



How to Promote Human Solidarity in Cameroon in the Context of the Current Anglophone Crisis

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ABSTRACT

The Purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of human solidarity in Cameroon in particular and to propose ways to promote it, especially at the time when Cameroon is going through a series of crisis. These crises have affected almost everyone in one way or the other. In the midst of the crisis, there is killing, kidnapping human rights abuses and violations, among others. These are signs there is no feeling of solidarity between and amongst Cameroonians.

Keywords: Human solidarity, Cameroon, crises, violations, affected

Solidarity means caring, sharing, protection and responsibility for one another. In Cameroon it is embedded in the policy of national integration. National integration according to theories and political speeches is to train citizens that are embedded within their culture, respectful of public interest, the common good, ethics and the democratic values, essential for harmonious living and open to the world (MINJEC, 2014). Though the Call for national integration and solidarity has often been made through political speeches, Cameroon is still facing numerous problems of living together. These problems include; unemployment, poverty, inequality, prejudice, intolerance, marginalisation, gross economic disparities, language diversity, ethnicity, among others. These problems have culminated and have eventually lead to what is known as the Anglophone crisis. The Anglophone crisis is a veritable show of lack of human solidarity among Cameroonians. Generally speaking, human solidarity is very crucial in building and improving

relationships. Where there is no human solidarity, there is misunderstanding, disagreement, conflict and violence. This lack of solidarity is what has plunged Cameroon to this senseless conflict. The Cameroon government has done much to improve solidarity through the creation of institutions that foster integration and solidarity. Some of these institutions include, the national Good Governance program, National Anti-corruption Commission, the national Commission for Human Rights and Freedom and the National commission for Multiculturalism and Bilingualism that was created in 2012. The objectives of these institutions is to improve the relationships between the Anglophones and the Francophones. In spite of these attempts to improved relationship among Cameroonians, this has failed. This is the reason we are now facing a crisis

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of our own making, a result of our irresponsible and selfish lifestyles. In one country, some tribes, think that they are more Cameroonian than others. Cameroonians abusive patterns of production and consumption, the insatiable greed for profit, the drive to satisfy the whims and wants of a few at the expense of the needs of the majority are vital signs that we don't really care for one another. Since independence in 1960/61 the Anglophones and Francophones Cameroonians have been living partially and partially living. Though they have been living together for years, they are torn apart by deep-seated animosity and hatred, prejudice, discrimination and intolerance. Because of these differences there are often cases of violence recorded here and there. Solidarity therefore have become elusive. At the peak of the crisis, we are shocked and disillusioned at the state of our relationships with each other's. The never ending cycle of violence, religious fanaticism kidnappings, the deterioration of our ecosystems, pollution among others.

Background of the study

This study highlighted the historical, conceptual, theoretical and contextual development of the concept of human solidarity in Cameroon in particular. Historically, the first notion about human solidarity was developed by Emile Durkheim (1933). Emile Durkheim was a French Sociologist. He was the one who formally established the academic discipline of sociology and is principally cited as one of the architects of modern social science along with Karl Max (1818-1883), Max Weber (1864-1920) among others. Durkheim intellectual quest to find what holds people together in a society is what culminated to his notion of solidarity.

Conceptually, the origins of the concept of human solidarity date from the beginning of sociological theory. Human solidarity was later given particular emphasis by the likes of Tonnies (1855-1936) and Durkheim among other classical theorist.

Theoretically, Durkheim theory of social solidarity is relevant in this study. In this theory, Durkheim's primary interest is to find out what holds society together when it is made up of people with specialised roles and responsibilities.

Contextually, the search for human solidarity has been in the Cameroons government political agenda since independence. Several government policies have emphasis the notion of integration and Living together. The essence of these policies have been to promote solidarity among Cameroonians.

The concept of Human solidarity

Solidarity in the Thesaurus dictionary is defined as an agreement of feeling or action especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group. Solidarity is a word a means much more than some acts of sporadic generosity. It is to think and act in terms of community, of the priority of the life over the appropriation of good by a few. It is aimed at fighting against the structural causes of poverty, inequality, and lack of work, land and housing, the denial of social labour rights among others. Solidarity is defined as an awareness of shared interests and objectives that create a psychological sense of unity. According to the popular movement, solidarity is understood in its deepest sense as way of making history. Solidarity is also refers to the ties in a society that bind people together. According to Hechter (2001) solidarity is the binding of individuals into a cohesive collectivity on the basis of normative obligations- is an emergent attribute groups that facilitates collective action and social order.

