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THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

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POST GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL  
AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

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DOCTORAT RESEARCH UNIT FOR  
SOCIAL SCIENCES

\*\*\*\*\*

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY



REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

*Paix-Travail- Patrie*

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UNIVERSITE DE YAOUNDE I

\*\*\*\*\*

*CENTRE DE RECHERCHE ET DE  
FORMATION DOCTORALE EN SCIENCES  
HUMAINES, SOCIALES ET EDUCATIVES*

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*UNITE DE RECHERCHE ET DE  
FORMATION DOCTORALE EN SCIENCES  
HUMAINES ET SOCIALES*

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*DEPARTEMENT D'HISTOIRE*

**THE MANKON KINGDOM: LEADERSHIP  
ADMINISTRATION AND POWER DYNAMISM,  
1902-2016**

A Dissertation Submitted in partial Fulfilment of the requirements for the Award of a Master of  
Arts (M.A) Degree in History

**Specialisation:** History of International Relations

*By*  
**SYLVIA SWIRRI.**  
*B.A in History*  
*University of Buea*

*Under the supervision of*  
**JOEL MEYOLO NARCISSE.**  
Associate Professor



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## SUMMARY

<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>DEDICATION.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>LISTS OF ABBREVIATION AND ANCRONYMS .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>GLOSSARY.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>LISTS ILLUSTRATIONS .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LISTS OF APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>RESUME .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND HUMAN SETTING OF MANKON .....</b>	<b>19</b>
1-1 Geographical location of Mankon .....	19
1-2 Historical Setting of the Mankon kingdom.....	26
<b>CHAPTER 2: LEADERSHIP AND POWER ADMINISTRATION IN MANKON AT ITS ORIGINAL FORM.....</b>	<b>41</b>
2-1 The Mankon palace (ntoh).....	41
2-2 Arts and Power in Mankon. ....	58
<b>CHAPTER 3: THE CHANGING PHASE OF LEADERSHIP AND POWER IN THE KINGDOM OF MANKON .....</b>	<b>71</b>
3-1 Changes in Leadership and Power in Mankon during the German colonial period .....	71
3-2 Leadership and Power in Mankon during the British Period, 1916 to 1961.....	76
3-3 Leadership and Power in Mankon after Independence.....	85
<b>CHAPTER 4: CHALLENGES AND IMPACTS OF LEADERSHIP ADMINISTRATION AND POWER DYNAMISM IN MANKON.....</b>	<b>92</b>
4-1 Challenges of leadership and power administration in Mankon.....	92
4-2 The Persistence of Leadership and Power .....	115
<b>GENERAL CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>140</b>

**To**

*My mother Rose Neh Aya, and to my father, Paul Aya Che, all of blessed memory.*

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## LISTS OF ABBREVIATION AND ANCRONYMS

<b>CNU</b>	Cameroon National Union
<b>COE</b>	Centre Orientamento Éducative
<b>CPDM</b>	Cameroon People's Democratic Movement
<b>CPNC</b>	Cameroon Peoples National Congress
<b>D O</b>	Divisional Office
<b>GHS</b>	Government High School
<b>KNDP</b>	Kamerun National Democratic Party
<b>MACUDA</b>	Mankon Cultural and Development Association
<b>MASA</b>	Mankon Student Association
<b>MPA</b>	Mankon Palace Achieves
<b>MTC</b>	Mankon Traditional Council
<b>NA</b>	Native Authority
<b>NAB</b>	National Archives Buea
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organisation
<b>NOWEFA</b>	North West Fon's Association
<b>NOWEFCO</b>	North West Fon's Conference
<b>NOWEFU</b>	North West Fon's Union
<b>Ok</b>	One Kamerun
<b>SCHC</b>	Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs
<b>SDF</b>	Social Democratic Front
<b>UNO</b>	United Nations Organisation
<b>UPC</b>	<i>Union des Populations du Cameroun.</i>
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>WCHA</b>	West Cameroon House of Assembly
<b>WCHC</b>	West Cameroon House of Chiefs

**GLOSSARY**

<i>Abvu</i>	Wood ash
<i>Adzag</i>	Banana leaves
<i>Ala-nkyi</i>	Land of water
<i>Atsey</i>	Clan
<i>Bikum</i>	King makers
<i>Fo</i>	Fon or chief
<i>Kwifo</i>	The highest secret and regulatory society
<i>Ndzinda</i>	Successor
<i>Nkah bueneh</i>	Light has gone out of Mankon, meaning the Fon is missing
<i>Nukvu</i>	Quarter
<i>Nushwim</i>	Sacred house where Fon's of Mankon are burried.
<i>Tatsey</i>	Clan head
<i>Zunkana</i>	Work free day

## LISTS ILLUSTRATIONS

### Maps

1: Map of Cameroon showing the North West Region.....	21
2: Location of Mezam Division in the North West Region where Mankon is located.....	22
3 : The Kingdom of Mankon .....	23

### Photos

1: The Mankon Palace .....	42
2: Enstoolment in Mankon.....	45
3: Fon Angwafo III, the 20th ruler of Makon .....	47
4: The Mankon museum .....	59
5: Royal beaded stool.....	61
6: Ndop Ritual Costume.....	62
7: A bundle of ceremonial spears.....	63
8: Royal fly whisk.....	64
9: Leopard belt .....	65
10: Commemorative statue of Mafo Mankah Theresia Angwafo III.....	66
11: King's ritual cap .....	67
12: A suit of armor.....	69
13: Fon Angwafo II.....	72
14: Fon Ndefru III.....	79
15 : Fon Angwafo III Performing His Political Duties in 1982 during Presidential Visit to Bamenda .....	89
16: Fon Angwafo III at the Unity Palace with President Paul Biya in the 1990s .....	98

### Tables

1: Traditional Administrative set up of Mankon.....	29
2: The Genology of Fons in the Mankon Kingdom .....	49

### Figures

1: The Mankon traditional administration .....	57
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**LISTS OF APPENDICES**

1: Questionnaires .....	123
2: The Inauguration Of Mankon Museum .....	124
3: Quarters In Mankon .....	131
4: Authorisation .....	132



## ABSTRACT

The distinct states and kingdoms of Pre-colonial Africa customized different forms of Leadership administration to suit their daily realities. Colonialism greatly affected leadership and power administration thereby ushering in different phases of leadership in Africa. The Historical study of leadership and power administration presents the different changes of leadership and power administration in the kingdom of Mankon from the Pre-colonial to 2016. Data used in this study was obtained from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was gotten from oral and archival sources, while secondary data was gotten from published and unpublished literature. All the data gotten from these sources were analyze using the qualititative and quantitative approaches and the following results were obtained. The geo-historical setting of Mankon played a determining role in the system of leadership and power administration. Colonialism came up with different notions about leadership administration in Mankon which experienced different changes in time and period. Power dynamism was accompanied by challenges, which were experienced by different Mankon leaders in the political, economic and socio-cultural domains, which had far reaching impacts on the development, peace and stability of the kingdom. In the course of the study it was discovered that, the Mankon kingdom had great leaders who worked for the development and progress of the kingdom by ensuring peace and security. The study ends by pointing out the fact that despite the challenges, to overcome these problems, Mankon traditional leadership should be more flexible to adapt to changes since change is inevitable in human societies and that the government of Cameroon should equally pay attention to cultural and historical realities before formulating State policies.

## RESUME

*Les États et royaumes distincts de l'Afrique précoloniale ont personnalisé différentes formes d'administration du leadership en fonction de leurs réalités quotidiennes. Le colonialisme a grandement affecté le leadership et l'administration du pouvoir, inaugurant ainsi différentes Phases de leadership en Afrique. L'étude historique du leadership et de l'administration du pouvoir a présenté les différents changements de leadership et d'administration du pouvoir dans le royaume de Mankon de la période précoloniale à la période postcoloniale. Les données utilisées dans cette étude ont été obtenues à partir de sources primaires et secondaires. Les données primaires ont été obtenues à partir de sources orales et d'archives, tandis que les données secondaires ont été obtenues à partir de la littérature publiée et non publiée. Toutes les données obtenues à partir de ces sources ont été analysées en utilisant les approches qualitatives et quantitatives et les résultats suivants ont été obtenus. Le cadre géo-historique de Mankon a joué un rôle déterminant dans le système de direction et d'administration du pouvoir. Le colonialisme a proposé différentes notions sur l'administration du leadership à Mankon qui ont connu différents changements dans le temps et la période. Le dynamisme s'est accompagné de défis vécus par les différents dirigeants de Mankon dans l'avenir politique, économique et socioculturel, qui ont eu des impacts considérables sur le développement, la paix et la stabilité du royaume. L'étude se termine en soulignant le fait que malgré les défis, pour surmonter ces problèmes, le leadership traditionnel Mankon devrait être plus flexible pour s'adapter au changement car le changement est inévitable dans les sociétés humaines et le gouvernement du Cameroun devrait également prêter attention aux réalités culturelles et historiques. Avant de formuler leurs politiques.*

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### Context of Study

The dynamism of leadership and power is neither a new issue nor an isolated phenomenon limited to the Mankon people of the Bamenda Grasslands of the North West Region of Cameroon. Leadership and power dynamism is a phenomenon which one is bound to encounter whenever we discuss human civilizations irrespective of whether they are African civilizations; ancient or modern societies<sup>1</sup>. This research work uses the word "leadership" to denote the art of influencing the behaviour of others and the word "power" as the ability to shape and control the behaviour of others. Leadership and power in the context of this study means the ability to influence and control the activities or behaviour of others. The work uses leadership and power dynamics to mean the ability or right to control and influence the activities of others.

Leadership and power dynamism has proven to be a cause for concern throughout the human societies and civilizations<sup>2</sup>. Viewed from any perspective, leadership and power has been interchangeably used across social science fields. Leadership and power keeps luring the attention of scholars and philosophers in the globe because the success or failure of any human societies has always been associated with leadership and power ownership of the society. With the glaring evidence that the survival of human societies is glued on the type of leaders or people who hold strong power, many theories have been advanced not only on leadership and power but also on the qualities of a good leader. The pillars of human societies are cemented with the tenets of leadership and power dynamism. This is because the management of states or human societies requires tactful tailoring of structures which can ensure development, promote the freedom and welfare of the members of the society, prevent and resolve conflicts; without these, human societies can easily collapse. The struggle for leadership and power dynamism becomes visible once there exist a reasonable number of people in a defined society. At the level of a limited number of people living in an area with loosely defined boundaries, the question of leadership and power dynamism remains a remote issue<sup>3</sup>. With large populations, defined borders and known sources; the need to defend the state or community and the need to prevent and manage conflicts make the question of

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<sup>1</sup> H. Elcock, *Political Leadership: New Horizons in Policies*, London: 2001, p.132.

<sup>2</sup> T. H. Green, *the Philosophical Foundations of Politics*, New York, 1996, p.120.

<sup>3</sup> A. Heywood, *political theory* Palgrave: Maximilian, 2004, p.47.

leadership and power dynamism to be a crucial issue for the survival of the state or community.

The significance of leadership and power dynamism made philosophers like Plato to identify some classes of people who are essential for the survival of the state. In Plato's Ideal state there are three major classes<sup>4</sup>. These classes are: the guardians, who are philosophers, govern the city; the auxiliaries are soldiers who defend it; and the lowest class comprises the producers (farmers, artisans and traders). Plato argued that these were the essential classes of people needed by the state to thrive.

Montesquieu on the Relationship between Power and the state came out with a theory which has to do with the separation of power. He argued that the separation of power into the legislative, executive and judiciary was crucial to protect both state and the rights of its citizens. He held the view that, the three arms of government were to be independent of each other and as such a single individual could not belong to more than one arm of the government.<sup>5</sup> Thomas Hobbes believed that the only true and correct form of government was the absolute monarchy, which was a form of government in which the monarch exercises ultimate powers as head of state and head of government; his or her powers are not checked or regulated by a constitution or by law. Absolute monarchy wielded unrestricted political powers over the sovereign state and its people. For Hobbes, if man is placed in a State of nature or without any form of government, humans would be in a state of constant warfare with one another. In this natural state, Thomas Hobbes argued that the life of man would be miserable, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.

Although the African political scene which has been animated by many civilizations from the time of antiquity till the colonial era in the last half of the 19th century, has not proven to be a good example of the above views. Leadership and power dynamism even before colonial Africa was issue in the hands of the different chiefs, Kings and emperors that championed the political affairs of the different states, kingdoms and empires in the continent. Power was at the hand of the leader who was at the center of the political arena of his state or kingdom. Power was disseminated from the center, where was the king to the periphery where the king had representatives. The situation never remained the same with the coming of the European colonialist during the last part of the 19th century. With the Blessings of the Berlin West

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<sup>4</sup> K. McKay, *A Primer on Plato: His life, works and Philosophy*, New York: 2000, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p.47.

African conference of 1884-1885, Africa was arbitrarily partitioned between some European countries. Different states and kingdoms had existed in Africa before the colonial era were glued together to resemble to suit European colonial agenda. Leadership and power tune was greatly affected by the colonisation of the continent by European imperialists. The authority of the different Kings, chiefs and emperors were greatly reduced, the indigenous leaders became answerable to the European colonial powers.

Mankon, which is found in Cameroon, is one of the African Kingdoms whose leadership and power was severely altered by the tenets of European colonisation of the territory. Before the arrival of the Germans in Cameroon, Mankon was a sovereign state headed by the Fon. The arrival of the Germans in Mankon opened avenues of conflicts between Fon Angwafo II and the German colonial agents in the territory. The unquestionable authority of the Fon started declining. The decline of the powers and authority of the Fon was accompanied by conflicts and attacks which had devastating impacts on the peace and stability of the kingdom.

Leadership and power was strong in Africa with the founding of kingdoms and empires in pre-colonial era. Leadership and power therefore is not a new phenomenon to a student of African History, these institutions were aimed at uniting and leading people to common or similar ancestral background for security, socio economic and political benefits of the community<sup>6</sup>. It was therefore on the bases of these benefits that many chiefdoms /fondoms were founded in pre-colonial Africa

Before Cameroon was colonized in 1884 by the Germans, the people were administered by their own traditional rulers who protected them. This was in exchange for loyalty and support from the subjects. When the Germans colonized Cameroon, they integrated these traditional rulers into their administration, thus traditional rulers became agents of the German Colonial administration.<sup>7</sup>

When authority passed down from the Germans to the British and French in 1916, the indigenous rulers were still intergrated as auxiliaries of the respective colonial administration. However, under the indirect rule system of the British propounded by Frederick lugard in Northern Nigeria, indigenous rulers participated in the colonial administration and they still exercise strong influence over their subjects. One of such indigenous rulers was Fon Ndefru

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<sup>6</sup> Tazifor and Kinga, *History for beginners Book 2*, Buea, Education Book Centre, 2004, p. 16 - 18.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p.18.

III of Mankon, whose rule started with the British rule in 1919 and ended in 1959. He was succeeded by his son, Solomon Anye Ndefru as Fon Angwafo III of Mankon.

### **Conceptual Consideration**

To ease the readers of this work and enhance proper understanding, a number of terms that runs throughout the dissertation shall be defined or explained. The following key terms will be clarified: leadership, power and administration,

John Maxwell says, ‘Leadership is influence nothing more, nothing less’<sup>8</sup>, it simply means that leadership is neutral and it is the responsibility of leaders to use it for good. Warren Bennis defines leadership as the capacity to translate vision to reality<sup>9</sup>. In the context of this study, leadership will be defined as the act of inheriting power from a predecessor, examples will be chiefs and kings.

Power according to Max Weber is defined as the ability to exercise ones will over others (Weber 1922). Power according to him affects more than personal relationships; it shapes larger dynamics like social groups, professional organisations and governments<sup>10</sup>. Oleksandra Senchuk defined power as the ability to impose will, affect the activities and behaviours of other people despite their resistance<sup>11</sup>. Power in our context will be define as traditional authority. This is when a Fon has power or influence that is rooted from a long-standing customs, beliefs, lineage, traditions and practices of a society.

Administration accoding to F.M Marx is a determined action, taken in pursuit of a conscious purpose. It is the systematic ordering of affairs and calculated use of resources and making those things happen which one wants to happen and foretelling everything to the contrary. The above definition makes it clear that administration has two essential elements; a collective effort and a common purpose<sup>12</sup>. L.D. White says that the art of administration is the direction, co-ordination and control of many persons to achieve some purpose or objective<sup>13</sup>. In our context, administration can be defined as the ways or means the traditional

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<sup>8</sup> K. Kruse, what is leadership? Paper retrieved from [www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com). Consulted on the 03/08/2022.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> M. Weber, 1979 (1922). *Economy and Society: An outline of interpretative sociology*, Berkeley: University of California Press. Retrieved from <https://openstax.org/details/books>. Consulted on the 04/03/2022.

<sup>11</sup> O. Senchuk, *Types of Power in the Modern World*, Warsaw, 2015, p.3.

<sup>12</sup> B. C. Nwanisobi, Definition of Public Administration: Various Scholars, *American International Journal of Business Management (AIJBM)*, volume 3 (September) 2020, p.57.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.57.

ruler of an ethnic group or clan exercises traditional authority within the ethnic group by mediating between the people and the state and resolving minor conflicts. Traditional rulers are custodians of tradition that is they have to see to the respect of cultures and support administration in leadership and power.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study shall reflect on three basic principles: the transformational leadership theory, structural functionalism theory and symbolic interaction theory. The transformational leadership theory came into existence through the works of James V. Downtown.<sup>14</sup> This study was further developed by leadership expert and a presidential biographer James MacGregor Burns<sup>15</sup>. The theory argued that good Leadership should see leaders and followers advanced to a higher level of morality and motivation. The theory holds that leaders should ensure that the lives of subjects are transformed to something better than they were before. This could be in terms of social amenities where the leader ensures that the standard of living of his subjects increases and it could also be through the creation of job opportunities to reduce the level of unemployment amongst the subjects. The theory further opines that transformational leaders through the strength of their vision and personality can inspire followers to change their expectations, perceptions and motivations to work towards a common goal. This theory was projected in the Mankon kingdom as their leadership continuously worked, to improve and impact the lives of its subjects. This was seen in areas like agriculture where the kwifon performed rituals before every planting season to improve crop productivity and also by the encouragement of Fon Angwafo III, a trained Agronomist, farming methods have improved in the kingdom. He opened farms in Befang and cultivated crops and vegetables and agencies like FONADER and MIDENO help farmers through aids like fertilizers.

The second theory known as the structural functionalism theory, came into the light of human science through the work of a French sociologist called Emile Durkheim (1885- 1917). The theory holds that all human societies as states and states to be like organisms made of distinct structures known as social institutions<sup>16</sup>. These structures are tailored to perform special

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<sup>14</sup> H. Blane, *The Principles Traditional Leadership: Create a mindset of Passion, Innovation and Growth*, Normandy Park, Weiser, 2017, p. 31.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.31.

<sup>16</sup> E. Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*, New York: Macmillan, 1993, p.68.

functions which are necessary for the functioning of the entire society. It opines that all human societies irrespective of their sizes or form operate in the context of division of labour where each part or social institution is given a function. The theory also holds that such systems use a principle known as the social solidarity as a measuring rod. This theory explains the reason behind the creation of traditional institutions in the Mankon kingdom like the kwifo, Manjong, and Ngangfo, which help to facilitate the smooth functioning of the Mankon kingdom.

The third theory is the symbolic interaction theory. The theory was first advanced by Max Weber<sup>17</sup>. According to Max Weber, the world is made up of symbols which the members of the society use in the relations and interactions with each other. The theory opines that the symbols are embodiments of the people's culture which help to direct material well-being of the people. This theory holds that the action of an individual was moderated by the group's opinion and belief. Symbols and objects played key roles in Mankon traditional leadership. This could better be explain using some arts objects in the Mankon museum like the royal beaded stool, Ndop ritual costume, a bundle of ceremonial spears, royal fly whisk, and the leopard belt, which are symbolic and signifies the Mankon culture and tradition. These theories have provided the sound bases needed by this work to interpret and analyse events in the scene of leadership and power administration in Mankon.

### **Objectives of Study**

The central focus of this work seeks to examine leadership administration and power dynamism in the Mankon kingdom, from 1902 to 2016. In addition to the major objective are specific objectives namely:

1. To establish the geo-historical background of the Mankon people.
2. To discuss the nature of leadership and power administration in Mankon at its original form.
3. To investigate the changing phase of leadership and power in the kingdom of Mankon.
4. To evaluate the challenges and impacts of leadership administration and power dynamism in the Mankon kingdom.

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<sup>17</sup> N. L. Cole, "Max Weber's Key Contribution to Sociology", retrieved from [www.thoughtco.com](http://www.thoughtco.com), consulted on March 08 2022,



### **Significance of Study**

The dissertation is very relevant to the people of Mankon in particular and scholarship as a whole given that it will enlighten the reading public on leadership and power dynamism from colonial period right up to the contemporary history of Mankon. A successful exposition of this work may also prompt a similar kind of research in other regions of Cameroon, especially around the Grassfield Regions where most ethnic groups have chiefs and Fon ruling them.

The study could also create awareness and a deep-seated urge for more knowledge in the dormain. In addition this study is relevant to the Mankon community, by studying the leadership in Mankon; it will help to promote and to learn the culture of the Mankon people. Even children who are still to be bore will meet this study and it will enable them to know about leadership in mankon.

Equally, this research work will help to sell the culture of the Mankon people. It is important to note that, not only the people of mankon will read this work and the fact that this work will be consulted by other researchers will help to sell the culture in and out of the North West region of Cameroon, thus helping to promote the culture of the mankon people world wide.

Lastly this research work will be relevant to other researchers; this is because others who might want to carryout research on this area will use this as an example. Equally this work is much relevant because it will add to the literature of the Mankon people and Cameroon cultural history in general; it will also enrich the historiography of leadership and power dynamism in the Bamenda Grassfield region and Cameroon at large. And finally the study will significantly impact the academic world; its findings will be a focal point where further research in the dormain of leadership and power will radiate.

### **Scope and Delimitation**

This study is limited within the area of Mankon in the Bamenda grassfields, found in the North West Region of Cameroon. The indigenous government of Mankon is headed by a Fon. The system is hereditary and patrilineal by nature. Mankon is a centralised state and authority starts from the family, through the quarters and village to the palace. The Fon is usually assigned by a kwifo which act as a check on the Fon's power. Leadership in Mankon has been handled before the arrival of the colonial masters to Cameroon and leadership lateron

changes with the presence of the Europeans until when the colonial masters left. Before 1884, the people were administered or ruled by their own traditional rulers who protected them. When the Germans colonized Cameroon, they integrated these traditional rulers into their administration. When authority passed to the British and French in 1916, the indigenous rulers were still intergrated as auxiliaries of the respective colonial administration, one of such indigenous rulers was Fon Ndefru III of Mankon whose rule started with the British rule of 1919 and ended on the eve of the British rule in 1959. He was succeeded by his son, Solomon Anye Ndefru as Fon Angwafo III. This explains why the researcher took interest in researching on the topic leadership and power dynamism in Mankon.

The period covered by the study runs from 1902 to 2016. The date of 1902 was chosen because it was the period in Mankon when the German annexation infiltrated the governing structures and systems especially after the Mankon-German war 1902, which led to numerous challenges, as leadership and power in Mankon faced some challenges due to the imposition of the German system administration<sup>18</sup>. Fon Angwafo was the 18th Fon who ruled in Mankon during the period of the German attempt to penetrate, explore and established their administration in Cameroon Grassfields and in Mankon in particular. Unlike the Bali who accepted to negotiate with the Germans, Fon Angwafo II at the time was not ready for any negotiation that would have deprived the kingdom of Mankon of its sovereignty. That was why he was probably the “only” ruler who tried to mount a stiff military resistance in a battle with the Germans and the Bali in defense of the Mankon kingdom in which it was successful. The study extends to 2016 because by the time, it became clear that the shifting paradigms of power and leadership in the kingdom were inevitably associated with crisis that greatly affected cultural heritage protection/ promotion and halted cultural expressions as many communities were either displaced or no more able to assemble for socio cultural manifestations<sup>19</sup>.

## **Literature Review**

Our focus in this part of work is to review the general and specific works that are either handled in part or in whole, some of the themes discussed in this study. In doing so, we will be justifying the originality of the study as well, as the purpose in terms of time, space and

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<sup>18</sup> *C. Chi Che, Kingdom of Mankon: Aspects of History, Language, Culture, Flora and Fauna*, Laanga Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group, 2011, p.15.

<sup>19</sup> Ntomnifor Richard Fru, 63, Secretary General of the Mankon Traditional Council, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022, Mankon Bamenda.

circumstances. It is against this background that our literature review in this section focuses on broad themes and other aspects that touched the different sections of the work. Our review of works begins with general works which are important to our study whether directly or indirectly. From the wider perspective, we narrowed down to specific documents that focus on power and leadership dynamism in Mankon.

Eballa and Aka in their book titled “Focus on Nukwi Nu Fo Ndefru III”, have analysed the origin and migration of the Mankon people, the social set up and political institutions in Mankon. Also other aspects like the life of the 20th ruler and some vital information about Fon Angwafo III are found in the book. This book brought out vital facts about the tradition and culture of the Mankon people.<sup>20</sup> This work will be of great importance to the researcher as it discusses some leadership issues and the various traditional institutions in the Mankon kingdom. It will also enable the researcher to know about leadership and power under the different Fons of Mankon.

Fru Ntomnifor, in his article has examined the geographical location, discussing aspects like climate, vegetation, migration and he also examined the economic activities of the Mankon people like agriculture, fishing, arts and crafts that has made life moving in the community<sup>21</sup>. This work is relevant to the study in that it helps to give a valuable insight of the geographical location of Mankon which is an aspect of the current study. In addition, this work has helped the study as it examined the origin, economic activities and migration in the study area.

Jean Paul Notue, in his book titled “Arts, Heritage and culture from the Mankon kingdom”, has documented the objects in the Mankon museum and their traditional significance. His book has also presented other aspects of the Mankon people like birth, marriages and succession in the Mankon tradition. He also examined the geographical location of Mankon by bringing out some elements on climate, relief, making use of maps<sup>22</sup>. This book will therefore be relevant in this study as it discusses some aspects like succession in Mankon which is one of the main focus of our study, as it talks of leadership and power in the Mankon kingdom.

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<sup>20</sup> Y. Eballa and E.A. Aka, " *Focus on Nukwi Nu Fo Ndefru III: Mankon Cultural Festival 23rd - 31st December*, 1984. Yaounde: SOPECAM 1984.

<sup>21</sup> R. Ntomnifor Fru, "Mankon Traveller's Guide ", 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Bamenda: Shiloh Printers, 2018.

<sup>22</sup> J.P. Notue and B. Triaca, *Mankon: Arts, Heritage and culture from the mankon kingdom*, Milan: 5 Continents, 2005.

Kuenou<sup>23</sup>, " The Role of traditional Authorities in peace building: case of the Menoua Division of West Cameroon, 1919 to 2015", Master Thesis, university of Yaounde 1, July 2021. The work presents the types, causes and manifestation of conflicts in the Menoua Division, the intra chiefdom conflicts and inter-chiefdom conflicts. He also examined the political, socioeconomic and geographical causes of conflicts bringing out the consequences like the disintegration and the formation of new chiefdoms. The work also examined Traditional Authorities institutions and peace building mechanisms, the fon or chief and Deputies "men of power " and other traditional institutions involved in peace building. Also, this work also assess colonialism and the mandate system in Cameroon, the role of Christian religion and chieftaincy reforms. From such a critical appraisal, one can efficiently understand the influence of both the traditional authorities and its power which is relevant to this study.

Gougni<sup>24</sup>, study the relationship between traditional authorities and the colonial power in the Foto chiefdom in the Menoua Division of the "Bamileke Country ". The work presents the physical and human environment by giving major outlines on the political, administrative and social organization of the area before the European arrival and penetration, and it also examined the various factors that favoured the weakening of the political entity after colonization. This study also presents the colonial clash and the changes brought about by the various colonizers (Germany, Britain and France) in order to understand how the political power evolved. This work is relevant to our study as it gives us knowledge of the penetration and the colonization of Cameroon and its impacts which is an aspect of our research.

Eshankeh<sup>25</sup>, analyse conflicts in Babungo before and since colonialism: origin, Evolution and Resolution, 1800- 1962, Master Thesis, university of Yaounde 1, August 2004. This work presents major conflicts involving Babungo and its neighbours in precolonial, colonial and post colonial epochs. This Master work also examined the different mechanisms or resolution taken to remediate at various conflicts between Babungo and its neighbours. Though this work accords less emphasis on leadership and power, nevertheless the work is relevant

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<sup>23</sup> G. C Kuenou, " *The role of Traditional Authorities in peace building: case of the Menoua Division of West Cameroon, 1919 - 2015* ", Master Thesis, university of Yaounde 1, July 2021

<sup>24</sup> M.G.T Gougni, *Authorites Traditionnelles et pouvoir colonial en pays Bamileke : L'exemple de Foto dans la Menoua 1903 - 1960*, Memoire de maitrise en histoire, universite de Yaounde 1, 1988.

<sup>25</sup> P.C Eshankeh *conflicts in Babungo before and since colonialism: Origin, Evolution and Resolution, 1800 - 1962*, Master Thesis of Yaounde 1, August 2004.

because it acts as a road map in understanding conflicts in precolonial and colonial periods in the history of Cameroon in general and Mankon in particular. It also helps us to understand the relationship between the traditional rulers and colonial masters.

Marceline Bih<sup>26</sup>, in her book titled " becoming a great leader ", examined what is leadership? And points to the fact that people have different perceptions about leadership. She further presents the power vision of 20/20 by asking the question do you have what it takes to become a great leader?, She also examined the different types of leadership under the topic leadership and success. This book is relevant to this study because it gives a broad knowledge about leadership; most importantly it shows how to become a great leader and the qualities of a leader.

Hongwe,<sup>27</sup> in her work titled "Traditional Governance in Bafanji from 1906 to 1974", examined the establishment of traditional governance and neighbourly relations, she further explains the sociopolitical administrative institutions like the Fon, the palace and the traditional council. In her work, she also examined the Traditional Governance in the midst of modern administration highlighting the colonial interaction, the British colonial administration and post colonial administration. She concludes by outlining the challenges of Traditional Governance in Bafanji. This work is paramount to our study as, it is based on traditional governance which is not far from leadership and power in Mankon.

Young,<sup>28</sup> examined the procedure of succession and enthronement of traditional rulers in the Bamenda grassfields. In her work, she mentioned the role of inheritance played in succession and the award of hereditary titles. She explained how traditional economy was done as well as traditional religion and ritual sacrifices in the Tikars fendom. She also presents a brief explanation on the migration and settlement of the Tikars on the Ndop plains. This work is relevant to our study because it shows how succession and inheritance takes place in the Bamenda grassfields which has similar aspects to that of Mankon which is also in the grassfields. Thus, the Document contributes to the development and realization of this research work, which can not be underestimated.

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<sup>26</sup> M. Bih, "*Becoming a great leader*" (preparing today's youths for Tomorrow's leadership) SOPE CAM, 2011.

<sup>27</sup> M.N.Hongwe, *Traditional Governance in Bafanji from 1906 to 1974*, Dissertation in History, university of Yaounde 1, 2017.

<sup>28</sup> C.Y Nkeneth, *Succession in the Bamenda Grassfields from earliest settlement to 2006*. D.E.A. Dissertation in History, university of Yaounde 1, 2009.

Nkwi<sup>29</sup>, analyses how Germany arrived Cameroon in 1884 and their subsequent penetration into the Bamenda Grassfields. He also examined how the Germans interacted with the Bali and the signing of treaties of friendship and protection. The recruitment of labourers of the German colonial administration and the interest of the the Bali's to suppressed their neighbors led to conflicts over powers in the Bamenda Grassfields. The information provided in this document will help a lot in the development of our research work due to the fact that the Mankon people also had contact with the Germans in 1889 to 1901.

Angafor<sup>30</sup>, in his work titled the "Traditional Government and Customs in the Tikar villages of the Ndop plain", examined the institutions of government as well as traditions and customs among the Tikar villages of the Ndop plain. To him, Traditional Government among the Tikar groups was highly centralised with the Fon at the head. He also made mention of the similarities in the customs and traditions of the groups and the supremacy of the ngumba regulatory society. His work is useful to our study as it looks as traditional government associated leadership and power, a theme that runs throughout this study.

Rudin<sup>31</sup>, traces the circumstances that surrounds the German annexation of Cameroon. He examined the Germano - Duala Treaty of July 12, 1884 and links it up to the indigenous resistances faced by German administration in Cameroon. He also examined the German administration of Cameroon and holds the view that, the administration made use of already existing institutions in Cameroon. He looked at the German activities in Cameroon and presents a picture that demonstrated that the main focus of the German Government in Cameroon was to exploit the economic resources of the territory. He also paints a picture of the German plantations in Cameroon and it's implications on the local people from 1884 when the First World War started and marked the beginning of the end of German administration in the territory. Though this work is not focused on Mankon, it provides the framework for this study to interpret German behavior towards the Mankon kingdom which greatly altered the power and patterns of leadership in the kingdom.

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<sup>29</sup> P.N. Nkwi, *The Germans presence in the western Grassfields 1881 - 1913*, Yaounde, African studies center 1981.

<sup>30</sup> V.A Angafor, *Traditional Government and customs in the Tikar villages of the Ndop plain*, M.A. Dissertation in history, university of Yaounde 1, 1988.

<sup>31</sup> H. R. Rudin, *Germans in Cameroon 1884 - 1914*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1906.

Rodney<sup>32</sup> opines that the colonization of the African continent in the 19th century was the reason behind underdevelopment in Africa. To defend his views, he revisits precolonial African civilizations which were flourishing. He argued that traditional states in Africa had institutions which helped to build states and kingdoms in precolonial Africa. He extends his argument by identifying and demonstrating the various methods employed by European imperialists to underdeveloped African economies. This work is relevant to the study leadership and power in Mankon, which revisits the precolonial and colonial Africa, bringing out its impacts on the territory especially on the issue of leadership. This study has gone a long way to provide guidelines which have helped this present study to interpret the colonial activities of Germany and Britain which had a high role on leadership and power dynamism in Mankon.

Chilver and Kaberry,<sup>33</sup> from an anthropological perspective, the two persons have provided an insight understanding of the Bamenda Grasslands states and kingdoms. They looked at the socio- cultural, economic and political setting of societies in the Bamenda Grasslands before the advent of colonialism. Their work discusses Traditional structures in the Bamenda Grassland and this makes their work an indispensable document to this study.

