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INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE ANGLOPHONE CRISIS IN CAMEROON
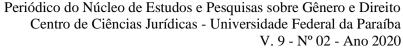
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Abstract: This article sheds particular light on the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon, focusing in particular on its internationalization. It exposes the highlights of the manifestation of insecurity in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon. This article finally proposes to explain the roles and intentions of international actors as they attempt to lay the foundations for/or increase their influence in Cameroon.
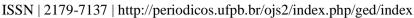
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Introduction

The crisis that Cameroon has been experiencing in recent years in its Anglophone part and which has been at its worst since 2018, has provided an intense vision of some essential mechanisms of the international community and thus a better understanding of its in-depth nature. The political tension provoked by the American position, in the name of the responsibility to protect, on the said crisis had as its main stake to rally a maximum of members of the Security Council. However, the debates did not solve the fundamental challenge of Russia and Chinathat are traditionally hostile to interventionism. This shows that in this "space of power"known asthe UN, states are now seeking consensus. As a result, the Government of Cameroon itself will have to take appropriate measures to maintain peace in the Anglophone areas. These international implications do not seem trivial, givenCameroon's strategic position and the hegemonic ambitions that characterize foreign powers.This raises the question of why the Anglophone crisis arouses so much interest on the part of the international community. Is there not a hidden agenda behind Cameroon's condemnation and solidarity with it in managing the crisis?

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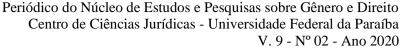
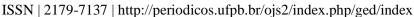We will try to shed light on these concerns.

Literature Review

One of the steps of the literature review can be considered as "*grasping the state of knowledge about a subject in a given cognitive space (political science, history, psychology, sociology, social work, etc.). Of course, we must know the theoretical foundations of the problems that have already been researched and those that remain to be solved*" (Olivier et al., 2005:29). The involvement of the international community in the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon is justified by the weakness of military capabilities, but also by the procrastination of foreign powers as to the undeniable economic benefits offered by this country.

There is no proper scientific work on the question of international involvement in the Anglophone crisis. However, many scientific researches of a general nature on foreign interventions in conflicts in Africa exist as well as those devoted to the Anglophone crisis itself. We will present them briefly. With these implications in the conflicts in Africa, Porteous Jacques Christophe considered that the former colonial powers sought, by indirect means, to preserve their political and economic interests – being able to intervene themselves or to interfere, on many occasions, when they considered them endangered (Porteous, 2003). And for Philippe Hugon, oil seems to be the first stake of the war for this continent which represents 8% of the oil reserves and constitutes a major stake of diversification of the supplies and control over the reserves on the part of the foreign oil companies (Hugon, 2003).

Never has the Cameroonian state seen its status in the international system so threatened by the international community and mainly by the United States. This is evidenced by the fact that even concepts of territory, frontier and sovereignty, which may be considered as fundamental to define the notion of State (Beja, 2013:82), are called into question. It is in this perspective that Vincent Ntuda Ebodé states that *"in the new global post-bloc strategic context, endless conflicts are perceived conflicts from their mafia, coercive, predatory angle in a wars system dominated by rarely conventional wars. wars with a*
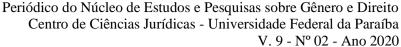
recurrence of civil wars with a low degree of institutionalization of the armed forces and where the distinction between belligerents and civilians is difficult if not impossible to make; that is, conflicts that are often not reduced to military operations" (Ntuda Ebodé, 2010:189).
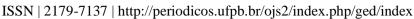
It is also important to mention the question of the status of studies and positions on the "Anglophone problem" or the "Anglophone crisis". Joseph Nfi Lon is the first Cameroonian to announce the precursors of the "Anglophone problem"(Nfi, 2014) now a terrorist event. His work is followed by Pierre Kamé Bouopda, who confirms that this institutional problem is at the heart of the political crisis that has repeatedly affected the NOSO-Cameroon for decades, and which has degenerated into an armed conflict since the end of 2017(Bouopda, 2017:11). Augustin Emmanuel Ebongue and Angeline Djoum Nkwescheu examine in their turn linguistic conflicts under the lens of the sociolinguistic theory of linguistic insecurity in a context of official French/English bilingualism, in the anglophone and francophone communities (Ebongue and Djoum Nkwescheu, 2018). Sosthène Nga Efouba analyzes political, economic and social situations by highlighting the influence of the United Kingdom under-tutelage of the United Nations after the First World War (Nga Efouba, 2018). This reminder of historical events therefore involves the reader to a process of federalization and reunification in which the depth of English culture seems to be not sufficiently highlighted.This legacy is not only formal as one might think, but fundamentally structures the men and women of this part of Cameroon, to the point of suggesting to them a vision of the country and a vision of the world that is not always the one we could wait for a francophone, for example. The author captures the news of the so-called Anglophone crisis in order to give politicians, different actors and mediators necessary historical elements and to take into account in the analysis of conflicting concerns.

