“They say we have peace”

Perceptions and practices of peace in Northern Cameroon

Audhild Steinnes Heum

Thesis submitted in partial completion of

Master’s degree in Social Anthropology

Department of Anthropology, University of Bergen

September 2016

Acknowledgements

In the course of completing this study, I have received valuable support and help from many people. First and foremost, I want to thank the people in the different areas of Djerem for their help and cooperation in my efforts to understand their society and their perspectives. I am especially grateful for the way they included me so generously in their everyday lives. I would also like to thank the University in Ngaoundéré for providing me with a research permit. In addition, I would like to thank the different authorities in Djerem. I experienced nothing but helpful responses throughout my stay in that region. Thank you to Elisabeth Neier for her hospitality during fieldwork, and to Laila Kaasa for letting me stay in her home in Ngaoundéré and caring for me during my battle with malaria. I am also grateful to everyone else in Ngaoundéré, both old and new friends, for their big and small gestures of kindness.

I want to express my deep gratitude to the folk at the University of Bergen: to the lecturers at the Institute of Anthropology for their inspirational classes; to Hilde Merete Ellefsen for being so helpful throughout this process; and, finally, a big and special thank you to my supervisor, Professor Frode Storaas, for his constructive and patient guidance. I am also grateful to the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) in Uppsala for offering me a scholarship. Being part of the intellectual environment at NAI for one entire month was indeed a great inspiration. Word of thanks goes to Gunhild Odden for her invaluable feedback in the final stages of writing up my findings; thanks also to everyone else at my current work place, Center for Intercultural Communication (SIK), for being such inspiring colleagues. I also owe a big thank you to Carol Stanley Thorne for her proofreading and comments.

Thank you to my friends from near and far and my family who have been cheering me on; a big, heartfelt thank you to my parents and parents-in-law who frequently babysat so I could concentrate on the final stages of the completion of this thesis; a huge word of thanks also goes to Else Jorunn Wergeland for her kind-heartedness and practical help; and a special thanks to Audhild Helgaas for her enthusiasm and invaluable encouragement every step of the way

Last, but not least, I want to thank my dear husband, Hans Jacob, who never stopped believing in me and this project. Thank you for being such a rock throughout the whole process.

To the readers of this thesis: Thank you in advance for whatever feedback or comments you might have.

May peace be upon you /Que la paix soit avec vous /Assalaamu alaykum.

Stavanger, September 2016
Audhild Steinnes Heum

To my number 1

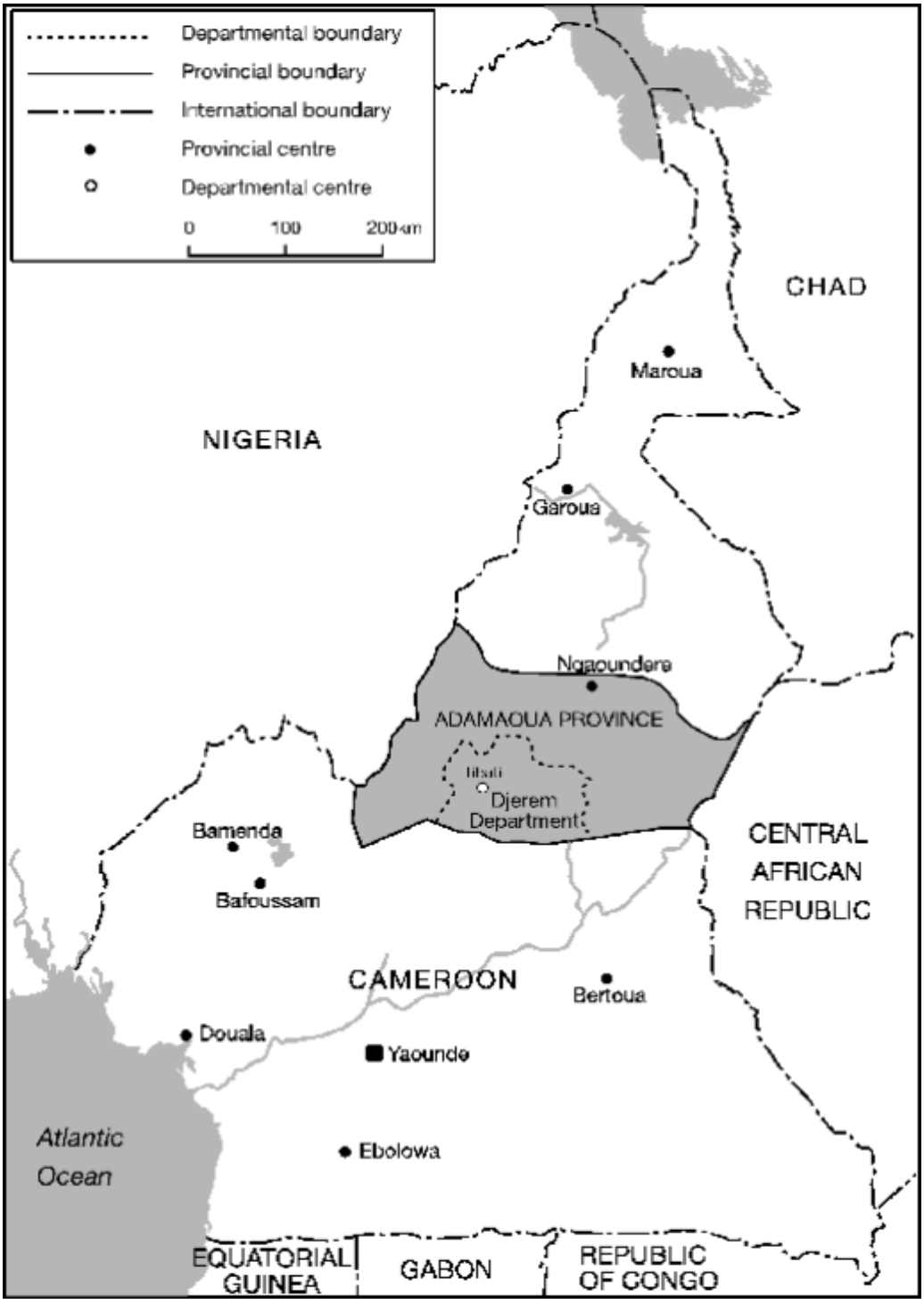
Contents

Acknowledgements iii
List of illustrations vii
Map vii
Photographs viii
Acronyms viii
Glossary ix
Chapter overview x
1. INTRODUCTION 1
Setting the scene of the study 1
Research questions 7
2. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK 10
Peace research 10
What is peace? – theoretical clarifications 12
'Negative' and 'positive' peace 12
Criticism of 'negative' and 'positive' peace 15
3. THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY 17
Country background 17
Prosperous setting, poor state of living 17
Absence of war 19
An excursion into the field 20
Economic activities, labour division and social stratification 21
Polyethnic, linguistic and religious composition of Tibati, Ngaoubela and Mbakaou 22
Historical traits affecting intergroup relations today 24
The chieftaincies as intermediate institutions 25
4. METHOD: ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES IN THE FIELD 28
Being a halfie; gaining access to the field and collecting data 28
Major obstacles 34
Ethical considerations 37
5. PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF PEACE IN DJEREM 39
"Cameroon is a country of peace" 39
"We are not like that" 39
"There are no problems between us" 44
"We cannot laugh together for a long time" 51
"The government does not want that savagery" 56

"There is no war here, but we are not living in peace" 59
"Those who are well off, they say we have peace" 59
"We are being colonized for the third time" 65
"No matter how much you suffer, you should always keep your mouth shut" 72
"We fight and defend ourselves" 76
Practices of peace in the chieftaincies 79
"The role of the chieftaincy is to maintain peace" 81
Settling a conflict: The chicken thief 86
"Without development there can be no peace" 88
6. CONCLUSION 92
"We need that change to come in the good way" 92
Bibliography 100

List of illustrations

Map



Location of the region of Adamaoua and the Djerem Department in the Republic of Cameroon (retrieved from Virtanen 2003: 5).

Photographs

1-3	Scenes from the National Day celebration in Tibati, 2013: - The Lamido of Tibati - The Prefect of Djerem and the Sub-prefect - School children marching and singing	p. 6
4	Unfinished house in Tibati with painted text: "Au Cameroun la paix". (In English: "In Cameroon peace")	p.98

All photographs by Audhild Steinnes Heum.

Acronyms

BIR	Brigade d'Intervention Rapide (French) / Rapid Intervention Batallion (English). Elite anti-banditry squad created in 2001
CAR	Central African Republic
CFA	The basic monetary unit in Cameroon and five other countries in Central Africa. Stands for: *Coopération Financière en Afrique centrale* (In English: Financial Cooperation in Central Africa)
CNPS	Caisse Nationale de Prévoyance Sociale (French) / National Social Insurance Fund (English)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EELC	Eglise Evangélique Luthérienne du Cameroun (French) / The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (English)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRW	Humans Right Watch
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IOL	International Organization for Labour
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NMS	Norwegian Mission Society
RDPC	Rassemblement Démocratique du Peuple Camerounais (French) / Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (English)
SDF	Social Democratic Front
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPC	Union de Populations du Cameroun (French) / Union of the Populations of Cameroon (English)
WFP	World Food Programme

Glossary

This overview explains different terms that are commonly used in the area under study, and that will appear throughout this thesis.

Fulani, Fulbe, Mbororo	In this study, the term *Fulani* (from Hausa) is used when referring to the shared traditions of common cultural and racial origin of the Mbororo and the Fulbe. The latter two terms are commonly used to draw a distinction between these two groups. The Fulbe are sedentary, while the pastoral Fulani, are referred to as Mbororo. (This distinction follows the same logic as Burnham, 1996).
Fulfulde	*Fulfulde* is the language of the Fulani
Kirdi	Although the term *Kirdi* was less used as an emic term in the field, I've chosen to use it in this thesis. Here, *Kirdi* is used as a collective term for the non-Islamic population of northern Cameroon (cf. Skutch 2004). The term was initiated by the Fulbe and has been applied to various people or ethnic groups who were resistant and did not convert to Islam at the time of colonization. It was originally a condescending term meaning *heathens* or *pagans*. The term is originally from the Kanuri language (cf. Hennig 1993). In this thesis, tribes such as the Gbaya, Dii, Tikar and Mambila will occansionally be refered to as non-Fulbe or Kirdi.
Lamidat	*Lamidat* is a term referring to the territory over which the Lamido reigns (Lode 1990).
Lamido, Lamibe	*Lamido* is a term used to designate an important traditional chief reigning over a vast territoy (Lode 1990). The term *Lamibe* is plural for Lamido (ibid.).
Notable	In this setting a *notable* refers to a person who is given authority to assist a traditional chief due to his age or experience. The word *elder* which is also sometimes used in this thesis denotes the same.
Sub-prefect	The *Sub-prefect* is responsible for the subdivisions of a department. (French: Sous-préfet)
Prefect	A *Prefect* is the state's representative in the department. (French: Préfet)

Chapter overview

Chapter 1 is a general introduction to the thesis and gives the reader some background on the state-driven discourse of peace in Cameroon. In addition, the formulation of the research question and the process involved in deciding on the final focus of this thesis is described.

Chapter 2 deals with the theoretical framework of the study with special regard to the two framing conceptual distinctions used in this thesis, namely 'negative' and 'positive' peace.

In Chapter 3 the focus is on the context of the present work. The subchapter *"Country background"* presents some general traits focusing on the developmental status and the historical absence of war in they country; while the subchapter *"An excursion into the field"* moves from the national to the local context, focusing on economic, social, ethnic and historical traits in the society under study. An introduction to the institution of the chiftaincy is also included.

In Chapter 4 I look at some methodological issues by reflecting on my own role and approaches to the field.

Chapter 5 presents the 'negative' and 'positive' perceptions of peace in the area under study and investigates peace-promoting practices. The chapter consists of three subchapters:

- *"Cameroon is a country of peace"* which focuses on informants who conveyed that Cameroon is, above all, a country of peace.
- *"There is no war here, but we are not living in peace",* in which I present ethnographic material focusing on informants who are critical to the state-driven discourse of peace, as they believe that peace entails much more than just the absence of war.
- *"Practices of peace in the chieftaincies"* which describes and analyzes the role of the chieftaincies in maintaining peace at the local level. This subchapter pays special attention to the role of the customary courts in ensuring peace.

Chapter 6, which is the concluding chapter of the thesis, includes a brief summary of how the findings served to answer the research question. Drawing on lessons from the study, I look at possible explanations for the lack of escalated intergroup conflicts in Cameroon compared to the two neighboring countries, the Central African Republic and Nigeria. I also touch upon possible future scenarios in Cameroon.

"It is doubtful whether in our modern world there is any other single issue more important than peace".

(Sponsel 1994:4)

1. INTRODUCTION

Setting the scene of the study

The entire Cameroon, let's say thank you to God.
For long we've been seeking the unity of Cameroon.
In this moment of joy, all Cameroonian children:
Long live the 20th of May.
We are ordered; let's always carry on in peace.[1]

The lines above were sung by school children from the village of Ngaoubela on May 20[2], 2013, as they were marching in front of the platform where the dignitaries where seated. The platform had been decorated for the celebration of the national day in Tibati, the administrative capital of the Department of Djerem. That day, the entire country of Cameroon was celebrating its 41st National Day.

I had decided to travel to Cameroon to study the subject of peace. I wanted to look at how peace is understood in a country that does not have a recent history of war or major armed conflicts. As I prepared for my fieldwork, little did I know that as a result of events that would happen in the spring of 2013, the topic of peace in Cameroon was about to become relevant in new ways. Let me go back a few months to some incidents that occurred earlier that year.

"*Are you French*?" A young man was shouting in my direction at the market known as *Petit Marché* in Ngaoundéré[3]. He was sitting in the middle of a crowd of other young men playing ludo on a homemade wooden board. This happened during my first week of fieldwork in Cameroon and three months prior to the national celebration that I will return to shortly. Before I had a chance to respond, he continued shouting: *"We will send you off to Nigeria!*" I decided to approach the group, telling him I was not French. He continued with an angry voice: "*The Frenchmen has done much harm against the Africans. If I saw a French person now, I would aim at him and shoot!"* His male friends, appearing a bit embarrassed, started to make excuses on his behalf.

1 My translation from French of *Le Cameroun entière, disons merci à Dieu /Ca fait longtemps que nous cherchons l'unité du Cameroun /En ce moment de joie, tous les enfants camerounais: /Vive le 20 mai /Nous sommes ordonnés /Continuons toujours dans la paix.*

2Cameroon's National Day on the 20th of May commemorates former president Ahmadou Ahidjo's abolishment of the federal system of government in favor of a united country in 1972. The day is also called 'Fête de l'unité in French.

3Ngaoundéré is the capital of the region of Adamaoua, in the neighboring department of Djerem.

This incident was not random. Several strangers had been asking me that day if I was French. Three days earlier, on February 19, 2013, there was an attack believed to have been carried out by Nigerian Boko Haram[4] Islamist militants on Cameroonian territory. The kidnapping happened about 800 km from where I was residing during my fieldwork.

Tanguy Moulin-Fournier, an expat employee, based in the Cameroon capital, his four children, his wife and brother, were on holiday near the Waza National Park in the far north of Cameroon when they were seized by men on motorbikes, armed with Kalashnikov rifles. Gunmen claiming to be members of the Nigerian radical Islamist militant group Boko Haram released videos of the family, threatening to kill them if authorities in Nigeria and Cameroon did not release Muslim militants held there. The family was held captive in Nigeria for two months.

This was not the first incident of Boko Haram activity on the Cameroonian side of the border, but it was the first one that received massive international attention in the media. Some members of the media pointed out that the kidnapping had happened just six weeks after France launched a military intervention in Mali to fight Islamic groups who had taken over a section of the north after a coup. This could indicate that the incident had global dimensions.

Then, another incident followed the next month, on March 24 2013, as members of the Seleka[5] rebel coalition ousted President François Bozizé in the Central African Republic (CAR). When the Seleka seized control over the capital Bangui, we kept hearing rumours about how the Seleka rebels were committing serious acts of violence, including pillage, arson, killing of civilians, raping of women and recruiting of child soldiers (Human Rights Watch 2013). Refugees from CAR started to come across the border 260 km and about four hours' drive from where I was staying.

Since Islam is the most prevalent religion in the marginalized northern areas where rebel groups sprang up, most Seleka members were Muslims (IRIN 2014). Those who resisted the brutal Seleka were termed Anti-balaka[6]. Most of the recruits to Anti-balaka were from

4 Boko Haram is usually translated as 'western education is a sin'; boko is from the language Hausa and haram is a borrowed word from Arabic

5 Seleka means 'alliance' in Sango. In late 2012 several rebel groups joined forces under the banner of the Seleka forces and seized power the following March. After September 2013, the prefix 'ex' has usually been added to Seleka, as the alliance official disbanded that month (IRIN 2014).

6 Balaka is the Sango word for machete. Some sources suggests it is also alludes to the French word for bullets of an automatic rifle ('balle AK'). 'Anti-balaka' roughly means 'invincible', a power that is purportedly bestowed by the charms that hang around the necks of most members. The term was originally used in 2008 or 2009 to refer to self-defence units that were set up in the absence of effective state security forces to protect

Christian or animist communities. They started to use a language that suggested that their intent was to eliminate Muslim residents from the CAR (ibid). In 2013 CAR was considered by UN to be one of the four major crisis in the world. This conflict was similar to most conflicts that we see in the world today in the sense that it was not a conflict or a war between nations, but an internal war – what many scholar will refer to as "new war" (cf. Richards 2005).

If we go back to the Cameroonian National Day celebration, two months after the unrest peaked in CAR, and three months after the incident with Boko Haram on the Cameroonian side of the border, it was not surprising that the official theme chosen as the headlinefor the celebration of 2013 was about the security situation in Cameroon: "*Army and nation together to meet the security challenges for an emerging Cameroon"*. On the front page of Cameroon Tribune, the major newspaper in the country which is owned by the government, the main headline a few days before the celebration was *"Army and Nation, same combat*"[7] (Cameroon Tribune 2013). On that day, the parade area had filled up with people from Tibati and the surrounding villages in the Department of Djerem, hours before the last of the authorities in the Department arrived.

When the Lamido, the highest ranking traditional chief in the area, arrived, we knew the programme of the day would soon start. The Prefect, the administrative leader of the Department and, therefore, the representative of the State, finally arrived. By being the very last person to arrive, he showed that his rank was above that of the Lamido. Whilst the Prefect and the other representatives of the official administration were accompanied by French band music played over the loudspeakers, a legacy from the colonial rule of the French, the Lamido and his entourage were accompanied by musicians from the Lamidat. They were playing traditional instruments while singers sang his praises, also according to the tradition – a testimony of the important role traditions still play in the society and a reminder of the historic hegemony of the Fulbe people in Northern Cameroon.

After much patient waiting, it was finally the turn of the children. Dressed up in their school uniforms, they were singing at the top of their lungs as they marched in front of the platform. I had watched the school children of Ngaoubela as they rehearsed for weeks prior to this day, singing and practicing marching with impressive coordination. Not every school child that

communities from attacks by cattle raiders or highway bandits; however, "Anti-balaka" then became a generic term for those resisting the brutal Seleka (IRIN 2014).

7 My translation from French: "Armée et Nation, même combat".

had been rehearsing for the National Day had made it to the parade though, as not everyone had managed to collect the 300 cfa[8] that were required for the transportation from the village to Tibati. In addition, 17 pupils had been expelled from that small elementary school earlier that month as their parents had not managed to pay the school fee for that semester.

Every school sang different songs as they marched by; different melodies and different lyrics in French. As I listened to the lyrics of the songs sung by the different schools, I noticed how every song seemed to contain the same two words: *unity* and *peace*. Two lines of the one sung by the school children of Ngaoubela is a good example: *"For long we've been seeking the unity of Cameroon. (...)We are ordered; let's always carry on in peace".* In addition, the official speeches that day – and at several other official events I participated in during my fieldwork – also contained references to, and a call for, unity and peace amongst the population. Given the fact that the National Day is about celebrating the unity of the country, this makes sense. With the Cameroonian setting being multicultural, multiethnic, and multilinguistic, one of the major concerns of the Cameroonian government is nationbuilding and de-emphasizing ethnic distinctions (Anttalainen 2013). Neither *unity*, nor *peace* are taken for granted in the country. Therefore, it is no wonder that the two words appears so often in official speeches and songs and that there is a strong state-driven discourse in the country of both national unity and peace.

In contrast to several of its neighboring countries, and also other African countries, which have a history of far more armed conflicts, Cameroon stands out as a peaceful country. Viewed from the outside, there has for a long time existed a general and common belief that the country is a "*haven of peace"* in a turbulent Central African Region (Sama 2007:193). It's no wonder, perhaps, that the leaders of Cameroon are prone to portray Cameroon as a country of peace. Some voices claim that this is an image that the leaders of the country will use every occasion to reinforce. On the other hand, Cameroon has also been criticized for being a 'failed state'. Many Cameroonian scholars and NGO's focusing on human rights have for decades been pointing to a growing insecurity and social unrest in the country stemming mainly from poverty and unemployment. In a report from the International Crisis Group, it is claimed that the country with its conflict potential can be almost a perfect storm (International Crisis Group 2010a). Whilst the regime focuses on national security in order to preserve peace, others are criticizing the regime for not focusing more on human security in order to preserve peace.

8 Equivalent to 0.46 Euro

As I listened to the children of Ngaoubela singing the phrase "*Let's always move forward in peace"*, I wondered: What does peace mean to Cameroonians in their everyday lives? And, what does it take to live and move forward in peace? During my fieldwork I discovered that people in the field had many perspectives and concerns of their own about the topic of peace. Not everyone agreed to to the state-centered focus of understanding peace as merely the absence of war.

This thesis will pay particular attention to the different perceptions of peace found in the area under study, whilst I will also say something about practices that promotes peace. By choosing to focus on peace, a topic that is both complex and has multi-faceted meanings, I am well aware of the great and almost insurmountable task I have undertaken, given the limitations of this Master Thesis and the limited time I spent in the field collecting the empirical data that is the basis of my analysis and discussion. I do not intend to present an exhaustive picture of the phenomenon of peace in the society under study, but I do hope that this anthropological study will manage to shed light on some central and valid features of that society.

The ethnographic material presented here was collected during fieldwork lasting from February to June 2013. The focus is on the population in the Department of Djerem, one of five departments in the region of Adamaoua, where the main bulk of my fieldwork took place. Due to unforeseen circumstances (which I account for in Chapter 4) some fieldwork was undertaken in Ngaoundéré, the capital city of the region of Adamaoua. I also did a few interviews while travelling in southern Cameroon. What is referred to as Northern Cameroon includes three regions: Adamaoua, North and Extreme North. People from the northern part of Cameroon are collectively referred to as the "northerners" by their southern compatriots. The three northernmost regions share some common historic features related to the Fulbeisation[9] and the dominance of Islam.

All the names of individuals mentioned in this study are pseudonyms, with the exeption of the traditional chiefs of Djerem who are mentioned with their title or names in some parts of the thesis. In addition I have altered some of the personal details regarding some of my informants in order to protect their anonymity. This study has been approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). Most quotes from the field are my translations from French.

[9] See Chapter 3 for an explanation of 'Fulbeisation'.

Scenes from the National Day celebration in Djerem, 2013. Top: The Lamido of Tibati /Middle: The Sub-prefect (left) and the Prefect /Bottom: School children marching and singing

Research questions

The ethnographic work that this thesis is based on stems from an idea I had to study the subject of peace. Before I present the research questions, it should be mentioned that when I first started to plan my fieldwork, I had no intention of studying peace. My initial plan was to focus on childrearing practices amongst the Wodabees in Niger, but due to insurgencies in the country, I was advised to rethink my original plan. I then started planning to travel to the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); however, a worsening in the security situation there due to the civil war forced me to once again reconsider my plans. At that point I made the decision to travel to Cameroon – a country with a reputation of being peaceful.

With the situation in Niger and DRC going through my mind while I was making plans to travel to Cameroon, I started asking myself: How is it that Cameroon has 'escaped' escalated insurgencies and major armed conflicts for so long? Consequently, my initial research question was: "How is peace possible in Cameroon?". This question reflected my hypothesis at the time, which was based on an understanding of peace as the absence of armed conflicts and war. Compared to its neighboring countries, as well as other African countries, Cameroon had for many years remained relatively peaceful - perhaps against many odds, some would claim. I was intrigued by this and hoped that my research would help me find some explanations for this.

Inductivism has informed every phase of this study (the data collection, the analysis and the processs of writing up). My aim has been to seek theories grounded in data, rather than imposed on data. (O'Reilly 2012). As I conducted my research in the field, my ethnographic discoveries led me to rethink my hypothesis. I realized that while some Cameroonians seemed to conceptualize peace in ways that resemble that of the state, many Cameroonians in the communities I studied did not agree with the idea of peace being merely the absence of war or armed conflicts. I also started to reflect on how peace is about practice as well as perception; in other words, whether peace exists (or not) is because it is socially constructed and organized by social agents (cf. Richards 2005). These realizations led me to change my research question.

As a result, the main question this study will undertake to answer is:

What are the perceptions and practices of peace found amongst the population in Northern Cameroon?

Much research on war and peace has focused on the state level. The aim of this study is to identify perceptions and practices of peace at a micro level amongst the population in the Department of Djerem. Hence, my aim is to give the concept and the practices of peace a local content. While doing this, I will also pay some attention to the wider, historical, social and economic structures within which the different actors think and operate. Both peace and war needs to be located *"(...) within the social contexts from which it springs*" (Richards 2005:4). Sponsel and Gregor (1994) emphasize that peace is sustained by values, attitudes and emotions. In this study, I believe this is something that also needs to be reflected when presenting perceptions and practices of peace. Lastly, the research question is based on the assumption that the people of different statuses in a society perceive peace differently.

My research question is twofold. I have therefore chosen to specify two subordinate research questions in order to answer the main question:

- *How is peace perceived in the everyday lives of the population?*

Different ways of conceptualizing peace will be investigated. Topics such as interethnic and interreligious coexistence and everyday grievances will be touched upon.

Secondly,

- *What role do traditional chiefs play in ensuring peace at the local level**?***

By choosing to focus on the traditional chiefs and the institutionalized practices they are part of, I will look closer at *one* important peace promoting practice in the area under study. The main emphasis will be on the role played by the customary court.

Some initial definitions of the concepts *perception* and *practice* are needed at this stage. First of all, by *perception,* I mean how people regard, interpret or look at something in a particular way (Oxford Dictionaries). *Practice* as I use it in this thesis, is "*the acting out of social life*" (O'Reilly 2012:6) and constitutes structures and institutions - such as the institution of the traditional chieftaincy and its customary court that I will look at in this thesis. When focusing on practice I will also give some examples of how people act with agency[10] within the structures framing their context.

