



# Cameroon: A Land of Hypocrisy

Kijem Joseph Yuh

## ABSTRACT

This article is an attempt to show that hypocrisy is omnipresent in Cameroon in various domains. It is very present in family life, inter-personal relationships, tribal/ethnic activities, socio-linguistic matters, political issues, trade unionism, professional matters, religious activities, women's relationships, satanic matters and other domains of life. It is growing by leaps and bounds. There is need to substantially reduce its impact on the society through a powerful anti-hypocrisy front composed of everyone who can contribute to the said reduction (the Cameroonian Government; parents and children; employers and employees; trade unionists; religious leaders and their followers; women; etc).

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In Cameroon, just like in many countries all over the world, hypocrisy is one of the major characteristics or aspects of human relationships, etc. It is perceivable (overtly and covertly) on a daily basis in the lives of children, adults, the elderly, etc. It is one of the traits of human nature, a nature which is downgraded by duplicity in its various forms. It is in this light that in family life, inter-personal relationships, tribal/ethnic activities, socio-linguistic matters, political issues, trade unionism, professional matters, religious activities, women's relationships, satanic matters and other domains of life in the Cameroonian society, it rears its ugly head.

In the Cameroon society, there is a lot of hypocrisy within **family circles**. In this connection:

- Husbands cheat on their wives and, at the same time, pretend that they love them. Wives act in a similar manner;

- Many wives who are maltreated by their husbands pretend to live happily in their homes and vice versa;
- Parents pretend to love their kids on an equal basis;
- Relatives of nuclear families pretend to love these families and vice versa;
- Etc.

Furthermore, each family in Cameroon hypocritically strives to present the best possible image of itself. It is in this light that it meticulously conceals its evil or atrocious deeds and clearly presents a positively spurious or fake picture of itself to the society or world. It skillfully shatters or discredits other families and pretentiously depicts itself as one of the best families in the world.

Many **inter-personal relationships** in the Cameroonian society are partially based on hypocritical

attitudes, attitudes which seriously undermine what President Paul Biya refers to as Cameroon's ultimate goal.<sup>1</sup> To this end, a person who is considered by another person as his/her best friend may be the source or origin of his/her downfall or demise.<sup>2</sup> The latter may skillfully pretend to be a trustworthy friend and thereby obstruct the progress or success of the former in many domains. At times, he/she may go as far as killing his/her friend very easily because of the genuine trust his/her friend has in him/her.

A lot of hypocrisy is perceivable in **tribal/ethnic activities** in Cameroon. When some Cameroonians talk in public about tribalism, one may naively think that this phenomenon does not exist in Cameroon. They deceitfully and hypocritically talk like anti-tribalism angels, messengers of anti-tribalism, etc. They misleadingly and hypocritically depict a Cameroon devoid of tribalism. In order to buttress their anti-tribal arguments, they always mention the omnipresence of inter-tribal marriages in Cameroon, the inter-tribal reactions in the political sphere, etc.

Unfortunately, tribalism is exceedingly present in Cameroon. It is very present in offices, playgrounds, schools, neighbourhoods, churches, mosques, hospitals, markets, media houses, families, etc. Many activities and dealings, in terms of public service recruitments and appointments, political party politics, economic matters, church politics, etc, are regrettably influenced, to a great extent, by tribal considerations.

The level of hypocrisy found in inter-tribal issues in Cameroon is similar to that obtainable in **socio-linguistic matters**. On a daily basis, the two main linguistic communities in the said country (the French-speaking and English-speaking communities) utter hypocritical statements which easily and erroneously enable someone to believe that all is well between these two communities. They strenuously and hypocritically argue that these communities have succeeded to surmount their differences in a variety of domains.

Their welfare arguments in favour of the said two communities are debunked by many clashes between these communities. They clash in schools, marriages, offices, shops, health institutions, cabs, churches, playgrounds, media houses, etc. Worse still, they are now clashing in a very devastating war in the two Anglophone Regions. They are hypocritically living

<sup>1</sup> Statement Made By President Paul Biya in a Toast During the Dinner in Honour of Mrs Christine Lagarde (IMF Managing Director/Yaounde, 7 January; 2016):

*Our ultimate goal is to achieve strong, lasting and inclusive growth which would generate the desired impact on the quality of life, leading to the attainment of the status of emergent economy by 2035.*

<sup>2</sup> This situation occurs in cases of jealousy, hatred, etc.

together in a weird type of union, a union which will not be successful having all sorts of deceit, a union whose deceitful and hypocritical character was indirectly shown by Dr John Ngu Foncha (former Vice-President of Cameroon, former Vice-President of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement, etc).<sup>3</sup>

**Political parties** in Cameroon display a lot of hypocrisy. They have very democratic constitutions and institutions meant to ensure democracy. However, they pretentiously preach democracy during political rallies. They affectedly explain their democratic intentions and nature in media houses. Their preachings, explanations, utterances, etc are a far cry from the reality noticed in their field activities, a far cry from the crying injustices or abuses embedded in their undemocratic practices.

Some of these practices are as follows:

- The undemocratic expulsion of members;
- The dictatorial attitudes of some party bigwigs;
- The use of fraudulent means during intra-party and extra-party elections;
- Unfair intra-party and inter-party destabilization activities;
- Lack of financial, moral and other forms of accountability;
- Etc.