If a new partition of the country is not possible, the reading of his book enables us to understand the socio-political roots of the crisis and to envisage unity with more efficiency.

Speaking of these crises, Modeste Mba Talla recognizes that

Cameroon has been shaken recently by many internal crises. According to him, in order to maintain power, the ruling regime weakens and fragments social and political forces, while exploiting anti-terror laws(Mba Talla, 2018).
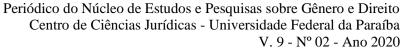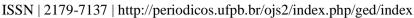
Methodology

There is ample existing literature on the Anglophone crisis in general and more specifically on the international involvement in conflicts in Africa, which will be the first support for this research. In addition to the scientific materials on the Anglophone crisis (which has shown a constant interest in this subject, but has never treated it independently), a great deal of the documentary resources used in this research will be taken from journal articles and specialized presses in the analysis of the international implications on the anglophone crisis. Our collection of documentary sources will follow the traditional methods of searching documentary and digital data.

However, several methodological challenges confront any research dealing with conflicts in general and interference in particular. These challenges revolve around the difficulty of obtaining first-hand data. It is obvious that in a context of conflict such as the one prevailing in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon, any attempt at research is limited by various factors such as : the insecurity characteristic of the research community, which makes any field mission impossible; the clandestinity of the actors which excludes any possibility of interviewing them, even if a field mission would have been carried out; the fear of reprisals that discourages local witnesses from speaking openly about the conflict, interests, etc. All of which limit the search to the exploitation of secondary data.

Our research is focused on the international implications in the Anglophone crisis;therefore, the action, the behavior of foreign powers that takes into account the geographical location of Cameroon and the resources at their disposal, inevitably lead us to convene the geopolitical approach in order to attempt to understand the sense, the meanings, the purpose of the decisions taken and the act made by the main foreign decision-makers. Geopolitics is a discipline whose object is to study the relations that exist between the conduct

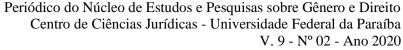of the foreign policy of a State and the geographical context in which it is exercised(Boniface, 1995:115).

Thus, using tools and grids of reading, fed by the intersecting methodologies of geopolitics, geostrategy, sociology and history, it will be necessary to analyze the logic of international implications in the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon. To achieve the most objective possible understanding of the said implications, the positions of the actors, mainly the United States, Russia and China, but also their stakes should be taken into consideration. In this intra-state war, we note the rise of a certain cooperative hegemony and the balance of powers leading to a division of the international community in this crisis.
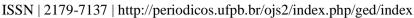
In addition, the strategic analysis is "the study of the strategy of the actors within the organizations"(Grawitz, 2001:156). According to the approaches, the notion of an actor defining himself as an individual or a group of individuals capable of strategic action – or the concept of strategy (Crozier and Friedberg, 1977) will be central to this analysis. However, making a break between the actor and his strategy is a delicate intellectual exercise that it does not seem useful here to submit. The extreme imbrication of actor/strategy justifies that reference is made simultaneously to both notions even if a strong emphasis on the concept of strategycan be observed. In analyzing the international implications in the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon, the actor is a being capable of strategic action and whose action has tangible repercussions on a given political process. The concept covers two dimensions: "one concerning the contribution of the actor to the political process and the other relating to the impact or the influence of this contribution on the result"(Grossman,2004:23).

Results

This research allowed us to explore the geopolitical and strategic roots of positions of the foreign powers that are the United States, Russia and China on the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon. After choosing to place research at the level of the search for power and influence, we used the strategic approach to understand the

dynamics of foreign implications in the Anglophone crisis. It is difficult to pinpoint precisely those international actors who nevertheless pursue well-articulated objectives, aimed in part at feeding their international ascension by posing themselves as responsible and conciliatory powers and competing with the American superpower who wishes to maintain itself by preserving its status.

The deadly push of the secessionist terrorists in the English-speaking areas of NOSO is part of the deteriorating dynamics of Cameroon's security situation. For nearly three yearsthis part of the country has been facing the rooting and development of certain illicit activities, as well as forms of violence of which terrorism constitutes one of the variants. In this context, the fight against the continuing secessionist terrorist organization poses a serious threat to the peace and stability of Cameroon and remains one of the priorities of the Government and the international community. The durability of such a conflict constitutes the paradigmatic axis of the analysis of the role of the foreign powers on this one.

