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*UNITE DE RECHERCHE ET DE  
FORMATION DOCTORALE EN SCIENCES  
HUMAINES ET SOCIALES*  
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## Department of History

# THE HISTORICAL STUDY OF VICTORIA “TOWN” IN CAMEROON (1858-1982)

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Master of Arts (M.A) degree in HISTORY

**Speciality: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY**

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## **WARNING**

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## DEDICATION

To my Mother, Mrs Ngonak Koffi Dora

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## ABSTRACT

This research titled “The Historical Study of Victoria “Town” in Cameroon (1858-1982)”, employing a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods along with a diachronic approach, the study draws upon primary and secondary sources to analyse the town's transformation over time. Primary sources, including documents from the Archives and information gathered from the people interviewed, provided invaluable insights into Victoria's history. Secondary sources, such as published works and iconographic materials, supplemented the analysis, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the town's development. Using a diachronic approach, the research examines changes and developments in Victoria's structural, social, and economic landscape over the study period. From its origins to the arrival of the Baptist missionaries seeking religious freedom, Victoria evolved into a vibrant hub of economic, social, and cultural activities. The town attracted migrants from diverse backgrounds, contributing to its rich cultural fabric and economic growth. During different periods of colonial rule, including German colonization and subsequent international governance under the League of Nations and the United Nations, Victoria underwent significant structural changes. Urban planning initiatives aimed at modernization and infrastructure development transformed the town's physical landscape, reflecting colonial priorities and aspirations. The independence era brought shifts in social dynamics and economic policies, as Victoria sought to chart its own course towards development and prosperity. However, challenges such as that of maritime trade, inadequate infrastructure, and economic stagnation led to Victoria's gradual decline in significance as a regional hub. The research findings highlight the complex interplay of historical, social, and economic factors in shaping Victoria's trajectory over time. By tracing the town's evolution from its humble beginnings to its present-day challenges, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of Victoria's history and its broader implications for urban development in Cameroon

**Key words: town, evolution, development.**

## RÉSUMÉ

*Cette recherche intitulée "Étude historique de la « ville » de Victoria au Cameroun (1858-1982)" utilise une approche mixte, combinant des méthodes quantitatives et qualitatives ainsi qu'une approche diachronique, pour analyser la transformation de la ville au fil du temps. Les sources primaires, des documents des Archives, après des personnes interviewées ont fourni des perspectives inestimables sur l'histoire de Victoria. Les sources secondaires, telles que des œuvres publiées et des documents iconographiques, ont complété l'analyse, contribuant à une compréhension approfondie du développement de la ville. En utilisant une approche diachronique, la recherche examine les changements et les développements dans le paysage structurel, social et économique de Victoria sur la période étudiée. Dès ses origines, à l'arrivée des Missionnaires Baptistes en quête de liberté religieuse, Victoria est devenue un centre dynamique d'activités économiques, sociales et culturelles. La ville a attiré des migrants de divers horizons, contribuant à son riche tissu culturel et à sa croissance économique. Au cours des différentes périodes de domination coloniale, y compris la colonisation allemande et la gouvernance internationale ultérieure sous la Société des Nations et les Nations Unies, Victoria a subi d'importants changements structurels. Des initiatives d'urbanisme visant à la modernisation et au développement des infrastructures ont transformé le paysage physique de la ville, reflétant les priorités et les aspirations coloniales. L'ère de l'indépendance a entraîné des changements dans les dynamiques sociales et les politiques économiques, alors que Victoria cherchait à tracer sa propre voie vers le développement et la prospérité. Cependant, des défis tels que lui du commerce maritime, des infrastructures inadéquates et une stagnation économique ont conduit au déclin progressif de Victoria en tant que centre régional. Les résultats de la recherche mettent en lumière l'interaction complexe des facteurs historiques, sociaux et économiques dans la trajectoire de Victoria au fil du temps. En retraçant l'évolution de la ville depuis ses modestes débuts jusqu'à ses défis actuels, cette étude contribue à une compréhension plus profonde de l'histoire de Victoria et de ses implications plus larges pour le développement urbain au Cameroun.*

**Mots clé : ville, évolution, développement.**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b><i>C.D.C</i></b>	Cameroon Development Corporation
<b><i>G. R. A</i></b>	Government Residential Area
<b><i>N. M. C</i></b>	Native Mixed Court
<b><i>W. A. P. V</i></b>	<i>Westafrikanische Pflanzungsgesellschaft Victoria</i>
<b><i>U. A.C</i></b>	United African Company
<b><i>F. E. D</i></b>	<i>Fonds Européen de Développement</i>
<b><i>G.D.P</i></b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b><i>N.A.B</i></b>	National Archives of Buea
<b><i>F.A.L.S.S</i></b>	The Faculty of Arts, Letters and social sciences
<b><i>S.O.N.A.R.A</i></b>	<i>Société Nationale de Raffinage</i>
<b><i>C.N.U</i></b>	The Cameroon National Union
<b><i>W.C.N.U</i></b>	The Women Cameroon National Union

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### 1. Historical context

Present-day Cameroon to the European was a territory limited to coastal areas along the Gulf of Guinea and inhabited by Bantu-speaking people<sup>1</sup>. However, during the 9th-15th century, the Sao civilisation flourished in the Northern part of the territory<sup>2</sup>. However, without a name, it had a well-structured economy and a political system with local authorities such as Lamidos, and chiefs who were the head of the tribal groups in the territory<sup>3</sup>. Before colonization in 1884, Cameroon was a territory of diverse climatic zones populated by a variety of people and politics. The Muslim states in the North such as the Emirates of Adamawa and Sultanate of Mandara traded with trans-Saharan merchants and Arabic peoples. The Coastal people in the South traded with Portuguese and Dutch seafarers beginning in the late fifteenth century. However, the name Cameroon came into existence only in 1472, with the arrival of the Portuguese explorers<sup>4</sup>. Led by Fernando Po, they made their way to Duala through the Wouri estuary, where they saw many prawns and called it *Rio dos Camarões* meaning "river of prawns"<sup>5</sup>. It is from this that the country's name was derived.

By the 17th century, the Dutch overshadowed the Portuguese in Cameroon by establishing trading stations. The Dutch were in turn, succeeded by the British in the 18th Century<sup>6</sup>. A trading place like so many others, it took on importance in 1827, when the English navy moved to the island of Fernando Poo to monitor the abolition of slavery. As early as 1826, the Englishman Richardson had described "Cameroon" as a real small town, with the wooden "two-storey house" of its chief, the King Bell<sup>7</sup>. With the arrival of other Europeans such as the British, French, and German, businesses and the slave trade moved from the coast to the

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<sup>1</sup> V. J. Ngoh, "The political evolution of Cameroon 1884-1961", Thesis of Master of Arts in History, Portland State University, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> M. D. DeLancey, and als, *The historical dictionary of the Republic of Cameroon*, Maryland, The Scarecrow Press Inc, 2010. p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> S. Bessong Takang, *An illustrated history of Cameroon since 1800*, Yaoundé, The Book House, 2013, p.45.

<sup>4</sup> E. Mveng, *Histoire du Cameroun*, Yaoundé, CEPER, 1984, p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> *Rio dos Camarões* is a Portuguese term that translates to "River of Shrimps" in English. The name reflects the abundance of shrimp and other aquatic creatures that were found in the river. It is possible that the Portuguese explorers who first encountered the river named it *Rio dos Camarões* due to the abundance of shrimp in the area. The name has since become a part of local geography and is still in use today.

<sup>6</sup> Ngoh, "The political evolution", p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> P. Laburthe- Tolra, "Christianisme et ouverture au monde le cas du Cameroun (1845-1915) " *Revue Française d'histoire d'outre-mer*, tome 75, N°279, 2e trimestre, 1988, p. 208.

interior, where the chiefs served as middlemen<sup>8</sup>. The Europeans sold clothes and metals in Cameroon while slaves and ivory were transported to Europe. With the gradual abolition of the slave trade, trade between European and Cameroon slowly changed in 1845. Alfred Sakar started constructing schools and churches along the banks of the river Wouri. When the slave trade was finally abolished in 1875<sup>9</sup>, trade was focused now on palm oil, ivory, and gold. The British and the Germans explored the Western Coast of Cameroon, while the French explored the Southern Coast of Cameroon. Their activities influenced the scramble for Cameroon because they discovered cheap Raw Materials such as Ivory, spices, rubber, palm oil and kernels needed by European industries. Also, transport routes, which made the movement of people and goods easy. They discovered a suitable environment for European settlement especially along the slopes of Mountain Cameroon, the Coast, etc. By 1868, British traders dominated the Cameroon coast. The main British trading firms were John Holt and Company, Amba Bay Trading Company, R & W King<sup>10</sup>. German firms such as the Carl Woermann, and the Jantzen and Thormahlen Firms later joined them. The British and German traders competed seriously along the Western Coast of Cameroon. The French established trading stations on the southern coast of Cameroon, in Grand Batanga, Malimba, and Campo<sup>11</sup>. They signed treaties with king Pass All of Malimba and king Williams of Grand Batanga.

The founding and development of towns in Africa in general and Cameroon in particular came because of the presence of the Europeans in Cameroon. Starting with the presence of the explorers such as Fernando Po in the 15th century, the Christian missionaries who sought to put an end to slave trade and the presence of the colonizers in the 19th century. *Fo*<sup>12</sup>, which will be baptized Victoria, already existed with the Bakweri people who were the locals living here<sup>13</sup>. They had farming and fishing as their main activities thanks to the presence of water bodies and the fertile volcanic soil at the foot of Mount Cameroon. The island of Bimbina attracted the attention of the Danes, who thought of settling the slaves snatched from

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<sup>8</sup> R. A. Austeen, "The metamorphoses of middlemen: The Duala, Europeans, and the Cameroon Hinterland", *The international journal of Africa Historical studies*, vol 6, N° 1, 1983, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> R. Anderson & H. B. Lovejoy, *Liberated Africans and the abolition of slave trade 1807- 1896*, Rochester, University of Rochester Press, 2020, p. 66.

<sup>10</sup> T. Tajoche, *Cameroon history in the 19th and 20th centuries book 3*, Buea, Education Book Center, 2003, p. 57.

<sup>11</sup> V. G. Fanson, "Background to the Annexation of Cameroon 1875 - 1885" in *Abbia: Revue culturelle Camerounaise*, N° 29, 1975, p. 241.

<sup>12</sup> The ancestral name of the town known as "Victoria" is "*Fo*". The name "*Fo*" is derived from the word "*Foo*". "*Foo*" far, very far from here. The British colonial administration renamed the town "Victoria".

<sup>13</sup> G. Courade, *Dictionnaire des villages du Fako*, Yaoundé, O.R.S.T.O.M, 1973, p.77.

the slave traders there. However due to the infertile soil it became difficult for their project to be carried out<sup>14</sup>.

In June 1845, Alfred Sakar arrived in Cameroon and was received with mixed feelings but he continued with his work in Cameroon. The first Europeans to reside in Victoria were the Missionaries of the Baptist society led by Alfred Sakar. Sakar's work was mostly carried out in Fernando Po where he worked with the Islands Aborigines, the Bubi and with rescued slaves who landed in Fernando Po through the British warship. However, the pressure from the Spanish government in Fernando Po on the Baptist missionaries worsened in 1858. May 23, Don Carlos Chacon, the commander of the Spanish Squadron arrived at Fernando Po and called Sakar to stop the protestant from worship immediately<sup>15</sup>. This forced Sarkar and his companions to leave and settle on the mainland across Fernando Po. Joseph Jackson Fuller spotted a field of sixteen kilometres long by eight wide in Amba Bay and convinced the Missionaries to buy it from the king of Bimbia on the coast, at the foot of Mount Cameroon<sup>16</sup>. After due process, King William of Bimbia handed ownership of the land to Sakar and *Fo* was founded in 1858<sup>17</sup>. Sakar named it Victoria, after the Queen of England in order to attract British annexation. The Missionaries established Plantation agriculture of cocoa and coffee here.

After presenting the historical context of the study, it is important to look at reasons for the choice of this topic.