Nkwi<sup>34</sup> traces the origin of party politics in Southern Cameroon and discusses the circumstances that transformed pressure groups to political parties. He further shows how the politicians of the time were able to exploit traditional institutions to achieve their political goals. He points out how Augustine Ngum Jua, a Southern Cameroon politician activist from Kom who manipulate Kom women to activate Anlu<sup>35</sup> for his political gains. He projects the disorder brought by Anlu in Kom in 1958 and the traditional administration in Kom and the British colonial administrators struggled to suppress the Anlu and maintain order in the Bamenda Grasslands. His work is useful to our study because it raises vital information issues on power dynamism which is one of the focus of our research.

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<sup>32</sup> W. Rodney, *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*, London: Bogle L'ouverture Publications, 1962.

<sup>33</sup> E.M Chilver and P.M Kaberry, *Traditional Bamenda: The precolonial History and Ethnography of the Bamenda Grassfields*. Vol. 1, Buea: Government Printers, 1967.

<sup>34</sup> W.Ngam Nkwi, *Voicing the Voiceless Contributions of Closing Gaps in Cameroon History*, (Bamenda, Langaa, 2010).

<sup>35</sup> A female traditional institution in kom charged with the duty to promote the interest of women and fight against offenses directed towards womanhood.

Bong<sup>36</sup> examines Traditional Rulers and Politics in Cameroon History, paying close attention to the chief in pre-colonial society. He explains that chiefs in pre-colonial times went by various titles which in the aggregate, were the equivalent of “king”. He outlined Cameroonian chiefs under the Germans and the British in Cameroon, paying attention to the chiefs and Dr. E.M.L. Endeley. He equally outlined the real problem between the chiefs and Endeley. He later shifted and looked at the chiefs under the French rule and the chiefs after independence, and most importantly, he analysed the role played by chiefs in politics since 1996. This work is crucial to our study as it handles both the Germans and British administration in Cameroon and also at independence, which had a heavy toll on Cameroonian society, affecting the leadership and power administration.

On the whole, it is evident that there exists diverse literature regarding the history and historiography of the Mankon people in the Bamenda Grassfields of the North West Region of Cameroon. However, there has been very little scholarly attention on Leadership Administration and Power Dynamism in the Mankon Kingdom from 1902 to 2016. Existing literature was however guided by well-established focus, objectives and context. The present study differs because it argues that Mankon had well defined leadership and power system where the Fon was supreme in the precolonial area but the system was later forced to keep embracing changes which left the Fon of Mankon and his representatives to be virtually powerless.

### **Statement of Problem**

The choice of this study was not random selection; it was the fruit of a long, well and deep refined thought. Leadership is as old as the creation of man in the universe, but leadership at the same time varies from one ruler to the other and from one community to the other. In the same line, each community has a way of selecting their leaders; some are rotational, while others are hereditary. The chieftaincy institution in Cameroon in general and the Mankon ethnic group in particular witnessed some changes as a result of European colonization. Significant of these changes was the replacement of traditional rulers or chiefs with people who believed could better serve the interest of the colonialist. In most cases, such imposed rulers were referred to as “warrant chiefs”<sup>37</sup>. All other traditional institutions were answerable to the Fon of Mankon. However, the system of Traditional Leadership in Mankon began

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<sup>36</sup> V. Bong Amaazee, *Traditional Rulers (Chiefs) and Politics in Cameroon History*, Presses Universitaires de Yaounde, 2002.

<sup>37</sup> J.V. Ngoh, *History of Cameroon since 1800*, Limbe Pressbook, 1996, p.68.



taking different paradigms during the German colonial era. The coming of colonialism further worsened the already serious situation as the German annexation infiltrated the governing structures and systems especially after the Mankon-German war of 1902. From 1902 the system of leadership and power in Mankon began facing numerous challenges due to the imposition of the German system of administration. The British rule was later introduced in 1916 when the British took over from the Germans, they introduced the system of indirect rule that further weakened leadership and power administration in Mankon. Even though chiefs were empowered with the British system of governance, they remained Native authorities and were empowered to serve as local government authorities, administered justice and collected taxes, thus the Fon of Mankon was an auxiliary to the colonial authorities, answerable to them. Independence brought its own problems to traditional leadership in Cameroon in general and the Mankon kingdom in particular. The chiefs were not expected to play partisan politics, that is why, the involvement of Fon Angwafo III of Mankon into politics drew a lot of criticisms and challenges to his administration. It is these problems and challenges faced over the years in Mankom that the study seeks to address. The central question that guides the study is – What factors contributed to the changes of leadership and power in Mankon and what were the impacts on the Mankon kingdom? The changes brought conflicts which continue to manifest in the kingdom today. It is against this background that this work argues that colonial incursion triggered the beginning of leadership and power dynamism, thereby rendering the Fon and his traditional administration virtually powerless in the face of challenges.

### **Sources and Methodology**

The study on Leadership and Power in Mankon was brought to its final completion thanks to the research that covered the period 2022. As far data analysis is concerned, we also opted for an interdisciplinary approach which borrows from other disciplines given the complexity of the study, the actors involved and the area of our study. Concerning the importance of interdisciplinary approach in analysing data, McNeil declares as follows: “an interdisciplinary study is a scientific method that addresses scientific phenomena holistically”<sup>38</sup>. It involves synthesis of disciplinary and scientific approaches in order to approach a problem. In line with this view, a holistic approach was a good option of this study taking into consideration its interdisciplinary nature.

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<sup>38</sup> D. McNeil et al.” Interdisciplinary research on Development and Environment”. Sum report No.10, university of Oslo, 2001, p. 8.

This research also involved the collection of data from secondary and primary sources. As concerned secondary sources, we consulted published and unpublished materials on regards to leadership and power in general and the case of Mankon in particular. Secondary sources included any written materials like: articles, books, dissertations, thesis, journals, and download materials related to the work. They were gotten from both public and private documented institutions and centres like the library of the university of yde 1, the cercle d'Histoire - Geographie - Archeologie (CEHGA), Ecole Normale Suprieure (E.N.S) Yaounde and the Heritage library in Biyem Assi (Yaounde). We also got information from the Buea Archives and the Mankon palace library in Bamenda. The documents used had broad or general knowledge of the issues carrying from the World, Africa, Cameroon and more specifically our area of study itself that is, the North West Region, Mankon - Bamenda.

The vacuum in data observed, that is from both primary and secondary sources in the field urged us to resort to internet sources in order to effectively and efficiently complete our work. Other documents related to the study were gotten from the internet search engines like: Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)), Google scholar ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)), Wikipedia ([www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)) and also from free encyclopedia such as Encarta.

The qualitative method here tries to understand the people's behavior by studying its institutions, cultural values and norms while quantitative method on the other hand deals with operationalization of empirical variables. Prediction and testing of fact from statistics gotten during research. This methodology is appropriate because it provides an in-depth analysis and profound understanding of the contribution of the Fon in line with leadership and power in our area of study.

The data collected was observed and carefully categorized according to the different segments of informants. We then resorted to both internal and external criticisms of the collected data following a malicious tedious screening and meticulous scrutinizing to establish concrete validity of facts, to reach objectivity and restore historical truth. To avoid being biased due to presumptions or speculation of any inclination from affinities from either family or relation ties which could impede the truth, we opted for a comparative approach through a logical construction. This consisted of comparing the results of the different groups established. This was done with clarity, lucidity and regor at the end; the groups with similar ideas were compiled and considered valid facts. In terms of presentation, the study combines

the chronological and thematic approaches. To render the study more practical, we employed the use of maps, figures, and tables in different chapters.

### **Problems Encountered**

It will not be proper to say that everything went smoothly in the process of the realization of this study. This therefore means that the difficulties encountered should not in any way be ignored or minimised because they constitute an important part of research. It was therefore the difficulties that fascinated and created awareness on what awaited us and sharpens one's appetite for research.

Many difficulties were encountered on the field of research when carrying out this study especially as the topic appeared more political. Among the problems that were encountered were the following; majority of the sources and resource persons were of age. It was very difficult working with them as they often forget important aspects such as names, dates and even events especially at the middle of the discussion. To overcome this challenge, the researcher had to consult other sources to complete the information.

In addition, the ongoing Anglophone crisis characterised by arbitrary arrests, gunshots, and detentions that is presently going on in our area of study affected the research adversely. Some of the actors were unwillingly to give out data or information. They thought that, the information they give might implicate them. To overcome this problem, the researcher had to offer gifts to the informants so as to encourage and motivate them.

Also, the ghost town phenomenon that characterised the daily life in the study area also affected the research adversely. We were at times obliged to relax at home on working days because business premises and institutions were closed. The insecurity in Bamenda rendered field work difficult especially with the brutal killing of both civilians and military forces in the area of study. Despite all these problems, our driving force continued to be the determination to add something new to the historiography of Cameroon, especially those in Mankon, irrespective of these problems, the accomplishment of this work was an irreversible determination.

Last but not the least, another major difficulty encountered during this project was that of the state of archival materials in some documentation centres mostly government institutions which in most cases were in a decaying condition, in some cases, pages were missing and

even teared. The inadequacy state, in which these archival materials were preserved, deprived us of many precious documents which could have been instrumental in our study.

### **Organization of Work**

This study is divided into four chapters excluding the general introduction and general conclusion. Each chapter begins with an introduction and ends with a conclusion. Chapter one dwells on the geo - historical background of the study area, the human activities and confederacy in Mankon.

Chapter two examined the leadership and power administration in Mankon at its original form. The chapter discusses the role of the Fon of Mankon in relation to traditional and political scene in Mankon. This chapter equally brings out the role of the kwifo and its lodges. The chapter focuses on Power and Arts in Mankon, the arts objects in the museum, analyse in relevance to its cultural significance in leadership and power in Mankon.

Chapter three on its part examined the changing phase of leadership and power in the kingdom of Mankon. The chapter discusses the implications of the German colonization of Cameroon in Mankon leadership. The chapter also handles changes in leadership during the British period in Mankon and at independence in 1961.

And finally, chapter four focuses on the challenges and impacts of leadership administration and power dynamism in Mankon and explores some recommendations. The chapter therefore looks at the difficulties faced by the Mankon traditional administration and attempts to provide solutions to some of the difficulties

## CHAPTER 1: THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND HUMAN SETTING OF MANKON

This chapter seeks to examine the geographical and historical background of Mankon. The chapter situates Mankon in the North West Region of Cameroon. The history of Mankon, origin, migration and settlement of the Mankon people is equally examine. The chapter further examines the political and socio-economic organization of the Mankon people with regard to their participation on issues pertaining to leadership and power.

### 1-1 Geographical location of Mankon

#### 1-1-1 The origin of the word "Mankon".

Fon Ndefru III (late) holds the view that "Mankon" means "mother wave" because the people of Mankon in one of their migratory movements under the first ruler Fon Ndemaghah I moved in a large mother wave<sup>1</sup>.

Furthermore, kingmaker and Mankon Cultural virtuoso, Pa Anye che Ndi (late) holds that at one point of the migration, Fon Ndemaghah I turned and exclaimed "mankon, (ma- means 'mother' but in this context it means 'large' and "nkon" means 'tail'). He was so much excited by the large crowd following behind him that he considered himself a very big animal whose tail was a massive crowd that trailed in Indian file behind him. (Needless to recall that in this culture, we know the greatness of someone by the massive following them). Whatever the case, the two Mankon Cultural epitomes both shared the view that "Mankon" originated from the large wave of movement behind Fon Ndemaghah I during one of their migrations. It should be noted here that "Mankon" is also called "Bandoe, Bande, or Bandeng" as spelt variously by colonizers. Ba- means " the people of" or " those of", -ndoe, -nde or -ndeng is a coinage following the Mankon first leader - Fon Ndemaghah I. Inshort, Mankon, Bandoe, Bande, Bandeng means " the people of or those of " Fon Ndemaghah I<sup>2</sup>.

#### 1-1-2 Geographical Background

Leadership administration and power dynamism in Mankon which constitutes the major concern of this study did not hang in the air. It occurred within a precise space, time and

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<sup>1</sup> C. Chi Che, *Kingdom of Mankon: Aspect of History, Language, Culture, Flora and Fauna*, Laanga Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group, 2011, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p.1.

circumstances which played a central role in the tailoring of the phases of leadership and power in Mankon. In the field of social science, there exist a close link between Geography and History. This is because environment plays a key role in human activities and as such, we must understand the Geographical background of a group of people before we can fully interpret and appreciate their history. It is against this background that the study presents the Geography and of the Mankon people in the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon.

### **1-1-3 Geographical Setting**

Mankon is one of the chiefdoms that make up Bamenda town, it is located in the North West Region of Cameroon, specifically the Mezam Division. Mankon is bounded to the East by the chiefdom of Mendakwe, to the North by Bafut, west by Meta and Bali and to the South by Mbatu and Nsongwa. It is situated on a plain punctuated by low hills. Mankon has a surface area of about 315 square kilometers. The town has an average altitude of 1000 meters above the sea level dotted with hills, irrigated by river Mezam and countless tributaries<sup>3</sup>. By the end of the 19th century 5,000 people occupied the land. Today the population is estimated at 60,000 inhabitants.

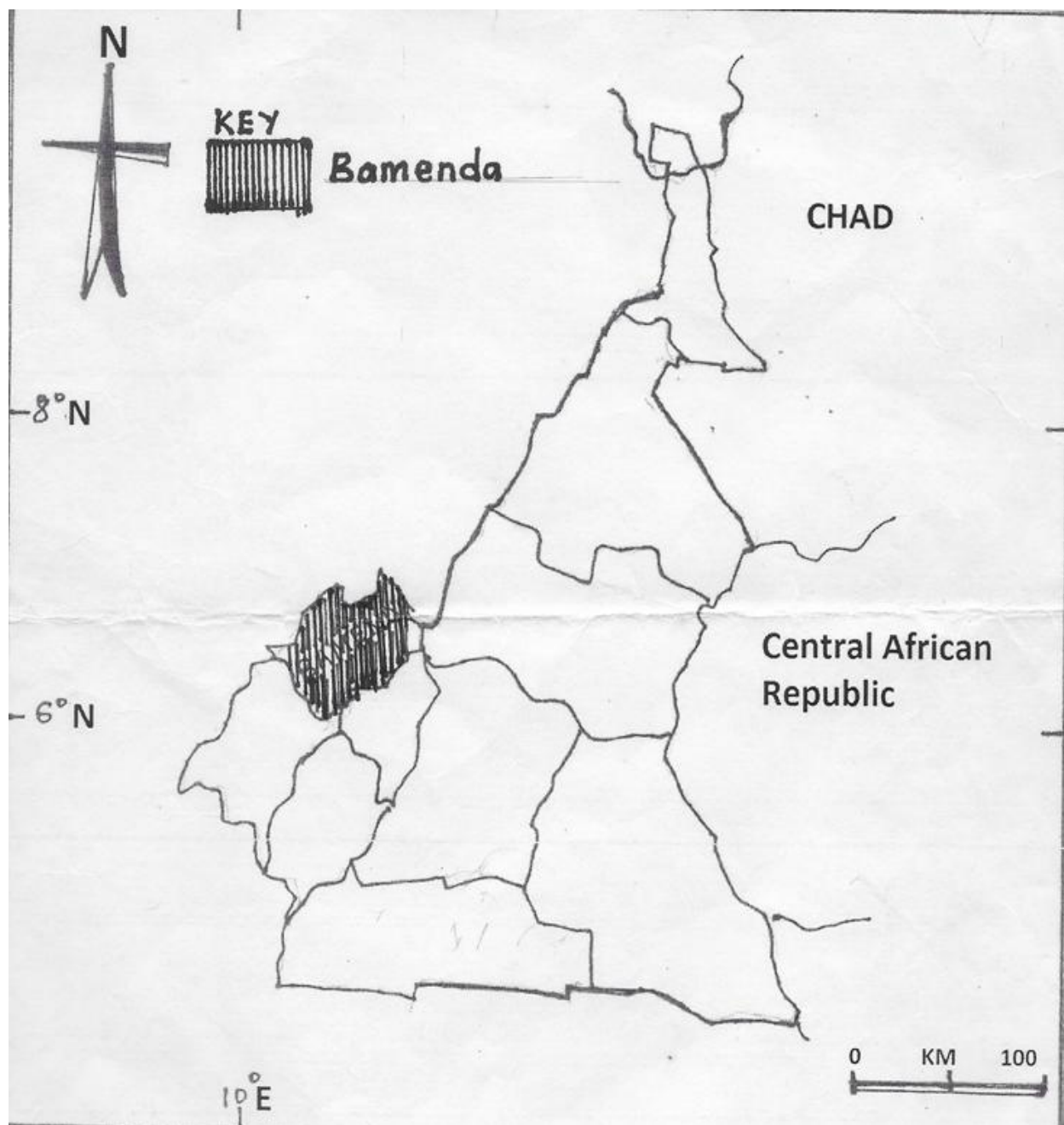
The location of the Mankon kingdom in the North West Region and its position is strategically located in such a way that attracts people far and near. The presence of the kingdom, economic resources, the political base and many facilities all crown to make the location booming in the Region. Mankon is an almost spherical land of about 20km in diameter<sup>4</sup>. (See map 1, 2 and 3)

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<sup>3</sup> E.M Chiliver and P.M Kaberry, *Traditional Bamenda , the Pre - colonial History and Ethnography of the Bamenda Grassfields* , vol. 2, Buea: Government Printers 1967, p.40.

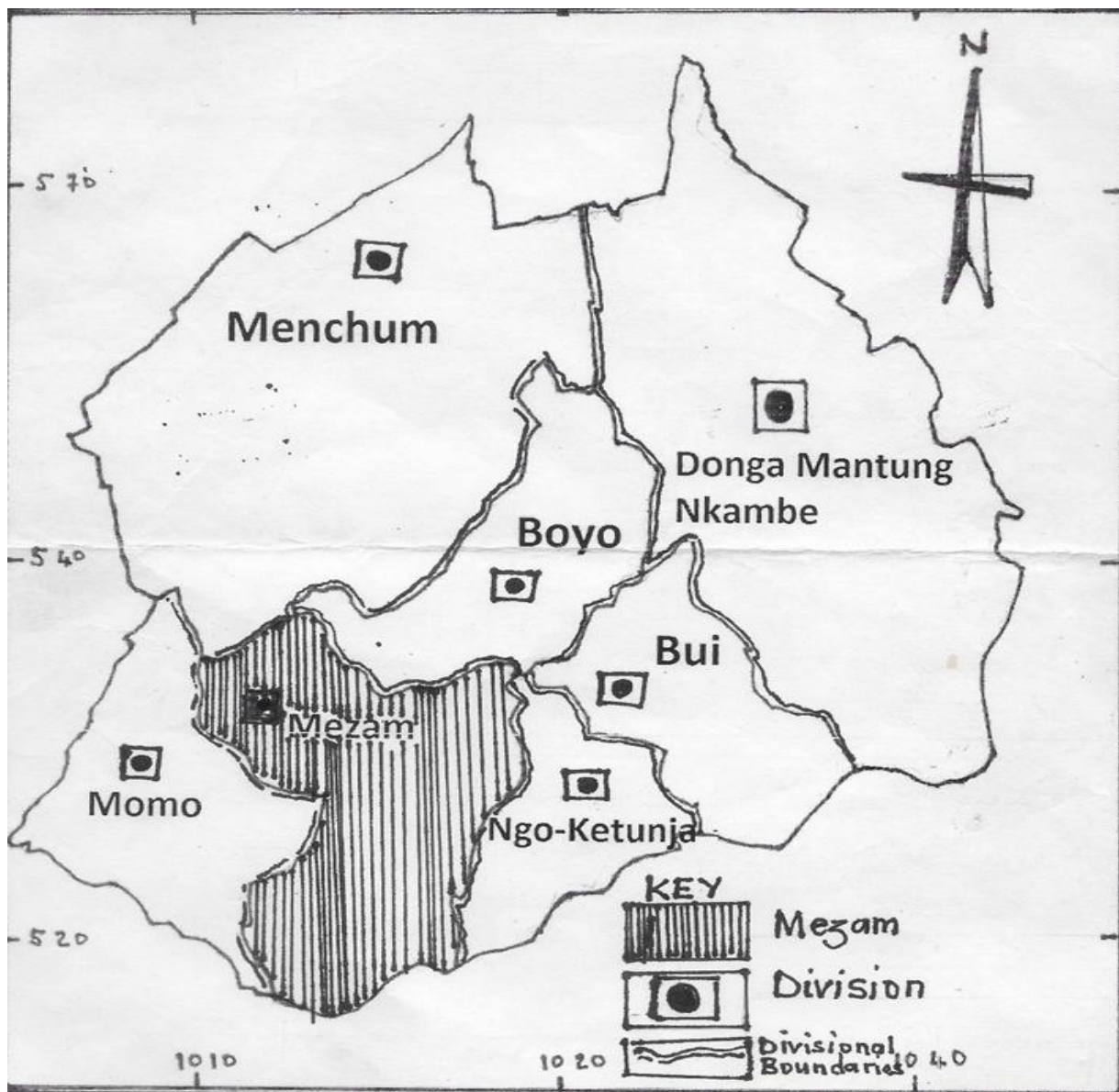
<sup>4</sup> Awa Daniel, 70, Teacher, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022, Azire Mankon Bamenda

**Map 1: Map of Cameroon showing the North West Region**



**Source: Sanclous Engineering Ntarikon.**

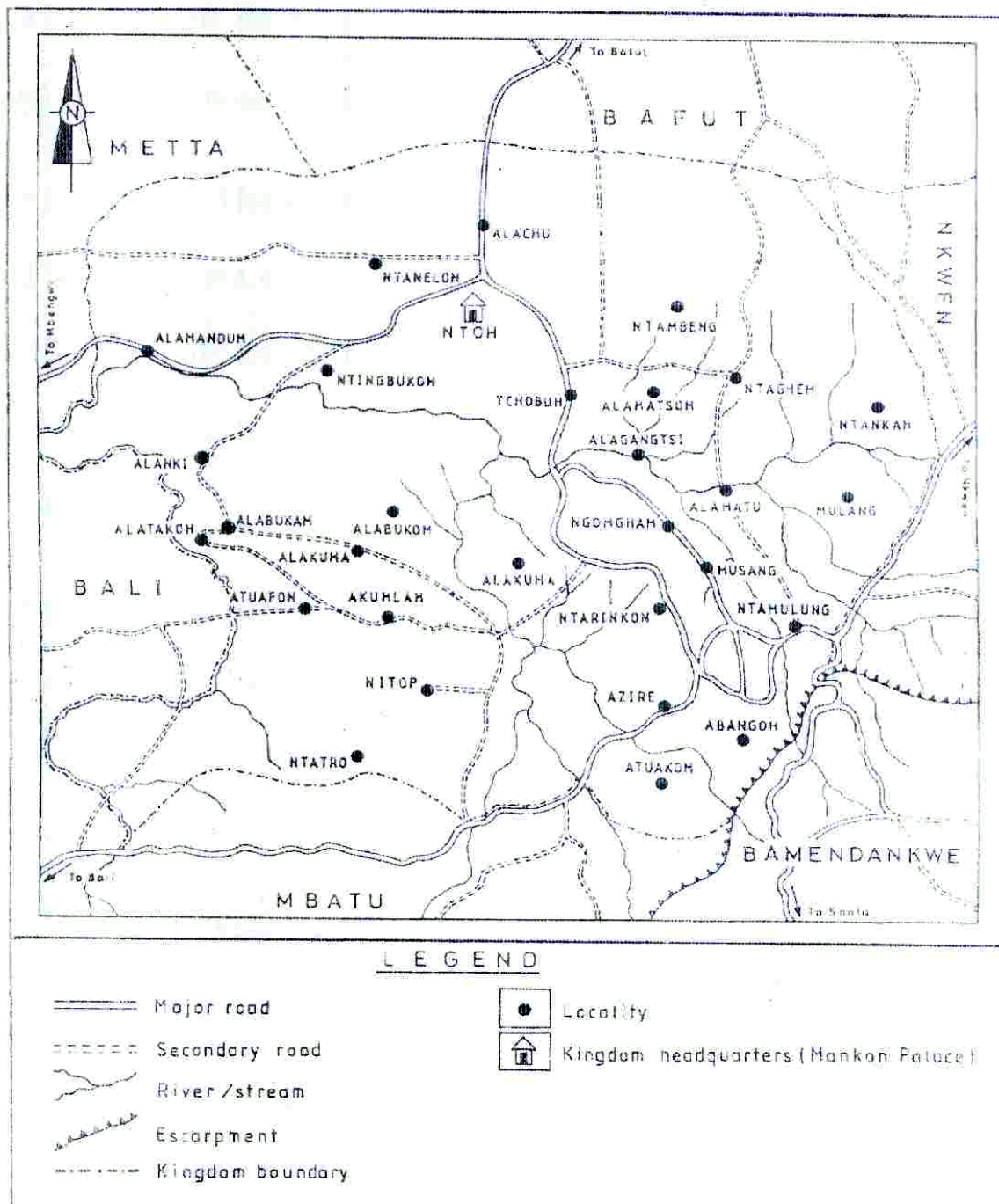
**Map 2: Location of Mezam Division in the North West Region where Mankon is located**



Source: Wankah Wilfred Nde, FO S.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon; A Biographical Synthesis 1925-2006, (Bamenda; Unique Printers 2007), p.6.



Map 3 : The Kingdom of Mankon



Source: Adapted from 1979.the maps of Bafoussam (NB -32-XI), and Nkambe (NB- 32-XVII), N.G.I, Paris, p. 22.

#### 1-1-4 Relief

Mankon lies at 1000m above the sea level, the town is blessed with plain and mountain ranges. The highest point in Mankon is Nta'bien which is 1338metres above the sea level. It is an elevated area of plateaux and small hills, which make up part of Cameroon Grassfields or Grassland<sup>5</sup>. Each Hill has its own name, which may be that of its location or that of the prominent local vegetation. The hills may also be named after a resident notable or even after a memorable event. For example, nta'ngoow is the name given to the hill on which the inhabitants accused of witchcraft was tried. The name nta'titon means a hill which cannot be burned or conquered due to the strength of its people.<sup>6</sup>

#### 1-1-5 Climate

The climate of Mankon is dominated by the North East and South West Trade winds which causes the dry and rainy season. From October there is dust and aridity due to the hamantan winds. The south west winds which are damp appear in March and cause the rainy season, the annual rainfall is about 2300mm<sup>7</sup>. The dry and rainy seasons are sub divided into four seasons and they coincide with human activities that is, during each season, the people engage in different human and economic activities<sup>8</sup>. The hottest and driest season last for about three months, between December and February; this period is called *aboob*. This is the time for building of houses, repairing roofs, hunting and land clearance by bush fires as well as time for ceremonies and for the abungafu, the Fon's annual dance. The short rainy season *ntsoobmboeng*, lasts from February until May. This is mainly the time for cultivating the soil, sowing seeds or planting seeds. During *mugham*, the main rainy season between May and August, the first crops are harvested and new crops are sown, at this time of the year, vegetation is lush and rivers are full. The last period is *Usan* which is between September and December. It is a short dry season, rain is scarce, the rivers are nearly empty and the soil is arid. Before bush fires commence, dry grass is harvested and used to repair roofs<sup>9</sup>. The climate favours effective growth of plants as can be seen in the varieties of crops that fill the markets with all types of fruits. Equally the favourable climate enhances the preservation of

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<sup>5</sup> Y. Eballa and E.A. Aka, *Focus on Nukwi Nu Fo Ndefru III: Mankon Culyural Festival 23<sup>rd</sup> -31<sup>st</sup> December 1984*. Yaounde: SOPECAM, 1984, p.11.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p.12.

<sup>8</sup> Nanga Edith, 62, Farmer, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2022, Nitob Bamenda

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

objects in the Mankon Museum to stay for many years<sup>10</sup>. This is to enhance leadership and power as some of the objects symbolises power and enhances the continuity from one Fon to the other.

### **1-1-6 Drainage**

Mankon is fairly well watered by the Mezam River and its tributaries which provide water for man, his crops and animals. The Bamenda escarpment is the main watershed from which the Mezam River and some of its most important tributaries take their rise. Most of the remaining smaller tributaries take their rise at the bottom of the respective knolls which form undulations throughout the whole of Mankon. The Mezam River is wider and deeper than the tributary valleys. This is because the entire Mankon land is flat and the streams in the tributary valleys do not flow fast enough as to be able to widen and deepen these valleys. Some of the tributary streams include *Nkyi Asa'a*, *Nkyi Ashega*, *Nkyi Ba'su*, *Nkyi Mafor* and *Nkyi Angoenwiy*<sup>11</sup>. In some of these rivers, rituals were carried out to purify and cleanse the land and to water crops for better produce.

### **1-1-7 Vegetation**

The vegetation of Mankon is mainly the high grass, low tree savannah type in which trees grow together with tall grasses. Grass and trees grow luxuriously along the valleys, streams and along river banks during the rainy season. In Mankon most people grow eucalyptus to serve various needs. The original vegetation has been replaced by a patch wood of cultivated crops.<sup>12</sup> The rich and diverse geographical features in this region together with the climatic condition have attracted a great deal of people from other regions of the country and the world at large to Mankon either as settlers or sellers. The rampant movement to the region has brought about socio - economic development. Most people in Mankon grow eucalyptus to serve various needs and the common crops cultivated are; maize, beans, yams, cassava, sweet potatoes, groundnuts, plantains and vegetables like bitterleaf, cabbage. Various fruit trees like mango, pear, plum are also grown especially around most homesteads<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Cho Jonas Che, 53, Worker in the Palace, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022, Mankon Palace

<sup>11</sup> Y. Eballa and E. A. Aka, *Focus on Nukwi Nu Fo Ndefru III*, p.11.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p.12

<sup>13</sup> Nchang Julie Awah, 67, Farmer, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022, Musang Bamenda.

## 1-2 Historical Setting of the Mankon kingdom.

Like most ethnic groups in the North West Region, the History of the mankon people is also characterised by several migration trends. About fifteen different ethnic groups contributed to the foundation of Mankon. They came from all directions and in particular from the Mbam valley and the Widikum region. Widikum appears to have been one of the settlements of the Mankon people from Sa Nyom. Cultural and linguistics evidence suggest that the Mankon people are of the semi - Bantu extraction of the Tikar group<sup>14</sup>. Thus, they had to continue migration in search of a practical and conducive place of settlement. Movement from Tikar was in waves of families under different leaders. Fon Ndemaghah's wave was the largest and more complex than the others. It was this idea of moving in a very large wave that seems to have given the name 'Mankon' to the people which mean "big tail". Thus, according to one of the many oral traditions, which are at times contradictory, several of the Mankon groups were originally based in the Mbam valley, the land of the Tikar, situated north-east of Foumban<sup>15</sup>.

According to E.M. Chilver and P.M. Kaberry, the mythical origin for many of the south western Bamenda village dynasties is Tadkon in Widikum, the present site of the Batibo Fon's palace. Tadkon, a border market, was influential in serving the interest of those who settled there<sup>16</sup>. Also, Soh asserts that before arriving in Tadkon, the Mankon people came from a place called Ntal-Sabi. He explains that the Mankon people wandered from the northern part of Cameroon, crossed the Bamileke country and went through the present-day Bangwa country before settling around the vicinity of Widikum<sup>17</sup>.

According to oral tradition, Mankon history is imbued with lots of myths and legends. J.F Ndefru III states that the Mankon people are the descendants of the Hamites, thousands of years ago who migrated in search of food, shelter, trade and commerce. The fore fathers of Mankon are said to have migrated with the expelled group from the present -day middle East (Sa'anyom) carrying with them the Mankon dialect – Ngemba, meaning 'I say'; a dialect said to have been developed in Asia, specifically in China by the Isthmus of the Suez. The curious thing is that the settlement of the Mankon people in Sa'anyom (the East) can not be proven,

<sup>14</sup> Angu Theophilus, 69, Retired Teacher, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022, Ntingkag Bamenda.

<sup>15</sup> J. P. Notue, *Arts, Heritage and Culture from the Mankon kingdom*, 2005, p. 31.

<sup>16</sup> E.M. Chilver and P.M. Kaberry, *Traditional Bamenda: The Pre-colonial History and Ethnography of the Bamenda Grassfields* (Buea: Government Printers, 1963), p.13.

<sup>17</sup> P. B. Soh, *The History and Social Institutions of Mankon Chiefdoms of Mbatu, Akum, Nsongwa, Chomba, and Ndzong* (Yaounde: ISH, 1979), p.14

but those who lay claim to this hypothesis buttress their arguments in some coincidental Chinese legacies to Mankon in names like: Che, Tsay, Tsetu, Tsi, Fen, Chang, Ntseh etc that tend to resemble some Chinese names like Mao Tse-tung, Chiteng, Chang, Tsai Chang, Kuo Feng<sup>18</sup>.

However, Islamic conquests in the North that swept through Egypt, the Sudan or the North Coast of Africa to Central and West Africa forced races to migrate down to the South. The impact is seen through the Semi-Bantu races that occupy part of Cameroon. This migratory movement of the Bantus reached Cameroon around the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century as far as Bamileke region. Linguistic and cultural evidence prove that the Mankon people is said to have come from Tikar as a result of pressures from stronger tribesmen from the North between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries under the leadership of Fo Ndemagha'a I and a number of his successors<sup>19</sup>.

Their first settlement in Cameroon was around the fertile spots in the Northern part of Mbam plain in the Northeastern of Foumban around Tikar. Pressure from Fulbe tribesmen appeared to have forced them out of the plain. Movement was in waves and the Mankon formed the largest single wave<sup>20</sup>. From the Mbam plain, they moved West wards to present day Wimbun area of Tang and Wiya clans of Donga Mantung Division where they met the other Fulbes of Northern Nigeria. The ensuing battle saw the death of Fo Ndemagha'a II who had succeeded his father. Fo Ndemagha'a III alais Minwitingori took over from him and led the people to Bamumkumbit where they settled for some time before wandering through the Bamileke regions of Babadjou and Dschang. It is important to note here that another name for the Bamumkumbit people is 'Mankong' and in their line of kings, they have names like Angwafong I, II and III that resemble the Angwafo I, II and III of Mankon<sup>21</sup>.

