

PERSISTENCE OF IDENTITY CONFLICT BETWEEN "TWA AND LUBA" IN KABALO TERRITORY: INEFFECTIVENESS OF RESOLUTION STRUCTURES AND MECHANISMS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine from a methodological perspective the factors of ineffective conflict resolution structures (local authorities, civil society, local conflict resolution councils, United Nations agencies and NGOs) and the mechanisms necessary to promote peaceful coexistence between the Twa and Luba communities in the territory of Kabalo.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since 2013, the resurgence of identity conflicts in Kabalo territory has led to serious human rights violations and the forced displacement of thousands of people resulting in a series of humanitarian emergencies. The identity conflict between Twa (representing some 15% of the total population of the territory) and Luba (representing 75%) has its roots, on the one hand, in the long-standing economic and political marginalization of the Twa by the Luba, social discrimination, lack of sustainable economic opportunities, access to livelihoods, barriers to equal rights, poor access to land, exclusion from local political decision-making, and on the other hand, poor access to basic social services and natural resources in Kabalo territory.

Since the beginning of the conflict, hundreds of people have been killed and thousands have been displaced from their homes. The weapons used in the conflict are often arrows, axes and machetes rather than guns.

By the end of 2017, Kabalo 's economy had largely collapsed, while fields could no longer be harvested. As a result, malnutrition developed among those who had fled, as well as those who remained at home. However, open fighting had largely ceased by early 2018, though the two sides still treated each other with suspicion.

The two communities, Twa and Luba, have made several commitments to make peace, but this determination to live together can only succeed if initiatives are carried out to finance projects with visible impacts. Thus, several activities have been implemented by the provincial authorities, local communities and various humanitarian actors for a peaceful coexistence between the two communities.

Seminars, projects and workshops as well as various training courses on conflict management and transformation have been initiated with a view to peaceful coexistence between the two Twa and Luba communities in the territory of Kabalo.

After a year of lull, the result of mediation by conflict resolution structures (local authorities, local conflict resolution councils, United Nations agencies and NGOs), a new outbreak of violence between Luba and Twa has caused the death of "about 150 people", and more than 400 villages have been destroyed between July 2018 and March 2019. In August 2019, clashes intensified after the Twa attacked a group of Luba near Lwizi and killed about 50 people, most of them Luba.

As far as we are concerned, this study seeks to identify the causes of the ineffectiveness of conflict resolution structures and resolution mechanisms for cohabitation between Twa and Luba in Kabalo territory.

In view of the above, the observation shows that the conflict between Twa and Luba has persisted in intensity since 2013 in Kabalo Territory.

Hence the following concerns:

- What is at the root of the ineffectiveness of the conflict resolution structures between Twa and Luba in Kabalo territory?
- What should be done to promote peaceful coexistence between Twa and Luba?

As for the hypotheses, we have retained the following:

- The failure to take into account the problems that are at the origin of conflict, the short time frame for the implementation of peace projects, the low functionality of local peace councils, the non-involvement of leaders of the two Twa and Luba communities in conflict resolution structures and local customs are said to be at the root of the ineffectiveness of resolution structures in resolving the identity conflict between Twa and Luba in territory of Kabalo.
- To resolve the conflict and promote peaceful coexistence between Twa and Luba in Kabalo territory, it is necessary to involve the leaders of both the Twa and Luba communities in the conflict resolution structures; To take into account the problems that give rise to conflict, not only to put an end to existing instability, but also to prevent new rounds of conflict.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- Identify the causes of the ineffectiveness of conflict resolution structures (local authorities, civil society, local conflict resolution councils, United Nations agencies and NGOs) between Twa and Luba in Kabalo territory;
- To identify the mechanisms necessary to resolve the conflict and promote peaceful coexistence between Twa and Luba in Kabalo territory.

It is in this capacity that Jean-Marie Bodo¹ treats questions of identity and multiculturalism in the Cameroonian context as issues of living together in ethnocultural and linguistic diversity. Indeed, he describes "identity" as a "paradoxical" concept that "includes what is similar to it and excludes what does not suit it".

In the same vein, Albert Mandjact and Nicolas Serge Ndock² analyze the identity dynamics that operate between ethnic groups for state control. They argue that the identity politics that have so far been applied in Cameroon are nothing more than state tribalism that has given rise to identity conflicts against a backdrop of competition for control of power and resources between the country's ethnic communities. According to the authors, there is an exacerbation of ethnicity in the relationship between citizens on the one hand and with the State on the other. This leads to a situation of permanent confrontation between ethnic groups in different theatres of public life.