## **2. Reasons for the choice of subject**

The choice of this research subject is highly motivated by diverse reasons, which can be grouped into three categories. That is for scientific, historic, and personal reasons.

Scientifically, this subject is due to the curiosity to study, retrace and edify the history of "Victoria", which is not known to many. There is insufficient documents on the history of Victoria. In addition, the lack of historians who have written on the history of Victoria is the reason for this dissertation.

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<sup>14</sup> Laburthe- Tolra, "Christianisme et ouverture" p. 208.

<sup>15</sup> Takang, *An illustrated history*, p. 39.

<sup>16</sup> Laburthe- Tolra, "Christianisme et ouverture" p. 209.

<sup>17</sup> V. G. Falso, *Cameroon history for secondary schools and colleges: from prehistoric times to the twenty-first century*, Kumbo, Teamwork Press, 2017, p. 128.

Historically, the choice of this subject is to add to the historical knowledge of "Victoria", so that in the end, people would know the role Victoria played in the history of Cameroon. In addition, the writing of this dissertation is due to the fact many are not aware of the history of Victoria even those living in it.

Personally, the choice of interest in this subject is because as someone from Limbe, former Victoria, it was noticed that though Victoria is highly historic and touristic, little or less is found on the history of Victoria. Not many historians have developed interest in the writing of the history of this town. "Victoria" was one of those towns in Cameroon that contributes to the economy of Cameroon due to firms and plantations, which not only contributes to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but also serves employment to Cameroonians around and out of "Victoria". It is sad to know that a town with so much to offer has not been fully exploited historically. It is in this curiosity that the interest in this subject was drawn. Another reason for the choice of this subject is the desire to study the values and structures of the people of Victoria.

After looking at the reason for the choice of subject, it is important to give a clear meaning of some words that will be seen in this document for better understanding.

### 3. Conceptual Study

The complex nature of some words sometimes creates confusion and misunderstandings amongst social science researchers. This according to Emile Durkheim :

*Toute investigation scientifique porte sur un groupe déterminé de phénomènes qui répondent à une même définition. La première démarche de sociologue doit donc être de définir les choses dont il traite afin que l'on sache et qu'il sache bien de quoi il est question. C'est la première et la plus indispensable condition de toute preuve et de toute vérification*<sup>18</sup>

It is therefore important to define certain concepts of this document for better understanding of the subject. Thus, these words will be defined: evolution, development and town.

**Evolution:** *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines evolution as the development or growth according to inherent tendencies of anything that may be compared to a living organism. The rise or organization of anything by natural development, as distinguished from

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<sup>18</sup> E. Durkheim, *Les règles de la méthode sociale*, Paris, F. Alcan, 1894, p.34.

production by specific act, growing as opposed to being made<sup>19</sup>. However, this definition seemed to exclude settlements. Many of these existed in English medieval planned and normally laid out towns to twentieth-century colonial towns and new towns. Evolution is commonly used as another word to talk about the change in landscape systems and politics, as a concept. It is mostly used in the context of urban geography. MP Conzen notes, "Evolutionary concepts about urban systems and structures are accepted elements of any general orientation to the subfield of urban geography"<sup>20</sup>.

However, the concept of evolution with respect to towns refers to the way in which urban areas change and adapt over time. This can include changes in the physical layout of the town, such as the construction of new buildings or the demolition of old ones, as well as changes in the social, economic, and cultural aspects of the town. Evolutionary processes in towns are driven by a complex interplay of factors, including population growth, technological innovation, political and economic changes, and cultural shifts. With respect to the historical study of "Victoria town", evolution refers to the development or growth of Victoria over time since its creation. Development is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Some of its major dimensions include; the level of economic growth, level of education, level of health services, degree of modernization, status of women, level of nutrition, quality of housing, distribution of goods and services, and access to communication<sup>21</sup>

**Town:** According to Howard Chudacoff, the word town is used in many different ways so much so that it is difficult to give a general and precise definition. To him, the most General and accepted will be « *les villes sont des communautés constituées par des concentrations de population qui gèrent et coordonnent un ensemble d'activités importantes* »<sup>22</sup>; He further holds that this formula supposes principal criteria. The First of them is that of the density of the population, which he holds to be a necessary characteristic of a town. The town has more population than a village. Secondly, the town for him constitutes home, knot, which concentrates and distributes goods and services as well as favouring exchange. Thirdly, social life is distinguished by its complexity and high degree of specialization of human relations. Lastly, the customs of the citizens are characterized by a community of tastes and interests,

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<sup>19</sup> J.A. Simpson and Al, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edition, Oxford, Clarendon press, 1989, p.300.

<sup>20</sup> M.P Cozen, " Historical geography: changing spatial structure and social patterns of Western cities", *Progress in human geography*, volume 7, issue 1, p. 11.

<sup>21</sup> Abhiman Dad, " Socio-economic development in India: A regional Analysis ", *Development and Societies*, Vol 28, N°2, 1999, p.113.

<sup>22</sup> H. Chudacoff, *Urbanisation à la mesure de la Société*, Paris, Nouveaux horizon, 1977, p. 10.

which manifests certain habits of urbanity. He says then that all of these characteristics of urban life : density , functions , social relations , attitudes of the mind, have made the town what it is, that is to say points of concentration of culture and human aspirations<sup>23</sup>. Town with respect to Victoria can be considered as a community characterised by a concentration of population that manages and coordinates a range of activities. “Town” is placed in inverted comma open and closed because as of the time of creation it was not a town. Victoria town has a population density that is higher than that of a village. Victoria town serves as a hub, facilitating the distribution of goods and services, while promoting exchanges. Its social life is marked by complexity and high degree of specialisation in human relations.

**Development:** Edward J. Blakely defines local economic development as "the process by which public, business, and community leaders work collectively to create better economic conditions, new jobs, and improved amenities for their locality"<sup>24</sup>. He goes on to emphasize the importance of community involvement and collaboration in achieving successful development outcomes.

According to Shaw, development in the context of a town can be defined as "a process of social and economic change that transforms a settlement from a simple, low-income, rural community to a more complex, high-income, urban community"<sup>25</sup>. Development in this dissertation can therefore be defined as the process of improving the economic, social, and physical conditions of a town or city, in order to enhance the quality of life for its residents. It can also be defined as the process of improving the economic, social, and physical aspects of a town in order to enhance the quality of life of its inhabitants. This may involve infrastructure development, the creation of job opportunities, and the provision of social amenities such as schools, hospitals, and recreational facilities.

After presenting the conceptual definition of terms, it is important to introduce the geographical study of this research.

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<sup>23</sup> Chudacoff, *Urbanisation*, p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> Blakely, E. J and als, (2013). *Planning local economic development: theory and practice*. Los Angeles, Sage publications, 2013, p.12.

<sup>25</sup> A.Shaw, *Development and cities*, Oxfordshire, Routledge, 2012, p.11.

#### 4. Geographical Definition

Victoria is located at the circumference of dockyard creek enclosed by the great massive of Mabeta and the low slopes of mount Cameroon<sup>26</sup>. It covered a total area of about 1014.4km<sup>2</sup>. It is bounded by the Bright of Biafra in the South, towards the foot of Mount Cameroon in the North, to the West by Batoke and to the East by river Mungo. It is found in latitude 3°80 and 4°50 North and longitude 8°50 and 9°30 East of the equator<sup>27</sup>. It has the Cameroon equatorial maritime climate type with a very high atmospheric humidity and a temperature above 25°C. It comprises features of three tropical climate regimes, which includes equatorial climate, which is made up of heavy rainfall throughout the year, seasonal characteristics of two seasons in a year, the raining and dry season and finally, the monsoon climate characteristics, which resulted in a great contrast between the seasons. This climatic temperature is often moderated by breeze from the Atlantic Ocean<sup>28</sup>. It has a flat topography and is made up of rudiments from the interior. It has three soil types. Due to temperature and soil, it has resulted to a forest vegetation type. This has favoured the presence of the Equatorial forest characterized by Shorts trees and Some Savannah on the hills and slopes plains<sup>29</sup>. The influence of Mount Cameroon has given birth to the rich volcanic soil through weathered rocks during the eruption. The vegetation located closer to the mangrove have the lateritic soil and those farther away from the North Eastern part of Mount Fako have the moany and Sandy soil. However, the situational location of Victoria has contributed more to the development. Having a situation accessible to port on the south Eastern end made it possible for development to take place. During the colonial era, it facilitated the transportation by Sea to Duala and used for the exportation of German plantation product raw materials and manufactured goods to the interior.

After presenting the geographical study of Victoria, it is necessary to introduce the chronological study.

#### 5. Chronological Study

This dissertation is in a general manner the study of Victoria from the pre-colonial period (1858) to the post-colonial period (1982). The year 1858 is important as it marked the

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<sup>26</sup> V.Ngende Esambe, "Urbanisation and the growth of Victoria: causes and implications", B.A dissertation in Sociology, University of Yaounde, 1981, p.13.

<sup>27</sup> D. A. Enohnyaket, " Plantation agriculture in Fako division and the Bakweri land problem 1884- 2006: A historical survey", A Masters dissertation of Arts degree in History, University of Yaoundé I, 2009, p. 16.

<sup>28</sup> P. J. Fraser and als, "Climate of Mount Cameroon Regions: Long- and Medium-Term Rainfall, Temperature, and Sunshine." *The Geographical Journal*, vol. 164, no. 1, 1998, p. 14.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p.14.



founding of Victoria by the British missionary Alfred Sakar through the purchase of land from Chief Williams of Bimbia due to the pressure from the Jesuit in Fernando Po<sup>30</sup>. After due process and settlement was done Alfred Sakar became the owner of the land and named it Victoria<sup>31</sup>

The year 1982 marks the year the name was changed from Victoria to Limbe. The change in name was because the people wanted a name that did not reflect the colonial masters hence the name Limbe that was gotten from river *Lembah* a river in Limbe.

After looking at the chronological study, it is important to bring out a critical review of the documents that have been consulted.

## 6. Literature review

Victor Julius Ngoh in his book<sup>32</sup>, examined the general history of Cameroon from before colonization with events such as Migration, peopling, states, fondoms, slavery and slave trade towards the German colony of Cameroon (1884-1916), extending to her administration and the First World War marking the end of German rule in Cameroon. He also presents the various passages of Cameroon from the First World War to independence and the various regimes up until the present day Cameroon with the Anglophone crisis. In looking at the history of Cameroon in general, Victor Julius Ngoh reveals to us the events that led to the founding of Victoria, which was due to the presence of the Jesuit in Fernando Po and the proclamation of Catholicism in Fernando Po (1858), which had become very important and strategic. This however forced Alfred Sakar and his companion to move to the mainland across Fernando Po, and after due process, Victoria was established in 1958. He also revealed the process of settlement of the land that made Sakar the owner of Victoria and the reasons for the founding of Victoria, including the search for a home for the Missionaries and because Victoria was seen as a good commercial area.

His work has a lot of relevance to the writing of this document, as it brought out an understanding of the background that led to the founding of Victoria. Because it was not the main interest of the author, some aspects of our work were not included. Thus, the focus of this dissertation is the history of Cameroon while our work is based on Victoria, hence it does not

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<sup>30</sup> Ngoh, "The political evolution", p. 34.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Ngoh V. J, *Cameroon 1884-Present, the history of the people*, Yaoundé, Design House, 2019.

include other aspects of this work such as the economic, social, and demographic evolution of Victoria, which is the focus of this document.