Fo Tako'Matsi I and Fo Ndemagha'a IV ruled between Babadjou and Dschang and Fo Tako'Matsi II who succeeded the latter died of malaria due to lots of mosquitoes which together with poor water supply and wild animals, caused the deaths of many migrants. In Bangwa present day Fontem, Fo Ndemagha'a V continued the journey, he later died and was succeeded by Tangwaani. Witchcraft practices there later force them out of the area and they journeyed northwards to the forest region around Tarinkon in Widikum which was infertile

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<sup>18</sup> C.Chi Che, *Kingdom of Mankon*, p.5.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p.7.

and hostile. It is important to note here that royal lineage in Mankon at the time was not hereditary as we have today but rather a Fon was chosen following his prowess, bravery and visible contribution to uplift the people, this was how Fo Ndemagha'a VI succeeded Fo Tangwaani after a temporary vacancy to the throne following the death of the latter. The Mankon people in the forest zone were mainly hunters<sup>22</sup>.

The Ntarikon Forest was hostile; there were too many mosquitoes and no rich hunting grounds. The Mankon people then moved on towards the east reaching *Ala'nkyi*, "the waterlogged land", a very fertile area, also rich in game. This was under the leadership of Fon Ndemagha VI, also called Mbangnuzhiy, a courageous fighter and a good leader. As time went on, the Mankon people still looking for a safe area to settle migrated again towards *Fumndvu* and finally to *Fo Zan*, the land they have occupied for four centuries right up to the present day. The site had advantages: it was rich in game, the soil was fertile, mezam river ran to the south and west, the Mili River to the north and a large swampy area to the east all made good natural defences. To ensure security and occupational rights the Mankon people dug out trenches at several strategic points.<sup>23</sup>

The kingdom of Mankon was originally made up of seven main clans, utsey, and other smaller sub-clans, all under the same ruler. Due to widespread insecurity and wars, they organized themselves into stronger political groups, forming a militarily well-protected and economically strong confederation, which was later joined by the Mbu's families. Within the confederation ruled by the Fon of Mankon, the clans or sub clans enjoyed a degree of independence and could manage their own affairs<sup>24</sup> the chiefs participated in the central administration of the kingdom, while recognising the uncontested leadership of the Fon of Mankon, their overlord. They could organise hunting expeditions provided they paid tribute to the Fon by giving him captured royal animals or their hides, in the case of the elephant, the tusks. They could freely undertake commercial activities and marry within the community.<sup>25</sup>

Under the Mankon traditional administration, there are 61 quarters in Mankon, (as seen in appendix 3), each ruled by a quarter head, as will be seen on table 1 below.

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<sup>22</sup> C. Chi Che, *Kingdom of Mankon*, p.8

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p.32.

<sup>24</sup> Ntomnifor Richard Fru, 63, Secretary General of the Mankon Traditional Council, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022, Mankon Bamenda.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*.

**Table 1: Traditional Administrative set up of Mankon.**

<b>UNIT</b>	<b>HEAD OF AUTHORITY</b>
REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON	REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
FONDOM ( <i>ALA'AH</i> )	FO MANKON
CLAN ( <i>ATSEY</i> )	CLAN HEAD ( <i>TA TSEY</i> )
QUARTER ( <i>NUIKVU</i> )	QUARTER HEAD ( <i>TA NUIKVU</i> )
COMPOUND ( <i>NDZWU</i> )	COMPOUND HEAD ( <i>TA NDZWU</i> )
FAMILY ( <i>NGWEUG</i> )	COMPOUND HEAD ( <i>TARUI</i> )

**Source: Mankon Travellers' Guide, 2nd Edition, Shiloh Printers Bamenda, p.7.**

### **1-2-1 Human Activities in Mankon.**

The survival of the Mankon people within our spatial and time scope was defined by a number of factors. The factors ranged from natural to human factors which were interwoven to produce a whole complex of farming, carving, fishing, trade and blacksmithing. These human activities coupled with the natural factors discussed above contributed to tailor the pattern of leadership and power in Mankon.

Mankon was the economic or commercial capital of the North West Region. The Mankon Commercial Avenue and its environs was not only host for regional head offices of most institutions in the country but also an area of intensive economic and human activities. Numerous shops and supermarkets are readily available to offer all what one needs. The Mankon main market and Azire food market are the largest markets in the region thereby confirming Mankon as the economic hub of the region.

In the past living in Mankon was at a subsistence level. Bush fallow cultivation and subsistence hunting provided the necessary food. Everyone cultivated the food which was enough for himself and his family. Cash crop cultivation was introduced much later. The main food crops grown in Mankon include maize (nchwi), ground nuts (*mandzu*), yam (*Azu*), beans (*fukon*), Ndzo (Bambara nuts), casava (*casara*), banana (*ambow*), plantains (*nungom*), cocoyams (*macaba*) and sweet potatoes (*mafenkou*)<sup>26</sup>, the people also grew raffia palms from which Palm wine was tapped for sale and for daily use as well as for ceremonial occasions. Bamboos and raphia from these palms were used for furniture work and the weaving of baskets, mats, bags and brooms were also produced from the leaves of the raffia palms.

The German colonial administration introduced irish potatoes into the region which was also cultivated in Mankon<sup>27</sup>. One important aspect of the economy was an attempt to improve farming method through the used of "mixed farming" techniques. In this way, His Royal Highness, the honourable Fon Angwafo III of Mankon, a trained agriculturist, was in the forefront in leading and encouraging the people<sup>28</sup>. By growing various types of crops in addition to keeping cattle, sheep and goats, the Fon was continuously and indirectly teaching the people to be able to improve and diversify their agricultural productivity. Vegetable cultivation includes several species of edible leaves, fruits, legumes and roots. Fruit trees grown, particularly around homesteads; include mangoes, guavas, avocado pears, pawpaw, plum, and pineapple. All these are grown for food and for sale in the local markets<sup>29</sup>

The farming methods are various, the most prominent being the bush fallow type, where the men cleared the grass and allowed it to decay; the women then gathered it and line it inside the ridges which they hoe and then plant with crops. Another method is a short-term productive, but a long-term destructive system through the practice of what is called the *ankara*. In this system, chamber-beds were made by covering ground on heaps of grass and allowing both ends of the beds open, fire was then set inside and the grass burned for some days, cooled and crops like cocoyams, maize, beans, vegetable, melon and pumpkin were planted. Temporarily, the yield was high but since the rich top humus soil and the bacteria

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<sup>26</sup> Mambo Esther, 66, Trader, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022, Mankon Bamenda.

<sup>27</sup> C. Chi Che, *kingdom of Mankon: Aspect of History, Language, Flora and Fauna*, Laaga Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group, 2011, p. 26.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p.27

<sup>29</sup> Sirri Margaret, 72, Farmer, 04<sup>th</sup> April 2022, Mile 7 Mamkon.



responsible for it were destroyed, the whole land was unproductive later. It should be recalled that before the advent of technical farming expertise, the farming methods were very local involving the tilling of ridges vertically down valleys and rainwater continuously swept them away<sup>30</sup>

To enhance their diet, the Mankon people reared animals for local consumption. At home, they kept fowls, various goat types and pigs. Some small amount of cattle was reared. Fishing was done through the digging of fishponds or hooking in the river Mezam and its tributaries during the dry season. Most important was fishing in the river Mezam ox-bow lakes and other depressions. One of such great fishing spots in the pre-colonial and post-colonial era were at Mezam river confluence at a place called *mighong*<sup>31</sup>. Women using traditional fishing nets mainly did this. The catch was shared between the women and the clan head who owned the fishing grounds. The fish was prepared and consumed wet or smoked.

According to the Mankon calendar, the people observed eight days in a week instead of seven as common with many European Countries. Among these eight days, two market-days and one of the market-days are strictly reserved for social gathering<sup>32</sup>. The week days in Mankon were as follows;

*Nsamna*; market day and the first day of the week. No heavy work.

*Mbigna*; second day of the week.

*Zunkana*; religious day, no work at all, it is the third day of the week. Family heads and most nobles attend the Fon's palace for various society meetings.

*Mummutan*; the fourth day of the week. Free activities.

*Zujong*; the fifth day of the week and Bafut market day.

*Zacob*; the sixth day of the week. General communal work day throughout the whole of Mankon. No private work on this day.

*Mbigndom*; the seventh day of the week and Meta market day.

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<sup>30</sup>Tabufor Richmond, 51, Farmer, 04 April 2022, Mile 8 Mankon.

<sup>31</sup>C. Chi Che, *Aspects of History, Language, Culture, Flora and Fauna*, p. 27-28.

<sup>32</sup>C. Njob, "Lore and Learning in Mankon tongue", Bamenda, West Cameroon, 1752/L/MINAC/SG/DLL, 9<sup>TH</sup> August 2019, p. 160-161.

*Zunkon*; the eighth day of the week and a sub market day, people may work on this day.

Away from farming which was in the hands of women, the Mankon people practiced hunting as a means to guarantee food sufficiency. Hunting was largely in the hands of men who used locally fabricated tools to catch games. Hunting of various animals in the past like the antelope, deer, monkey, fox, cutting grass, was done in the forest. Two of such great hunting grounds were owned by the Fon at Nkfulu and Aturafo<sup>33</sup>. Men organised themselves in hunting groups with a pack of dogs, spears, clubs, nets and dane-guns, set fire on one end of the forest to drive the animals to the other end where they waited these instruments. The most effective weapon was the net that was set. The person waiting by the side of the net never made any noise to scare the prey away. If it were simply a publicly owned forest, the catch was shared among the hunters. However, if it belonged to some clan head or the Fon, they had a greater share of the meat as owners of the hunting ground. Nevertheless, in all cases, certain totemic animals like the leopard, wolf, tiger, were taken to the palace and who killed the said animal was decorated with a red feather for bravery and rewarded with spears and more hunting tools. With the coming of so many people to Mankon and the expansion of the kingdom, most if not all of these forests have been cleared for settlement or farming and thereby causing the animals extinct<sup>34</sup>

The men also engaged in wine tapping for drink locally and the excess is sold in the local markets like Ntsuaalem and mile 8. The wine is tapped from trees like raffia palm and the date palm. The method of tapping needs special expertise, because the secret of a successful tapping lies in being able to recognize and predict the readiness of a plant with regard to tapping. After identification, a mature stem is prepared and a hole is bore through which allows the wine sap to flow. A funnel is used to connect the fluid into special calabashes which the tapper collected each time he comes for tapping which is done at least twice and sometimes thrice a day<sup>35</sup>

However, with the help of Fon Angwafo III, a trained Agronomist, farming methods have been improved in the kingdom. He taught through examples: he opened up farms in Befang, Asongka'a, Nta'ngub, and Bagmandey where he planted and reared variously, coffee, mangoes, guavas, maize, plantain suckers, palm trees and reared cattle, goats, and others. The

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<sup>33</sup>C. Chi Che, kingdom of Mankon: *Aspect of History, Language, Culture, Flora and Fauna*, p. 28.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid*, p.29.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid*.

farming methods used now are modern and extensive. Added to the above are agencies like the National Fund for Rural Development (FONADER), North West Development Authority (MIDENO), Heifer Project International (HPI) and various field of extensive workers who helped vulgarise farming methods and give aid through nursery plants and fertilizers such that the Mankon people have improved upon their farming methods. Some of their produce was marketed and money was used to solve their pressing needs<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, another human activity carried out in Mankon was smelting and smithing. Industries abound in Mankon, one of such industries and most important was the iron and steel industry which in the pre- colonial period, people did smelting and smithing. Iron ore was gotten along the river banks and valleys of the Bamenda Plateaux especially in Akum and Mendakwe. Burning charcoal was used to heat this ore to melting point. The molten ore was then formed into various shapes at the smelting centres at Ntsalam, Alamatu, and Nta'titon. Products like spears, knives, saws, gunpowder and bullets were bartered in the local markets or used at home<sup>37</sup>. It should be noted that it is from the smithing experience and its scotching heat that the proverb "the blacksmith is never afraid of hearth fire"<sup>38</sup>.

The weaving of baskets and bags using raw materials from various palm fronds was also and is still practiced in many parts of Mankon. Added to this artisan is carving. Usually, a tree is felled and cut into bits and local chairs, doorframes, traditional whistles, statues are carved out of them. Due to the need of pot to cook food in colonial Mankon, clay was collected, moulded into various shapes, and burnt solid in local kilns. Other pots were smelted and Smith using zinc<sup>39</sup>

Local oil Mills were constructed all over Mankon and famous was those at Ala' amandum. These were constructed when pits were dug and lined with stones. The palm nuts were then harvested, boiled and crushed with long pestles in these pits after which the nuts were extracted from the chaffs; boiled again, and oil was gotten. This practice was obsolete with the advent of mechanisation. Fon Angwafo III produces oil from his farm at Bagmandey using modern machines<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> C. Chi Che, kingdom of Mankon: *Aspect of History, Language, Culture, Flora and Fauna*, p.29-30.

<sup>37</sup> Ndoh Roland, 68, blacksmith, 28 March 2022, Ntarikon.

<sup>38</sup> C. Chi Che, *Aspect of History, Language, Culture, Flora and Fauna*, 2011, p. 30.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> C. Chi Che, *Aspect of History, Language, Culture, Flora and Fauna*, 2011, p. 30.

The most interesting industry is the quarry industry. Before the advent of this industry, building of houses was done by pinning sticks in the ground, tying others on them and plastering with mud. The roof was made of thatched. Urbanization brought about the quarry industry in Mankon. Those who promoted the industry in Mankon included: Pa Paulo Atorbizhwe'e, Pa Asa' miwaa, Pa Tuma- bidzong, Pa Lucas Forbiwey, Pa Samuel Ntche, Pa China Augustine Fonteh, Pa Aaron Tabufor for sand quarry. The two types of stones that were quarried are granite /sandstone and the basalt. This industry has attracted so many employees who dig out the stones, split them into various sizes using hammers. These stones are used in building houses, bridges and roads. The sand dug from the river was used in cementing the house<sup>41</sup>.

Trade has been a vital tool in the history of human societies. Trade and the development of transportation facilities are connected, the Mankon people have always thought it necessary to construct footpaths and bridges leading to farms. The people have been able to construct several motorable roads for easy movement of goods and people. In these efforts, the road construction has been concentrated in the areas with greater population densities as well as to rich farmland areas and market centres.

Trade in the past was by what can be called "BARTER" in which bargaining was carried on by both the buyer and the seller without having face to face contact<sup>42</sup>. Yet in this type of trade, there was sincerity and honesty between the buyer and seller to the extent that each partner had a fair deal. Traditional norms forbade dishonesty and cheating<sup>43</sup>. The barter system was replaced in the course of the years by the use of shells, cowries, copper, brass rods, decorative beads, elephant tusk and others. These articles were accepted as money, bride price and the wealth of individuals as well as the value of other economic activities were measured in terms of these articles. The Mankon people extended their trading activities to neighbouring villages including Bali, Bafut, Nkwen and Meta, and traded with Mankon which was very rich in ivory. The Mankon people sold or exchange their cowpeas for Meta oil which was then sold in Bammessing, in return they bought back cloth and Bammessing pots, which was in the early days of inter village trade<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> C. Chi Che, *Aspect of History, Language, Culture, Flora and Fauna*, 2011, p.32.

<sup>42</sup> Y. Eballa and E. A. Aka, *Focus on Nukwi Nu Fo Ndefru III*, P.18

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ade Mishimbo, 70, Trader, 16 March 2022, Mankon.

### 1-2-2 Social Aspects

The Mankon community is involved with so many socialising activities. When in joy, sadness or pain the people communally express their joy or sorrow in recitations and songs. Marriage and birth ceremonies are times when they are most happy, ritualistic performances are times when they are solemn, and death ceremonies are times when they are not safe or in pain.

As far as marriage is concerned, we have to look at the royal marriage and that of the rest of the people. The former is that of the Fon and his sons. Normally, certain families are marked out to give a daughter to the palace for marriage and others are "caught" when the Fon or his councilors see a beautiful girl that is fit for the palace<sup>45</sup>. When she comes, cam wood is rubbed on her forehead, showing that she belongs to the palace. She can now then be given to the Fon or to any of his mature sons. The cam wood once rubbed, the girl cannot escape from the palace or refuse marriage again.

For the rest of the people, marriage takes place among clans. The parents of the "two-to-be" usually meet while drinking palm-wine brought by the suitor, they discuss without the consent of the boy or girl. When arrangements are reached at, the two families arrange for a day when the first (of the four) instalment of the bride wealth has to be given. When all of the above is completed, a day is fixed for members of the girl's family to escort her to her husband house. Bachelors are not respected and are not given any important role in the village<sup>46</sup>.

Childbirth is one of the moments when the people are most happy. When a child is born to a house, family members and friends bring food to feed the mother and the child. They spent days here before returning home. During this time, birth songs are sung. The birth of a child is an important event, having many children is a sign of power and happiness. The birth of twin is given great consideration and respect: the mother may even enter the palace and have the privilege of talking to the Fon. The mother of the twin is called "mangye" and their father "tangye", are shown particular reverence. This is because twins are believed to have connections with gods<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> Mishimbo Julius Nde, 64, Vice Secretary of the Mankon Traditional Council, 27 March 2022, Mulang Street four.

<sup>46</sup> J.P Notue, *Arts, Heritage and Culture from the Mankon Kingdom*, p.40.

<sup>47</sup> Angwafo Cecelia, 68, Teacher, 16 April 2022, Mankon.

Death ceremonies are one of the instances when communality and sociability are expressed. Relatives of the deceased stay in the latter's compound for a week, the first three days of which are those of mourning and the rest, for eating, drinking and dancing. The latter activities are to escort the deceased in life after death. Due to changing times, and economic hardship, mourning days have reduced from eight to three<sup>48</sup>. There are some socio-cultural organizations with a sense of purpose that shows their commitment towards the development of the Mankon kingdom. They include; MACUDA (Mankon Cultural and Development Association), which is the umbrella and the most reputable Mankon tribal development association as it touches all the people within and outside Mankon, the MASA (Mankon Student Association), the moving force of all youths of Mankon towards the promotion of the Mankon culture and development<sup>49</sup>. The various juju and dancing groups like the mbagum, asmba, makonge, and the bottle dance are commonly used to create awareness and support during traditional festivals, and to keep people alive on rest days, various women's groups like the *Nkah Ni Kwi* (the light of maturity), is a women's group with the goal of empowering women/girls for a better future, advocate political, social, economic and cultural rights of women and girls in Mankon<sup>50</sup>.

Arbitration is another social aspect in Mankon, the Mankon people have a traditional way of resolving arguments. Five different levels of arbitration are contemplated: the head of the family judge minor cases, the quarter council Judges appeals. Problems concerning clan members are submitted to tasey, the chief of the clan; serious cases are submitted to the Fon's court or to the bukum council; nowadays the civil administration and the Court of Justice deal with criminal cases. The kwifon is only involved in the traditional ceremonies to purify the people implicated in crimes, which are intended to prevent their repetition and avoid serious social consequences<sup>51</sup>.

### **1-2-3 Traditional Religion**

For the Mankon people, the traditional religion still has an important role in the protection of their activities, environment and themselves. Sacred sites, as well as the ritual objects that accompany ceremonies and celebration are therefore respected. Before the advent of

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<sup>48</sup> C. Chi Che, *Aspects of History, Language, Culture, Flora and Fauna*, p.36

<sup>49</sup> Fobuzong Paul, 80, Quarter Head, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2022, Mankon Palace

<sup>50</sup> Fru Denise, 72, Traditional Councilor, 30 March 2020, Mankon palace.

<sup>51</sup> J.P. Notue, *Arts, Heritage and Culture from the Mankon Kingdom*, p.40.

christainity, the only worship was animism<sup>52</sup>. Various clans had their gods and shrines. There were tree-gods, stone-gods, stream gods, at whose shrines, natives went and prayed to their ancestors. The Fon himself had to and still has to go to Ala'nkyi (a city of water) every year to pray to his forefathers to enable him to rule well, and to rid the land of any misfortunes. After each ritual at Ala'nkyi, more rituals continue with singing and dancing at samni (the palace piazza). Christainity has greatly reduced ancestral worship at clan level, with the only exception of that of the Fon<sup>53</sup>.

Mankon as a centralized Kingdom had established norms, values and system of beliefs. The Mankon believe in the existence of a supernatural being, that shapes and control their lives, it is seen as the provider, giver and protector of life<sup>54</sup>. This being was venerated through their ancestors, which made ancestral worship very important in the kingdom. Religion in Mankon had its own forms and modalities of worship, traditional rituals was an example and most important in term of forms and modalities of worship, while secret shines was usually identified with streams, forest, trees and stones<sup>55</sup>. It should be noted that free access to these sites was always forbidden especially women, and children, only initiated members, chief priests and diviners were allowed to enter there.

Rituals performances take the form of incarnations and sacrifices, animals used for sacrifices included rams and fowls, camwood, palm oil, salt and water<sup>56</sup>. The culture of the Mankon people was inherited in their religion, in order to ensure continuity, from generation to the other, oral history, tradition, and initiation rites were used to transmit and preserved this religion.

#### **1-2-4 Traditional ritual in Mankon: From Ala'nkyi to Samni**

In Mankon, almost every year is celebrated what is termed "The Fon's Dance". Very few people (natives and non-natives alike) know that the three days ceremony at samni is a culmination of a series of activities and rituals that start all the way from Ala'nkyi, the sacred shrine and the soil of the Mankon kingdom. Few people know that it is the paramount role of the reigning Fon to visit Ala'nkyi every year to offer sacrifices and to pray to his forefathers (the late Fon's) to enable him to rule well, and shower blessings on his land and people. Yet

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<sup>52</sup> C. Chi Che, *Aspects of History, Language, Culture, Flora and Fauna*, p. 36.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p.37.

<sup>54</sup> Fon Angwafor IV,50, Traditional Ruler, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2022, Mankon palace

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid .

few are those who are aware of the fact that the staging or non staging of the Fon's dance depends on the acceptance or refusal of the sacrifice offered. A refusal of such a sacrifice may be because the ancestors are angry with the Fon, the natives and/or the land has been desecrated. On these occasions, the Fon prays and sacrifice goats and chickens. The kwifon liberations are celebrated on or next to certain large stone blades standing like pillars placed in a special area of the Ala'nkyi shrine, especially during times of hardship<sup>57</sup>.

### **1-2-5 A brief history of Ala'nkyi in Mankon.**

Ala'nkyi (a land of water) is a sacred place where the Mankon people settled after the migration of Widekum. On the hill at Ala'nkyi are found seven graves of the Fons who were 'lost' here. Here, are found the Kwifon's sacred stone, this area is a tourist attraction. In the valley below is found the sacred water- nkyimali. The Ala'nkyi delegation is usually made up of the Fon, kwifon (sacred juju), Takumbeng (royal family), and some bukum (king makers). The chief performer is usually the Kwifon<sup>58</sup>.

Once the performers from the palace at Fozan arrived Ala'nkyi, they first of all wake up the seven Fons before going to nkyimali. Before entry, the entrance was cleansed with a young cock or hen, that was killed and put at the gate. Some liberation was also poured here. The sacred waters of nkyimali are treaded exclusively by the Fon and the kwifon<sup>59</sup>. Immediately after entry, a white cock was used to preform a ritual on the Fon after which cam wood was rubbed. The sacrifice was done in this sacred pool from where water was collected in the sacred gourds and given the Fon to drink. After the liberation, the white cock was released and watched, if the ancestors accepted the liberation, the cock excretes on the spot, or moves a few metres to do so or sheds a feather. A contrary action to the entire above means refusal<sup>60</sup>.

### **1-2-6 The Mankon Confederacy.**

The Mankon people from sa'nyom to Fozan moved as a single unit under powerful Fons assured by able and intelligent lieutenants and councilors. In Fozan, they enjoyed some peace that was soon followed by raids and ambushes from within and without. Consequently, a federation was formed among the clans that made up the Mankon kingdom. These clans: Ala'tako, Bandeng, Banyanga, Bikom, Bombi Anyerengum, Bombi Ndesiri, Mason, Mandey, Nto, together with smaller clans of Mbatu, Ndzong, Mundum I and II, chomba, Nsongwa,

<sup>57</sup> Fon Angwafor IV, 50, Traditional Ruler, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2022, Mankon palace

<sup>58</sup> C. Chi Che, *Aspects of History, Language, Culture, Flora and Fauna*, p.38.

<sup>59</sup> Ngang Jackson, 40, Traditional Councilor, 08 March 2022, Ntambeng.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid..



Akum and Ala'tening formed themselves in a powerful unit which could resist any external invasion or threats<sup>61</sup>.

This Confederacy spoke the same language-Mankon. Due to economic and military prowess enjoyed by the Mankon people, they assimilated the Mbu group made up of the present day Mbu (Bafuchu), Mbei, Ba, Ndza, Ngyenmbu and Fomundum (in Bali Sub-division). The smaller clans that were incorporated, formed sub chiefdoms, enjoyed a degree of autonomy and were allowed to trade, hunt and intermarry with the powerful clans. However, they in turn recognised the suzerainty and paramountcy of the Mankon kingdom. The whole confederation had a central market at *samnimandza'a* where they all traded and their sub chiefs took part in the central administration. It was this benevolence as the Mankon kingdom grew that the powers and autonomy of the sub clans continued to dwindle favouring a more centralized type of government<sup>62</sup>.

The Mankon kingdom was not to enjoy the Confederacy forever, as Mbatu, Nsongwa, Chomba, Ala'tening and Bafuchu further migrated to the Bamenda escarpment and Mundum I and II further moved beyond Bafut. The cause was that each ethnic group was allowed to organise hunting expeditions, if totemic animals killed, were given to the dynasty of Mankon. Regrettably, when the Mbatu people caught a leopard, they did not present it to the Fon of Mankon. Consequently, the kwifon of Mankon arrested the ruler of Mbatu and his nobles. The kwifon tried the ruler and his notables. The severity with which the Mbatu people were treated frightened other innocent groups to disperse. This portrays Mankon as a kingdom of leadership and power from time immemorial<sup>63</sup>.

### **1-2-7 The Mankon Language**

The Mankon Language belongs to the "Ngemba" group of languages that LEROY (1977:14f) says comprises of: Pinyin, Mankon, Awing, Bafut, Nkwen, Mendakwe, Bambili, Bambui, Bamumkumbit, chomba, Mbatu, Njong, Akum, Mundum I, Mundum II, and Ala'tening<sup>64</sup>.

Due to her migratory history, her formation of a Confederacy, the maintenance of marital, trade, friendly and interactional ties with her neighbours, the Mankon community is

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<sup>61</sup> Y. Eballa and E. A. Aka, *Focus on Nukwi Nu Fo Ndefru III: Mankon Cultural Festival*, p. 22.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p.23.

<sup>64</sup> C. Chi Che, *Kingdom of Mankon: Aspect of History, Language, Culture, Flora and Fauna*, 2011, p. 46.

multilingual. The main language however is still Mankon. LEROY again has this to say: le multilinguisme était Courant a Mankon parce que 20% des femmes mariées a des hommes de Mankon venaient d'une chefferie étrangère et parlaient leur langue a leurs enfants. De plus, elles étaient assistées dans leur travail, comme tout autre femme a Mankon, par un enfant de chefferie qui, lui aussi, utilisant sa langue Maternelle. Enfin, Les commerçants de Mankon, pour resserrer les liens avec leurs partenaires étrangers, faisaient des échanges de personnel. Si bien qu'il était courant qu'a l'intérieur d'une même maisonnée on parlât plusieurs langues, et que beaucoup de locuteurs Mankon fussent capables de parler, à coré de leur langue maternelle, plusieurs autres langues. Ce multilinguisme était considéré comme au a tout et était, par conséquent favorisé<sup>65</sup>.

The essence of this chapter was to situate our study area within its contextual space. This was to see how human behavior from earliest settlements was influenced by geography and how human activities helped to shape the indigenous thinking and knowledge pattern of the Mankon people. The historical background, besides tracing the origins, migration and settlement of the people, equally provides a formidable background upon which the tenets of leadership and power were formed. It is therefore seen from the above discussion that the background knowledge of Mankon has brought to light important information on how the Mankon kingdom was founded and how it developed. The kingdom was characterised by different economic, political, social and cultural activities which influenced the daily lives of the people. The different historical and geographical aspects of the Mankon people coupled with circumstances to map out the contours of leadership administration and power dynamism which we shall examine in the proceeding chapters of our study.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p. 47.

## **CHAPTER 2: LEADERSHIP AND POWER ADMINISTRATION IN MANKON AT ITS ORIGINAL FORM**

This chapter focuses on leadership administration and power of arts in Mankon. The chapter discusses the different political institutions and political offices established in the Mankon kingdom. This chapter presents leadership administration and power in Mankon prior to the intrusion of European colonists in the area. The chapter further argues that leadership and power dynamism in its original form was carefully tailored to reflect daily realities and upheld values of the Mankon kingdom. We shall examine the Mankon palace (Ntoh Mankon), and discuss the office of the Fon which was the highest authority in all spheres of Mankon life; we shall equally examine the Kwifon as the highest political institution that work together with the Fon to ensure the functioning of the Mankon kingdom and its institutions and finally we shall equally examine the Central Government (Nda Ala'a) in Mankon, the Manjong, the village council, which was the military wings of the Mankon Government. We shall equally examine the significance of Arts and Power in Mankon in respect to culture and tradition.

### **2-1 The Mankon palace (ntoh)**

It will be difficult for one to fully discuss the leadership and power administration in the Mankon kingdom without discussing the Mankon palace which acted as a permanent seat of the Fon of Mankon and its traditional institutions. The Mankon palace is located at Fozan. This suggests that the Mankon people all converged at Fozan before spreading to other parts of Mankon. The origin of Fozan stands out as the site where the Mankon palace was erected and can be traced back to the migratory history of the Mankon people. The Mankon people have lived in this present site, Fozan, for about four hundred years and seven Fons have been burried here namely Ndemagha VIII, Ndefru II, Angwafo I, Fomukong, Angwafo II, and Ndefru III and Angwafo III respectively<sup>1</sup> (see Photo 1 ).

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<sup>1</sup> Mishimbo Julius Nde, 64, Vice Secretary of the Mankon traditional council, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2022, Mulang Street four.

**Photo 1: The Mankon Palace**



**Source: The Mankon Palace Archives**

At the entrance to the Mankon palace is the Museum, one of the greatest achievements of Fon Angwafo III, was the renovation of the Museum in the palace which today has given a new face lift for the palace that attracts many tourists. This was part of the inheritance from one Fon to the other. Some of the objects were used for cultural manifestations and traditional dances in the life of the Fon.

As an important institution in the Mankon kingdom, the palace was a significant establishment of the Mankon people as it hosted the Fon and acted as the centre where power was disseminated to the other parts of the the Kingdom. After looking at the Mankon palace or Ntoh Mankon, it will be important for us to look at the Fon who resided at the Mankon palace and ensured the smooth functioning of the Mankon kingdom.

The Mankon kingdom is a solid unit whose head is the Fon. As constituted authority of the land and Paramount ruler, the Fon acts as an auxiliary to the country's central government within an area of jurisdiction. The Fon himself who is the head of Nto clan, is aided in the government of the land by the nobles, the councillors, the secret societies, jujus of kwifo and takumbeng, and the Fon's mother – Mafo.<sup>2</sup>

The kingdom is composed of nineteen clans, which is ruled by the clan heads (tatsey). These clans were further splited into wards or quarters (nikfu) with their leaders (tanikfu). The quarters are then composed of families (nda) at whose head is a man (tanda), if we look at the Mankon political and social structure, we would notice that it is a decentralized type but each smaller unit working towards unity and harmony of the whole structure<sup>3</sup>.

In the Mankon kingdom, the Fon and many wives live in the palace. A residential area was constructed to host these women. The Fon's wives constituted of the wives he married and the wives of the late Fons. The new wives were taught palace administration, how to behave in public and how to appear before the Fon. The wives of the Fon were easily identified by the cowry bracelets on their hands. This goes a long way to confirm our view that the Fon of Mankon weilded much power in leadership. This is so because the number of wives and children owned by a man in Mankon was an indicator of one's status in the society.

### **2-1-1 The Fon**

Fons played a central role in the administration of states and kingdoms in the Bamenda Grasslands of Cameroon prior to the advent of colonialism. The Fon or king was the most important person in the administrative organization of Mankon. He was the secular, spiritual, economic and social leader of the people in the land. Awason describes the Fon as someone who:

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<sup>2</sup>C. Chi Che, *kingdom of Mankon: Aspect of History, Language, Culture, Flora and Fauna*, 2011, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

enjoys exceptional status and prestige, dressed in sophisticated luxury attire, can by his dresses and luxury goods clearly be singled out from the rest of his people, was generally accompanied by an entourage of dignitaries and servants carrying status symbols such as fly whisks, ivory trumpets and was accorded respectable behaviour by his subjects all the time, his arrival at any occasion was signaled by a large entourage of nobles, queens, princes and princesses, servants, clowns, body guards and the sound of trumpets to alert people of his presence<sup>4</sup>. The Fon was thus a singular figure and the incarnation of the customs and traditions of the Mankon people. He was the head of the centralised government and moderator of all cultural activities in his kingdom. The Bamenda Grasslands constituted of centralized states and kingdoms, power in these states and kingdoms were concentrated in the hands of the Fons who embodied spiritual, divine and physical powers. The Mankon kingdom falls within the category where the Fon was at the apex of power.

The traditional rulers acquired authority over their subjects from sources as propounded by Max Weber, according to Weber, the right to direct and command others (political authority) emanates from three sources – tradition, charisma and legacy<sup>5</sup>. Tradition is the right to rule resulting from the continuous exercise of political power, as with hereditary rule. Charisma involves no skill or knowledge, and recognizes no rules or traditions; but it results from the exceptional strength of personality of a leader. A charismatic leader obtains widespread support because of his ideas and dynamism. Legality was attached to the authority of a political office when the duties are performed in a legal and constitutional manner<sup>6</sup>. Africans at different levels, recognised and accepted tradition, charisma and legality in their traditional rulers. The recognition and acceptance determine the influence which the chiefs wielded over their subjects.

Under Enstoolment, There are three classes of succession in Mankon: that of the Fon, the Bikum and the commoners. That of the Fon is the most sacred (see photo 2 below). When a Fon died (Fon is missing), the news was usually kept secret and the palace is guarded because enemy kingdoms might destabilize the land; false claimants to the throne might crop up and the palace property might be looted. After the deceased is buried in a sitting position in the sacred grave

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<sup>4</sup>L.C. Awasom, "Kingdom of Mankon", (n.p. 2011) p, 65.