For his part, Paul Abouna³ also observes the important place that ethnicity occupies literally and figuratively in the public space in Cameroon. According to the author, the physical occupation of space in Cameroon's major cities is mainly based on ethno-community affiliations. This de facto establishes physical borders between ethnic groups in society and calls into question the living together and the community of destinies that have served as the foundations of Cameroon's national project since the country's independence.

BOLINDA WA BOLINDA⁴ measured the impact of the conflict between two major ethnic groups in the Isangi territory on its development. As a sociologist, he seeks and proposes sociological antidotes to put it back on its feet and help it develop and get out of the vicious circle of intensifying conflict characterized by discordant language about political, economic, social and cultural problems.

The author concludes that this conflict has land, political, economic and religious manifestations that demonstrate that the Topoke and the Lokele are relentlessly vying for power in this territory. The Lokele sought to keep it to the detriment of the Topoke, who demanded a fair distribution of it in all vital sectors. The author indicates a dynamo-societal path of normalization of relations between the two groups through the establishment of a frank collaboration between them based on understanding and solidarity, an alternative system of access to power.

2.0 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The realization of this research forces us to swim in the plurality of methods in order to identify the one that is capable of explaining the nature of the phenomenon studied. Thus, we used a method and techniques.

¹ Bodo, J.-M., Cameroonian multiculturalism and its daily praxis. *Connaissances et Savoirs*, 2020, pp. 21-22

² Mandjact and Ndock, a permanent clash of identity groups? Struggles for the Hegemonic Appropriation of the State by Ethnic Communities in Cameroon, *Connaissances & Savoirs*. 2019, p.11

³ Abouna, P., *Le pouvoir de l'ethnie: Introduction à l'ethnocratie*, Editions L'Harmattan, Paris, 2011, p. 22

⁴ BOLINDA WA BOLINDA, On the impact of the Topoke-Lokele ethnic conflict on the development of the Isangi Territory. *Recherche d'antidotes sociologiques*, Doctoral thesis in sociology, FSSAP, UNIKIS, 2000, p.108

theories that propose authentic suppositions⁶. However, when engaging in research, the choice of subject partly dictates the choice of method, although this also depends on the researcher's preferences and the possibilities for advancing science in this field⁷.

Thus, being linked to the notions of functionalism and holism⁸ and appropriate to the study of organizations and the dysfunctions that can result from them, Georges Balandier's dynamist method seems to us to be the best suited to the present study. In his conception of the dynamic approach, Balandier shows that when a researcher manages to analyze a specific society in its transformations, contradictions, tensions and internal and external dysfunction, he makes the dynamist analysis⁹.

2.4 Data collection techniques

As we seemed to be more compatible with the current study, the conversational approach¹⁰ presided over the collection of data for this research.

Thus, in this study, we have resorted to documentary techniques to construct the problem and circumscribe the literature review and to consult the documents (the administrative reports of the territory; direct disengaged observation, a phase characterized by moments of intense concentration by the researcher on the respondents in their natural environment. This is the period during which research data are systematically collected; to the semi-structured interview to facilitate, but also to stabilize the discourse through a detailed interview guide developed for this purpose; and the Focus Group to stimulate open discussions based on the above-mentioned themes. This makes it easier to identify key messages and identify points of convergence and divergence among respondents. This made it possible to place the respondents in a situation of interaction and group dynamics.

3.0 PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY RESULTS

3.1 Causes of ineffective conflict resolution structures

Table 1: Major Causes of Ineffective Conflict Resolution Structures

No.	Causes of Ineffective Conflict Resolution Structures	Percentage
1	Failure to address salient issues that lead to conflict	66%
2	Local customs	25
3	short implementation time of peace projects (10
4	Low functionality of Local Peace Councils	11
5	non-involvement of the leaders of the two Twa and Luba communities in conflict resolution structures	5

⁶ Popper, K., *Conjectures and Refutations*. La Croissances du savoir scientifique, Payot, Paris, 1985, p. 362.

⁷ Boulanger, G., *La recherche en sciences sociales*, ed. Universitaire, Paris, 1970, p.23.

⁸ <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Structuro-fonctionnalisme>, accessed July 12, 2022.