[10] According to Ortner (2001), agency should always be embedded in practice theory.

Although the first subordinate question points primarily to *perceptions* and the the second question points primarily to *practices*, in many respects the two facets are intertwined in the presentation of my ethnographic research and my analysis of it.

Even though I have presented a main question and two subordinate questions, I will sometimes refer to the research questions in the singular, as the research question.

2. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

"True peace is not merely the absence of some negative force
- tension, confusion or war;
it is the presence of some positive force
- justice, good will and brotherhood".
(King 1957:119)

As peace is the core concept of this study, it is imperative to say something about the use of the concept in this thesis. In this chapter I will point to scholars, mainly within, but also outside the discipline of anthropology, that have inspired this work; and I will also present some analytical considerations in order to contextualize this study.

In the citation above it is claimed that true peace is more than the absence of some negative force. The words were written by Martin Luther King in a period of American history in which the Black Americans were marginalized and forced to submit to injustice and exploitation. King argued that this was a *negative* peace and that true peace should rather be understood as the presence of some positive force that included justice, good will and brotherhood. Whether peace is conceptualized by stressing the absence of certain conditions or by the presence of certain qualities will be central to this study.

Peace research

Peace research and peace theories draw primarily, but not exclusively, on the social sciences and humanities (Atack 2009). According to Atack, peace theory is very much a compilation of theories and concepts derived from other disciplines, such as international relations, sociology, philosophy, and theology (ibid.). Much of the work of anthropologists whose work has been identified with peace studies, relates to issues of human rights, which has become the focus of advocacy of anthropology (Sponsel 1994).

Modern peace research emerged in the 1940s and has flourished since the 1960s (Sponsel and Gregor 1994). In the the volume *The Anthropology of peace and nonviolence*, published in 1994, Sponsel and Gregor argued that anthropology already had an enormous amount of literature on violence and war, but that the focus on anthropology of peace had just begun. Sponsel noted that:

"Most of the anthropological research that is obviously relevant to peace studies focuses almost exclusively on violence and war. Whilst this work is certainly important, it is

insufficient: nonviolence, peace, and related phenomena also deserve serious systematic attention" (Sponsel 1994:15).

Other scholars also claim that studies on nonviolence and peace are relatively few compared to an enormous volume on warfare and other forms of aggression (Howell and Willis 1989; Barfield 1989). Goldschmidt, who also notes that the data on peacemaking procedures are rather sparse, comments that:

"All who have investigated the ethnography of war have complained about the poverty of the material, but I can assure you that it is magnificent compared with the ethnography of peacemaking, which if present at all is usually relegated to a paragraph or two at the close of the discussion on war. Rarely does the rubric peace appear in an index" (Goldschmidt 1994:110).

This might leave an impression that nonviolent and peaceful societies are rare. But what is even more unfortunate is that it leaves a gap in the body of knowledge about how the phenomenon of peace is experienced and practiced in different parts of the world.

The large amount of the attention given to explain the violent aspects of societies in social sciences also applies to the African continent. When starting to search for literature I found out that a number of books and articles deal with war and violence in Africa, or with the topic or re-establishing peace after a period of war, and that it was far more difficult to find literature focusing on peace as a social phenomenon there. I believe that peace and nonviolence, just as violence, are significant phenomena of the African continent that need and deserve to be documented, deconstructed and explained in context. Just as war and violence need to be reduced, nonviolence and peace need to be further developed – and understood at a social level in their own context.

The importance of empirical studies focusing on the attributes and conditions of nonviolence and peace in societies is stressed by various authors (cf. Barfield 1989; Galtung 1969; Sponsel 1994; Howell and Willis 1989). I agree with these scholars who claim that anthropologists have a significant contribution to make in the pursuit of more knowledge about the phenomena of both war and peace, the strength of anthropology being first and always ethnography (cf. Howell and Willis 1989:viii). The fact that the body of work on peace and violence is limited compared to the work on war and violence, inspires me to further knowledge in this field.

What is peace? – theoretical clarifications

Webel makes an interesting point when he questions whether peace has an 'essence', an ontology, or if it is like other theoretical terms such as justice, freedom and virtue?; "[*s]omething intangible, but which virtually all rational people prize?"* (Webel 2007:7). He claims that we often recognize peace by its absence, just like we do with states such as happiness, harmony, love, justice and freedom (Webel 2007).

With references to one of Immanuel Kant's famous terms, I believe peace is not 'a thing in itself'; rather it is socially constructed. In other words, peace is something that people *do* or *make*. When saying this I am inspired by Richards who edited the volume "No war no peace" (2005). His argument is not about peace, but war. He claims that war is not a thing in itself; war, like peace, is *organized* by many social agents.

Richard claims it is important to comprehend the practices of war and peace, such as how people mobilize and organize for war (and peace – my comment). Sponsel and Gregor also claim that "*Like war, peace has essential preconditions: a structure, an organization, and values, attitudes and emotions that sustain it*" (Sponsel and Gregor 1994:xv). Since peace requires social organization we can speak of it as something that is being practiced.

Montagu notes that there are many different conditions that shape and control the intra- and intergroup relations we call peace and violence (Montgagu 1994). When working with the concept of peace an important question is *what* is peace *when* and *where* and to *whom?*; and whose definition counts? When focusing on peace in this thesis I will be considering it as a situational, relative concept.

Peace, like many theoretical terms, is somewhat challenging to define. I will now say something about the approach I have chosen to use when framing my material regarding the different conceptualizations of peace in the area under study.

'Negative' and 'positive' peace

The most fundamental conceptualization of peace is between *negative* and *positive* peace (Lauritzen 2013). In the following, I will elaborate on that distinction and explain why I believe it is valid or useful, although it is contested.

Johan Galtung, who is considered by many to be the father of peace studies, is also viewed by many as the first to propose the conceptualization of peace between *negative* versus *positive* peace in his article 'Violence, Peace and Peace Research' (1969). Although Galtung may have

made the distinction known, it dit not originate with him. Others had used this distinction before, such as Martin Luther King, whom I referred to in the beginning of this chapter.

Galtung notes that *negative* peace has historically denoted the 'absence of war' and other forms of wide scale violent human conflict (Galtung 1969); peace is often understood as non-war and non-violence (Webel and Galtung 2007). This way of viewing peace defines or determines it negatively, as it defines peace by the absence of certain conditions (ibid.). Barfield notes that this is a narrow view of peace which can be associated with the political philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1651) who saw "*peace preserved only by threat of retaliatory violence through government policies and the military, and nonviolence as just a narrow political strategy"* (Hobbes 1651 cited in Barfield 1998:350).

Sponsel (1994) also claims that this is a narrow focus, since it is just deals with security, stability and order, and that social scientists with an allegiance to this position tend to focus mostly on national security, violent conflict, and especially war at the national, global or international level. Sponsel notes that the working assumption (of those studying war and violence) is that " *(...) a knowledge of the causes and functions of war will help to reduce the frequency and intensity of war and to find alternative ways of conflict resolution that will lead to a more peaceful world*" (Sponsel 1994: 6). This corresponds well with my impression of discourses that are state-centered (rather than people-centered), but also with the everyday use of the concept, as the popular idea is that if a country is not at war, the country is termed peaceful. According to Barfield (1998) this view has perhaps been the most popular Western view.

The positive concept of peace is much broader than the concept of negative peace. Some scholars draw a parallell between describing peace merely as 'absence of war' and describing health merely as 'absence of sickness'. Like peace, health is *"(...) a distinct condition with its own positive causes, characteristics and goals"* (Eller 2006:235). Consequently, those who conceptualize peace as *positive* peace operate on the thesis that peace is much more than the absence of war and violence. They maintain that *negative* peace fails to take into consideration many of the underlying problems and issues of peace, such as inequalities within and between societies (Barnaby 1988 referred to in Barfield 1998). In line with this, many claim that also among the threats to national, international and global security, and hence positive peace, are phenomena such as injustice and poverty.

Positive peace is charcterized by *"(...) the presence of positive social and political phenomena, such as justice, equality, human rights and well-being"* (Atack 2009:42). Another definition correlating with this positive approach is that peace is seen as:

"(…) *the dynamic process that leads ideally to the relative conditions of the absence of direct and indirect violence*[11] *plus the presence of freedom, equality, economic and social justice, cooperation, and harmony"* (Barfield 1998: 350).

Barfield notes that those who use the positive concept of peace views the processs of peace as promoting "(…) *the survival, welfare, development and creativity of individuals within a society, so that they may realize more of their physical, sociocultural, mental and spiritual potential in constructive ways*" (Barfield 1998:351). Galtung, and others who follow this way of conceptualizing peace, defines *positive* peace as denoting simultaneously the presence of many desirable states of mind and society (Webel 2007).

Eller notes that the evidence proving that peace is much more than the absence of violence is that *"(...) societies can be 'at peace' one moment – like the Serbs and Muslims in Bosnia – and be at each other's throat the next. Unless people suddenly went insane (which is unlikely and not sociologically useful), there must have been preexisting claims and grievances lying dormant"* (Eller 2006:235). Eller argues that if we don't focus on understanding the real causes of political violence, we will never be able to address it in a serious, useful and lasting way (ibid.)

Charles Webel has made another interesting distinction, roughly similar to that of Galtung. He differs between 'strong, or durable peace' and 'weak, or fragile peace'. He says 'strong peace' is a condition in which *"(...) there is relatively robust justice, equity, and liberty, and relatively little violence and misery at the social level"* (Webel 2007:11). Hence, strong, peaceful cultures and societies promote personal harmony, well-being and satisfaction. 'Fragile' or weak peace denotes a society "(…) *where there may be an overt absence of war and other widespread violence in a particular culture, society or nation-state, but in which there is also pervasive injustice, inequity and personal discord and dissatisfaction"* (Webel 2007:11).

11 According to Barfield (1998: 350), direct violence includes war; while indirect violence includes structural violence. Structural violence can be defined as "(…) the avoidable disparity between the potential ability to fulfill basic needs and their actual fulfillment" (Ho 2007: 1). These avoidable structural inequalities are caused by unequal share of power to decide over the distribution of resources. Structural violence also leads to constrained agency. Ho claims that when structural violence is present, there is also violation of human rights (ibid). Social, economic, political and civil rights, and also the right to development, are concerns raised by structural violence theory (ibid.).

In this thesis, both *positive* and negative *peace* will be touched upon through ethnographic presentations.

Criticism of 'negative' and 'positive' peace

The terms 'positive' and 'negative' peace are not uncontested. Some critics, such as Boulding (1977) argue that the term *negative* peace is misleading since peace is never merely the absence of war. He claims that peace is not the opposite of war, and that both peace and war are complex and dynamic phases of an ongoing system of oppsoing groups (ibid.).

Richards (2005) also advocates not imposing a sharp categorical distinction between 'war' and 'peace'. He argues that an ethnographic approach to war and peace is done best if thinking in terms of a continuum where one recognizes that nonviolence/peace and violence/war each have their own attributes, and that neither is merely the absence of, or the opposite of, the others : *"This helps us appreciate, for example, that many wars are long periods of (uneasy) peace interrupted by occasional eruptions of violence, that war is often (...) a state of mind shared among participants, that 'peace' can often be more violent and dangerous than 'war'"* (Richards 2005:5).

Furthermore, the terms *positive* and *negative* peace have been criticized for being evaluative (Barfield 1998; Sponsel 1994). The positive concept of peace has also been criticized for its breadth, claiming it is a weakness that renders the field vague. It can therefore be used in different ways. It can for instance be connected to vast political and historical issues or it can denote peace between or within individuals (cf. Harris 2004; Atack 2009). Within the field of peace studies, all levels might be considered: "*individual, group (intra – and inter-), regional, national, international, and global*" (Sponsel 1994:6). I would agree with scholars who notes that the meaning of peace can vary depending on the type of problem or level of analysis at which it is used (cf. Atack 2009). The more criteria we build into the definition of peace, the less likely we are to encounter peaces in the plural, according to Galtung (1969). On the other hand, others see the breadth as a strength, as they consider the areas covered by a wider definition, such as economic and social injustice, to be a major cause of much of the violence in the world (Sponsel 1994).

Although I am aware of the critics of the concepts of positive and negative peace, I agree with those who think the distinction remains valid. Being aware of the distinction between positive and negative peace prior to fieldwork, helped me to reflect critically in line with this distinction when I had conversations with or interviewed people. Whether someone was

expressing his/her perceptions of peace, or I was observing or listening to peoples thoughts on practices of peace, I would often pay attention to whether they were focusing on the absence or the presence of certain conditions. Also, in this process of trying to grasp perceptions and practices of peace in the field, the disctinction between positive and negative peace, was useful when reflecting on the disparity between the state-driven discourse conceputalizing peace merely as *negative* peace, and that of many of my informants.

Epistemologically the two distinctions lead to a different production of knowledge as *negative* peace tends to refer to the state level and the protection of a nation from foreign invasion of threats to political values. *Positive* peace, on the other hand, allows for a more people-oriented approach as it allows for more attention being paid to the the *subjects* of nonviolence and peace per se. It offers a valuable tool to assess the way a society is experienced seen from the inhabitant's perspectives. I agree with Rivera and Pàez (2007) when they say that the referent for security should be the individual rather than the state. At least, that resonates with the focus of this study as it pays attention to how people themselves conceptualize peace and what conditions people themselves believe need to be present in order for them to have a sense of living in peace. If we look at the distinction between state security and human security (see Eriksen 2005), there are, I feel, similarities with the conceptualizations of positive and negative peace. Both the concept of human security and *positive* peace includes all issues that affect personal security and not simply enemy attack (Rivera and Pàez 2007). Just like the concept of human security, positive peace is a concept which can help researchers to comprehend issues that has to do with stability and cohesion (paraphrasing Eriksen 2005 writing about human security). A focus on *positive* peace also helped me to pay more attention to factors that rendered people insecure and made them feel vulnerable.

3. THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Social, economic and historical conditions shape the framework within which the population functions. Howe (1989) claims that attention should be given to conditions within which shared meanings are socially constructed. In terms of this present study of the perceptions and practices of peace, it is important that the context be taken into account – otherwise the emic perspectives of this study would be difficult to understand (Goldstein 2013). In this part of the thesis, I will pay attention to some general traits, focusing on the country as a whole, before I look at the particular area under study.

Country background

"Cameron is a land of much promise,
but a land of unfulfilled promises".
(DeLancey et al. 2010:1)

Prosperous setting, poor state of living

Cameroon is often referred to as an "Africa in miniature" due to its diversity found within a landmass of 475, 501 square kilometers[12]. The climates and agricultural environments are shifting from tropical climate and dense forests in the south, to savannah grasslands in the central region and an arid and hot landscape in the north. In addition to being rich on natural resources, Cameroon is also rich in human resources. The population which numbers a little more than 23 million (CIA World Factbook 2014), is young and diverse. 42.9% are under 14 years (ibid.). The country is home to more than 250 ethnic groups (cf. Skutch 2004). Others suggest an even higher number. Most of those ethnic groups number fewer than 100,000 persons (DeLancey et al. 2010). The polyethnic mosaic in Cameroon is striking wherever you travel: "*Nowhere in Cameroon is there one ethnic group that can be numerically superior to all other ethnicities combined. The province, the department or general administrative area is never an ethnically homogeneous category in Cameroon"* (Mback 2000:107-108).

The number of individual languages found in todays Cameroon is 280[13] (Ethnologue). The languages reflect the mix of cultures and historical migration patterns within West and Central

[12] Cameroon is slightly larger than Sweden.
[13] Of the 280 languages, 12 are institutional, 101 are developing, 89 are vigorous, 57 are in trouble, and 21 are dying (Ethnologue)

Africa (Skutch 2004). Cameroon has two official languages that are constitutionally ensured, English and French; both a legacy from the country's colonial era. Eight of the 10 regions in the country are Francophone, including Adamaoua where I did my fieldwork.

Not only do ethnic groups speaking different languages live side-by-side everywhere, but Christianity, Islam and traditional animistic religions also co-exist practically everywhere. However, there is a larger percentage of Christians in the South, whilst in the northernmost regions the population is evenly divided between the Christians and the Muslims. The highest concentration of Islam is found in the Adamaoua region. About 40% of Cameroonians profess to be Christians (evenly divided between Protestants and Catholics) and around 20% claim to be Muslims (DeLanceyet al. 2010)[14]. There is no official religion in the country.

Although Cameroon is blessed with a prosperous setting, the population in general struggles to survive in their everyday lives. A look at a fairly recent annual Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 2013) confirms the fact that the Cameroonian population lives in difficult economic and social conditions. In that report, Cameroon was ranked number 152 among 187 countries worldwide. Nigeria shared the same ranking with Cameroon, while the Central Africa Republic was ranked as number 185[15]. They were all classified as "low human development countries" (ibid.). According to the World Bank (2012), more than 40 percent of the country's population lives below the poverty line. Life expectancy at birth is estimated to be 56 years[16], which is rather low (WHO 2012 estimates).

Many voices, (both inside and outside of Cameroon) point to the paradox that the country is not more developed. The potential for economic growth and social prosperity is there. Fossungu raises a question that is often asked by Cameroonians and foreigners visiting the country:*"With all these human and physical potentials that even the blind can see, why is Cameroon one of the least developed* [countries] *on the continent?"* (Fossungu 2013:199).

One reason why the progress is hampered could be the country's persistent problems with wide-spread corruption that contributes to underdevelopment and inequality in the society (Anttalainen 2013). Corruption and also poor management perpetuates the poverty of the

[14] Other sources claim that nearly 70% of the population is Christian and around 20% of the population is Muslim (CIA World Factbook 2016).
[15] Only two countries received a lower ranking: the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Niger, which was ranked as the least developed country.
[16] Life expectancy at birth for both sexes increased by 5 years over the period of 2000-2012; the WHO region average increased by 7 years in the same period.

majority of the population (ibid.). DeLancey et al. notes that considering all the resources of Cameroon, it is a country that has the potential of being a leader in Africa. Then, he goes on to say: *"Instead, we find a country almost paralyzed by corruption and poor management, a country with a low life expectancy and serious health problems, and a country from which the most talented and highly educated members of the population are emigrating in large numbers"* (DeLancey et al. 2010:1).

Absence of war

After independence from colonial rule in 1960, the country has managed to avoid war and major armed conflicts. That is, with a few expectations: Between 1960-61 there was an intrastate conflict between the Union of the Populations of Cameroon (UPC)[17] and the Cameroonian government. It should be mentioned that this conflict started as a bloody war of independence, lasting from 1957-59. Ten of thousands of Cameroonians were killed, notably amongst the Bamileke. After France granted independence to Cameroon in 1960, the UPC continued to fight against the Cameroonian government as its members had not been given positions of power (Uppsala Conflict Data Programme)[18]. In addition a low-level intrastate conflict was fought between Cameroon and Nigeria over the question of sovereignty over the Bakassi Peninsula in the south, as authority over this area had not been clearly delineated by the colonial powers. Since the Bakassi area is rich on oil reserves, it was an attractive asset to both countries (ibid.). The conflict peaked in the early 1990's with military confrontations between the two countries. In 2002 the International Court of Justice delivered a judgement, deciding that the sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsula lie with Cameroon. Nigeria withdrew its troops from the Bakassi area in 2006 (ibid.).

This is how Fonchingong, a Cameroonian academic, reflects on the state of Cameroon:

"Not only is Cameroon like the rest of the continent endowed with acknowledged human and natural resources, but it also enjoys, more than most other African countries, relative peace and stability by virtue of the fact that it is one of the continent's very few countries that have not experienced the trauma of coup d'états and military rule" (Fonchingong 2009:2).

[17] UPC was the first nationalist party in Cameroon. UPC is known as the most radical of the independent-seeking movements in Cameroon.
[18] See also Humanité (2015) for more on this conflict.

During my fieldwork, Cameroon had still not decleared war on Boko Haram in the northernmost parts of the country, but they officially did in 2014 as the country faced increased attacks from the jihadist group.

Nevertheless, in the more recent history of Cameroon there are several examples of social unrest and civil protests due to general frustration caused by the current social and economic situation of the country. In an effort to fight the unrest caused by this growing insecurity, an operational command force, BIR[19], was created by the government at the beginning of 2000. Many extra judicial killings have been reported by this elite force (cf. Mbuagbo and Fru 2003).

An excursion into the field

Turning from the national scene to the local one, I will now briefly describe the setting of the Djerem Department. The ethnography I present in this thesis deals with rural and semi-rural areas. Life in rural zones is characterized by no electricity or running water, while semi-rural people live in a context with some access to urban services (Bue Kessel 2014). Normally life in rural areas is also characterized by a minimum of health centers, but the hospital of Ngaoubela, which holds the status of a regional hospital, provides people with access to health services in Djerem.

Djerem is found on the mountainous plateau of Adamaoua. The region is bordered by Nigeria to the west and the Central African Republic to the east. The area forms the 'barrier' between the forested south and the semi-desert of further north. The reddish soil that is typical of this part of the country is a pleasant contrast to the surroundings: the bright green foliage in the rainy season or the dry or burnt grass in the dry season. The department is an area of some 13,283 square kilometres. It is rather sparsely populated with 124,948 inhabitants recorded in the 2005 census[20].

The bulk of my fieldwork took place in Tibati, Ngaoubela and Mbakaou. Tibati, which is the administrative capital of Djerem, lies along the principal norh-south highway of Cameroon, and is situated between the villages of Ngaoubela and Mbakaou. Ngaoubela is approximately 15 km from Tibati, and Mbakaou, approximately 20 km. The distance from Tibati to Ngaoundéré is about 218 km on an unpaved road that is transformed to a muddy morass

[19] In French: Brigade d'Intervention Rapide.
[20] At the time of the 1987 Census, the population was 61,165, meaning it more than doubled from 1987 to 2005. I have not been able to find more updated numbers.

during the rainy season. Sometimes when making that trip, people prefer to take another road, which goes via Meiganga, with the total distance to Ngaoundéré then being 411 km. Although that road is almost twice as long, the great advantage is that it was paved in recent years, thanks to Chinese investment in infrastructure projects in the country.

Economic activities, labour division and social stratification

The vast grasslands in the area are ideal for the rearing of cattle. The soil is fertile. Nearly all farming in the region is done at the subsistence level. The department is also known for its rivers and lakes, which are rich in fish, with most of them coming from a large dammed lake by the name Mbakaou, next to the village of the same name. The fish are transported to other parts of Cameroon, where they are highly appreciated. Small trade is also one of the major economic activities in Djerem.

The division of labour is determined largely by formal education (for civil servants) and gender. In Djerem there is also a noticeable specialization by ethnic group. The most common activity for the Fulani is herding and trading. Tribes, such as the Bamileke who originated from the south-western part of Cameroon, and the Hausa, are also mainly involved in commerce and trading. Kirdi tribes in the area often practice a mixed economy, cultivating crops, but combining that with fishing, hunting, gathering and sometimes livestock raising (cf. Burnham 1996). The Kirdi in Djerem participate in trading activities only to a limited degree. If they do, it is mostly the women, who are trying to generate some income by carrying on small commerce at the local market. The women also carry the main burden of the cultivating activities and hence, make the largest contribution to the economy of the households. In fact, in many cases, women carry the main burden of responsibility for feeding their families. An income activity for young men is what they refer to as “jobs”, meaning small, casual jobs, such as driving taxis – including motorcycle taxis.

The Fulani are generally wealthier than the Kirdi tribes. Among the Fulani, traditional social organization includes hierarchical relations between members of groups with different statuses (royalty, nobility, commoners, and slaves). The Kirdi have a more egalitarian social organization with age and gender being the major factors in their social stratification (Everyculture).

Polyethnic, linguistic and religious composition of Tibati, Ngaoubela and Mbakaou

Everywhere in Adamaoua, as in the rest of the country, there is a multitude of ethnic groups living side by side. Tibati, Ngaoubela and Mbakaou are no expeptions, as they are all characterized by multiethnic, multilinguistic and also multireligious coexistence.

Ngaoubela has 15 ethnic groups with a similar number of spoken languages in a population of approximately 1500 inhabitants, according to several informants who knew the village well. Amongst the ethnic groups represented in the village are: Gbaya, Fulbe, Hausa, Mbum, Pana, Tikar, Vute, Mbororo, Dii, Baboute, Kutin, Bamoun, and Banso. These inhabitants originated not only from northern Cameroon, but also from southern parts of the country, in addition to Nigeria, CAR and even Rwanda. The village was founded in 1957 when Norwegian missionaries built and opened a clinic there for patients suffering from leprosy (Lode 1990). Today the village is first and foremost known for its hospital, which has the status of being a regional hospital, owned and run by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (EELC). In addition to the hospital buildings, there is a small market area where Fulbe men have small shops and Kirdi women sell from their small tables. One older man selling traditional medicine displayed on a plastic mat on the ground can also be found in the market, as well as young men selling credit cards for mobile phones plus gasoline in used one-liter plastic bottles. Taxis and motorcycle taxis are found just outside the hospital buildings. Lastly, there is one hairdresser salon and two bars in the village, as well as a private elementary school, a church and a mosque.

In Mbakaou, the population numbers around 4000.[21] According to the chief of the village, there were at the time of my visit 18 ethnic groups coexisting in the village; or, at least that was the number that he and one of his men were able to think of on the spur of the moment – there might be more, the chief admitted. The ones he mentioned were: Gbaya, Mbum, Hausa, Fulbe, Dii, Bamoun, Babouté, Bamilieke, Ewondo, Malimba, Vuté, Kotoko, Arab-shoua, Mosgon, Tikar, Mambila, Jika, Zokom, and Mbororo. The demographic situation has evolved significantly since the village was founded in the 1880s.[22] In addition to the ethnic and linguistic diversity in this village, there are both Muslims and Christians. In fact, there are three mosques and three different churches in the village.

[21] Numbers from a population cencus in 2010 presented to me by the Chief and one of his men.
[22] History of Mbakaou (2009), Personal archive of the chief.

Tibati is the administrative centre of the Department of Djerem. In addition to the official administration, the town and department is reigned by a local monarch, the Lamido, who lives in the centre of Tibati beside the main mosque. It is a Muslim religious centre, a Lamidat. The population numbers approximately 35,000 inhabitants (data from GeoNames). The major ethnic groups there are Mbum, Gbaya, Fulbe, Hausa, Kolés, Tikar, Mambila, Vuté, Kotoko, Mousgoum, Yamba, Bamiléké and Banso, according to sources in the Lamidat.