<sup>5</sup> C.A. Leeds, Political Studies, (London: Macdonald and Evans, 1975), P.4

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



(*Nda Fo*) in the sacred shrine - *Nishwim*, members of the Takumbeng choose a new Fon from his sons and hand him to the kwifon<sup>7</sup>. It should be noted that succession to the Mankon throne is patriarchal that is a son succeeds his father. First sons rarely succeed except when there is no other son. When the deceased has no son at all, a rare occurrence viewing the number of wives each Fon has, he is succeeded by his nephew. When male child is handed to the kwifon, the latter takes him to the sacred enthronement house *Ndaamenang* where several rituals are performed on the appointee after which he becomes the new Fon<sup>8</sup>.

**Photo 2: Enstoolment in Mankon**



**Source: Aka, Focus on Nukwi, p. 59**

<sup>7</sup> C. Chi Che, *Aspect of Histoy*, p.24-25.

<sup>8</sup> Ndenge Fongang, 58, Teacher, 28 April 2022, Ntingkag.

Those that rubbed or enthroned the king or Fon do not clean their hands on the ground. When enthronement procedures are over, the new Fon is then shown to the public who pelt him with stones, signifying the last insult they will ever proffer on him, but this insult strengthens and immunises him<sup>9</sup>. A day would then be fixed for the official mourning of the late Fon. On this day people are dressed in banana leaves (adzag) and smear wood ash (abvu) on them. The men with guns take positions on nearby hills and the Fon gives the first gunshot after which the rest go. After a Fon has been enstooled he cannot abdicate, only death can take him away from the throne. They then assemble at the palace plaza, singing, dancing and then food and drinks are served<sup>10</sup>.

The kingdom of Mankon has had twenty one Fons, the first leader was Fon Ndemagha I, who led the people out of Tikari. He laid the foundation for the migration for the 14th and 15th centuries and fought hard with many groups to settle his people<sup>11</sup>. These groups struggled for leadership. He was indeed the 'Moses' of his days who started the Exodus but did not see the promise land.

Among leader was the 10th to the Mankon throne, Fon Tseymagha I (*Alankyi*), he took his people out of Ntarikon because he discovered that the place was so unfriendly<sup>12</sup>. Tseymagha was considered to be one of the wise Fons of Mankon. The 16th Fon of Mankon, Fon Angwafo I who took his people from FoZan to the present site<sup>13</sup>. He is considered to be a good leader who brought his people to the promise Land. Other leaders had mounted the throne of Mankon with Fon Angwafo III who is the former leader, being the 20<sup>th</sup> Fon of Mankon. He took over as a Fon in 1959<sup>14</sup>. He continued with the development of Mankon through modernization from where his father ended. This was in the realms of indigenous institutions, and socio- economic development. In the process he had an urge over his father because he had acquired western education. Photo 3 is a portrait of Fon Angwafo III of Mankon.

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<sup>9</sup> Titandong Valentine, 61, quarter head, 28 April 2022, Ntingkag.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> C. Chi Che, *Apects of History, Language, Culture, Flora and Fauna*, p.6,

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.8.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.10.

<sup>14</sup> Ndenge Fongang, 58, Teacher, 28 April 2022, Ntingkag.



**Photo 3: Fon Angwafo III, the 20th ruler of Makon**



**Source: Gallery of the Mankon Palace Archive.**

The enstoolment of nobles is done by the Fon. When a noble dies, the kwifon mourns him on the first day and mourning continues until the 8th day when it ceases and a successor is chosen (from among the deceased person's sons) and taken to the Fon for blessing. The latter annoints him round his neck<sup>15</sup>. A second generation of noble was enthroned in his compound and shown to the Fon later.

Commoners are enstooled by elders of that family. A successor was annointed with cam wood, herbs worn round his neck and he was offered his late father's drinking cup, cap, bag and walking Stick. Note should be taken that in case a man dies without a son, his paternal nephew succeeds him. The successor is known as *ndzinda* ('chop chair')<sup>16</sup>

The kingship in Mankon is hereditary and based on patrilineal succession. One of the main pre-occupation of the ruling Fon while he is still in office is to choose the son who is going to succeed him. To be eligible, a son of the king must have been conceived when his father had already been installed as king. This is expressed in Mankon by saying that the son must be a 'child of the leopard skin' as the king's bed is covered with leopard pelts. Furthermore, he should be married and must have shown proof of his fecundity; he should be born of a Mankon woman. Every aspect of his character is taken into account, sense of Justice, industriousness, tolerance, honesty, valour and respect for the traditional institutions.

From 1197 to present, 21 Fons have ruled in the Mankon dynasty. The table below presents the various leaders of Mankon.

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<sup>15</sup> C. Chi Che, *Kingdom of Mankon: Aspect of History, Language, Culture, Flora and Fauna*, p 26.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

**Table 2: The Genology of Fons in the Mankon Kingdom**

	<b>Name of Fon</b>	<b>Other Tittle</b>	<b>Reign</b>
1	Ndemagha I	Tibati	1197-1252
2	Ndemagha II	Wimbum	1952-1280
3	Ndemagha III	Bamukumbit	1280-1309
4	Tako Matsi		1309-1326
5	Ndemagha IV	Babadjou	1326-1338
6	Tako Matsi II	Dschang	
7	Ndemagha V	Fontem	1352-1364
8	Tangwanu	Tamkon-Widikum	1364-1407
9	Ndemagha VI	Mbamnizihi	1407-1455
10	Tseymagha I	Alankyi	1455-1487
11	Ndemagha VII		1487-1539
12	Tseymagha II		1539-1593
13	Ndefru I		1593-1641
14	Ndemagha VIII		1641-1693
15	Ndefru II		1693-1744
16	Angwafo I	Fumnju	1744-1799
17	Fomukong	Fozan	1799-1866
18	Angwafo II	Great Warrior	1866-1919
19	Ndefru III		1919-1959
20	Angwafo III		1959-2022
21	Angwafo IV		2022-

**Source: Ntomnifor Richard Fru, Mankon Travellers' Guide, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Bamenda: Shiloh Printers, 2023.p.8.**

The above table gives the summary of all the rulers in the kingdom of Mankon and the period which they ruled.

Apart from the Fon role in the country's central administration, he also performs the following duties: he presides over religious rituals, the war council, the council of Bikum and other important meetings. He awards titles to meritorious citizens for their outstanding performances (award of the red feather insignia), he moderates all cultural events and activities of his kingdom, he appeals on all cases except those of felony and murder, also as father of the land, he is at the head of all regulatory societies like the kwifon and the Takumbeng.

The Fon was not just a leader but also the highest priest of the kingdom. He was considered to be much more than an ordinary human being. People went to him for guidance and inspiration. Once enthroned, the Fon ruled throughout his lifetime. However, in case of misconduct he could be dethroned by the kwifo.

### **2-1-2 Kwifo**

The word kwifo means "The thing of the Fon", kwi stands for the "thing", while fo means the "chief"<sup>17</sup>. Warner explains that the kwifo is "a complicated matter, it is an insecure, mysterious, impersonal, confusing and it is intending to be so"<sup>18</sup>. This was the highest institution that wielded power in the traditional governance mechanism of the Mankon Kingdom. It was even above the Fon who was the physical and Paramount leader. The kwifo had as its main duty to verify and ensure that decision arrived at for the wellbeing of the Mankon Kingdom were implemented under the directives of the Fon, without the slightest compromise. It is worth noting that the kwifo had powers to depose the Fon if it was found out that he committed an abomination<sup>19</sup>

Kwifo was common in almost all the states and kingdoms of the Bamenda Grassfields. It has different appellations in the different states and kingdoms of the Bamenda Grassfields, the Nso and Libum called "Nwerong", while in Bafut it was known as Nkwifor and in Bali as Ngumba.

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<sup>17</sup> S. N. Nkwenti, " Traditional Authority in the Ngemba Area: A case study of Menka" (Maitrese Dissertation, University of Yaounde, 1987) p.19.

<sup>18</sup> J. P. Warner, *Pre-Colonial Mankon, The Development of a Cameroon Chiefdom in its Regional Setting* (Michigan University, Microfilms International, 1987) p. 226.

<sup>19</sup> A Fon could commit an abomination if he failed to defend the interest of his people by performing the required sacrifices and libations. For example, Fon Mungamah II of Mbatu enthroned in 1989 took upon himself as a student and avoided staying in Mbatu Fon's palace even after the end of his studies. He became compelled by forces unknown to normal human reasoning to resign as the Fon of Mbatu in December 1999. This was a strange happening which in the past was usually treated by a mystical execution of the Fon. In a similar manner, in 2006 the Fon of Babanki, Fon Vubansi II was brutally killed by his subjects for violating traditional practices considered as an abomination on the Chiefdom.

These institutions were charged with executive, legislative and judicial duties directed by supreme leaders. At times the institutions could execute some tasks through sound judgement without prior consultations with the Fons or supreme leaders.

In traditional Mankon society, traditional institutions and regulatory Societies were pecked on the kwifo, who was the government and the highest authority in Mankon. It is the keeper of traditions and ensures order; it has very important judiciary and ritual functions and its judgement are definitive, without appeal. The kwifo participate in the administration of the kingdom, the enthronement and initiation of the king and burials of chiefs. Its executive members are exclusively male citizens and include the Fon, who is also part of the Takumbeng of the Royal clan, the princes' society<sup>20</sup>

The kwifo members have no right to the throne, the Fon is the only prince who sees the kwifo and is therefore called the son of the kwifo. Being the only member informed of events in the Takumbeng and kwifo, his opinion is often decisive and respected by the two lodges when affairs of the state are discussed. The kwifo is an institution that regulates social life rather than a secret society, as it is often said, although, like every government, it maintains a certain degree of secrecy in some affairs.

It has the function of purifying people involved in certain crimes such as murder, suicide, arson and treason; it carries out protective libations when serious situations arise or disasters threaten to exterminate the population. The symbol of this society, and therefore of authority, is two U-shaped iron gongs. The heads of the kwifo are three notables of common birth, whose titled are *forti*, the chief; *bushi*, the assistant chief and *awambeng*, second assistant<sup>21</sup>. Official symbols of authority such as masks, instruments and objects of the sacred orchestra used during kwifo rituals, are entrusted to the *forti* and are kept in the societies quarters in the palace, out of sight of the non initiated. Not a monolithic group, the kwifo is made up of several independent lodges

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<sup>20</sup> Y. Eballa and E.A. AKA, *Focus on Nukwi Nu Fo Ndefru III*, p.50.

<sup>21</sup> Tabufor Richmond, 51, king maker, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022, Mile 8 Mankon.

specialized in specific domains: Justice and policing, medicine, customary laws and religion and agricultural rites<sup>22</sup>.

Kwifo *tuntsu* includes two types of people: those who are not descendance of the Royal family or have lost their royal lineage (that is, when the Royal descent reaches the fifth generation) and those of shared birth or who are neutralized Mankon people. The members of kwifo *tuntsu* meet often in a special part of the palace called the *Numo nu kwifo*<sup>23</sup>, where they take decision concerning the political and socio-cultural life of the kingdom. All decisions are then submitted to the Fon for approval. The kwifo *tuntsu* members make announcements, usually in the main square and at the market place; their role is also to purify society from all that could degrade it<sup>24</sup>. *Mankwakungfung* or *nkukom* are symbolic kwifo owned by each clan chief, their role is to reinforce kwifo decisions and participate in the burial ceremonies of a chief or notable<sup>25</sup>.

Kwifo *adjwang* is open to all men, including those of royal descent, provided they are after the fourth generation, membership is by initiation. The members meet to discuss social issues; they are responsible for the funeral of princes, princesses, the king's wives, nobles and members of the society itself<sup>26</sup>.

Takumbeng of the Royal Clan is the society of princes, whose title can be traced back to the fourth generation. Its role is rituals, that of asking the gods to provide the Mankon people with good health, fertility, abundant harvest, peace and protection from famine and disease. Its symbols are *ndoeru takumbeng* and *ntsaru*: a small bamboo house with walls covered in torn young raffia leaves and housing a talking drum played as the Takumbeng members perform their sacrifices<sup>27</sup>.

Bukum is a society made up of nobles belonging to the kwifo or Takumbeng. One can belong to the society by inheritance or by direct nomination by the Fon. The *bukum* council meets the Fon to discuss public affairs and take important decisions concerning the survival of the kingdom.

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<sup>22</sup> Y. Eballa and E.A. AKA, *Focus on Nukwi Nu Fo Ndefru III*, p.50

<sup>23</sup> Tabufor Richmond, 51, king maker, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022, Mile 8 Mankon.

<sup>24</sup> Y. Eballa and E.A. AKA, *Focus on Nukwi Nu Fo Ndefru III*, p.50

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p.51,

<sup>27</sup> J. P. Notue, *Mankon: Arts, Heritage and Culture from the Mankon Kingdom*, p.38.

The council also has the power to impeach the Fon if he does not respect the people's traditions or if he commits grave errors. In such a case he must excuse himself and pay a fine in kind: goats or palm-wine, or both<sup>28</sup>.

### **2-1-3. V The Manjong: Ndamukong**

Ndamukong literary means "the house of Spears", which signifies that this house was a war lodge. The lodge was constructed by Fon Mukong I. It was used as a military lodge where Mankon youths and adults were recruited and trained to defend the kingdom. Qualification for recruitment was limited to owners of weapons, namely cutlass, spears and guns and must be good fighters. The lodge was equally used as a refugee camp where women and children were sheltered during intertribal wars. With tribal wars now a thing of the past, Fon Angwafo III however, had affected some innovations in this lodge. Today it is used as a hall for cultural activities and a court hall. It is also an audience hall<sup>29</sup>.

### **2-1-4 Ngangfo**

This is one of the arms of the Kwifo in Mankon. Members are drawn from herbalist groups throughout the kingdom. Their duty is to prevent misfortune in the village and to induce good harvest to all. It is believed that they are charged with the duty of appeasing the gods of the land through sacrifices. Thus appeased, the gods would then send rain for watering the crops. Its members usually come out at the beginning of the rainy season particularly before the planting period and appease the gods of the land through sacrifices to send enough rain so that the people should have a good harvest. They do this by going through the quarters in the village, sprinkling herbal concoctions to appease the gods, they also produce herbal remedies to heal the Fon and their fellow citizens. This process takes about seven days before the people start tilling the land. As a farmer Fon Angwafo III has ensured that this ceremony was carried out every year. Defaulters are usually punished<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Y. Eballa and E.A. AKA, *Focus on Nukwi Nu Fo Ndefru III*, p. 51.

<sup>29</sup> W. Wankah Nde, *FO SAN Angwafo III of Mankon: A Biographical Synthesis, 1925-2006*, Unique Printers Bamenda, 2007, p. 28.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 29

### **2-1-5 Mafo**

Mafo literary means "the mother of the Fon", who constitutes part of the government set up. However, a princess appointed by the Fon to head women of the kingdom during the reign of the Fon usually assists the Mafo, the mother of the Fon, with her position. They are responsible for the welfare of the people taking special care of the Fon's wives, princes and princesses. They also advise the Fon and supervise the palace in his absence and settle disputes amongst women in the kingdom. They also supervise the Fon's family and train the Fon's new wives with the palace etiquette and they also entertain guests<sup>31</sup>.

### **2-1-6 Nda Ala'a**

Nda Ala'a literary means "a house for everybody". In spite of this denotation, the name is misleading because not everybody is allowed to be a member. There were qualifications for membership. Members could either be through appointment by the Fon following certain criteria or through hereditary rights as successors to the Mankon nobility, example Fon Angwafo III as head of all the institutions in the palace made some innovations here. He increased the Number of members who were charged with affairs of the whole kingdom. In this house, each quarter was represented and was charged with the responsibility of transmitting to the palace, problems or any development activity they intend to carryout in the quarter<sup>32</sup>.

### **2-1-7 Quarter and Village Councils**

A quarter council is found in a quarter or ward. A quarter is a settlement made up of people of different families and lineage. They may not share the common ancestry and may or may not have any family ties.

A quarter (*nukvu*) has a quarter head (*tanikuv*) who presides over the quarter council. This quarter council is composed of the quarter heads and members who are family heads. Above the quarter is a village council. The village is a large group of families than the quarter. The village council meets on a particular day called *Zunkana*, a work free day in Mankon. The quarter

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<sup>31</sup> W. Wankah Nde, *FO SAN Angwafo III of Mankon: A Biographical Synthesis*, p. 28.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.



council met periodically to resolve problems which the quarter had referred to it. Those needing solutions at the village level are channeled to the palace<sup>33</sup>.

With increased population, Fon Angwafo III saw the need to increase the number of quarter councils in order to ease administration. He has created more quarter councils like the Ntamulung Council. The volume of business was such that the agenda could not be exhausted in one day. Hence the Fon granted them the permission to meet for two days. So, today the village councils meet twice a week. They deal with development matters as well as resolving problems among the residents<sup>34</sup>.

### **2-1-8 The Family**

The family was the smallest traditional political unit in the kingdom. At the head of the administration was the family head, who administered his family members and provided solutions to the problems confronting them. However, with problems that might involve two families, the heads may be directed to the quarter council. Failing to have a lasting solution the problem may continue with appeals up the ladder until it reached the level of the palace where appeals could be taken<sup>35</sup>.

### **2-1-9 The Militia**

One important pillar of human civilizations throughout History has been the defence and security systems. The need for societies to defend and maintain their sovereignty triggered the creation of battalions of varying types and sizes. External threats have proved to be the downfall of many great civilizations. The Mankon kingdom needed the presence of a military wing in the government because many vassal states were incorporated into the Mankon kingdom through conquest. The Mankon people in a bid to ensure the growth and prosperity of their kingdom constructed a hall called Ndamukong (house of Spears), where youths were trained in warfare. Mankon had no permanent military service. There was a system of youth training in target shooting, wrestling and arm to arm combat, using two sticks (Fulam). The moat was a trench dug

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<sup>33</sup>W. Wankah Nde, *FO SAN Angwafo III of Mankon: A Biographical Synthesis*, p. 28.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

by men around the village to prevent enemies from infiltrating into the town. There were few entrances and these were guarded by guards of intelligence service (Twere)<sup>36</sup>.

### **2-1-10 Judiciary (Nkyiete Abien)**

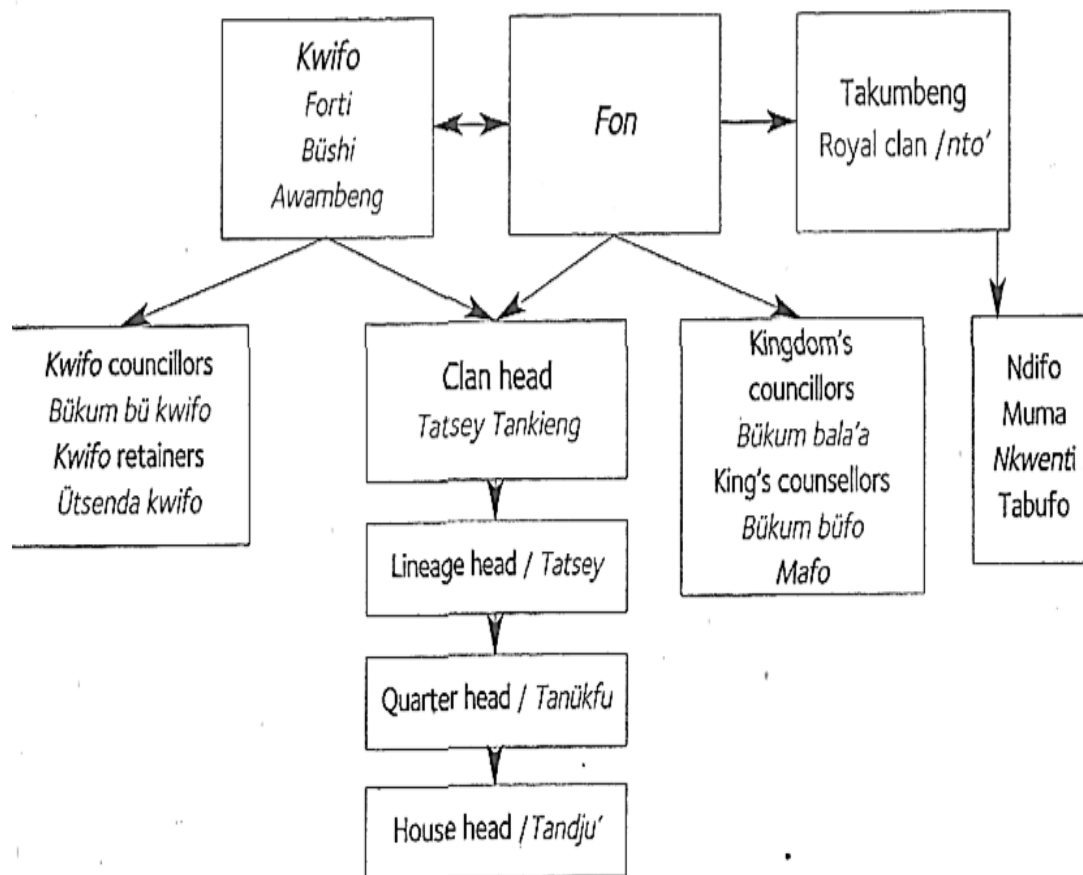
The people of Mankon had traditional ways of settling disputes amongst them. *Abien* (case - litigation) was settled at various levels where the litigants were involved. There are five stages in settling disputes, (See figure 3). Minor cases are tried by family heads, cases of appeal from family heads and those involving two wards are settled by quarter council, clan cases and appeals from wards are heard at the compound of *Tatsey* (clan head) where leaders of the clan meet and resolve problems of social nature, *Abien Ntsounto* (palace court) where cases of serious nature and appeals from the clans are looked into by a council of Bukums appointed by the Fon. The fees for appeal range from a fowl to a goat according to the gravity of the case, *Abien kwifo*; final appeals are brought to the Fon for settlement. Cases of treason and murder were dealt with by *kwifo*. (See figure 1). In this court the Fon was not a member and decisions are not subject to appeals<sup>37</sup>. As seen above, the family heads, the quarter council, lineage head, clan head and the Fon who worked in collaboration with the *kwifo* and *Takumbeng* jointly take decisions for final appeals that are brought to the Fon for settlement.

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<sup>36</sup> Y. Eballa and E. A. Aka, *Focus on Nukwi Nu Fo Ndefru III: Mankon Cultural Festival 23rd- 31 December 1984*, p. 54

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p.55

**Figure 1: The Mankon traditional administration**



**Source: Jean-Paul Notué Mankon: Arts, Heritage and Culture from the Mankon Kingdom, p. 37**

Mankon maintains friendly relations with neighbouring tribes. A system was established which sought to regulate and sustain such relationship. Usually, the *Fon* appoints either *Nkum* or *Ntsenda* who has a good knowledge of a particular tribe to take charge of relations between the two tribes. Such a person was called *Tamandom*. The appointed *Nkum* lived in Mankon but undertook missions to the tribe to which he was designated. Strangers into Mankon were referred to the *Nkum* incharge of relation with the tribe from where the strangers came. *Tamandom Tuba*

for example was the person responsible for relation between Mankon and Bali. Tamandom so, was incharge of relation between Mankon and Nso<sup>38</sup>.

These inter-relationships were guaranteed by regular exchange of gifts amongst the friendly tribes on such occasions like the annual and Nukwi festivals. Advantages derived from these relationships includes mutual understanding, inter marriages and good trade links as well as free movement of persons beyond tribal boundaries<sup>39</sup>.

## **2-2 Arts and Power in Mankon.**

The arts and all material culture are the privilege supports of the ideology of royalty in the kingdom. The power of the Fon, the power of the kwifo are all displayed by the use of artifacts found in the Mankon museum. The arts objects in the museum and the symbolic motifs represents archives and documents which are important sources of knowledge on tradition. The works of arts in the palace had as main objective to display the greatness of the Fon, to show his prestige and power. A number of arts objects like the leopard belt, the royal beaded stool and a bundle of ceremonial spears depicts arts and power in Mankon.

### **2-2-1 The Mankon Museum.**

Under leadership and power in the kingdom of Mankon, one of the greatest achievements of Fon Angwafo III, was the renovation of the Museum in the palace which today has given a new face of lift for the palace and attracts many tourists. This was part of the inheritance from one Fon to the other, some of which were used for cultural manifestation and traditional dances in the life of the Fon. The safety of the objects in the Mankon Museum was a matter of concern to each Fon. Unfortunately, some of these antiquities were destroyed by termites, fire and some missing through theft<sup>40</sup>.

The magnificent Mankon museum presents cultural and artistic productions of the kingdom of Mankon in the Grassland of Cameroon. Mankon museum is located in the North West Region of Cameroon, the heart of Bamenda. The museum came into existence as a result of the rich culture of the Mankon people which needed to be projected and preserved for future generations. The

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<sup>38</sup> Y. Eballa and E. A. Aka, *Focus on Nukwi Nu Fo Ndefru III: Mankon Cultural Festival 23rd- 31 December 1984*, p.55

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p.56

<sup>40</sup> W. Wankah Nde, *Fo SAN Angwafo III of Mankon: A Biographical Synthesis, 1925-2006*, p.44

museum has both carving and weaving objects with both historical and esthetical values. The museum was set up with the support from the Italian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) known by its Italian acronym Centre Orientamento Educativo (COE), in collaboration with the Mankon community. (See photo 4). The project started in 2001 and was completed on January 28, 2006, under the reign and leadership of Fon Angwafo III of Mankon, and is attracting many tourists especially in the North West Region<sup>41</sup>. See appendice 2.

**Photo 4: The Mankon museum**



Source: Mankon Palace Archives

Arts objects in the Mankon museum have symbols and significance, there are objects that explains the history of the people, objects of power and tradition, objects of war and objects of creativity. In Mankon certain objects and symbols are performed only for the Fon as well as for some animals because the Fon was associated with animals having supernatural powers. Some of the arts objects express both visible and supernatural aspects of the Mankon people, good examples are the royal fly-whisk, royal beaded stool and the Ndop ritual costum<sup>42</sup>. Not

<sup>41</sup> W. Wankah Nde, *Fo SAN Angwafo III of Mankon: A Biographical Synthesis, 1925-2006*, p.45

<sup>42</sup> Mishimbo Julius, 57, Vice Secretary General, Mankon Traditional Council, 23 March 2022, Mankon Bamenda.

withstanding some are symbols of power and authority used by the Fon in the kingdom as will be seen below. Note should be taken of the fact that, the Mankon museum has about 167 objects, some will be shown in the work.

### **2-2-2 Objects and their significance**

It is first of all important to note that, the Mankon museum is a live museum. This could be explained in the fact that, some of the objects in the museum are used for rituals, traditional performances and during occasions like the Fon's annual dance. These objects are treated with a lot of care and respect to tradition because of the values it has in terms of the culture and tradition of the people, which is paramount in the kingdom in terms of power and leadership in Mankon.

### **2-2-3 Royal beaded stool (*aboeru munyi*)**

This stool is having a height of 40.5cm with a diameter of 39cm. It is made up of wood, glass beads and plant fibre. The stool is completely covered with jute cloth which is embroidered with multi colored glass beads of varying sizes. On the top of each leopard head is a carved human head supporting the seat while the entire structure rests on a round pedestal. Achirifor Fon, a Mankon sculptor, born around 1910 repaired the embroidery on the stool during the reign of king Ndefru III. He also restored it again during the reign of Fon Angwafo III before his death in 1999<sup>43</sup>.

The significance of this stool is that, it is one of the stools on which newly enthroned Mankon kings sit during the period when they are introduced to the general public. This event usually takes place in the palace court yard. Associated with political and judicial authority, the leopard motifs on the throne symbolise the strength, prestige and greatness of royalty, in fact the king is known as 'the leopard' and his children are regarded as being those of this animal<sup>44</sup>. The restoration of this stool ensures the continuity and help to establish a link between the existing Fon and his predecessors in terms of leadership and power. See photo 5 below.

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<sup>43</sup> J. P. Notue, *Mankon: Arts, Heritage and Culture from the Mankon Kingdom*, 2005, p.171.

<sup>44</sup> Manka Susan, 67, worker in the Mankon Palace, 20 March 2022, Mankon Bamenda.

**Photo 5: Royal beaded stool**



**Source: Jean Paul Notue, Mankon Arts, Heritage and Culture, p. 171.**

#### **2-2-4 Ndop ritual costume (*akoso komngang*)**

This is a sleeveless rectangular costume with a white hood, produced from an indigenous indigo fabric. The edges of the neck, the sleeveless openings and the hem, are all decorated with single rows of cowries while both sides of the costume are adorned with white geometric motifs representing the stars, the sun, the moon and simplified animal forms. The Ndop ritual costume has a length of 135cm and width of 132cm, it is found in the Mankon museum and numbered as Inv. no. MK.02.1.33, Mankon Museum<sup>45</sup>.

Tseghama Peter Angwafo III, a Mankon prince stated the relevance of this costume. According to this notable, this costume was acquired by king Angwafo III during the preparatory phase of 1984 Nukwi festival to replace the old one, which had been completely ruined before this event. The king himself confirmed that he bought this fabric from a trader who came from the Benue

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<sup>45</sup> Jean Paul Notue, *Mankon Arts Heritage and Culture*, p. 169.

Region in Nigeria. It was then entrusted to Achirifor Fon, a versatile Mankon craftsman who made its hood and decorated it with cowries. Then it was handed to the komngang society which transformed it into a functional object through numerous rituals, thus rendering it potent. This costume is worn exclusively by the Fon as the leader of the Komngang, a group that performs only twice during the reign of each Mankon Fon that is during his enthronement and the nukwi festival. The ndop fabric has symbolic value in the Mankon kingdom: it is used as a shroud for the king; a loincloth for notables and as a decorative element during the funeral rites of the king, the queen mother mafo and certain notables. The cowries on the cloth represent royal authority and wealth<sup>46</sup>. See photo 6 below.

**Photo 6: Ndop Ritual Costume**



**Source: Jean Paul Notue, Mankon: Arts, Heritage and Culture, p.168**

**2-2-5 A bundle of ceremonial Spears (*mukongmo ala*)**

These are five Spears that are bound together by a rope. It has a height of 190cm and it is made up of wood, iron, glass beads, cowries, cloth and thread. Elderly members of the mandoeru group stated that this bundle of Spears was produced in the main forging centre at Ntsualam in Mankon in the first half of the twentieth century and was given to Fon Ndefru III by members of the

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<sup>46</sup> Jean Paul Notue, *Mankon Arts Heritage and Culture*, p. 169.

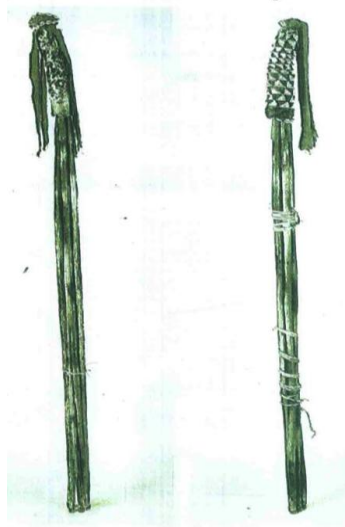


forging guild in the latter part of his reign. His successor Fon Angwafo III, inherited it upon his accession to power in 1959<sup>47</sup>.

The relevance of this bundle of ceremonial Spears is that, it is a symbol of authority, power and sovereignty, the bundle of Spears is used by the Fon when addressing his subjects, especially during important ceremonies or on special occasions. While the king is seated on the rostrum in the palace square, an announcer steps forward and calls for silence by playing the double gong. The king removes one spear from the bundle of five as a leader and holds it up with his right hand, before he starts addressing his subjects.

In Mankon tradition, this bundle of five spears tied together symbolises unity of the people. Like the bundle the people are expected to be united as one person and to combine all their efforts for the benefit of the entire kingdom. The presence of the leopard pelt on the object symbolises the strength and force of the king, the cowries signify royalty and the redcloth stands for peace<sup>48</sup>. This bundle of ceremonial Spears is coded as: Inv.no.02.2.187, Mankon Museum. See photo 7 below.

**Photo 7: A bundle of ceremonial spears**



**Source: Jean Paul Notue. "Mankon Arts, Heritage and Culture" p. 169.**

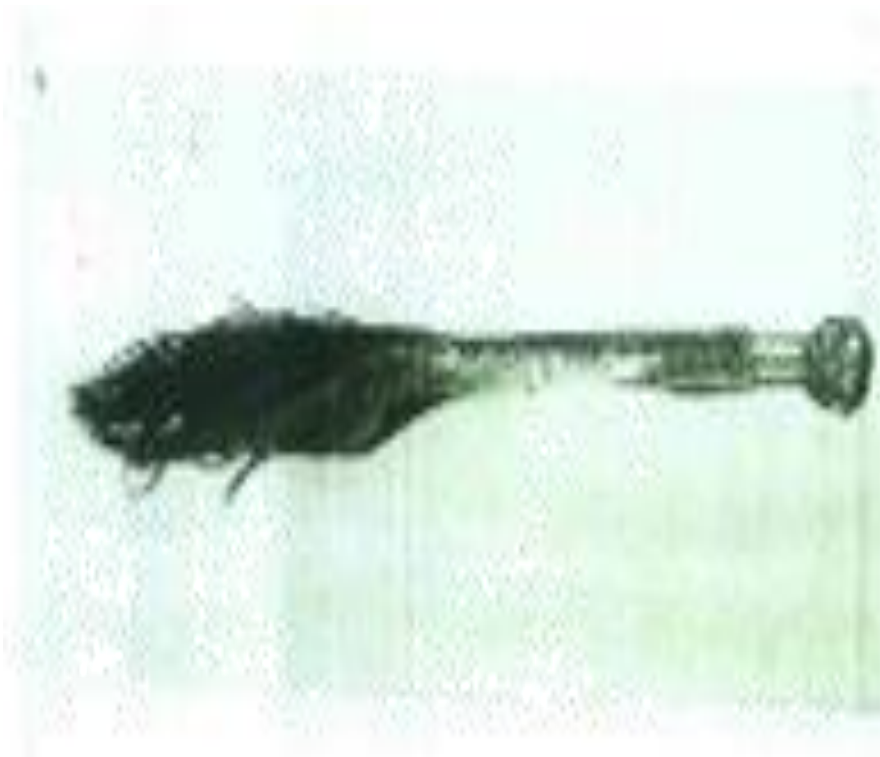
<sup>47</sup> Jean Paul Notue, *Mankon Arts Heritage and Culture*, p. 169.

