see Ade Ajayi 1969).

Hence, the idea of education, which was initially the preserve of one mission with the sole intention being to teach the German language; emphasis on language being to reproduce those who will be able to manage the “workers” properly as well as report to the whites, was jointly taken up by the four missions and: “The curricula which evolved emphasised a religious content and the immediate objective in view was to enable converts read the scriptures” (Shu 2000: 2). Besides that, reading, writing and addition as well as some basic notions of a literary and scientific culture and a good number of other things which are directly useful in the different positions in the production process, were also taught. Eventually, education became the main pre-occupation of the Churches in competition with what was referred to at the time as “the government” (the white impostors) both of which doted primary as well as secondary schools here and there recording a total of about 67.000 pupils by the 1950s who, upon graduation, worked in close collaboration with the whites, becoming the elite who were to take over from the whites with the mandate to ensure the reproduction and continuity of what the whites had established. The coastal area, however, where the whites had based their exploitative practices, emerged in the 1960s as the region with a high scholarisation rate.

As early as 1886 the Baptist missionaries had established the Alfred Saker College in Douala and in 1939 the French, who had taken over from the Germans, opened the Leclerc College in Yaoundé and a major seminary at Akono in the south. In the British controlled territory the Roman Catholic Church set up the Sasse College in Sasse near Buea, etc., all of which set the standards for what would become Cameroon’s educational system although with slight variations in what is referred to as the Anglophone and Francophone educational sub systems which are just variations of the same thing: the capitalist system of education which, in its functions to ensure the reproduction of ‘labour’ for the ‘labour market’, also ensures the reproduction of its submission to the established order (as do other state ideological apparatuses such as the church or the police). In a neo-colonial context such as Cameroon, the

so-called professional schools (including seminaries, schools of education, the School of Administration, and the like) have a special role to play in this respect. That is where the neo-colonial doctrine is reproduced to ensure that learners are not only completely subjected to the neo-colonial order but should also learn to master its ideology in order to better manipulate it for the total subjection and domination of Cameroonians: where 'labour' specialises in the reproduction of one aspect of the neo-colonial ideology.

Since its inception, by the invading Europeans, of education as an ideology and the school as a public sphere where people from different backgrounds congregate, outside the family unit, schools, as ideological state apparatuses, have become a major instrument of politics in which the neo-colonial state holds onto its claim of social responsibility; in its claim that the state has the responsibility to educate its citizens. Consequently, schools are created in different localities as a special favour from the neo-colonial government. Yet schools are only what they are: ideological state apparatuses for the reproduction of 'labour power' as well as for the reproduction of the submission of its products to the neo-colonial state.

As a public sphere, schools – including universities, professional schools and other types, formal or informal, run by individuals, confessional institutions, corporate bodies or government (it doesn't matter who runs a school. What matters is the internal bourgeois law it realises) – which are today found everywhere throughout the national territory, reproducing diversified forms of knowledges which better qualifies 'labour power', according to the designs of the capitalist system, driven by the Western industrial economies, are not discursive forums where individuals get together to mould or to formulate their different opinions into policy. They are rather forums where children are taught varying elements of knowledge, skills, techniques or simply know-how, which only transforms them as individuals into subjects subjected to the ruling ideology as they expect to become 'something'; expect employment. Beside imparting diverse forms of knowledge and skills, pupils and students are also taught in schools to master the practices of the ruling ideology, which certifies their participation in the "labour process" in the sense in which Karl Marx describes it, which includes all forms of paid employment (white collar, blue collar, local, national or international, business ventures), leading to 'false consciousness', their own misconception of their needs and interests, which the ideology of Western education imposes on the people of Cameroon, if not Africa as a whole, who have tended to belief in its empty promises and to fashion their lives according to that belief, and subjects them to the neo-colonial state, as willing subordinates.

As I mentioned earlier, that the programme of study of the school when it was introduced by the Germans consisted mainly of the teaching of agriculture, besides the teaching of the German language and the romantic ideology of Christianity, was because the emerging factories in the West, at the time, depended largely on agricultural inputs from the plantations: its division of labour was still relatively simple. When the factories became diversified in production, emerging as a complex system which required a complex division of labour, there was need to also diversify the school curriculum to suite the expanding global developments of the Western industrial economies. For the burgeoning factories in the West to maintain their expanding conditions of production, there was need to equally expand not only the material means of production but also the productive forces by producing diversified forms of 'labour power' suitable for a complex system that was now requiring a complex division of labour to ensure an endless chain of production which should be able to reproduce itself indefinitely following a definite pattern of relations of production. In this continuous chain of production, two things are paramount: the reproduction of the material means of production and the reproduction of the productive forces which, according to a law internal to the capitalist system, must have to be reproduced or renewed continually if the Western industrial economies must not collapse.

For this ends, the expanding factories will need a continuous production and reproduction of diverse forms of skills which find their unity in the division of labour itself which requires that diverse forms of knowledge, abilities and proficiencies are reproduced on the spot to: secure channels through which the factory will have a continuous supply of diverse forms of raw material; expand the channels for the distribution and consumption of the finished products from the factory at the global level (including all the complex stages of distribution, marketing, advertising, accounting, import and export, private channels for whole sale and retail, etc); secure the possibilities through which the factory will have to ensure the continuous reproduction of new and changing ideas for the reproduction of the relations of production (including the priests and the high priests of the neo-colonial system such as ministers, professors, pastors, teachers, directors, journalists, and others); reproduce the mechanisms for the maintenance of order (including the neo-colonial state and all the repressive and ideological state apparatuses within it), all of which should keep the 'demand and supply sequence' at equilibrium, subsidised by the peasantry whose labour is no longer for the reproduction of itself but for the sustenance of those who are 'called' to offer their 'skilled labour' for the capitalist system.