Cameroon's **trade unions** function in a very hypocritical atmosphere, an atmosphere which was, and is still, bred by the re-modelling of trade unions in Cameroon after its independence.<sup>4</sup> Trade union leaders

<sup>33</sup> "Dr Foncha's 1994 Resignation from Tripartite Talks", *The Post Magazine*, Edition No. 0001, Buea, The Post Magazine, 2019, p.13

In this excerpt, Dr John Ngu Foncha brings to the fore the hypocritical attitude of Cameroon's French-speaking community in the following words:

*I can state here and now that the People of Southern Cameroons would never have voted in favour of unification if it had not been for the assurances that the resulting union would take the form of a federation.*

In this statement, Dr John Ngu Foncha is indirectly showing the fact that the French-speaking community of Cameroon duped its English-speaking counterpart by initially, bilaterally and hypocritically establishing a federal State with it and subsequently destroying it on a unilateral basis.

<sup>4</sup> Codesria, "Classical Social Movements", Available at: [codesria.org/IMG/pdf/Chapter\\_3.pdf](http://codesria.org/IMG/pdf/Chapter_3.pdf) Consulted on: 21/06/21

In this excerpt, it is being mentioned that after independence, many African countries set out to re-model trade unions so that they should serve the dominant parties,

are very vociferous when called upon to defend or uphold the rights of trade union members in various domains. They always threaten to go on strike with their members whereas most of them use their threats as a ploy to blackmail the government in order to receive personal bribes from it. They keep on deceiving their members that they are working in their interest whereas they are torpedoing all trade union moves to be successful and hypocritically working for their respective personal interests.

A good number of Cameroonians pretend a lot in their **various professions or professional set-ups**. Some of them pretend because they are jealous of their more successful colleagues and are yearning to occupy their posts. Furthermore some other pretentious workers claim to respect and love their bosses whereas they are the ones destroying them behind the scenes. This hypocritical situation is omnipresent and omnipotent in professional relationships in ministries, companies, churches, etc.

The behavioural patterns in **religious circles** in Cameroon are a glaring example of hypocrisy in the lives of Cameroonians. Although the religions in Cameroon have moral/spiritual models (such as St. Joseph) and preach virtue (they do so in sermons, deliverance sessions, media houses, schools, prisons, car parks, playgrounds, etc), this preaching exercise is not sufficiently put into practice since many Christians, Moslems and believers in other religions frequently behave hypocritically in the society.<sup>5</sup>

A good number of those persons who preach virtue in churches, mosques, temple, synagogues, etc are the same people who practice vice. They do so in terms of public service promotion and recruitment; the delivery of public service; the management of family affairs; the management of religious affairs; the handling of school issues; the manner in which people are treated; etc. Furthermore, in some paradoxical cases, the more prayerful a person is, the more harmful he/she becomes! In a nutshell, hypocrisy and religion are strange bedfellows in Cameroon, strange bedfellows indeed!

In Cameroon, **women** usually exhibit hypocritical attitudes. They pretend to be one in mind and heart, to love each other sincerely. They hypocritically claim to be each other's keeper, etc whereas their activities and attitudes constitute

stumbling blocks to their welfare, success or progress. Their hypocritical attitude is omnipresent, an omnipresence which lends more credence to, and is perceptible in, BUCREP's claim as to the road to the attainment of gender equality in Cameroon.<sup>6</sup>

It is on the strength of the foregoing that a good number of women pretend to support their fellow women who are involved in feminist activities. They provide just lip- service support or allegiance. Moreover, some women hypocritically advocate the appointment and promotion of female workers to top positions in public and private sectors. When these workers are appointed or promoted, the former overtly or covertly display a sense of jealousy vis-à-vis the appointees or the promoted.

A good number of Cameroonians pretentiously claim that they are not involved in **satanic or evil practices**. They openly and devotedly take part in moral and religious activities in their respective families, churches, offices, etc. They do their utmost to present a righteous picture of their respective characters.

Unfortunately, they are members of cults or secret organizations. They secretly, openly and wholeheartedly participate in the activities of these cults and organizations. They sacrifice blood, human lives, human organs, etc. They take vows of poverty, fidelity (to evil spirits, etc), secrecy, etc.

In conclusion, it could be said beyond reasonable doubt that hypocrisy (in its various forms or facets) occupies a prominent place in the Cameroonian society. As already seen, it is perceptible in family life, inter-personal relationships, tribal/ethnic activities, socio-linguistic matters, political issues, trade unionism, professional matters, religious activities, women's relationships, satanic matters and other domains of life. It is noticeable in schools, churches, hospitals, offices, markets, shops, bars, restaurants, streets, motor parks, airports, railway stations, playgrounds, seminars, conferences, workshops, etc. In order to considerably reduce it, there is need for all the stakeholders in the anti-hypocrisy domain (the Cameroonian Government, psychologists, sociologists, parents, politicians, workers, religious leaders, women, etc) to set up a solid front to fight against it wherever and whenever it is necessary.<sup>7</sup>

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regimes and State structures along the lines of the Soviet model of State organization.

Cameroonian leaders (former and current leaders) are among the said African leaders.

<sup>5</sup> Archdiocese of Bamenda, *Prayer to St. Joseph (Novena Prayers In Honour of St. Joseph)*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Bamenda, Copy Printing Technology (Archdiocese of Bamenda), 2003, p.49

In this prayer, some of the characteristics of St. Joseph (as a role model) are clearly mentioned. They are as follows: humility, greatness, justice, prudence, chastity, generosity, hard work, prayerfulness, etc.

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<sup>6</sup> BUCREP, "35th Edition of the International Women's Day (Promotion of Equality and Protection of Women's Rights by 2020/Assessing Cameroon's Progress 25 Years After the Beijing Conference)", Yaounde, BUCREP, 2019, p.5.

BUCREP (Central Bureau for Censuses and Population Studies) contends that Cameroon still has a long way to go as far as attaining gender equality is concerned.

<sup>7</sup> These stakeholders should be involved in frequent and judicious sessions aimed at combating hypocrisy in Cameroon.

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