<sup>48</sup> Fru Peter, 60, worker in the Mankon Museum, 18th May 2022, Mankon Palace.

### 2-2-6 Royal fly-whisk (*lunga*)

The handle of the royal fly-whisk is decorated with a leopard figure standing on a round stylized stool. This object is made up of wood, horse tail, plant fibre. It has a length of 84cm and was previously in the collection of Fon Angwafo III but was handed to the museum in 2002 and coded as Inv.no.Mk.20.1.83, Mankon Museum. This object is usually used by the king and wives and young princesses during the Mankon annual dance from time to time, the mask bearers of the muwatsu society also use it particularly during the funeral ceremonies of Mankon princes and princesses<sup>49</sup>.see photo 8 below.

#### Photo 8: Royal fly whisk



**Source: Mankon Arts, Heritage and Culture, p. 199.**

Apart from the royal fly-whisk above, there are others like the anthropomorphic fly-whisk which Fon Angwafo III's predecessors used to it to drive flies away from their bodies. They also used it

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<sup>49</sup> J. P. Notue, *Mankon: Arts, Heritage and Culture from the Mankon Kingdom*, p. 200.

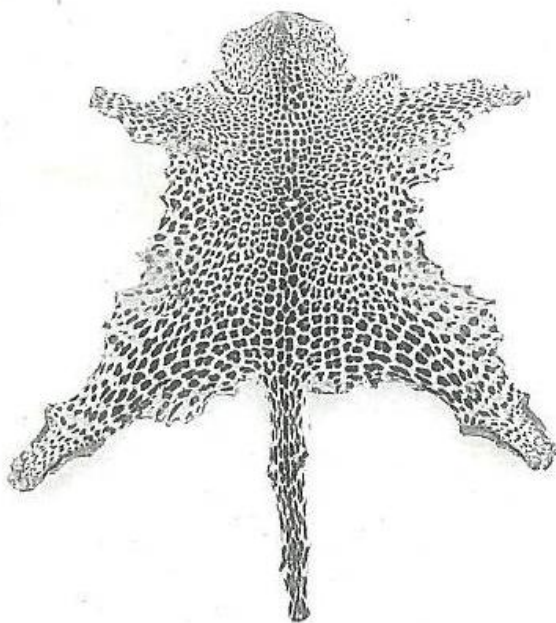
when traveling within the kingdom and during certain important ceremonies such as the Mankon annual dance<sup>50</sup>.

### **2-2-7 The leopard belt (*ngob afungo*)**

In the Mankon tradition, the leopard is considered to be a royal animal and is believed to be endowed with the attributes associated with the king, who, is believed may turned into a leopard at will, it is moreover, the king's exclusive right to keep a slain leopard and retain it's pelt, while the hunter's reward includes conferment of a title by the king. The leopard pelt has a length of 210cm and width of 150cm, previously in the collection of Fon Angwafo III which was a gift in 2002. Collected in the Mankon museum, Inv.no.Mk.02.2.297, Mankon museum<sup>51</sup>.

The leopard pelt is spread on the ground where the king's throne is placed. Members of the muwatsu society (a dance group of Mankon princes) formerly used leopard pelts during performances as accoutrements of their costumes. See photo 9 below.

#### **Photo 9: Leopard belt**



**Source: Mankon Arts, Heritage and Culture, p.183.**

<sup>50</sup> J. P. Notue, *Mankon: Arts, Heritage and Culture from the Mankon Kingdom*, p. 200.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

### 2-2-8 Commemorative statue of mafo Mankah Theresia Angwafo III

The wooded statue represents Mafo squatting slightly in an attitude of reverence and dressed in a loincloth tied between her legs. This statue has a height of 92cm with a pedestal of 96cm. The length is 42cm and the width is 36cm, this statue was collected and presented to the museum by Fon Angwafo III in 2002<sup>52</sup>.

The statue hair is painted in an elaborate style and the object bears the the following inscription; "In remembrance of late mama Mafo Mankah Theresia Angwafo III who died on 17 April 1994". King Zofoa II of Babungo produced this statue and offered it as a gift to king Angwafo III in 1994 during the death celebration of his mother mama Mafo Theresia Angwafo III, following the outstanding relationship that their predecessors had established between the two kingdoms since the precolonial period<sup>53</sup>. This statue is preserved in the Mankon museum and coded ; Inv.no.MK. 02.15, Mankon Museum. See photo 10 below.

**Photo 10:** Commemorative statue of Mafo Mankah Theresia Angwafo III



**Source: Mankon Arts, Heritage and Culture, p. 203.**

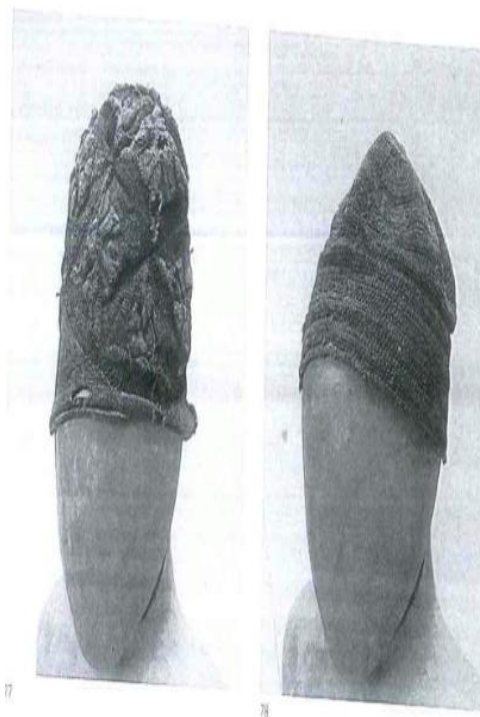
<sup>52</sup> J. P. Notue, *Mankon: Arts, Heritage and Culture from the Mankon Kingdom*, p. 200.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, p. 203.

### 2-2-9 King's ritual cap (*usafo*)

The origin of this cap can be traced as far back as the reign of king Angwafo II, in the second half of the nineteenth century. It has a height of 26cm and diameter of 18cm. The king usually puts on the cap when he goes to the graves of his ancestors at Ala'nkyi for worship and to pay them homage. He also wears it from time to time during the musongong ritual, which precedes the annual dance. He is normally accompanied to the Ala'nkyi shrine by the powerful medicine men of the kingdom and the Ala'nkyi priests. Seven mankon kings appear to have been buried there. The cap is previously in the collection of Fon Angwafo III coded as Inv.no. MK.02.2.317, Mankon Museum<sup>54</sup>. See photo 11 below.

#### Photo 11: King's ritual cap



Source: Mankon Arts, Heritage and Culture, p. 205.

### 2-2-10 A suit of armor (*ako' sofo*)

This war armour is composed of a convex cuirass and a helmet made mainly of brooze and chromium-plated steel. It has a height of 33cm, width of 30cm, coded as Inv.no.Mk.02.2.315. Mankon Museum. The external surface of the cuirass is made of stainless steel, whereas the

<sup>54</sup> J. P. Notue, *Mankon: Arts, Heritage and Culture from the Mankon Kingdom*, p.205.

interior is covered with a lining made of red fabric. Both the hem and the edges of the armour are decorated with brownish nodules. Historical documents and oral sources confirm that the suit of armour, which may have been produced before Zintgraff's expedition to Mankon in 1891, 1895 and 1901. After being sent to Germany for restoration around 1988. In the first attack, which took place in 1891, Dr Zintgraff aimed at conquering Mankon and annexing Bafut the next day. This turned out to be a fiasco because the Mankon warriors fought bravely, killing five German soldiers, and Zintgraff had to flee to Babungo. The Germans attacked the Mankon again in 1895 in order to avenge Zintgraff's defeat and also to punish Mankon for blocking their inland penetration. The last attack was on 1901 when the Mankon people refused vaccination and continued to resist German inland penetration. After Von Pavel and Captain Glauning's punitive expedition in 1901, in which the combined forces of Mankon and Bafut were defeated, king Angwafo II sued for peace. Mankon then agreed to pay war indemnity and so peace was made between the German administrators and Fon Angwafo II of Mankon<sup>55</sup>.

In 1902, the German administration officially recognised and decorated king Angwafo II for his pre-eminence as shown by his judicious rule, prestige, integrity, honesty and fair dealing and his fear of God, Fon Angwafo II was seen as not only a capable leader but also as a great warrior. The Fon received the German tricolour (confiscated by the British administration); a resplendent steel cuirass of the Prussian Guard; an eagle-crested German crown; a portrait of the late Kaiser William; two swords; and four brass bugles (still in existence are the cuirass, crown and swords). He was authorized to keep an army of one hundred soldiers constituting what was known as the sogyie nkamngom (a local militia). King Ndefru III inherited this suit of armour from his father upon his enthronement in 1919 and his son King Angwafo III, inherited it from him in 1959. These two leaders were very fond of this armour, which they usually wore during important ceremonies like annual dance or the nukwi festivals and, and it was usually kept in the royal collection in the Mankon museum<sup>56</sup>. See photo 12 below.

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<sup>55</sup> J. P. Notue, *Mankon: Arts, Heritage and Culture from the Mankon Kingdom*. p.176.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

**Photo 12: A suit of armor**



**Source : Mankon Arts, Heritage and Culture, p.176.**

Apart from these objects examined above, the Mankon museum has over 167 objects. However, for the purpose of our study, the most important ones are examined in this study especially those used by the Fon who is the leader of the Mankon kingdom. It can be seen that these objects are very important in the leadership of Mankon in the fact that most of the object have cultural, social and political significance being in use, collection or heritage. The objects also serve as a medium of continuity in leadership and power as some of the object like the suit of armour, royal fly-whisk, the bundles of ceremonial Spears and the royal beaded stool was passed down from one king to another and from generations to the next.

The main aim of this chapter was to examine the nature of leadership and power administration in Mankon during the colonial era. The chapter examined the different structure of Mankon traditional leadership at its original form. In this light the chapter discusses the traditional government in Mankon and its institutions starting from the Fon and argue that he was a supreme

authority who ruled his kingdom through the kwifo. The kwifo was equally examined and our findings indicated that the kwifo functioned as a government with many institutions under its control. The chapter also examined the power of arts in Mankon and the significance of the arts objects in relation to leadership and power in the Mankon kingdom. From the objects studied above it can also be seen that arts is power put into effect with the skillful and creative ability of the artist to entertain and educate.



## **CHAPTER 3:**

### **THE CHANGING PHASE OF LEADERSHIP AND POWER IN THE KINGDOM OF MANKON**

This chapter presents the different phases that leadership and power experienced in Mankon. The objective here is to identify changes that occurred in Mankon during the German colonial period from 1891 to 1916, under the British colonial administration from 1916 to 1961 and finally this chapter will also examine changes that took place in the Kingdom of Mankon after the Independence of Cameroon. And it concludes that the different phases of leadership and power dynamism experienced by Cameroon, brought some challenges and impacts on the Mankon kingdom.

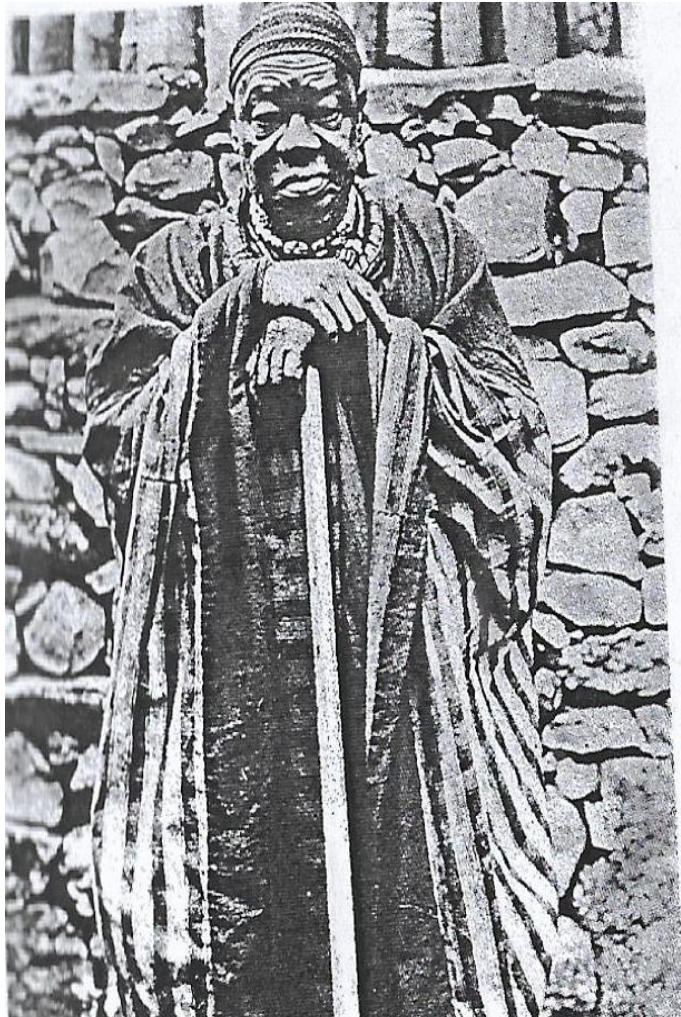
#### **3-1 Changes in Leadership and Power in Mankon during the German colonial period**

The changes in leadership and power under the German colonial rule took experienced the reign of two Fons namely Fon Fomukong I whose reign ended in 1866. Followed by the reign of Fon Angwafo II from 1866 to 1920 and met with drastic changes due to German colonial influence after 1891, his administration ended in 1919. (See photo 13 of Fon Angwafo II below). Fon Angwafo II was one of such Fons who was able to raise and coordinate a strong army of Mankon soldiers and created a system of military and diplomatic alliance to resist invasions by neighbouring kingdoms in alliance with Europeans invaders seen in the case of the Mankon battle of 1891 where the Mankon-Bali troops were defeated. However, although Mankon was finally subdued and the German colonial rule established in a counterattack, Fon Angwafo II remains a figure like Samouri Toure of the Mandika empire as was acknowledged by Kaiser William I, the German Emperor<sup>1</sup>. Thus it can be seen how African leader was able to use his deep-rooted military and diplomatic skills to defend and secure the borders of his kingdom against attacks.

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<sup>1</sup> N. Suh Fru, "Traditional rulers and the Art of war in Traditional Societies on the Eve of World War One (W W I): Case Study of Fon Angwafo II of Mankon 1866 to 1920", The International Journal of Humanities and Social Studies (ISSN 2321- 9203), Vol 5, 2017, p.98.

**Photo 13: Fon Angwafo II**



**Source: Makon palace archives**

The race for colonial expansion in Africa by European powers like Germany, Britain and France became intense after 1884 especially in Cameroon. This was because the territory had fertile soils for the setting up of plantation agriculture. In 1887, Dr. Eugene Zintgraff, a German, submitted a request to the German government asking to build a series of commercial establishments in Cameroon<sup>2</sup>. Zintgraff wish was to create a road linking the hinterlands of Cameroon with the coast of Cameroon. He built a trading Post at Barombi from where he stretched to connect with one at Bali, not far from Mankon. Zintgraff thus planned a harsh expedition against the Mankon

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<sup>2</sup>C. Chi Che, *A Concise and Analytical History of Mankon, 1197-2012* Bamenda: Agwecam Publishers, 2013, p. 16-24.

and Bafut who were considered two enemy kingdoms that were west of the Bali. He was convinced that the defeat and control of Mankon and Bafut would place the territory under the German Colonial control<sup>3</sup>. This was to enable the German economy to profit from trade, cheap labour and to obtain raw materials needed in their industries.

When Fon Angwafo II as a tactful leader learnt of the treaty between the Germans and the Bali, he immediately dispatched Mankon spies, laleh, into Bali. The laleh monitored Zintgraff's plans and activities and reported all the suspicious actions to their Fon<sup>4</sup>. It was through the laleh mechanism that Fon Angwafo II knew about Zintgraff's plans to attack Mankon and Bafut with the help of the Bali. He immediately called the attention of Fon Abumbi I of Bafut and they jointly set up a Mankon-Bafut military to fight the common enemy. Fon Angwafo II appealed to the emotions of Fon Abumbi I in the following words: "We must join our forces together to defend our land and all that we inherited from our ancestors; lest we shall be condemned by posterity for cowardice and irresponsibility"<sup>5</sup>. This statement made Fon Angwafo II gain the total support of Fon Abumbi and his people. On January 1, 1891, Dr. Eugene Zintgraff declared war on Mankon. His army numbered about 5000 soldiers recruited from Bali and Meta, five German Officers led them namely: Lt. Von Spangenberg, M. Huwe, F. Caulwelt, H. Nehber and H. Tiedt<sup>6</sup>. Zintgraff's plan was to attack and conquer Mankon and take over Bafut in one day. Unfortunately for him Fon Angwafo II had put in place a well planned war Strategy. He ordered the Mankon people especially women, children and the elderly, to leave the village and hide mile away. He also instructed his soldiers who were armed with Machetes and spears to withdraw and position themselves at strategic points in a semi-circle around the vilage. A segment of his army was placed under cover near the main market close to the Fon's palace. Finally, he alerted the Bafut to be prepared in the case where the Germans failed in taking control of Mankon, their immediate attention would be to subdue the Bafut. This caused the Bafut soldiers to be placed on alert at the main entrance into the Bafut kingdom from Mankon<sup>7</sup>. Once the strategy developed by Fon Angwafo II of Mankon was put in place, Zintgraff's troops entered Mankon and were surprised to find out the area empty. They were convinced that the

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<sup>3</sup>C. Chi Che, *A Concise and Analytical History of Mankon, 1197-2012* Bamenda: Agwecam Publishers, 2013, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Ngang Ettien, 72, Retired Teacher, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2022, Mankon Bamenda.

<sup>5</sup>C. Chi Che, *A Concise and Analytical History of kingdom of Mankon*, p.151.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

inhabitants had fled away from the village in fear or had simply surrendered. They immediately moved to the Fon's palace and set the sacred royal house, Atsum, on fire. They then fired their guns in the air in jubilation and began returning. As they retreated, the determined and fuming Mankon forces stationed around the main market and rounded them up. This was the start of the fierce Battle of Mankon<sup>8</sup>. When the battle ended, about 2000 people had lost their lives. This included hundreds of the Bali soldiers, 170 foreign troops four European officers, and Zintgraff suffered from a seriously dislocated leg. He escaped with some of his men to Babungo Fon's palace in Ndop where he got refuge from Fon Senge. When Fon Senge noticed the presence of the approaching soldiers from Mankon, he disclosed the truth, considering Fon Angwafo II as a brother and pleaded by saying to the soldiers; "Go and tell Fo that the man he is looking for is here in my courtyard under my cover - please in my name and for my sake, spare his life"<sup>9</sup>. The Fon of Mankon received his appeal and decided to save the life of the "white man" by demonstrating his ethical and God fearing attitude. This helped in fostering bilateral cooperation and mutual co-existence with Germany and other Bamenda Grassfields kingdoms. The courageous and humanitarian personality of Fon Angwafo II served as a model for other Fons of Mankon.

With time, the Germans were still not satisfied with the situation, in 1895 and 1901, they pursued their attacks on Mankon. It was only in 1901 that the Mankon kingdom was finally subdued by the Germans<sup>10</sup>. The Mankon Royal palace at Fozan was constructed after the Mankon-German wars on the same site where it was burnt. The Germans moved their settlement from Bali to the Bamenda up Station in order to succeed in monitoring the Mankon kingdom and its confederation. To further demonstrate his boldness, Fon Angwafo II decided to meet the Germans after a year of hiding in the palace of the Fon of Big Babanki, he sent words to the German administration requesting to see them. His message was that "I hear you were looking for me, if you want to see me, I'll surely be there to see you"<sup>11</sup>. The Germans were surprised to learn that he was still alive and thus accepted his proposal. They were some mixed feelings when the Fon was received by the Germans, some Fons from the kingdom of Bafut, Babanki, Meta, Oku and Ndop were there

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<sup>8</sup>L.C. Awasom, "kingdom of Mankon", p.151.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, p.151.

<sup>10</sup>C. Chi Che, *A Concise and Analytical History of kingdom of Mankon*, p.151

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

to witness how the situation will be, concerning what the Germans will do to the Fon of Mankon considering their harsh policies. They thought he would be hanged due to the impression they had about the harsh treatment of the Germans. Surprisingly, the Fon was taken into a private room and dressed elegantly in a German war armor. On the helmet was the caption, "Kaiser of Cameroon"<sup>12</sup>. Many people remained dumfounded as significance of the armour was great and the unexpected turn of event provoked misconception by those who had turned up for the occasion. At last, the Germans made peace with the powerful Fon Angwafo II and crowned him strongest king of Cameroon.

Three factors are significant when assessing Fon Angwafo II's domestic policy. These were his open-door policy to outsiders, his reaction of force labour by Mankon people and his delegation of powers to regents. To begin, his open- door policy was based on his acceptance of strangers to settle on Mankon land. For example, Fon Mbanga of Bum and his followers were received in Mankon under the reign of Fon Angwafo II. He offered them land for farming and building. Also, the Hausas who migrated from their Bamenda up Station settlement after having been driven away by the Germans, following the 1901 Mankon-German war, Fon Angwafo II invited and settled the displaced Hausas in the present- day Hausa quarters in Abakwa; he built 29 houses and handed to their leader, Mallam Mama<sup>13</sup>. This open - door policy was a rear leadership strategy adopted by the Fon's of the Bamenda Grasslands during the period because of the fear of the unknown.

Secondly, Fon Angwafo II refused the Mankon people from providing force and unpaid labour to the Germans who used forced labour and brutal methods of administration to build the fort in the Bamenda up Station and for the construction of the road from Abakwa town to up station<sup>14</sup>. The Fon of Mankon refused the Germans from carrying out such forceful recruitment of workers in Mankon for that purpose. The Fon decided to make a schedule in which different quarters in Mankon took turns to move to Up Station to engage in the road digging as was expected by the Germans. He personally accompanied his people to the German project sites where he supervised

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<sup>12</sup>C. Chi Che, *A Concise and Analytical History of kingdom of Mankon*, p.58

<sup>13</sup> Fo Angwafo III, *Royalty and Politics, The story of my Life*. (Bamenda: Langaa Research and Publishing CIG, 2009), 26.

<sup>14</sup>L. Ntse Musongong, " Traditional Governance in the Mankon kingdom from Pre-colonial Times to 2009: Evolution and Challenges", Department of History, University of Buea, February, 2015. p.189.

them and ensured that no one was harshly treated. By so doing, he saved his people from German exploitation and brutalization by the Germans<sup>15</sup>.

Lastly, the Fon delegated some of his powers to three princes, Aza'a Nfo Mukara, Fru'ba and Tata Laboeru, who served as his regents. This happened around the last ten years of his reign by 1909, due to his poor health. These Prince regents were closely assisted by Ndifor, Muma and Sabum. These regents were all recognized by the German colonial administration. However, during world war one, Germany was defeated in 1916 and the British took possession of the territory in which Mankon was situated. As a result, there was a change of policy which had influence on leadership and power in Mankon<sup>16</sup>.

### **3-2 Leadership and Power in Mankon during the British Period, 1916 to 1961.**

When the British took control of the British Cameroons in 1916, one of their first concerns was to inquire whether the natives in their zones of occupation wished to remain under the British rule or not. Those who had the mandate to speak for Cameroonians were the chiefs and the British naturally appealed to them. If it was expected that the report would represent the true opinions of the chiefs and the people of the Cameroons, this was a difficult task for the administrators. If the British really intended to afford the people of conquered territories in Africa, an opportunity of having a voice in their destinies, then it had to be admitted that the various races and tribes could not be expected to make a leap in the dark simply because the British happened to be in possession of their land for the time being<sup>17</sup>.

The defeat of Germany in Cameroon by the Anglo-French forces introduced new power paradigm shifts in the territory. Mankon which is our focus witnessed new leadership and power dynamisms from the British colonial administration and we shall also look at how this altered the pattern of leadership and power in Mankon. The British colonial period experienced the reign of three Fons of Mankon. There were; Fon Angwafo II who was there when the British took over possession of their sphere of Cameroon in 1916, Fon Ndefru III whose reign ended in 1959 and Fon Angwafo III who ruled up to 2022. This chapter analyses the changes experienced in the

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<sup>15</sup>L. Ntse Musongong, " Traditional Governance in the Mankon kingdom from Pre-colonial Times to 2009, p.189.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> V. Bong Amaazee, *Traditional Rulers (Chiefs) and Politics in Cameroon History*, Presses Universitaires de Yaounde, 2002, p.26-27.

leadership of these three kings of Mankon under the British Period. Fon Angwafo II saw the German expulsion of Cameroon and the advent of British administration in Cameroon. He communicated the names of his regents to the new colonial authorities who had misjudged him from the onset, because the Fon had been sick for a considerable length of time and had nominated regents to assist him, the Germans from the onset felt that the Kingdom had no leader. While in his state of recovery, Fon Angwafo II identified himself as the reigning Fon of Mankon<sup>18</sup>.

It was based on this that the British believed and accepted the situation. The first British Divisional Officer (D.O.), G.S. Podevin, reported in 1919 that: “The head chief of this large town, which is quite close to Bamenda is a very old man who has been ill for some considerable time. He has now become completely paralyzed and is no longer able to conduct the affairs of his people. A deputy by name Kolumba (Fruba) who was elected by the majority of the people had been appointed to take charge of the affairs in the meantime”<sup>19</sup>.

Based on Podevin's statement, Fruba was elected by the Mankon people as regent to Fon Angwafo II. Consequently, he gave full authorization for him to function as the Fon of Mankon. Fruba took advantage of this to connive with the British to recognize him as the lone regent and subsequently the Fon. This led to conflicts in the as it was against the culture and tradition in the kingdom. Thus leadership administration and power dynamism was not only caused by the British administration but also by the Mankon themselves. This was a major setback in the reign of Fon Angwafo II, experienced during the British rule.

The brutal killing of the regent of Mankon intensified the tense climate between the British colonial administration and the Mankon kingdom. Upon hearing that his son had been killed by the British, the ailing Fon Angwafo II attempted to commit suicide. He however, died of the shock and paved the way of Tata Laboeru to succeed him in 1919. Ndeh explains that: Before Fon Fomukong was treacherously hanged, he said: “Mankon shall not know peace for one hundred years because of this evil plot against me and my people”. Was it a curse? If so, the

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<sup>18</sup>L. Ntse Musongong "Traditional Governance in the Mankon kingdom from Pre-colonial Times to 2009", p. 191.

<sup>19</sup>S. Chi Ndeh, *Revelation, How Solomon Angwafo III's father usurped the Mankon throne* (Bamenda: Patron Publishing House, 2012), p. 60.

Mankon people will be reprieved in seven years<sup>20</sup>. Ndeh holds strongly that the tenth Fon of Mankon, whom he considered to be Fomukong, was murdered in a well planned plot championed by his step sister, Manka, and step brother Laboeroe, with the complicity of the colonial authorities to usurp the Mankon throne. It should be noted that in the line of Fons who have ruled Mankon, Fomukong who was considered to be the tenth Fon, is not recognized by the Mankon royalty<sup>21</sup>. Fon Ndefru III was enthroned in 1919 when the leadership and power in Mankon was in serious crisis.

After the reign of Fon Angwafo II, the kingmakers of Mankon enthroned Tata Laboeroe, one of the regents and named him Fon Ndefru III of Mankon<sup>22</sup> in the following words: "He lived and ruled at a transitional period when Mankon was bound to undergo changes. This was a period of colonialism and external influences in the kingdom, Mankon traditional ways clashed with modern western culture, so acculturation and enculturation were inevitable"<sup>23</sup>. Fon Ndefru's III reign plagued with numerous internal and external trials which seemed to have outweighed quickly. The king took over of the Mankon kingdom at the time when the World powers<sup>24</sup> had just determined the future of the world in a Paris, after the devastating effects of war world one, the Mankon kingdom was affected by the Versailles Treaty that melted sanctions on Germany given that the Western portion of former German Kamerun was officially handed to the British as a mandated territory of the League of Nations. The British colonial administration that took over the British Cameroon administered the southern part of the territory as an integral part of the Eastern Region of Nigeria from 1947 to 1961.

Fon Ndefru III was a unique Fon of Mankon that saw his reign within the entire period of rule covering the British Mandate period from 1919 to 1945 and the British Trusteeship period from 1945 to 1959 when he died<sup>25</sup>. He undertook a passionate restructuring of leadership administration of the Mankon kingdom during his reign. Nonetheless his reign was seriously influenced by the British colonial administration. The Mankon Confederacy which began in

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<sup>20</sup>S. Chi Ndeh, *Revelation, How Solomon Angwafo III's father usurped the Mankon throne*, p. 61.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>The three regents were Ass'a Nfo Mukara, Fruba and Tata Laboeroe.

<sup>23</sup>C. Chi Che, *A Concise and Analytical History of Mankon kingdom*, p.24-25.

<sup>24</sup>The World Powers was made up of the Big Five, namely; Britain, France, USA, Italy and Japan.

<sup>25</sup>Y. Eballa and E. A. Aka, *Focus on Nukwi Nu Fo Ndefru III: Mankon Cultural Festival*, p.25.



c.1800 saw its final collapse under the reign of Fon Ndefru III in 1927. This was when the people of Ndzong were relocated following instructions from the British colonial authorities, they migrated from their settlement in Mankon to their present day mile 12 location. This was done without the consent of Fon Ndefru III who simply observed how the act was going on with all impunity orchestrated by the British authorities<sup>26</sup>. During the reign of Fon Ndefru III, a number of remarkable issues got materialised in Mankon to which his skills in leadership were evidently demonstrated. These include the 1929 “Asan-dje question”<sup>27</sup>, peace agreements with neighboring kingdoms, assistance to religious institutions, growth in education, infrastructural development, urbanization, advanced security, growth in agriculture and commerce, improvement in health and progress in tourism. This can be best comprehended from an analysis of the political, economic, social and cultural ways of Fon Ndefru III (see photo 14 below of Fon Ndefru III).

**Photo 14: Fon Ndefru III**



**Source: Mankon Palace Archives**

<sup>26</sup> Fru Thaddeus, 78, Mankon Councillor, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2022, Mankon Bamenda.

<sup>27</sup>The "Asan-dje Question" was a situation in Mankon where a disgruntled fraction decided to exile themselves from Mankon in 1929 and settled in Esu. They resettled back in Mankon in 1947 after negotiation. See, Awasom, "The Kingdom of Mankon", p.170-171.

When Fon Ndefru III took over from Fon Angwafo II, he met his first main political challenge in 1929, in what is referred to as the "Asan-dje Question"<sup>28</sup>. This was an uproar incited by the adopted son of regent Fruba, Elias Nde- Nsoh, who spearheaded an opposition against the Fon. Elias Nde-Nsoh, was very disgruntled with the enthronement of Tata Laboeroe as the Fon of Mankon, following the hanging to death of his foster Father by the British colonial authorities. He had the hoped of becoming the next Fon of Mankon after the death of his father. Consequently, he provoked and promoted opposition against the reign of Fon Ndefru III to the extent that the Fon was openly attacked on his way to attend the Ngemba Customary Court session by early 1930<sup>29</sup>. Unfortunately, he escaped unhurt. The incident led to the arrest by the British authorities, of 46 culprits; 22 were jailed and 24 reprimanded to pay fines for instigating chaos in Mankon. The incident led to the self exile of Elias Nde-Nsoh and his followers to Esu in wum where they lived untill 1947<sup>30</sup>.

Furthermore, Fon Ndefru III saw the passionate need to resolve the Asan-dje Question. He sought the intervention of the D.O. for Bamenda Province, J.C. Mayne, and the Fon of Esu. Together they sent an earnest invitation to the Mankon exiles in Esu to return home. Satisfied with such a request, those who had gone on exile unanimously agreed to return home in 1947. Fon Ndefru III organized a grand home coming ceremony for them during which a lasting reconciliation was made; this was symbolised by the planting of stone pillar at the Mankon palace plaza<sup>31</sup>. This act of reconciliation demonstrated the Fon's good leadership in bringing his people together and restoring peace. Another important political move of Fon Ndefru III was a peace agreement with the British D.O.and villages sharing a common boundary with Mankon. The Fon's authority was declining in the eyes of the British officers and it became evident when he was not appointed as the president of Ngemba Native Authority court. Realizing that his authority was declining, the Fon tabled a complaint in a letter dated 24 July 1943 to the chief Commissioner of the Southern Provinces in Enugu Nigeria saying: The British Government is known for justice and truth. It beats your humble servant to see that while other chiefs who fought the white man on his arrival are still not being respected, but their authorities under the

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<sup>28</sup> Awasom, "Kingdom of Mankon", p.178-179.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid p.179.

<sup>30</sup>S. Chi Ndeh, *Revelation*, p. 92-93.

<sup>31</sup>L. C. Awasom, "Kingdom of Mankon", p.110-115.

British government are being enhanced, the position of my self and my people are being lowered. Can humiliation and injustice be greater? What have I done to lower my status and prestige which I had maintained before the advent of the Europeans while even chiefs of lower status are being elevated and supported?... Shall intrigues and manipulation be allowed to succeed? If so, it will bring great dissatisfaction and disaffection among your humble subjects<sup>32</sup>.

This letter was a testimony that Fon Ndefru III was seeking favour from the British authorities since he was disserted. To prove his worth, the Fon decided to reinforce the Mankon-Bafut alliance and went ahead to conclude peace agreements with the Nkwen, the Mendankwe and Bali through the settlement of inter-chiefdom boundary disputes<sup>33</sup>. The letter reached Enugu late in February 1944 due to the communication lapses as mails had to be delivered by messengers through long distances. Nevertheless, the Fon's wish was granted by the British administration that approved the creation of a Mankon Customary Court at Nta'tru in Mankon. As president of the Court, Fon Ndefru III decided to transfer it to Ntahmbag in the present-day Mankon town.

In the economic dormain and under his leadership Fon Angwafo III was an advocate of farming and animal rearing. To demonstrate his love for agriculture, he started a large-scale sweet potato farm in the Ntamulung quarter<sup>34</sup>. The products were consumed locally and surpluses exported to other villages. His farm produced a great quantity of potatoes earning the name Mafe Nkon, literarily meaning "sweet potatoes of Mankon"<sup>35</sup>. Hence the Fon's aim was making his people see the importance of agriculture. The people consequently turned towards the cultivation of alot of sweet potatoes like the Fon had done. Fon Ndefru III also encouraged fishing in Mankon by constructing fish Ponds around the central town of Mankon. It was later reclaimed and is today transformed into the Mankon food market.