Bessong Stephen in his book<sup>33</sup> throws more light on the history of Cameroon in general and the history of Victoria in particular. He looked at the history of Cameroon from pre-colonial Cameroon with population movements, states, and kingdoms, up until the arrival of the colonial masters, the colonial period, the war periods, and the various administrative systems of the British and French. He looked at Neo-colonial Cameroon from independence up until the Sino-Cameroon relationship, established on 26 March 1971. He also gave a great contribution to the reason why Victoria was founded which include religious reasons, commercial, humanitarian, political, and because of Catholic hostility which was the main reason for the founding of Victoria. It was founded for religious reasons due to the search for an area where people could worship God freely. Another reason was the desire to extend legitimate trade to the coast through the establishment of coal stores, provision stores, and other commercial essentials. After the proclamation of the emancipation law of 1 January 1863 by the British. Victoria was seen as a means of settling free slaves. Politically, Victoria was founded because Sakar needed protection and saw that evangelism and commerce alone could not provide protection, hence naming Victoria after the Queen could attract British annexation of the coast. Furthermore, he mentioned the importance of Victoria to the Baptist Missionaries. This included the prevention of conflict between the Catholics and the Baptist Missionaries, it also served as a center of evangelism for Baptist missionaries on the coast of Cameroon. Again, the settlement of the Baptist mission made easy the expansion of Western civilization along the coast of Cameroon. Victoria also contributed to the enormous growth of commerce along the coast of Cameroon, with the opening of gain trading companies such as John Holt and stores were opened in Victoria to promote legitimate trade. Victoria enabled the introduction of Western administration through the setting up of the court of equity and justice to resolve trade conflicts.

His work is important to the writing of dissertation as it revealed the Historical framework of how Victoria was founded, the reasons, and the importance of Victoria to the British Baptist Missionaries. However, although it was of great contribution to the writing of

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<sup>33</sup> Takang, *An illustrated history*.

this work, it did not contain other aspects of this document such as the demographic and economic evolution, which is the focus of the present work.

V.G Fanzo in his book<sup>34</sup> examined the political and social organization of pre-colonial Cameroon, its population and workforce, religions such as Jihads and the various societies of pre-colonial Cameroon. He also reveals the colonial trend in Cameroon from a colonized territory by the Germans to a mandate territory and a trusteeship territory under Britain and France and their various administrative systems. He also presented the route to independence, Neo-colonial Cameroon, and the various changes that took place in Cameroon after independence up until the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century with a focus on globalization, political and economic crisis wrapping up with the present Anglophone crisis. He revealed the desires of the missionaries who wanted the British government to declare Victoria a British colony. However, due to the reluctant nature of the British government, the missionaries set up an administration in Victoria, which was well structured with a defined function of enforcing law and order and saw the implementation and payment of fines. This is evident with the creation of the court of justice in Victoria with Horton Thomas Johnson, a black trader, as the chairperson. He also examined the population structure of Victoria that was made up of Missionaries and traders, liberated slaves, and Cameroonians from the neighbourhood who worked for the British.

This book was interesting to the writing of the present document as it revealed the British administration in Victoria and the demographic structure of Victoria. However, due to the interest of the author, that was the general history of Cameroon, other aspects of this dissertation were not examined in this book such as economic, social, and demographic evolution. As a result, we sought to examine these aspects in the present work.

S.H. Bederman, in his book<sup>35</sup>, examined plantation agriculture in Cameroon in general and Victoria in particular. He began by revealing the introduction of plantation agriculture during the German reign and the management by the British and now the Cameroon Development Corporation. He further presents the location of plantations in Cameroon that is mostly located in Victoria around the foot of Mount Cameroon. Its vegetation and climate varies accordingly. Temperature varies between warm, cold and humid. In addition, he

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<sup>34</sup> V. G. Fanzo, *Cameroon history*.

<sup>35</sup> A. H. Bederman, "Plantation Agriculture in Victoria Division, West Cameroon: An Historical Introduction", *Geography*, Vol 51, N° 4, 1966, pp. 349-360.

revealed the geographical location of Victoria, found around the slopes of Mount Cameroon. He revealed that British Baptist Missionaries were the first to settle in Victoria. They started their work in Fernando Po but were later chased by Catholic hostility in Fernando Po. This forced them to move to the unoccupied mainland with about 200 families. In 1858, they founded Victoria. During this period, not much was done about commercial development even though Amba bay offered a great harbour. The British mostly controlled trade during this period although some German firms existed. Also, he revealed the growth that took place by 1st January 1913 with the presence of about 195 non-African planters in Cameroon, with the local workers being about 17827 and a total number of 58 plantations present in Cameroon most of which were around Victoria. However, working conditions were not the best, and also the Germans were strict in their colonial policy but were the most successful colonial Masters. In 1944, only 17 plantations were functional of 1,066, 240 of the decision, 188684 acres were in plantation and 1/3 was under cultivation. This period also revealed the population trend with immigrants from Nigeria who served as workers on the plantation as the population of Victoria could not supply all the labour needed. The years 1959 and 1963 saw a drastic fall in banana production, as there was a shift in the use of lands for the production of cocoa, rubber, palm oil, and tea.

This book, largely, has contributed to the writing of the present work as it helped us know the various developmental stages that took place in Victoria from its founding until 1982. However, some aspects such as social evolution and demographic evolution were not included due to the differences in the field of study. The author writes from a geographical perspective while we are writing from a historical perspective. In addition, the book does not show the population changes that occurred from the time of the creation to 1982 which will be seen in our work.

Thomas Ngomba Ekali explained that European influence was behind the creation of towns and cities in Cameroon.<sup>36</sup> Victoria originated as a religious town, for the settlement of Baptist missionaries who were forced to leave Fernando Po by the Spanish who declared the Catholic Church the only church on the Island. Sakar out of desperation moved with his followers to the mainland where he bought a piece of land from King William of Bimbila on August 23, 1858, which was named Victoria. The first settlers were all missionaries, included

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<sup>36</sup>T. Ngomba Ekali, "The fluctuating fortunes of Anglophone Cameroon towns: the case of Victoria 1858-1982" in, Steven J. Salm and Toyin Falola, *African Urban Spaces in historical perspective*, Rochester, Rochester Press, 2005, pp. 320- 339.

Joseph Wilson, and his son Joseph Wilson Junior, Stephen Burnley, Henry Scott, Daniel Moore, and Hannah Michael. Victoria was founded for religious reasons rather than trade. Activities carried out included evangelism, commerce, and education. These reasons plus political reasons was the pull factors that led to the immigration of population into Victoria from Britain traders and immigrants from the neighbouring village. The opening of a school in 1862 by Sakar improved the status of Victoria to a religious, commercial, and educational division. Furthermore, he explained the economic and demographic evolution of Victoria. From its boom with the influx of population from neighbouring towns in Cameroon, Nigeria to its decline after the construction of the Tiko-Douala road which transferred some functions from Victoria to Douala. The increase in population was a result of the availability of employment in the plantations, the presence of communication facilities such as roads, railways, and telephones, and the presence of an expanding exchange economy. This was seen with the presence of banks. However, Victoria experienced a decline due to the construction of the Tiko- Douala road, which reduced the function of Victoria's port.

This book has contributed to the present work as it made us understand the economic and demographic evolution of Victoria. However, the author did not present the population changes in different years' periods to show how the population evolved. This population change will be revealed in this document.

Engelbert Mveng in his book<sup>37</sup> talks about Victoria Court of Equity regulations for the Colony of Victoria, Ambas Bay. Victoria Agency Office West Africa October 1858. In order to ensure safety, reduce crime rates, ensure freedom in disciplines like (trading, Christian worship), improve transportation and hygiene; a governor and a council consisting of a maximum 12 renown men of which half was chosen by the governor while the others were chosen by established men in the Bay. Laws were established from the Christian Biblical context and special care was imposed on Sunday worship for Christians. Freedom of trade within and out of the city was established. Any violation of these establishments' laws by any man led to: A penalty of not more than twenty shillings or imprisonment with work for not more than one month. Confiscation of property and five pounds for the first offense, ten pounds for the second offense by the same man and expulsion for the third offense by the same man.

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<sup>37</sup> E. Mveng, *L'histoire du Cameroun*, Yaoundé, CEPER, 1984.

This book is important as it helps us know the organization of the court of Equity and the reasons why it was created. However due to the author's focus he did not present the various evolution that took place in Victoria such as the economic and social evolutions which is the focus of this work.

Edwin Aderner and Shirley Aderner, reveal the establishment of plantation agriculture by the Germans.<sup>38</sup> After the annexation of Cameroon by the Germans, Victoria was still under the British but after the exploitation of the interior Victoria came under German rule. This led to the establishment of trading firms such as the Woermann firm and hence the establishment of plantation agriculture to provide raw materials for the German companies as it was cheaper cultivating them than buying them. German penetration into the interior of Victoria met with a lot of resistance especially when it came to land. He further explained the population and migration pattern of the population of Victoria, which comprises native inhabitants such as the Bakweri, Wovea, and people of the fish town, Cameroonians from other neighbouring communities who came to work at the plantations and Nigerian due to the presence of road and train networks. He goes forward to examine the various problems that happened in Victoria some of which included inadequate labourers, language barrier, prostitution, and land use problems that first started because of land ownership and intensified with the crops cultivated in the lands. He also brought out the marriage rites of the Bakweri people of Victoria and the sex ratio in which the men were more than that of the women. This could be a result of the plantation's labour, which was mostly men.

This work was interesting as it helped us to understand the various structures of Victoria ranging from the population and other problems that were faced in this area including land problems, prostitution, and divorce. However, it did not include other aspects of Victoria such as historical events that led to the founding of Victoria, its economic, social, and demographic evolution that will be examined in the present dissertation.

George Courade examined the decrease in the population of Victoria due to the shutting of the Bota oil mill and the reduction in port activities<sup>39</sup>. The dismissal of the Cameroon Development cooperation and the closure of the British branches after colonization led to a reduction in the European population in this area. In 1967, the number was reduced to 150.

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<sup>38</sup> E. Adener & S. Aderner, *Kingdoms on mount Cameroon: Studies in the History of the Cameroon Coast, 1500-1970*, Bergham, Oxford University Press, 1996.

<sup>39</sup> G. Courade, *Victoria, Bota, croissance urbaine et immigration*, Paris, O. R.S. T. O. M, 1979.

The population agglomeration of Victoria was characterized by many different ethnic groups from Cameroon such as the Bakok, central groups of the grass field and about 160 people from Nigeria who came in search of jobs. This population structure was mostly drawn by the plantation that rendered employment. The failure of development was because Victoria's geographical location did not allow access surrounding the old massif volcano of Mabeta, and the lower slopes of mount Cameroon, the population could only settle on the small plain and the edges of Duck yard creek swamps. The Location attracted the first inhabitants due to its safety purpose rather than the availability of space. The immigration resulted in the birth of irregular neighbourhoods. The densification of New town, and the neighbourhood in which its inhabitants were chased by the Germans to establish a station. After 1950, the government residential Area came into existence with the building of houses for government executives. The plantation of it is a nautical and touristic site with its class of 160 businesspersons, Bamenda and Bamileke, its environment. The creation of transport linking Victoria and Douala will compromise the economic activities of this town, as many inhabitants will move to Douala, which offered better opportunities.

This book has contributed to the writing of the present work as it revealed the demographic structure of Victoria, however the author writes from a geographical perspective while this work is in the historic perspective.

Ngende Victor Esambe in his dissertation talks about the history of Victoria exclusive of Bota, which is now an urban whole<sup>40</sup>. He reveals the geographical location study of Victoria, taking into consideration aspects such as the site and situation, and climate. Construction of the surface was difficult due to the swampy and hilly nature of Victoria. Victoria is located at the circumference of dockyard creek enclosed by the great massive of Mabeta and the low slopes of mount Cameroon. It has the Cameroon maritime weather type with a long raining season of 9 months ranging from mid - February to mid-December consisting of heavy rains and thunderstorms and a short dry season of 3 months often interrupted by small rain. This has favoured the presence of the Equatorial forest characterized by Shorts trees and Some Savannah on the hills and slopes plains. The influence of mount Cameroon has given birth to the rich volcanic soil. However, the situational location of Victoria has contributed more to the development. Having a situation accessible to port on the south Eastern end made it possible for development to take place. During the colonial era, it facilitated the transportation by Sea

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<sup>40</sup>Esambe, "Urbanisation"

to Duala and used for the exportation of German plantation product raw materials and manufactured goods to the interior. He goes further to examine causes of urbanization of Victoria which was mostly influenced by migration brought about by both pull and push factors. These include death of a parent or poverty in the village, inability to inherit parents' wealth due to many brothers. In addition, the desire for education and greener pasture, commercial reasons brought about by the demand for Labour in Victoria. Pull factors were seen by the dominance of groups in various villages.