This is assured at all levels by the circulation of an exchange-value which is only an infinitesimal proportion of the total expenditure of 'labour power' deployed in the production process, which has, unfortunately, weakened the ability of 'labour' to rally itself under a single ideology to free itself from the shackles of the Western industrial economies. And for the changing needs of the globalising Western industrial economies to be sustained, the capitalist system of education which includes apprenticeship, professional training and other institutions of formal and informal learning, which is actually what has fragmented and stratified the Cameroonian 'public' into various incoherent spheres, had to become complex, loaded with subjects that will meet the diversified needs of the expanding factories and their expanding chain of production and reproduction procedures, which is why it is referred to as the capitalist system of education: it serves the diverse needs of the capitalist system. To renew the conditions for the reproduction of 'labour', the 'school' must broaden its scope to go beyond the mere teaching of skills in reading, writing and calculation, agriculture and manual work, to include many other things that are directly relevant in the different occupations and posts in the growing industrial production chain including all kinds of knowledges and techniques that will ensure that 'labour' wholly embraces the capitalist system and accept it as what has to be and must be, with no alternative.

To ensure that 'labour' wholly embraces the capitalist system and accept it as a given and must be discussing its terms of existence only according to its logic, 'labour', besides being taught a variety of things vital for the reproduction of its skills, must also be taught to learn to accept the neo-colonial ad hoc political arrangement; learn to obey its rules, thereby learning to reproduce its submission to the repressive ideology of the ruling elite: learn to play its role as an exploited category. Besides learning to place their hope and trust on the neo-colonial state from which 'labour' expects an 'improvement in its living condition', which is what keeps the different revolutionary pressures within the neo-colonial state at equilibrium, to use the language of Claude Ake (1978). 'Labour' will need to learn economics or some notions of it, for example, in order to explain the operations of the neo-colonial state in terms of a business enterprise wherein the President of the Republic must be evaluated only in terms of his abilities at managerialism. They must equally learn history, not because history, as a subject, is intended to enable the learners to reformulate their future from the ruins of the past but a history which rather celebrates colonial achievements: a history which presents whites as great explorers, scientists, great thinkers, great statesmen, etc., under whom they must submit and then willingly offer their 'labour' for the success of the Western industrial economies.

'Labour', as well needs some notions about science, which may be elementary or detailed, but, which in the final count, is not intended to produce scientists in the post-colony but to let the learners of scientific knowledge know how far the white man, who must be perceived and received as master without question, has gone in extrapolating the laws of nature. 'Labour' needs to learn how to carry out a systematic diagnosis on the biological causes of diseases and to administer drugs (as medical doctors) manufactured by Western pharmaceutical companies, and must learn to produce food that meet the food demands of the capitalist system: to feed those who are "working" for capital, etc. Whatever the case, the capitalist system of education, which may even be thoroughgoing and rigorous, ends up imparting in the pupils and students only hybridised notions about the self, about social formations, about Western scientism, about history in general, and about every other thing, which makes 'labour' to belong neither here nor there: with no means with which to formulate for itself and identity and to establish ways of reproducing it. With hybridised notions in diverse domains, 'labour' is thus qualified not to become masters of its own destiny but for deployment in the "labour process" as passive subordinates whose only obligation is to "work" so as to 'improve its living conditions': 'labour' has no other alternative except its ultimate submission to the demands of capital; its submission to the "labour market", like a candle in the wind.

Against this background are the various class struggles in the post-colony which are centred on the demands for an 'improvement in living conditions', sustained by the local representatives of the European factory owners (the President of the neo-colonial state and his *état major* ably assisted by graduates from the Yaoundé School of Administration and Magistracy) whose duty it is to learn how to manipulate the dominant ideology for the subjection of the exploited category as they keep on daydreaming about an 'improvement in living conditions'. In this case, unemployment presents itself as a function of the need to create a reserve pool of diversified 'labour power' (first school leavers, GCE 'O' and 'A' Level holders, technicians, teachers, engineers, degree holders, high level managers, etc) from where the capitalist system can, at any time, recruit its productive forces according to its diversified operations and historical needs and not according to the historical needs as defined by the holders of those certificates or knowledges: knowledge and certificates are useless in a neo-colonial context as long as their beholders have not been called upon to offer their 'competence' or 'skills' for the capitalist system, for wages which are not calculated in terms of redistribution but by the absolute necessity to ensure that 'labour' is able to reproduce itself indefinitely (in its children) for future deployment. This also keeps 'qualified labour' in

diverse domains looking up to the neo-colonial political arrangement and the capitalist system as a whole on which it helplessly depends for its economic survival; for ‘improvement in living conditions’.

Amongst all the mechanisms of public mediation to be found in a neo-colonial context, schools are the most servile and obsequious yet least suspected to be what reproduces and ensures the continuous ‘functioning’ of the capitalist system and its neo-colonial copy or affiliate, being a function of the unconsciousness as local people get more and more subjected to the ideology of Western education and then through it to the dominant mode of production. Alternatively stated, besides all what is taught in school, pupils and students, as agents in the division of labour, are also schooled on the rules of “civilisation”/ “modernity” and its moral codes which moulds their civic and professional consciences and enables them to respect the socio-technical division of labour and in so doing respect the rules of the neo-colonial state and to be obedient to it, which explains why the history of resistance to colonial and neo-colonial domination in all of Africa, since the 1900, gradually died out following the inception of Western education and Christianity which subjected ‘labour’ to the subjecting force of external materialistic forces on which they have to depend.

Each mass ejected *en route* is practically provided with the ideology which suits the role it has to fulfil in class society: the role of the exploited (with a ‘highly-developed’ ‘professional’, ‘ethical’, ‘civic’, ‘national’ and a-political consciousness); the role of the agent of exploitation (ability to give the workers orders and speak to them: ‘human relations’), of the agent of repression (ability to give orders and enforce obedience ‘without discussion’, or ability to manipulate the demagogy of a political leader’s rhetoric), or of the professional ideologist (ability to treat consciences with the respect, i.e. with the contempt, blackmail, and demagogy they deserve, adapted to the accents of Morality, of Virtue, of ‘Transcendence’, of the Nation, of [Europe’s] World Role, etc.).

Of course, many of these contrasting Virtues (modesty, resignation, submissiveness on the one hand, cynicism, contempt, arrogance, confidence, self-importance, even smooth talk and cunning on the other) are also taught in the Family, in the Church, in the Army, in Good Books, in films and even in the football stadium. But no other Ideological State Apparatus has the

obligatory (and not least, free) audience of the totality of the children in the capitalist social formation, eight hours a day for five or six days out of seven<sup>3</sup>.