Under the German and later the British colonial administration, traditional rulers were absorbed into the modern adminitrative systems in several ways. In Mankon with regard to the dormain of taxation, Fon Ndefru III a leading member of the Native Authority Court, was a tax agent of the Government. He collected both the poll tax (individual tax) and the Jangali tax (cow tax). As a

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<sup>32</sup>S. Chi Ndeh, *Revelation*, p.58.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Mushimbo Julius, 57, Vice Secretary General, Mankon Traditional Council, 22 August 2022, Mulang Bamenda.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

result, he contributed in furnishing the government with money used for economic and social development during the colonial era. This was therefore a combination of Traditional governance and assistance to colonial governance by the Fon of Mankon<sup>36</sup>. Concerning infrastructural development, during the reign of Fon Ndefru III, a number of roads and bridges in Mankon were constructed. This includes the bridges over the River Mezam, Alabukam, dzong and Asongka. To demonstrate his smartness, in 1942 he wrote to the British Commissioner at Enugu seeking for assistance. He said; “War is now finished and work is being done in other places so Mankon needs a treasury, bridges... Stones are ready at Ngomgham water. House for treasury needs only a safe and a strong room door...”<sup>37</sup>. Thus he fought for the welfare of his subjects.

In the domain of tourism, Fon Ndefru III provided land and labour for the development of the first botanical garden in Bamenda and the forest reserve at Ntahmulung (present day Government Bilingual High School) GBHS, Bamenda Hill and Bamenda city council offices. Under his reign, a central fish pond which was transformed in the 1990s into the central food market in Bamenda was constructed and filled with variety of fish and other aquatic creatures, which was an attractive man-made lake that captured the admiration of many visitors to the Mankon town<sup>38</sup>.

Furthermore, the Fon also played a significant role in Christian religion propaganda, education and health, within the Mankon kingdom during the British era. He welcomed the different religious denominations that came to Mankon. These are the Catholics, Presbyterian and Baptists, who all received land he generously offered for the construction of churches, schools and colleges. The Catholics constructed a Catholic Mission Centre at Big Mankon quarter; the Presbyterians constructed theirs in Ntahmulung and the Baptist at Ndamukong streets in Mankon.

Under the domain of education, land for the construction of schools was given to the missionaries. The Catholics for example set up the Sacred Heart College in Mankon<sup>39</sup>. The Presbyterians constructed theirs at Ntingkah in 1932. The Roman Catholics set up the Roman

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<sup>36</sup>L. Ntse Musongong, "Traditional Governance in the Mankon kingdom from Pre-colonial Times to 2009", p. 201.

<sup>37</sup>Buea Archives, File No. IB/1944/1.1.

<sup>38</sup>L. C. Awason, "Kingdom of Mankon", p.178.

<sup>39</sup>Sacred Heart College Mankon Bamenda was founded by the Mill Hill Father's in 1961, they later on handed the school to the Marist Brothers. The first batch of students attended classes at the premises of St. Joseph Primary School Big Mankon for a year before transferring to the present site at Ngomgham quarter in Mankon.

Catholic School Ntambeng in 1935 with dormitories for students coming from surrounding villages like Bafut, Nkwen, Akum, Santa, Bali and Metta<sup>40</sup>.

In addition, in the domain of health, it is known that by the time Fon Ndefru III ascended the throne of Mankon, the people had a lot of distrust for the colonizers. Consequently, the Fon and his people were afraid of taking the modern medication because they believed that the white man had the abnoxious plan to exterminate the Mankon people who had humiliated them in the three colonial wars of 1891, 1895 and 1901<sup>41</sup>. However, the Fon was very smart and able to convince the people to receive the White man's vaccination against chicken pox, small pox and other medical problems. The Fon used community labour to build a maternity centre at Ntingkag which was beneficial to expectant mothers to deliver their babies right close to the Mankon Fon's palace rather than traveling far to Mambu in Bafut or to Bali which was costly<sup>42</sup>.

Still under health, Fon Ndefru III offered land and manual labour for the construction of a Mankon General Hospital, which is today known as the Bamenda Regional Hospital<sup>43</sup>, despite the tough times faced by Fon Ndefru III, he was able to maintain a smooth administration with significant achievements. His successor, Fon Angwafo III was opportuned to tune up the foundation he laid in leadership in the kingdom of Mankon.

Fon Angwafo III of Mankon was the first western educated Fon in his reign in the kingdom of Mankon<sup>44</sup>. He therefore demonstrated himself as a politician, an educator, an agriculturalist and a major architect that the Mankon kingdom ever had. Awasom described this period in the following words: The period also presents Fo Angwafo III as someone with unparalleled talent in finding common ground between three polarizing cultural traditions, the British tradition, the French tradition and the African tradition. It exposes Fon Angwafo III as a provocative global educator who visits Europe and the United States to share with scholars, educators, business leaders and politicians of the Western industrial world, cross cultural revitalization seminar,

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<sup>40</sup>Sacred Heart College Mankon Bamenda was founded by the Mill Hill Father's in 1961, they later on handed the school to the Marist Brothers. The first batch of students attended classes at the premises of St. Joseph Primary School Big Mankon for a year before transferring to the present site at Ngomgham quarter in Mankon. p.172.

<sup>41</sup>C. Chi Che, *A Concise and Analytical History of Mankon*, p.151.

<sup>42</sup>Fru Thaddeus, 78, Mankon Councillor, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2022, Mankon Bamenda.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>W. Wankah Nde, *FO S.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon*, p. 11.

lectures, partnership agreements and bilateral cooperation<sup>45</sup>. Fon Angwafo III is an example of a Cameroon political icon. This was demonstrated on how he skillfully cooperated with three antagonist politico- social traditions of the French, British and indigenous Africa in his reign.

In the economic domain, as an agricultural officer by profession, Fon Angwafo III reinforced the agricultural sector of Mankon immediately he rose to power in the Mankon kingdom. He introduced the Asongkah Green Revolution project in 1947, a cooperative enterprise which has totally transformed the agricultural system within the entire kingdom<sup>46</sup>. Before, the Mankon people cultivated just little quantities of cocoyams, plantains and bananas; they also practiced small scale horizontal agriculture with routine traditional methods of cultivation. Upon his accession to the throne of Mankon, Fon Angwafo III encouraged the Mankon people to develop more interest in agriculture. He did so through personal example and counseling. He taught the people soil conservation techniques like planting of cover crops, farming across the slope, keeping control over wild fires, substituting shifting cultivation with intensive use of manure, the use of fertilizers and organizing agricultural demonstration seminars and lessons<sup>47</sup>.

In the political domain, the Fon believed and upheld the fact that he was an auxiliary of the British colonial administration in Cameroon at that time. He decided to participate actively in politics. Nde advances some reasons that instigated Fon Angwafo III entry into politics. These included; being educated, young and energetic to withstand the Political game<sup>48</sup>. As a result, the Fon was enthroned just a few months after legislative elections had been organized in the British Southern Cameroon. Precisely on the 25 July, 1959, Fon Angwafo III got involved in political discussions centered on the alternative questions for the 1961 Plebiscite. On August 9, 1959, he made a trip to Mamfe where he participated in the preparatory conference to discuss the questions for the plebiscite. At the Mamfe conference, the Fon supported the idea that southern Cameroon should secede from Nigeria and be reunified with the Republic of Cameroon. Unfortunately, the Mamfe Conference failed to agree on the questions for the plebiscite<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup>L. C. Awasom, "Kingdom of Mankon", p.120.

<sup>46</sup>W. Wankah Nde, *FO S.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.63.

<sup>47</sup>Che George, 60, Farmer, 02August 2022, Mile 8 Mankon.

<sup>48</sup>W. Wankah Nde, *FO S.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.76.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p .70.

The United Nations General Assembly imposed the question that: Do you wish to achieve Independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria? Or do you wish to achieve Independence by joining the independent Republic of Cameroon?<sup>50</sup> The result of the Plesbiscite was in favour of the reunification of Southern Cameroon with the Republic of Cameroon which was the optional position held by Fon Angwafo III of Mankon<sup>51</sup>. Upon his rise to the throne of Mankon in 1959, Fon Angwafo III had barely prepared the groundwork for his political career that began in 1961, as a member of parliament for the Lower Ngemba Constituency. Therefore, his contributions as a politician during the colonial era could not be clearly celebrated for the period was short lived but a lot of changes took place.

In the socio-cultural domain, the Fon contributed considerably towards the development of the British Southern Cameroon during the colonial era between 1959 and 1961. He introduced the importance of female education, Mankon did not only lead in the number of schools providing education for female students but also became a kingdom with the most educated women in the North West<sup>52</sup>. Fon Angwafo III as a leader therefore forged hard to unhold, defend and protect the Mankon kingdom bestowed on him. However, his Political, economic and socio-cultural contributions to the development of both the Mankon kingdom and the Republic of Cameroon can best be judged only from 1961 and further.

### **3-3 Leadership and Power in Mankon after Independence.**

British Southern Cameroon gained her independence on October 1961, by joining the Republic of Cameroon which had gained independence on the 1st January 1960. The reunification of French Cameroon and British Southern Cameroon became East Cameroon and West Cameroon respectively. The two territories constituted the Federal Republic of Cameroon till 1972 when the United Republic of Cameroon was created through a referendum organised on the 20th of May 1972.

The maintenance of the political structures of Mankon by Fon Angwafo III remains evident within the indigenous governance set up. Mankon society was patrilineal where succession

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<sup>50</sup> W. Wankah Nde, *FO S.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.77.

<sup>51</sup> V. J. Ngoh, *The Untold Story of Cameroon Reunification: 1955-1961* (Limbe Presprint Plc, 2011), p.22.

<sup>52</sup> Fo Angwafo III, *Royalty and Politics*, p.63.

passes from father to son, the kingdom had remained a centralised state since 1961. The Fon under this period continued to head the executive arm of government. His palace remains the administrative center of the kingdom with council halls, shrines, secret societies and specialised quarters for the queen mothers and others. At Independence the Fon had remained both the secular and spiritual leader of the Mankon people. All the important political undertakings within the kingdom still revolve around him. The administration of the kingdom continued to have family heads and quarter heads at the base, assisting the king in the daunting task of leading the people.

The family in Mankon has remained the smallest political unit. At the head were family heads who administered their family members, providing solutions to their day to day problems. In cases that involved two families whose heads could not resolve the problem, the role of the quarter councils were sought. If the quarter heads could not resolve any disputes amongst families, there were then transmitted to the Fon's palace, at this level, the Fon presided and deliberated over the critical matters and used his wisdom to make final judgements and decision as the leader.

Considering the population increase in Mankon over the years, the Fon added the number of quarter councils; this was for the best interest to ease his administration. Each quarter council became composed of five councillors namely; the quarter head, a secretary, a treasurer and two members. Meetings of the quarter councils are held based on the frequency of matters they have to resolve<sup>53</sup>. The Mankon Traditional Council (MTC) was above the quarter council. The MTC meets once in an eight-day week on a traditional sabbath day called Zunkana. The MTC is also known as Nda' Ala'a, which constitute representatives of each of the quarter in Mankon. As a result, each quarter head was charged with the responsibility of taking to the palace problems and any developmental endeavours of his quarter. Deliberations here were led by the Fon who also assigned some notables to sit in his place. Issues that usually came up in the Nda' Ala'a were land disputes and family succession disputes<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> L. Ntse Musongong, "Traditional Governance in the Mankon kingdom from Pre-colonial Times to 2009". p. 213.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p.214.



At the close periphery were other specialised institutions like the Kwifo, the Ndamukong, the Mafo, the Nganfo and others which were treated in chapter two of this work did not change from the Pre-Colonial institutions that had been put in place. The main area of change came along with the western education which the Fon had undergone. As the first Educated Fon of Mankon, Fon Angwafo III did not end with political administration of the Mankon kingdom but stretched into the National Political arena. He thus blended tradition with modernity as the Fon dressed in modern attire as he returns from USA in 2003. He wore a cow boy hat, a cross gold necklace, gold bangle, with a pen in his pocket depicting modernity<sup>55</sup>.

At the national level, Fon Angwafo III of Mankon systematically became absorbed into the Cameroon National politics. He did not complete the expected six months confinement period due to the immediate need for his political contribution towards the independence of British Southern Cameroons. Considering that he had gained some international exposure as a student in Nigeria, the politicians lobbied for his input<sup>56</sup>. In his view, he wanted to assist his people in the development both at the local and national levels.

In 1959, three months after he was made Fon of Mankon, he engaged in Political discussions that centered on the alternatives of the Plesbiscite questions in the southern Cameroons. He apparently developed interest in becoming an active politician. He was obliged to travel to Mamfe to participate in the preparatory conference for discussions on the Plesbiscite question on August 9, 1959. Fon Angwafo III stood for the idea that Southern Cameroons should secede from Nigeria and be reunified with the French Cameroon when they would have gained independence<sup>57</sup>. The main Political parties in British Southern Cameroons was the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) and the Cameroon National Congress (KNC) which failed to agree on the plebiscite question. However, in 1961, the United Nations General Assembly decided to limit itself to two questions which were, "Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria or Do you wish to achieve independence by Joining the independent Republic of Cameroon?"<sup>58</sup>. At the end the result of the Plebiscite was in

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<sup>55</sup> L. Ntse Musongong, "Traditional Governance in the Mankon kingdom from Pre-colonial Times to 2009". p. 214.

<sup>56</sup> W. Wankah Nde, *Fo S.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.76

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, p. 79.

favour of reunification, a position Fon Angwafo III had adhered to. This was therefore what further encouraged him to be partisan in politics during his reign.

Furthermore, before the Mamfe Conference, Fon Angwafo III had inherited from his father the office of President of the Ngemba Native Council in 1959. This court was established in 1927 by the British colonial administration<sup>59</sup>. It was one of the adaptors of the British Indirect Rule System whereby the local chiefs acted as intermediaries to administer the people on their behalf. The British thus used the existing traditional political institutions which they had judged as being appropriate. This system constituted Native Administrative courts that tried civil cases while the magistrate courts tried criminal cases.<sup>60</sup>In 1960, Fon Angwafo III was elected by twelve out of fifteen votes, into the Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs.<sup>61</sup>This gave him additional audacity and stamina to ascend the national political ladder of Cameroon. As a member of the House of chiefs, in 1961 he pledged his support to KNDP led by J.N. Foncha that was the ruling party in West Cameroon. Other delegates of British Southern Cameroons to the Conference were A.N. Jua, S.T. Muna, Nde Ntumazah, Tamfu and members of the KNDP, CPNC and One Kamerun (OK) parties<sup>62</sup>.

The Fon's membership in the West Cameroon House of Chiefs (WCHC) was brief; he barely made a year and had to resign since he was struggling to become a member of the West Cameroon House of Assembly (WCHA). The 1961 Federal Constitution had created two Legislative Assemblies for Cameroon, one for East Cameroon and the other for West Cameroon<sup>63</sup>. Fon Angwafo III vacated his seats in WCHC to contest election into the WCHA, despite the attempts by Foncha to force him to stay on was in vain. On December 15, 1961, Foncha held a meeting at the Fon of Bafut palace to persuade Fon Angwafo III to stay in the House of chiefs but he turned down the request<sup>64</sup>. In 1966 all the political parties in the Federal Republic of Cameroon were merged to form the One Party state. Despite this new dispensation

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<sup>59</sup> Nji Denise Fru, 65, Councillor, 02 September 2022, Mankon Bamenda.

<sup>60</sup> Fo Angwafo III, *Royalty and Politics*, p.23.

<sup>61</sup> W. Wankah Nde, *Fo S.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.80

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p.75.

<sup>63</sup> L. Ntse Musongong, "Traditional Governance in the Mankon Kingdom from Pre-colonial Times to 2009" p.218.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, p.218.

the Fon was re-elected in 1967 on the ticket of the Cameroon National Union (CNU), that was formed in 1966.<sup>65</sup>

Fon Angwafo III stayed as a member of the West Cameroon House of Assembly between 1967 and 1972. In 1972, the Federal Republic of Cameroon was abolished by Ahmadou Ahidjo, which was endorsed by the May 20, 1972 Referendum which ushered in the appellation the United Republic of Cameroon. Once again, Fon Angwafo III was elected thrice into the Cameroon National Assembly within the single party State. This was in 1967, 1973 and 1983. This made him play a role in the governance of Cameroon from the Legislative bench for twenty six years, 1962-1988<sup>66</sup>. (See photo 15).

**Photo 15 : Fon Angwafo III Performing His Political Duties in 1982 during Presidential Visit to Bamenda**



**Source: Aka, “Fon Angwafo III” in focus on Nukwi, p.66**

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<sup>65</sup> W. Wankah Nde, *Fo S.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.84-85

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, p. 85.

In 1988, the Fon resigned as a parliamentarian but two years later, that is in 1990, he was appointed as the first National Vice President of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), a position he held for a very long time. Fon Angwafo's role in National Political governance from 1962 to 2016 made him endure a lot of Political and constitutional changes in Cameroon. He is one of the few English speaking Cameroonians who has served longest as parliamentarian. Among others were S.T. Muna, J.N. Foncha, Tamfu and J.C. Kangkolo<sup>67</sup>.

Fon Angwafo III's role within the National governance of Cameroon, made him president of the Mankon Urban Town Council between 1964 and 1968 which later changed to Mankon Area Council where Fon Angwafo III was the chairman till 1972<sup>68</sup>. In 1972, the council changed from Mankon Area Council to Mankon Rural Council due to the Referendum with Fon Angwafo III still as the chairman till 1977. At that time, the council's status was changed from a Rural to Urban Council. It then became the Bamenda Urban Council, in which the Fon remained the Chairperson between 1977 and 1996<sup>69</sup>. It is important to note that Council administration is the base of executive power under the local governance in Cameroon. It is therefore evident that Fon Angwafo III played a significant role in Cameroon's modern governance for a very long time, at both the local and national level. While doing so, he was still fully a custodian of traditional leadership in the Mankon kingdom. During the entire reign of Fon Angwafo III, he had been actively involved in party politics and this has greatly influenced leadership and power in Mankon. His Political, economic and socio-cultural leadership of Mankon were quite remarkable but however, some of them faced critical challenges which by 2016 had left him in a considerable puzzle. Despite the confusion he moved on with the administration of his people as their king.

This chapter has examined the different phases that leadership and power experienced in the Mankon kingdom during the different historical periods, starting from the German colonial rule in Mankon, followed by the British rule in Cameroon which led to the implementation of the British system of Indirect Rule, which greatly affected leadership and the powers of the Fons of Mankon by reducing their powers and positions as Fons. And finally, the chapter also discussed

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<sup>67</sup>W. Wankah Nde, *Fo S.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.85

<sup>68</sup>L. Ntse Musongong, "Traditional Governance in the Mankon Kingdom from Pre-colonial Times to 2009" p.220.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

the changes that took place in Mankon after Independence. It is also realized that leadership and power in Mankon during the different periods experienced various results as a result of the different colonial policies that were implemented in the Mankon kingdom by the different colonialists.

**CHAPTER 4:**  
**CHALLENGES AND IMPACTS OF LEADERSHIP ADMINISTRATION AND POWER**  
**DYNAMISM IN MANKON**

The changing phase of leadership and power administration in Mankon was marked by varied challenges and impacts on Mankon leadership and the quest of nation building. This chapter focuses on the different challenges encountered by Mankon leadership and the effects on Mankon development and nation building. This chapter argues that the numerous challenges encountered by those who were in possession of power in Mankon negatively affected socio economic and political development of the Mankon Kingdom in the Bamenda Grassland. The chapter ends by outlining some recommendations to remedy the challenges.

**4-1 Challenges of leadership and power administration in Mankon**

The system of leadership and power administration in Mankon was bound to experience some challenges internally and externally as some of the indigenes of Mankon openly criticized the Fon and questioned his authority as well as other challenges came as a result of the Fon's involvement in politics among others. The challenges and impacts of leadership administration and power dynamism in Mankon will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs

**4-1-1 Drawbacks of the British system of indirect rule on the leadership in Mankon, 1923 to 1961.**

At the outbreak of World war one in Europe and its extension to Africa, the Anglo-french forces pushed out the Germans from Kamerun. The fall of Douala immediately saw the Genesis of a joint administration for the territory. The Anglo-french Condominium lasted until March 4, 1916<sup>1</sup>. The area under study became part of the union in 1915 when Major Crookenden took control of the military station in Bamenda<sup>2</sup>. Instantly, the Fons of the area went in support of the British. This duration of the condominium was brief because in 1916, the territory was divided

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<sup>1</sup> L.Z Elango, *The Anglo-french Condominium in Cameroon, 1914- 1916, A History of Misunderstanding*, Limbe: Navi Group, 1967, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> P. N. Nkwi and J. P. Warner, *Elements for a History of the Western Grassfields* Yaounde: Publication of the Department of Sociology, The University of Yaounde, 1982, p. 215

between the French and the British who took 432.000 sq. Km and 88.000 sq.km respectively<sup>3</sup>. The contemporary decision was confirmed in May 1919 following Article 119 part 1 of the treaty of Versailles<sup>4</sup>. From 1916 to 1921, there was no official British policy in the place. It was in 1923 that the Indirect Rule was officially adopted. In accordance with the 1923 Order in Council for the Cameroon. The policy of indirect rule was applicable and hinged on three ordinances; the native court, the native revenue and the native authority, these ordinances influenced traditional government in Mankon between 1923 and 1961 in aspect of leadership and power. The British believed that the Native Administration (N.A) was the most effective means of ruling the people through their own leaders. However, this design met with difficulties and provoked a number of challenges on leadership and power in Mankon. The essence of the Native Administration was to empower the natural rulers but preaching christainity ran counter to the beliefs, traditions and customs of the people. This meant that any disrespect against these beliefs, customs and traditions was a direct attack on the institution of leadership and power in the Mankon kingdom.

The Fon played the role of local authority under the indirect rule policy just as they had earlier done under the Germans, especially in the Bamenda Division. This was appropriate since the area was made up of very large and centralised kingdoms. Due to the absence of administrators, Podevin, the D.O for Bamenda Division, had to do whatever he could to keep the administration intact. It was in this light that a mobile court was established for the administrative Division in Bamenda<sup>5</sup>.

Nkwi summarizes British influence on traditional Governance in the following words: “The policy of indirect rule which advocated the use of traditional political institutions in the administration of the area, promoted a very slow and deliberate process of socio- economic development”<sup>6</sup>. From Nkwi's view, it is evident that the British Indirect Rule was intended to slow down the pace of development within the kingdoms. It therefore affected certain intrinsic

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<sup>3</sup> V.G. Fanzo, *Cameroon History for secondly schools and Colleges*, Vol. 2, The Colonial and Post- Colonial period Limbe: MacMillan Publishers Ltd, 1989, p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> Colonial Office, Report of Her Majesty's Britannic Government, 1930, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> NAB, cb (1918), Annual Report, Bamenda Division, p.24.

<sup>6</sup> P. N. Nkwi, *Traditional Diplomacy: A study of inter- Chieftdom Relations in the Western Grassfields. North West Province of Cameroon* (Yaounde: Department of Sociology, University of Yaounde, 1987), p.35.

values in the traditional governance. For example, in the 1930s, Fon Ndefru III wrote to the British to complain against being side lined despite all he had done to receive them with open hands <sup>7</sup>. Nkwi further highlights the fact that because of indirect rule policy, national consciousness was promoted which led to an amalgamation of the Pre-Colonial mini-states into operational administrative structures to meet the needs of modern government. Thus, the emergence of nationalist movements in the 1950's permitted the gradual transmission of power to new men, who were not only proud of their colonial heritage, but we're also proud of their Pre-Colonial identity<sup>8</sup>. It was therefore for this reason that most of the Fons of the Bamenda Grasslands, who became educated, saw a reason to integrate themselves into modern politics so as to use the forum to project the image of their kingdoms. This was because they became afraid that their institutions of governance could easily become totally side-lined by the new breed of political leaders that were coming as a result of the fight for Independence. The challenge posed by the colonial policies of Germany and Britain were further aggravated at the dawn of Independence.

#### **4-1-2 Challenges to Leadership and Power faced by Fon Angwafo III.**

The challenges in leadership and power faced by Fon Angwafo III are best explain in three diamensions. Those resulting from his partisan position in national politics, economic and socio-cultural challenges as well as challenges instigated by the 1977 chieftaincy laws in Cameroon. The challenges faced by Fon Angwafo III as a partisan politician were enormous. In effect, his reign from 1961 to 2016 was plagued with numerous political challenges. They included his conflicting relations with John Ngu Foncha and the Kamerun National Democratic party (KNDP), president Ahmadou Ahidjo and the Cameroon National Union (CNU) Party political intrigue; President Paul Biya and the Cameroon National Democratic Movement (CPDM) intrigue; victimization from Ni John Fru Ndi and his Social Democratic Front (SDF) party, and the fragility of the North West Fon's Union.

The Fon's conflicting relations with Foncha began in 1959 when he rose to the helm of the throne of Mankon. British Southern Cameroons was at the crossroads of pressurising the British to grant

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<sup>7</sup>"Intelligent and Re- Assessment Report on the Ngemba Area, Bamenda Division, Cameroon's Province" (January 1938), No AB26, 16561, R. Newton, NAB, p.2-4.

<sup>8</sup>P. N. Nkwi, *Traditional Diplomacy*, p.35.



its autonomy. Considering that this was a trusteeship territory under the United Nations Organization, the politicians had conflicting options for the Independence of the territory. The KNDP of Foncha and the Kamerun National Congress (KNC) of E.M.L. Endeley were at daggers drawn politically speaking, with regard to what direction the people of the British Southern Cameroon were to take. While the KNC worked for integration with Nigeria, the KNDP worked towards gradual reunification with the French Cameroons.

Fon Angwafo III found himself wrapped up in the political puzzle as he embraced the reunification option and believed that Foncha and his KNDP would accept him with open hands. Foncha on his part, saw in him a potential threat since the Fon was the leader of the Mankon people amongst whom was Ndeh Ntumazah. Foncha sensed that Fon Angwafo's entry into politics was to give support to Ntumazah whose one Kamerun (O.K) party was in alliance with the Union Des Populations du Cameroun (U.P.C.) party. For that reason, most of his political undertakings were frustrated by Foncha. First, his attempt to solicit for a seat in Parliament for the Lower Ngemba Constituency was denied by Foncha who favoured the candidacy of Daniel Awa Nangah. However, the Fon went in as an independent candidate and won the seat as a member of the West Cameroon House of Assembly for the Lower Ngemba Constituency. Foncha saw this as a major slap on his face. Attempts by the Fon to reconcile with Foncha never worked as he explains: When my supporters advised me to reconcile with the KNDP following the elections, I was willing to consider the suggestion but John Ngu Foncha turned it down saying the loyalty of the people of Mankon was questionable<sup>9</sup>.

Despite the support given by Fon Angwafo III as an independent member of parliament for J.N Foncha to be appointed as prime minister, their relationship continued to be sour. The Fon explains that: "... Foncha (did not stop) from accusing me and instigating others to accuse me of breaking the chief's law by going to parliament or doing politics"<sup>10</sup>. It is therefore possible that Foncha may not have had any personal problems with the Fon, but was totally against partisan political role the Fon was playing. This strained relationship between Foncha and Fon Angwafo III persisted and stretched into other areas and this affected the progress of Mankon Kingdom for decades which posed a challenge on leadership and power in the kingdom of Mankon. Evidence

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<sup>9</sup> Fo Angwafo III, *Royalty and Politics*, p. 25.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p.27.

of this was based on the Fon's statement that the SDF of Ni John Fru Ndi was "the reincarnation of the KNDP"<sup>11</sup>. Fon Angwafo III's long stay in Parliament (twenty seven years) could therefore be perceived on the fact that President Ahidjo and Biya made use of him as their instrument to maneuver within the political landscape of North West Region.

The Fon and CNU political intrigue under President Ahidjo was another major challenge to Fon Angwafo III. When President Ahmadou Ahidjo experienced a tense political atmosphere provoked by the multiplicity of political parties in the early 1960s, he decided in 1966 to turn the country into one-party state<sup>12</sup>. It is believed that this was easy to realize because Ahidjo gained the support of Fon Angwafo III who was an independent member of parliament whose relation with the KNDP was strained. Thus, when the Cameroon National Union (CNU) party was formed, Fon Angwafo was easily elected as the first section President of Mezam Division in 1966<sup>13</sup>.

Between 1966 and 1982, Fon Angwafo III became a major political actor for the CNU from the North West Province<sup>14</sup>. He was therefore at the complete disposal of President Ahmadou Ahidjo whose political desires were carried out with the unchallenged support of the Fon. The Fon assumed that as an auxiliary of the administration, he was doing what was accurate to implement the state policies. To his opponents, he was a major sell out to the course of the Anglophone Cameroon course. Many sons of the area were disappointed because he had concentrated a lot of powers in his hands. This was evident in 1975 during the CNU party reorganisation<sup>15</sup>. The Fon stood for the re-election as the Mezam Divisional Section President and met with stiff opposition from challengers like D.A Nanga<sup>16</sup>. The Fon is known to have been publicly ridiculed and insulted in the course of the fight to occupy the position.

Another challenge of leadership and power in the Mankon Kingdom came from the CPDM intrigue under President Paul Biya. With the transition at the helm of the nation on November 6, 1982, when Paul Biya took over as Head of State of Cameroon following the resignation of

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<sup>11</sup> Fo Angwafo III, *Royalty and Politics*, p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> W. Wankah Nde, *Fo S.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.90

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.87.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.88.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.91.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

President Ahidjo, a lot passed unknown in the sphere of political leadership within the North West Province. President Paul Biya wore the same shoes as Ahidjo had worn by making appropriate use of Fon Angwafo III as an important political actor of the North West. Despite the change in the name of the lone political party from Cameroon National Union (CNU) to the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) in 1985, the Fon of Mankon seat was maintained till 1988. The Fon explains, "From 1969 to 1988, I repeatedly won the elections to occupy the section President Seat of the Mezam on both the platform of the CNU and CPDM parties"<sup>17</sup>.

Fon Angwafo III further explains that he was winning elections with the aim of serving his people. He never understood that the objective of his party leaders was different. In this same connection, he asserts that when he was no longer going to be politically useful, he decided to resign from parliament. This was in 1988 following cries within the CPDM for traditional leaders to stay out of politics. The Fon was obliged to toe party lines and throw his support to D.A. Atia, the next CPDM candidate for parliament. In 1992 S.A.A. Akenji became the next parliamentarian of Mankon origin to occupy a seat at the Cameroon's National Assembly<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, despite his resignation, he still threw his weight on the CPDM party of President Paul Biya.

Despite the return of Cameroon to multi party politics in 1990, Fon Angwafo III continued to be chosen as the first Vice Chairman of President Paul Biya's CPDM party. This demonstrated how his support has been useful to the system despite all the criticisms why he got involved in politics as a traditional ruler and calls from his adversaries to stay away from partisan politics. However, many attempts by the Fon to share his ideas with the Head of States, as he was opportuned to in the 1990s, to discuss with the President of the Republic at the Unity Palace in Yaounde. (See photo 16).

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<sup>17</sup> Fo Angwafo III, *Royalty and Politics*, p.32.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.33.

**Photo 16: Fon Angwafo III at the Unity Palace with President Paul Biya in the 1990s**



**Source: J.P Notue, *Art and Heritage in Mankon*, p.33**

Despite the Fon of Mankon occupying the post of Vice President of the CPDM, he was not granted audience, making his role insignificant on burning issues concerning either State management or traditional governance.

Furthermore, the Fon equally suffered victimization from Ni John Fru Ndi and the SDF party which led to some intense political challenge. On May 26, 1990, Ni John Fru Ndi took the courageous steps to launch the Social Democratic Front (SDF) party in Mankon town<sup>19</sup>, it was therefore evident that Fon Angwafo III would meet some political challenges which will affect leadership and power in Mankon. News about the launch of a new political party was received

<sup>19</sup>W.Wankah Nde, *FO S.A.N Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.92.

with mixed feelings by the political elite of the North West Province. Like their counterparts in other provinces of the republic, Fon Angwafo III led a CPDM march in the streets of Bamenda to express their refusal for what they referred to as "Western-imposed models" of politics in Cameroon. Taking the bull by the horn, proponents of multi-party rule threw their full support for the launch of the SDF party. Due to the heavy deployment of troops to stop Ni John Fru Ndi from launching his new party, six innocent Bamenda citizens lost their lives, the launch took place right at the doorsteps of the Fon of Mankon, in the neighborhood of Ntarinkon quarter<sup>20</sup>, it was therefore a severe blow to Fon Angwafo III's Political prowess and also as a traditional leader of Mankon, his powers as a Fon was disrespected which posed a challenge to leadership and power in the kingdom of Mankon. There was an open endorsement of multipartism in Cameroon and was followed by the 1990 laws on the creation of Associations. The Fon of Mankon was caught hands down by his longtime political rivals, who since then have not only challenged him in elections, but have also sought his victimization. As a result, Fon Angwafo III continued to be targeted, especially as he kept holding tight to the CPDM as its first National Vice President<sup>21</sup>.

#### **4-1-3 The 1992 Presidential Elections and its toll on the Mankon Leadership and Power Administration.**

After the Presidential Elections of 1992, reports of irregularities spread throughout the country. In Bamenda the electorate went on total civil disobedience, the target was to destroy all property belonging to the members of the ruling party CPDM. Fon Angwafo III became one of the victimized personalities which was a challenge his powers and position as the leader of Mankon.

The 1992 presidential elections results in Cameroon and the involvement of the Fon of Mankon into politics had some critics that analysed his involvement in politics left him little time to carryout his duties as a traditional leader. Again as president of the CNU Mezam section, many people found it difficult to confront him on political issues because of traditional protocol of meeting and discussing with the Fon. The greatest problem which confronted the Fon and his subjects was the presidential election of 1992 and its outcome. As results of this election in Cameroon, Bamenda, the capital of the North West Region became the center of opposition and

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<sup>20</sup> Aya Henry, 73, retired teacher, 10 September 2022, Yaoundé

<sup>21</sup> W.Wankah Nde, *FO S.A.N Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.93.

violence. The 1992 Presidential elections in Cameroon projected the Mankon people as a people with steady support for the opposition party in Cameroon. There were many disturbances and destruction and of the victims were the Mankon people. There was the looting and burning of the Mankon Fon rest House in Bamenda Town<sup>22</sup>. They was also the looting and burning of property of many Mankon people like Daniel Anyedzang, Solomon Anye Akenji, Linus Ayong Che, Tangyie Nyoh, Cletus Anye Matoya and Martin Chi<sup>23</sup>.