Given the above, it is clear that the common position of China and Russia on the Anglophone crisis is to challenge the dominant power that is the United States. Such an alliance consists in mutually increasing the resources needed to enhance their power and denying the dominant power in the United States access to Cameroon, rich in resources and strategically interesting. The desire to challenge the status quo is their main motivation. However, balancing is more than anything easy, since it implies significant investment, trust in the other, common interests and a common strategy.

New challenges faced by the international community today since the beginning of the 21st century are not sparing Cameroon (Zeibote et al., 2019). This country has become one of the theatersfor the globalization of strategic challenges, having found itself in the center of the Anglophone crisis that threatens peace and stability. This is what makes Angela Meyer say, speaking of the states of Central Africa, that their "stability is especially threatened by the fact that these states are not sufficiently capable of guaranteeing the security of their populations. This is among other things to relate to the new, broader concept of security. Given the extent of

certain challenges or their transnational nature, the state presents an actor that is not appropriate to meet all the security needs of its citizens"(Meyer, 2006:2).
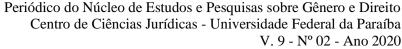
Discussion

All previous studies on the Anglophone crisis and international interference in the conflicts in Africa have some convergences with ours. But, as far as we are concerned, our research differs from previous work by the fact that we seek to demonstrate the motivations of foreign powers in the Anglophone crisis. We seek to decrypt the stakes and the game of these actors.
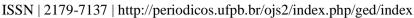
Insecurity in the anglophone regions

The Anglophone crisis in the northwestern and southwestern parts of the country, which were sub-mandates of the League of Nations (SDN) from 1922 (the date of signing the Treaty of Versailles) and sub-tutelage of the UN from 1945, and were administered by Great Britain until in 1961, is the last factor in Cameroon's history of insecurity. This crisis, which began in October 2016, has turned into a conflict between security forces and increasingly well-armed separatists fighting on behalf

of the so-called "marginalized"Anglophone minority. An idea refuted by President Paul Biya, when he states that *"to explain this crisis, it has often been evoked a feeling of marginalization experienced by the populations of North West and South West. I would like to repeat to our countrymen in these regions, but also to those of the eight other regions of Cameroon, that marginalization, exclusion or stigmatization have never inspired the action of the various governments that I have formed since my accession to the supreme magistracy of our country"*(Biya, 2019). The instability and conflict engendered in these regions are not only influenced by specific social and political changes, but they themselves also illustrate a tendency to change the course of events in unpredictable ways.

The Anglophone crisis results from an internal decomposition of Cameroon with propagation effects. Since summer 2018, this conflict has overflowed Francophone regions and the risk of communitarization has become high. Twenty attacks and fires took place in the French-speaking regions of the West (Menoua, Bamboutos and Noun

areas) and the Littoral (Mbanga, Njombe Penja and Mpenda Mboko areas), killing about fifteen people and causing considerable material damage(International Crisis Group, 2019).After three years of clashes, which resulted in 1,850 deaths, 530,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and tens of thousands of refugees, power and separatists seem to be in irreconcilable positions. With regard to refugees and IDPs, their influx creates resource pressures for both neighboring Nigeria and western Cameroon, causing near-term shortages. The management of these populations is generally problematic for both states. In addition to human displacement, there are the destabilizing effects of the spread of war itself,a situation that English-speaking secessionists take advantage of to perpetrate their terrorist acts. *"The abuses of armed groups have pushed thousands of our compatriots to seek refuge in other parts of the country, and even, for some, in neighboring countries where they are reduced to precariousness"*(Biya, 2019). The number of refugees and deaths produced by this crisis only reflects the terrorist character of the movements that trigger
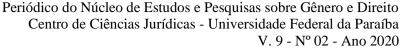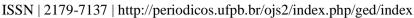
them. The separatists live in the utopia of upcoming independence by the creation of a Republic of Ambazonia causingmistrust of the Cameroonian authorities and the state apparatus. The government, meanwhile, persists and signs on the uniqueness and indivisibility of Cameroon, in accordance with the Constitution,what makes Paul Biya say that "Cameroon will remain one and indivisible" country (Biya, 2019).