The hidden *meaning* beneath Western education, therefore, is that, as an unnoticeable underside, it transforms individuals into obedient ‘servants’ of the neo-colonial arrangement which they see as their only source of economic rescue. Besides that, the neo-colonial government, as a major aspect of governance, methodically controls the content of what is taught in schools: to produce citizens who are compliant to the neo-colonial state, which could also be one of the reasons why education in Cameroon was not necessarily intended to be thoroughgoing. And even it is thoroughgoing it does not intend to achieve any other goal other than ideologically transforming learners into ready-made ‘labour’ for the capitalist system; expectants of employment only. It was only intended to distort reality for young people; by transforming them into job seekers and subjecting them to the demands of the “labour market”, and to tilt their attention towards the neo-colonial state which, on behalf of the countries of the industrial North which control the process for the demand and supply of labour in the “labour market” – from the point of exploitation and transportation of raw material to the point of production, distribution and consumption – ‘promises’ to satisfy the needs it has imposed on them. Otherwise, why this circumlocutory approach to meeting bio/physiological needs when the soil is there, holding in its sacred womb all the agricultural and mineral resources for all to depend on as a benchmark for development? Unfortunately, ‘citizens’ who have been fashioned to depend on the neo-colonial state for ‘improvement in living conditions’, plus subsidies provided for by the peasantry with their agricultural production, ‘unconsciously’ reproduce themselves as ‘labour’ within the framework of the school as an ideological state apparatuses, a public sphere, for the reproduction of the neo-colonial state and the entire capitalist system.

For further verification of the hypothesis, the case of the law as an ideology operating within the framework of a public sphere is also discussed. We begin from the premise that law in Cameroon is a foreign imposition which, like religion and education, was part of the *superstructure* that was imposed on the material base of African societies for the reproduction of the conditions of production. In the paragraphs that follow I will demonstrate how law, as a repressive ideology, which operates in public places or ideological state apparatuses such as courts, prisons, police stations, lawyers’ chambers, etc, have facilitated the project of

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<sup>3</sup> Louis Althusser, [French (1970) English Translation (1971)]; “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”, in “*Lenin and Philosophy*” and *Other Essays*.

domination by aiding the neo-colonial state in the reproduction of the conditions of production for the benefit of the Western industrial economies. We begin from the understanding that no society in the world, “primitive” or “civilised”, can exist as a whole, as an entity, without a system of rules that define and regulate its numerous aspects and a set of institutions that enforce them, imposed on the people by themselves. Once this becomes a foreign imposition, the intention will be to create what we have already seen to be ‘false consciousness’ in which the people are subjected to mistake someone else’s interests for theirs and then become unconscious of the fact that by reconstituting themselves in the reproduction of what they have come to believe in, to be the law, which is not based on a system that allows for the self-generation of moral laws by the people themselves but rather based on repression, realisable by the assurance of economic benefits for those who reproduce it, they will be ‘unconsciously’ reproducing the material conditions that satisfies some other people’s historically defined interests.

Upon their arrival in the Wouri estuary in 1884, the Germans had no respect for the Black people they met on the spot. With no respect for the existing laws and institutions thus the European invaders proceeded to establish what would suit their interests; a repressive apparatus, resulting in the arbitrariness that brought about the physical confrontations which erupted between them and local peoples as we saw in the preceding paragraphs. After forcefully installing themselves the Germans imposed what they called Station Heads or District Officials which constituted the “administration” and functioned as a higher instance with responsibilities which included administration and jurisdiction. They could even impose the death penalty on those who tried to offer any form of resistance to the German exploitative practices. To ensure maximum and unperturbed exploitation of the territory, the Germans in 1891 introduced the *polizeitruppe* or the police force and in 1895 they introduced the *schutztruppe* or the arm force, recruiting mostly foreigners, particularly Africans from Dahomey land, into both forces for the protection of Germans in the Kamerun as they carried out their armed robbery ventures. In 1903 they established what they called *Gouvernementstrat* or an Advisory Council, which was made up mainly of missionaries, cultivators and merchants, all whites, at the head of which was the German military Governor, stationed in Buea, represented at the district level by the District Officials. Operating in conjunction with the “administration” was the *bezirksgericht* or the District Court which functioned as the basic court and the *obergericht* which functioned as the High Court, based in Douala. For the dispensing of justice at the higher instance was either the Governor or a Judge appointed by him.

By establishing a “machine of repression” and its supplementary organs such as a government bureaucracy, the courts, the military, and the police, the Germans had set the stage for the imposition of a superordinate structure together with its law for the effective control, domination and exploitation of the people in what eventually became the neo-colonial state of Cameroon. This was to be fully realised after World War II under the French and the British, who held the divided “German idea” in trust for the UN, with very slight modifications to the German structural idea. In other words, what obtains today in Cameroon as structural elements is not very much different from that *repressive machinery* which the Germans had set afoot except for the fact that the Ideological State Apparatuses, which I call ‘ideological carriers’ (which must be distinguished from the repressive state apparatus and its auxiliary organs which primarily constitute a machinery of violent repression though not completely void of ideology), vital for the reproduction of the conditions of production, a government and the administration, which were gradually established, above which was a head of state.

This massive repressive ensemble was, during the cold war, delegated to blacks, at the head of which was Ahmadou Ahidjo, who, by hobnobbing with the European exploiters, had received the necessary political grooming from the whites on whose behalf he was to, as their auxiliary manager assisted by the ‘functionaries’ who were and are still the high priests of the ruling ideology (ministers, directors, etc), operate a *repressive machinery*, being a fictitious world that was imposed by Europeans on Cameroonians who have come to accept it as valid and are unconsciously participating in its maintenance and reproduction. That, in itself, is the result of the hidden hand of history which was never revealed to Cameroonians who are unconscious of the fact that they are reproducing themselves as ‘labour’ for Western industrial economies and as distributors and consumers of Western industrial goods. And what obtains today in Cameroon as law is rooted on what the Germans had introduced as law, which was a German idea intended to protect German interests in the Cameroons in their larceny as they sought resources for the growth and expansion of the Western industrial economies, which Cameroonians have also come to accept it to be true and are unconsciously applying hybridised notions of the law (a hybrid law = no law at all) regulating relationships between themselves as well as prosecuting others under a neo-colonial state which is ‘above the law’; which can only exist by its possession of a repressive force, being another example of ‘false consciousness’.