As I already mentioned, French is the administrative language in Adamaoua, and also the one that all children learn and speak in school. Due to the Fulbe's historical hegemony in northern Cameroon, the Fulfulde language serves as a 'lingua franca' and is widely used by others tribes as well. People who don't have a formal education most often do not speak French, or their French is limited. However, people who have had some schooling speak French, as well as Fulfulde, and very often, two or more tribal languages. Educated Fulanis will switch between Fulfulde and French. The Kirdi population often switched, seemingly effortlessly, between Fulfulde, French, their mother tongue, and quite often also some other tribal languages. Different languages are spoken in different settings. In the churches of the EELC, I noticed how French, Gbaya and Fulfulde were all used during the church service. In the market, Fulfulde and French were mostly used, but also other languages if those you were trading with were from another tribe. In the mosque, it was Arabic and Fulfulde that were used.

A major part of the population in Adamaoua (and also in Djerem) are Muslim. Ngaoubela is an exeption, as there are more Christians than Muslims there. Ethnic groups such as the Fulbe, Hausa, Kanuri, Kotoko and Arab-shoa tend to be Muslim, although there are a few examples of Christians from these groups[23]. The Gbaya in the region are in general identified as Christians, although a not insignificant number of them are Muslims. Ethnic groups such as the Gbaya and the Dii have been Christianized by Norwegian and American missions (Waage 2002)**.** Many of the tribes remain animistic or, they practice a mix (syncretism) of either Christianity and animism or Islam and animism. The chief in Mbakaou, who is a Christian but also believes in sorcery, is representative of many other Christians in Djerem.

[23] Information from conversations with the leader of a centre for Muslim converts in Ngaoubela, belonging to the EELC

Historical traits affecting intergroup relations today

During the 19th century, from 1804-1830, the Fulbe colonialized large parts of northern Cameroon[24] by obtaining positions of power, partly through the use of military force, which they justified in the name of Islam, and partly through cooperation with different local chiefs. Large groups of Fulbe took an active part in this *jihad* which resulted in the rise of West-African Islamic states (Burnham 1996; Virtanen 2003)[25]. The conquest led to the foundation of lamidates, autonomous Fulbe chiefdoms, which meant the invading Fulbe conquerors started to rule over the local populations (Virtanen 2003).

The Fulbe were the politically dominant group in the region of Adamawa[26] in the 19th and 20th century. Many people under the Fulbe rule tried to improve their status by actually becoming like the Fulbe (Virtanen 2003). This happened through the process called *Fulbeisation* in which the conquered people of Adamawa converted to Islam and adopted the Fulfulde language and certain Fulbe cultural ideals, such as their behavior and clothing (Virtanen 2003; Burnham 1996). It should be noted that people who converted to the religion and the culture of the Fulbe tended to change their appellation from Kirdi to Fulbe; hence people calling themselves Fulbe in Adamaoua today are not necessarily "ethnical Fulbe" (Hennig 1993). It is for this reason that the Fulbe identity was – and still is – often confused with the Muslim one (Virtanen 2003; Burnham 1996).

Interestingly, it was during the colonial era[27] (1884-1960) that the process of Fulbeisation and Islamisation was set in full motion (Virtanen 2003).The colonial powers formed alliances with the Fulbe because they were better organized. They used the Fulbe as middlemen to help in their rule, among other things to collect taxes from the other tribes. Although the French made improvements in their administration in Adamaoua by striving to have more direct contact with the non-Fulbe groups, many groups had already adjusted to the Fulbe rule and had become an integral part of that hierarchy (Virtanen 2003).

On 1 January 1960, the French part of present-day Cameroon gained independence as the Republic of Cameroon. Ahmadou Ahijdo, a Muslim Fulbe from the north, was elected as the

[24] The Fulbe gained control over the whole of northern Cameroon, apart from the very northernmost part , north of Maroua (e.g. Waage 2002)

[25] The Fulbe were already present in Adamaoua before that war. The pre- jihad migration originated in Bornu, Nigeria (Virtanen 2003).

[26] When using the term Adamawa (instead of Adamaoua), I refer to the former Adamawa Emirate, the territory which the Fulbe conquered during their *jihad* in the 19th century. The Adamawa covered an area from today's Nigeria to Cameroon (Mohammadou 1981 referred to in Virtanen 2003:8 and Boutrais 1993:9).

[27] Cameroon as we know it today, has been colonized by three colonial powers: Germany, England and France. Adamaoua has been under German and French colonial rule.

country's first President. During the rule of Ahidjo, jobs in the public sector were systematically given to Fulbe (Lode 1990; Burnham 1996). This led several Kirdi to convert to Islam and Fulbeisate. The Muslim minority of the country as a whole held a disproportionate amount of political power (DeLancey et al. 2010). They received preferential appointments when it came to administrative posts and so on, but this has changed with the presidency of Paul Biya, the current president.

Today, 34 years after the presidency was handed over to Biya, the second President of Cameroon, there are fewer political and economic benefits connected to being a Fulbe. Many important positions in the public sector in northern Cameroon are held by Christians from Southern Cameroon (Waage 2002). When Christianity was established by various missions, many adopted a western lifestyle as an alternative to the Fulbe identity (Burnham 1996).

The chieftaincies as intermediate institutions

The Cameroonian Chieftaincy Law contained in Decree No 77/245 of July 15, 1977 organizes traditional communities into chiefdoms. According to this decree, traditional chiefdoms are organized on a territorial basis.

The chieftaincies in the area under study are hierarchically-organized and made up of a first class chiefdom[28], and a second and a third class chiefdom, depending on their territorial or historic importance. Criteria such as the size of the population and economic importance may also be taken into account. It is the legislators in Cameroon who classify the chieftaincies according to their importance (Mback 2000). The traditional chief in Tibati is a first class chief, whilst the ones in Ngaoubela and Mbakaou are third class chiefs. The area of jurisdiction of the Lamidat in Tibati is the whole Department of Djerem, whilst the third class chiefdoms rule over their village and its surroundings.[29]

The title given to the chief varies from region to region. In Adamaoua and further north, a first class chief is referred to as a Lamido. The third class chiefs I met during my fieldwork were referred to as *Djaouro*[30] in the field. I will use either this local title or just the word chief(s) to refer to them throughout the rest of this thesis.

Chiefs are chosen from families that are customarily called upon to carry out the traditional leadership role. This, according to the Chieftaincy Law, decree no 77/245. Family is defined

28 In French, the terms used are Chefferie de 1er degré, 2ème degré and 3ème degré.
29 In urban areas a third class chief rule over a quarter.
30 Djaouro can also refer to the "chef de quartier" in towns.

as people sharing the same bloodline and lineage, from the same father, mother or just the same father. The chief, before being elected, must meet the required physical and moral conditions and must, if possible, know how to read and write. After a process consisting of a number of steps to ensure the candidate's bond to his community where the local community participates in naming who they want, the chief is designated by the administrative authorities. First class chiefs are appointed by the Prime Minister, second class ones by the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization and third class ones by the Prefect (Mback 2000).

Traditional chiefs in many ways serve as a link between the government and the people. Their role is twofold. First of all, they are auxiliaries of the administration and report to the central government[31]. As auxiliaries of the administration, the chiefs are called upon to perform certain acts. One of the acts is to transmit directives from the administrative authorities and ensure that they are implemented. Another is to help taxation officials collect taxes and fees for the state and local authorities. They also have a duty to help the administrative authorities to ensure the economic, social and cultural development of their areas as well as to maintain public order (Mback 2000). In Djerem, informants told me the chiefs have the authority to allocate plots and distribute land for farming and grazing.

Secondly, they have the authority to judge in certain cases according to the traditions and customs. In this traditional court, which I will refer to as the customary court, they settle disputes or arbitrate in matters arising among their subjects in accordance with the native laws and customs (Metiege 2012). As we shall see later in this study, the customray courts remain an important element in the judicial system as they resolve different disputes, such as domestic and minor property disputes arising in the area of their jurisdiction. It is interesting to note that the population relates to two parallel judicial systems; the traditional, customary court of justice and the official judicial system.

The chiefs in the field:

During my fieldwork in Djerem, I observed and interviewed three different chiefs. I also visited and observed a fourth chief in the village of Gangomi, but as he only spoke Fulfulde and my Fulfulde skills are limited, I did not have any extensive chats with him. I did also have

31 Hierarchically, traditional chiefs are directly below the State representatives in their electoral districts. For instance, the Lamido in Tibati reports to the Prefect.

a conversation with the chief from a village named Tela. He invited me to come see him in Tela, but I never found the time to do so.

I will now give a short presentation of the Lamido and the two *Djaouro's* I interviewed:

His Majesty the Lamido of Tibati, Hamido Bello, was inaugurated on April 13, 2008. He is the son of an Mbum mother and a Fulbe father. The Lamidat of Tibati has always been ruled by the Muslims (interwiews with the Lamido and his secretary).

Assana Martin from Mbakaou is a Gbaya. He was installed on May 16, 2009. He is a Christian. He grew up in a Muslim home, but his schooling was partly sponsored by missionaries in the area. He is the 7th chief in the history of the village (interviews with the chief).

His Majesty Moussa Youssouffa is the third chief of Ngaoubela. He inherited the chieftaincy from his older brother. His father who was a Dii, was a Muslim and the first chief of Ngaoubela. He got along well with the Norwegian missionaries who built the leprosy clinic and, later, the hospital, a church and a primary shcool in Ngaoubela. Youssouffa's father encouraged him to choose his religion himself. He chose Christianity. He was inaugurated as chief of Ngaoubela on May 10, 2010 (interviews with the chief).

4. METHOD: ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES IN THE FIELD

Ethnographic fieldwork allows for data collection in context, which I consider to be a methodological strength. The intent is to give an in-depth description of everyday life and practice whilst taking the context into consideration. This is sometimes referred to as 'thick description' (Geertz 1973).

In this chapter I will look reflexively on my own role in the field, including the ways in which my familiarity with the field has affected this study. Self-reflexivity and awareness were important tools in the field, but so is retrospection to reveal potential biased interpretation and my own role in the construction of social life as the ethnographic research unfolded (cf. O'Reilly 2012). The reader will be given an insight into factors that eased my way into the field and also some of the more challenging parts of my fieldwork. Prior to travelling to Adamaoua, I knew that a lot of flexibility would be needed, as this is part of the unpredictability of everyday life in the setting, but I did not know the extent to which I would actually experience that. Lastly, in this chapter I will also pay attention to some ethical considerations and to some ethical dilemmas in the field situation.

Being a halfie; gaining access to the field and collecting data

Going to Cameroon for my fieldwork was in many ways like doing "anthropology at home". Having spent almost my entire childhood in Cameroon, I had a sense of familiarity with the country. From the age of two till the age of 15, I lived at three different locations in Adamaoua as my parents worked for the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS) in the region. As a child, it was only natural that Cameroon and Adamaoua felt like home to me. Important socialization processes took place during these years, shaping my sense of identity and my understanding of the world for ever after. Since I had grown up in the country, I had already internalized important aspects, such as norms, values and behaviours of the culture. For the record, I had also been back in Adamaoua working as a volunteer for a year after high school, in addition to visiting the country for three weeks in 2011.

In many ways I identify with the term *halfie* used by Abu-Lughod (1991). She uses halfie to define people who by virtue of migration, overseas education or parentage have developed a mixed identity. She claims that halfies cannot easily avoid the issue of positionality. I agree with her on that in the sense that one of the things one learns from childhood as a halfie, is that different views and different ways of speaking always come from somewhere. For many,

self-reflexivity comes more or less naturally when growing up as a halfie. In line with this, Abu-Lughod makes a point that ethnographic representations are always "partial truths", but also "positioned truths" (1991:469). Halfies, because of their split selves, travel uneasily between speaking "for" and speaking "from":

"The problem with studying one's own society is alleged to be the problem of gaining enough distance. Since for halfies, the Other is in certain ways the self, there is said to be the danger shared with indigenous anthropologists of identification and the easy slide into subjectivity" (Abu-Lughod 1991:468).

O'Reilly (2012) also points out that familiarity with those one studies can be a "drawback" as one might be too familiar to achieve the required curiosity or become 'blinded' to certain aspects of society. I was well aware of this when entering and planning the field trip. One of the things I did to compensate for this was to choose to do my fieldwork in Djerem, a department I had never lived in previously – only visited briefly. I figured this would be an advantage in helping me to not be too biased and have my vision and objectivity as a researcher blurred. Just as much as identification can be a danger, I figured if I chose to do fieldwork in one of the areas my parents had worked in, it could also be a drawback with regard to people's categorization of me. O'Reilly claims that whatever their objective is at the outset, all ethnographers must strive to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange, meaning one must constantly question, immerse oneself and distance oneself in the ongoing process of producing ethnographic insights (2012). An example of a useful trick in order to make the familiar strange was to imagine I was writing to a friend who was a total outsider to the field when jotting down my fieldnotes.

Having grown up in Cameroon gave me many advantages in terms of gaining access to the field. During my stay in Adamaoua, people would often introduce me to other Cameroonians, saying: *"She is a Cameroonian sister",* which marked me as an insider. Having lived several years in the country before, I was lucky to have acquiantances and friends there. Some of them became important 'gatekeepers'[32]. Let me mention a few events that eased my access to the field.

Prior to my fieldtrip, I had been "warned" that it could take time to obtain a research permit from the University in Ngaoundéré, which I wanted to ask them for. Thanks to one of my aquiantances, I was brought directly to the Dean of the University at a private, unanounced

[32] Gatekeepers are key research participants as they ease access to a group or a setting (O'Reilly 2012).

visit in his home. As a result of this I had an appointment at the Universtity already the following day. Upon arriving in Djerem, that is in the field, my access was once again made easier because an acquaintance that I knew from earlier stays in Cameroon offered to go with me and introduce me to the important officials in the department. After two days I had been introduced to the prefect, the sub-prefect, the procureur, several other important people in the judicial system, the Lamido in Tibati, and several key people in the village where I was living at the time. After having presented myself to the authorities, I focused on settling in the field and get familiar with the people in the village I had chosen as my main base. The very first Sunday I was introduced in church and the chief who was also present, encouraged the whole congregation to take good care of me and help me with whatever I needed for my research. It was a very good start indeed.

Another important event early on, after only a few weeks in the field, was when I accepted, after much persuasion, to play football on a team formed in the village for the celebration of the Women's International Day, the 8th of March. This was the only time during the year that some of the women would engage in football playing. I had participated in one of the few practices before the tournament, at which time the women commented: "*You play like a man! You have to be part of our team"*. I realized that the women would not take *no* for an answer. So, there I was, observing how the women borrowed more or less suitable shoes from fellow villagers, while outfits were borrowed from the men's team. The womens's team I played in reached the final, which was played at the main football field in Tibati with a huge crowd cheering and laughing. The crowd included important local authorities, as well as commentators equipped with microphones and loudspeakers who, of course, made comments about every move on the field. After this event, I was known all over the Department – not only as a researcher or a white person, but as someone who had sweat, gotten dirty and fought for the honor of not only the local girls, but also the village where I resided. I did not realize it until after the game, but that incident in many ways marked me utterly as an insider and made many people find me more approachable.

As I wanted to gain access to different perspectives of peace, I started observing and hanging out with people belonging to different communities and with different social statuses in these communities. During my fieldwork I observed and/or had conversations or interviews with men and women, young and elderly, village chiefs, traders, farmers, teachers, unemployed and self-employed, as well as people with a regular income. The people I got to know can also be categorized as well-educated and illiterate people, autochtones and immigrants to the area

under study. Finally, the ones I met can be categorized as Christians and Muslims, or Kirdi and Fulbe. Practicing participant observation, I immersed myself in the everyday lives of the people I got to know. I walked with my informants[33], worked in the fields, carried water from the well, sat in the market with the women, and followed the men as they went fishing. I shared meals with people and had something to drink at the local pub. I danced, laughed and was laughed at, cried, celebrated and mourned. I took part in official events as well as private events. Thus, I got to experience the joys, the worries, the sorrows, the frustrations and the challenges of the researched – and I also learned about their views on how the wider structures of the society affect their lives.

Knowing a culture is as much about embodied knowledge as it is about intellectual activity. Embodied knowledge is knowledge that has become part of who we are (O'Reilley 2012). Like O'Reilly, I believe that ethnographic fieldwork is best done when involving and engaging the body and all the senses (ibid.). She notes: *"Participant observation is an embodied activity; it is more than just being there and involves some doing along with others"* (O'Reilly 2012:99). One such embodied experience of an everyday activity of one of my informants happened for instance one day when I followed a woman to fetch wood in the bush some kilometres outside the village; chopped wood with an machete that was far from sharp and had a broken handle; felt the heavy pile of wood weighing uncomfortably on my head as we walked back to the village whilst sweating in the hot sun. As a result, I experienced first-hand how physically demanding this everyday tasks of the women are.

Having socialized into the Cameroonian culture as a child, I have two sets of body languages; a 'Norwegian' one plus a body language adapted to the Cameroonian context. This, I believe, helped create resonance and gain rapport with people (see Wikan 1992 for more on resonance). Having background knowledge and thus being able to perform both "basic empathy" and "complex empathy", was also a huge advantage (see Hollan 2012 and Hollan and Throop 2008 for more on empathy). Hence, being able to adapt my body language, my way of speaking and my humour to relate to people from different ethnic and religious background in the field from day one, I did not have to spend a lot of time settling in.

The methods of participant observation and qualitative interviewing used in the field were combined with some quantitative work, such as mapping of the demography in the villages under study. According to Shweder (1997) good anthropological research ought to involve

[33] Also referred to as 'go-along method' (Kusenbach 2003)

both qualitative and quantitative work. I also gathered textual materials that I felt might be of interest, such as newspaper articles, pamphlets, as well as documents my informants shared with me.

Participant observation also involved engaging in conversations and doing interviews. Before starting to ask questions, it is important to listen in order to know what questions are meaningful in the context (Briggs 1995). I would also add that it is equally important to observe, as what people say they do is not always the same as what they actually do (O'Reilly 2012). In the first period of my fieldwork, I deliberately put my main emphasis on just participating and observing, listening to the discourses and the practices that unfolded without me affecting it by asking questions. This did not mean that I did not take part in conversations, or ask any questions, but my main focus was to grasp the reality without interfering too much, and to avoid imposing my own preconceived framework of ideas on the participants. My questions were recorded in my notebook and later processed for subsequent use.

The distinction between negative versus positive peace, was useful when paying critical attention to the discourses in the different communities, but also when framing my interview questions. Sometimes, when for instance my informants talked about peace in their communities by giving a negative definition, I would ask them: "What needs to be present in order for you to know that there is peace?". This provided much information that I would otherwise have missed.

Most of my scheduled, more focused interviews (with key informants) took place in the second half of my fieldwork, as the ethnography progressed. Most interviews in this part of the process were unstructured ones. The interviews were to large degree collaborative and included open-ended questions in order to give the interviewee the opportunity to speak about what he/she viewed as important. The interviewee was also given the opportunity to add new ideas, change the topic, disagree and so forth. O'Reilly (2012) notes that unstructured interviews or conversations allow people to be reflexive, to express contradictory opinions, as well as their hopes and fears. Most informants seemed pleased to be given the opportunity to talk about their lives and share their reflections. They seemed to appreciate that I was there to learn about, and from, them. I came back to Norway with recorded interviews of 20 different informants. The interviews lasted from 30 minutes to approcimately two hours, making up a

total of over 20 hours to transcribe. In addition I had taken notes on informal conversations and interviews that were not recorded.

An important advantage during fieldwork was that I had the necessary language skills. While in the field, I communicated with my informants in three main languages: French (every day), English (occasionally) and Fulfulde (every day, but on a basic level). Being able to exchange phrases in Fulfulde and also greet in languages such as Gbaya was indeed a door-opener, which was evident when one of the village chiefs said to me: *"When a white skin like you speaks our language, it gives a good feeling in the heart. People will approach you a lot".*

Not all my informants were proficient in English or French. The French that some of my informants spoke was not always compatible with standard French. The linguistic differences in the region reflect the level of formal education and to some extent a rural versus urban setting (Waage 2002). Having grown up in Cameroon I was acquainted with the French they speak in Admaoua, which allowed me in many situations to intuitively grasp the meaning of what was being conveyed. Let me give one example: Humor is an important part of everyday interaction among Cameroonians.Being able to laugh in the right places marked me as an insider, and being able to make subtle jokes was indeed a door-opener.

My main aim whilst in the field was to get past the official version of peace and grasp the beliefs (or perceptions) that people themselves used. It is often argued that as the anthropologist's perspective is coloured by his/her own background when describing the field experience, it is almost impossible to really grasp the 'native's point of view'[34] and produce a true emic description (e.g, Eriksen 2010). Since my background included living in the region under study, I believe I had an advantage. Still, being well aware of the many pitfalls involved in field representations, and also translation from one language to another, I would for instance try to double-check certain statements. Keeping in mind that my presence could have an effect on what people shared, sometimes referred to as informants 'speaking for effect' (Wikan 1992), also made it imperative to make use of different methods to ensure the validity of the data. Different methods of triangulation was put to use, such as comparing what different informants conveyed, or comparing reports with my own observations, and/or eliciting the same data in different ways from the same person (O'Reilly 2012). I would often discuss the same phenomenon with informants belonging to different social groups. However, I agree with O'Reilly when she claims that the 'lies' people tell, the 'myths', rumors or stories

[34] This is a term made famous by Malinowski.

they believe in or construct, the contradictions they express are cultural data in themselves (O'Reilly 2012) I believe that such data may also reveal important information about the society.

Another pitfall to avoid was to be careful not to make generalizations, but pay attention to the differences of people who were socially, economically and politically differentially placed (cf. Ortner 2001). In my study the objective has therefore been to explore a wide variety of perceptions and practices relating to peace-promoting mechanisms in the area under study. Another point is that if I had studied only one group, I would have missed out on valuable information. Several researchers have travelled to Cameroon with the aim of studying one ethnic group, only to find out that the predominantly plural ethnic character of the social settings that every group relates to had to be confronted (Burnham 1996). Burnham, who studied in a neighboring department of Djerem noted:

"Seen from the Gbaya perspective, interethnic contacts were constant features of their daily activities, fundamentally coloring their social and historical perceptions and affecting their economic livelihoods, their political relations, their religious beliefs and many other aspects of their lives" (Burnham 1996:7).

I felt that only studying one group would provide me with what Burnham would call a one-sided perspective with only second-hand knowledge of the other segments of the multi-ethnic society (ibid.).

Since I remained open-minded during fieldwork concerning the final focus of my research, some of the data I amassed ended up being of less relevance (Everett and Furseth 2012). On one hand, collecting not-necessarily-relevant data meant extra work and loss of time (ibid.); but on the other hand, it was, as I have already mentioned, important to allow the *field* guide the analysis and the application of the theory.

Major obstacles

Doing no harm is an important ethical principle that not only applies to the research participant, but also to the researcher (O'Reilly 2012). Avoiding risky situations was not always easy. During my fieldwork, I learned more than once that doing participant observation, taking part in people's everyday lives, also meant being exposed to some of the same challenges and threats as them. As much as participating in the field with body and mind

is an exciting and rewarding way to learn about the realities people experience, it can also be a vulnerable affair being exposed to the tharsh side of the reality.

One of the major obstacles during my fieldwork happened when I experienced six weeks of setback due to malaria – without taking into account the time to fully recover afterwards. I was on prophylactic medication, but still ended up with malaria falciparum[35]. Almost every family I came to know in the field had family members that were attacked by malaria during my fieldwork, with children being the most susceptible. Thus, being sick and having to go through the system of the local hospitals was an unplanned experience, but it also provided an insight into one of the many everyday battles that the people there face. Not only did I get malaria, but Coartem, the malaria medication I was treated with twice didn't have the expected effect. It was only after being sick for almost six weeks, and changing medication that I finally got well. The only explainable reason why the treatment did not work was that I had been a victim of fake medicine[36]. Needless to say, the business of fake medicine is indeed a harmful and unethical business, affecting the weakest of the weak in several countries in this part of Africa. For me it was a harsh and very embodied experience of a serious Third World issue.

This also meant losing many weeks of valuable work in the field. I had planned to spend more time focusing on the village chiefs and the customary courts. This requires lots of time, since it is difficult to know when conflicts are going to surface and judicial rulings will take place. In other words, you need to have enough time to hang around and wait for something to happen. Due to the illness I spent six weeks outside Djerem, in Ngaoundéré. Whilst under treatment I tried my best to compensate for lost time in the field by doing some interviews, validating data I had already collected and discussing my hypothesis with people in Ngaoundéré; most of them had some kind of affiliation to the area under study or could provide resources in other ways with regard to my topic of study. Coming back to the field, I had to reformulate my plans for the last weeks in the field. As I was beginning to run out of time, I decided I had to rely on what I had already observed and make it a priority to be more focused on doing interviews with key informants such as village chiefs.

[35] Malaria falciparum is casued by the parasite Plasmodium falciparum and has the highest death rate of all types of malaria.

[36] In April that year (2013) a warning note with the heading *"Fake Coartem in circulation!!!"* was issued by DIFAEM[36] and EPN[36]. A German pharmacist working in Cameroon had tested some batches of Coartem and found that the tablets tested contained no active ingredients at all.

While it is true that I had a good basic knowledge of the society from having grown up there, some of the realities of everyday life still proved to be more difficult to cope with than I had expected. Growing up, I had lived the protected life of the privileged in the society; whereas while I was doing fieldwork, I lived much closer to my informants, sharing the everyday experiences of the population both in terms of living standard and security issues. I both witnessed and felt the consequences of the insecurities in their lives, I experienced the harsh realities that they face in a much deeper and more embodied way. I witnessed several traumatic incidents and the reactions of the families afterwards.

As much as being a halfie and doing fieldwork at home represented many advantages in the field, the fact that I could easily identify with my informants in many ways, - because the Others were in certain ways the self (paraphrasing Abu-Lughod 1991:468) - also made me vulnerable. While in the field, I coped with the harsh realities I witnessed and experienced, by trying to keep a professional distance, which I managed to do most of the time. However, after arriving back home to my 'protected' life in Norway, I found myself having emotional/psychological reactions as I read through my fieldnotes and the interviews I had done. I had a hard time processing the human pain and the sorrow I had witnessed; I began to struggle with loss of sleep, problems concentrating, intrusive memories etc. For a long time, I didn't understand what was going on, and I didn't realize how much the experiences from the field were still affecting me. It was not until two years after having finished my fieldwork, when I had a random conversation with a researcher who had done fieldwork in another African country, writing about a similar topic to mine, that I realized how what I experienced during the fieldwork was still affecting me and the process of writing up my thesis, long after my fieldwork was over. So after two years, I did seek help, and I was offered trauma therapy for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The therapy proved effective and helped me to establish the needed distance from the experiences to be able to start focus on my thesis again.

At the very end of my fieldwork, I also lost nearly all my video recordings[37] from my entire time in the field, because two computer disks with material I had filmed and a backup of this video material disappeared from my luggage. All my efforts to locate the lost material failed. I was upset at losing that valuable data, but I felt even worse because of some of my informants were in the material. There was not much I could do, but to notify the informants concerned that the film material had dissaperared.