In reality, the ambiguity of the relations between the Cameroonian diaspora and the state apparatus, enamelled of mistrust and resistance hidesbehind this Anglophone crisis. The very difficult living conditions or the personal and collective ambitions often force the Cameroonian populations to leave their country of origin for other "greener pastures" or other real or imagined eldorado. This explains the strategy of supporting English-speaking secessionists through financial support for the perpetration of terrorist acts by the population. In a context of globalization where transnational and international migration is considered as geopolitical and geoeconomic mobility, the contribution of Cameroonians in the diaspora has, for some time, taken on a
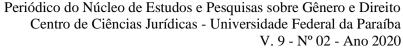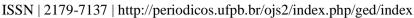
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very particular meaning for Cameroon in terms of its destabilization, supported by some governments in their host countries (Škuflić et al., 2018; Lincényi, 2017). Paul Biya (2019) confirms this when he states that radical movements, mainly inspired from abroad, have recovered and misrepresented corporatist claims: *"they thus hatched a secessionist project with the aim of partitioning our country. To this end, they have formed and financed armed groups that have caused great damage to the populations of the North-West and South-West regions"*. Moreover, the prodigious evolution of science and the development of new information and communication technologies (NICT) over the last twenty years have allowed the Cameroonian diaspora to play the role of demonization and destruction of their country, rather than an important role in the development and strengthening of scientific and technological capacities Cameroon. Regarding the Anglophone crisis, *"social networks have unfortunately favored the emergence of self-proclaimed leaders, extremists of all kinds trying to establish their notoriety through insults, threats, calls for hatred, violence and murder"* (Biya, 2019).

Nevertheless, being aware that the Cameroonian Diaspora can play a crucial role in the management and appeasement of the Anglophone crisis, as well as in the reconstruction of conflict-ridden regions with the strong commitment of President Biya to promote and strengthen the reflection on its commitment in several thematic fields related to development in order to value their role and their actions, the government remains opened to their contributions. Accordingly Paul Biya(2019) says, "the time has come to mobilize all the positive and constructive forces of our country, both inside and in the diaspora, for this desire to become a reality".

The outbreak of the Anglophone crisis has had enormous socio-political and economic consequences for Cameroon such as: a break in cross-border trade with Nigeria, an influx of refugees, increased political instability and the instigation of the armed conflict, the abandonment of rubber plantations, palm oil, banana plantation from the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) and Pamol, the shutdown of Telcar Cocoa (a private company, the leader in the cocoa
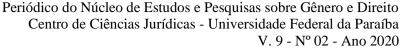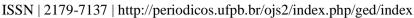
market in Cameroon), fishery resources and hydrocarbons. The economic and security situation is contrasted in the two English-speaking regions. We note the rise of military companies that show a new kind of contractual subcontractors in this war zone. New actors have proliferated: terrorist networks, mafias and others such as the "Ambazonia Defense Forces (ADF)" created in 2017 and its dismemberments that are "Tigers of Ambazonia", "Vipers", "Ambazonia Restoration Army (Ara)", "Ambaland Forces", and the "Southern Cameroons Defense Forces" (Socadef). These latter are terrorists in the Anglophone regions and Paul Biya(2019) takes the international community to witness in these terms: *"the whole world has witnessed the atrocities committed by these armed groups: mutilations, beheadings, assassinations of elements of the Defense and Security Forces, administrative authorities and defenseless civilians, destruction of infrastructure and public buildings, burning of schools, hospitals, etc.".*

In view of the foregoing, it is not an exaggeration for the Cameroonian Government to take measures aimed at the militarization of the Anglophone regions. While *"armed violence destroys lives and livelihoods, fuels insecurity, fear and terror, and has a profoundly negative impact on human development",*(The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, 2006)it is true that Armed violence is always linked to internal political issues. It is for the Cameroonian army to preserve the integrity of the territory and strengthen an established power. In a broader perspective, the level of violence in the Anglophone crisis – which is not limited to crime – and the feeling of insecurity depend largely on the behavior and performance of the Cameroonian Defense and Security Forces (CDSF). In this area, the record is mixed with allegations of human rights violations by the CDSF by non-governmental organizations such as International Crisis Group, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Nevertheless, it is clear that a majority of the population of the two English-speaking regions displays their confidence in the state to ensure their protection. In this regard, Paul Biya (2019) reassured that *"the Defense and Security Forces have taken drastic measures, often risking their lives, to*
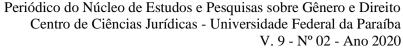
ensure their duty to protect citizens and their property. At present, these measures are beginning to bear fruit with the improvement of security and the gradual recovery of economic activities in both regions".
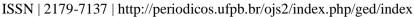
It is also important to note how the actors of chaos have given the Anglophone crisis an international face through the active participation of foreign powers and non-governmental organizations. To assert the legitimacy of their claims, Ambazonian leaders rely on their diaspora and powerful international lobbies. Another decisive dimension is the convening of the "Arria-Formula" meeting, at the initiative of the United States of America, on the humanitarian situation in Cameroon, held on May 2019 at the United Nations Headquarters. During the debate, Cameroon found itself in a position where the only veto powers it could rely on were mainly France, China and Russia. The Arria-Formula meetings are a relatively recent practice of the members of the Security Council. Like the plenary consultations of the Council, they are not provided for in the Charter of the United Nations or in the Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Council. However, Article 30 of the Charter makes the Council the master of its procedure and gives it full latitude to establish its practice. Arria Formula Meetings are confidential and very informal meetings that allow Council members to have, in camera and in a flexible manner, open discussions with persons whose Board member (s) who invited them and who are in charge of organizing and animating the meeting consider that the Council would be interested in hearing them or to whom they wish to convey a message. They give the members of the Security Council concerned the opportunity to have direct exchanges with representatives of governments and international organizations – often at the request of the latter – as well as with non-State parties, on issues that affect their concern and which are the responsibility of the Security Council.