The ugly face of the election attracted criticisms as the general cry was that he involved these election victims in the CPDM party. It should also be noted that the Fon was also a victim as his rest House (Palace) in the Mankon Urban Area was burnt down. The disturbance and the destruction after the declaration of the 1992 Presidential election result led to the declaration of a state of emergency by the Government<sup>24</sup>, a serious episode in the history of the North West Region in general and Mankon in particular which posed some challenges on leadership and power administration.

The cause of the state of emergency was the wanton destruction of lives and property when the Supreme Court declared President Paul Biya, the winner of the 1992 elections. It was therefore an attempt to prevent chaos that the president declared the aforementioned state of emergency<sup>25</sup>. Troops were deployed to maintain peace and order all over the Region. The effects of the state of emergency were numerous and far reaching. Many people were arrested especially the Mankon people, detained and tortured as the Fon of Mankon by then was actively involved in politics. As a result of the tense atmosphere in Bamenda, people deserted the Bamenda Central area to their villages of origin mainly by trekking. As a result, movement within the region was strictly limited during this period. Economic activities were grounded and no vehicles could be seen plying the streets except the trucks of the troops that patrolled the streets. In the rural areas, the effects were equally felt especially in Mankon, the youths alleged responsible for destruction went into hiding, this also was a threat to the kingdom of Mankon in terms of leadership and power administration as the Fon and the subjects were under serious tension. With the

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<sup>22</sup>Aya Henry, 73, retired teacher, 10 September 2022, Yaoundé.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>W. Wankah Nde, *FO S.A.N Angwafo III*, p.99.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.p.100.

intervention of the forces of law and order, peace gradually returned to the region and the state of emergency declared to last for three months, however was uplifted a month earlier<sup>26</sup>.

#### **4-1-4 The Intergration of Malcontents in Mankon in 1947.**

One of the key challenges that the Mankon leadership faced was the Intergration of Malcontents in Mankon. Before his death in 1919, Fon Angwafo II had been lying helplessly ill for a period of twelve years, unable to rule effectively. During these sad years of his ineffective reign, his eldest son, Azaa Fomukara was made the regent but because he was not literate, he was replaced by Columba Fruba<sup>27</sup>. Regretably, before his death in 1919, Fruba seemed to have become too ambitious by assuming the title, Fon Fomukong. This was not in keeping with the the Mankon tradition, considering enstoolment rites had not been performed on him, which was seen as a disrespect for the culture and traditional values of the Mankon people. Thus, when Fon Angwafo II died in 1919, Tata Laboeru another Prince was popularly chosen by the king makers and installed as Fon Ndefru III<sup>28</sup>.

Fon Ndefru III's installation was peacefully celebrated according to the customs and tradition of the Mankon people. With his accession to the throne, Mankon people felt relieved because the last twelve years of Fon Angwafo II's reign were years of uncertainty and anxiety. Fon Ndefru III ruled for ten years, that is right up to 1929 peacefully without any disturbances. By the end of the ten peaceful years, a few discontented citizens who had been nursing some grievances revolted against him on the instigstions of one of his nephews Elias Nduso, the adopted son of late regent Fruba. Investigations showed that the allegations levelled against the Fon were unfounded and that his nephew (Elias Nduso) who had wanted to become the Fon was behind the agitation<sup>29</sup>, this was a challenge to the leadership of Mankon under Ndefru III. The agitation increased with time and the Fon was openly attacked while on his way to attend the Ngemba Customary Court session. No significant harm was done but of the forty six (46) persons arrested, 22 of them were found guilty and imprisoned while the remaining 24 were fined for helping the trouble. Mr Fruba and some of his supporters went on exile to Esu and this led to a division among the people into

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<sup>26</sup>W. Wankah Nde, *FO S.A.N Angwafo III*, p.100.

<sup>27</sup>Y. Eballa and E. A. Aka, *Focus on Nukwi Nu Fo Ndefru III: Mankon Cultural Festival, 23rd-31st December 1984*, p. 57.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

two fractions<sup>30</sup> which greatly affected leadership and power administration in Mankon fostering disunity and instability.

Moreover, between 1929 and 1947, Mankon was almost in a state of anarchy with people supporting one fraction against the other. This was indeed a "Dark Age" in Mankon history<sup>31</sup>. By 1947, Fon Ndefru III felt that he could not be Fon in a divided Fondom. He realized that the rift within his family circle and among his subjects was growing wider and wider. In a reconciliatory move, he recalled all those who had gone on self exile. As the gods would have it, Mr C.J Mayne, the Divisional Officer of what was then 'Bamenda Province', a reunion was effected and lasting peace restored, symbolized by erecting a stone pillar at the palace plaza<sup>32</sup>.

#### **4-1-5 Political opponents of Fon Angwafo III.**

Furthermore, another challenge faced by leadership and power administration in Mankon was the presence of political opponents in Mankon at Independence. Since 1961 some Mankon elite had opposed the Fon of Mankon involvement into politics. They held diverse opinions to support their views. Despite Angwafo's long parliamentary career, some Mankon people remained skeptical and did not like his participation into politics. This culminated in a memorandum addressed to the Fon by the Mankon Cultural and Development Association (M.A.C.U.D.A).<sup>33</sup> This memorandum came in the wake of the re- introduction of multi- partism in Cameroon in the early 1960s. Unlike the immediate post - Independence period in the 1960 bitterness and divisiveness characterised the new area of multi- partism. Cameroon was being torn apart and the Mankon kingdom did not escape the malaise. Afraid that the kingdom could be torn apart by the new politics, M.A.C.U.D.A, wrote to the Fon, proposing that he should quit the political arena for the interest of Mankon<sup>34</sup>.

In 1975, during the C.N.U party reorganisation, Fon Angwafo III sought re- election as Mezam Divisional Section President, he came up against stiff opposition from challengers like D.A Nangah. The Fon was publicly insulted and ridiculed. This mud linkings was such that the only

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<sup>30</sup>Y. Eballa and E. A. Aka, *Focus on Nukwi Nu Fo Ndefru III*, p. 57.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.58.

<sup>33</sup>W. Wankah Nde, *FO S.A.N Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.90.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.



option was for him to withdraw. He withdrew from the contest in favour of one of the candidates, D.N Che, a son of Mankon and a businessman.<sup>35</sup> All these poses a challenge to the Fon of Mankon and his power was limited as the leader of the Mankon Kingdom who openly had opponents but could really do anything about it. Thus, the MACUDA Memorandum gave Fon Angwafo III some sleepless nights which made him to defend himself by justifying his decisions to be involved in politics. His involvement in politics was partly because as the Fon of Mankon, he was the executive, political and administrative head of the Mankon People.

#### **4-1-6 Succession Struggle and the Accession to the Throne, 1959.**

Another pertinent issue that challenged Mankon traditional leadership was the succession disputes involving some Fons in Mankon especially during the accession to the throne in 1959 by Angwafo III. Fon Ndefru III in the early hours of Monday, March 30, 1959 following a sudden heart attack after forty years of reign from 1919 to 1959. Prince Solomon Anye Ndefru alongside the other princes and princesses of Mankon who were out of the village for various reasons were all called home<sup>36</sup>.

The missing Fon was buried in an alcove (nushwim or bufor shrine), a sacred house where the Fon's of Mankon are buried. He was the fourth to be buried on the site<sup>37</sup>. With the death of the Fon (*Nkah bueneh*) meaning the light has gone out in Mankon, was followed by a period of mourning until the enthronement of the successor<sup>38</sup>. During this period of mourning which was confirmed that the Fon was dead or missing, the Mankon people, both men, women and children went on searching for the missing Fon. During this period, the people stayed mostly in their homes, no economic activities were carried out. In addition, there was no firing of guns of any sort in the kingdom. This situation went on until when the successor was caught, which is believed that the missing Fon had been seen<sup>39</sup>.

As was the custom, the death of the Fon was to be kept secret until the successor had been chosen. Even if some of the princes caught wind the situation, Prince Solomon Anye Ndefru was unaware and least thought he was to be the successor. He confirmed this when he said; When I

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<sup>35</sup> W. Wankah Nde, *FO S.A.N Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.91.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p.15.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>38</sup> Fon Angwafo IV, 50, Traditional ruler, 20 August 2022, Mankon palace.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*

left primary school before going to Nigeria, I was interested in agriculture. I least thought I would be Fon. My father was inclined to favour traditional administration for me... my mother wanted me to do traditional medicine. I did not like these choices but preferred agriculture<sup>40</sup>.

In Mankon there were a number of qualities that a crowned prince should possess. Among these qualities Prince Solomon Anye Ndefru fulfilled many of them such as: good character and behaviour. Above all he was conceived when his father was already enthroned as Fon and Prince Solomon Anye was born in 1925 when his father had been Fon since 1919<sup>41</sup>. The prince was chosen either by the late Fon before he died or by the king makers according to the Mankon tradition. Generally, they had been succession struggles following the deaths of Fons of Mankon. Thus, there was a struggle before Fon Ndefru III became Fon in 1919 and it was the same situation in 1959 with Prince Solomon Anye.

Furthermore, though Prince Solomon Anye had these qualifications and was willed by the late Fon, the enthronement exercise was not without problems. This was because a conflict arose and resembled that which took place during his late father's enthronement in 1919. It was the struggle between the king makers and the administration in Bamenda. The king makers were determined to respect the will of the late Fon for the enthronement of Prince Solomon Anye Ndefru but the British colonial administration at the time favoured a different candidate, known as Prince Joseph Fruasah Ndomu<sup>42</sup> which created tension on the traditional leadership in Mankon. Prince Joseph Ndomu, son of Fon Ndefru III, was born in 1912 in Mankon, he attended the Government school, Bamenda station between 1922 and 1931<sup>43</sup>. He worked in the Local Council service of Bamenda Division from May 1932 to May 1955. With this long service career, he rose to the grade of supervisor of Council Treasuries in the Bamenda Division. His service was terminated with the abolition of the Bamenda Division with its central Native Authority. He then joined the Southern Cameroon Government service on August 16, 1955 and retired in 1975<sup>44</sup>.

This further escalated the political climate in Mankon following the death of Fon Ndefru III, the king makers informed the Senior Divisional Officer (S.D.O) for Bamenda Division, Brian

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<sup>40</sup>Fo Angwafo III, *Royalty and Politics*, p. 32.

<sup>41</sup>Ngwa Cyril, 66, palace guard, 20 August 2022, Mankon palace.

<sup>42</sup>W. Wakah Nde, *FO S.A.N Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.17.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid. p.18

Sharwood - Smith, that the Fon was missing. The S.D.O immediately wrote a letter to Prince Joseph Fruasah Ndomu informing and instructing him this: “your father, the Fon is late since March 30, 1959. The enthronement is due soon. You are, therefore, requested to make all arrangements to be at home before the 1st of April. ... My interest is that from your acceptable administrative qualities you should be the heir to the throne. I will also do everything at my level to influence your acceptance by the Mankon traditional King makers although they may have an alternative”<sup>45</sup>.

The problem over the succession Struggle and the accession to the throne in 1959 became a burning issue with the Mankon traditional leadership as the S.D.O tried to influence and go against the will of the cultural norms of the succession rights in Mankon by favouring and encouraging Prince Joseph Fruasah to take over the throne of Mankon. According to Prince Joseph Fruasah Ndomu, the colonial administration perceived that he was intelligent and had always opposed them in administration<sup>46</sup>. They therefore wanted to get rid of the prince from the office by way of making him the Fon of Mankon.

Despite this administrative maneuver the Mankon people were nevertheless happy to see Prince Ndomu present and participating in the enthronement ceremony. They however detested the presence of the police. It should be noted that the succession Struggle was not only between the S.D.O and Ndomu on one side and the king makers on the other. Prince Solomon Anye was unaware of the struggle as he testified, "immediately I came in from Bafang on the death of my father, I was caught and confined in the palace"<sup>47</sup>. It should also be noted that Prince Ndomu was not born on the leopard skin, thus he was ruled out of the succession question and could not be the new Fon of Mankon according to the Mankon customs and traditions.

Generally, the British Colonial administration through their policy of indirect rule used traditional rulers in local administration. Traditional rulers were therefore answerable to the authorities. Contrary to this policy, the Mankon people had strongly resisted colonial rule. It was therefore the aim of the British to facilitate their hold on the people by influencing succession to chiefs which was a challenge to traditional leadership. In the case of Mankon they failed due to

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<sup>45</sup>W. Wakah Nde, *FO S.A.N Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.17.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p.18

<sup>47</sup>Fo Angwafo III, *Royalty and Politics*, p.20.

the firmness of the king makers to respect the will of the late Fon. From 1959 till his death in 2022, Prince Ndomu collaborated with the Fon advising him when need arose. He also participated in the most significant traditional rite, the symbolic "stoning" of the Fon<sup>48</sup>, an act to show that it was the last chance the people had to treat as mortal, the man they elevated to the leadership. The struggle ended after the new Fon was enthroned, he was named after one of his predecessors and he became known as Fon Angwafo III of Mankon<sup>49</sup>

#### **4-1-7 The Fragility of North West Fon's union.**

Another challenge to Leadership and Power in Mankon was the Fragility of the North West Fon's Union. The over 450 Fons that shielded the entire North West Region could have been a major force to reckon with on traditional leadership in Cameroon had been firmly united. It was believed that their united effort could be of substantial help to the entire region. Unfortunately, despite attempts at setting up a united front, many setbacks crept in. To begin, it is alleged that when the Fons of the North West came together to confer the title of Fon of Fons on President Paul Biya in 1985, the venture yielded dividends only to its initiators<sup>50</sup>. For example, Fon Angwafo III who in June 1990 was made First Vice Chairman of the CPDM, is believed to have been one of the initiators and in return received personal rewards for the effort to the detriment of the Union<sup>51</sup>. This is compounded by the fact that in 1988 there was an uproar that Fons should be political but that seemed to have been short-lived.

In 1994, the North West Fon's Association (NOWEFA) was created. Its aim was to restore the lost glory of the traditional institution. At its helm was Fon Fusi Yakum Ntaw<sup>52</sup> of Bambalang in the Ndop Sub-Division. Internal squabbles amongst the Fons fuelled by some North West politicians, killed the NOWEFA initiative. The main reason was that most of the Fons had become partisan in politics and were openly in support of either the ruling party or the opposition party. This resulted in the creation of North West Fons Conference (NOWEFCO) as a

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<sup>48</sup>This was part of the Mankon tradition and the enthronement procedures, when the new Fon is shown to the public, they spelt stones on him which signifies the last insults they will proffer on him but these insults strengthens and immunises him.

<sup>49</sup>W. Wankah Nde, *FO S.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.20.

<sup>50</sup>K. Fokum, "Royal Beggars: North West Fon's and the decadence of Tradition"(A Messenger Publication, February 2009), p. 9.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid, p.9.

<sup>52</sup>Fon Fusi Yakum Ntaw of Bambalang was the Governor of the North West Province. He was therefore a key administration that served the executive arm of government.

rival association. At the helm of NOWEFCO was Fon Doh Gah Gwanyin of Bali Kumbat. He received the blessings of the Prime Minister, Mr. Achidi Achu, who left Yaounde and attended its launch in the Sky Line Hotel in Bamenda<sup>53</sup>. After a lot of damage had been done by the existence of the two rivals Fons associations, merger was brokered in 1999. NOWEFA and NEWFCO came together to found the North West Fon's Union (NOWEFU). This time around, Fon Abumbi of Bafut became the President General, Fon Chafah of Bangolom the Secretary General, Fon Forbuzie of Chomba the Publicity Secretary and Barrister Nico Halle, who was not a Fon, became the Legal Adviser, a 52 member Royal Executive Board was put in place<sup>54</sup>. The objective was to unite the 450 Fons of the North West Province under a common agenda, to work collectively, to protect and preserve the traditional institutions of the Region.

After the term of office of the Fon of Bafut elapsed, he handed over to the Fon of Nso who later handed over to Fon Chafa XI of Bangolom. The secretary General became Fon Forbuzie II of Chomba and the Treasurer General was Fon Jokem of Mbengwi. With this team in place, the construction of a North West Fon's Secretariat which had been earlier earmarked as a project, commenced. All attempts at bringing the two to a compromise failed. Fon Chafa Isaac XI singlehandedly decided to revoke the title of Ntumfo, meaning "the Fon's messenger" that had been bestowed on Barrister Nico Halle by the Fons of the North West. Fon Forbuzie explains that: "Nobody was bold enough to put the brakes on his actions, not even the big Five Kings in the North West Province who had been appointed to serve as advisers of the Union. As one of the Big Five Fons<sup>55</sup> of the North West who had advisory role, Fon Angwafo III, observing the challenge to their authority, simply watched as it intensified. Consequently, the union of Fons of the North West Region has continued to be in a state of imbalance with the economic challenges not withstanding.

#### **4-1-8 Challenges posed by the 1977 Chieftaincy Laws**

In Cameroon the Fon or Chief in local governance and development has always had a significant place. This was because the colonial and post-colonial administrators recognized their important

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<sup>53</sup> K. Fokum, "Royal Beggars", p. 9.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 10.

<sup>55</sup> Big Five Fons refers to the Five Class chiefs of the North West Region. From the 1977 classification of chiefdoms, these are the kingdoms of Mankon, Bafut, Bali, Bansa and Kom.

role. Besides, neither the colonial nor the post-colonial administration wanted the Fons to have change in political matters at the local or national levels<sup>56</sup>. For that reason, they decided to contain the chiefs through a series of regulations. Most of these regulations which were state laws placed the Fons and chiefs as agents of the administration and liaison between the state and the citizens. It all began with the 1922 status of Chiefs, creating regional chiefs, which was put up by the French Colonial authorities in French Cameroon. Despite their Paramount positions, the chiefs were simply considered as administrative agents. The 1922 status was modified on 4 February, 1933, creating three grades of Chiefs. The first grade were the Lamidos and Sultans, the second grade were chiefs who headed groups of Canyons and the third grade were chiefs who were village heads<sup>57</sup>. There was little difference despite the grading in their functions as the chiefs were responsible for providing labour for plantation and public work, the collection of taxes, and the supervision and maintenance of Law and order in their areas of jurisdiction. The principal role of Chiefs in the post colonial period did not change except that the provision of labour in plantations was no longer applicable.

Following the creation of the southern Cameroon House of Chiefs in May 1960, a law recognizing chiefs was passed. This was known as Law No. 7 of December 10, 1960<sup>58</sup>. It recognized the chiefs as a person whose chieftaincy title was associated with a native community. Unfortunately, the authors of Reunification failed to look at the laws on chieftaincy as an immediate priority. As a result, no common law guided the regulation of chieftaincy in both East and West Cameroon.

In 1977, President Amadou Ahidjo signed Decree No. 77/245 of July 15, 1977, to organize chiefdoms in Cameroon, it was expected to be a blessing but unfortunately, like the 1933 order of the French Colonial Government, it classified chiefdoms into three grades. Chapter 1 (2) of the degree grades the chiefs as first, second and third class. The classes are based on the territory covered by a given community. Chapter II on the appointment of Chiefs states that before a chief

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<sup>56</sup>W. Oyemakinde, "The Chiefs Law and the Regulation of Traditional Chieftaincy in Yorubaland," in *Journal of the Historical society of Nigeria*, Vol. IX no. 1 (December, 1977), p. 63.

<sup>57</sup>V.T. LeVine, *The Cameroons: From Mandate to Independence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), p. 97-98.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid, p.98.

is appointed, he must be able to read and write. This sounded positive as most chiefs were left with the challenge to educate their children who were heir apparent<sup>59</sup>.

Furthermore, the 1977 chieftaincy decree has had a plethora of challenges to their institution since it was signed. Fon Angwafo III has been a focal point in the application as some of the terms failed to apply in Mankon. For example, chapter 1 on Miscellaneous provisions 33 (1) and (2) states that: Zones and quarters shall from the point of view of their functioning and administration, be equated to 2nd and 3rd class chiefdoms and secondly the manner of appointing zonal, quarter and ward heads shall be fixed by order of the Minister of Territorial Administration<sup>60</sup>. According to this provision, considering the size of the Mankon kingdom, it was normal to have some of its quarters under the governance of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> class chiefs but rather, this has never been the case. Fon Angwafo III has undergone criticism by some of his people for not allowing sub chiefs to govern under him as provided by the law. For these reasons, some of the quarter heads declared themselves as sub chiefs. This was the case with the Fomambu people in Alamabuh that has since the 1950s declared to be a village on its own inside Mankon<sup>61</sup>.

The 1977 chieftaincy Law favoured the elimination of sub chiefs in Mankon. It was however expected that the 1996 constitution would resolve these problems. Following a constitutional consultation committee created in 1994 to make proposals for a new constitution in Cameroon, it was believed that the place of traditional governance will come to light. There was a general cry for a House of Chiefs. Unfortunately, when the constitution was finally presented to the parliament, it completely dismissed the position of Chiefs. The constitution simply mentioned the role of Chiefs in the Regional Councils. This implies that the 1977 decree organizing chiefdoms continued to be the main governing institution of chieftaincy in Cameroon<sup>62</sup>.

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<sup>59</sup> L. Ntse Musongong, "Traditional Governance in the Mankon Kingdom from Pre-Colonial Times to 2009", p.272.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p.273.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p. 277-278.

#### **4-1-9 Economic and socio-cultural challenges of leadership and power in the Mankon kingdom.**

When the economic crisis hit Cameroon in 1986, the way was paved for a return to multi party politics wherein traditional authorities became increasingly powerless. This became blatantly obvious with the rise of Prime Minister Achidi Achu. His message of "you scratch my back, I scratch your own" at the Centre of politics simply meant "give-and-take". The Fons were expected to give their loyalty to the regime in return for economic benefits. This therefore meant that since economic crisis was getting severe, no Fon was expected to reap where he did not sow the desired political seeds. This was another challenge to most Fons since the assurance that the opposition was going to take power was uncertain. While some Fons openly opted to ally with the opposition SDF, others stood for the CPDM<sup>63</sup>.

On His part, Fon Angwafo III had remained consistent in his position as a CPDM Frontline Member despite all the "victimization". Meanwhile other Fons decided to declare their support for the ruling CPDM with the objective of making economic gains. The socio-cultural challenges to leadership and power in Mankon were also critical.

Fon Angwafo III also faced a series of socio-cultural challenges between 1961 and 2009. They included, the loss of some Mankon antiquities in the 1960s, irregularities in organising the Fon's Annual Dance in the 1990s, the withdrawal of Mankon people from contributing to communal work, the controversy over the construction of Government High School (GHS) Mankon, and troubles over the Wanton sale of land by Mankon people to outsiders.

In the 1960s Mankon Arts works in the hands of some state officials got missing. Rev. Father Engelbert Mveng, who was the minister of Education and Cultural Adviser, collected arts work from Mankon for display in America and never returned them<sup>64</sup>. The story goes that during the celebration marking the Independence of Cameroon in the 1960s, Rev Father. Engelbert Mveng clandestinely took a dance group from Mankon to the United States of America (USA). The dancers were poorly treated while in the USA and they felt obliged to return to Mankon, abandoning their dance instruments in the process. Attempts by the Mankon traditional council

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<sup>63</sup>Camping No. 40, Thursday August 16, 1990. Fon Ndikum of Alum declared that "we are with the SDF".

<sup>64</sup>Fo Angwafo III, *Royalty and Politics*, p.68-69.



(MTC) and the dancers who launched complaints to the United Nations Organization (UNO) to regain the arts objects of Mankon proved fruitless. Fon Angwafo III explains how the Cameroon Ambassador to the United States of America said he never knew about the issue. When the Mankon Traditional Council asked the Cameroon Government to prove into the issue, it was reported that the situation was based on private arrangements between two people<sup>65</sup>.

Those involved had all died without tangible arrangements made to compensate Mankon. As a measure to combat such a misfortune, the Fon of Mankon obtained assistance from the Centro Orientamento Educativo (COE), an Italian NGO, to put in place a modern standard Museum to preserve Mankon antiquities. The Mankon Museum, constructed in conformity with the standards of the International Council of Museum, took five years to complete. It was inaugurated on January 28, 2006<sup>66</sup>, with a 225 pages museum Catalogue titled " Mankon: Art Heritage and Culture from the Mankon Kingdom" and edited by Jean- Paul Notue and Bianca Triaca in 2005.

Meanwhile, in 1992, attempts by the Fon and his Administration to name the street of Mankon town ended in a fiasco. Initiated by Sanjou Tadzong Abel Nde, then Government Delegate for the Bamenda Urban Council, the streets of the town were titled after prominent Mankon indigenes<sup>67</sup>. This was based on their contributions towards the development of the town. For example the Ndefru, Tseymagha and Mumuntinguru streets, were named after some past Fons of Mankon. Sign posts bearing these names were put up but they never lasted for a week. Some unscrupulous individuals destroyed them, making the project to be suspended<sup>68</sup>. It is nevertheless believed that although it was undertaken by the Government Delegate, this was an initiative of Fon Angwafo III which was destroyed. This was a major setback of Fon Angwafo III's leadership.

In addition, there was a sudden irregularity in the organization of the Fon's annual traditional dance in Mankon. The tradition of Mankon has it that the Fon organizes annually in the month of December a traditional dance festival. This cultural practice has been smoothly ongoing since the

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<sup>65</sup>Fo Angwafo III, *Royalty and Politics*, p.69.

<sup>66</sup>W. Wankah Nde, *FO S.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.47.

<sup>67</sup>Nde Joseph, 79, contractor, 30 September 2022, Biyem assi, Yaoundé

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

Pre-Colonial times. Its only setback was noticed in the 1990s during the reign of Fon Angwafo III. However, it was organized after every two years with justifiable reasons, believe to be coming from the ancestors of the land<sup>69</sup>.

Unfortunately, between 1990 and 1993, the Mankon Fon's annual traditional festival did not take place<sup>70</sup> which led to disappointment of the Mankon indigenes and posed some questions, thus a challenge on leadership and power in Mankon. As a result, some decided to write to the Fon wanting to know why the festival did not take place. The Fon replied them stating 2 reasons. Firstly, the socio -political situation in Cameroon, especially within the Mankon Town, was not conducive for the festival to take place. The 1992 post-election disruptions which saw the destruction of a lot of royal property was the main factor. Secondly, the organization of this festival was usually very expensive. Unfortunately, indigenes of Mankon have, for quite some time, refused to contribute their own quota towards its organization. It is was therefore burdensome on him to solely sponsor the event<sup>71</sup>. This challenge was a setback of leadership in Mankon because the Fon was left to fail in his responsibilities as custodian of Mankon tradition. It was further aggravated when the Mankon indigenes withdrew from communal work.

Furthermore, the political upheavals in the 1990s left the mankon people completely adamant towards communal works. Communal work in Mankon that was a collective activity since Pre-colonial times came to a halt in the 1990s, most of the road networks of the kingdom had been dug and maintained thanks to assistance from indigenes of all the quarters<sup>72</sup>. Nevertheless, during the 1998 reorganisation of quarters and installation of new quarter councilors, the Fon used the forum to sensitize them of the need to return to the age-old practice. Despite their acceptance, it is evident that the response has been very timid. It became worst at the level of providing communal labour on the Fon's farm. The Fon became compelled to recruit workers for his farm with assistance provided by his immediate Royal family. Therefore, an age-old

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<sup>69</sup>Before the Traditional Annual Dance known as Abung-fo took place, a trip is made to Ala-nkyi palace shrine by the Fon to seek approval from the gods of Mankon. He either returns with a confirmation or a rejection message in respect to the holding of the festival that year.

<sup>70</sup>Ngwa Cyril, 66, palace guard, 20 August 2022, Mankon palace.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

<sup>72</sup>L. Ntse Musongong, "Traditional Governance in the Mankon Kingdom from Pre-colonial Times to 2009", p.264.

traditional practice whereby individual quarters organized and took turns to work on the Fon's farms came to an end in the 1990s<sup>73</sup>.

Another setback of leadership and power in Mankon involved a controversy over the construction of Government High School (GHS), Mankon. Following a Government Decree creating the Government High School in Mankon in 1989<sup>74</sup>, it was expected that the school would be located at the Alabukam Quarter. To the surprise and disappointment of the Alabukam people, it was moved to Ntahtitoh Quarter. Many believed that the Fon was the one who decided that GHS Mankon should be located in Ntahtitoh<sup>75</sup>. The reason advanced was that Ntahtitoh was centrally located in the rural area of Mankon. Consequently, they said that the Fon wanted to make the school accessible to all the children of Mankon. Since the people of Alabukam Quarter had made financial contributions for construction of the school in their quarter, they completely castigated the point of view. This resulted in their boycott of all Mankon palace activities like traditional annual dance festival<sup>76</sup>. However, the decision to set up the school at Ntahtitoh was not the Fon's but of administrative authorities in charge of schools mapping.

The Provincial Delegate for Education, Mathew Gwaforgbe, explains that the decision was based on strict administrative reasons<sup>77</sup>. Evidently, Ntahtitoh was a more central location in Mankon than Alabukam and because of administrative convenience the school had to be in that location. As a result, the Alabukam Quarter inhabitants have never stopped cursing the Fon for taking from them an educational structure which they expected to open up their quarter to modernity.

In addition, another clash to leadership and power in Mankon under Fon Angwafo III, was the sale of land. The Fon explains that: Land is central to everything and I call on all the Mankon people to use it judiciously and effectively. What we do or don't do with land is central to what we are able to achieve. We must use land in a way to ensure that we have land for the coming generation for the building, for their food needs, small stocks farms... Our land management is currently not the best. It has tended to create more landless citizens. The love for money and

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<sup>73</sup>L. Ntse Musongong, "Traditional Governance in the Mankon Kingdom from Pre-colonial Times to 2009", p.264.

<sup>74</sup>Nde Joseph, 79, contractor, 30 September 2022, Biyem assi, Yaoundé

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>W. Wilfred Nde, *FO S.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon*, p. 51.

<sup>77</sup>Anye Richard Fru, 63, Development Communicator, 26 September 2022, Ntingkah, Mankon.

riches by selling land has not been good for the population... Our future as a community is tightly linked to how successful we manage the land at our disposal as a scarce resource, which is why on September 30, 2003, I signed a royal act regulating the sale of Land in the kingdom of Mankon<sup>78</sup>.

Despite this position of the Fon who is the custodian of land, he continued to receive criticism with regard to land management in Mankon. Most of his acts have been interpreted to mean he is a "land grabber". Daniel Atia, a former member of the Federal House of parliament, in an open declaration said: can you imagine that the first thing he (Fon Angwafo III) did upon becoming Fon of Mankon was to confiscate my land at Ngomgham! I am talking of 19 hectares and this was in 1962<sup>79</sup>.

Atia goes further to explain how he took the Fon to the Ngemba Native Court for confiscating his land and won the case. Unfortunately, the Fon refused to respect the court's decision. Atia is one amongst other indigenes of Mankon who have openly expressed disillusionment with the Fon for grabbing their land. Considering the letters of those that complain of having lost their lands to the Fon were published by Simon Chi Ndeh in his book titled, *Betrayal*, there is reason to further ponder about the situation of land disputes in Mankon. Meanwhile, on his part the Fon states that he is the custodian of all Mankon land and those exploiting it should receive approval from the palace. To him, the manner in which Mankon indigenes are selling out land to outsiders was alarming. Nde justifies this with the following judgement: It became worst when the Mankon people with plots in the urban center especially along the Commercial Avenue started selling them at an alarming rate. The situation was further complicated by the Bamenda Urban Council decision to prescribe the type of houses that is storey buildings to be constructed along the main Commercial Avenue<sup>80</sup>.

The Mankon indigenes who could not afford to build as requested by the Bamenda Urban Council resorted to selling their land and moving into the rural areas of the Mankon Kingdom. Therefore, considering this to be a fundamental challenge to his administration, the Fon advised his people not to sell but to hire out their land. Those that persisted with selling were levied fines

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<sup>78</sup>Fon Angwafo III, *Royalty and Politics*, p. 59-68.

<sup>79</sup>S. Chi Nde, *Betrayal*, p.94.

<sup>80</sup>W. Wankah Nde, *FOS.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon*, p. 43.

by the Mankon Traditional Council (MTC)<sup>81</sup>. Some of these fines involved seizure of the land with just a token compensation made to the buyer. It is believed that this was the situation in which individuals like D.A. Atia and others found themselves.

#### **4-2 The Persistence of Leadership and Power**

Despite the numerous and diverse challenge aforementioned, the system of Leadership and Power has never been wiped away. Kwame Boafo Arthur that; Contrary to the expectations of many theorists, modernization school, chieftaincy as an institution survived various political challenges in the 19th and 20th centuries. Though discredited by events that unfolded in many developing countries where chieftaincy is still revered, modernization theorists were convinced that chieftaincy structures wither away with time.<sup>82</sup>. Therefore, it is evident from the failure of the hard position taken by modernization theorists that leadership and power or traditional governance, as an identity of the African, has its place. Certainly, it is rooted in the people's way of life and can only be handled but not stopped from prevailing despite the challenges.

In Cameroon, despite the very difficult 1977 legislation under which leadership and power survived, it was still a major way of life of the people. A number of factors accounted for this persistence of Leadership and Power administration in Mankon. Firstly, its adaptability, adjustability, and elasticity may account for its strength to survive in various political terrains most of which were adversarial and hostile<sup>83</sup>. This means that despite the rapid social changes, kings continue to retain political significance by projecting themselves as the custodian of treasured local values. At the helm of leadership and power in Cameroon recently, is found some personalities who were seated at top government offices. After their retirement from government, they turned to embrace the chieftaincy titles. For example, Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya, Sultan of the Bamoums, was a long serving minister who ended in government as the Minister of Territorial Administration; Colonel Anaghe, Fon of Ngie kingdom, was once a military Colonel in Cameroon.

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<sup>81</sup>W. Wankah Nde, *FOS.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon*, p. 43.