[37] Due to an interest in ethnographic film, the research permit from the University of Ngaoundéré also included permission to record video in the area under study.

To use Shweders' (1997) words, in dealing with unexpected incidents I definitely experienced the "surprise of ethnography" in more than one way. For the record, it might be mentioned that the process of finishing this thesis was also delayed because I have been on maternity leave.

Ethical considerations

My work in the field was overt in the sense that I did not hide the fact that my reason for spending time in the region was to do research. When doing interviews, I sought verbal consent. Most of the time, my informants did not hesitate when I asked their permission to record interviews. When they were reluctant, I either took notes as they were talking, or else I would jot the conversation down as soon as possible after it was over. All the interviewees were offered confidentiality in the content of the thesis. The exception was in the case of informants such as the traditional chiefs since it is very difficult to anonymize them due to their public role. Other informants said explicitly that they were okay with their names being mentioned; but, nevertheless, I have chosen to protect their identity due to topics they touched upon that could be sensitive in some way. One way I have chosen to ensure confidentiality is by not mentioning the name of the village or town of my informants – which is also one of the reasons for doing multi-sited ethnography. I will also sometimes just refer to 'the chief' without referring to any location.

Ethical dilemmas will inevitably arise when doing fieldwork. After a few weeks in the field, I realized that although I had tried to be open about my role as a researcher, some of my informants still seemed confused about the aim of my stay. Most Westerners, who had resided in the area or currently lived there, were there to provide some sort of aid (usually in combination with Christian mission work). My role as a researcher was different.

In a context where many people live from hand to mouth and are struggeling to meet their everyday needs, I was constantly being approached and asked for money. Especially during the first month, I was 'reminded' either directly or indirectly in many of the conversations I had that people whom I talked to were short of money, worrying about how to pay the school fees for their children, that they were unable to pay a medical bill, or out of 'credit' on their mobile phone, to mention just a few things. The needs were endless. It quickly became clear that there was a tension between people's expectations of me and my role as a researcher At one point I decided to sit down with some of the informants I spent the most time with to explain my role in the field to them; that I was not there to give aid, but I was there to learn

from them and about them and their society, thus placing myself in the role of an apprentice (cf. Jenkins 1994). I explained how it was important for me to see how they coped and lived, without me interfering to solve their problems. I experienced nothing but respect on their part for my openness about my role; in fact, I got the impression that they also viewed this as a sign of respect for their situation.

Still, there were incidents where I made a conscious, moral choice to give people a helping hand by supporting them with money. In one such case, the bond with the family whom I helped only grew stronger as a result, and they really contributed a lot in order to make me feel comfortable and ease my stay in the area. Being seen as a potential economic resource might colour how or why some people approach you. On the other hand, not giving people you spend much time with and get to know a helping hand in times of need, also has the potential of colouring the relations you have developed. Just as much as people came forward to support me, it was only natural in the setting that I sometimes stepped forward to give a helping hand. I agree with O'Reilly that ethical dilemmas must be resolved on a case-by-case basis as ethnography takes place (2012). As no methodological handbook will teach you how to do this, self-reflexivity during the different phases of the study is all the more important.

5. PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF PEACE IN DJEREM

In this part of the thesis, I will answer my research question by presenting the empirical findings that led me to formulate my research question: *"What are the perceptions and practices of peace found amongst the population in Northern Cameroon?"*. I will look at how the members of the communities under study characterize and understand the concept of peace in their everyday lives, whilst also identifying peace practices.

Although practices and perceptions in many ways go hand in hand, the emphasis is on perceptions in the first two subchapters, while the last subchapter will focus more on practices of peace, as I look at the role of the traditional chieftaincies and their role in ensuring peace.

"Cameroon is a country of peace"

"That's what makes the strength of Cameroon;
we are many ethnic groups".
(David)

In this subchapter, the different informants categorize, above all, Cameroon and the respectives communities they are referring to as peaceful. The chapter deals with topics such as interethnic and interreligious relations, as well as the approach of the state to intergroup conflicts. I will begin this first subchapter by presenting some examples of how Cameroonians indicated that their country differs from other states and their inhabitants nearby and far away, frequently seen in international media because of armed conflicts. I believe there is something to learn from the way they contrast themselves to others when it comes to values and social skills that are important in the Cameroonian society.

"We are not like that"

"We don't like a lot of turmoil. It's calm here". The comment was made by Garba.

It was late afternoon. A group of us were walking along a cattle path through the savannah. The car we were in had had a breakdown 5 kilometres from the village we were heading to. Some of us had volunteered to try to get help so the car could (hopefully) be fixed. Since Garba, one of the other passengers, was from the village he took the lead to show us the way.

As we walked along, Garba would now and then comment on the vegetation and the landscape surrounding us, revealing an impressive knowledge of nature, typical of the Gbaya in this area who make their living by hunting and fishing. Garba stopped under a tree that had yellow fruit the size of plums. I had never seen these fruits before. "*We eat these ones, because they don't have spots",* he explained, handing us some carefully-picked fruit. *"They taste a bit acid now, but when the rain starts to fall harder, it will change the taste of the fruit,* Garba noted.

The air was comfortably cool as the heat of the day was becoming less intense. The reddish soil of the savannah was a pleasant contrast to the landscape that was about to turn bright green since the rainy season had started. Birds were providing us with a concert us as we walked along. Enjoying the fruit Garba had handed us, I could not help but think how well his words resonated with the peacefulness and calm of the nature surrounding us.

As we walked, Garba continued to share his thoughts on the situation in the country and about how Cameroon and its population differ from other countries. He asked rhetorically:

- *"Why do Arab countries and some African ones have so many conflicts? How* are *they leading their countries? And now even in Mali…".*

He paused without finishing the sentence. I was qurious to hear more. I replied:

- *"The questions you are raising are very interesting. I have been wondering how to explain the lack of war in Cameroon."*
- "*War in Cameroon, no!"*
- *"How would you explain that?"*
- "*It's difficult to explain. We are not like that. In the heart of the Cameroonians…".*

He paused again, before he continued:

- *"We don't hear talk about war… No!"*

Garba was one among several informants who also contrasted the qualities of the citizens of Cameroon to other conflict-ridden states and their population. A well-educated Fulbe working in the judicial system also seemed to share a similar view:

"Between Cameroonians there is peace. But if this peace is broken, it doesn't come from Cameroon; it always comes from the exterior. It's someone from the exterior that doesn't like to hear about the stability that we have here that wants to prove the opposite" (Mahmoudou).

Ascribing conflicts and war-like situations to "others" also happened in other conversations, such as one with Pierre, who said:

"*We are different. You see, in Nigeria there are many conflicts. People are dying every day. You see, someone may even come and kill people in a church. (…)We don't have that problem here. You know every country where there are Muslims, they always have many problems. This Muslim thing has become so bad in the whole world. For instance, those Arab countries, they are not good"*.

When I asked him whether the Muslims in Cameroon are different than those in the other countries he was referring to, he replied: *"Yes, very, very different".*

Whilst one might say that this way of viewing "the others" is essentializing, because individual characteristics are not taken into account and *all* the Arabs, Nigerians and Muslims (to use them as an example), are categorized as being one and the same, I believe these quotes and reflections highlight some interesting points.

Another informant, Adamou, had another approach when contrasting Cameroon to Nigeria and CAR: "*When you look at other countries like Nigeria and the Central African Republic, a majority of the populations in the north are Muslims and a majority of the populations in the south are Christians. In Cameroon we don't have such a polarization. You see? That can explain why we are more peaceful".*

These examples illustrate how some Cameroonians' referred to themselves and their country as peaceful, while contrasting the peace in Cameroon to the situation and the qualities of the inhabitants and the leaders of other conflict-ridden states. Peace, in these examples, is first and foremost referred as a state of absence of war; hence this way of perceiving peace resonates with *negative* peace. This way of conceptualizing peace also correlates with the discourse of the Cameroonian government.

Let us look at a few more examples. If we go back to the walk in the bush and the interaction with Garba, the conversation shifted to the recent kidnapping by Boko Haram of the French family in the very north of Cameroon. It was interesting to hear how that was viewed by people in the field: *"It is stuff like this that disturbs the country. (…) For us Cameroonians, it hurts us. It is wicked before God".* He continued, stressing his view: *"To a man of God, it is shocking. (…) They have locked up the family somewhere! For over a month! It is mean. It*

hurts us", he repeated. Again, Garba was attributing the responsibility for the unrest to outsiders. He also expressed other reasons for being indignant:

"*That is evil in the sight of God because they* (referring to the French who were kidnapped – my comment) *don't have the same culture as us. You go and kidnap people like that and then you hide them, you see? The food they are given is not what they are used to. Even the climate, the housing, the way of life, it is not the same. They are prisoners! It is not good. Even God will view that as evil".*

Hospitality, which includes taking good care of (foreign) visitors, is an important practice in the social setting of Djerem. Garba is a Christian, but Muslims I heard talking about Boko Haram also condemned the actions of the group. Here is one example: *Everyone is condamning the Boko Haram. "They don't even leave the Muslims* alone. *They are people who even kill the Muslims! If you don't side with them, they kill you. They are people without mercy. People are not in favor of them, the rough radicalists"* (Ibrahim).

In other words, Ibrahim contrasted the way of practicing Islam in Djerem to the Islam practiced by the *radicalists* – a term he used several times. He described the Islam being practiced in Djerem as 'traditional Islam': *"We practice the same way we saw our parents practice"*, he said. He described this as an Islam that doesn't encourage trouble and contrasted it to an Islam practiced by younger men who have been studying in Saudi Arabia and Belgium: *"They come back with a tough religion. They are not in favor of simplifying things. They talk about a 'modern' Islam. No, those who come from there, they are of a modern Islam".*

The way I understand it, being able to simplify things, as Ibrahim put it, is a quality and an important social skill that many Cameroonians would see as a positive thing. *"When we make ourselves simple, it's good",* Garba told me. He also said that when you come across as simple, people will consider you as friendly.

Let me illustrate this through another example. When people would say to me: *"Audhild, you are very simple"*; I understood that what they were saying was: "You don't cause any problems". This could also be expressed as: *"Audhild, you are not complicated*!" I learned that in the context in which I was living, this was indeed a great compliment. The implication of this could also be that people were complimenting me on my flexibility in certain situations. So when Ibrahim pointed to the fact that the radicalists representing a new Islam

are not in favour of simplifying things, he was also referring to a lack of flexibility, something which is underlined by him describing the Islam they represent as *rigid*. In the Cameroonian society this is regarded as a threat to peace.

Another informant made a similar point when trying to explain the lack of war or escalated conflicts in Cameroon: *"In Cameroon we don't have any extremists – neither among Muslims, nor among Christians"* (Adamou).

While walking with Garba, our conversation was now and then interrupted by encounters with other people: men, women and children, heading from some sort of errands in Mbakaou back home to their villages scattered around in the bush, aiming to arrive there before sunset.

I noticed that Garba adjusted the language he used according to who he was speaking to, and which tribe they belonged to. Greetings were expressed both in Gbaya and Fulfulde. When I asked him how many languages he speaks, he listed five that he speaks fluently: Fulfulde, Hausa, Mbum, and French, plus his own language, Gbaya. In addition, he speaks a little Pidjin and English, making a total of seven languages. "*We speak a lot of languages*", was his comment. Being able to build and maintain relations is important in the everyday life; hence, knowing multiple languages is useful.

As Garba pointed out: *"It's different here than in Europe. You have to talk to everyone. And everyone knows everyone"*. He has not been to Europe himself, but has met many Europeans over the years. He also made another comparison based on his experience working for a Pakistani company: *"When I used to work for them, they were like savages; they didn't know how to make people feel welcome (...): 'Never mind about all the others! I am me, you are you'. For them that's how it was. But here in Cameroon, no!"*

In these examples I have shown how some Cameroonians contrast themselves to others by claiming that they are different. When I have mentioned the ethnic and religious affilitation of some of the informants in this section of the study, it is merely to show how people in the field from different ethnic groups – both Fulani and Kirdi groups – seem to agree on the narrative that Cameroon is a country of peace.

How the informants categorize 'the others' says something about their self-identification as a group. In arguing this, I draw on some of the concepts from Jenkins article (2000) in combination with some points made by Briggs (1970). Briggs shows how the reaction to what is considered to be deviant behavior, says something about important norms and values

amongst those who are expressing these reactions. Jenkins makes a reference to Barth (1969) and his point that in order to define 'ourselves', 'the others' are contrasted with us – positively or negatively. Social skills and values such as flexibility, which is contrasted with being rigid in interaction with others, or in the exercise of one's religion, were important to the self-identification of my informants. Hence, the way of categorizing "the others" reflected back on their way of identifying themselves as a people who neither likes, nor practices, war and turmoil, and thus explaining the lack of war in the country.

Let me make another point. Jenkins (2000) claims that internal group identification (how someone identifies themselves) and external categorization (how others categorize you/a group), are interdependent. He argues that external categorization is basic to internal definition. Put in other words: *"(...) a categorized group, exposed to the terms in which another group defines it, may internalize that categorization, in whole or in part as an element of its own self-identification"* (Jenkins 2000: 21). As I have already pointed out, in the examples and conversations above, peace is, above all, understood as absence of (generalized) conflicts and war. Following Jenkin's point, one could argue that this might be because the state's discourse on peace and security has been internalized by the part of the population; in other words, the self-identification of the population might be an internalization of the 'external' categorization of those in power and responsible for constructing the discourse.

There is also another option. Jenkins (2000) claims that the categorized (those who are subject to the state's external categorization) may resist. In the next subchapter, *"There is no war here, but we are not living in peace",* I will voice informants who objected to the state's discourse. But first, we will look more on how people talked about social coexistence and intergroup aspsects in relation to the topic of peace on a local and national level.

"There are no problems between us"

Informants in the different areas I visited in Djerem would claim that peaceful coexistence was the norm. One informant, Elodie, said that: *"People generally practice peaceful coexistence*". She explained that on a basic level, there are not many conflicts between the different ethnic or religious groups in Djerem.

Another informant, when explaining the relationship between different ethnic and religious groups, put it this way: *"No, there are no problems between us. (...) We stay like this*

(referring to the multiethnic and multireligious demography of her quarter – my comment). *And we greet each other, we have fun and we laugh together"* (Hadjimatou).

Being able not only to accept differences, but also practice inclusion was stressed by yet another informant who claimed that in Adamaoua pacific coexistence is practiced: *"We accept each other. We don't reject each other because of religion. Because conflicts arise when you do not accept one another. If you come to me, and I reject you, (…) the battle begins. But if you arrive and I accept you easily, you will integrate rapidly, you won't have any problems"* (Mahmoudou*).*

Tolerance was highlighted frequently as an important value in the society. Accordng to several informants, tolerance is about understanding and accepting ethnic and religious differences. I will now give some examples of how practicing tolerance was highlighted as an important explanatory factor when speaking about the interreligious coexistence.

Kadji, a government official, put it this way: *"The country tolerates all religions without favoring one over the others. This means that whenever there is a ceremony in one religion, whether it is Muslim or whatever, the state arranges to send their representatives there".* Kadji was invited as an official to an event I was present at in the church. Both leaders from different religious communities and representatives from the government were invited. Kadji stated: *"That is the very essence of secularism; it's to say we tolerate all religions, we don't favor one over the other".*

The Lamido of Tibati, viewed as an important religious leader by many, also encouraged interreligious tolerance: *"Thanks to God, in Djerem where the Muslims are in majority, we the Islamic leaders leave to all religions to practice their religion as they want to. That is to say, everyone has the liberty to practice religion as he wants. When we, the leaders, don't mind, the others* (the Christians – my comment) *are not harassed"*.

He also gave other examples of how interreligious tolerance is being practiced:

"There is collaboration between us. All the churches, when they have big ceremonies, they include us. Yes, they invite us to participate. If we do not have any impediments we will either assist or send a representative. And we, when we have the great prayers, like when we pray during the festival of Ramadan (…), they also come to join us at our sites of prayer, even when they are outside of the town. They are authorized to be there, they are not disturbed.

They come with their chair, they place it, they watch how the faithful Muslims pray and then we go back home together. So for the moment we don't have this kind of difficulties yet".

Another informant in the village of Ngaoubela, Yaya, when speaking about the coexistence between the religious groups explained: *"Between the religions there are no problems. There are no difficulties"*. He exemplified the tolerance that exists between the Christians and Muslims: *"When a Christian dies, we* (the Muslims – my comment) *go to visit the Christian family who is in mourning. We go to their house"*. I witnessed this myself when a Muslim trader died during my stay in the village. Both Christians and Muslims gathered in the compound of the mourning family to show sympathy and share their condolences.

Bruno, a Christian from the south, pointed to the heterogenous coexsistence to explain the tolerance that exists: "*If I am a Christian and you are a Muslim I understand that we are different"*. He claimed that the problem arises if the differences between the religious groups are not tolerated. He continued:

- *"You know, the problem with the Muslims is that very few of them are reasonable and can tolerate differences – which is not normal. It's a serious problem in Nigeria. It's not just in Nigeria. There is a lot of this in the Sahel region. From Nigeria, from Mali…".*
- "*Are you worried that this might happen in Cameroon as well?",* I asked.
- *"No, I think in Cameroon the thing (…) is you don't have an area that can be classified as a Muslim area as such. In Djerem there are Muslims, but then there are the Gbaya and all the others who are not Muslims. (…) I think in Cameroon, the co-existence of different tribes and different religions lets people be more tolerant"*.

Another informant, Marcel, also explained how the most important thing is that people of different religions live close together; they interact on a daily basis. He explained that he himself grew up in a Christian family in the south, but that a large number of his neighbors were Muslims. The fact that he had grown up with them, that he had known them since childhood, and had been interacting and playing football with them, made it impossible for him now as an adult to accept it when they were not treated well or to have a conflict with them. *"This is how it is in most parts of Cameroon; people coexist",* he said.

Yet another informant, Pierre, also claimed that they don't have ethnic conflicts in Cameroon, an assertion he explained this way:

"We have many ethnic groups in Cameroon. We have more than 241 different languages. Yes, 241. So that's why you find that you can never have a conflict, because there will always be someone who will say 'No, I don't like that idea'. You mobilize with two people here, but then five other people will say 'No, we don't want that'. That's why you find there's no conflict in Cameroon".

Several informants stressed ethnic diversity as being a stabilizing factor in the country. Two of the informants I interviewed, Bruno and Adamou, contrasted the ethnic demography in Cameroon to that in Rwanda. Here is how Adamou put it: *"When you don't have many ethnic groups, the conflicts can easily become generalized"*. He exemplified this by pointing to a well-known conflict in Adamaoua in the early 90's[38]:

"*When for instance the Gbaya and the Fulbe were fighting in '91 and '92, the Hausa intervened to separate them. The Fulbe were discontent with the Hausa, because they believed that since the Hausa were Muslims like them, they would fight on their side. So when you fight, the others are watching."*

He continued eagerly: "*When the Gbaya are fighting, the Beti are watching; whereas when there are only two ethnic groups, like in Rwanda, when the conflict explodes, it easily becomes generalized (…). So it is for this reason that in a context where there is religious and ethnic diversity, generalized conflicts are more unlikely"* (Adamou).

Another informant, one of the many who happened to be married to a woman from a different tribe than his proclaimed: *"That's what makes the strength of Cameroon; we are many ethnic groups"* (David).

Several informants pointed to how interethnic marriages are quite frequent in the country and how this also could be seen as to explain the peace found in Cameroon. Fossungu claims that: *"Ethnic, religious, and cultural tolerance is the order of the day in Cameroon because inter-ethnic, inter-religious, and inter-cultural (…) marriages are very common and regarded as perfectly normal in the country"* (Fossungu 2013:200).[39]

With regard to the absence of religious violence in Djerem, some informants pointed out that religious extremists have so far been almost non-existent in the region. This has already been

[38] The conflict will be dealt more with later in this chapter.
[39] However, in the area under study people pointed out how marriages between Muslims and Christians happens less frequent than marriages between other groups.

mentioned, but it was a theme that was brought up repeatedly by both Christian and Muslim informants. The fact that there is not a tradition of religious extremism was highlighted as an important explanation of the social, intergroup peace by several informants (Marcel, Ibrahim, Mahmoudou and Adamou). To quote Marcel: *"(...) another advantage in Cameroon is that there are neither very extreme Christians, nor very extreme Muslims".* However, some people in the field expressed concern that there is a tendency toward a growing religious extremism and religious intolerance amongst some young Muslims that are being educated abroad[40]. According to Adama (2004), the 'pure' Islam these young Muslims are professing is not compatible with the most common form of Islam in Cameroon that is a blend of traditional Islam plus local beliefs and practices.

When asked specifically about relations between Muslims and Christians, the majority of the people I spoke to did not perceive hostility between the two religions as being a major issue[41]. This finding concurs with those presented by the Pew Research Center (2013): *"People throughout the region generally see conflict between religious groups as much less of a problem than unemployment, crime or political corruption*".

I noticed how people talked about religious and ethnic groups or conflicts interchangeably. Pew Research Center (2013) also notes that in Cameroon the concern about religious conflict corresponds rather closely with people's concerns about ethnic conflict. In Cameroon, 28% cited religious conflict as a big problem and 30% cited ethnic conflict as being a problem. On the other hand, when asked to name a very big problem, 82% cited crime; 74% said corrupt political leaders; and as many as 91 % mentioned unemployment. People's concerns over these latter issues are something I will look more into in the next subchapter. But for now, let me shed light on a few more important findings.

[40] Fear of Christian fundamentalism was never mentioned as a threat to peace.

[41] The Muslims I interviewed expressed a positive view of the Christians, or at least negative views were not mentioned. Christians, on the other hand, expressed positive or mixed views of Muslims, but with far fewer expressing negative views. These findings correspond to those presented in 2013 by the Pew Research Center. During my fieldwork, few talked about tension between the religions; except I would sometimes hear non-Muslim people say that Muslims considered them as not being pure, or as being in some way inferior to them. Burnham also noted this when looking at the many elements that sparked the conflict in Meiganga in 1991-92 (Burnham 1996). It could also be worth noting that in the study from the Pew Research Center, only 12% amongst both Muslim and Christian groups said the government was treating their religious group unfairly (ibid.). My informants said it is a good thing that others are free to practice their religion. It was also interesting to note that several informants claimed that intrareligious conflicts was a more relevant issue than interreligious conflicts. During my time in the field people referred to how both the Muslim community and the Christian church were having issues of internal conflicts between different groups or factions (amongst the Muslims: those who had studied in e.g. Saudi Arabia versus the traditionalists; in the EELC: different factions based on ethnic differences).

Instead of viewing the coexistence of ethnic and religious groups as a threat to peace, this plural coexistence was put forward as an explanatory factor of peace amongst my informants. A point made by several persons (Bruno, Pierre, Adamou, David), was that it is rare to see generalized conflicts in Camreoon, because the diverse setting makes mobilization of larger groups difficult or even impossible.

An argument made by Richards (2005) and Sponesel and Gregor (1994) is that when civil violence such as ethnic or religious riots breaks out it is because it is organized. Another point is that when rebellion happens it tends to be ethnically particular (Collier 2000). Collier notes: *"(...) the more the society is divided into a patchwork of different ethnic and religious groups, the more difficult will it be to recruit a force of a sufficient scale to be viable"* (2000:11). This assertion is in line with the point made by the informants mentioned above. What Collier is saying is that ethnic diversity correlates only weakly with civil war (ibid.). He found that countries such as Tanzania which have many ethnic groups are better at avoiding conflicts than countries where two or three ethnic blocks compete for control. If one group is dominant, that is if a group has between 45 and 90% of the population, it is not unlikely that the majority has both the power and the intersest to exploit them minority (ibid.).Collier argues that sometimes the minority decides to fight as it might fear permanent exploitation. In such societies, it doesn't really make a difference who is in power, the majority or the minority. If the minority is in power, it might not trust democracy as it does not trust the majority. Collier says that the Tutsi-dominated government of Rwanda and Burundi is perhaps an example of that (ibid.). This concurs with the citation of one of my informants (Adamou) who contrasted Cameroon to countries who have only two or three ethnic groups.

It is somehow tempting to draw a parallel between the contemporary official debate in the Norwegian media about how the development of 'parallel' societies[42] raises the risk of conflicts and organized civil violence. In the social setting of Djerem, people's lives are so intertwined with one other with so many common arenas of interaction – and with the traditional leaders also encouraging this - that they do not have the challenges normally associated with parallel societies.

The examples I have presented in this subchapter all have something in common in that they convey how differences are downplayed in everyday life. Bue Kessel (2014), in a study done

[42] Some city districts in Sweden have frequently been referred to in the media, as well as Molenbeek on the outskirts of Brussels (cf. Rossavik 2016).

in Ngaoundéré noted how ethnicity is downplayed in the everyday interaction of the women she was studying. My impression is that ethnic and religious differences are also downplayed in the everyday life of the population in Djerem.

In this section I have presented examples from conversations, interviews and observations made in the field, all of which show how peaceful interaction and coexistence is the norm in Djerem. With that said, this subchapter also gives several examples of how people operated with positive definitions of social peace as the examples they provided point to what they viewed as being the content of social peace. Social values such as tolerance, flexibility and inclusion were stressed as being important in intergroup interactions and something that was being practiced in the everyday life.

Other charcteristics of social peace, stressing social harmony, were also mentioned by one of my informants, Garba. When I asked him how he would know when peace existed, he answered: *"That is to say that in my heart I have love for you, you have love for me. When I see you, it makes me feel good, when you see me it makes you feel good - well, there's no trouble between us. We can chat together, we can eat together, and we can coexist. You see? Peace is living side by side".*

On another occasion Garba told me:

"You know there is peace when there are no problems between you (and your neigbhour – my comment). *You love each other. You must smile together. You have to love your brother and everyone, without making a distinction between the races. You should not seek to do things that will harm another person. That's when you live in peace"*.

These are all positive characteristics pointing to visible signs of intergroup peace: greeting each other, being able to laugh together, sit down together, chat together, share a meal and collaborate. Hadjimatou, whom I referred to earlier, also emphasized several of these interactions. Another informant, David, from the Mambila tribe pointed out the importance of not being angry for a long time and holding a grudge, as he regarded that as a threat to peace:

"Cameroon is a country of peace. We are usually not angry for a long time. We forget. If for instance I am discussing land property with a person from the Gbaya tribe… Or maybe I am doing something wrong to a Gbaya... If he continues to hold a grudge it can easily develop into something in the future. It can turn into a war between the ethnic groups".

Despite describing the community as being at peace, the population in Djerem also talked about historical lines of conflict, which had the potential to surface under ceratin circumstances. Although (and as I have already pointed out) the multitude of ethnic groups in the society was often used by my informants to explain the stability of the country, ethnic and religious traits in the society were sometimes brought up when mentioning potential drivers of conflict. In order to shed some further light on the perceptions of peace, we will look at how social relations are still colored by the history of Adamaoua and can present a threat to social peace.