Take the case of the Cameroon Land Tenure Law of August 5, 1974, based on ordinance N° 74.001 of July 6, 1974, which virtually deprived all citizens of their land by

transferring all lands to the neo-colonial State of Cameroon in exactly the same spirit as was the German military law that was imposed on the “natives” which completely deprived them of their land and gave the Germans the leeway to seize extensive parcels of “native” land for their plantation projects. Considering that all Europeans had the same mission to Africa, the same was also experienced under the Arthur Richards 1946 Land Ordinances which transformed all lands in the British occupied territories of Nigeria and the Southern Cameroons into Crown land, including all the mineral resources therein. Realising that the neo-colonial state of Cameroon is an affiliate or even a counterfeit of the Western capitalist system, then by handing “all pieces of land occupied or exploited before August 5, 1974” or “those lands free of any occupation, or all lands occupied or used before August 5, 1974”, the neo-colonial state virtually seized the people’s lands and held them in trust for Western industrial countries, rendering Cameroonians as voiceless subjects with no claim to what they can call their land and can rise up to fight to protect it in the case of a foreign intrusion.

The implications of this are very grave for Cameroonians. An Americans (Geovic company), for example, can exploit and export cobalt and nickel from Nkamouna near Lomié in the East Province or exploit and export bauxite in Minim Martap near Ngaoundere as they are currently doing in competition with the French Bolloré company, realising 25 % of petroleum exploitation and exportation, or the French logging companies such as SIBAF, Thanry, SAB, Pallisco, etc, recklessly logging and destroying Cameroon’s forest, while Cameroonians have no voice to raise because the land, *ab initio*, belongs to the State, the neo-colonial state, as enshrined in the law. The same thing can be said of Administrative law which regulates the activities of the illegitimate administrative agencies of government which were imposed on Cameroonians by Europeans as well as every other law in the post-colony. Although the laws of Cameroon may be enacted today by the “natives” themselves, they are rooted on the spirit of that foreign legal foundation as was initiated by the Germans and upheld by successive European intruders, which completely ignores or even seeks to destroy all indigenous foundation philosophy on which law in Cameroon should have been evolving.

The fact that Cameroon is a bijural country where two foreign legal systems co-exist, derived from the English and French laws, tells the story. And whether one is referring to common law or civil law is like saying the same thing in different words since these are build on the same foundation that was established by the Germans for the same purpose: to protect the interests of Western industrial countries in Cameroon. To ensure the effectiveness of that mission, the authentic laws of the peoples of the land of Cameroon are instead derogatorily referred to as ‘customary law’, relegated to the background, and targeted for destruction. This

makes the public sphere of the law, like that of Christianity, and that of education, as shown above, contested public spheres since they do not only have foreign origins, established to achieve goals for Western industrial countries, but seek to destroy their indigenous versions. And by claiming that “ignorance of the law is no excuse of the law” Cameroonians are imposed a law which they would otherwise contest its existence since it did not develop as a result of their cultural experience.

Even what is referred to as the constitution of Cameroon, under which Parliament is empowered to enact laws, was voted by the French parliament where it was first submitted in 1946 after which it was amended and confirmed suitable for the subjection of colonised subjects. In 1960 a few changes were made to it and was adopted by the East Cameroon’s Legislative Assembly, which was ‘given’ the powers (by the French) to vote the President of the republic. It became the “fundamental law” of the land from where all other laws are derived, for ideological repression, ‘unconsciously’ subsidised by Cameroonians.

To be sure of how Cameroonians are unconsciously subsidising a foreign idea of law, we look at the law as operating in Cameroon in two arms: the official bar and the private bar. While those who are ‘called’ to the official bar, such as magistrates, are subsidised by the neo-colonial state to exercise a European idea of the law in Cameroon, those who are ‘called’ to the private bar, such as lawyers, are subsidised by Cameroonians themselves as they seek justice within a legal system they do not understand its logic, also revealing one more case of how Cameroonians have come to accept a fictitious world and its law as valid and are unconsciously operating within it thereby unconsciously subsidising the operations of the capitalist system as determined by the Western industrial economies, thus legitimising the existence of an repressive system which subjects them. On the other hand, Cameroonians have no other alternative because it is not only an imposition, enforced by the neo-colonial state, which they must accept as absolute truth but also because the public sphere in Cameroon operates in purely economic terms (justice, for example, is paid for: magistrates are on a salary and lawyers are hired with the court, as a public sphere, regulated by economic relations and not by the desire to mould public opinion into a counterpoising force against neo-colonial designs), which have weakened the capacity of Cameroonians to reverse the hand of history which has rendered them as slaves of Western ideas on their own land.

If we re-examine Louis Althusser’s postulation that ideologies are material i.e. the end result of ideologies is that they are transformed into material things, then we can now see how the interplay of Western imposed ideologies in Cameroon, as the three examples demonstrated above have shown, namely; the ideologies of Christianity, education and law,

achieve for the West the material gains necessary for the growth and expansion of the Western industrial economies. To put it in simple stipulations: what you believe in and hold to be true, which becomes part of your unconsciousness, governs your life and determines the type of things your hands produce. Lawyers and magistrates in Cameroon, for example, like teachers, priests/pastors, medics (don't forget that labour, too, needs to be in good health, yet not by the conditions as defined and realised by it but by the conditions as defined and realised for it by Western health variables), administrators, etc, are hardly aware of the ultimate results of their 'jobs'; they are unconscious of the fact that they are actually assisting the Western world in their project for the reproduction of the conditions of production in Africa for the same purpose as did the trans-Atlantic slave trade and slavery, justified by an abstract law, being an invisible hand of history. Today, in what has been pompously styled as the modern world, slavery is no longer mediated by the physical repressive force of the whip and the gun, though that element has not been completely removed.

The neo-colonial state operates by controlling the invisible realm of ideas or by the 'management of ideologies' in conjunction with the use of physical repression (it still contains the Repressive State Apparatuses: the Army, the Prisons, the Police, the Courts, the Gendarmes, the Administration, which means that the neo-colonial state still operates by violence), achieving exactly the same results, if not better results, for the Western industrial economies as did slavery and slave trade, especially that labour today, unlike yesterday, also has to possess some skills; needs to be qualified which, according to the contemporary world structure as well as ethical considerations, needs to be produced and reproduced, indefinitely, on the spot, to enable it fit into the different positions and levels of the complex division of labour within the capitalist system (from truck drivers to professors, from mechanics to economists, from farmers to medical doctors, from bar tenders to journalists, etc).