This work has contributed to the writing of this document as it has revealed the process and causes of urbanization in Victoria. However, the author has a different discipline as he writes from a sociological perspective; he also did not include other areas of this topic such as the economic, social, and demographic evolution of Victoria.

According to the authors of *the historical dictionary of Cameroon*<sup>41</sup>, from the year 1976 to 1987, it was noted that the population of Victoria during this period increased by 39.44%. And from 1987 to 2001, the population of Victoria during this period increased by 47.27% giving an approximate average increase in population by 43.36% from the year 1976 to 2001 with respect to the ranges. This increase in population in Victoria was primarily due to the presence of the Germans and British colonizers who helped to develop both the infrastructural, educational and commercial state of the city, Victoria. The Germans built agricultural centers like the Cameroon Development Cooperation (C.D.C)<sup>42</sup> that had control over expansive plantations alongside planting an experimental Botanical garden, which made Victoria to become a dreamland for job seekers in and out of Victoria. They also built schools that facilitated growth of literacy in the city thereby leading to the growth of socioeconomic, economic and political development along the years. The British also built school(s) and infrastructures that led to more development of Victoria adding to the fact that Victoria is located along the coastal lines of Cameroon, which by default serves as a commercial avenue for many in and out of Cameroon. They go further to explain that the reunification highway that was built to link Victoria and Douala made people move from Victoria to Douala to get more opportunities taking into consideration. The ports of Victoria are second to the ports of Douala. Douala has better fiscal incentives as compared to Victoria. Naming Victoria a “ghost

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<sup>41</sup> M. D. DeLancey, and als, *The historical dictionary of the Republic of Cameroon*, Maryland, The Scarecrow Press Inc., 2010.

<sup>42</sup> CDC Cameroon, also known as the Cameroon Development Corporation, is a state-owned agro-industrial company. The company was founded in 1947 by the British colonial government and was later nationalized by the government of Cameroon in 1972.



town”, which described the gradual reduction of its population. The rate of commercial activities started reducing. Not only until 1981 that initiatives like the National Oil refinery and Zoo were put in place to revive the city of Victoria. In addition, the document that the act of corruption from the government has slowed down major projects in the city of Victoria.

This document has greatly helped in the writing of the present work as it reveals the rise and fall of Victoria during colonial rule and after colonial rule. However, it did not include major aspects of the present work such as demographic evolution, economic evolution, and social and infrastructural evolution.

After examining the critical review of the literature, it is necessary to clearly define the problem of this dissertation.

## **7. Statement of problem**

The British Baptist Missionary Alfred Sakar founded Victoria, a religious town by origin, in 1858. Victoria went through several processes, from the British Baptist Missionaries to the Bethel Mission. Starting as a religious town whose status later changed to an agricultural, educational, and political town, with various changes in the population, infrastructure, and activities. Hence the evolution of Victoria. The principal question is; which historical appreciation can we make from the evolution of Victoria “town”? This question has resulted in secondary questions. What is the origin of Victoria “town”? What was the structure of Victoria “town”? What were the socio-economic activities of Victoria “town”? What are the limitations of this evolution?

The interest of this dissertation is to bring out the various benefits the population of Victoria in particular and the whole of Cameroon can derive from the edification of the history of Victoria.

## **8. Interest and Objective**

Generally, this research would help the people of Victoria to know their origin and how they have developed over time. It could help to discover the ancient values and traditions of Victoria that have been forgotten. This dissertation could help Victoria find a place in scientific knowledge. In addition, this document could permit the government to know the economic potential of this town and know how to better improve the town. This dissertation could help

contribute to the historiography of Victoria. It could make other historians find interest in the history of Victoria.

The central objective seeks to show the evolution of Victoria. This present work has secondary objectives. The first is to show the origin of the people of Victoria. The second objective is to show the administrative and socio-cultural structure of Victoria. The third objective seeks to show the socio-economic activities of Victoria. The fourth objective seeks to bring out the difficulties of this evolution. This document could contribute to the scientific writing of the history of Cameroon in general and Victoria in particular.

After looking at the interest and objectives of this dissertation, it is important to know how data will be collected, treated, analysed and used.

## **9. Methodology**

Any research work requires a particular methodological approach beforehand. Methodology is the set of methods for the scientific analysis of data on a research subject. For this work on the historical study of Victoria, the qualitative method was used. It employed a qualitative review of existing literature on the history of Victoria and interview to gather in depth information on the history of Victoria town.

The data collected for the study were obtained from two principal sources, namely primary and secondary sources. Respecting the methodology of the history department of the University of Yaoundé I, and given there is absence of adequate studies done on the history of Victoria; the research was mostly carried out with the aid of primary source materials. However, the role played by secondary sources cannot be under looked. The most outstanding of the primary sources that greatly contributed to the realization of this research were oral sources.

Oral information was obtained through interviews by recording and taking down of notes was done with people of credible ages such as administrative personnel, resource personnel, local authorities and the population of Victoria (Limbe). Other primary sources were documents from the National Archives of Buea (NAB). Information was also collected from private Archives. The Palace was also a research venue. It was after the collection of primary sources that enough proof was gathered to assist the writing of this document. However, these primary source materials were judged credible and authentic only after they were strictly

criticized and compared with other sources. The primary sources were strengthened by secondary sources.

Secondary sources consulted consisted of, some published and unpublished works such as dissertation, thesis, rapport, articles, journals and books obtained from public libraries such as the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences (FALSS), Library of the University of Yaoundé I, the library of the University of Buea, The Ecole Normale library and the History-Geography- Archaeological Club Library of the University of Yaoundé I.

This work was analysed using the Diachronic approach. This helped in studying changes and developments in Victoria over the period of 1858- 1982. It helped us study the historical evolution of Victoria, tracing its origins, growth, and changes over time by reviewing and analysing historical documents, published studies, and other relevant sources related to the research topic. In addition, the interviews with experts in the field helped us to gain insights into the historical evolution of the research topic. Therefore, we undertook a verification of these sources as we compared them with primary and secondary source materials, in order to ensure that the research remained scientific and authentic.

After looking at the methodology, it is necessary to look at some difficulties encountered

### **10. Difficulties Encountered**

During the writing of this thesis, we encountered several significant challenges. One of the primary difficulties was the age of the population for interviews. Given the period of our study, which spanned from 1858 to 1982, identifying and interviewing individuals who had first-hand experiences or knowledge relevant to the research was extremely challenging. Many potential interviewees were either no longer alive or were advanced in age, which limited their availability and ability to participate in interviews. The unwillingness of some informants who feared that information gotten would be used against them giving that we are coming from Yaoundé.

Another major obstacle was limited number of documents. Essential records and archival materials from the specified period were often scarce or inaccessible. Many documents had either not been preserved adequately or were located in archives that were difficult to access due to geographical constraints or restrictive archival policies. This scarcity of primary sources necessitated a reliance on secondary sources, which sometimes lacked the depth and specificity required for a comprehensive analysis of the subject matter.

After looking at the difficulties, it is important to see how the work will be organized.

## **11. Organization of work**

The first chapter seeks to explain the human background of Victoria. It is based on the migration trends of the different tribal groups that settled in Victoria.

The second chapter looks at the socio-economic structure of Victoria due to its contact with the European. The organization of Victoria under the European powers such as Britain and Germany.

The third chapter examines the various evolution processes that have taken place in Victoria. The demographic, infrastructural and industrial evolutions that have taken place in Victoria under the Republic of Cameroon.

The Fourth chapter explains some disadvantages of this evolution. It explains the negative sides of this evolution such as the expropriation of native lands, population segregation and a decline in the economy.

## **CHAPTER I: THE ORIGIN AND SETTLEMENT IN VICTORIA**

Victoria, a town rich in history tells a story filled with its founding, people fighting over who owned it, important leaders and different ethnic groups moving there. This chapter explores the multifaceted origin and settlement dynamics of Victoria, spanning the early ownership disputes, the founding and the influx of people. How did the interplay of discovery, ownership and migration shape the origin and settlement of Victoria? This question has resulted in secondary questions; what were the circumstances surrounding the discovery of Victoria, what were the key events and challenges faced during the establishment of Victoria? How did the arrival of different ethnic groups influence the social, economic and cultural landscape of Victoria? In examining these aspects, we uncover the story of how Victoria began and grew, showing the important factors that influenced its early days.

### **I. THE ORIGIN OF VICTORIA**

The origin of Victoria was a multi-faceted process that unfolded during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was influenced by various factors, including European exploration, missionary endeavours and the expansion of commercial interest along the Cameroonian Coast.

#### **1. Discovery and early ownership**

The discovery and early ownership of Victoria trace back to the exploration of Fernando Po by the Portuguese, who were the first to set foot on the Island. However, the Spanish ownership of Fernando Po followed, marking a shift in the territorial control. Eventually, the English settled on Fernando Po contributing to its evolving ownership landscape.

##### **1.1. Portuguese Navigator's discovery of Fernando Po**

During the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, European nations were driven by the spirit of exploration and the desire to establish sea routes to reach Asia's lucrative spice markets<sup>1</sup>. Portugal was at the forefront of maritime expansion, led by explorers like Prince Henry the navigator<sup>2</sup>. These explorers sought new lands, resources and trade routes. In 1471, a Portuguese navigator Fernando Po arrived at the shore of an unknown Island. This event marked the beginning of a significant milestone in the age of exploration. The navigator named the island Fernando Po

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<sup>1</sup> J. H. Parry, *The age of reconnaissance: discovery, exploration and settlement 1450-1650*, London, Phoenix Press, 1962, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p.23.

and claimed it under the King Alphonso V of Portugal<sup>3</sup>. This act of naming newly discovered after explorers or individuals involved in the expedition was common during this era. The arrival and naming of Fernando Po by the Portuguese navigator marked the beginning of foreign influence and interest in the Island.

The Portuguese navigator's landing on Fernando Po marked the initial step in a sequence of events that would eventually shape the Island's history, including its later ownership changes, colonization attempts, and the interaction between various colonial powers<sup>4</sup>. The act of naming the Island after himself reflected the mind set of exploration and the desire to claim new territories.

After examining the discovery of Fernando Po by the Portuguese explorer, it is necessary to look at the Spanish ownership of Fernando Po.

## **1.2. Spanish ownership of Fernando Po**

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, Europe was characterised by intense colonial rivalries among major powers. Spain, like other European nations, was actively involved in the quest for overseas territories. The acquisition of new colonies was driven by various factors including economic interests, the desire for expanded influence and strategic positioning.

In 1778, ownership of Fernando Po changed hands as it was ceded to Spain<sup>5</sup>. The circumstances leading to this transfer of ownership included diplomatic negotiations, alliances or concessions made by Spain and Portugal during the treaty of *El Pardo* <sup>6</sup> signed on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 1778<sup>7</sup>. The shift of ownership from Portugal to Spain had several implications; the acquisition of Fernando Po contributed to the territorial expansion of the Spanish empire. Spain sought to establish its presence in various regions to strengthen its colonial network and increase its access to resources and trade opportunities. Spain's control of Fernando Po affected the Island's trade dynamics. The Spanish empire was known for its mercantilist policies, which

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<sup>3</sup> B. E. Underhill, *Alfred Sakar: Missionary to Africa*, London, the Carey Kingsgate Press, 1884, p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> Parry, *The age of reconaissance: discovery*, p.1.

<sup>5</sup> Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 93.

<sup>6</sup> The treaty of El Pardo was a treaty of friendship, security and commerce between Spain and Portugal, which ceded Fernando Po to Spain.

<sup>7</sup> G. W. Prethero, "Peace handbooks: Spanish Morocco", *The historical section of the foreign office*, vol 20, N° 122, 1920, p. 49.

aimed to maximise economic benefits for the colonial power<sup>8</sup>. The island's resources and trade potential was harnessed to serve Spanish interests.