<sup>82</sup>A.K. Boafo, "Chieftaincy in Ghana: Challenges and Prospects in the 21st Century in Africa and Asia Studies" (Volume 2, no. 2. 2003), p.125.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

The second is the flexibility of the institutions of traditional governance and its ability to adapt to changing political order of the post-colonial era has been a major factor for its persistence.<sup>84</sup> Despite the failure of the African state to bring about Democracy and development where the state has been plagued by greedy and violet political elite in and out of Africa, leadership and power has re-emerged as an important vehicle in indigenious political expression. If not becoming chief of a kingdom after their retirement as earlier explained, most top officials returned to their kingdoms for post like even a simple "Messenger" known in the North West region as Ntumfo. Interestingly in the 1990s it was washed and propagated by some individuals like Barrister Niko Halle to henceforth become more meaningful. Some top government officials even went down to their kingdoms to request to become the Fon's messenger<sup>85</sup>. In 1985, the Head of State was crowned as Fon of Fons by the Fons of the North West Region, wherein, he received the title with much gratification. This seeks to explain that the role of traditional authorities is highly recognized by many folks in Cameroon and can not be easily eroded. Haven learnt from the North West Fons, the chiefs of the South West Region of Cameroon decided to crown the Head of State, Num-ngui<sup>86</sup>. A school of thought holds that the title was conferred on the President following his request. If that was the case, then it is clear that leadership and power will hardly ever follow the direction long anticipated by proponents of the modernization theory.

Lastly, the acceptance of leadership and power is due to the multiplicity of administration and political problems most African states have been facing. It is argued that as a result of these problems, the traditional realm continues to expand or maintain its authority to the detriment of the modern state apparatus. Mamood Mamdani offers one of the difficult and influential critiques of traditional leaders. He describes them as the institutional embodiment of "decentralized despotism" and argued that the colonial state captured traditional authorities by designating them as agents of indirect rule in rural Africa<sup>87</sup>. In do doing, it made chiefs upwardly accountable to the colonial state, distancing them from rural communities and eliminating any vestiges of local

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<sup>84</sup> A.K. Boafo, "Chieftaincy in Ghana: Challenges and Prospects in the 21st Century in Africa and Asia Studies" (Volume 2, no. 2. 2003), p.126.

<sup>85</sup> K. Fokum, 'Royal Beggars' p.14.

<sup>86</sup> Num-ngui was the tittle that was given to President Paul Biya in 2011 during the festivities of the Agro Pastoral show that was held in Bellows.

<sup>87</sup> M. Mamdani, *Citizens and Subjects: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p.23.

legitimacy they may once have enjoyed. To Mamdani the traditional leaders were nothing without the state and the authority it bestows<sup>88</sup>.

Furthermore, Carolyn Logan postulated that chiefly persistence is primarily rooted in state weakness. Most importantly, chiefs continue to control land and other resources in a context of weak local governments that allow them to maintain their authority<sup>89</sup>. Hence, the persistence of Leadership and Power is rooted in the institutions of popular legitimacy. A number of factors contribute to sustaining chief's popular legitimacy; their proximity and intimate familiarity with their community, traditional authorities also function according to norms and rules, both formal and often informal, with which people are deeply familiar. Most importantly, the persistence of Leadership and Power has been proven from intense surveys conducted in Africa as a strong desire of the majority of the people.

Also, leadership and power in Africa has remained persistence because, while in the early period chiefs were illiterate, in recent times most of them are literate. In this way, most communities go looking for chiefs that can lobby politicians, governments and non-governmental organizations for developing projects. This demand has thus placed traditional governance at the top of educated elites in society. It is therefore these modern elite chiefs who are becoming more instrumental in creating the fluidity between the traditional and the modern sectors. The process has provoked the existence of the "two publics" - one traditional and the other modern. In this regard, they are given access to their level in search for political gains. Therefore, traditional governance in the post-colonial period represents not only an important political arena within state politics but also one which is characterized by local interests, historical reinterpretations and cultural creativity. In the case of Cameroon, there is an issue of "simultaneously modernizing their traditions and traditionalizing their modernity"<sup>90</sup> as a copyright of what has been going on in Ghana. Unfortunately, there is a serious need for a review of the 1977 chieftaincy laws of Cameroon, the creation of a House of Chiefs, amongst other salient reforms,

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<sup>88</sup> C. Logan, "The Roots of Resilience: Exploring Popular Support for African Traditional Authorities in Africa Affairs", 112/448, in <http://afra.oxfordjournals.org/> (accessed October 5, 2022), p.356.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p. 357.

<sup>90</sup> F.B. Njamjoh, "Our Tradition are Modern, our Modernities Traditional: Chieftaincy and Democracy in Contemporary Cameroon and Botswana. *Modern Africa: Politics, History and Society*, 2 (2), 2014, p.24.

in order to maintain leadership and power in its most proper context considering that modernization has affected it grateful.

The chapter has examined the challenges of Leadership and Power Administration in Mankon and its impacts. The fading powers of the Fon, the challenges faced by traditional governance since the Germans and British colonial periods, the succession struggle and the accession to the throne, the partisan political role of Fon Angwafo III which led to his victimization and alot of criticisms from his people. Most importantly the effects of the 1992 presidential election and its toll on the kingdom of Mankon, led to the economic and socio-cultural challenges to leadership and power. It is important to note that some of these challenges were triggered by circumstances beyond the control of the Mankon traditional leaders, while some were simply a product of their inability to adapt to change. It concludes by discussing the persistence of leadership and power administration in Mankon despite the numerous challenges. Adaptability, Flexibility, and acceptance due to the multiplicity of administration were examined as methods to preserve leadership and power administration in Mankon.



## GENERAL CONCLUSION

This work titled "The kingdom of Mankon: Leadership Administration and Power Dynamism from 1902 to 2016" set out the central objective to examine the changes of power administration in Mankon and how the change affected the position of the Fon and other traditional institutions in Mankon. It also had as specific objective to; situate the geo-historical setting of Mankon and how it affected leadership and power administration in Mankon, to examine leadership and power administration in Mankon prior to colonial encounter, evaluate leadership and power administration in Mankon during the colonial and the post-colonial era and lastly to access the impacts of the changes of leadership and power administration in the Mankon society. The work was divided into four chapters with each chapter addressing a specific objective.

Chapter one situated the studying area its ecological and human context. The objective was to see how human behavior from the earliest settlements was influenced by geography and how human activities helped to shape the indigenous thinking and the knowledge pattern of the Mankon people. The geographical background besides discussing the location, relief, climate, drainage, and vegetation, it equally provided a solid background upon which leadership and power administration in Mankon rested upon.

The background knowledge of Mankon brought to light important historical information on how the Mankon Kingdom was founded and how it developed. It also demonstrated that the kingdom was characterized by different economic, political, social and cultural activities which influenced the day to day lives of the inhabitants. The different aspects of natural and human setting therefore defined leadership and power administration in Mankon.

Chapter two had the focus of examining how power administration was tailored in Mankon before the German annexation of 1884. The chapter found out that power was initially designed to suit the daily realities of the Mankon people. It was seen in the chapter that the Fon was at the apex of power and was regarded as a figure sent by the gods of the land to lead the people with unquestionable powers. The Fon governed the kingdom through traditional institutions with the kwifon as the leading traditional institution.

Chapter three evaluated the changes in leadership and power administration in Mankon during the Germans, British reigns in Mankon and at independence. It was discovered in the chapter that the Germans who colonized Cameroon did not have the same notion about power administration with the Fon of Mankon and his traditional institutions. Never the less the Germans collaborated with the Fon of Mankon and his traditional institutions. Power administration in Mankon during the period of the Germans no longer depended solely on the views of the Fon and his traditional representatives because the Germans turned to interfere with the Mankon administration in terms of leadership. The chapter equally discussed power administration in Mankon during the mandate and found out that the British maintained had reshaped some traditional institutions during the mandate and trusteeship periods. Lastly the chapter examined leadership and power administration in Mankon after independence of Cameroon. It was realized that there were frequent conflicts involved in Mankon traditional institutions and the institutions of the Republic of Cameroon.

Chapter four lastly focused on the challenges and impacts of leadership and power administration in Mankon during the different phases. The chapter argued that the changing phase of leadership and power administration in Mankon has placed the Fon at a position where his powers were limited, traditional authorities which initially played active political roles like the kwifon were reduced to play socio-cultural roles.

From the findings gathered from all the chapters of this work, one can conclude without any fear of contradiction that leadership and power administration in Mankon was tailored to reflect daily realities of the Kingdom. These realities were defined by the relationship between natural and human factors. The Fon was seen as a supreme leader bestowed with physical and spiritual powers to influence and command the activities of the Mankon people. The Fon resided at the palace which was the center where power was disseminated to the periphery where there were quarter heads at quarter level.

The essence for a smooth functioning of the Kingdom necessitated the creation of traditional institutions. The kwifon was Paramount over all the institutions in Mankon and was headed by men of distinguish social and moral standing who mastered the art of traditional governance with unquestionable competence. Kwifo tensu played the role in taking decisions and presenting to

the Fon for approval and also in charge of making announcements. It therefore serves as the public relations arm of government. The decisions of the Fon and kwifo were enforced by militias like the manjong and traditional priests whenever they was need.

However, the colonization of Cameroon by Germany which brought diverse and far reaching implications never spared the traditional administration in Mankon. The Mankon-German war of 1891 to 1905 launched the continual evolution of leadership and power in Mankon. The powers of the traditional government in Mankon became a target of the German colonial administration which altered it to suit the German colonial agenda. The First World War which started in 1914, saw Anglo-French and Belgian forces defeating the Germans in Cameroon by 1916. This led to the British and French partition of Cameroon. Mankon became part of British Southern Cameroons and the British and their colonial policies triggered the introduction of another phase of leadership and power administration in Mankon. The British era was further compounded by the return of ex service men and the reintroduction of Christianity which had an influence on Mankon traditional administration in the aspects of modernity which had an effect on culture and tradition.

The traditional administration in Mankon continued the struggle to maintain its authority over the Mankon kingdom in 1961 when British Southern Cameroons gained independence by joining the Republic of Cameroon to create the Federal Republic of Cameroon. At this point, Mankon traditional administration witnessed another phase of leadership and power administration. The Fon and his traditional government had to work under policies that suited the agenda of the Federal Republic of Cameroon and was answerable to the Divisional Officer (D.O) and finally the Prime Minister, the authority of the Fon and his traditional representatives increasingly became a subject of interrogation from many quarters. The outcome was projected by challenges which had far reaching consequences in the kingdom. The challenges and impacts only helped to authenticate our argument that colonialism and its tenets launched the beginning of the changing phase of leadership and power administration which continued even after the post colonial era in Cameroon.

It can be concluded that at the end of the research, the following results were were gotten, the geo-historical background of the Mankon people was established as seen in chapter one. It was

seen that, Mankon was situated on a defined location and background, illustrated using maps. As a result of this study, it was also realized that the history of the Mankon people was characterized by several migratory trends. In chapter two of the work it was discovered that Mankon had some political institutions and political offices of the Fon like the kwifo, Nganfo, Mafo and Manjong. It was equally seen that some of the objects of the Mankon museum signified power and authority as some objects were part of the inheritance from one Fon to the other.

Also as an outcome of the research, the various factors that led to the changing phase of leadership and power in the kingdom of Mankon were sought out and discussed, which were the changes brought by the Germans, British and it was realized that the changes were not only caused by the British administration but also by the ingenes of Mankon like the case of Fruba who went against the culture and tradition of the land by declaring himself as Fon in the reign of the Fon Ndefru II who was down as a result of some illnesses. This act of betrayal carried out by Fruba, led to conflict in Mankon and it caused some changes in leadership and power in the kingdom as it greatly reduced the powers of Fon Ndefru II.

In the last part of the work, the challenges and impacts of leadership administration and power dynamism in Mankon were investigated. Here it was discovered that, some of the challenges were beyond the control of the Fons while some were as a result of the colonial administration and some came as struggles and disputes among the Mankon people. It was in line with this that the research work ended by discussing the persistence of leadership administration in Mankon as a means to preserve leadership and power by adaptability, flexibility and acceptance due to the multiplicity of administration.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRES

1. Where is the geographical location of the Mankon kingdom in the North West Region of Cameroon?
2. What is the history of the Mankon people?
3. How was the migration trend of the people of Mankon and their earliest settlements?
4. When was the kingdom of Mankon founded?
5. Who was the Fon in the Mankon kingdom?
6. What is the administrative set in the Mankon kingdom?
7. How was succession and enthronement of Fons carried out in Mankon?
8. What are the significances of the arts objects in the Mankon palace museum in relation to leadership administration and power in Mankon?
9. How did leadership and power changed over time in the kingdom of Mankon?
10. Why did the kingdom of Mankon experienced different systems of leadership in regards to the presence of the Europeans?
11. How did the Fons of Mankon lead the people before the coming and influences of the colonial masters?
12. What were the impacts of the German and British rule in the Mankon kingdom?
13. How was leadership administration and powers of the Fons of Mankon after Independence of Cameroon?
14. What were the challenges of leadership administration and power dynamism in the Mankon kingdom?
15. Why did the Mankon kingdom faced some challenges in leadership?
16. Why did some of the Fons in Mankon faced challenges more than others in their administration?
17. How did leadership and power continue to survive in the Mankon kingdom despite the numerous challenges faced by the Fons ?
18. Why did leadership administration persist in Mankon?

**APPENDIX 2: THE INAUGURATION OF MANKON MUSEUM**

**A ROYAL ADDRESS DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE MANKON MUSEUM ON THE 28<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF JANUARY 2006 IN THE MANKON PALACE, AND PRESENTED BY MR. MUMBARI JOSEPH FORCHU (PRESIDENT - GENERAL OF THE MANKON CULTURAL AND DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION.)**

I feel particularly honoured on this historic day for Mankon Fondom to have to stand in such a privileged position and deliver a speech to important guests of your caliber. I wish first of all to seize this opportunity to welcome you all to this palace of the people of Mankon, which is equally a royal repository of love, peace and order. Your presence here today gives an added touch of recognition of a dream come true. I do treasure and appreciate profoundly the fact that most of you who have honoured our invitation and are here with us today have shelved other exacting and compelling, both personal and official duties in order to grace this outstanding event in the history of this fondom with your personal presence. Thank you dearly for your concern. Before I proceed, let us rise and observe a minute's silence in honour of all those who enthusiastically threw their weight, energy, and resources behind this project, but as fate would have it, have been called to the world beyond.

Before I come to the historicity of this dream, which the present Fon of Mankon, His royal Highness, Fon S.A.N. Angwafo III, shared with his people, let us at stage of this speech remind ourselves of the importance of a MUSEUM.

The Cultural and artistic patrimony of Cameroon is enormous. In the North West Province, for example, there exist innu-

merable object which individuals and traditional kingdoms conserve jealously and exhibit only during ritual feasts and great ceremonies. Most of these cultural objects are dispersed all over the territory, kept inside social and traditional religious areas, conserved and restored in a manner often precarious, in the absence of any initiative for the compilation of an inventory of conservation and restoration. Today these objects are found in places, which offer little or no security and conservation. And this is where the dream of the Fon of Mankon came as early as 1963. The records show correspondences between the Fon of Mankon and the Senior District Officer for Bamenda Division in which the Fon of Mankon agreed to offer a vast parcel of Mankon Native Land to the Government of West Cameroon as his people's contribution to the erection of a National Museum. And although architectural plans were drawn and even accepted by Fon Angwafo III, the whole project died, it would appear on this same drawing board.

It should be noted that there did exist, after all, a miniature National Museum in Bamenda division and this was set up very early in 1954 in the then Mankon Community Hall which today houses the British/Bamenda Urban Council Library. Some of the early workers included one Pa Asongwe, Rt. Honourable Simon Achidi Achu and Mr. Simon Ade Anye. Built as a museum and library, this small building housed fantastic objects, which portrayed the arts and crafts of the people of the North West Province. As a result of inadvertence, egotism and lack of good will, these artifacts mysteriously disappeared from the museum one after the other with the resultant closure of the same.

With the demise of this small museum and the failure to concretize West Cameroon Government's intention to erect a museum, especially after the hopeful barrage of correspondences between the Senior District Officer for Bamenda Division and the Fon of Mankon, the future looked bleak. Being the sort of forward looking person that Fon S.A.N. Angwafo III is, he under-

took another course of action, namely, a personal and courageous collection of artifacts, with the hope, yes a slim hope, that one day, a museum will be born, at least in Mankon.

Ladies and Gentlemen, that child you see over there, named, THE MANKON MUSEUM, has as its *maternity* L'INSTITUT DE FORMATION ARTISTIQUE DE MBALMAYO, abbreviated (IFA) and a top rated Italian gynecologist, an NGO, Centro Orientamento Educative abbreviated (COE) which was recognized in Cameroon under Order No. 0019/A/MINAT/DAP/SDLP/SAC of 2 January 1995. It all began when IFA in Mbalmayo launched its first ever brochure titled "The Treasure of the Mankon Fondom – the Cultural objects of the Royal Palace". Writing to the Fon of Mankon on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2000, on behalf of the Italian NGO code named COE. Mme Bianca Triaca said, among other things, and I quote: "We shall be happy to present it to you at the end of the printing. We hope that this will help the youths to know their culture, the arts of their Fondom and that it will encourage them to study, safeguard and promote their patrimony". "We have the conviction", she continues, "that a rich patrimony is very important in determining the cultural identity of a people and it could also play important role in the economic development of a country".

It was in this same letter that the breaking news was made when she wrote: "Convinced of the above, we are preparing a project which we shall present to you hi the very near future."

And in this connection, Ladies and Gentlemen, in this project, five Fondoms had to be chosen from the West and North West "grassland" a region – an area where, according to the Italian NGO, although the artistic patrimony is very rich, it faces the danger of dispersion, decay and outright disappearance. The project entailed the following from IFA:

1. The organization of training sessions at it's Headquarters in Mbalmayo for the attention of local conservator of artistic and



cultural Patrimony; 2). Equipping and construction areas where the project shall be planted so as to facilitate the collection of artistic works and local animation, for example concerts, exposition, spectacles, dances etc., and 3) One year economic and technical upkeep of the activities of small museums.

The criteria for the selection of the five fondoms included:

1. The presence of a good number of artistic works, and
2. The availability of other private artistic works that the owners are willing to open their doors for studies and to the public.

Four youths holders of G.C.E 'A' Levels or BAC had to be chosen from each of the 5 Fondoms and had to be trained by Cameroonian and Italian experts for a period of two years in IFA based in Mbalmayo. The first programme turned on Theory and the second year was practical in the fields of the respective Fondoms.

You can imagine for yourselves what went through the mind of Fon S.A.N Angwafo III, when at the end of the letter to him by Mme Bianca Triaca, she wrote and I quote: "If then you think that your Fondom can benefit from the above project and that the youths of your village can profit and get a better job in the frame work of this project, if you accept that the above described project can take place in your Fondom, you could address to us a letter indicating your acceptance". Surprisingly, she went ahead to state that, and I quote: "I have proposed your Fondom as one of the targets of the project. This has been motivated by the collaboration not only from you but also from Mr. Fongang Alphonsus Ndenge and those in the Royal Court during my research for the brochure, "The Treasure of the Fondom of Mankon-the cultural objects of the palace" which I hope I will soon present to you. Your response is very important". Yes, Ladies and Gentlemen, between 1960, when the Fon of Mankon dreamt of a Museum, to December 2000, (a span of 40 years) when this Italian NGO reached out this hand of cultural development, this hand of co-operation, this hand of friendship, one can only point to a certain truism, namely that patience is

the price many a man had paid for success.

His Royal Highness, Fon Angwafo III, S.A.N of Mankon on behalf of the Mankon people stands here to state without the slightest iota of hesitation that your patience, your steadfastness had made us to be part of this golden handshake from the Italian NGO, CENTRO ORIENTAMENTO EDUCATIVO (COE).

The Mankon people, therefore pledge, and this pledge is total and colossal, that we shall keep to the letter of the protocol agreement signed between COE and the Fondom of Mankon and regret any previous inconveniences caused especially to Madame BIANCA TRIACA to whom we want to record a very sincere message of thanks for all her effort and patience. As mentioned above, the said protocol agreement spelt out that:-

- a) COE was to train four curators
- b) Through the curators and the coordinators COE was expected to collect and make an inventory of all cultural objects, and equally study, document and exhibit them in the permanent exhibition room.
- c) Furnish the offices
- d) Publish the catalogue of the museum.

We wish to acknowledge at this juncture with reserved gratitude that all the above-cited conditions were duly fulfilled. On the other hand, Mankon had the obligation to:

- 1) Put up the Museum building and also provide the artifacts therein.
- 2) - Eventually take over the museum and run it.

Initially roofing was to be provided by Mankon, but in view of the heavy work burden and its financial constraints on the population. C.O.E. went an extra mile to provide zinc for the roof, an act of which we remain very highly appreciative.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the imposing museum structure which you see, at the upper floor, consists of:

- a) A spacious exhibition room,
- b) Souvenir shop,
- c) Ticket room
- d) Two offices,
- e) An archives room,
- f) A store

At the basement you have:

- 1) A conference hall,
- 2) A video room,
- 3) A library
- 4) A laboratory and provision for reserved artifacts.

The realization of this giant project, which is the symbol of pride and traditional authority of the Mankon people has been financed by the indigenes of the Fondom in and out of Mankon and

Cost 200.000.000frs CFA.

We express sincere thanks to friends of this great Fondom within the province and the nation at large for any moral, material and financial contribution towards its realization also. Although much has been put in as reflected by this presentation, sa lot more needs to be done for the accomplishment of its foil potentials. Much assistance therefore, is still needed both from the indigenes and friends of this Fondom. Moreover it is important to not here that an important piece of work of this magnitude cannot be void of some teething hitches. Initially four curators (two gentlemen and two ladies) were trained at Mbalmayo. Unfortunately on of the gentleman has died. All the ladies got married and they went away with their husbands. Currently we are left only with one gentleman and one of the married ladies to shoulder the demanding responsibilities earlier meant for four curators. A museum shop would be an imperative accompanying asset to the museum. We hope to tackle this vital issue as soon as possible. Right now we are grappling with the pre-occupation of providing enough chairs and tables for the video and conference rooms.

We went at this juncture to sincerely than the Italian Government representing here by her ambassador for this wonderful contribution towards our development. We pray that the ambassador will open up many more channels from which we shall continue to benefit. Like Oliver Twist we would not be ashamed of asking for more. This act of the Italian NGO, C.O.E., by ricochet, goes a long way to expose the excellent diplomatic relations that our country Cameroon enjoys with Italy, a Country of great Artist and Designers.

Since the world has become a small global village a modern information and communication network is absolutely indispensable for the local exploitation and the marketing of the Museum to the outside world. This will require the following.

1. A telephone link.
2. An internet facility
3. Computers, printers; scanners, photocopier and fax machines for the day-to-day secretariat duties.
4. Training of experts in museum management, computer information experts and secretaries, bookkeeper or Accountant etc.

However we cannot end this address without continuing to thank Mme Bianca Triaca, an Official of the Italian NGO (Centre Orientation Educative) code named COE for the provision of a web site which is an indispensable tool for national and international publicity of the Museum, and for this you can consult [www.museumcan.org](http://www.museumcan.org). Glowing tribute equally goes to Prof. Jean Paul Notue and other resource persons including the renowned research institutions that have in one way or the other projected the image of this fendom and the Museum to the international community through their various works and publications.

May the good Lord who guided you here equally take you back safely to your respective homes and stations. Finally the Mankon people say, Thank you. The North-West people say, Thank you. Well all say, Thank you.

- Long Live the Fendom of Mankon.
- Long Live Centro Orientamento Educative (COE)
- Long Live International Co-operation.
- Long Live Cameroon.

**Source:** W. Wankah Nde, *FO S.A.N. Angwafo III of Mankon*, p.104-110.

### APPENDIX 3: QUARTERS IN MANKON

1. Akumlam
2. Atuafon
3. Alatah
4. Alabukam
5. Alabukom
6. Alatakoh
7. Alakoro
8. Alankie
9. Asongkah
10. Ndzong
11. Alamandom
12. Alafrumbi
13. Alasuatom
14. Alatsu
15. Ntangien
16. Matsam
17. Atualakom
18. Bagmande
19. Ntingkag
20. Bagbanong
21. Atuakom
22. Mbomasa
23. Atuazire
24. AZIRE "A"
25. Azire "B"
26. Kukvung
27. Maso
28. Ngulung
29. Matsom
30. Lower Ngomgham
31. Musang
32. Muwatsu
33. Alamatu
34. Ndzumambueh
35. Nitob 1
36. Nitob 2
37. Nitob 3
38. Nitob 4
39. Ntamafe
40. Ntumbong 1
41. Ntumbong 2
42. Ntahbukoh
43. Ntambag 1
44. Ntambag 2
45. Ntambag 3
46. Ntambeng
47. Ndzumafon

TRADITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE - CUM JUDICIAL SET UP OF MANKON FONDOM		
UNIT	INDICATOR	HEAD OF AUTHORITY
REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON		REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
FONDOM (ALA'AH)		FO MANKON
CLAN (ATSEY)		CLAN HEAD (TA-TSEY)
QUARTER (NUIKVU)		QUARTER HEAD (TA-NUIKVU)
COMPOUND (NDZWU)		COMPOUND HEAD (TA-NDZWU)
FAMILY (NGWEUG)		FAMILY HEAD (TARUI)

48. Ntakimbari
49. Ntamulung 1
50. Ntamulung 2
51. Ntankah
52. Mulang
53. Chinde
54. Ntatra
55. Ntarinkon 1
56. Ntarinkon 2
57. Ntsuabuh
58. Mukwebuh
59. Akokikang
60. Mbingfibie
61. Alakuma

Source: Mankon Travellers' Guide, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, p.7

## APPENDIX 4: AUTHORISATION

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

PAIX-TRAVAIL-PATRIE

\*\*\*\*\*

UNIVERSITÉ DE YAOUNDÉ I

\*\*\*\*\*

FACULTE DES ARTS, LETTRES ET  
SCIENCES HUMAINES

\*\*\*\*\*

DEPARTEMENT D'HISTOIRE

\*\*\*\*\*



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

PEACE-WORK-FATHERLAND

\*\*\*\*\*

THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

\*\*\*\*\*

FACULTY OF ARTS, LETTERS AND  
SOCIAL SCIENCES

\*\*\*\*\*

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

\*\*\*\*\*

Siège : Bâtiment Annexe FALSH-UYI, à côté AUF

### ATTESTATION DE RECHERCHE

Je soussigné, Professeur **BOKAGNE BETOBO Edouard**, Chef de Département d'Histoire de la Faculté des Arts, Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université de Yaoundé I, atteste que l'étudiante **SWIRRI Sylvia**, matricule **201112** est inscrite en Master II dans le dit Département, option Histoire des relations internationales. Elle mène, sous la direction du **Pr. Joel MEYOLO** (*Maître de Conférences*), une recherche universitaire sur le thème : « *Mankon fondom : leadership and power, (1980-2006)* ».

Nous la recommandons aux responsables des administrations, des centres de documentations, d'archives et toutes autres institutions nationales ou internationales, en vue de lui faciliter la recherche.

En foi de quoi, la présente autorisation lui est délivrée pour servir et valoir ce que de droit.

Fait à Yaoundé le... 07. FEV. 2022.

Le Chef de Département



*Bokagne Betobo Edouard*  
Maître de Conférences

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1	Ade Mishimbo	70	Trader	16 <sup>th</sup> March 2022, Mankon
2	Angu Theophilus	69	Teacher	28 <sup>th</sup> April 2022, Ntingkag Bamenda
3	Angwafo Cecelia	68	Teacher	16 <sup>th</sup> April 2022, Mankon
4	Anye Richard Fru	63	Development Communicator	26 <sup>th</sup> September 2022, Ntingkah
5	Awa Daniel	70	Retired Teacher	21 <sup>st</sup> May2022, Azire Mankon Bamenda
6	Aya Henry	73	Retired Teacher	10 <sup>th</sup> September 2022, Yaounde
7	Che George	60	Farmer	02 August 2022, Mile 8 Mankon
8	Cho Jonas Che	53	Worker in the palace	16 <sup>th</sup> March 2022, Mankon palace
9	Fobuzong Paul	80	Quarter Head	16 <sup>th</sup> April 2022, Mankon palace
10	Fon Angwafo IV	50	Traditional ruler	20 <sup>th</sup> August 2022, Mankon palace
11	Fru Denise	72	Traditional councilor	30 <sup>th</sup> March 2022, Mankon palace
12	Fru Peter	60	Worker in the Mankon museum	18 <sup>th</sup> May 2022, Mankon palace
13	Fru Thaddeus	78	Mankon councilor	30 <sup>th</sup> August 2022, Mankon Bamenda
14	Mambo Esther	66	Trader	16 <sup>th</sup> March 2022, Mankon Bamenda
15	Manka Susan	67	Worker in the Mankon Palace	20 <sup>th</sup> March 2022, Mankon Bamenda
16	Mishimbo	64	Vice Secretary of the Mankon	27 <sup>th</sup> March 2022, Mulang street four

	Julius Nde		Traditional Council	
17	Nanga Edith	62	Farmer	12 <sup>th</sup> March 2022, Nitob Bamenda
18	Nchang Julie	67	Farmer	16 <sup>th</sup> March 2022, Musang Bamenda
19	Nde Joseph	79	Contractor	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2022, Biyem-assi, Yaounde
20	Ndenge Fongang	58	Teacher	28 <sup>th</sup> April 2022, Ntingkag
21	Ndoh Roland	68	Blacksmith	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2022, Ntarikon
22	Ngang Ettien	72	Retired Teacher	22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2022, Mankon Bamenda
23	Ngang Jackson	40	Traditional Councilor	8 <sup>th</sup> March 2022, Ntambeng
24	Ngwa Cyril	66	Palace guard	20 <sup>th</sup> August 2022, Mankon Palace
25	Nji Denis Fru	65	Councillor	2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2022, Mankon Bamenda
26	Ntomnifor Richard Fru	63	Secretary General of the Mankon Traditional Council	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2022, Mankon Bamenda
27	Tabufor Richmond	51	Farmer	4 <sup>th</sup> April 2022, Mile 8 Mankon
28	Sirri Magaret	72	Farmer	04 <sup>th</sup> April 2022, Mile 7 Mankon
29	Titandong Valentine	61	Quarter Head	28 <sup>th</sup> April 2022, Ntingkag

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>DEDICATION.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>LISTS OF ABBREVIATION AND ANCRONYMS .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>GLOSSARY.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>LISTS ILLUSTRATIONS .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LISTS OF APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>RESUME .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Context of Study .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Conceptual Consideration .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Theoretical Framework.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Objectives of Study .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Significance of Study.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Scope and Delimitation .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Literature Review .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Statement of Problem.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Sources and Methodology .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Problems Encountered.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Organization of Work.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND HUMAN SETTING OF MANKON .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>1-1 Geographical location of Mankon.....</b>	<b>19</b>
1-1-1 The origin of the word "Mankon".....	19
1-1-2 Geograpical Background.....	19
1-1-3 Geographical Setting .....	20
1-1-4 Relief .....	24
1-1-5 Climate .....	24
1-1-6 Drainage .....	25
1-1-7 Vegetation .....	25

<b>1-2 Historical Setting of the Mankon kingdom.</b> .....	26
1-2-1 Human Activities in Mankon. ....	29
1-2-2 Social Aspects .....	35
1-2-3 Traditional Religion .....	36
1-2-4 Traditional ritual in Mankon: From Ala'nkyi to Samni .....	37
1-2-5 A brief history of Ala'nkyi in Mankon. ....	38
1-2-6 The Mankon Confederacy. ....	38
1-2-7 The Mankon Language.....	39
<b>CHAPTER 2: LEADERSHIP AND POWER ADMINISTRATION IN MANKON AT ITS ORIGINAL FORM.</b> .....	41
<b>2-1 The Mankon palace (ntoh)</b> .....	41
2-1-1 The Fon .....	43
2-1-2 Kwifo.....	50
2-1-3. V The Manjong: Ndamukong .....	53
2-1-4 Ngangfo.....	53
2-1-5 Mafo .....	54
2-1-6 Nda Ala'a.....	54
2-1-7 Quarter and Village Councils .....	54
2-1-8 The Family .....	55
2-1-9 The Militia.....	55
2-1-10 Judiciary (Nkyiete Abien) .....	56
<b>2-2 Arts and Power in Mankon.</b> .....	58
2-2-1 The Mankon Museum. ....	58
2-2-2 Objects and their significance .....	60
2-2-3 Royal beaded stool ( <i>aboeru munyi</i> ) .....	60
2-2-4 Ndop ritual costume ( <i>akoso komngang</i> ).....	61
2-2-5 A bundle of ceremonial Spears ( <i>mukongmo ala</i> ) .....	62
2-2-6 Royal fly-whisk ( <i>lunga</i> ) .....	64
2-2-7 The leopard belt ( <i>ngob afungo</i> ) .....	65
2-2-8 Commemorative statue of mafo Mankah Theresia Angwafo III .....	66
2-2-9 King's ritual cap ( <i>usafo</i> ) .....	67

2-2-10 A suit of armor ( <i>ako' sofo</i> ) .....	67
<b>CHAPTER 3: THE CHANGING PHASE OF LEADERSHIP AND POWER IN THE KINGDOM OF MANKON</b> .....	<b>71</b>
<b>3-1 Changes in Leadership and Power in Mankon during the German colonial period</b> .....	<b>71</b>
<b>3-2 Leadership and Power in Mankon during the British Period, 1916 to 1961</b> .....	<b>76</b>
<b>3-3 Leadership and Power in Mankon after Independence</b> . ....	<b>85</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4: CHALLENGES AND IMPACTS OF LEADERSHIP ADMINISTRATION AND POWER DYNAMISM IN MANKON</b> .....	<b>92</b>
<b>4-1 Challenges of leadership and power administration in Mankon</b> .....	<b>92</b>
4-1-1 Drawbacks of the British system of indirect rule on the leadership in Mankon, 1923 to 1961. ....	92
4-1-2 Challenges to Leadership and Power faced by Fon Angwafo III. ....	94
4-1-3 The 1992 Presidential Elections and its toll on the Mankon Leadership and Power Administration. ....	99
4-1-4 The Intergration of Malcontents in Mankon in 1947. ....	101
4-1-5 Political opponents of Fon Angwafo III.....	102
4-1-6 Succession Struggle and the Accession to the Throne, 1959.....	103
4-1-7 The Fragility of North West Fon's union. ....	106
4-1-8 Challenges posed by the 1977 Chieftaincy Laws.....	107
4-1-9 Economic and socio-cultural challenges of leadership and power in the mankon kingdom. ....	110
<b>4-2 The Persistence of Leadership and Power</b> .....	<b>115</b>
<b>GENERAL CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>119</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>123</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>133</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>140</b>