At this point in our discussion, the unavoidable question is: how does the ruling ideology, which aims at the reproduction of the conditions of production for Western industrial economies, secure the unity of a public sphere which is made up of a multiplicity of ideological state apparatuses which are somewhat relatively autonomous and possessing dissimilar characteristics? For a straightforward answer, this unity is secured by the very contradictions that are found in the public sphere, which is expressed through the conflicts inherent in the various class interests, of which governance in a neo-colonial context is about fermenting and keeping these class, ethnic as well as regional interests in existence, by promising them "development" or 'improvement in standards of living' which is at the same time the shared interest of those various fragments or spheres, for the purpose of achieving its

goal, which is that of repression and domination. Neo-colonial domination and extortion, which is vital for the growth and expansion of Western industrial economies, would be impossible if the Cameroonian 'public' was rallied under a single systematising vision; speaking with 'one voice' as it were. Even the different ethnic ideologies, which manifest themselves within the neo-colonial arrangement in the form of "tribalism", have been co-opted into the ruling ideology of the neo-colonial state through the development propaganda which carries the promised social responsibility of the neo-colonial state.

From the point of view of the theory of 'differentiated interpellation' we have come to realise that the public sphere in Cameroon is a fragment of different ideological state apparatuses which harbour different ideological patterns which 'call' Cameroonians from different backgrounds to become participants in different domains for different reasons which are all linked to the ruling ideology by the cry for an 'improvement in living conditions'. It is a situation of the survival of the fittest as each class, ethnic group, region, corps or organisation, etc., is 'called', by its vocation, to different expectations.

Once one steps out of the family circle, which is an ideological state apparatus in itself in that it is a para-public sphere which is equally propagating the bourgeois ideas of neo-colonialism (teaching children how to speak English or French, teaching them Western mathematical ideas, teaching them bourgeois history, held in a state of arrest by the power of the media (TV, films, radio messages, books of foreign cultural background, etc.)) one is either in school, in church, in court, in the market place, in the office, in the bar, at a bus station, at the police station, in the military barracks, at a political party meeting, in the stadium, at the gymnasium, at the cyber café, confronted by bill boards, etc., where individuals are 'called' upon, one and all, to respond to different interests, mediated by economic relations in accordance with the ruling ideology which is centred on the claim to offer opportunities for the 'improvement in the living conditions' of the population. One is either 'called' as an individual and as a member of group for different reasons (political, religious, legal, educational, professional, economic, aesthetic, etc.) or is performing a different 'job' according to the division of labour, all of which operate on different ideological principles with no common vision on which direction society should go; no intention to establish a universal model in the image of the Enlightenment which it imitates for Enlightenment itself would seize to exist if that happens, yet they all operate according to the ruling ideology.

This has been changing over the years in response to the needs or interests of the foreign countries and organisations which initiated the "Kamerun Idea" itself, which was

initially intended for the production of resources with the use of the cheap, willing labour of the local people for the growth and expansion of the European industrial economies. In the course of achieving that desirable goal, conceptual opposing social categories which justify hierarchy in favour of the governing elite intended for the disempowerment of the population have constantly been networked into associations or relationships. Hence, a *superstructure* which was saddled with ideological mechanisms for public mediation by external, invading forces for the one purpose of ideologically controlling the political process for the production and transmission of ideas within a public sphere with conceptual mechanisms that establish binary associations in which certain privileges are preserved for certain social categories while associating others with subordinate roles, was established.

By assigning superior values to certain categories which are then viewed against their opposites which are presented as inferior, a hierarchy of inferior/dominance is established which deemphasises a deliberative public sphere of independent and active individuals who freely congregate and freely discuss their terms of existence in relation to the power of the public sphere of the ruling class both of which should form a single dynamic continuum. This effectively controls the people epistemologically by denying them the opportunity to generate and nurture their own common understanding of the world in response to an ideological disposition that derives from and sanctions their common daily experiences and aspirations intended to model for themselves a common identity and a common destiny. Yet, for a people to be referred to as a nation, they should be governed by a single ideology which embraces them as one people, embodied in their system of political organisation, rooted in a shared principle, expressed in culture, language, art, religion, music, etc., for the ‘interpellation’ of citizens in a public sphere which serves the people the need to constantly engage themselves in the discussion, negotiation, and the remoulding of their different opinions or held views about their own very existence and through that reformulate them into a systematising vision or a coherent system of concepts that should characterise their ways of *knowing* and *doing* as they obligatorily engage in employing reason in creating social structures or ideological apparatuses within which they act, as one people, to define their lives, making policy on a regular basis, allocating power and scrutinising performance.

Accordingly, a division of labour should derive from a ‘national ideology’ which governs the people’s unconsciousness about their relationship with the All-Creating and All-Knowing God (the One True God all pre-colonial African peoples believed in), nature, and their fellow humans in their associative practices to meet their bio-physiological needs. And Cameroon is far from meeting that expectation because the ideological apparatuses which

'call' individuals to 'become' acting subjects within the repressive state have foreign origins for the reproduction of relations of production as well as for the reproduction of the material means of production in ways that do not only "favour" the ruling clan but benefits more the foreign industrial economies especially those of countries of the North in general (including Asian countries which are now coming in with full force) to the disadvantage of the local population which is subordinated and marginalised in the process.

On the contrary, what is referred to as Cameroon is instead a distortion of reality<sup>4</sup>. This, as has been shown above, followed the military conquest and ideological transformation of the people of that geographical space, which was, before 1884, inhabited by different political units governed by their different indigenous ideologies which were rooted in their self-governing and deliberative institutions of public mediation, built into a system of political economy. But based on foreign systems of ideas, which actually distorted the local peoples' understanding of reality and subjected them, a relatively autonomous foreign overarching politico-legal power structure with its foreign imposed systems of thought (the various ideologies; educational, religious, political, legal, etc), which selects its own kind for its own needs, was imposed on local peoples which carries out ideological repression on the subordinated categories for the purpose of extracting surplus-value for the "favoured" categories who represent the Western industrial countries and serves as local allies in the project of subordinating the population.