The cession of Fernando Po to Spain was part of the larger pattern of colonial expansion and competition that characterised the era of European imperialism. It set the stage for subsequent developments on the island, including interactions with other colonial powers, economic activities and changes in the local society and culture.

After looking at the Spanish ownership of Fernando Po, it is necessary to examine the English settlement in Fernando Po.

### **1.3. English settlement on Fernando Po**

In 1827, the English government decided to establish a settlement on the North side of Fernando Po<sup>9</sup>. This decision stemmed from several factors including geopolitical interest, economic considerations and the broader context of the British Empire's activities in West Africa. The location of the English settlement was strategically significant for several reasons: positioned on the Island, the English settlement provided an ideal vantage point for monitoring the West African coast. From there, the British fleet could oversee maritime activities including trade and critically the suppression of transatlantic slave trade. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Great Britain was actively engaged in efforts to abolish the transatlantic slave trade<sup>10</sup>. The English settlement on Fernando Po played a pivotal role in these endeavours. British naval patrolled the region, intercepting slave ships and freeing enslaved individuals<sup>11</sup>. By establishing a settlement on Fernando Po, the British government extended its control in the region. This presence allowed them to assert pressure on other colonial powers such as Spain, which also had claims on the Island.

## **2. Colonists in the English settlement of Fernando Po**

During the period from 1827-1858, the English settlement of Fernando Po saw the arrival of colonists from Sierra Leone and liberated individuals rescued from slave vessels. These settlers brought with them a diverse array of cultural influences and experiences, contributing to evolving landscape of the Island.

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<sup>8</sup> R. S. Smith, "Spanish Mercantilism: A hardy perennial", *The Southern Economic Journal*, vol 38, No 1, 1971, p.1.

<sup>9</sup> Laburthe- Tolra, "Christianisme et ouverture", p. 208.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 208.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2.1. Colonists from Sierra Leone and liberated individuals from slave's vessels

The English settlement on Fernando Po attracted a significant number of colonists from Sierra Leone during the period from 1827-1858. These individuals often referred to as settlers were often employed as artisans or labourers from the beginning of the settlement in 1827<sup>12</sup>. Their skills and labours were essential in various aspects of settlement life, including construction, agriculture and infrastructure development. The colonists from Sierra Leone came from diverse backgrounds, representing different ethnic groups<sup>13</sup>. This diversity enriched the social fabric of the settlement throughout its existence. Overtime, many of these colonists integrated into the local community on Fernando Po, marrying individuals from other African ethnic groups on the Island. This intermingling of cultures contributed to the unique cultural landscape of Fernando Po.

Another significant group of colonists on Fernando Po was composed of individuals who had been liberated from slave vessels by British naval forces during the same period. These individuals, often referred to as liberated Africans, found refuge and freedom on Fernando Po<sup>14</sup>. British naval vessels intercepted slave ships along the West African coast, freeing enslaved individuals and providing them with sanctuary on the island. Upon their arrival on Fernando Po, these liberated individuals were granted British subject status<sup>15</sup>. This meant that they were afforded the protection and rights of British subjects, including the right to live and work on the island without fear of re-enslavement. Like the colonists from Sierra Leone, liberated Africans brought with them a rich tapestry of cultures, languages, and traditions. Their presence further contributed to the multicultural character of the settlement throughout the period.

Despite their diverse backgrounds and origins, the colonists from Sierra Leone and the liberated Africans worked together to build a community on Fernando Po. Both groups shared common goals throughout their time on the island, including maintaining the English settlement's operations, supporting the British fleet's efforts, and creating a stable and thriving community<sup>16</sup>. The coexistence of these two groups facilitated on going cultural exchange and the blending of traditions<sup>17</sup>. Over time, a unique blend of cultures and customs emerged,

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<sup>12</sup>Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Takang, *An illustrated history*, p.42.

<sup>15</sup>Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*



reflecting the island's distinct identity. The legacy of these early colonists still existed in the cultural, linguistic, and social heritage of Fernando Po. Their contributions helped shape the island's history and identity as it transitioned through various phases of colonial rule during this period.

Following the arrival of colonists from Sierra Leone and liberated individuals from slave vessels, Fernando Po saw an increase in population with diverse background. This demographic shift set the stage for the subsequent impact of the Baptist Mission on the Island's social and cultural landscape.

## **2.2. Impact of the Arrival of the Baptist Mission on Fernando Po**

In 1841, the Baptist Mission led by John Clark and Dr J. k Prince was established on Fernando Po<sup>18</sup>. This marked an important moment in the island's history, transitioning it from a focus on naval and strategic interests to a new emphasis on missionary and humanitarian activities. The primary objective of the Baptist Mission was to spread Christianity among the local population<sup>19</sup>. Missionaries engaged in preaching, teaching, and building relationships with the island's residents, working to convert them to Christianity. This period saw a gradual Christianization of the island's inhabitants. In addition to religious activities, the Baptist Mission played a crucial role in education. Missionaries established schools to provide basic education to the local people. These schools aimed to improve literacy and contribute to the overall development of the community<sup>20</sup>.

Prior to the arrival of the Baptist Mission, Fernando Po had been strategically important for its role in supporting the British fleet and suppressing the transatlantic slave trade. However, the presence of missionaries signalled a shift towards a more humanitarian and religious purpose for the island<sup>21</sup>. The missionaries, led by Alfred Sakar, placed a strong emphasis on faith, morality, and Christian values. They worked to instil these values in the local population, seeking to create a morally upright and Christian community on the island. While the missionary presence was generally well received by some segments of the population, there

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<sup>18</sup> Fanson, *Cameroon history*, p.126.

<sup>19</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p.33.

<sup>20</sup> NAB, File N° Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, "Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958", p.19.

<sup>21</sup> Takang, *An illustrated history*, p. 42.

were also instances of conflict with traditional religious practices and resistance<sup>22</sup>. However, over time cooperation and understanding between the missionaries and locals developed, leading to the growth of the Christian community.

The Baptist Mission's influence on Fernando Po left a lasting legacy. The island's population experienced a transformation in education and religious beliefs during this period, contributing to its cultural and social evolution. The presence of missionaries led to cultural exchange between the European missionaries and the local African population<sup>23</sup>. This exchange influenced various aspects of life on the island, including language, customs, and traditions. The Christian community established by the Baptist Mission continued to thrive on Fernando Po after the arrival of Spanish authorities in 1858<sup>24</sup>. The island's religious landscape was forever altered, and elements of the missionary legacy can still be observed in the island's culture and religious practices today.

After the Baptist Mission arrived and changed things in Fernando Po. The island saw significant shifts in its social and religious life. However, during this time, tensions rose because of Spanish claims and disputes over Fernando Po.

### **2.3. Spanish Claims and Tensions on Fernando Po**

In 1845, the Spanish Crown revived its historical claim to sovereignty over Fernando Po. This claim challenged the existing English presence and authority on the island. The revival of Spanish sovereignty claims created tensions with the established English settlement on the island<sup>25</sup>. The English had maintained a presence on Fernando Po since 1827, and their settlement was strategically important<sup>26</sup>. Fernando Po's strategic significance, particularly as a monitoring point for the coast and efforts to suppress the transatlantic slave trade, made it a valuable location for European colonial powers<sup>27</sup>.

To assert Spanish control over Fernando Po, the Spanish Consul-General arrived on the island in 1845<sup>28</sup>. This marked a significant development in the on-going tensions between the

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<sup>22</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p. 35.

<sup>23</sup> Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

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

<sup>26</sup> Laburthe-Tolra, "Christianisme", p. 209.

<sup>27</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p.34.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 33.

Spanish and English presence. The Spanish Consul-General initiated negotiations with the English settlers and missionaries. Initially, the Spanish sought to restrict the activities of the missionaries, including their preaching and educational work, in favour of the Roman Catholic Church. Despite initial tensions, a compromise was eventually reached in 1845<sup>29</sup>. The Consul-General agreed to allow the presence of the Baptist missionaries on the condition that they would reside in a private capacity only. This compromise allowed the missionaries to continue their work for a limited time<sup>30</sup>.

The arrival of the Spanish Consul-General and the negotiations had a significant impact on the missionary activities led by Alfred Sakar and his colleagues. While they were allowed to remain, their activities were restricted, and they faced challenges in carrying out their work. Despite the compromise, tensions and challenges persisted on the island<sup>31</sup>. The coexistence of English settlers, Baptist missionaries, and the Spanish presence created a complex social and political environment. The compromise reached in 1845 set the stage for future developments on Fernando Po. In 1858, the Spanish steam vessel *Balboa* arrived on the island, officially marking the transition to Spanish colonial rule and significantly influencing the island's dynamics<sup>32</sup>.

The events of 1845 and the subsequent transition to Spanish rule marked a critical phase in Fernando Po's history, as it shifted from English influence and missionary activities to Spanish colonial control resulting to Spanish interference and clash of interest.

### **3. Spanish Interference and Clash of Interests**

The period of Spanish interference and clash of interest on Fernando Po was marked by several significant events. These included restrictions imposed by the Spanish Consul-General, continued efforts by the Spanish authorities to halt the Baptist Mission's activities and ultimately, the decisive expulsion of missionaries and a religious proclamation.

#### **3.1. Spanish Consul-General's Restrictions**

In 1845, the Spanish Consul-General attempted to limit the activities of the Baptist missionaries on Fernando Po. He required them to reside in a private capacity, imposing

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<sup>29</sup> W. G. Nkwi, "Salt wata modernity: the port city of Victoria (Cameroon) ca. 1920's- 1980", *Coriolis*, vol 6, n° 2, 2016, p.37.

<sup>30</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p.33.

<sup>31</sup> Laburthe-Tolra, "Christianisme", p. 209.

<sup>32</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p.33.

restrictions on their public religious and educational work<sup>33</sup>. The clash of religious and cultural values became evident as British and Spanish interests collided. The Baptist missionaries represented Protestantism, while the Spanish authorities aimed to promote Roman Catholicism<sup>34</sup>. These restrictions significantly affected the missionary work led by Alfred Sakar and his colleagues. They faced challenges in fulfilling their religious and educational missions because of increased Spanish interference.

Following the Spanish Consul-General's restrictions, tensions heightened as the Spanish authorities continued their efforts to halt the Baptist mission's activities on Fernando Po.

### **3.1. Continued Spanish Efforts to stop the Baptist mission**

Spanish authorities continued their efforts to suppress the Baptist Mission's activities on the island. They sought to establish Roman Catholic dominance and diminish the influence of the Protestant missionaries. Spanish bishops and priests arrived on Fernando Po with the objective of furthering Roman Catholicism and extinguishing the Baptist Mission's influence<sup>35</sup>. This marked an escalation in the religious and cultural conflict. Despite Spanish efforts, they faced resistance from both the local population and the Baptist missionaries. The island's inhabitants, who had been influenced by the Baptist Mission, resisted the imposition of Roman Catholicism<sup>36</sup>.

As the Spanish authorities persisted in their attempts to stop British mission, tensions escalated, eventually leading to the decisive expulsion of missionaries and the issuance of a religious proclamation on Fernando Po.

### **3.2. Decisive Expulsion and Religious Proclamation**

The turning point in this religious and cultural conflict came in May 1858 when Commander Don Carlos Chacon arrived on Fernando Po with Spanish forces<sup>37</sup>. He came to declare Roman Catholicism as the sole permitted religion on the island. Commander Chacon's arrival marked the culmination of Spanish efforts to establish their religious authority and expel

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<sup>33</sup>Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 95.

<sup>34</sup> Ekali, "The fluctuating fortunes", p.321

<sup>35</sup> Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 94.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p.34.

the Protestant missionaries<sup>38</sup>. This was a significant moment in the island's history. With the arrival of Spanish forces, a proclamation was made that declared Roman Catholicism as the only permitted religion on Fernando Po. All other religious practices were excluded, and private worship within families was the only acceptable form of religious expression.

The period from 1845 to May 1858 witnessed escalating tensions between British Protestant missionaries and Spanish authorities over religious and cultural dominance on Fernando Po. The arrival of Commander Chacon and the proclamation of religious exclusivity represented the decisive moment when Spanish influence prevailed on the island. This resulted to the search of a new home, and consequently, the founding of Victoria.