The purpose of human solidarity is to confront the destructive effects of the empire of money, forced displacements, painful emigration, the traffic of persons, drugs, war, violence and all those realities that many of you suffer and that are called to transform.

Theory of Human solidarity

Emile Durkheim was the first person to who came up with the theory of human Solidarity. Mile Durkheim (1933) asserted that there are two types of social solidarity-how society holds together and what ties the individual to the society. These two forms of solidarity are mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity. According to Durkheim, Mechanical solidarity takes place where division

of Labour is relatively limited. This form of social solidarity in modern societies, with a highly developed division of labour, is called organic solidarity. Organic solidarity on the other hand is more complex with higher division of labour. Human solidarity is very important in every society. It fosters love, peace and development. Solidarity is identified in the Millennium Declaration as one of the fundamental values of international relations in the 21st century, where those who either suffer or benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most. However, human solidarity has been neglected over a long time in Cameroon. Though Cameroonians have been living together, this living together has not been without grievances. Lack of solidarity among Cameroonians has fractionalised Cameroon by politics, ethnicity, culture and religion. The ongoing Anglophone crisis is a case to support that there is lack of solidarity among Cameroonians.

Why is Human Solidarity Important

If Cameroonians must forged ahead as one people, there is a need to enhance and foster solidarity. For solidarity is the seeds that holds society, a people together, otherwise it falls apart. Solidarity is founded on mutual respect of each other's uniqueness, and a deep sense of appreciation of our common humanity-that we are individuals with intrinsic self-worth, and that we are sisters and brothers within one human family inhabiting the planet Earth our home and our heritage. Solidarity emphasises the interdependence between individuals in a society which allows individuals to feel that they can enhance the lives of others. It is a core principle of collective action and is founded on shared values and beliefs among different groups in society. The importance of human solidarity cannot be overemphasised. This is the reason why the United Nations General Assembly convinced that the promotion of the culture of solidarity and the spirit of sharing is important for combating poverty, proclaimed 20 of December of each year as the International Human Solidarity Day.

The Anglophone crisis as an illustration of the antagonism between the Anglophones and the Francophones

Cameroon is an independent nation. Cameroon is officially a bilingual country with English and French as the official languages. The Anglophone crisis is firmly rooted in the country's colonial past. Cameroon was originally a German colony. After World War 1 German Kamerun was split between France and Britain and placed as a trust territory under the League of Nations. This division was uneven 8:2 in France favour. This unequal partition sowed the seeds of what today is referred to as the Anglophone problem in Cameroon. At the time of independence in 1960/61 the British territory Southern Cameroons was offered a plebiscite to join either newly Nigeria or French speaking Cameroon. Southern Cameroonians voted to join la Republique du Cameroun, leading to the formation of the Federal Republic of Cameroon from 1 October 1961 as an indissoluble federal system composed of two equal parts. However, what followed was the gradual centralisation of power and unilateral dissolution of the Federal structures by the president. Later in May, 1972, president Ahidjo abolished the federal system and created a unitary state named the United Republic of Cameroon. Also in 1984, president Biya renamed the Country as La Republique du Cameroon, thereby reinstating the name adopted at independence on 1st January 1960, before reunification with the former British Southern Cameroons. Since then, the historical background has helped Cameroonians to live partially together for long. Cultural and educational differences of inequalities between the two inherited colonial cultures have developed and brought about the crisis. There have been differences between the English speaking Cameroon and the French speaking Cameroon in educational and judicial domains (Bouopda, 2018).