⁹ Balandier G., *Sens et pouvoir*, PUF, Paris, 1971, p.183.

¹⁰ Chamich, M., *Management of conflicts related to natural resources in the arganeraie of the Sous (Morocco)* (unpublished), Doctoral thesis in Rural Studies, University of Toulouse, 2008, p.176.

When asked about the causes of the ineffective conflict resolution structures between the Twa and Luba communities in Kabalo territory, the vast majority of respondents (66%) agree that the failure to take into account the salient problems at the origin of the conflict posed by each party is the main cause, followed by local customs (25%). The other causes do not have a considerable influence on this subject.

3.2 Perception of the effectiveness of conflict resolution structures by locality

Table 2. Effectiveness of Conflict Resolution Structures

Answers	Percentage (100%)
Effective	25
Ineffective	59
Don't know	16

The table highlights the ineffectiveness of conflict resolution structures between the Twa and Luba communities. Indeed, 59% of respondents think that these structures are not effective, unlike the others, (25%) who think that the structures are effective, and 16% do not know. This view is supported by the majority of the Twa (76%), compared to 24% of the Luba who maintain the opposite.

However, even if the Twa and the Luba agree on this idea, there is a significant difference between their answers. Indeed, Luba are more likely to disagree with the idea that conflict resolution structures have been ineffective (39%). On the other hand, the Twa are more likely to think that these structures have not been effective (20%). The reason for this ineffectiveness of conflict resolution structures is that they have addressed the effects and not the causes of conflict. Also, they have often settled this conflict in a biased way according to the community affiliation of the parties involved. The biases, the lack of objectivity, the poor functioning of the committees explained by the non-inclusion of all communities and the unavailability of some members of the amicable settlement committees whose absence is regular.

3.3 Poor management of frustrations

As our contacts with both parties to the conflict show, this violence is the result of poorly managed social problems and affects many levels of daily life. It follows from these exchanges that the identity conflict is experienced in the territory of Kabalo and has spread to other neighboring territories. Some Twa interviewed say that all this violence is the result of the discrimination they face at the hands of the Luba community on the social level. These include access to education, the rejection of marriages between Twa and Luba, the distinction of social classes...

However, according to the same Twa: "the nature of conflicts differs according to the triggering mechanisms and the ways of life between communities". For example, the identity conflict that has predominated in several villages in Kabalo territory such as Kifingile, Kiyabo kabamba, Pipe, Lukodji, Kibanda, Kanda, Muswa bantu, Mubanzo, Kibamba kyela and Kidjibumba, is linked to self-esteem. Indeed, the Twa reproach the Luba for their intolerance of sociological rites such as mixing and the widespread poverty of the Twa community because of the poor

management of the workforce by the Luba. The latter consider that the Twa are demanding an equality that is considered unacceptable.

3.4 Local context and recent developments

The results of the quantitative analyses show that the level of trust between the Twa and Luba in Kabalo territory remains average. 43% of those surveyed said so, while 25% of those surveyed indicated that this level of trust is low or very low (6%). 21% said that the level of trust is high, and 4% very high.

3.5 Community perception of the quality of actors for peace and social cohesion

Table 3: Quality of actors for peace and social cohesion

Qualities	%
Very poor	45%
Bad	36%
Good	43%

45% of the population perceives the quality of the actors of peace and social cohesion between and within the community as very bad, and bad (36%) against 43% who positively assess the degree of social cohesion between communities.

3.6 Perception of inter- and intra-community social cohesion

Table 4: Inter- and intra-Community social cohesion

Mention	%
Good	30
Bad	42
Average	12
Very poor	9
Excellent	7

Compared to the table on the perception of inter- and intra-community social cohesion in Kabalo, 42% of the population say that social cohesion is good; followed by 30% who insist that it is good; On the other hand, 12% of the populations surveyed say that the degree of inter-community cohabitation is average; compared to 9% who maintain that it is very bad, while only 7% of the population say that social cohesion is excellent.

3.7 The efforts of peace structures in conflict management

Table 5: Efforts of peace structures in conflict management

Efforts of peace structures in conflict management	
Answers	Percentage
The conflict does not change	42,70%
The conflict decreases	13,50%
The conflict escalates	43,80 %

Asking the question of the efforts of peace structures in conflict management with a view to inter- and inter-community social cohesion; 43.8% of the population say that conflicts are increasing, compared to 42.7% who say that conflicts do not change. 13.% say that conflicts are decreasing in the area. Up here, the illustrative table.