The establishment of plantations in the coastal regions, the building of the Douala Sea Port initiated by the Germans in 1885, the building of the Douala International Airport by the French in 1935, the establishment of industries at the Douala neighbourhood of Bassa and the dotting of corporate businesses in areas that favoured the production of certain types of inputs for the Western industrial concerns, including the establishment of the cotton estate in Garoua in 1951 by the French amongst others, emerged as new forms of social arenas which were mediated by economic relations. These were also supported by the establishment of the Public Service by the French (in East Cameroon and by the British in West Cameroon in 1958) as part of the social responsibility dream invented by Europeans for the subjection of Cameroonians under a dominant mode of production. They became the new types of

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<sup>4</sup> The true picture of any African society can be known only by studying its pre-19<sup>th</sup> century status. All these encapsulating shady power structures that were imposed on African peoples by Europeans in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, arbitrarily, which claim to be nation-states and whose operations are being manipulated by Europeans from behind the scenes who, in collaboration with the European tailor-made elite who are at the beck and call of European countries, keep on confusing the people, are not true representations of Africa. For a theory on the operations of neo-colonialism in Africa, illustrated with the particular case of Cameroon, see my *Political Philosophies and Nation-Building in Cameroon: Grounds for the Second National Liberation Struggle*, 2006.

ideological apparatuses within which the local people were to be discussing their terms of existence with money as their requisites. The disjunctive urban settlements that became known as towns wherein the European business activities were located selectively “favoured” those regions of their location as well as “favoured” those who first “qualified” to offer their ‘labour power’ in them, especially those who held top ranking posts in the Public Service, who were working in close collaboration with the whites, and who became the ‘*nouveau riche*’, serving as the ideological markers; high priests, of the new *superstructure*. The process also “disfavoured” women whose labour power was not immediately sought for.

To support that foreign foundation philosophy on which the new *superstructure* was erected, in the 1950s, as the neo-colonial *superstructure* was crystallising into form; an “estate-state”, new forms of idiomatic expression such as art, sculpture, poetry, music, plastic art, literature, including Christianity, being representations of the aesthetic ideology of the West which lay stress on beauty for beauty’s sake and thus claims to give life its meaning rather than derive from an indigenous reality, dominated the new public sphere, which was emerging as fragments of different economic interests, for the ‘interpellation’ and subjection of Cameroonians. As contested forms, they became antagonistic to their indigenous counterparts which derived from and supported the indigenous world views which are today marginalised forms. Bars and night clubs, for example, which were the new but contested forms of social arenas which were making their inroads in the late 1950s and early 1960s, mediated by economic relations, came along with their own kind of music (Makossa, meringue, rhumba, high life, and later on zouk, kwasakwa, ndombolo, bikutsi, ben skin, coupe décale, etc), which emerged from indigenous roots quite alright but in its search for international recognition relied heavily on a foreign outlook, for the ‘interpellation’ and subjection of Cameroonians to a European imposed dominant ideology, which ‘called out’ on individuals (men and women) into a ‘new life of improved standards’. It was in these new public arenas that early prostitution found its breathing grounds and served the political needs of the dominant ideology in that through that way women were “compensated” for what they have lost in terms of ‘improving on their condition’.

By their claim of making life for the new people of the new era by giving it meaning, developing to meet economic needs rather than support any indigenous political philosophy or world view for the political purposes of stemming European invasion, they ‘called out’ on Cameroonians who, in responding to the ‘call’ to come and ‘enjoy life’, unconsciously subjected themselves to a dominant mode of production, whose expansion in the post-colony benefits the Western industries such as the Western industries for bottled alcoholic drinks or

for musical instruments, for example. It was an era in which authentic forms that derived from reality and supported it were instead targeted for ridicule and destruction with the corresponding effect being the alienation of local people who were being 'called' upon to look up to the coming "desirable" era with admiration since it was ushering in a new lifestyle characterised by the European ideological concepts of aestheticism and romanticism, which have hybridised and distorted the African world. Unfortunately, too, these new forms of idiomatic expression, which sought the destruction of all indigenous political philosophies, had no intention to establish universal ideals either because the neo-colonial power structure was never intended to establish any universal model but to establish only a fractured image of the Enlightenment at the outskirts of Enlightenment for the sustenance of Enlightenment itself.

The operations of the various 'publics' (including the over 200 political legalised parties that are currently existing in Cameroon, trade unions, professional associations, cultural associations, etc) are determined by economic relations, governed by foreign ideas which seek to reproduce the conditions of production to satisfy foreign interests, pretentiously claiming that such manoeuvres will ultimately end up 'improving on the living conditions' of the population. And governance is about the maintenance and reproduction of these different 'publics' which, though different and seemingly conflictual are unified by their subjection to the dominant ideology, the ruling ideology, which assures their endurance and continued existence, under the subjective claim that they 'improve on the living conditions' of the population. The ruling ideology does so by its provision of wages to state employees which is also the case with "workers" of all domains, which only motivates them to want to keep on "working" or show of charity to favoured interests groups, or just by its claim of social responsibility over the subjected citizens who live by hoping that things will one day be different, encouraged by Christianity's call for hope for a better life hereafter, all of which culminates in the indefinite reproduction of the material means and the relations of production in the post-colony for Western industrial economies. In that same spirit, the different public spheres, privately owned or government owned, thrive by their manipulation of the ruling ideology, claiming, like the neo-colonial state, to be seeking 'improvement in living conditions'.

It should be made clear that as long as a sphere has been permitted to exist (such as a bar, a night club or even a telephone booth) within the neo-colonial arrangement, that should be seen as an indication that it either correlates the ruling ideology and thus serves the needs of the dominant mode of production or is being persuaded to do so. One example is that of the

family which has become an ideological state apparatus in that the state, in its modernisation drive, is muzzling the family (indirectly through the church as an ideological state apparatus) to toe the line by adopting only those attitudes, such as monogamy and few children, for example, which are consistent with its claim of social responsibility. And for being economically dependent on the neo-colonial arrangement, the family has been weakened and frayed off its autonomy and independence and its members have been transformed into ideological subjects for the neo-colonial state, which claims social responsibility, at least as a public relation strategy for its endurance, which it selectively uses to the favour of some groups and to the disadvantage of others. And by linking a divers 'public' to itself in this way (having a direct command over those set of institutions which serve as the repressive state apparatuses while ideologically manipulating the other set which serve as the ideological state apparatuses which are themselves microcosms of the neo-colonial state in that they, too, like the neo-colonial state, combine both ideology and repression (discipline) in their operations), the neo-colonial state can successfully achieve its mission, which is to ideologically hold an alienated 'public' captive for the Western industrial economies. We now examine how the neo-colonial regime realised the "Kamerun Idea" by repression, both physically and ideologically.