"We cannot laugh together for a long time"

- *"Would you say that you have peace in your village?,* I asked.
- "*Well, there is a bit of peace…",* Assana answered.

Assana Martin is the chief of Mbakaou. Here is the story he told to explain why only *a bit* of peace was present in his village at the time of my fieldwork. Although that story dates back to 2009, long before I met Assana, I've chosen to include it as it highlights a relevant conflict line that several informants, both Kirdi and Fulbe, pointed to when speaking of potential conflicts in Northern Cameroon. Although other informants have confirmed the story and it correlates with my impressions of the ethnic and religious climate in the area under study, it is worth noting that this is Assana's representation of what happened.

Assana who is a Christian, was the first chief in the village to be an adherent of a religion other than Islam. According to Assana, the founder of the village was a Muslim Gbaya; the chief consistently emphasizes that the Gbaya are the original *'autocthones'* of the village. He himself also belongs to the ethnic group Gbaya. He refers to the Fulbe as the *"comers."*[43] In addition, some other tribes have moved in from other parts of Cameroon, like the Kotoko from the north and the Bamileke from the south.

The series of events described here started in May 2009. The chief of the village had just passed away. Being the little brother of the former chief, Assana took over as chief and was officially installed on May 16. But then a conflict arose.

After the inauguration of Assana, he discovered that another man had also been installed as the village chief, exactly a week after Assana's inauguration. The other man, now also calling

[43] In French he used the term "les venants", which could also be translated with "those who came". According to Burnham (1996) there were no Fulbe present in the region of Adamaoua before 1804 – that is before the declaration of *jihad* at the time, which was the reason the Fulbe began moving in to the region from the north.

himself chief, was from the Fulbe tribe and a Muslim. According to Assana, this came as a total surprise. He recalled his reaction: *"I said, where does that chief come from? Why did he take the name of my grandfather?"*. He set out to investigate what had happened and discovered that the Fulbe man had allegedly bribed some authorities[44] in Tibati to accept him being installed as the chief of *Mbakaou II*, hence creating a second chiefdom there.

Assana decided to appeal to the central authorites and sent a letter to the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization in the capital, Yaounde. The letter was dated June 9, 2009. He made seven copies of the letter to the authorities in Djerem and in Adamaoua. In that letter, he filed a complaint against the Fulbe man and two high-ranked authorities in Tibati whom Assana claimed he had bribed. This is how he portrayed the situation in his letter to the Minister:[45]

"Your Excellency, I have the respectful honor to come before your High Benevolence to bring to your attention the false political maneuvers that resulted in the creation of a second chiefdom in my chiefdom, and the nomination of NN1[46] as head of that chiefdom called Mbakaou II (…)". The letter goes on to present the following facts:

"I am the little brother of the deceased Chief of Mbakaou, the man named Oumarou Paul. After his death, according to tradition, I Assana Martin, was subsequently chosen to succeed him on the throne. On Saturday, May 16, 2009, I was officially installed by the Sub-prefect of Tibati as chief of the 3d degree in the village of Mbakaou, replacing my brother Oumarou Paul who passed away. To my big surprise, NN1, a representative of the non-natives in my village, was officially installed a few days after, that is to say, on exactly May 23, 2009, by the same Sub-prefect as chief of the village Mbakaou II, a chief of the 3rd class also; a chiefdom that didn't existed during the lifetime of my big brother.

The inauguration which took place in my territory was not announced to me. What is even worse is that NN1 is not originally from Mbakaou. That is what led me to investigate the matter. In terms of this investigation, I obtained information that all the other chiefs being Muslims and myself being the only Christian, it was felt necessary at all costs to weaken my power and reduce my territory (…)".

[44] I have chosen to not reveal the identiy of the actual authorities.
[45] My translation from French. This is only an extract of the letter that I got to copy from the personal archives of the chief.
[46] I have chosen to anonymize the name of the Fulbe who tried to become chief and use NN1 instead.

He goes on to present a series of arguments to defend his chiefdom and have the inauguration of the Fulbe man as chief judged invalid. After that he explains how this situation was threatening the peace of the village and how he had made an effort to maintain the peace of the village:

"One must remember that this inauguration is perceived by the native people as a charade, causing a turmoil that I have had to move heaven and earth to deal with. We managed to avoid an uprising of the population organized by discontent natives, aimed at sabotaging the enthronement. I had to put my diplomacy to work to bring my people to understand that this is where you, the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, the supreme body responsible for the management of traditional chiefdoms of Cameroon, would have to give your approval of this state of affairs in order for me to confirm to them that there is a second chiefdom in their village. For now, they must understand that NN1 and his chiefdom are operating underground (…)".

Assana continues to argue that this incident is just *one* example of a marginalization of the Gbaya and how this could have serious consequences:

"Your Excellency the Minister, beyond this political holdup orchestrated by NN2 and NN3[47] *arises the problem of the status of the Gbaya in Djerem. What just happened in Mbakaou adds to many other similar acts showing that at the core it is really about a crusade against the Gbaya - a true manhunt. Both at the political, social and cultural level a real marginalization of the Gbaya community is to be noted. And Mbakaou is nothing but a territory where this is happening. The Gbaya chief has no social status. He ranks last in the nomenclature of traditional leaders in Djerem. (…)In every small incident of conflict, the Gbaya community is always reminded that they are Central Africans, Congolese and Sudanese of origin, and that they should leave the Djerem to head back to the above-cited regions, without, however, imagining the serious consequences that a situation like this can cause".*

Assana ends his letter by pointing to the ideals of peace of the President of the Republic and the Minister, as well as his own:

"The social peace that the President of the Republic pushes for every day; peaceful coexistence among tribes, loses its meaning in the Djerem where the NN2 and NN3 do

[47] I use NN2 and NN3 instead of the names of the authotities in Tibati mentioned in the letter.

whatever comes into their heads. We reach out to you for your help in sorting out this latent interethnic conflict that could have a serious impact on the upcoming electoral campaign. Your Excellency, we know we can count on your concern for the light to be shed on this false chiefdom that is causing tense relations between the natives and non-natives in the village.

In the hopes that this request will attract your attention despite the multiple requests that you receive, please accept, Your Excellency, my constant attachment to the ideals of peace and national integrity".

After this, a trial was organized at the court in Tibati where Assana and the Fulbe man, as well as a number of official authorities, including representatives of the state, were present. Assana told me how much was at stake both for him and his personal security at that time. Not only did he fear there would be an uprising among his population with blood being shed, he also risked being accused of making false accusations and imprisoned. But, *"they decided I was right"*, he says. His authority, at least officially, was maintained.

Peace was restored in the village. Further escalation of the conflict and a violent uprising was avoided. However, it was an uneasy peace, because Assana described the situation in his village by saying: *"There is a bit of peace, because we still cannot laugh together for a long time"*.

This case highlights a latent conflict that several informants told me about between Christian Kirdi chiefs and Muslim Fulbe; it illustrates how an us versus them situation arose. As I have already mentioned, this case is an example of how the hegemonial rule by the Fulbe over the non-Fulbe population still affects the relationship between the Kirdi and the Fulbe today. I draw on Richards, when I say that conflicts should be understood in relation to patterns of conflict and violence embedded in society (Richards 2005). Burnham (1996) also argues that a purely economic explanation is not enough, but that the backcloth of history should be considered. In other words, one must take ancient relationships (or 'ancient hatreds') into account, whilst at the same time looking at the different solutions that are available to the actors dealing with the conflict. In this case, Assana decided the benefits were potentially higher if turning to the state.

Burnham (1996), notes that disputes over Gbaya chieftaincies became more common prior to the early 1990s. According to Burnham, an outburst in the town of Meiganga in the Mbere Department (one of the neighboring departments of Djerem) between the Fulbe and the Gbaya

in 1991[48], followed a historic fault line which has defined the Fulbe-Gbaya opposition for more than 150 years. My impression is that this fault line does not only apply to the Fulbe versus the Gbaya, but also to the Fulbe versus other ethnic groups, as I also heard about chiefs from other Kirdi ethnicities complaining about their struggle as chiefs due to resistance by the Fulbe population who didn't want to be ruled by them.

Assana told me how there had been a pressure from the Fulbe in his village who had tried to convince him to convert to Islam on several occasions. In 2013 the Christian chiefs in Northern Cameroon had formed an organization called "Chefs traditionnels de l'EELC"[49]. One of the reasons for doing this was the pressure felt by Chrtistian chiefs from the Fulbe. One of the objectives of the organization, according to one chief I spoke to, is to *"(...) support each other against Islam that obliges certain chiefs to Islamize before becoming chief. We let them know that it is possible to be chief and still be a Christian, to follow Jesus and still be a good chief"*. The organization numbered 245 Christian chiefs from the three northernmost regions in Cameroon.

Several informants in the field pointed out how the Fulbe still have a hard time being ruled by other groups. One young Fulbe man I had a conversation with, Yusuf, who I assumed to be in his mid-twenties, explained how his grandfather and even his father had slaves from other tribes. It was not until 1965, after pressure from the UN, that the Lamibe of northern Cameroon agreed to let go of the slaves who did not want to continue to live as slaves in the Lamidats (Lode 1990). Yusuf confirmed how some Fulbe found it difficult to be ruled by a chief who belonged to another ethnic group or who was not a Muslim. He admitted that many Fulbe still feel 'superior' to other tribes due to their historic supremacy. *"But this is about to change"*, he said. *"Now it's more like if someone has money, he is respected; if you have a nice car, a nice house and so on"* (Yususf).

However, if we return to the conflict in Mbakaou, it is interesting to note how ethnicity and religion became relevant in that conflict when power in the village was at stake. The case also highlights social peace and one man's agency in calming a conflict. Due to clever management, pleading for the intervention of the state, Assana managed to calm this battle for power that was actually a battle between the Gbaya and the Fulbe in the village. According to my informants, such incidents have the potential to develop and draw larger groups into the

[48] See Bunrham 1996 for a detailed account of this incident.
[49] English: Traditional Christian Chiefs of the EELC

conflict, making it escalate. This was what Assana feared. Burnham, who has done extensive research on the Gbayas in the Mbere Department, notes that "*Violence to a person was (and still is) viewed by the Gbaya as a collective concern of one's co-resident clansmen (...)"* (Burnham 1996:72). The battle for power between two men in Mbakaou also became a collective concern.

This case also highlights the relationship between the chiefs and the state and how the state is proactive in intervening in ethnic conflicts. I believe that by referring to the upcoming elections when writing to the Ministry, the chief was well aware of what he was doing. According to Erbe et al. (2009), the support of village chiefs are hotly sought by political parties because they have the power to mobilize and influence their subjects at the local level to vote for one party or the other. Erbe et al. note: *"Democracy in Cameroon means rule of the majority at all costs. For that reason, political parties, in their struggle to win political power or stay in power, put in place mechanisms to ensure a majority vote at all costs in every election"* (ibid. 2009:20).

The case presented in this section shows how chiefs are strategic to the government. They also, officially at least, show loyality to the President. One visible symbol of this is a picture of the President that every chief I visited had hung up on the wall of the reception hut or room. If there were several pictures on the wall, the picture of the President would be placed above the other pictures.

I will now show how some informants pointed to the role of the government when explaining the presence of interethnic and interreligious peace.

"The government does not want that savagery"

When Assana spoke about the current situation in his village, he said:

"Apart from the guy who tried to make himself a chief, I get along well with the others. That's how it is. In general, the relationship between the Muslims and the Christians is good. It is going well because the Cameroonian state does not want that (referring to the previous situation with the conflict – my comment). *If you feel like it, you can follow your religion; you do not trouble each other".*

On another occasion he also emphasized the role of the state when speaking about peace between the ethnic groups: *"Living in peace is to respect the laws of your country. There is no*

war here because the law of Cameroon does not allow that. The government does not want that savagery".

He explained what happens if there is an escalation of conflicts:

"If you don't live in peace, the forces of the state will come to find out why you don't live in peace. That's why we are monitored by our soldiers, by the gendarmes and the police. (…)The Cameroonian state wants everyone to live in peace. And that is why the chief too…if there is a problem between two friends, the chief seeks to settle that, to arrange so that peace is restored between the two. And when the chieftaincy is unable to settle it, the gendarmerie is called upon. They absolutely want people to live in peace".

He exemplified this by referring to the conflict in 1991 in Meiganga that turned into an outbreak of violence between the Fulbe and the Gbaya:

"The Fulbe were saying they would take over the chieftaincy; however, Meiganga is a town of Gbaya. (…)And a lot of people died because of that. There was a war between the Fulbe and the Gbaya. (…)They (the state – my comment) *managed to calm the conflict (…). Well, the military came and intervened in a harsh manner to separate them by force. They said, why war? And then they let the government be the judge. The government said that Meiganga is the town of the Gbaya (…). You see, they said* (to the Fulbe's – my comment) *you will not have the chieftaincy. It's a Gbaya chiefdom. The Fulbe were forced to accept that*".

Burnham (1996) when writing about this specific conflict, notes: "*At the time, the country was in the throes of a widespread campaign of popular protest, commonly referred to as 'villes mortes'*[50]*, against the policies of President Paul Biya and his regime. (…) In towns and cities across Cameroon, the villes mortes general strike shut shops, offices and other public facilities*" (1996:1).

Public transport systems stopped and businesses closed all over Cameroon during these campaign days. Politically-dominant Fulbe and other Muslims throughout northern Cameroon were, according to Burnham, strong supporters of the anti-Biya campaign. When some Gbaya women brought their produce for sale in the normal way, they were attacked by Muslim youths. The conflict escalated, with people dying and wounded on both the Gbaya and the Fulbe side. Peace was restored by the intervention of the army and the gendarmes (Burnham 1996). The next year, more violence followed in an incident involving Fulbe and Gbaya,

[50] English: ghost cities

starting in Meidougou (17 km from Meiganga) and spreading to Meiganga. This time again, the army intervened to bring an end to the violence (ibid.).

Assana concluded by saying:

"When the government intervened, peace was restored, there were no more problems. The people were afraid; they realized they couldn't do whatever they wanted. The conclusion was that if it used to be a Fulbe village, it will remain a Fulbe village. If it was a Gbaya town, it will remain Gbaya. If it is a Christian town, it will remain Christian. And if Muslim, it remains Muslim".

Several other informants, amongst them Marcel, argued that although the ethnic diversity of the country is an important explanation for the stability in Cameroon, the government is also aware that the diversity can be a threat to peace: *"(...) they are therefore exercising sagacity on this matter",* he said. Marcel claimed that one rarely sees cases in the courts relating to ethnic conflicts. The authorities are harsh in handling interethnic conflicts. *"Everyone knows that",* he says.

In the case from Mbakaou, the role of the government is referred to in positive terms by Assana. These examples point to social peace upheld by a government that comes down hard on interethnic and interreligious unrest. Peace is in many ways maintained by deterrence. In the case of Mbakaou, one could say that although the conflict ended peacefully, it was in some senses not resolved, as it still causes some frustration and strained relations. Even though some informants praise the President and the government for the state of peace in Cameroon, my impression is that the population is very aware of the sometimes violent methods used by the government. Expressions of fear of the government occurred repeatedly in conversations and interviews with other informants in the field. I will elaborate more on this in the next subchapter.

"There is no war here, but we are not living in peace"

"If you can have the basic in terms of financial resources, life is so easy in Africa".
(Bruno)

In this subchapter the emphasis is on people who don't agree with the state-driven discourse on peace, as they believe and express how peace entails much more. I will look at how people who were operating with wider definitions of peace were taking other parameters into account when presenting their perceptions of peace, the focus being on everyday life and the struggle to cover basic needs and ensure the well-being of themselves and of the family; the latter is a battle for many, because of a struggle for basic economic resources for a majority of the population in rural and semi-rural areas.

"Those who are well off, they say we have peace"

During my fieldwork, to get from one location to the other, I travelled like the locals do, hiring a motorcycle taxi or squeezing into a Toyota Corolla - the most common brand of car used for taxi driving. It did not take me long to learn the skill of squeezing into a vehicle, sitting on one buttock and sometimes also sitting half sideways so that only one shoulder was touching the back of the car seat. In this setting, it was not unusual for a car designed for a total of five people to have four in the front seats (two in the driver's seat and two in the passenger seat), in addition to four (or sometimes even five adults[51]) in the back. Children sit on the grown-ups' laps. On one occasion I was travelling in a Mercedes minibus designed for 27 people, but it had a total of 47 passengers! I was offered the only place left 'available', which was next to the driver in his seat, sitting with one foot on each side of the gearshift. Taking a motorcycle taxi resulted in similar experiences. I more than once found myself sitting squeezed between the driver and one or two other adults. Of course there was always the option of paying more and thus ensuring there would be fewer passengers on motorcycle taxis or in regular taxis.

Since I spent quite a lot of time travelling around in the field, I had numerous opportunities for informal chats with the taxi drivers, and sometimes with the passengers. To frame the analysis in this chapter I will start with some quotes from a young man, Pierre. Although he held a university degree, he had not been able to get a job that reflected his level of education, and so was now trying to make a living as a taxi driver.

[51] On one occasion I refrained from getting into a taxi as there would have been eight adult males and myself in a Toyta Corolla, in addition to quite a lot of luggage.

Pierre was from the English-speaking part of Cameroon. He claimed he had moved to another part of the country to get away from the pressure his family put on him to help them financially. They would say: *"..today we don't have any bouillon cubes to prepare food, we don't have soap, we don't have oil… Can you buy this, can you help us out with this?"*. He said he moved to have more economic freedom.

As I presented the reason for my stay in Cameroon to him and started to talk casually about the idea of Cameroon being a peaceful country, he replied: *"You see, people think we have peace in Cameroon. There is no peace! What do you mean by peace?"* He did not wait for any answer, but went straight on with his argument: *"No, you don't need to have a war to say that you are not living in peace. There is no war here, but we are not living in peace!"*.

He gesticulated to emphasize his words as he continued to elaborate on what he meant: "*People die every day of hunger. People die every day of sickness. They don't have money to have medicine (…)"*.

As he was driving, Pierre now and then had to come to almost a complete stop in order to navigate bumps and holes in the middle of the road. Every now and then he would also bring the taxi to a complete stop, lean out of the window with a bottle he had filled up with water, splash the water on the front window and dry it with a piece of cloth, since the windshield washer fluid pump was broken. Getting it fixed was not a priority for him.

Pierre made a reference to the motorbikes passing us on the road: "*Those motorbikes that you see here in Cameroon kill more people than where there is war. The countries where there is war, they don't die like they do from being killed by motorbikes here in Cameroon. Why are motorbikes killing so many in Cameroon? It's because of poverty".*

I must admit, the state of many of the motorcycle taxis and the other taxis I took often made me feel anything but safe. Pierre's taxi was actually one of the nicer taxis I travelled in. In some of the other taxis, the body and the windows showed signs of earlier accidents. In one taxi, the driver had tried to tape a cracked window to hold it together. Stains of blood could be seen in the corner of the windshield, due to an accident when the taxi hit a person. The rear window was replaced by a piece of plywood. The smell of gasoline inside the taxi was obtrusive. Seatbelts were practically never used. Even if they did exist (often they didn't), using them was not really an option since the cars were most often overcrowded with passengers. In order to save fuel, most taxis and motorcycle taxis would run without lights if

it wasn't totally necessary, and would sometimes switch off the engine when going downhill. For the same reason, practically none of the motorcycle taxis had fully-functioning instruments. This was done in the belief it saved on gas. In addition, mirrors were most often non-existent. The tires were sometimes totally worn out with no tread left. I only saw one person using a helmet during my fieldwork in Djerem.

The condition of the roads also made me feel vulnerable more than once. Several people I got to know during my fieldwork told me stories about accidents they had been involved in, and how they were still suffering from various injuries stemming from road accidents. I believe I was lucky to have only been involved in two accidents while travelling on motorcycle taxis during my fieldwork. Luckily I got away with minor injuries. However, I witnessed first-hand several accidents involving other people: a mother with her baby and the driver falling over on the motorcycle they were sitting on, another underaged boy and a driver whose motorbike also toppled over. I also witnessed an episode involving a fatality and severe injuries due to a motorcycle crash. A young man tragically died before our eyes. *"The life of an African is not worth much*", one of the passers-by commented.

Another comment by Pierre during my interview with him, which was quite similar, focused on the many deaths that were not caused by overt or direct violence:

"Don't talk to me about peace. There is no peace in Cameroon. If you don't have money for the hospital, they will not treat you. They won't! You will die because you don't have money! You see? So we don't have peace in Cameroon. When you are in Europe you think we have peace, because there is no war, but people here are dying, more than those who have war ".

At one point during the interview I asked Pierre how he would know if he was living in peace. His answered without hesitating:

"When someone is living in peace, he has enough food to eat, he doesn't have sickness. He can travel to where he likes without any disturbances. If he is married, his wife is fine, no sickness... His children are good. They have good education. That's my own idea about living in peace".

He paused a bit, before he continued: *"Because if there is no war, it means we're living in peace. If you are able to make a living, it means you're living in peace. If there is no one cheating you, it means you are living in peace. If you are not sick, you don't have sickness, it means you are living in peace. If you have food to eat…".* At one point in the conversation

Pierre made a subtle, but critical allusion to what I assumed to be the political elite in the country:

"Those who are well off, they say we have peace. But they are fine. Their children live in Europe. They have their bank accounts in Europe. You see, someone will take more than five billion and go and put it in the banks in Europe. At the same time, this country is suffering from many things".

Pierre disagrees with the narrow state-driven definition of peace. That is to say, he perceives absence of war to be one amongst several characteristics of peace. He made an important distinction between those who belong to the elite of Cameroon, who are well off and can send their children off to Europe, and those who struggle in their everyday existence to cover the basic needs. According to him, those who perceive peace to be present are those who are well off. In the beginning of the previous subchapter I suggested that one reason why some people perceive peace to be present could be that they have internalized the definition used by the state. Another reason which has not been mentioned, could be that different groups, such as government officials and also traditional chiefs, are loyal to the state and therefore do not problematize the state-driven discourse.

Returning to Pierre and his critical comments about the elite enriching themselves to the detriment of the rest of the population, allegations of corruption were often made towards those who are well-positioned in Cameroon. During my fieldwork, I heard stories and testimonies of corruption at almost every level in society. Just to give a few examples: On the day of my arrival in February 2013, when I was travelling from the airport to where I was going to be staying overnight, the taxi driver pointed to some of the nicest multi-storied houses in the outskirts of Yaoundé, the capital city, claiming: "*This is all due to corruption. They have taken money from the state*". During my first trip from Ngaoundéré to Djerem, as we were passing by Meiganga, there was a point where the paved road suddenly ended. "*This is due to corruption*", my fellow passengers told me, accusing the mayor of Tibati of having taken a portion of the money budgeted for paving that stretch of the road. I can't say whether all of the allegations I heard in the field were true, but it was interesting to note how often it was mentioned. When taking public transportation, other passengers sometimes pointed out to me so I could see for myself how drivers would put bank notes between their driver's licence and other papers before handing them to the police officer at a control post.

Cameroon has a long history of poor ranking on corruption indexes. In 1998, it was listed as the most corrupt country in the Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International 1998). 14 years later, in 2012, it ranked 144 out of 183 countries (Transparency International 2012). According to a survey in 2013, 86% of the Cameroonian respondents felt that the police were either corrupt or extremely corrupt. 72% felt that public officials and civil servants were corrupt or extremely corrupt. The same percentage was true for the educational system. 81% felt that the justice system was corrupt or extremely corrupt (Transparency International 2013). In March 2006 the National Anti-Corruption commission was created. Following that, several government ministers and heads of state corporations were arrested. I mention this, because as we shall see later, I argue that with a lack of confidence in the police and the justice system, the traditional chieftaincies and customary courts play an important role in dealing with conflicts and maintaining social peace. The widespread corruption causes a rather unfortunate climate for foreign businesses, which again hampers development. The persistence of corruption means that the majority of Cameroon's population remains deprived of the benefits of the country's natural resources. It causes both frustration and resignation amongst the population.

To sum up: In this chapter I have shown how Pierre, who does not consider himself to be amongst the privileged, argues against the narrow notion of peace as merely absence of war. The way I see it, his way of defining peace, is in line with theory stressing that peace needs to be understood as a distinct condition with its own attributes. Peace, according to Pierre, entails having a means of earning a living so that you have enough to eat and that you can take care of yourself and your family; that you can care for them if they are sick; that you can pay for their education. He also mentions conditions such as not being cheated, which I understand as meaning being treated fairly or justly.

Pierre pointed out how the death toll in Cameroon may be even greater than in countries where there is war, because of issues such as poor traffic safety and common illnesses which go untreated. In Chapter 2 I referred to Richards (2005) who also points out how "peace" (my quotation marks) can often be more violent and dangerous than war[52]. One has only to look at the structural violence that exists to realize that Cameroon is anything but safe for its population.

[52] Richards (2005) exemplifies this by comparing the death toll in the brutal war in Sierra Leone (1991-2002) that was estimated at less than 15,000 per year to the murder rate in "peaceful" South Africa that was approximately 25 000 victims a year.

Let me present some facts to substantiate what Pierre could be referring to when he talked about the death toll and the economic difficulties for the population. The population in Cameroon suffers from serious health problems. HIV/AIDS was the leading cause of death in 2012, with a little over 32,000 people dying from it. Lower respiratory infections and diarrheal diseases are also taking many lives, with malaria being 4th on the list, causing over 12 000 deaths in 2012 (WHO 2012 estimates). Malnutrition also represents a serious problem, especially in the extreme north (DeLancey et al. 2010). With the insurgencies of Boko Haram and the dry climate with shorter rainy seasons as a result of climate change, it has worsened. Just as Pierre pointed out, another factor threatening the security of the population is traffic-related deaths and injuries. Traffic deaths are among the top 16 most common death causes in Cameroon (estimates from World Health Rankings 2014[53]). According to a 2007 report for the WHO, road traffic accidents were the leading cause of death among young males between the ages of 15-19 years in 2002, while among 10-14 years and 20-24 years they were the second leading cause of death in low and middle-income countries in Africa and the Middle East. Their findings showed that young people from economically-disadvantaged backgrounds were at greatest risk in every country (Toroyan T. et al. 2007)[54].

During my fieldwork, I noted the difficult material and financial conditions with which the population was faced. This impression corresponds well with what other studies done in Adamaoua have found (cf. Waage 2002; Munkejord 2002; Bue Kessel 2014). Let me give some more background to the situation that young people in Cameroon are facing. Due to urbanization and the general socio-political challenges in the country, unemployment rates are high (Bue Kessel 2014). A report from the International Labour Organization (2013) report claims that the unemployment rate is 30%, while that of underemployment is 75%: The working population is about 12 million. Only a little over 200,000 people work in the public service sector. With government being the largest employer, the 11.8 million people who are not government-employed are a call for concern (ibid.). In a country that looks for development alternatives, the unemployment rates are way too high (Anttalainen 2013).