## **II. THE FOUNDING OF VICTORIA**

The founding of Victoria is a story of exploration, vision and the search for an ideal location. It begins with the exploration and careful selection of a suitable site, guided by the vision of Alfred Sakar. As Sakar's aspirations took shape, the quest for the perfect location led to arrival at Amba Bay. This part is based on the journey of discovery and decision making that ultimately resulted to the establishment of Victoria.

### **1. Exploration and Selection of Location**

The exploration and selection of a location for Victoria were driven by Sakar's vision and the quest for an ideal setting. As Sakar's vision crystalizes, the search for the perfect spot intensified, eventually leading to the arrival at Amba Bay. These intricate processes of exploration, vision and decision-making paved the way for the founding of Victoria.

#### **1.1. Alfred Sakar's Vision**

Alfred Sakar, a determined and visionary missionary, faced the pivotal challenge of finding a new home for those who cherished freedom and religious truth<sup>39</sup>. The pressing need was to secure a settlement where religious liberty could flourish amidst the backdrop of geopolitical shifts and challenges. The abandonment of Clarence marked a turning point, driving Sakar to seek a new haven for those who valued liberty and truth<sup>40</sup>. Clarence, the initial settlement on the island of Fernando Po, had been a beacon of hope for those seeking refuge and a place to practice their faith freely. It was founded by the British as a strategic outpost but

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<sup>38</sup> Esambe, "Urbanisation", p.22.

<sup>39</sup> Takang, *An illustrated history*, p.42.

<sup>40</sup> Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 97.

evolved into a sanctuary for liberated individuals, artisans, and labourers from Sierra Leone. Here, they could live as free British subjects under English rule<sup>41</sup>.

However, historical tides and geopolitical shifts were unforgiving. Around the mid-19th century, Clarence faced abandonment due to changing circumstances, which could have meant the end of a haven for those who cherished freedom and religious truth. It was at this critical juncture that Alfred Sakar's unwavering commitment to the principles of liberty and religious truth came to the forefront<sup>42</sup>. Rather than succumbing to adversity, he saw an imperative need to secure a new settlement where these cherished values could not only survive but also flourish.

Sakar was not just a missionary; he was a visionary who believed that religious freedom was not a negotiable principle. His devotion to this cause was unshakable, driving him to seek a new haven for those who shared his passion for liberty and truth. With Clarence's abandonment as the backdrop, Sakar embarked on a mission, not just as a religious leader but also as a pioneer in the search for a new home<sup>43</sup>. He was well aware that simply abandoning their pursuit of religious freedom was not an option. Sakar's vision was not confined to merely relocating people; it encompassed the establishment of a settlement where religious liberty could thrive, untouched by the challenges and geopolitical shifts of the time<sup>44</sup>.

Alfred Sakar's vision was more than a response to adversity; it was a testament to his unyielding commitment to the ideals of freedom and religious truth. His determination to establish a new settlement would later lead to the founding of Victoria, a unique community where religious freedom would indeed flourish.

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<sup>41</sup> Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p.95.

<sup>42</sup> Van Slageren, *Les origines de l'Eglise evangelistique du Cameroun Mission Européennes et Christianisme autochtone*, Leiden, E.J Brill, 1972, p.27.

<sup>43</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p.34.

<sup>44</sup> Takang, *An illustrated history*, p.42.

**Photo 1: Photo of Alfred Sakar**



**Source:** B. E. Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p.95<sup>45</sup>

Sakar's vision set the stage for the subsequent search for an ideal location, as he sought to bring his aspirations to fruition amidst the landscape of Amba Bay.

## **1.2. Search for an ideal location**

In the pursuit of Alfred Sakar's visionary goal to establish a settlement where religious freedom and community could flourish, a critical phase involved the search for an ideal location<sup>46</sup>. This quest for the right place was not merely a matter of convenience; it was an important factor that could determine the success of their mission and the preservation of cherished values. Selecting the right location was a multifaceted endeavour, fraught with complexity. It was not merely about finding a spot on the map but about identifying a place that could support the fundamental principles of religious freedom and community cohesion.

The settlers, led by Sakar, had to navigate a range of factors, including geography, accessibility, sustainability, and the potential for growth. Their choice would have far-reaching consequences for the success of their mission. Alfred Sakar, known for his indefatigable spirit, did not embark on this journey alone. A devoted group of companions who shared his vision

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<sup>45</sup>Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 93.

<sup>45</sup> Parry, *The age of reconnaissance: discovery*, p.30.

<sup>46</sup> Ekali, "The fluctuating fortunes", p.320.

and determination accompanied him<sup>47</sup>. Their exploration encompassed a wide geographical area, as they scoured various potential locations. This thorough approach allowed them to evaluate each site's suitability in terms of their mission's objectives. Amidst their search, religious freedom remained the guiding principle. The chosen location had to provide an environment where this freedom could not only be practiced but also protected from external challenges.

Sakar's unwavering commitment to this principle was the compass that directed their exploration. It was not just about relocating; it was about finding a place where religious liberty would thrive<sup>48</sup>. Beyond religious freedom, the settlers sought a place where community could flourish. This meant considering factors like accessibility to resources, suitability for settlement, and the potential for growth. Sustainability was paramount. The chosen location had to be capable of supporting not just the settlers' immediate needs but also their long-term aspirations<sup>49</sup>. The stakes in this search for an ideal location were undeniably high. The success of their mission depended on making the right choice. An unsuitable location could jeopardize the very principles they held dear. The meticulous search for an ideal location underscores the settlers' commitment to their vision. It serves as a testament to their dedication to religious freedom and community building.

Ultimately, this quest led them to a place that would become the foundation for Victoria; a unique settlement where these cherished values would not only be preserved but would thrive, leaving a lasting legacy for generations to come. The next part will explore their arrival at Amba Bay and the significance of this choice in more detail.

### **1.3. Arrival at Amba Bay**

The expedition led by Alfred Sakar embarked on a significant voyage that marked the beginning of their quest to find an ideal location for their settlement. Their arrival at Amba Bay was a pivotal moment in their journey, fraught with challenges and yet filled with hope. The journey commenced on a notably wet and gloomy morning in June 1858. This was the moment when Sakar and his dedicated team set sail on a small native craft, departing from the island of Fernando Po<sup>50</sup>. The decision to set out on this voyage was a bold one, driven by their unwavering commitment to find a new home where religious freedom and community could

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<sup>47</sup> Laburthe- Tolra, « Christianisme et ouverture », p.209.

<sup>48</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p.35

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 99.



thrive. From the very outset, the voyage was marked by adversity. The adverse weather conditions they encountered posed a considerable challenge. Sailing in a small craft made them particularly vulnerable to the elements. The unpredictable nature of the weather, including heavy rain and chopping winds, tested the resilience of the explorers. These conditions were just the beginning of the challenges they would face<sup>51</sup>.

As they made their way towards their initial destination, Bimbia, the explorers had to contend with not only the weather but also the logistical challenges of the voyage. This included the need to manage a small craft in rough seas, where the elements often dictated the pace of their journey. The journey was fraught with uncertainties, and their determination was a driving force in overcoming these obstacles. Bimbia, a significant coastal location, served as the starting point for their exploration. This coastal settlement had historical significance and was the gateway to the broader region they aimed to explore.

Their arrival at Bimbia marked the beginning of their quest to identify a suitable location for their settlement. It was from here that they would set out to explore the surrounding areas and make the critical decision that would shape their future.

## **2. Exploration of Amba Bay**

The exploration of Amba Bay involved encounters with King William, navigating challenging wilderness and discovery of the Bay of Amboises. This part works on the adventures and discoveries made during the exploration of Amba Bay, highlighting the encounters with local rural, the rugged terrain and the stunning natural landscape that shaped the journey of discovery.

### **2.1. Meeting with King William**

Following their arrival in Bimbia, Alfred Sakar and his team recognized the importance of engaging with local leaders to facilitate their mission of establishing a settlement. One of the key figures they sought to collaborate with was King William, a prominent chief in the Bimbia region. King William held a significant position as a chief in the area<sup>52</sup>, making him a crucial figure to engage with for their endeavour. Alfred Sakar and his team approached King William with respect and diplomacy, recognizing that securing the support and cooperation of local leaders was essential for their exploration and the acquisition of land for their settlement.

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<sup>51</sup>Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 99.

<sup>52</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p. 34.

In their meeting with King William, Alfred Saker articulated their mission and vision. He explained their intention to establish a settlement where religious freedom would be preserved, and a community based on their values could thrive<sup>53</sup>. The pivotal aspect of this meeting was seeking King William's consent and cooperation in acquiring a suitable tract of land along the coast. His approval would be instrumental in making their vision a reality. King William welcomed the idea and agreed to sell the required land<sup>54</sup>.

King William's response to their proposal was significant. His willingness to collaborate and offer consent to the missionaries signalled a positive step forward in their exploration<sup>55</sup>. His support and cooperation were invaluable, as it indicated that local leadership recognized the potential benefits of having the missionaries establish a settlement in the area.

**Photo 2: Image of king Williams**



Source: NAB, File no Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, "Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958"<sup>56</sup>

After meeting with King William, the explorers ventured into the challenging wilderness, encountering rugged terrain and unpredictable natural obstacles along the way.

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<sup>53</sup>Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 98

<sup>54</sup> Laburthe- Tolra, "Christianisme et ouverture", p. 209.

<sup>55</sup>Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 98.

<sup>56</sup> NAB, File no Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, "Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958", p.19.

## 2.2. Challenging Wilderness

The expedition led by Alfred Sakar and his companions from Bimbria into the wilderness was a significant part of their exploration to find an ideal location for their envisioned settlement in the Bay of Amboises<sup>57</sup>. This phase of their journey was characterized by several notable challenges. As they ventured further into the wilderness, they encountered rocky shores along the coastline<sup>58</sup>. These rocky and uneven terrains made travel difficult, requiring careful navigation to avoid hazards. The rocky shores also presented challenges during their exploration, as they needed to find suitable areas for landing and further investigation. The presence of cliffs along their path added complexity to their journey. Navigating these cliffs, which were likely steep and rugged, required caution and physical exertion. Additionally, elevated terrain posed challenges, as they had to ascend and descend, often making the journey physically demanding<sup>59</sup>.

The explorers encountered thick and dense forests as they moved inland from the coast. These forests presented obstacles in terms of visibility, navigation, and the need to clear paths. Moving through dense foliage and undergrowth required physical effort, with the explorers having to cut through vegetation to create passages. In the wilderness, without established paths or trails, navigation was challenging. They relied on their knowledge of the area and guidance from local sources to find their way. The lack of clear landmarks in dense forests and along rocky shores made it necessary to rely on natural cues and geographical features to stay on course.

Despite these challenges, Sakar and his companions persevered in their exploration. Their determination to find a suitable location for their settlement in the face of such physical obstacles underscored their commitment to their mission. It also highlighted the importance of their eventual discovery of the Bay of Amboises, which offered the promise of a more favourable site for their envisioned settlement.

Navigating through the challenging wilderness, the explorers pressed onward until they made the remarkable discovery of the Bay of Amboises, unveiling a gem amidst the rugged landscapes.

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<sup>57</sup> Laburthe- Tolra, ‘‘ Christianisme et ouverture’’, p.209.

<sup>58</sup>Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 98.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

### 2.3. Discovery of the Bay of Amboises

The discovery of the Bay of Amboises was a momentous event in the journey of Alfred Sakar and his companions. It represented the realization of their quest to find the perfect location for their envisioned settlement. The Bay of Amboises stretched out with nearly two miles of untouched, pristine beachfront<sup>60</sup>. This expansive sandy shoreline presented not only a scenic view but also an opportunity for practical use. The vast beachfront provided ample space for various activities, from constructing homes to establishing trade facilities. What made the bay particularly appealing was the relatively calm nature of its waters<sup>61</sup>. Unlike the tumultuous seas often encountered outside the bay, the waters within were much more tranquil. This natural shelter from the elements was a valuable asset, especially for navigation and for any potential harbour or docking facilities.