The internationalization of the anglophone crisis

It seems that it is the incapacity of the Cameroonian army to contain the Anglophone crisis and to protect the population and the goods, which, in fact, force the international community and
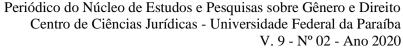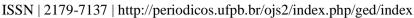
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mainly the United States to take a particular interest in it. Indeed, American diplomacy expresses its concern over the conflict between secessionist groups and the Cameroonian authorities in these Anglophone regions. Tibor Nagy, the US assistant secretary for African Affairs, reiterated his concern for "the civil war that is taking place in the facts" (Bensimon, 2019) in the western parts of Cameroon, *"where, fundamentally, Anglophones are fighting for their rights and where, unfortunately, the government did not respond in a way that soothes the fears of Cameroonians"* (Bensimon, 2019). At the request of the United States, therefore, the separatist conflict in the two western regions of the country must be addressed at the United Nations. It is true that previously, the European Parliament has addressed the issue by *deploring"the unwillingness of both parties to the conflict to engage in peace talks; urges the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States to work to convince Cameroon to organize such talks; considers that, in the absence of progress at this level, the crisis in Cameroon should be brought to the* *attention of the United Nations Security Council"* (Foute, 2019).

The detailed statements from the meeting, in the spirit of conflict prevention and in the presence of the Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council and the UN Deputy Secretary General in charge of Humanitarian Aid, made it possible to identify divergent positions of the international community on the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon. The United States had hoped to garner support – in the form of a declaration – to encourage foreign intervention in Cameroon, in the name of the responsibility to protect. However, the meeting ended with an overview of the deep divisions that drive the international community on the response to the Anglophone crisis that has shaken Cameroon since 2016. Russia, Equatorial Guinea and China tried to prevent the holding of the meeting called for by the United States and not included in the agenda of the Council, arguing that the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon is not a threat to peace and security in the world. China made an appeal to respect the sovereignty of Cameroon by noninterference in its internal affairs. It
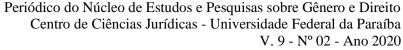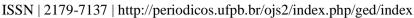
claimed of the readiness to support the Cameroonian government in resolving this conflict. Russia, for its part, presented the multiple fronts on which Cameroon is engaged in connection with the humanitarian situation (the Sahel, Gulf of Guinea, refugees, etc.), and invited the international community not to exceed the limits in order to enable Cameroonians to solve their problems by establishing a national dialogue with the support of the African Union. It should be emphasised that in 1945 the United Nations Charter had to simultaneously respect State sovereignty and allow military intervention by the international community to prevent attacks on world peace and even humanitarian crises. With regard to Equatorial Guinea, it condemned the politicized approach and the political use of the Anglophone crisis by the international community, while commending the efforts of the Cameroonian Government for peace and national reconciliation.

In the same perspective, it is in this complex context of the Anglophone crisis that some NGOs build their interventions to respond to the plight of the populations of the English-speaking regions. The strategies of these NGOs are to better adapt to the recurrence and the complexity of this humanitarian crisis. The NGO Reach Out-Cameroon presented the situation prevailing in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon and mainly the violence against women, without putting an end to the efforts made by the English-speaking women in the context of the resolution of the crisis. As for the NGO Caritas Bamenda, it reported the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon by calling for help in this direction.