Especially for young people, the unemployment rates are challenging. Many pursue school or even a university degree to find that there are no jobs once they finish their studies. 70% of the country's population is estimated to have agriculture or pastoral activities as their main

[53] According to this source it is 25 times more likely to die of road traffic accidents in Cameroon than in Norway.

54 The report notes that underreporting of deaths and injuries is known to be widespread.

occupation (WFP 2012). The informal sector with small and insecure salaries is the biggest employer in Cameroon. Underemployment amongst highly educated people, but also amongst other young adults in Cameroon is a source of frustration. One of the young men I got to know during my stay in Adamaoua had pursued a university degree in engineering, but found himself in a difficult situation due to unemployment when I first talked to him at the beginning of my fieldwork. He started to drive a motorcycle taxi to earn a living. At the end of mye fieldwork, news reached me that he had been locked up in jail due to an incident of theft. According to a report by the International Crisis Group, in 2005, half of the 50,000 motorcycle taxi drivers in Douala held a university degree (International Crisis Group, 2010b). The number of motorcycle taxis has exploded in recent years, which I consider to be a reflection of the difficult situation faced by the young people who have given up finding a regular job.

The discontent expressed by Pierre, was also something I encountered in converstations with other relatively young people, often with higher education. I will now present a young woman I got to know in the field. Like Pierre, she was also concerned about the insecurities in her everyday life.

"We are being colonized for the third time"

This section will provide some glimpses into the life of Rose, describing her life as a young woman, and showing why she too resists the idea of a narrow definition of peace.

Rose and I had been sitting outside the local school, having a rather long conversation. The golden evening light had been replaced by thick darkness. We were surrounded by the song of the crickets. Rose had just asked that we move closer to the church since the church had an outside fluorescent light. *"It's better to be in the light"*, she said, without any further explanation; and the conversation continued:

"We have peace in theory, but not peace of mind. They talk about peace, because we don't have war. But if your heart is not calm, what is it that they call peace?". Rose would often use methapors to emphasize what she meant: *"If I have to laugh only because they put a gun to my head, am I happy? That is not happiness. I am laughing because I am afraid to die, right?".*

Rose is a young Kirdi woman in her mid-twenties. I first met her when a group of women gathered to get their hair braided and fixed for an upcoming festivity. The women had offered to braid my hair too, since I was going to take part in the celebration.

Rose belonged to a household consisting of her mother, her father, and her eight siblings, plus three cousins. In addition, they often had visitors staying with them. Her father had a job, but Rose said she didn't know exactly how much he earned, although she believed it was less than 100,000 CFA[55] a month. She claimed she was lucky to have a father who didn't spend all his money drinking beer. Still, at the end of the month, there was not always any money left. Sometimes they would eat only one meal a day. "*Yesterday when I came home in the evening, everyone was complaining that they were hungry. I was obliged to help to get something to eat, since I had 700 CFA[56] remaining"*, Rose explained. She also had a job which made her one of the very few women in her circle of friends to have a monthly salary. She earned 53,700 CFA[57] a month working full time. In addition she often spent the afternoons and the weekends selling small commodities at the local market to earn some extra money. She was renting a house, paying a monthly rent of 10,000 CFA each month plus 3000 CFA for electricity. She was a single parent of a three-year-old boy, who was born while she was still in school.

During our conversation she explained how her son got sick with malaria the previous month, and how she had to go to the hospital, and pay for blood tests and treatment. This cost her 20,000 CFA[58]. She was also expected to contribute toward the cost of feeding her extended family every month:

"Sometimes when I go to bed I sigh because I'm in pain. If you watch me, I work all day. Afterwards my spinal column is aching when I go to sleep. Sometimes in the morning when I get up, my cousin will come saying she doesn't have any clothes. I have to find her some money. Then my mother will inform me that the meat has arrived (in the market – my comment)*, which means she wants me to buy some. And also some flour… One has to do this, one has to do that. My little brother calls me to say I have to… And this one calls me… What do to? Should you remain indifferent? Should you plug your ears?".*

[55] 152,45 Euro
[56] 1,07 Euro
[57] 81.87 Euro
[58] 30.49 Euro

Rose explained that if people believe you have money, everyone in the village will look at you saying "*Since you have a job, could you supply me with 10,000 CFA*[59]*?*".

Since it is the local chief who allocates plots for building houses, Rose asked the chief some time ago for a plot of land, and was given one. Her dream is to build a house of her own. She said: *"Even with my small salary, I had hoped to put aside something in order to build at least the foundation of my house, and then, over time, to put up the walls".* However, putting aside money is difficult when there are always everyday needs to be met. She said she fears the chief will end up reclaiming the piece of land he awarded her, if time goes by and she doesn't manage to start building.

In that region unfinished houses can be seen practically everywhere. The construction of a house can take years. As soon as people get a plot of land to build on, they will try to put up a foundation or at least a pile of rocks or 'bricks' to indicate that the plot is 'taken' and construction is underway. If they don't, they may find someone else coming and starting to build on their plot, or that the plot has been reclaimed. If people manage to set some money aside, they will start building; if they run out of money, the building process will stop for a short while – or sometimes a long one.

Rose goes on to elaborate on how she is constantly expected to help the rest of the family out:

"If my father buys food at noon, I have to buy some for the evening meal. In addition I have two brothers taking vocational training. As the months go by, one of them may call to tell me that he needs to find a place to rent, and he does not have the money, he does not have a place to live, he does not have a mattress to sleep on, he doesn't have anything. When my grandfather passed away, I had to contribute to the funeral, I had to give money. Last month, I found myself with only 1600 CFA[60] *left of my salary when I had paid for everything. (...) How are you supposed to survive? 1600 francs that's supposed to last for 30 days!".*

She sighed: *"Life is not easy. If you could be in my shoes...".* She asked rhetorically: *"So you see a bit what pushes people to do almost anything?".*

Rose claimed people's morals change when their lives are difficult. In her case one example of that is that she is now making ends meet much due to a relationship with a man with a good income, a man who holds a higher position in the area, but whose wife and children live in

[59] 15,24 Euro
60 2,44 Euro

another part of the country. Rose herself has a fiancé that she is planning to marry, who is currently also living elsewhere. She claims she would prefer not to be in this situation, but it has been a necessary compromise (as she terms it) due to her difficult economic situation. This is the story she told me of how she got involved with the man whom I will call Patrick for now:

"It was the difficult situation at the time that pushed me to do that. I had to feed my child. I was giving my baby artificial milk, because I was going to school. It was costing me nearly 7000 CFA[61] *a week for two boxes of milk powder. In addition, I had to buy mineral water. (...) And I was still in school. Should I refuse* (his advances – my comment)*? It was very, very, very difficult for me".*

She met Patrick three years ago. She had just been to the pharmacy that day buying medication, because her eight month-old son had gotten ill with flu-like symptoms.

"I was in school at the time, I didn't have any money. That day I had only 1800 CFA in my pocket. (...). I sat down on a bench to wait for a taxi to go home. He arrived with his car at the brewery to buy beer to take home. He asked if he could sit down beside me while his car was being loaded with the beer. I told him it was a public bench, he could sit down. This is how he asked for my number (...). He called me from time to time. And at the time I constantly needed support. To be allowed to submit a thesis, you had to pay 50,000 CFA[62]*. So you go out, you come back with all the data, but in order for the work to be accepted and printed, (...) they ask you for 50,000 CFA. My father didn't even have 5 CFA. It was Patrick who paid the 50,000 CFA. And then I had to defend the thesis. The custom here is that after you defend your thesis, there is a party, like a little celebration. So, it was also he who payed for the party. So I reckoned I owed him a lot (...). He helped me on several levels. (...).But he is a married man, what am I supposed to do? What am I doing with him? When you are poor sometimes you have to compromise".*

In a context where life can be a never-ending search for money, and where people have a responsibility for not only themselves, but also for the well-being of the extended family, it is important for them to have a social network to lean on in times of crisis. If someone in the family has a good income, everyone will expect them to provide financial assistance. For Rose, Patrick represents an important economic resource for the time being.

61 10,67 Euro
62 76,22 Euro

Other women I spoke to in the field told me how it was important for them to be part of what was referred to as saving groups for women[63]. One woman told me she was part of a group of 11 women. Each month 10 of the women were expected to contribute 2500 CFA, which made a total of 25,000 CFA that was given to the 11th woman. So every 11 months, each woman would supposedly get 25,000 CFA in cash. In practice, the woman told me, it is often difficult to make the saving groups work, as the women in the village don't have a lot of money, and it can sometimes be quite hard to come up with the 2500 CFA for the monthly meetings.

Cameroon lacks a functioning social welfare system. Rose explained how, in her view, the Cameroonian population is susceptible to fraud by the State: *"Every month they cut an amount of my salary to pay to the CNPS[64]. If I give birth, or when I get old, normally I should get payments from the system".* But, the experience of Rose and other people I met during the fieldwork is that all too often these payments are not made. *"They tell us to send papers. We send, but the money never comes!"*

One day I accompanied Rose to visit a woman to celebrate the arrival of her newborn son. During our visit, the women present started to talk about how she most likely would not receive payments from CNPS, while she was on a maternity leave for the next eight weeks. The conversation then turned to the social services in general and the CNPS in Cameroon. The women present in the room all expressed a lack of confidence in the system. When we left the woman and her newborn, Rose said: *"You know, we* (the Cameroonian population – my comment) *are being colonized for the third time*".

In a later conversation I asked her to elaborate on this. Rose explained:

"What we experience is just another form of colonization. Why am I saying that? Because I have noticed one thing: Where you come from, you have a way of life. It is true that I do not know what it is like, but when I try to picture it in my mind based on conversations (with Europeans who have visited the area – my comment), *everyone is equal. Everyone has rights. So you get what is yours. But here, for us, this is not the case. Here it is different. Here you can see how we have two social classes. We have an upper class[65] and a lower class. Who is*

63 In French they say 'faire des côtisations'.
64 Caisse Nationale de Prévoyance Sociale (English: National Social Insurance Fund). The CNPS covers three branches of social security which includes: Occupational Risks, Family Benefits and Old-age, Invalidity and Death benefits.
65 In French she said "la haute classe".

the lower class? In the lower class are the poor[66]*; the ones who don't have anything in life. When the upper class decides something, you, the poor, no longer have the right to speak up. (…) For example, when you have money here, you are at peace. However, you will find that is rare for people to be in that state".*

Rose claimed that those belonging to the upper class are abusing their power. She claimed that those who lead the country practice what she calls "the politics of full pockets". She expressed concerns over the gap between those she labelled as the rich and privileged and those she labelled as the poor. She claimed the government does nothing to narrow the existing gap.

Rose also explained that sometimes people try to fight for what they believe to be their rights, but many people give up on the system. Others never even try, because they do not know the necessary procedures to follow to try to obtain what they are entitled to.

Such was the case for Fatouma, another woman. Being illiterate, not knowing how to claim her rights from the system and not having family members to help her out, Fatouma is in a marginalized position. She had previously suffered from tuberculosis. Since the illness had remained untreated, it had eaten up bone tissue in her body, so that her spinal column was now deformed and her legs would not carry her. She was unable to walk and spent her days in a wheelchair she had been given by the hospital in Ngaoubela. She had two children with two different men, but neither of the men was present in her or her children's lives. When talking about the father of her first child, she commented: *"I never saw his eyes"*. Being handicapped and having no income, she was unable to feed her children or herself on her own.

- *"I am a really poor woman".*
- *"How come you are poor?",* I asked.
- *"My illness made me like this. I didn't know what illness I had. At first, we thought it was another illness, but then it turned out it was tuberculosis. I can't walk anymore. And that is how I got my two children. One boy and one girl. (…)I don't know how I will support them. I don't know how I will be able to be a mother to them till the day that God will take me away. I don't know what to do".*
- *"Have you tried to get help from the state?",* I asked, thinking of the CNPS.
- *"I wanted to try, but I don't know how to proceed. I want to start the process, but I don't know how".*

[66] Rose would describe poverty as the lack of material resources, as well as the lack of knowledge or awareness.

Although the case of Fatouma is an example of a person who, in many ways, is more vulnerable than the general Cameroonian, many people don't know how to go about claiming their rights in the system[67]. Even if they do have the ability to do it, many people, including Rose, would testify that they do not get what they believe themselves to be entitled to.

The case of Rose represents a situation common to many people in the area when it comes to everyday struggles to make ends meet – except she is currently better off than many other young adults in the area, as she has a job. Rose's way of conceptualizing peace in many ways concurs with what Pierre conveyed. Just like Pierre she also talks of the discourse of the Cameroonian population of living in peace as something she does not agree with, as peace in her view entails much more.

With no or few governmental social services to lean on, and with a life full of insecurities that the informants describe as a constant struggle, the family network represents an important social security for many. At the same time, some people in the field who I talked with also mentioned how this at times can feel like a burden and something that hampers them from living and develop their own life. Women's saving groups can be seen as representing yet another social security. Lastly, as in the case of Rose, having a relationship with a wealthier man is a way of ensuring her and her child's material wellbeing.

When Rose claimed that the Cameroonian population is being colonized for the third time, she is pointing to how the current regime, just like the previous German, and then French, colonizers in the area, are first and foremost serving their own interests. Now it is the upper class which is colonizing the lower class, she says. They are filling their own pockets instead of serving the population. Just like Pierre, she is pointing to a division in society between the elite and a marginalized population, between those who are privileged in society and those who are not.

I will now look more at how, in addition to having enough money to live, Rose pointed to equal rights of the citizens as a prerequisite of peace. She also said that freedom of speech is an important attribute of peace. In the next section I will discuss how some informants talked about the lack of freedom to protest or speak up.

[67] At the time of my fieldwork she coped due to benevolence from an European person who helped her with housing.

"No matter how much you suffer, you should always keep your mouth shut"

Most of my informants were careful not to criticize openly the economic and political structures, the elite and those in power. I sometimes would ask my informants why people were not protesting more about what they viewed as unjust.

Rose explained the lack of rebellion as fear of those in power: *"We really don't have a rebellious spirit. Everyone is afraid of reacting. Everyone is afraid".* Rose claimed that the peace you see in Cameroon is a peace in name only, because now, in her view, they only have a partial peace: *"Because I can express that 'my leg hurts', but I cannot say to the President that I do not like your way of leading the country. If I say that I don't know if I will sleep through the night. What kind of liberty is that?"*.

Pierre, also answered by pointing to the President: *"The President uses the military to keep people down. If you try to raise your voice, they will come and pick you up",* he claimed, before he continued: *"If you make a sound, they will either kill you silently… You see?"*. He did not finish the sentence, but went on to say: *"People are afraid of problems".* Later he said*: "The government will use power to force you to do what you don't want".*

Yet another informant, Bruno, also indicated that people don't complain due to fear: *"There's a lot of fear. Because people have been misusing power".* He claimed that if someone complains or criticizes the authorities they are afraid of the sanctions:

"You know they are able... They will not chase him (the complainer – my comment) *for that specific problem, but they will seize another opportunity when there is a small misunderstanding and then they will use that to really sanction him. People will know that that this is because he complained, but they will not put it directly. And this is making people become very scared (…). You don't want to raise your finger and maybe lose opportunities or whatever".*

In the region of Adamaoua and even in Djerem, there are reports of people being killed for unknown reasons. These incidents, among many others, have caused, and still cause, a feeling of fear and insecurity in the society. Let me mention two incidents that happened in the early 1990's. In September 1991, the former archbishop of Garoua, Yves Plumey, was found slain in his bed in Ngaoundéré. He was of French nationality, but had been serving in Cameroon since 1946 and had moved to Ngaoundére after he retired. When they found him, he was tied to his bed by strips of curtain that were torn from his bedroom window. In April 1992, a few

months after the 'ville morte' campaign, a Swiss man, Dieter Stücklin, working as an economist at the hospital in Ngaoubela, was found murdered in his house. He had been strangled with a piece of cloth. There were several rumors in the village about what happened and who killed him, but the reality is that they never found out. Neither did any investigation find out why Mr.Plumey was killed. Mr. Plumey had alledgely criticized the regime. In Ngaoubela, it was pointed out how Mr. Stücklin had connections with Amnesty International. One of the inhabitants in the village put it this way: *"It just made me aware that even in our small village, things like this could happen*" (interview during fieldwork). To date, people say these murders remain a mystery, but there seems to be a wide-spread belief that they were politically motivated. They were seen an attempt to keep people out of politics and not raise one's voice to criticize the human rights' violations, nor the corrupt and undemocratic actions of the regime in the country. A Cameroonian informant I talked to also claimed that he had been the victim of an attempted poisoning which he believed was due to his political views that he had talked publicly about.

One final, more 'recent' example that illustrates the government's use of military forces to put people down: In February 2008 widespread demonstrations and rallies broke out in Douala, the economic centre of Cameroon, and spread to the capital Yaoundé. This was a spontaneous protest against the rising food and fuel prices, on the one hand; and against Biya's goal of removing the constitutional restrictions on the number of presidential terms, on the other hand. The demonstrations were violently crushed by the security forces. 40 people were killed according to an official account, but some NGO claimed at least 139 were killed (International Crisis Group 2010b). The state security forces have been critisized repeatedly by human right organizations, the opposition and civil society movements for its use of violence, arbitrary arrests and also unlawful detentions to prevent oppositional political activists from holding meetings.

Whereas the government was praised for intervening and hitting hard on interethnic conflicts in the last subchapter, the informants quoted here, criticize the same government for its brutality in dealing with protests voicing grievances against the regime, claiming that this does not resonate with peace the way they define it.

Bruno argued that people become passive due to the lack of tolerance from the authorities in accepting criticism. *"Everywhere you go in Cameroon people will say: What can we do, what can we do?"* He claimed that people in his area, were not (made) aware of the fact that they

could complain. He gave an example, which other informants also shared: *"When the authorities put up a sign like that and they say that they want to do the road… and later they don't do it, nobody complains. That's the thing. They just wait: 'What can we do?' Just like that… (…) And this is really very, very bad".*

He claimed the peace in Cameroon is a fragile one: *"The fact that people are so calm, so cool, does not mean that they are happy with the state. You understand? And this is very dangerous. Very, very dangerous. So just overnight, things can change dramatically".* He went on explaining what he meant by pointing to another African state: *"In Ivory Coast, with Houphouët-Boigny*[68]*, nobody knew that this war they have been involved in for 10 years would happen. You know, because Paul Biya is here, so many people are quiet. Because everyone wants to have his own small share"*[69] (Bruno).

In addition to the fear of sanctions from the government, some people would also point to the violent conflicts in the neighboring countries and the massive influx of refugees, arguing that it was better not to protest or revolt, because anything is better than having to flee your home due to war. After all, they said, with the current president, Cameroon had remained peaceful in the sense of absence of war.

Another point made by a female informant, Houma, was how people suffer in silence because they have been socialized during their upbringing to endure difficult and unjust situations: *"Because they have trained us from our early years that one should not scream, one has to endure".* She also claimed that the fact that people don't speak up, doesn't mean that they are not suffering. *"You learn to endure"*, she said. Teaching children to endure during upbringing concurs with several observations I made in the field. For instance if a child fell, hurt himself and started crying, people would tell him to stop crying and be quiet. On some occasions people, including other children, would even laugh at children who were crying. I never really brought this up to ask someone to elaborate on these observations, but one way of analyzing this could be that in a rough context, it has become 'natural' to teach children the social skill of enduring pain and suffering.

Houma also mentioned how some people don't raise their voice or protest simply because they do not realize that they are being marginalized or suffering an injustice. When someone

[68] Félix Houphouët-Boigny was the first President of Ivory Coast. He held presidency for 33 years and maintained for the most part a peaceful one-party regime. After his death, conditions in Ivory Coast quicly deteriorated with a number of coups d'etat, economic recresson and civil war (History World).
[69] Here, 'everyone wants to have his own small share', refers to economic or career opportunities.

is ignorant in the sense of lacking knowledge or education, they don't even know their rights, Houma stated:

"Because when you know your rights, when you are aware that you have certain rights and that if you suffer as a result of violence, it's a violation of your rights. That's the moment when you can say 'No (...)', But when you are ignorant, you cannot actively participate (in debates on issues regarding your rights – my comment), *because you are not even aware that you a victim of violence."*

A third explanation, according to Houma, is that people tell themselves that they are not the only one suffering. Many others around them are suffering the same thing without complaining even though they also feel harassed. *"This is how it is. One has to accept it",* she said.

In this part, I have shown how some informants considered freedom of speech as an inherent attribute to the concept of peace, and therefore questioned or objected to the discourse of Cameroon as a country of peace. Although free speech was part of President Biya's liberalization process along with the introduction of multiparty politics in the 1990's (Adama 2004), people in general still feel excluded when it comes to debating politics or voicing social dissatisfaction. *"It's a long way from theory to practice"*, Houma said. In an atmosphere where basic rights are denied citizens, I have shown why the need to protest does not lead (more often) to unrest and rebellion. To sum up, fear of sanctions from the government is often mentioned as the reason for not speaking up, protesting or revolting. Possible sanctions for doing so, according to my informants, are loss of career opportunities and even being killed. Use of force by the military may be one of the consequences of social unrest. One informant claimed that fear makes people become passive. Other informants pointed to a lack of awareness as an explanatory factor for not speaking one's mind. People may not have been taught to believe that they have human rights or basic rights as citizens. Yet other informants pointed to how children in society grow up and learn to endure suffering through processes of socialization.

Brenes and Wessels note that in conflict-ridden contexts, *"[S]ome of the worst* effects (of growing up in violent surroundings – my comment) *are youths who learn social scripts that portray violence as a normal and acceptable means of handling conflicts"* (2001:100). I believe that in the area under study it also holds true that in a context that is marked by structural violence, youths grow up to learn social scripts that portray not speaking up, but,

instead, putting up with – and silently enduring - the situation as a normal and 'necessary' way of handling it.

Burnham (1996) points out how the history of the Cameroonian population is a long history of domination and having to endure different forms of violences where resistance has been sanctioned. In the area of this study, I believe this holds especially true for the Kirdi as they were dominated first by the Fulbe, and then by two colonial powers. Then, in more recent times, they experienced marginalization by the first president of Cameroon, Ahidjo, and now they are enduring grievances and lack of basic rights under the current regime. I believe the marginalization that these people have suffered - and are still suffering - is woven into the social fabric, so to speak. One might ask whether history has traumatized the population. One of my informants, Bruno, claimed just that. He said that the population was resigned to the situation and he suggested that peace is just a façade. Montagu (1994) points out that if hope is broken because something has gone on long unrealized, people may suffer from what she calls the "giving-up-syndrome".

My examples indicate that both inequality (as measured, for example, by access to resources and opportunities) and a regime that has some traits of a dictatorship are poor statistical predictors of conflict. Collier notes that it is the business of dictators to crush internal dissent (2000). People in the area under study have many reasons not to protest or rebel, although it could be claimed that the objective reasons for doing so are there. In Djerem, history, socialization processes and the population's internalized fear of possible sanctions by the regime if they dissent, reinforce one another and cause the population to keep quiet. This means that *negative* peace is maintained, but it is what some informants would refer to as a superficial peace. In the long term, many scholars consider the use of deterrence by the state to be an approach to handling diessenters that is extremely dangerous (Sponsel and Gregor 1994).

We will now look at another 'phenomenon' which I believe says something about the emotional climate in the area under study.

"We fight and defend ourselves"

During fieldwork, I started to notice expressions that occurred frequently in the everyday conversations. The sentences would either come as an answer to the everyday question "How are you doing?" or at the end of a reflection about an everyday matter. The sentences that occurred over and over again were:

*On se bat (*English: *We fight)*[70]

*On se défend (*English: *We defend ourselves)*

*On pousse et on met la cale (*English*: We push and we put in a wedge)*[71]

On tient le coup (English: *We carry on; we weather the storm*)

*On force seulement (*English: *We are just forcing)*

*On se débrouille (*English: *We cope)*

*C'est dur (*English*: It's hard)*

*C'est pas facile (*English*: It's not easy*)

*On supporte seulement (*English*: We just endure)*

On va faire comment? (English: *What can we do?)*

As I see it, people see themselves as situated in a condition of conflict either consciously or unconsciously, which is why they explain it using military terms (fighting and defending oneself) and being in combat mode. An informant explained the expression "on se bat" this way: *"We fight in order to get money. (…) Maybe we find just a little money, that's why we fight. We fight in order to find something to eat"* (Hadjimatou).

The expression "on se débrouille" reflects, in my view, the Cameroonians' ability to be creative and do whatever they can with whatever they have. As a Cameroonian you have to learn the skill of making the best of the opportunities you have in an unpredictable world. "Se débrouiller" can also be understood as finding a creative way to get out of a complicated situation. The statement is often used to describe how one handles the problems and challenges of everyday life (cf. Waage 2002). The expressions "it's hard", "it's not easy" could be pointing to specific circumstances in life, but people often used those sentences to describe the general hardships of everyday life.

The sentences "we just endure" and what can we do?" could reflect the feeling of resignation or becoming passive, as Bruno suggested in the previous section. It could also reflect a feeling of despair that was sometimes communicated. Here is one example of how the latter sentence could appear in a conversation. In this case, the informant was referring to people she had overheard in her neighborhood who were discontent with the current President: *"Since he*

70 All translations to English are my translations from French.

71 Meaning: putting a wedge such as a stone behind a wheel so that the vehicle is blocked from rolling backwards – my comment

does not create new jobs, we don't like Biya. Biya is not good. Biya has 'eaten' all the money, Biya has sold out everything. What can we do?" (Hadjimatou).

According to Adama (2004), one way of understanding some of these expressions could also be that they express a silent demand; a way of claiming one's rights. Adama is referring specifically to the sentence "we push and put in a wedge", when he says this. I also believe that several of the expressions can be interpretated as a form of resistance. I have already referred to Jenkins (2000) who claimed that the categorized may resist. In this context, those who resist are people who oppose to being categorized by that state as living in a country of peace. In a context where people afraid to speak up, I believe these expressions could be seen as a subtle way of resistance. It is a 'safe' way to communicate that they are not content with a situation they feel that they are forced to endure.

The very same sentences that were often communicated with a sense of absolute seriousness were at other times accompanied by laughter, reflecting another way of responding to social misery: using black humour. When the sentences were said with a chuckle, it would often trigger a humorous response from the listener(s). Some of my observations from the field, resonate with what Goldstein (2013) describes in the book "Laughter out of place" where she shows how the members of the underclass in Brazil keeps their anger and despair at bay by laughing and thereby spitting into the face of chaos. Similarly, I believe that in the area under study in Cameroon, laughter helps to keep the prevalent frustration and discontent at a distance.