### **5. From Social Tyrannism to Neo-Liberalism and the Liberalisation of the Public Sphere in Cameroon**

Social tyrannism would refer to that style of governance that was adopted by President Ahmadou Ahidjo, during the cold war, when the French (and the British) had just receded to the background, at the heat of the independence struggles, having handed over power to their local representative in the person of Ahmadou Ahidjo who resorted to the use of cruelty and brutality as a governing technique intended to subject Cameroonians under the repressive neo-colonial state which also claimed social responsibility. To totally subject Cameroonians to a pure dream manufactured to alienate them, Ahidjo declared a permanent state of emergency in the same spirit of the 1955 emergency law (*loi cadre*) that was imposed on Cameroonians by the French which ended up suppressing the national liberation movement. The neo-colonial state under Ahidjo played the role of a "good father" and monitored and controlled all what was meant for public consumption such as information, films, music, art, books, etc. All forms of associations were banned; only the official media (Radio Cameroon and Cameroon Tribune) and the Repressive State Apparatuses which were directly under the control of the presidency such as the army, the police, the gendarmerie,

prisons, military tribunals operated including an omnipresent spy network which monitored all public discussions including even what people discussed in private.

Those who were found guilty of having ‘discussed’ what was considered to be running counter to the agenda of the neo-colonial political arrangement were reported to Ahmadou Ahidjo who ordered for their immediate arrest and detention at the Yaoundé Kondengui Maximum security prison, which contained underground cells and torture chambers, or at the concentration camps at Tcholere and at Mantoum, all constructed for Ahidjo by the French. Between February 1958 and November 1982 when Ahidjo resigned from power, whose reign Mongo Beti (1984) describes as fratricidal, characterised by murders, disappearances, and imprisonment, over twenty thousand Cameroonians have been tortured to death in those torture chambers, over twenty-five thousand others shed their blood in the liberation struggles (*maquis*), and yet another five thousand lost their lives in the concentration camps (Mukong 1985: 90). In my book *Political Philosophies and Nation-Building in Cameroon: Grounds for the Second National Liberation Struggle*, I quoted Richard Joseph (1974) who observed that the emerging repressive neo-colonial state in Cameroon under Ahmadou Ahidjo who was fronting for France as an auxiliary manager of a French overseas outpost feeder with a special assignment to psychologically condition and physically subdue the peoples of Cameroon into subordination as an exploited category, was

“... buttressed by concentration camps, the extensive use of physical brutality and torture by soldiers and gendarmes, a ubiquitous military and security-service presence, the retention of the state of emergency in most of the South, the use of military tribunals for political – or even political – offences, etc., [was] specifically related to the devolution of power by France to the very political forces in the territory which had played no part whatsoever in the nationalist struggle and which, until the eve of the power-transfer, had vigorously opposed this movement” (Joseph 1974: 429, 430).

Although the use of repressive state apparatuses as Ahidjo did also had an ideological effect, the combine use of the ideological state apparatuses which, in this case, were limited to the three mainline churches for the purposes of effective state control, namely; the Roman Catholic Church, the Presbyterian, and the Baptist Churches plus the mosques and schools, which were permitted to function, produced the “right” ideological results of subjecting

individuals one and all to the dominant ideology of the neo-colonial state which was shielded behind the mask of social responsibility.

Within the framework of what President Ahmadou Ahidjo had styled as the policy of regional balancing, which characterised mainly of what he claimed were attempts to redistribute the colonial infrastructure to the regions on an equal basis, which were located in areas strategic to colonial interests, he rather incorporated those pre-colonial nations that were larger in size into the neo-colonial political arrangement as ethno-regional power blocks to facilitate his “sharing” programme. This only succeeded in creating regional hegemonies which disfavoured other groups and resulted in regional imbalances (Adri van den Berg 1997: 165). During the 1980s and 1990s, following the final destruction of Socialist Russia by the West, a beckon of “freedom” was ushered into Cameroon in what was termed to be a ‘wave of freedom that was blowing from the East’, led to the emergence of diverse forms of mechanisms of public mediation which flooded the public arena where they were competing for space. That threw the public sphere in Cameroon in the 1990s into turmoil as marginalised groups as well as those opinions that were suppressed under the state of emergency laws were seeking expression. There was clamour for freedom of expression, freedom of association, a desire for spiritual freedom, and a quest for a return to multiparty politics (abolished in 1966 by Ahidjo in favour of a one party system of politics).

In 1990 a series of laws were passed in relation to freedom, including press freedom and freedom of associations, which unleashed social forces into the public arena where they were contesting for space and led to the social unrest that Cameroon experienced in the early 1990s. Following those seismic events, the public sphere in Cameroon became “liberated”. Today, all forms of associations, multinationals, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and Common Initiative Groups (CIGs) compete for control of the public sphere. Over two hundred political parties, which were legalised in response to the demand for freedom, are also contesting for control over the public sphere. The newly created “opposition” political parties, with the Social Democratic Front (SDF) as the forerunner, have been contesting the legitimacy of the ruling party, the Cameroon Peoples Democratic Party (CPDM), in its monopoly control of the public sphere. Political contestations over the public sphere brought about a new social phenomenon which characterised public life in Cameroon in the 1990s whereby some Cameroonians contested the presence of other Cameroonians in certain parts of Cameroon in what became the “settlers” versus “indigenes” struggle.

The state monopoly ownership of the media and monopoly control of information was shattered leading to the proliferation of private radio and TV stations. This was coeval with

the introduction of the New Information Technologies (NIT) which included the Internet and the parabolic antenna, which revolutionised the ‘information public’, which broke physical boundaries and established virtual publics, placed the mental life of young Cameroonians under the direct control of countries of the industrial West which control the content of the new media, etc, all of which radicalised the public sphere following the advent of “freedom”. And even in the church the same seismic events did not spare the three mainline churches which monopolised the dispensing of salvation in Ahidjo’s period and thus monopolised an ideological control over the population. That was followed by a wave of spiritual revivalism that shook the foundation of the three mainline churches, contesting their monopoly role as an ideological state apparatus.