The expansive beachfront offered ample room for development. This space was not only vital for constructing the settlement itself but also for setting up the infrastructure needed for commerce and trade<sup>62</sup>. Wharves, docks, and landing piers could be established along the beachfront. The bay's sheltered waters made it ideal for commercial activities<sup>63</sup>. It had the potential to become a thriving hub for trade with the local indigenous populations as well as neighbouring regions. Access to calm waters encouraged trade with European vessels, contributing to its economic potential<sup>64</sup>. The presence of the nearby Cameroons Mountain added to the allure of the location. The mountain's imposing presence not only added to the visual appeal of the bay but also suggested the possibility of access to the mountainous interior. This was crucial for exploration and expansion. The location enjoyed a favourable climate, thanks to the constant sea breeze and the refreshing mountain air. Additionally, an abundant freshwater source, in the form of a stream flowing into the sea at the western end of the cove, provided a reliable supply of fresh water—an essential resource for any community<sup>65</sup>. With all these, Alfred Sakar was pleased and set up the new settlement mission station, which he named Victoria after the Queen of England.

In essence, the discovery of the Bay of Amboises offered Alfred Sakar and his companions an ideal location for their settlement. Its combination of natural beauty, protection from harsh

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<sup>60</sup> Laburthe- Tolra, ‘‘ Christianisme et ouverture’’, p. 209.

<sup>61</sup>NAB, File no Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, ‘‘Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958’’, p.19.

<sup>62</sup> Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 101.

<sup>63</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p.35.

<sup>64</sup>Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 101.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

weather, abundant space, commercial potential, proximity to the mountain, and access to freshwater made it a highly promising site. This discovery marked the beginning of their journey to establish Victoria, a place where religious freedom, community, and commerce could flourish.

### **3. Establishment of Victoria**

The establishment of Victoria unfolded with the solemn act of taking possession accompanied by prayer, followed by rapid progress in developing the settlement. Public worship and meticulous planning played pivotal roles in shaping the early days of Victoria.

#### **3.1. Taking Possession with Prayer**

The act of taking possession of the land in the Bay of Amboises with a heartfelt prayer was a significant and symbolic step in the establishment of Victoria. Taking possession of the land was a symbolic gesture that signified the commitment and ownership of the newfound location<sup>66</sup>. It was a declaration that this land, with its potential and promise, was now dedicated to their cause the establishment of a settlement that valued religious freedom and community. The act of prayer added a profound spiritual dimension to this symbolic gesture. Prayer is a deeply meaningful practice in many religious traditions, and by invoking prayer, the settlers acknowledged the importance of divine guidance and blessing in their endeavour. It demonstrated their faith and reliance on a higher power to guide them in this significant undertaking.

Gathering together for this act of possession and prayer also fostered a sense of communal unity among the settlers. It reinforced the idea that they were embarking on this journey as a collective, bound by a shared vision and purpose<sup>67</sup>. The communal aspect of the prayer underscored the importance of unity in their new community. The prayer likely included expressions of their hopes, aspirations, and intentions for the land and the settlement. It served as a formal declaration of their purpose, emphasizing their commitment to creating a place where religious freedom could flourish. June 9, 1858, became a historical marker for the founding of Victoria. It was the day when they officially began their journey to transform this

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<sup>66</sup>Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p.104.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*

wild and beautiful land into a thriving settlement<sup>68</sup>. The act of prayer on this date held lasting significance for the settlers and their descendants.

Following the act of taking possession with prayer, the establishment of Victoria gained momentum, as rapid progress became a driving force in shaping the thriving settlement.

### **3.2. Rapid Progress in Establishing Victoria**

The settlers of Victoria, led by Alfred Sakar, displayed remarkable determination and resilience in the face of challenging weather conditions. Despite the constant wind and rain, they were undeterred in their mission to establish the settlement. This resilience was a testament to their commitment to creating a new home for themselves and others who valued religious freedom. To begin building Victoria, the settlers wasted no time. They immediately started felling trees, using the available natural resources to construct the infrastructure they needed<sup>69</sup>. This efficient use of resources allowed them to make rapid progress in the early stages of settlement development. The settlers started with a rudimentary hut, likely a basic shelter to protect themselves from the elements<sup>70</sup>. However, they quickly expanded this structure, making it more suitable for habitation. This expansion marked the beginning of the physical presence of Victoria, where settlers could reside and work on further developments<sup>71</sup>.

To ensure the orderly growth of the settlement, sections of land were designated for specific purposes. Some areas were set aside for stores, which would likely house essential supplies for the community. Family dwellings were also planned, showing the intention to create a self-sustaining and organized community. The settlers' resourcefulness in making rapid progress was essential. They adapted to the challenging environment, leveraging their skills and determination to create a foundation for Victoria's future growth.

As Victoria took shape, the focus shifted towards establishing public worship spaces and meticulously planning to ensure the orderly development of the settlement.

### **3.3. Public worship and planning**

As the settlement of Victoria began to take shape in August 1858, several significant developments occurred. One of the notable milestones was the commencement of public

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<sup>68</sup>NAB, File no Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, "Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958", p.20.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid*, p.20.

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*.

worship services<sup>72</sup>. This indicated the settlers' commitment to their religious faith and the importance of spiritual life within their new community. Public worship provided a sense of continuity with their experiences and marked the beginning of religious activities in Victoria<sup>73</sup>. With the basic settlement infrastructure in place, the settlers turned their attention to the physical layout of Victoria. Roads were constructed to connect different parts of the settlement. This step was vital for mobility, trade, and the overall development of the colony. Urban planning played a crucial role in organizing the settlement efficiently. The allocation of building lots signalled a structured approach to urban development<sup>74</sup>. Each lot designated for specific purposes, such as residential, commercial, or community spaces, contributed to the orderly growth of Victoria. It allowed settlers to establish their homes and businesses within a planned framework<sup>75</sup>.

Alfred Sakar and his companions envisioned Victoria as more than just a settlement; it was to be a center of civilization, freedom, and light. This vision emphasized their aspiration to create a community that would embody principles of freedom, education, and progress<sup>76</sup>. It aimed to be a beacon of hope and enlightenment in the region. Through public worship and urban planning, the settlers demonstrated their commitment to continuity and stability. Despite the challenges they faced in establishing Victoria, they sought to maintain a sense of normalcy and purpose. This commitment played a crucial role in the resilience of the community.

## II. POPULATION STRUCTURE OF VICTORIA BEFORE 1858

Before the arrival of the Baptist Missionaries in “Victoria”, *foh*<sup>77</sup> ( which will be later Baptist Victoria) was occupied by some ethnic groups of Cameroon, prominently the Bakweri people. *Foh* was the local name used by the Bakweri people. It was a disserted place where those found guilty of witchcraft from Buea were driven to; in this case *Foh* means “faraway”<sup>78</sup>.

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<sup>72</sup>Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 98.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> NAB, file n° Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958, NAB. p.20

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Foh, Phoh, Mvoh* means far away, usually used when someone is charged and found guilty of witchcraft, while *Voh* means a distant land.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Emmanuel Mokande, age 60, traditional Notable 1, Mile 4 Limbe, 26 March 2023.



Also, the name *Foh* could refer to “a distant land” which was often used by people leaving Buea to *Foh* which was quite distant from Buea<sup>79</sup>.

## 1. Ethnic composition of Victoria

Victoria, located in what is now known as the Southwest Region of Cameroon, has a diverse ethnic composition due to historical migrations, colonial influences, and the impact of the plantation economy. Here is an overview of some prominent ethnic groups that made up the population of Victoria before the arrival of the Baptist Missionaries.

### 1.1. Bakweri

The Bakweri also known as *Kwe* are one of the prominent indigenous groups in Victoria<sup>80</sup>. They inhabit the territory East and Southeast of the main axis of the Cameroon Mountain. They have a long history in the region and were traditionally associated with the areas around Mount Cameroon<sup>81</sup>. According to their traditions, *Bamboko* located on the other side of Mount Cameroon, is considered their place of origin. They settled in their first communities around the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Bakweri villages are mainly extended family units<sup>82</sup>. Settlement in the Bakweri tradition is an individual affair, where a person or a few relatives moved to establish a new village. The Bakweri continue to be a significant part of Victoria's population. All Bakweri believe they originated directly from *Mboko*. Unique traditions of origin exist such as the *Maumu* claiming to come from *Songo* River in Meme Division and the *Bojongo* traditions tracing their descent from *Njonge*, a man of *Ewonji* on the creeks<sup>83</sup>.

After looking at the Bakweri, another prominent group is the Isubu.

### 1.2. Isubu

The *Isubu*, sometimes spelled as *Isuwu* or *Isu*, reside in enclaves on the Bimbia promontory along the coast<sup>84</sup>. They have a mixed origin, with their territory becoming known as Bimbia in the past. The Isubu population has declined significantly over the years. Historically, the Isubu played a significant role in early trade with Europeans and actively

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<sup>79</sup> Interview with David Esombe Nanywe, age 56, traditional ruler and member of Regional Assembly of Chiefs, Mile 4 Limbe, 27 March 2023.

<sup>80</sup> Fanso, *Cameroon history*, p. 62.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Interview with David Itoe, age 70, farmer, Bojongo, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

<sup>83</sup> Fanso, *Cameroon history*, p. 62.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Thomas Nasako, age 82, retired teacher, Dikolo village, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2023.



participated as intermediaries in the slave trade<sup>85</sup>. The Isubu chief, particularly in the 18<sup>th</sup> century enjoyed favour from the whites who supported them in clashes with neighbouring groups. Overtime, the *Isubu* tribe became confined to three villages in two enclaves on the coast of the Bimbia promontory, surrounded by plantations. Despite their reduced territorial presence, the Isubu were influential especially during the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>86</sup>. *Nako* a Grandson of Chief *Mbimbi* gained recognition from Europeans as the chief of *Bonangomba*, contributing to the prominence of the Isubu in slave trade<sup>87</sup>.

After *Nako*'s death, the tribe's strength shifted to Bonabile, a settlement founded by Bile, known as "King William" by the British Consuls from 1826, received support from them in conflicts with neighbouring tribes<sup>88</sup>. In 1858, King William ceded land to Alfred Sakar, a Baptist Missionary, leading to the establishment of Victoria<sup>89</sup>.

After exploring the Isubu, it is important to examine the Wovea people.

### 1.3. The Wovea

The *Wovea* people, also known as '*Ewota*' by the Bakweri and *Bota* by the Douala inhabit the Pirate Islands in Amba Bay and have villages on the mainland opposite<sup>90</sup>. The Wovea people usually grouped with the Bakweri tribe due to their small numbers and similarities in custom and language. They have a unique origin, with some being descendants of *Bubi* people from Fernando Po. The Bota village Group is made up of the enclave Bota Island, the separate *Ngeme* enclave, and the two Bakweri settlements of *kie* and *Mokindi*<sup>91</sup>.

Initially, the Wovea inhabited the two larger Islands in Amba Bay, namely *Ndam* and *Mondole*. However, they vacated Amba Bay during the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>92</sup>.

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<sup>85</sup> Interview with Vivian Ndivi, age 68, housewife, Mile 4 Limbe, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Chief Epupa Samuel Ekum, age 75, Traditional ruler of Dikolo village Bimbia and Honorary Chairman of Fako Chief Conference, New Town Limbe, 2023.

<sup>87</sup> Ardener, *The plantation*, p.154.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p. 35.

<sup>90</sup> Interview Josephine Ekeli, age 70, business woman, Bota Middle Farms, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

<sup>91</sup> Interview Juliet Enene, age 27, graduate, Botland chieftdom, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

<sup>92</sup> Fanso, *Cameroon history*, p. 63.

## 2. Migration and settlement of some ethnic groups to Victoria

The ethnic composition of Victoria is a testament to its historical and cultural diversity, shaped by migrations<sup>93</sup>, colonial influences, and economic activities such as plantation agriculture. Each of these groups has contributed to the rich tapestry of Victoria's cultural heritage. The tribes indigenous to Victoria Division, such as the Bakweri (*Kpe*), *Bamboko* (*Mbako*), Isuwu (Isubu), Wove, *Bakolle*, *Balong*, and Mongo, have complex origins and migration patterns<sup>94</sup>. This part focuses on the migration, settlement<sup>95</sup> and establishment of “Victoria” before the arrival of the Baptist Missionaries.