Most importantly, I believe that these expressions can also be seen to reflect the emotional climate in the society. Rivera and Pàez (2007) claim that one can talk about a collective, social climate existing within a society. Such climates are objective in the sense that they are perceived as existing apart from an individual's personal feelings and they reflect how individuals think the majority of others are feeling in the group's current situation (ibid.). The expressions quoted here point to predominant collective feelings of having to fight, battle, and cope, as they endure the hardship and insecurities of everyday life. They also point to a collective feeling of resignation or, in some cases, a silent resistance and demand for rights.

When I say that it is a collective feeling, I do this because informants themselves often spoke of the experiences the expressions were referring to as collective. When asking some informants about these expressions, the answer would be: "*All of us are fighting*". Or the reaction would be: *"We are all there. All of us are putting in a wedge. It's hard"* (Kadji). The

sentences, I believe, reflect not only how the people themselves feel about the current situation, but also how individuals think the majority of others feel in the group's current situation. The fear of speaking up expressed by the informants could also reflect important aspescts of the predominant collective emotions in the society. In this context, feelings such as the collective fear used by a dictatorship to ensure order are also part of the emotional climate (Rivera and Pàez 2007).

Those with power or status experience a different emotional climate than those without (Rivera and Paez 2007). I also believe that those who agree with the state's discourse of peace, or even might have internalized it, experience a different emotional climate than those who believe that this way of conceptualizing peace is too narrow. Rivera and Pàez link 'emotional climate' to human security saying that one may speak of a dimension of security-insecurity inherent to a society's emotional climate (2007). The way I see it the the aspect of emotional climate is also an important aspect of the broad concept of peace – that is *positive* peace.

We will now look more at how people relate to peace by investigating the role of traditional chiefs and some institutionalized practices that plays an important role in ensuring peace in the local communities. Some peace-promoting practices that were manifested in interethnic and interreligious interactions have already been touched upon.

Practices of peace in the chieftaincies

Arriving in the field with the chief, he made a stop by the river before entering the village, washing his face and hands, telling the ancestors he was coming in peace, asking them to help him with the task of maintaining peace in the village. His father had practiced this ritual before him.[72]

In this subchaper I will discuss the traditional chieftaincy as a social institution and its role in promoting peace at the local level; both *negative* peace and *positive* peace. More precisely, I

[72] Observation during fieldwork.

will try to shed light on the subordinate research question: *What role do traditional chiefs play in ensuring peace at the local level?*

The extent of the authority of the traditional chiefs varies in different regions and among different ethnic groups. In many areas, the jurisdiction of local chiefs and their councils has eroded since the colonial era. However, in Adamaoua the chiefs are known for their particularly strong power, and they still receive much respect and devotion from their population, due in a large part to the role played by the traditional court in the rural communities (Virtanen 2003).

Let me mention a little episode from my first encounter with the Lamido in Tibati to illustrate the respect people show when they go to visit him:

When visiting the compound of the Lamido in Tibati for the first time, I noticed how people coming to see the Lamido took off their shoes and bent down in front of him as they greeted him by raising their hands and shaking their fists in front of their faces, in his direction. This is as a way of communicating that they acknowledge his power. Whilst doing this, they looked down and to the side, avoiding eye contact with the Lamido as a sign of respect and submission, according to the tradition. They then sat down on the ground with their traditional hats in their hands, and with their body turned slightly sideways so as not to facing directly the Lamido. They did not speak until the Lamido asked them to.

The Lamido in Tibati sits on a chair on a low platform, above his 'audience'. An exception was made for me since I was a white person. I was offered a chair, and the Lamido teased me for having taken off my shoes. That day I was there to introduce myself and present my research project, asking for his approval to work in his chieftaincy. He let me know that I was welcome to the area and jokingly offered me housing amongst his 12 wives, after which he commented on my bare feet: "A wife does not need to take off her shoes for her husband".

I will now present some quotes from conversations and interviews with the chiefs about the role of the chieftaincies in maintaining peace. I will try to give the reader an overview of typical conflicts brought before the customary courts, before I present a case of a conflict settlement I observed in the court of one of the traditional chiefs. Lastly, I will shed some light on how the chieftaincy deals with the everyday struggle and grievances of the population to cope with the various human insecurities.

"The role of the chieftaincy is to maintain peace"

All the chiefs I met and interviewed in Djerem stated that one of their main roles, if not *the* main role, is to settle disputes and to ensure peace reigns amongst their population. One chief put it this way:

"Trying to maintain peace is our duty. We can never, ever, ever retire from that. Because when we do not take part, when we are not trying to keep the peace, safeguarding peace, things will begin to deteriorate Thanks to God, the population knows the value of the traditional chiefdom. When we speak and they listen to us, we truly take advantage of these occasions to maintain peace".

During my time in Djerem, I tried to map recurrent conflicts and grievances that were brought before the chief. In Ngaoubela, stories of theft of the harvest in the fields around the village happened so frequently that people spoke of that as being a problem. A young man showed me how his mother had put visible 'talismans' in her pineapple field, to scare potential thieves away. Other informants told me stories of theft of livestock, such as cattle, sheep or goats. When I asked the chief of Mbakaou to name typical conflicts brought before the customary court, he answered: *"Sometimes when people drink wine, they quarrel a bit and start to fight a bit. There are some cases of divorce. Then there are those who borrow money or goods from others in the market, but then they do not repay. Minor cases like that. (...) Well, everything that we do* (to solve those cases – my comment) *brings peace"* (Assana).

One woman, Sylvie, explained that whenever a problem or a conflict arises one will most likely first try to solve it within the household or the extended family. If the conflict is not settled, one will seek advice from the head of the tribe. If the problem is still not solved, one will bring the case to the *village chief* or the *Lamido*. Then, the next level will be the official authorities – locally or at the national level. Hence, there are many levels and options for resolving conflicts.

The Lamido said he usually asks both parties to cool down and be patient with one another whenever a conflict occurs. He confirmed that in most cases, people have the option of appealing to traditional authorities with a higher rank. If, for instance, one of the third class chiefs doesn't manage to settle a conflict, it can be forwarded to the Lamido. If the chiefs consider a case to be too difficult for them to settle, they can forward it to the tribunal. The Lamido also said that if the chiefs are presentend with cases "where blood has been shed", they send the cases on to the tribunal.

The Lamido of Tibati also confirmed how the customary court often settles small cases. He listed some typical conflict cases: "*Conflicts between husband and wife, between father and son, between neighbors, between herders and farmers.* The latter conflict mentioned by the Lamido is a well-known one in the savannah areas around Tibati. All the chiefs I spoke to in Djerem brought up these conflicts caused by the destruction of the crops of the Kirdi farmers by Fulbe cattle. Since farming is the main source of subsistence of the Kirdi population, it is a serious matter if the crops are destroyed. Such incidents can turn into heated conflicts. During my fieldwork, I never witnessed firsthand such a conflict, but I heard of one ongoing case in a village of Djerem.

As one of the Lamido's roles is to distribute land in his chieftaincy, he explained the importance of not distributing farming land close to a pasture and vice verca when granting grazing land to a cattle owner. If the cattle owners want to move to a new campsite, it has to be approved by the Lamido (cf. Virtanen 2003). The chiefs in Djerem needs to use their knowledge of the surroundings to make sure that they do not allow grazing too close to another pasture or too close to cultivated land. *"This is how we deal with agro-pastoral problems",* the Lamido says. If a case is brought to the Lamido, the pastoralist might be ordered to compensate for the damaged crops by paying the farmer. *"If the peasant has been working his fields, ignoring that it is in proximity to a pasture, we have the right to ask him 'Why did you plant your field on that spot?'. But in order to not leave him empty-handed, we can tell the pastoralist to give the farmer something, since he has more money"* (the Lamido).

Several informants talked about how the population prefers to use the customary courts rather than have their case taken to the tribunal. However, some informants argued that for instance Kirdi farmers may be reluctant to bring cases before Muslim chiefs, claiming they may be biased in their judgements and favour the Muslim herders. However, the official courts have a reputation of being corrupt and not judging in a manner that the population perceives as fair. One informant, Elodie, summed up her impression of the official court this way:

"Justice for the people is a big problem the way I see it. As there is no real justice, whoever pays the most wins. And you can end up in trouble for just about anything. And if you don't know anybody who has a lot of money… The people who work in the courts - I do not know if it applies to absolutely everyone - but they are trying to earn extra money. (...) They behave as if conflicts are there to help them become rich. There is no objectivity. They try to exploit the

conflict to the max. (...) They ask for money and make life difficult for people that way. Even if the family must get rid of everything they own to pay so they can get what they want, it's not their problem. (…)Here we are talking about a justice system that is unfair. And that's a big problem".

Elodie added: "*If the cows of a Fulbe eat the crops of a Gbaya and the case is taken to the court, the Fulbe is likely to win because he has more money since he can sell his cows and pay more money to the court. The result is often that the Gbaya whose fields have been destroyed, doesn't get anything".*

The informant's conclusion is clear: "*What works best is conflict resolution at the village level with the village chief, because the local chief usually knows both parites and wants to be in harmony with both. So at least he tries to find a solution".*

One of the chiefs pointed to the importance of the morals of the leader and spoke of how important it was not to try to gain anything from conflicts:

"There will always be conflicts. But the real problem is… That is to say, the responsibility is on the shoulders of the leader. If he is a good leader, everything should be fine. If he is not good, there will always be difficulties. Because you have to have love of the people you are ruling over. One should not seek to settle conflicts because one wants to gain anything from it. Conflicts should be settled solely to safeguard the peace. If you settle conflicts because you seek to gain anything, you risk doing wrong to the one who is right and doing a favour to the one who is wrong".

Another point that was made is that the chiefs deal with 'incoming' problems immediately. The Lamido said it is important to avoid escalation of the conflict, which might happen if the conflicting parties have to wait for the conflict to be solved: "*Whenever a problem is presented, one has to look for solutions to the problem as soon as possible and bring the parties to an agreement in order for the problem to be settled. That's the reason why we don't have fixed days for judging cases".* This is especially important, he says, if the problem is very delicate.

The chiefs are surrounded by a council, usually made up of elders from different ethnic groups in their jurisdiction, as has been the tradition for many generations. At the time of my fieldwork, the Lamido of Tibati had at least 21 elders (according to his secretary). The chieftaincy in Ngaoubela had 11 elders (according to the chief himself) and in Mbakaou there

were more than 10 (according to my interview with chief). According to one of the chiefs, one of the main roles of the elders is to assist the chief by judging certain cases. They also have an important role to play when a new Lamido needs to be elected. In addition to the elders assisting in the traditional courts, there are also other committees to assist the chief. In Mbakaou, there is the Committee of Development and the Vigilance Committee. The latter keeps track of new people arriving in the village. The Development Committee is responsible for land and the allocation of properties, in addition to the general development of the village.

In Tibati, the Lamido states that every ethnic group in his jurisdiction must appoint a 'group chief' who would represent them at the Lamidat. The Fulbe have a long history of integrating some of the elders of the conquered people at a high level in their hierarchy. Today, the state also requires that representatives from different ethnic groups must be selected as elders, as well as members of the different committees (interview with chiefs). *"That is to avoid tribalism*", one of the chiefs explained. He also explained how one tries to include representatives from new ethnic groups who have arrived to the village: *"It shows solidarity"*, he said. He added that if there are problems in the village, they gather the different tribes together to resolve the problem: *"As we live side by side in the village, the problems should also be solved together"*.

In a conversation with the secretary of the Lamido, he claimed that the administration could not succeed on their own in safeguarding the peace. As an intermediate institution, the chieftancies have an important role to play. The Lamido stated that the chieftaincies know their people, since the chiefs are themselves "sons of Djerem". In contrast, almost none of the representatives of the administration originate from the area. They have been transferred to Tibati from all over the country[73]. As an example, the Prefect is from the Extreme North, the Sous-Prefect is from southern Cameroon, and so on. An important effect of this, according to the Lamido, is that the administration has to listen to and collaborate with the chieftaincies, since they are the ones who know the population and the traditions: "*Because when you take someone from the Extreme North and put him as Prefect in Tibati, if he does not work hand in hand with the natives, with the traditional chieftaincy, what can he really understand? Nothing! So he has no choice but to work hand in hand with us".*

The Lamido explained that if someone from out in the countryside has an important problem it may be difficult for him to address the Prefect. It is a lot easier for many people to go

[73] A heritage from French colonial times.

directly to the Lamido. The Lamido will then take it upon himself to inform the Prefect if it is an urgent matter. *"I can inform him day and night. I also read everything he obtains from the administration".* He added: *"He can also inform me day and night. If there is information to be communicated to the population, I can pass it on".*

I have found that the chieftaincy as a social institution plays an important role in maintaining peace in the rural societies I studied. The fact that they mediate, settle and try to avoid the escalation of even smaller conflicts (long before they become criminal cases), is of great importance, especially in a multiethnic setting where there is always the potential of conflicts escalating into ethnic conflicts, or to cite Richards: "*Local conflicts may escalate into 'real wars"*" (2005:14). Many people prefer to use the customary court rather than the tribunal, as the tribunal has a reputation of being more concerened with taking advantage of the situation by 'filling their own pockets', than with judging fairly. Another advantage is that the customary court often deals with cases immediately, which means that conflicts are often solved before they've had the chance to develop, so to speak.

In a setting where the representatives of the administration are frequently stationed in a part of the country that is not area of origin, a number of my informants stressed how important it is that the chieftaincies have a solid knowledge of their territory. In rural areas, many people also feel more familiar with the chieftaincy than with the administration. I believe with Eriksen (2010) that one can also say that the institution of the chieftaincy represents continuity in a society that has been through major historical shifts in a rather short time.

One informant claimed that the state uses the traditional system to their benefit. In some respects, I believe he is right since it is obviously helpful to the state that the chieftaincies know their population, that they are trusted by the population and that they contribute to the maintenance of peace – that is peace in the sence of absence of conflicts or war. Another aspect is that the chiefs I talked to expressed nothing but loyalty to the state. I would assume that this is because they have the same respect of criticizing the regime as other groups in the society, or as one informant pointed out in the previous subchapter; that people don't want to loose opportunities or privileges that they already have.

I will now proceed to give an example of a conflict settlement. During my time in the field, the conflicts I had a chance to witness were peacefully resolved.

Settling a conflict: The chicken thief

In this section I will look at how one particular chieftaincy dealt with a typical conflict. Although I specify the ethnicity of the people involved in the case, it is only to show the diversity of the society and how multiple ethnicities are often present amongst the actors when cases are settled in the customary court.

It was early morning. I was awakened by my cell phone ringing. It was the village chief calling: "There has been a case of theft during the night. If you want to observe the judgment, you must come right away". I hurried to the chieftaincy, a short walk from where I was residing, and found a group of men gathered under the shadows of a big mango tree in the yard of the chieftaincy. The birds were singing in the trees, goats were grazing nearby and some chickens were wandering around in the yard. Although it was still morning, the heat was starting to get intense, as it was in the end of the dry season.

I found the chief sitting on a pink plastic chair. He had called in some of the village elders, and two men who served as guards in the village; a Gbaya man and a Fulbe man. The chief was sitting in the middle, with the guards and elders surrounding him on other plastic chairs. A young Mbororo who had attempted to steal a chicken, was sitting on one of the roots of the mango tree, his gaze fixed on the ground. One of his brothers was also present. The man who owned the chicken, who was from the Dii tribe, was standing some meters away from him with his arms crossed.

The chief had requested that the Mbororo man who was the head of the tribe of the offender be present. When that man arrived, he crouched down in front of the chief, shaking both his fists in front of his face towards the chief. The chief greeted him. When he had finished, the Mbororo man began greeting the chief. Such greetings can last several minutes, consisting of a series of questions inquiring after the state of health of the family, the compound, the animals when relevant, and so forth. The Mbororo avoided looking directly into the chief's eyes; instead, he looked to the side and downward. After he had finished greeting the chief, he sat down, so that he was in a lower position than the village chief.

This is what had happened prior to the case being brought before the traditional court: The young Mbororo had been caught at 2 a.m., attempting to steal a chicken. The chicken had made a lot of noise, which woke up its owner. With some help, he bound the hands and feet of the Mbororo and took him, along with the chicken, immediately to the house of the village chief. When the chief got up at 6 a.m., he found the thief and several other men in the living

room of his house. In addition, a group of around 40 people had gathered outside the house. There was a lot of noise.

The young Mbororo who was in his twenties, was married and had four children, according to the chief. He looked pale and kept coughing constantly during the 'trial'. "It's because of the drug abuse"[74]*, the chief said to me in a conversation afterwards. The chief explained that the young man had a problem with sniffing the kind of glue that was normally used to repair tires. In addition he was abusing pills such as Diazepam. According to the chief, this is a relatively widespread problem amongst young Mbororo men.*

The chief talked with the men about the case in a calm tone. The conversation was held in Fulfulde, hence the chief was adjusting his language to the spoken language of the offender and his clansmen. Everyone was given an opportunity to speak. Finally, the chief lectured the wrongdoer, and announced that he had to make up for the offense by working in the yard of the chieftaincy for an hour, carrying rocks that needed to be moved. The men present at the hearing agreed with the chief's decision. This was considered a mild punishment. "If he had been in better shape, I would have ordered him to work longer", the chief said. The owner of the chicken had already gotten it back, hence no more compensation was needed. The men thanked the chief and said good-bye to one another. The conflict was thus settled, and I never heard anyone speaking of it again during my time in the village.

Later the chief talked to me about how he was pleased because the case was settled without the relationship between the two tribes being disturbed. He explained that initially someone had suggested taking the offender to the police in Tibati, but said that this could have caused difficulties between the tribes of the offender and the offended.

This is an everyday example of a judgement being handed down by a traditional chief. The case illustrates how conflicts are dealt with in the customary courts, and also the authority that traditional chiefs still hold in Djerem. Although the chief has the last word, consensus among those involved in the case is important. This particular case was solved in such a way that the chief managed to maintain harmony with the tribe of the offender, as well as with the tribe of the offended. The case is also an example of how traditional chiefs deal with low-level conflicts and prevent them from developing into larger conflicts. Small cases need to be

[74] The fact that the young man was addicted to drugs points to a larger problem amongst young men. Although I have chosen to include this information in talking about this case, it is a theme that I won't elaborate further on here.

resolved to in order to preserve peace in a society. Most conflicts in Cameroon are local conflicts – hence the chief, knowing the people in his chieftancy, having authority over them and being assisted by a council consisting of representatives of different ethnic groups is well placed to mediate conflicts. The way I see it, he is well placed to play the role of a local peace agent.

In this subchapter, I have so far been focusing on how, in many respects, traditional chiefs view themselves as local peace agents, since they consider one of their most important tasks to be to maintain peace in their respective areas of jurisdiction. The way I see it, they play a crucial role in safeguarding the peace, understood narrowly as *negative* peace. I will now attempt to shed light on the role of the chief when it comes to maintaining peace understood as *positive* peace.

"Without development there can be no peace"

"The hardest task is to ensure the development of my village", one of the village chiefs said one afternoon when he was elaborating on the different tasks weighing on him as a chief.

Both chiefs of third class whom I got to know during my fieldwork, claimed that chiefs of that class doesn't get any funds from the state to initiate development projects in the village. Only chiefs of first and second class receive a monthly fixed payment based on the size of their population[75]. The state allocates money for developmental issues to the municipality, so if a third class chief wants to initiate a development project in the village he has to turn to the municipality for funding. The chief explained how he had made several demands to the municipality, asking them to improve the road to the village, but without getting any response. He also wished to improve the market area, but he claimed there are very few mayors who do such things for the chieftaincies.

As we talked about the state of development of the village and the situation of the inhabitants, he pointed out how several people in the village had died of malaria the previous year. They died because they had no money, he said. He continued by talking about how difficult it was for him to accept that this happened. He said he had tried to create a system where the inhabitants of the village could contribute a small amount of money to a fund every month. The idea was that when someone got sick, they could use some of that money to go and get treated at the hospital. However, in a context where people were so often found themselves in

[75] According to Mback (2000), this is also defined in an inter-ministerial decree: No 57 / MINAT / MINFI of February 26, 1983.

a situation with limited cash at their disposal, his idea had yet to be implemented. *"I have to fight; I myself have to advance so that I can help support the others. If I am always average or don't have money myself, I cannot help others. I need to have a lot of energy. I have to have a clever mind and some finances in order to be able to help others".* He said his aim is to lead by being a good example.

This chief has a job elsewhere, and spends most of the year outside his village because of the location of that job. Coming home to his village is often demanding: *"In order for me to stay in the village for a long time, I need to have money. Every day I have to deal with an everyday problem of the population. I have to have a life of my own, but that's difficult at the moment".* During my time in the field, he visited the village three times. He said he wishes he could come more often, but there is always a lot of pressure on him whenever he turns up: people coming to him with their everyday grievances, and asking for economic support. I once heard him saying that he preferred, if possible, not to let the villagers know that he was coming; otherwise people would turn up in even greater numbers to seek help than was the case during the visits I observed.

He is unmarried and would like to take a wife, but as marriage and having his own family would require money, he has not proceeded with the process of marriage yet. For the time being, he said, he has to put his own desire to marry aside in order to use his resources to help the the village. During one of the many conversations we had, he asked rhetorically: *"How am I supposed to help everyone out and at the same time have a life of my own? I pray about this, but God does things in his own time".*

He explained how many people expect him to help them out, because they believe he has the economic resources to do so. *"I use my own salary to help people all the time. And these days I often use credit. (...) When people come before you with problems asking for help that you feel you cannot refuse, it's hard. That's why there are things I have not been able to accomplish. I have ideas, but it takes money to do things".*

The chief would like to create some small businesses in the village; something that can help the population earn money and become more self-sufficient: *"If I do that, it will take away some of the pressure I am under. I have to always pay for the care of someone, my family and all of that"*. He added: *"If there is money* (if that project generates money – my comment), *it will benefit the entire village".*

At one point during my fieldwork, I helped one of the families to pay for treatment for a 10-year-old boy, Bouba, who had been diagnosed with the most aggressive type of malaria. He had been hospitalized during the night, but since his mother (who was a single HIV-positive mother with no regular income) and the extended family that lived in the same compound as them didn't have the money to pay for the necessary treatment that was prescribed, his condition deteriorated. I sat together with his aunt and his mother, watching over the feverish, almost motionless tiny body in the hospital bed. His chest moved rapidly up and down as the fever affected his breathing. Realizing that the consequences of no help on my part might prove fatal for the little boy, I made a decision to pay for the treatment that day. The next day there was still no money to continue the treatment, so once again I provided the money. The same thing happened the third day.

At one point, when the condition of the boy began to improve, I realized the family had not brought him any food to eat. *"I'm hungry"*, he told me. His aunt explained that they didn't have money to buy him food and bring it to him. I gave her some money asking her to provide food for the boy the next few days, adding how important it was for the boy to eat in order to recover. When I came back to visit late that afternoon, I realized the family had already spent all the money to buy ingredients to make a meal for everyone in the family. "*None of us had eaten*", the aunt explained.

After this incident I got a text message from the village chief in which he said that the news had reached him about how I had helped the family out in order for Bouba to recover. He thanked me for my intervention and wrote "*You have seen and felt the suffering of the population. You have observed how the* lack of security *and the poverty destabilize our lives*". Before I left the field, he told me: *"Now you understand my real challenges. Now you know how I feel*". He repeated this several times, reminding me of the fact that he constantly had to deal with similar situations and how much this weighed upon him. Summing up his reflections on the situation of the people in his chieftaincy, he said: *"Without development there can be no peace".*

In this last section of this subchapter I have attempted to shed light on how one of the chiefs describes development as being a prerequisite for peace. All the chiefs talked about the success of the chieftaincy in maintaining peace understood as *negative* peace and how they played an important role in calming conflicts involving different ethnic groups. However, this chief shared how difficult it was to ensure peace for the population in the sense of *positive*

peace; he expressed that if the role of the chief is to help maintain peace in the sense of contributing to fewer economic struggles and enhaced living conditions in the everyday lives of his people, then he has an almost impossible task.

The biggest cause of unrest for individuals that is also sometimes used as an explanation of conflicts seems to be the daily struggle to find enough money to survive, that is, the necessary resources to take care of their own basic needs and those of extended family. The chief's concern is a reflection of that. The difficult situation of his people also causes unrest in his life as the needs are endless and he is constantly confronted with the social and economic insecurities of his population. Based on this, it might be relevant to ask: How long can the chieftancies as a social institution manage to maintain peace - that is a *negative* peace -, if conditions that favour insurgency continue to be prevalent?

6. CONCLUSION

Taking an emic, and a rather wide and holistic approach I have answered my research questions by showing how different perceptions of peace are expressed in the society under study. The thesis has contrasted the different perceptions of peace with the discourse of peace propagated by the state. I have shown how some informants agree on the notion that Cameroon is a country of peace, whilst others oppose this notion as they believe that peace needs to be understood as something more than just the absence of war. The study has also pointed to practices that characterize and ensure peace in the different local settings.

"We need that change to come in the good way"

Although the informants in this study had different approaches to peace, they seemed to agree on one point: The norm in the society is social peace between the various ethnic and religious groups. In the introductory chapter, I contrasted the situation in Cameroon to the developing conflict in CAR in 2013 between the predominantly Muslim Seleka rebels and the Christian Anti-Balaka. I also pointed to the insurgencies in northern Nigeria and on the Cameroonian side of the border because of the activity of the Islamic group Boko Haram. One burning question arises: *Why isn't Cameroon experiencing the same kind of violent conflicts as these two neighboring countries?* In Chapter 1, I also pointed to how Cameroon with its conflict potential has been described as almost a perfect storm (International Crisis Group 2010a). Why then, is the situation in Cameroon different than that in CAR? And, why has Cameroon not seen the formation of rebel groups, such as Boko Haram, on its territory?

Nigeria, CAR and Cameroon all have a heterogeneous population (Uppsala Conflict Data Programme). Other common traits are economic grievances voiced by the population, unemployment, pervasive corruption and nepotism. The people in all three countries have also experienced authoritarian rule and leaders who have failed to undertake – or delayed doing so - promised political and economic reforms. However, the history of Nigeria and CAR is filled with far more insurgencies and interethnic violent clashes than has been the case Cameroon. Drawing on some important insights gained from this study, let me try to suggest some possible reasons as to why Cameroon has escaped armed insurgencies.

My first point is about the ability to mobilize larger groups. In Chapter 2, I referred to Richards' (2005) and Sponsel and Gregor's (1994) argument that when civil violence such as ethnic or religious riots breaks out, it is because it is an organized effort. I also pointed out

that there is a tendency that when rebellion happens, it is ethnically particular (Collier 2000). The patchwork of ethnic and religious groups in Cameroon makes it difficult to organize and mobilize an insurgent group of sufficient scale to actually be viable – a point made by several informants in the field, which is also supported by Collier (2000).