In the Roman Catholic Church, it was Rev. Father Etienne N. Khumba of the Buea Diocese who launched a spiritual revivalist group in the Bonjongo Parish which he called the “Maranatha”. In the struggle that ensued between him and the Roman Catholic Church, he was sacked and was reinstated latter on. In the Presbyterian Church, it was Rev. Dr. Bame Bame who contested mainstream prebyterianism by introducing spiritual revivalist ideas in the Anglophone Parish of the Presbyterian Church in Djongolo, Yaoundé. He was also fired from the Presbyterian Church. Rev. Mbong Valentine, with support from the South American Baptist churches, shook the foundation of the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Church which is supported by the North American Baptist churches, in what became famously known as the “Belo Field Crisis” in the 1990s in which the Kom faction of the CBC church was contesting the managerial style of CBC over the Belo Field Council of Churches and was thus seeking a new space outside the framework of the CBC structure. What had become the public sphere of the church also witnessed “freedom” and today all sorts of churches operate at every street corner, including the Jehovah Witness Church, which went underground after it was banned by Ahidjo, which resurfaced in the 1990s and is very visibly contesting for a fair share of space in the public sphere.

It was an era in which the state of emergency law was uplifted; the repressive side of the state was lowered (not eliminated), and was counterbalanced at the ideological front by way of flooding the public sphere with a multiplicity of mechanisms of public mediation not only for the fragmentation of the public sphere but for the complete ideological alienation of Cameroonians who, in their struggle for economic survival, become ideologically arrested and subjected under the dictatorship of the neo-colonial state whose structure had adjusted to accommodate new ‘publics’ which operate on different ideological lines with no intention of developing an all-encompassing or an overarching common identity and with no commitment

to working together within a single systematising vision for a common destiny. It was an era of the survival of the fittest in Darwinian terms in which Cameroonians and foreigners competed for space; an era of neo-liberalism in which the industrial countries of the North, through their IMF/World Bank, had imposed the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) on Cameroon including 37 other African countries, with privatisation, liberalisation, and democracy as its main components.

As a way of establishing a *new* kind of relationship with ‘labour’, this enabled the countries of the North, acting in concert, through multinationals, to return and reclaim the economy in a more direct manner, buying up all the colonial infrastructure (water, electricity, plantations, etc) and introducing new ones (MTN, Orange, PMUC, etc) thus directly controlling almost the entire corporate sector in Cameroon today with Cameroonians being able to offer only their ‘labour’ with the ruling band, in line with the ruling ideology, mediating the process by using democracy as an alibi to allow corporate organisations from the North to dominate the public sphere in Cameroon for the continuous growth and expansion of the industrial economies of countries of the North, shielded by the neo-colonial state. Today, exactly 124 years after the Germans imposed the colonial structures which eventually became the neo-colonial state of Cameroon Cameroonians are free, but free only to the extent to which they are able to freely reproduce themselves as ‘labour’; professional skills and expert knowledge, through their children for deployment in the complex global division of labour which only assures the development and expansion of the Western industrial economies. Thus to think about the public sphere in Cameroon is to be prepared to rethink the whole ‘Kamerun Idea’ as a contestable one wherein the “traditional”, the Western, and the Islamic, based on conflicting principles, co-exist problematically as Kwame Nkrumah (1964: 78) observed.

Itself a public sphere, which was forcefully established by Europeans outside the public sphere of the pre-colonial nations, its endurance has been assured only by the use of repression: the combine use of the repressive state apparatuses and the repressive ideological mechanisms for public mediation, being a style of governance which is aimed at maintaining Cameroonians in a physical and mental state of arrest for exploitation for the benefit of Western industrial economies. As such, the public sphere of the neo-colonial state in Cameroon remains a contending issue, highlighted in the works of some famous Cameroonian authors such as Mongo Beti, Ebenezer Njoh-Mouelle, Marcien Towa, Woungly-Massaga, Abel Eyinga, and the political writings of the leaders of the national liberation movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Unfortunately, political analyses in Cameroon have been consigned only

to such rubrics as “tribalism”, “regionalism”, “favouritism”, “nepotism”, or “corruption”, “embezzlement”, and “misappropriation”, etc., which, as manifestations of class struggles and domination, do not only stereotype but are essentially empiricist and so do not go beyond the ‘shield’ of the neo-colonial state to uncover the invisible mediating role of ideologies in fragmenting the public sphere in ways that facilitates neo-colonial domination.

And the major objective of this paper was to outline the politico-historical processes through which a *superstructure* on the *infrastructural* base of this portion of Africa which became Cameroon, whose survival is assured by the existence and reproduction of an alienated ‘public’ by way of emphasising ideological differences which are diverse facets of the neo-colonial ideology (having co-opted the different ethnic ideologies which are maintained and used for neo-colonial political purposes); the use of the “invisible hand of ideologies” combined with physical repression, was imposed on Cameroonians for the popularisation of hybridised notions necessary for alienation and the subordination of Cameroonians for the purpose of surplus-value extortion. I also tried to show how alienation has gradually assimilated Cameroonians, if not all Africans, into the monetary economy of the Western industrial countries where they have come to depend on money which the industrial West, in order to sustain their interests, rations it out in bits under different conditions at different times aimed at achieving the same goal of economic enslavement and political domination.

Unfortunately, the idea of ‘differentiated interpellation’ wherein Cameroonians are ‘called’ to serve different ‘functions’ within different spheres for economic purposes (including even those public spheres which are created by the individuals themselves: bars, schools, NGOs, TV stations, political parties, newspapers, etc), which are not discursive forums which offer Cameroonians the possibility to discuss a common public opinion into being and to forge a common identity for a common destiny, but which are rather created in response to economic pressures, and also in response to Christianity’s doctrine of salvation being a personal matter, thereby offering the possibility for the unconscious reproducing of the dominant ideology of the ruling stratocracy in all its contradictions. This has alienated the Cameroonian ‘public’, weakened it, and rendered it incompetent in mustering one energy to dismantle a “repressive machine” that was imposed on them by invading Europeans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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