In the same vein, and with regard to other members of the Security Council, such as the Dominican Republic, it spoke of enormous material and human damage that mainly affects young people (unwanted pregnancies) and called for an intensification of the dialogue between stakeholders. Belgium is concerned by the ramification of the Anglophone crisis, both at the national and international level and has called for urgent and thorough investigation with punishment of possible perpetrators. In addition, it recommended inclusive and committed dialogue and welcomed the recent visit of the Cameroonian Prime Minister to the English-speaking
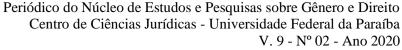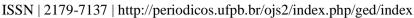
regions, which is an important sign. It expressed its willingness to share experience in Cameroon with regard to decentralization and the promotion of bilingualism. As for Germany, it said that the situation is extremely serious in the English-speaking regions and that it is urgent to establish responsibilities and make every effort to ensure that the humanitarian disaster ceases in those regions. The United Kingdom recalled the historical links that binds it in Cameroon and praised the generosity of the latter in terms of hosting refugees from the sub-region. For The United Kingdom, it is urgent to talk about the social-political crisis that underlies this humanitarian crisis, launch a credible dialogue between the parties to the conflict and finally implement decentralization. Kuwait said the humanitarian situation in Cameroon is extremely difficult because more than 3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. There is an urgent need for preventive diplomacy and dialogue to ensure respect for human rights and humanitarian law. It called on the Government of Cameroon to work with international organizations and the international community to put an end to this crisis. Also, it asked the UN to play a central role in the humanitarian aid 2019, relying on the arrangements made by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to help Cameroon to get out of this situation. Indonesia spoke of the need for cooperation with the authorities in the resolution of this crisis and questioned the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations in this regard. Poland referred to the complexity of the humanitarian situation in Cameroon in its multiple facets and condemned extrajudicial executions, restrictions on movement and incitement to interethnic hatred. It called on the parties on the ground to open dialogue and strict respect for human rights and humanitarian law. France is also very concerned about the multiple security fronts that Cameroon is engaged in and has called for the protection of civilians from violence and that impartial investigations are conducted to establish accountability in national courts. Finally, the European Union recommended a dialogue worthy of the name and proposed the need to bring a regional and international response to find a political solution in the long term.
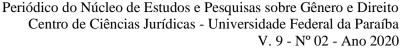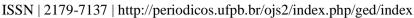
In Cameroon, there is a tension between the will of the United States to intervene in the Anglophone crisis and the need to have this problem solved by the Cameroonians themselves. Indeed, the credibility and legitimacy of the Cameroonian institutions are proportional to their ability to distance themselves, to empower the United States, so as not to be perceived by the Cameroonian population as the auxiliary of the US intervene, but as the result of an intra-Cameroon political game. This is why the Ambassador,Permanent Representative of Cameroon to the United Nations, H.E. Tommo Monthe said that this meeting under the Arria formula did not meet the accession of Cameroon. And that the latter *"is standing, stubborn as the truth, aiming for the emergence in 2035, a country that is not in paradise, but not in hell either, but on the earth of men patiently and methodically seeking its way to endogenous development, in this pivotal period where the realities and survivals of the twentieth century still overlap with those of the twenty-first century affirming itself; in a context where rivalries of power, interest and ideology are increasing in various parts of the world; in an Africa which is projected by 2063 as a prosperous, free, united, peaceful continent and a major player in international relations"*(Arria, 2019).

Emergency economic measures, president Biya's political reforms, the Cameroonian authorities' call for a dialogue and repression have still failed to bring calm in the English-speaking regions. The Anglophone crisis has become internationalized and the aid received by secessionists from the petro-monarchies of the Gulf of Guinea contributesboth to the militarization of the conflict and its continuation. The support given to the Biya regime by France, Russia and China allows it to last and condemn without concern any foreign intervention. Already, in December 2018, when Cameroon was mentioned during the presentation of the report from of the Secretary-General on Central Africa, the Russian diplomacy had expressed its views, being very close to Beijing and African countries: *"It is important not to cross the border between prevention and intervention in the internal affairs of States. All indications are that a number of our colleagues are very close to this. For the moment, we have every reason to believe*

that Cameroon is able to solve this thorny problem alone. We are willing to help, but only if our partners in Cameroon deem it necessary" (Bensimon, 2019). And to better reinforce this position, Dominique Bilde, French Member of the European Parliament, stated on her twitter page of April 18, 2019 "No to the interference in the affairs of Cameroon, who bravely fights Islamism!" She goes on to say, *"in the fight against terrorism, Cameroon has carried it beyond its own borders. In addition, despite a difficult domestic situation, it has long been home to thousands of Nigerian refugees fleeing Islamist barbarism. These are the feats of arms of the Cameroonian, light years away from the vitriolic portrait that some believe good to brush"* (Foute, 2019).
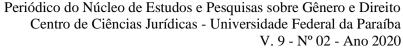
Cameroon is therefore protected in the UN Security Council by the triple veto: French, Russian and Chinese. However, the Biya regime does not manage to overcome the Anglophone secessionist terrorism: a low-intensity conflict settles over time with its procession of bloody atrocities on both sides, characteristic of a real war. By default, the international community is often obliged to entrust the restoration of
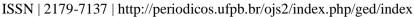
order to states that want it because, precisely, they have strategic interests in the troubled regions.

American, russian and chinese interventions for strategic mobiles?