As similar as Nigeria, CAR and Cameron may be with regard to the heterogeneity of their populations there are some significant differences between the countries with regard to the distribution of ethnic diversity within their borders. In CAR, the majority of the population in the north is Muslim; whereas in the south, the population is predominantly Christian (International Crisis Group 2015). More than 75% are Christians (Douglas-Bowers 2015), and only 15 percent are Muslims (Moran 2014). Nigeria is also marked by a more clear-cut division between a Muslim North and a Christian and Animist South than is the case in Cameroon. In Nigeria as a whole, there is no clear religious majority (Pew Research Center 2012), but the most numerous ethnic groups in the northern two-thirds of the country are the Hausa and the Fulani, the overwhelming majority of whom are Muslims (CIA World Factbook 2015).

In CAR, most Seleka rebels were Muslims. They were recruited from the Muslim communities who felt that they had been marginalized for several years (Douglas-Bowers 2015). When President Bozizé was ousted in March 2013, it was the first time since independence that a force from the Muslim population in the north was in power (HRW 2007). The regional 'imbalance' in distribution of ethnic groups in CAR might be of importance when trying to understand how the mobilization that lead to the violence in 2013 could happen in CAR and not in Cameroon. Collier (2000) argues that rebellion initiated by the minority in societies with ethnic dominance might be the behavior of despair as the minority group is tired of, and fears, permanent exploitation. While ethnic and religious diversity doesn't make a society more dangerous, ethnic dominance does make a society more prone to intergroup conflicts (ibid.)

My second point is about marginalization. Taking the case of CAR again, President Bozizé had been accused for many years of favoring the Christian majority in the south. Especially the region around the capital Bangui benefited to the detriment of others; the social and economic disparities between the north and other parts of the country and the marginalization of the Muslims fueled the rebellion (HRW 2007; Douglas-Bower 2015). If we look at Nigeria, some voices claim that the population's disappointment with the social and economic

situation in the north has opened up the way for religious ideologies. The roots of the growth of radical Islam and groups such as Boko Haram, lie in the increasing sense of political marginalization felt by the northern population (Hoffman 2014): *"Initially a fringe movement that believed in the strict observation of Sharia and providing social and financial help to poor Muslim families, Boko Haram was transformed into the most devastating threat to the Northeast's stability during the latter years of the last decade"* (ibid.).

In Cameroon the history is somewhat different. In Chapter 3, I described how, under the rule of Ahidjo, the first President of Cameroon, the Muslim Fulbe were shown favoritism, since jobs in the public sector were automatically given to them (Lode 1990; Burnham 1996). I also described how this changed with the presidency of Biya who, despite being accused of favoring his own tribe, the Beti, has a reputation of not favoring the Muslims over the Christian population and vice versa[76].

Let me give one example of how Biya has been maneuvering the ethnic landscape since the start of his presidency: In 1984, two years after he became president, a failed *coup d'état* lead to a short intrastate conflict with fighting in the streets of Yaoundé that lasted for three days. Behind the revolt were military forces still loyal to Ahidjo (DeLancey et al. 2010). Many saw this failed coup as an attempt to restore the supremacy of the Muslims. Biya, however, avoided focusing blame on the Muslims and continued to emphasize national unity (Takougang and Krieger 2000). Although there is a historical conflict line between the Muslim Fulbe and the Kirdi populations, as described in Chapter 5, the President has in many aspects succeeded in reducing, rather than increasing, the conflict potential. Even though he is a Catholic, he has built alliances and integrated Muslims in important official and governmental positions. An indication of his ability to build alliances is for example the fact that the Muslim elite in Ngaoundéré are important supporters of his party, the RDPC. Alhadji Mohammadou Abbo Ousmanou, a wealthy Fulbe business man in Ngoaundéré was appointed by the President himself to the political board of the RDPC.

In Chapter 5, one of the village chiefs pointed to those who lead the country as an important factor when explaining the presence of peace or war in a country. He certainly had a point. Part of the strategy of the Cameroonian state is to pay close attention to interethnic and interreligious conflicts; and intervene, if necessary, to prevent them from escalating. Building

[76] Still, there are some reports of ethnic grievances amongst some Fulbe, who resent the loss of benefits.

alliances with the elite of important tribes could also be seen as a strategy that helps maintain stability. Sometimes ensuring stability and peace also means ensuring power.

In Chapter 5 I also showed how there is a general sense of marginalization amongst larger groups of the population in the area under study. In contrast to Nigeria and CAR, where larger ethnic and religious groups in a specific part of the country countries feel marginalized, the marginalization in Cameroon is not so much of an ethnic, religious or regional character. There is a tendency for people in Northern Cameroon to have less access to wealth and infrastructure than those in the southern part, however, since no group is in a clear majority in the north, the situation is quite different from that in the neighboring countries. "*We are all there*", one of my informants is quoted as saying; "*all of us are putting in a wedge*". The larger picture in the area under study is that the grievances in Cameroon are more about the rift between the elite occupying governmental positions and large groups of the population that feel they are part of an unjust system. Although the rift between the regime and population exists and causes frustration in large groups of the society, rebellion and civil war is unlikely given the diversity of the country and the probability of mobilization. I believe this could also be part of the picture when trying to explain why Cameroon differs from its conflict-ridden neighbors.

My third point is about the practices of the chieftaincies in the area under study. In a setting where there I a general lack of trust in the official institutions, the authority that the chiefs hold and the respect they are accorded by the population is of great importance. In a multiethnic setting where there is the potential for conflicts escalating into intergroup conflicts, the customary courts play an important role in resolving conflicts before they escalate. It's also worth noting that the chiefs I interviewed all seemed to be aware of the importance of leading by example. Not only did they talk about interethnic and interreligious tolerance and inclusion, they also practiced it; and, consequently, they encouraged social cohesion. My knowledge about the role of the chieftaincies in CAR and Nigeria and what role they could potentially play in ensuring peace is limited, but this could be an interesting topic for future research.

As much as the chiefs I studied play an important role in ensuring social peace at the local level, in this thesis I also pointed out their lacking capacity to deal with the everyday grievances related to economic issues and the general well-being of the people; hence their ability to build positive peace amongst their population is limited. The Pew Research Center's

study (2013), which I referred to in Chapter 5, found that the population in Cameroon sees conflict between religious groups as much less of a problem than political corruption and unemployment. This concurs with my findings. Collier (2000) also describes grievances related to low income as a risk factor for conflict. The recent history of Cameroon has shown how civil riots in the bigger towns, are triggered by people's frustration due to economic grievances. In the northernmost part of Cameroon there are several reports of how young Cameroonian males are being recruited by Boko Haram who promise them money[77]. A Cameroonian historian and political scientist, Achille Mbembé, says in an interview that to these boys *"[w]aging war has become just like any other job"* (Dougueli 2015). He goes on to say: *"These young people have nothing to lose. They have the choice between emigration and war, which also offers social mobility. (...)But as the opportunities to emigrate are dwindling, the only remaining option for them is to enlist in the regional markets of violence"* (ibid.).

During my study I have realized how especially younger people were the ones conveying frustrations about feeling marginalized due to the injustices caused by the economic and political situation in the country. Although the government is aware of the dangers posed by the growing rate of youth unemployment and has made moves in that regard, the bottom line is that a lot more has to be done in order to integrate young Cameroonians's into the country's economic life. I believe that better economic prospects with more job opportunities would not just make recruitment to Boko Haram harder, but that it could possibly change the emotional climate in the country and ensure a more durable peace, to use Webel's term (2007). The President's use of deterrence and violent strategies to stop violence from escalating and to keep the population under control only provides for an uneasy peace. I showed how my informants talked about this in Chapter 5. Some of the informants also called this a superficial peace. Webel calls it a fragile or weak peace (ibid.). Whatever term one choses to use, at this point in time, the peace in Cameroon has a dark side.

Paul Biya, who has ruled the country for 34 years, has survived both a coup attempt and many protests against the legality of his rule. His rule is autocratic and his grip on political power is firm. Any electoral attempts to unseat him have not succeeded. In the last presidential election in October 2011, he officially won 78% of the votes and began a new seven-year term (Murison 2013). International observers, as well as his opponents, rejected the result, saying the election was marred by irregularities. The next presidential election will take place in

[77] Reports from CAR also claim that the Seleka movement recruited impoverished men (Douglas-Bowers 2015).

2018. During the months I spent in Cameroon, some voices claimed that they hope Biya will consider a new seven-year term, arguing that if he does one thing is assured at least: There will still be peace in Cameroon. Others feared chaos whether Biya is alerting his candidacy, or if the power is handed over to a new head of state. After all, there are many examples of unrest and even civil wars in other African states as a result of the process of transfer of presidential power.

The rift between the regime and the society is perhaps the most dangerous weakness when it comes to peace. There is a risk that the distance between the population's hopes and expectations and the regime's refusal to change could at some point prove too much for Cameroon's much praised stability, despite the fact that the ethnic diversity up till this point appears to have been amongst the factors preventing political instability. I have suggested that, in many respects, this rift represents a silent conflict, since the people don't feel free to voice their opinions due to threats of brutality if they criticize the government. One could say that the state is out of tune with its people as they don't adhere to the same narrative. The quote which is used as a heading of this thesis is a reflection of that: *"They say we have peace, but we don't"*. 'They' is here pointing to the privileged in society, the elite and the rulers. 'We', refers to those who define themselves as belonging to the lower class, as being marginalized in a number of ways, and having to deal with constant insecurity in their everyday lives.

What will happen in Cameroon in the years to come? Will those who long for *positive* peace and more human security in their everyday lives find it? Will Cameroon manage to implement changes that will benefit the whole population and stay clear of an outbreak of civil war, as has been the case in too many of its neighboring countries? With the next presidential election taking place in near future, the population is both anxious and hopeful. Those who long for a transfer of power, hope this will be the beginning of long-awaited economic and political changes, and that this will also put an end to the oppression the population has subdued since colonial (or even pre-colonial) times.

To ensure a stronger peace, whoever wins the next election must continue to make sure that no ethnic or religious groups are disfavoured compared to others. In addition, the leaders must listen to the social and economic grievances of their population and make sure to focus on human security for all its inhabitants, not just state security. The scope of peace should

include all issues that affect personal security and not simply enemy attack[78]. The local practices that ensure peace should also be taken into account. Cameroon has a huge potential, but policy initiatives must ensure that all Cameroonians feel valued and protected so that they can truly move forward in peace.

I will allow Pierre, one of my informants, to have the last word. What he says is representative of how many young Cameroonians perceive the future:

- *"When do you think you will find peace?",* I asked.

He sighed, then he said:

- *"I don't know. (...) I know that in ten years' time, maybe five…this country will either be in flames or it will change. (...) So maybe in ten years, either it will be good or bad. (...) Next time you come to Cameroon, maybe you will find change. You will find change either with a new president, and then development, and then change will come. If not, you will see on television that there's war in Cameroon, civil war. That's the two options".*
- *"I hope we will never see a civil war in Cameroon"*, I replied.
- *"We pray that will never happen. We need that change to come in the good way. Not with fighting, so that we can die on the day God has prepared for us to die".*

[78] Paraphrazing Rivera and Pàez (2007) referring to 'security'.

Unfinished house in Tibati with painted text: “Au Cameroun la paix” (English: “In Cameroon peace”).

Bibliography

Abu-Lughod, Lila (1991). "Writing against culture". In R.G. Fox (ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, pp. 137-162

Adama, Hamadou (2004). *L'Islam au Cameroun. Entre tradition et modernité*. Harmattan

Anttalainen, Kati (2013). *Decolonizing the mind? Historical identity and historical consciousness in Cameroonian history textbooks*. Master's thesis in Education, University of Oulu

Atack, Iain (2009) "Peace studies and social change: The role of ethics and human agency". In Corridi, Jenna (ed.), *Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review*, Vol. 9, pp. 39-51

Barfield, Thomas (ed.) (1998). *The Dictionary of Anthropology.* Blackwell Publishers Ltd

Barth, Fredrik (ed.) (1969). *Ethnic groups and boundaries. The social organization of culture difference.* Universitetsforlaget

Boulding, Kenneth (1977). "Twelve friendly quarrels with Johan Galtung". Iin *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 14, 1. pp. 75-86.

Boutrais, Jean (ed.) (1993). *Peuples et cultures de l'Adamaoua (Cameroun)*. Paris: Co-édition ORSTOM/ "Ngaoundéré-Anthropos"

Brenes, Abelardo and Wessels, Michael (2001). "Psychological Contributions to Buildng Cultures of Peace". In *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace and Psychology,* 7(2), Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., pp. 99-107

Briggs, Charles (1995). "Listen before you leap: toward methodological sophistication." In *Learning how to ask: a sociolinguistic appraisal of the role of interview in social science research.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 93-111

Briggs, Jean L (1970). *Never in anger. Portrait of an Eskimo family.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Bue Kessel, Terese (2014). *Between God's sharing power and Men's controlling power: A quest for diaconal empowerment and tranformation in Femmes Pour Christ in Cameroon.* School of Mission and Theology: Dissertation Series – Volume 19

Burnham, Philip (1996). *The politics of cultural difference in Northern Cameroon*. Edinburgh: University Press

Cameroon Tribune (2013). May 17, p 1.

CIA World Factbook (2014). Retrieved from: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/print/country/countrypdf_cm.pdf (last checked 21 July 2016)

CIA World Factbook (2015). Retrieved from: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html (last checked 29 August 2016).

CIA World Factbook (2016). Retrieved from: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cm.html (last checked 8 September 2016)

Collier, Paul. (2000). *Economic causes of civil conflict and their implications for policy.* Washington, DC: The World Bank

DeLancey, Mark Dike; Rebecca Neh Mbuh; Mark W. DeLancey (2010). *Historical dictionary of the republic of Cameroon*, fourth edition, Scarecrow Press, Inc.

Douglas-Bowers, Devon (2015). "Colonialism, Coups, and Conflict: The Violence in the Central African Republic". In *Foreign Policy Journal*, 6 February 2015. Retrieved from: http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2015/02/06/colonialism-coups-and-conflict-the-violence-in-the-central-african-republic/ (last checked 29 August 2016)

Dougueli, Georges (2015). "Achille Mbembé: "Faire la guerre est devenu un boulot comme un autre". In *Jeune Afrique* 7 May 2015. Retrieved from: http://www.jeuneafrique.com/230963/politique/achille-mbemb-faire-la-guerre-est-devenu-un-boulot-comme-un-autre/ (last checked 3 September 2016)

Eller, Jack David (2006). *Violence and culture. A Cross-Cultural and Interdisciplinary Approach.* Belmont: Thomson / Wadsworth.

Erbe, Nancy; C. B Ezeh; D. Karanja; N. Monifor; G. Mubanga; N. R. Tanto (2009). "Negotiating and mediating peace in Africa". In *Pepperdine Dispute Resolution Journal*. Vol. 9: Issue 3, article 2. Retrieved from: http://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/drlj/vol9/iss3/2 (last checked 4 September 2016)

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland (2005). *Risking security. Paradoxes of social cohesion*. Inaugural lecture, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 15 March. Retrieved from http://hyllanderiksen.net/Security.html (last checked 18 July 2016)

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland (2010). *Small places, large issues. An introduction to social and cultural anthropology.* Third edition. Pluto Press.

Ethnologue. *Languages of the world.* Retrived from: http://www.ethnologue.com/country/CM (last checked 21 July 2016)

Everett, Euris L. and Inger Furseth (2012). *Masteroppgaven. Hvordan begynne – og fullføre*. Universitetsforlaget.

Everyculture.com. Retrieved from: http://www.everyculture.com/Bo-Co/Cameroon.html (last checked 14 August 2016)

Fonchingong, Tangie Nsoh (2009). "Introduction". In Tangie Nsoh Fonchingong and John Bobuin Gemandze (eds.). *Cameroon: The stakes and challenges of governance and development.* Bamenda: Langaa Research & Publishing CIG, pp. 1-9

Fossungu, Peter Ateh-Afac (2013).*Understanding confusion in Africa. The politics of multiculturalism and nation-building in Cameroon*. Mankon, Bamenda: Langaa Research & Publishing CIG.

Galtung, Johan (1969). "Violence, peace and peace research". In *Journal of Peace Research,* Vol. 6, No. 3. Sage Publications, Ltd, pp. 167-191

Geertz, Clifford (2003). *The interpretation of cultures.* New York: Basic Books.

GeoNames. Retrived from: http://www.geonames.org/search.html?q=tibati&country= (last checked 14 August 2016).

Goldscmidt, Walter (1994) "Peacemaking and the institutions of peace in tribal societies". In Sponsel, Leslie E. and Thomas Gregor (eds.), *The Anthropology of Peace and Nonviolence*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner

Goldstein, Donna M. (2013). *Laughter out of place. Race, class, violence, and sexuality in Rio Shantytown.* University of California Press.

Harris, Ian M. (2004). "Peace education theory". In *Journal of Peace Education*, Vol. 1, 1, pp. 5-20

Hennig, Rainer Chr. (1993). *Rise and fall of the Adamawa Emirate* (translated introduction to thesis). Retrieved from: http://www.afrol.com/archive/fulbe_adamawa.htm (last checked 19 August 2016)

History World. Retrieved from: www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ad16 (last checked 7 September 2016)

Ho, Kathleen (2007). "Structural violence and Human Rights violation". In *Essex Human Rights Review* Vol. 4 No. 2 September. Retrived from: http://projects.essex.ac.uk/ehrr/V4N2/ho.pdf (last checked: 28 August 2016)

Hoffmann, Leena Koni (2014). "Who speaks for the North? Politics and Influence in Northern Nigeria". *Chatham House, The Royal Institute of International Affairs*. Retrieved from: https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/who-speaks-north-politics-and-influence-northern-nigeria# (last checked 1 September 2016)

Hollan, Douglas. 2012. "Emerging issues in the cross-cultural study of empathy". In *Emotion Review* 4 (1), pp. 70-78.

Hollan, Douglas and Jason C. Throop (2008). "Whatever happened to Empathy?: Introduction". In *Ethos*, Vol. 36, Issue 4, pp. 385-401.

Howe, L. E. A (1989). "Peace and violence in Bali: culture and social organization". In Signe Howell and Roy Willis (eds.). *Societies at peace: Anthropological Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, pp.100-116

Howell, Signe and Roy Willis (eds.) (1989). *Societies at peace: Anthropological Perspectives*. New York : Routledge

HRW (2007). *Background: The varied causes of conflict in CAR*. Retrieved from: https://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/car0907/4.htm (last checked 29 August 2016).

Humanité (2015). "Cameroun et France : sur le chemin de la vérité ?". Retrieved from : http://www.humanite.fr/cameroun-et-france-sur-le-chemin-de-la-verite-580306 (last checked 22 July2016)

International Crisis Group (2010a). *Cameroon: Fragile state?* Africa Report No 160–25, May 2010. Retrieved from:

http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/westafrica/cameroon/160Cameroon%20Fragile%20State.ashx (last checked 10 August 2016)

International Crisis Group (2010b). *Cameroon: The dangers of a fracturing regime.* Africa Report No 161–24 June 2010. Retrieved from: https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/cameroon-dangers-fracturing-regime (last checked 14 August 2016)

International Crisis Group (2015). *Central African Republic: The roots of violence.* Report No 230, 21 September 2015. Retrieved from: https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic/central-african-republic-roots-violence (last checked 29 August 2016)

International Labour Organization (2013). *Global employment trends*. Retrieved from: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_202326.pdf (last checked 3 July 3 2015)

IRIN (2014). *Who are the Anti-balaka of CAR*? Retrieved from: http://www.irinnews.org/report/99634/briefing-who-are-the-anti-balaka-of-car (last checked 15 July 2016)

Jenkins, Richard (2000). "Categorization : Identity, social process and epistemology". In *Current Sociology*, July 2000, Vol. 48(3), SAGE Publications, pp. 7-25

Jenkins, Timothy (1994). "Fieldwork and the perception of everyday life" in *Man* 29 (2), pp. 433-455

King, Martin Luther (1957). "Non-violence and racial justice". In *Christian Century*, 6 February, p 188-122. Retrieved from: https://swap.stanford.edu/20141218225500/http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/primarydocuments/Vol4/6-Feb-1957_NonviolenceAndRacialJustice.pdf (last checked 16 July 2016)

Kusenbach, Margarethe (2003). "Street phenomenology: The Go-along as ethnographic research tool'. In *Ethnography*, 4 (3), pp. 455-485

Lauritzen, Solvor M. (2013). *Building a culture of peace: Peace education in Kenyan Primary Schools.* PhD thesis, University of York.

Lode, Kåre (1990). *Appelés à la liberté. Histoire de l'église évangelique lutherienne du Cameroun*. Improcep éditions.

Mback, Charles Nach (2000). "La chefferie traditionelle au Cameroun: ambiguïtés juridiques et dérives politiques » in *Africa Development*, Vol. XXV, No 3&4, pp. 77-118

Mbuagbo, O.T and Celestina Neh Fru (2003). "Civil Society and democratization: The Cameroonian experience". In *Journal of social development in Africa*, 18(2), pp. 133-148

Metiege, Divine (2012). *Chieftaincy law: Organizing chiefdoms in Cameroon.* Retrieved from http://nanjecreativethinking.blogspot.no/2012/08/chieftaincy-law-organizing-chiefdoms-in.html (last checked 15 July 2016)

Montgagu, Ashley (1994). "Foreword". In Sponsel, Leslie E. and Thomas Gregor (eds.), *The Anthropology of Peace and Nonviolence*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner

Moran, Benedict (2014). "Harvest of Fear. Examining the Roots of Central African Republic's Séléka Rebel Movement" in *Aljazeera*, 1 December 2014. Retrieved from: http://projects.aljazeera.com/2014/car-transition/ (last checked August 29 2014).

Munkejord, Mai Camilla (2002). *Tout ce que je veux, c'est m'asseoir quelque part. Une étude anthropologique des discours et pratiques du champ universitaire au Nord-Cameroun.* Thèse pour le degrée Cand. Polit. en Anthropologie Sociale, Université de Tromsø

Murison, Katharine (2013). "Recent history" in *Africa south of Saharah 2014*, Routledge, 43d edition, p 206 ff.

Nyamnjoh, Francis B. (1999). "Cameroon: a country united by ethnic ambition and difference". In *African Affairs*, Volume 98, number 390, Oxford: University Press, pp 101-118.

Ortner, Sherry B. (2001). "Specifying Agency. The Comaroffs and Their Critics". In *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, Volume 3: 1, Taylor&Francis Ltd, pp. 76-84.

O'Reilly, Karen (2012). *Ethnographic methods*, second edition. Routledge

Oxford Dictionaries. Retrieved from: www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/perceive (last checked 10 August 2016)

Pew Research Center (2013). Retrieved from: www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-overview/ (last checked 1 September 2016)

Pew Research Center (2012). Retrieved from: http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec/ (last checked 1 September 2016).

Richards, Paul (ed.) (2005). *No Peace No war. An Anthropology of contemporary armed conflicts.* Ohio: James Currey Ltd

Rivera, Joseph De and Páez, Darío (2007). "Emotional Climate, Human Security and Cultures of Peace". In *Journal of Social Issue*, Vol. 63, No. 2, pp. 233-253.

Rossavik, Frank (2016). "Terroren henger sammen med aksepten for parallellsamfunn. Nå må det være slutt". In *Aftenposten* 18 April 2016. Retrieved from: http://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/kommentarer/Terroren-henger-sammen-med-aksepten-for-parallellsamfunn-Na-ma-det-vare-slutt---Frank-Rossavik-8404425.html (last checked 8 September 2016)

Sama, Molem C. (2007). "Cultural diversity in conflict and peace making in Africa". In *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, Volume 7: 2, pp. 193-218

Shweder, Richard A. (1997). "The surprise of ethnography". In *Ethos*, Vol. 25, No. 2, Ethnography and Sociocultural Processes: A Symposium (Jun., 1997), Publised by: Wiley on behalf of the American Anthropological Association, pp. 152-163

Skutsch, Carl (ed.) (2004). *Encyclopedia of the World's minorities.* Routledge

Sponsel, Leslie E. (1994). "The mutual relevance of Anthropology and Peace Studies". In Sponsel,

Leslie E. and Thomas Gregor (eds.). *The Anthropology of Peace and Nonviolence*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner

Sponsel, Leslie E. and Thomas Gregor (eds.) (1994). *The Anthropology of Peace and Nonviolence*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner

Takougang, Joseph and Milton H. Krieger (2000). *African State and Society in the 1990s: Cameroon's Political Crossroads*. Westview Press

TheWorld Bank (2012). Retrieved from: http://data.worldbank.org/country/cameroon (last checked 3 July 2015)

Toroyan, Tami and Margie Peden (eds.) (2007). *Youth and Road Safety*, Geneva: World Health Organization (WHO)

Transparency International (1998). Retrieved from: https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi_1998 (last checked 10 August 2016)

Transparency International (2012). Retrieved from: https://www.transparency.org/cpi2012/results#myAnchor2 (last checked 10 August 2016)

Transparency International (2013). Retrieved from: http://www.transparency.org/gcb2013/country/?country=cameroon (last checked 21 July 2016)

Uppsala Conflict Data Programme. UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia: www.ucdp.uu.se/database, Uppsala University (last checked 25 August 2014)

UNDP (2013). *Human Development Report 2013*. Retrieved from: http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hdr/human-development-report-2013.html (last checked 21 July 2016)

UNDP (1994), *Human Development Report 1994*.New York: Oxford University Press.

Virtanen, Tea (2003). *Performance and Performativity in Pastoral Fulbe Culture*. Academic Dissertation, University of Helsinki, Faculty of Arts, Institute of Cultural Research.

Waage, Trond (2002). *"Chez Nous on se débrouille". Om håndtering av uforutsigbarhet. Fortellinger fra syv ungdomsmiljøer i den polyetniske byen Ngaoundéré i Nord Kamerun.* Avhandling for graden Doctor Rerum Politcarum. Insitutt for Socialantropologi, Universitetet i Tromsø

Webel, Charles (2007). "Introduction: toward a philosophy and metapsychology of peace". In Webel, Charles and Johan Galtung (eds.), *Handbook of peace and conflict studies.* London and New York: Routledge, pp. 3-13

Webel, Charles and Johan Galtung (eds.) (2007). *Handbook of peace and conflict studies.* London and New York: Routledge

Wikan, Unni. 1992. "Beyond the words: The power of resonance". In *American Ethnologist* 19 (3), pp. 460-482.

WFP (2012). Retrieved from internet : http://www.wfp.org/countries/cameroon/overview (last checked 21 July 2016).

WHO (2012). Cameroon: WHO statistical profile. Retrieved from: http://www.who.int/gho/countries/cmr.pdf?ua=1 (last checked 21 July 2016)

World Health Rankings (2014). Retrieved from: http://www.worldlifeexpectancy.com/country-health profile/cameroon (last checked 15 August 2016)