3.8 Weaknesses in peace structures

Table 6: Major Weaknesses in Peace Structures

Weaknesses in peace structures	Percentage
No proper conflict resolution techniques	27,90
Decision rendered ineffective	26,40
Lack of resources	25,90
The actors of resolution are themselves judges and parties	24,90
Lack of will of the parties	17,40
Don't understand the conflict	15,40
Incompetence in conflict resolution	11,90
Procedure too expensive	10,00
Procedure too long	9,50
Other	7,00
Have no influence	6,00
Mediation	0,00

In order for the peace structures to work fruitfully in the context of pacification in the area, it can be seen, from the graph below, that these actors experience certain difficulties and weaknesses: the lack of appropriate conflict resolution techniques; ineffectiveness of decisions rendered; the lack of means to peacefully resolve conflicts; the dual roles that some of these actors play in motivating and resolving conflicts generated by themselves; the lack of will of the parties; poor understanding in conflict analysis; lack of skills in the subject; procedures that are long and expensive.

4.0 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

However, there is a slight difference between the Twa and the Luba. Indeed, the Twa are more likely to accept the idea that salient issues that are the source of conflict between the two communities must be taken into account by conflict resolution structures, whereas the opposite is true among the Luba.

Similarly, the answers given by the respondents differ according to the level of education received. Thus, respondents with a low level of education (6 years of primary school) are propensity to agree that the salient problems that constitute the source of conflict between the two communities must be taken into account by the structures during the conflict resolution process, while the opposite is true for respondents with a high level of education (D6N). This difference in response is also observed from one village to another. While respondents living in the city of Kabalo tend not to agree with the consideration of salient problems that are at the origin of conflict during conflict resolution processes, those in the villages of Kanzanze,

Manyange and Monde tend to agree with this idea. Other causes are the short implementation time of peace projects (10%), the low functionality of local peace councils (11%), the non-involvement of young men and women, as well as the leaders of the two Twa and Luba communities in conflict resolution structures (5%) and local customs (25%).

Regarding the perception of the effectiveness of conflict resolution structures by locality, the view that conflict resolution structures are effective is supported by the majority of Twa (76%), compared to 24% of Luba who argue the opposite.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This study, carried out in the territory of Kabalo, allowed us to identify the factors that are at the root of the ineffectiveness of the projects implemented by the main actors (state services, NGOs and local leaders) committed to peace in the territory of Kabalo.

In view of this questioning, we have pushed our scientific curiosity very far by asking ourselves the following questions:

- What is at the root of the ineffectiveness of the conflict resolution structures between Twa and Luba in Kabalo territory?
- What should be done to promote peaceful coexistence between Twa and Luba?

In terms of hypotheses, we thought that:

- Discrimination, the failure to take into account the problems at the origin of conflict, the short time frame for the implementation of peace projects, the weak functionality of local peace councils, the non-involvement of leaders of the two Twa and Luba communities in conflict resolution structures and local customs are said to be at the root of the ineffectiveness of resolution structures in resolving the identity conflict between Twa and Luba in territory of Kabalo.
- To resolve the conflict and promote peaceful coexistence between Twa and Luba in Kabalo territory, it is necessary to involve the leaders of both the Twa and Luba communities in the conflict resolution structures; To take into account the problems that give rise to conflict, not only to put an end to existing instability, but also to prevent new rounds of conflict.

Thus, in order to reach the explanation and verify our mortgages, we have resorted to the dynamist method of Georges Balandier because it seems to us to be the best suited to the present study.

In the field, our method was supported by documentary techniques, disengaged direct observation, semi-structured interviews and Focus groups to encourage open discussions based on research themes.

After the investigation and analysis of the data, we arrived at the following results:

- 66%) agree that the failure to take into account the salient problems at the origin of the conflict posed by each party is the main cause;

- 59%) think that these structures are not effective, unlike the others;
- 43% of respondents said that the level of trust between the Twa and Luba in Kabalo territory remains average;
- 45% of the population perceives the quality of the actors of peace and inter- and intra-community social cohesion as very poor;
- 43.8% of the population say that conflicts are increasing between the Twa and the Luba;
- 27.90% insisted on the lack of appropriate conflict resolution techniques.

In view of these results, it must be said that our initial hypotheses are all verified and confirmed.

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