This reflection is based on a geostrategic framework; geostrategy as a strategy of space makes it possible to highlight the deployment of competing forces in a space in search of interests. In the wake of the search for solutions to the Anglophone crisis, the Cameroonian territory used to serve as fertile ground for the realization of geostrategic projects of foreign powers. Thanks to its important geographical position in the Gulf of Guinea and in the Central African Economic and Monetary Community sub-region, Cameroon is attracting foreign powers. The objective here is to show that their involvement in the Anglophone crisis hides veiled interests, fueled by their unbridled race to energy resources.

Cameroon's Anglophone regions abound with oil deposits likeLimbe and Bakassioil (Cossé, 2006), and the Gulf of Guinea, of which Cameroon is the main gateway, is a hot spot in the global oil geography
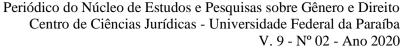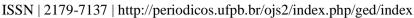
(Rosellini, 2005).This is what makes Dominique Bilde say, with regard to the Anglophone crisis, "the dissensions between Anglophones and Francophones are less the result of deep antagonisms than of well understood economic interests" (Foute, 2019). Clearly, the latter states that "the national hydrocarbon reserves lying off the Anglophone crisis" are the source of this unrest observed by foreign powers. Without ignoring the other powers, like France, which is traditionally present on Cameroonian territory and provides part of the maintenance of security and fight against terrorism that gangrene certain regions, it is important to take into interest the American, Russian and Chinese positions that seem proactive, pragmatic and focused on the Anglophone crisis. To believe realistic arguments that are almost unanimous on the fact that states are constantly in a frantic race of their vital interests, the commitment of the United States, Russia and China on the Anglophone crisis is a good illustration of fundamental axis linking space and power, the power expressed in the space policies implemented by these states. Space is like a palette where the degrees of state power can be expressed. For Samuel Huntington"*the power of a state is normally evaluated by measuring the resources available to it compared to those possessed by other states that it tries to 'influence'*"(Huntington, 2000 :111).

However, the world governed by the concept of the "security dilemma", which means that regardless of how the United States behaves on the Anglophone crisis, there is still a tendency to curb or counter its superpower. If the United States has been in a position similar to that of Great Britain since the end of the Cold War after the Battle of Waterloo: a predominant position; other powers such as Russia and China feel threatened by the hegemonic power that this country represents. The United States will see in a certain future their power to be first caught, then matched and finally perhaps outdated(Smout et al., 2003:94). In order to rebalance the system, the emerging powers – mainly Russia and China – are in fact more and more tempted to find themselves in a position to be at odds with the United States. Their goal is to create a multipolar world that would
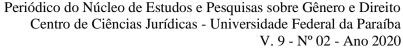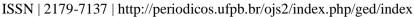
weaken American power at the same time.

As a nation that is a close friend of the United States, Cameroon has always accommodated the American imperative of promoting democracy through the strengthening of its political stability. At the end of President Paul Biya's visit to the United States in March 2003, the then head of the State Department announced, *"Cameroon is a place of stability in that part of Africa and we want to do everything we can strengthen the government and strengthen our relationship with Cameroon"* (Powell, 2003). This is to say that the United States has committed itself if not to strengthen, at least to maintain the political stability of Cameroon. The rapprochement vis-à-vis Cameroon seems to testify to their will to protect their national interest in order to nourish "a strategy of sharing the regional influence with this country"(Chouala, 2005). The American petrostrategies in the Anglophone regions is primarily a maneuver aimed at the United States; we can say that it does not benefit Cameroon any less. Not that the latter profit passively, because it is still free to refuse the hand of the United States, but more because it makes rational acts of a nature to achieve ends of national interests. This is a case of interdependence commensurate with the effects of military cooperation between Cameroon and the United States. The reversal of the situation inherent in the Anglophone crisis arose first from a feeling of Anglo-Saxon cultural solidarity and then from the control of energy resources. The tensions in these areas date back to the colonial era when the present republic of Cameroon emerged from the combination of the former British colony with the great French colony. Anglophone regions say they are "marginalized" politically and economically in a country dominated by Francophones. It is therefore understandable why the United States and its allies in the "Anglo-Saxon imperialism" (Canada, but also Nigeria and South Africa), constitute a geopolitical reality more than ever of actuality and tightened indeed the sponsors of secessionist lobbies known as "Ambazonians". "Diaspora groups in the American suburbs (Washington) support a dissident Cameroonian (separatist) nation" (Michel, 2017). The turn of the Anglophone crisis in the
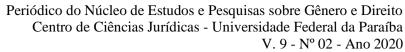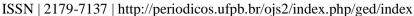
international community illustrates that the United States has an impressive capacity for projection and a powerful apparatus of propaganda (Richardot, 2003). They seem to encourage secessionists in their logic and criticize the security measures taken by the Cameroonian government. In this military situation, the United States Embassy in Cameroon urged the Cameroonian police and security forces to exercise restraint. *"Reprisals against these provocations would endanger the civilian population and only feed a cycle of violence. The violence must stop. Now more than ever, we call on both parties to engage in an expanded dialogue without preconditions"* (Mbodiam, 2019). President Biya persists in restoring the order:*"on the other hand, those who persist in committing criminal acts and violating the laws of the Republic will face our Defense and Security Forces and will suffer all the rigor of these same laws. The same is true of hate and violence promoters who, comfortably and with impunity in foreign countries, continue to incite murder and destruction. Let them know that they will sooner or later be accountable to Justice"* (Biya, 2019).