In 1984, the president issued the law to modify the constitution and change the name of the United Republic into the Republic of Cameroon. This move was opposed by the Anglophones because they

never agreed to this change because it manifested the Institutional obliteration of English speaking Cameroon (Awason, 2020). Other grievances of the English speaking Cameroonians, include the lack of equal representation in governmental positions, Unequal share of the National cake, lack of provision of social and basic amenities among others. Since then, there have been regular protests in the English –speaking areas, especially every year on October 1, the date of the unification. These and other decisions by the president has fostered a sense of social economic and political subordination among Anglophones, who have since called for a return to the federal constitution (Awason, 2020). It is against the backdrop of these grievances that Lawyers and teachers started a movement to obtain fair treatment for the Anglophones schools and courts that has progressively mutated into an armed conflict (Dionne, 2018). This situation escalated when on October 1, 2017, the separatists proclaimed the Independence of the Anglophone part of the country under the name of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia (Lyare and Essomba, 2017). According to the International Crisis Group (ICG 2020) the International Federation of Human Rights and United Nations International Children Emergency Fund, the conflict in the English-speaking area of Cameroon emanates from political abuses, dominance injustices, the failure to respect human rights and the colonial cultural and linguistic differences (Nsapu, 2017).

At the heart of violence, there are still gross human rights violations, intolerance, murder, Killings, Kinappings. All these are vital signs that there is no solidarity between the Anglophones and the Francophone's. Human solidarity is a huge missing in the socio-economic and political life of Cameroonians. However, in spite the continuous grievances of the Anglophones, there still exist some areas where human solidarity is manifested. These areas include, sports and especially in football. When it comes to sports, especially football, Cameroonians has often spoken as one man. The president of the Republic in most of his speeches has often said that Cameroon is one and indivisible in spite of its cultural and linguistic differences.

How to Build and Promote Human Solidarity in Cameroon

For a nation to develop and progress, it is important for the people to understand themselves, respect and share fundamental values that unite them. Solidarity will develop and grow among individuals who share fundamental values such as those enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of Cameroon in 1966 and those proclaimed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and those inculcated in ethnic groups. Challenges such as prejudice, stereotypes disrespect for one another culture have often resulted to lack of solidarity. This means that to promote solidarity, there should be tolerance and the respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of cultures and various forms of human expressions are very important in building and promoting human solidarity (UNESCO, 1995). Solidarity is the foundation of democracy and human rights. The aims of solidarity are to counter influences that lead to fear, aversion towards the exclusion of others. Solidarity recognises that others have the right to be who they are.

Solidarity is also challenged by intolerance. UNESCO (1995) asserts that education is the most effective means of preventing intolerance. There is a need to educate citizens who are appreciative of other cultures, respectful of human dignity and differences, and able to prevent or resolve conflicts amicably. Discrediting hateful propaganda towards the different other through education is an imperative. Major religious traditions call on their flock to treat others with the same respect and dignity they give themselves. The call to challenge intolerance is enshrined in various human rights instruments. United Nations, through international agreements and treaties, have affirmed their commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights such as the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion, and expressions. Article 1.2 of the "Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice" stipulates that "all individuals and groups have the right to be different. In order to build and promote solidarity, we must respect one

another. The lack of respect for differences, among other factors, has given rise to the Anglophone crisis.

Human solidarity can also be promoted by raising awareness, encourage discussion and listening to others stories to encourage empathy, build solidarity and challenge the dominant narrative about migration. Solidarity can also be promoted by making your voice heard. Learn about what advocacy organisations are doing by supporting human rights and take action by call representative and signing petitions. Solidarity can be promoted by the realisation and strengthening of the ties that bind us together in our common humanity: our human nature and our human condition. It can also be promoted through a deep sense of appreciation of our common humanity- that we are sisters and brothers within one human family inhabiting planet EARTH, our home our heritage. Solidarity can be fostered if we ceased to see others as less important. Solidarity can also be promoted by the teaching of critical peace education. According to Bajaj (2008) critical peace education delivers from an understanding of peace education as a critical analysis of society to develop peace, transformative agency, human rights and social justice. It was first sketched by Wulf (1974) and later by Freire's theory of attribution. And critical pedagogy by Zembylas (2008). It can be promoted by sharing our financial and other resources to make life worth living. After all what are we fighting for? You came with nothing, so you will leave with nothing. Solidarity fosters the spirit of living together and promote peace and social cohesion.

Solidarity is the bond that unites races, religious and ethnic groups together. Nobody is an Island. We need each other to developed and progressed. It is time we forget our differences and live as the Lion and the lamb. Delors (1992), said that "the World is our village: if one house catches fire, the roofs over our heads are immediately at risk. If anyone of us tries to start rebuilding, his efforts will purely be symbolic. Solidarity has to be the order of the day. He further said that "we need a global ethics to guide us in solving global issues, in strengthening our global interdependence and solidarity.

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