Given that Cameroon is a key geo-economic and geopolitical issue for many state actors, that is why it isstrengtheningitsrelations with emerging powers such as Russia. The strengthening of relations between the two countries is therefore part of a tradition based primarily on historical legitimacy, orifinating from Russia's involvement in the decolonization struggles of several African countries, then on the promotion of the principles of non-democracy, interference and neutrality as the foundation of partnership with Africa. Igor Ivanov, then Russian Foreign Minister, pointed out in 2001:*"our country has played a leading role in the decolonization of Africa and has helped several countries in their struggles for independence. African leaders today remember this very well"* (Keir, 2013). Nearly two decades later, in March 2018, as part of an interview on the sidelines of his African tour, Sergei Lavrov said: "Russia actively contributed to the independence of African countries and the development and strengthening of their states" (MID.RU, 2018). Against a backdrop of multipolarization of international relations and exacerbated
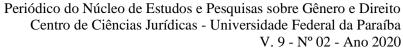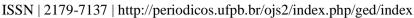
realpolitik, Africa is once again a theater of influence games as in the Cold War era (De Martin de Viviés, 2019). Russia exercises real power in the African continent, through military, energy and commercial partnerships, and asserts its influence in the face of crises such as the so-called Anglophone crisis in Cameroon (Rezk et al., 2019). In this country, it focuses more on security and law enforcement. The conclusion of military agreements and the sending of military advisers, instructors of the troops and the formation of the Cameroonian defense and security forces materialize its presence. Russia does not forget its supply of raw materials at low cost. Its goal was to create a multipolar world that would weaken American power at the same time, which, according to many researchers, is therefore a "strategic interlude", soon exceeded. Russia claims no doubt to legitimize its share in the paternity of the new order. There is therefore a real desire to rebalance the international system (Skidmore, 2005).

While it is true that China's African policy is "part of a broader strategy of circumventing Western powers or assimilated"(Niquet-Cabestan, 2006), it is none the less true that it invites itself to the concert of the nations in Cameroon and mainly on the Anglophone crisis to take advantage of subsoil rich in raw materials and ores (diamond, bauxite, gold, lithium,copper...).Hence, it promotes the rapid development of Cameroonian territories, by the construction of bridges, highways and railways facilitating the transportation of wealth collected. China is not afraid to fight US superpower; that is why Deng Xiaoping so strongly expressed to Henry Kissinger: "China fears nothing under heaven or on earth" (Murawiec, 2002:103). It therefore seeks to increase its diplomatic offensive in Cameroon. It pursues a policy of peaceful development and harmonious society. This is why Tanguy Struye De Swielandeconsidered the development of soft power by China as a gentle way to defend the national interest (De Swielande, 2006). Chinese actions in Cameroon thus contribute to shaping a favorable environment for achieving its objectives.

Conclusions

In short, the Anglophone crisis is part of the wake of the increasingly polarized world, with escalating crises and conflicts hampering economic growth and creating lasting humanitarian problems for the population of certain regions and, on the other hand, regions that have a lasting peace. This is why international involvement in the conflict is crucial. This seemed to justify the decision of the United Nations Security Council to hold an informal meeting on Cameroon on May 2019, to stimulate international efforts on the human rights crisis affecting the English-speaking regions of the country.

However, it is true that the intervention of the international community in this so-called Anglophone crisis Cameroon has been going through since 2016 seems to be largely linked to the geopolitical designs of the Powers, aimingat consolidating an area of political and economic influence. This ambition intended to establish a form of ideological balance in a "miniature Africa"perceived as being an area under the imperialist influence of the powers such as the United States, Great Britain and France.

In view of the current situation that persists, the international communityjust wants to facilitate the end of the crisis, but theycannot solve this situation without the will of Cameroonians.That is why after a long way President Biya announced the opening of a major national dialogue during his message to the nation.

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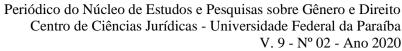
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