### 2.1. The Bakweri migration

The numerically significant Bakweri people originated from the *Mboko* country on the North Western side of the Cameroon Mountain. Their migration to the South Western side of the mountain, where they founded villages, began around 1750-70<sup>96</sup>. Over time, they moved down to the coast and creeks, establishing their presence in the Victoria Division.

The Bakweri are a cluster consisting of the *Mboko*, Isuwu and *Wovea* groups. Their settlement is largely the result of the Bantu migration from the mid-18th century. The Bakweri people speak the *Mopke*<sup>97</sup> language, which is a member of the Niger-Congo family<sup>98</sup>. The Bakweri people originate from the back of Mount Fako around the lower *Bomboko*. They were mostly fishermen, who settled along the Coast, while farmers and hunters settled beside the Mount Cameroon<sup>99</sup>. Most Bakweri villages assert to originate from a group of villages that lies in a belt between 650m and 1000m up Mount Cameroon<sup>100</sup>.

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<sup>93</sup> Migration refers to the voluntary and involuntary movement of people from one given area to another. In this work, it is used to refer to the voluntary and involuntary movement of some ethnic groups from their region of origin to “Victoria”.

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Kwaku Martha, housewife, Botaland chiefdom, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

<sup>95</sup> Settlement refers to the place where people live. With respect to this work, settlement of ethnic groups refers to the decision of these ethnic groups to make “Victoria” their permanent home. It involves the process of building a community, developing infrastructures and adapting to the economic, social and environmental conditions of “Victoria”.

<sup>96</sup> J. Takougang, “Chief Johannes Manga Williams and the making of a “native” colonial autocrat among the Bakweri of the southern Cameroons, *Trans African journal of History*, Vol 23, 1994, p.11.

<sup>97</sup> Delancey, *The historical dictionary*, p. 54.

<sup>98</sup> The Niger-Congo family is one of the largest language families in the world. It is named after the two major rivers, the River Niger and the Congo River, that run through the region where many Niger-Congo languages are spoken.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Chief Epupa Samuel Ekum, age 75, Traditional ruler of Dikolo village Bimbina and Honorary Chairman of Fako Chief Conference, New Town Limbe, 29 March 2023.

<sup>100</sup> Eyongetah, ‘A historical Survey’, p. 40.

The origin of the Bakweri dates back to two oral traditions. Firstly, the tradition of the Bakweri in Buea, which states that a certain Eye *Njie* from *Bomboko* who usually went up towards the Eastward side of Mount Cameroon to haunt with his friend *Nakande*. Eye *Njie* usually haunted around the river area that is present day Buea while *Nakande* haunted in the area, which is present day Wonakanda. They settled with their wives and opened gardens that drew the interest of friends and relatives from *Womboko* who later joined them<sup>101</sup>.

Another tradition affirms that *Manyang Masonje* left *Isongo* and *Bakingili* where he settled around Bimbria. There, he had many catches in “*Isu*” meaning the end of my journey. *Nakande* from *Bomboko* settled in *Bonakande*, which was called *Ligbea* meaning a place for good farming. He was a farmer<sup>102</sup>. Haunting could be seen as the main motive behind the migration of the *Bomboko* people. However, although haunting could be said to be the main reason that favoured the movement of the *Bomboko* people, nonetheless, the presence of fertile soil around the slopes of Mount Cameroon also contributed<sup>103</sup>. The men practised fishing and hunting, while the women carried out farming. The Bakweri are located on the Eastern and South Eastern slopes of the Mountain, the coastal *Bomboko* are found on the South East coast, the inland *Bomboko* are found on the North-West of the Bakweri and the *Isubu* and *Wovea* people are located on the South- Eastern Coast of Fako Divison<sup>104</sup>.

Moving from the Bakweri Migration, it is important to explore the *Isuwu* migration.

## 2.2. *Isuwu* Migration

Migrants from the coastal area of Mboko formed the *Isuwu* tribe, also known as *Subu* or *Isubu*. They settled on the Bimbria promontory in the mid-eighteenth century. Their contact with the Duala people facilitated their involvement in trade with Europeans.

The *Isuwu* or Bimbria people are a small Bakweri ethnic group located in the South-Western Coastal region of Cameroon. The Bimbria people claim their ancestral origins to a native of *Mboko* known as *Isuwu na Monango*<sup>105</sup>. The *Isuwu* chieftaincy is situated on the Western Spur of the Cameroon Mountain. The *Isuwu* lineage is said to have descended from

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<sup>101</sup> Eyongetah, ‘A historical Survey’, p. 40.

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Chief Epupa Samuel Ekum, age 75, Traditional ruler of Dikolo village Bimbria and Honorary Chairman of Fako Chief Conference, New Town Limbe, 29 March 2023.

<sup>103</sup> Interview with Catherine Mbella, age 62, queen and business woman, Botoland chieftdom, 27 March 2023.

<sup>104</sup> Aderner, *kingdoms on Mount Cameroon*, p. 26.

<sup>105</sup> Fanso, *Cameroon history*, p. 63.

one of *Isuwu na Monanga's* offspring *Mbimbi* an individual of *Mboko* community<sup>106</sup>. He played an important role in the history of the *Isuwu* people. As a result, the people came to be known as Bimbians and the land was named Bimbia. Two descendants of *Mbimbi* initiated the establishment of *Isuwu* settlement, namely *Likolo* (or *Dikolo*) and *Wonyangomba*<sup>107</sup>. Another notable settlement, *Wonyabili*, which European traders referred to as Williamstown, eventually emerged as the most influential trading centre. Together, they formed what later became recognised as Bimbia<sup>108</sup>.

The exact details of the migration and settlement of the Bimbia people in Victoria is not well known, but there are some historical accounts that provide some insight. According to Oral Tradition, the Bimbia people were originally fishermen and traders who migrated from Niger Delta Region in the mid-17th century<sup>109</sup>. They settled along the coastline near present-day Victoria, establishing a thriving fishing industry and trading with neighbouring tribes and Europeans. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Victoria became a centre of commerce for the region, attracting many people from surrounding areas. The Bimbia people were amongst the people who settled in Victoria.

After examining the migration of the *Isuwu* people, it is important to examine the migration of the *Wovea* people.

### 2.3. The migration of *Wovea* people

The *Wovea* people are a Bakweri ethnic group found in South western Cameroon. The *Wovea* people have a history of migration and settlement. The migration of the *Wovea* people can be traced back to their ancestral roots on the Island of Fernando Po and their subsequent settlement in Amba Bay<sup>110</sup>. According to *Wovea* Oral tradition, their lineage can be traced back to a man hailing from Fernando Po, who experienced a shipwreck off the Mboko Coast. Miraculously surviving the ordeal, this resilient survivor eventually married a Mboko woman and established a settlement on the largest rocky island in Amba Bay. This migration from Fernando Po to Amba Bay is believed to have been established during the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>111</sup>. However, as the 19<sup>th</sup> unfolded, circumstances prompted the *Wovea* people to

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<sup>106</sup> Interview with Joseph Wolete, age 65, farmer, New town Limbe, 24 March 2023.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Mathias Litumbe, age 70, businessman, Down Beach Limbe, 24 March 2023.

<sup>108</sup> Fanso, *Cameroon history*, p. 63.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Interview with Mirabel Mbella, teacher, Botaland chiefdom, 27 March 2023.

<sup>111</sup> Fanso, *Cameroon history*, p. 63.

gradually vacate Ambas Bay. Subsequently, the Wovea people sought a new home and settled in Mondole.

However, their stay in Mondole was short-lived. In 1905, they were forced to evacuate the Island due to the establishment of a leper settlement, which compelled the Wovea people to find an alternative place<sup>112</sup>. Subsequently, the Wovea people found a new home in Victoria, which became their new destination for resettlement, and it served as their new cultural and economic center. The Wovea people adapted to their new environment and engaged in various livelihood activities such as fishing, farming, and trading<sup>113</sup>.

After examining the migration of the different ethnic groups to Victoria, it is important to see their various economic activities, which shaped the economy of Victoria.

### 3. Economic activities

Before the arrival of Baptist missionaries and the establishment of the Baptist settlement of Victoria in what is now the Southwest Region of Cameroon, the indigenous economy of the area was characterized by subsistence agriculture, fishing, and a relatively simple trade system. Below is an overview of the indigenous economy of Victoria during that period

#### 3.1. Subsistence Agriculture

The primary economic activity of the indigenous people of Victoria was subsistence farming. They cultivated a variety of crops to meet their dietary needs. This was a staple crop for the Bakweri people. It is a type of yam (*Dioscorea dumetor*) that was grown and consumed as a source of carbohydrates<sup>114</sup>. Maize was an essential cereal crop in their diet, harvested during specific seasons. Plantains and Bananas were also cultivated but usually took longer to yield. They were an important part of the diet. Cocoyam and yams were among the root crops grown by the indigenous people. They provided sustenance throughout the year<sup>115</sup>. These crops were grown in rotation to ensure a steady food supply throughout the year. The Bamboko tribe, situated near the Bakweri, also practiced subsistence agriculture<sup>116</sup>. They grew similar crops to the Bakweri, including yams and maize. The Isubu people, living in the Bimbria promontory,

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<sup>112</sup> Fanso, *Cameroon history*, p. 63.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Gustave Peter Mokoko, age 60, farmer, Mile 4 Limbe, 25 March 2023.

<sup>114</sup> NAB, File No Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, "Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958", p. 53.

<sup>115</sup> Interview with Vivian Eposi, age 64, farmer, New Town, 12<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

<sup>116</sup> Interview with Pierre Nitcheu, age 60, driver, Mile 4 Limbe, 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

practiced mixed agriculture and were known for their involvement in the slave trade. They cultivated crops suitable for their coastal location.

### 3.2. Fishing and trade

Given Victoria's coastal location and proximity to water bodies like the Mungo River and Ambas Bay, fishing was a significant economic activity<sup>117</sup>. Various types of fishing equipment, including harpoons, tridents, and fish traps, were used to catch fish and other aquatic species. Fishing was a vital economic activity for the Bakweri people, particularly those living in coastal enclaves like Bota. Traditional fishing methods like harpoons and fish traps were used<sup>118</sup>.

While the indigenous people were not primarily known as traders, there was a system of trade in place. Early markets were established near the coast, facilitating trade between coastal communities and inland farming villages<sup>119</sup>. These markets allowed for the exchange of agricultural produce for fish caught by coastal fishermen. Trade networks existed between coastal communities and inland farming villages. These exchanges involved agricultural produce like farrowing, maize, and cocoyam in return for fish and seafood.

### 3.3. Livestock and hunting

Indigenous people practiced livestock farming on a small scale. Goats were particularly common, and they held cultural and economic significance<sup>120</sup>. Cattle, sheep, chickens, and some ducks were also raised in villages. Indigenous communities, including the Bakweri, practiced limited livestock farming<sup>121</sup>. Goats were common and held cultural significance, often used in ceremonies and as a form of wealth. Some hunting activities existed, with traditional tools and methods. Wildlife such as bush meat was occasionally part of the diet. While not a primary economic activity, hunting contributed to the indigenous diet. Indigenous people used traditional tools like harpoons for hunting<sup>122</sup>.

Indigenous communities engaged in various craft activities, such as pottery and the production of traditional tools and utensils. Indigenous communities engaged in pottery

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<sup>117</sup>NAB, File N° Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, "Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958", p.53.

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Marthins Njei, 65, fisherman, Botaland, 12<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

<sup>119</sup> Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 102.

<sup>120</sup> NAB, File N° Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, "Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958", p.53.

<sup>121</sup> Interview with Taguela, 68, driver, Mile 4 Limbe, 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

making. They designed pots, containers, and utensils for various domestic purposes<sup>123</sup>. Local artisans produced tools and utensils used in agriculture, fishing, and everyday life. It is important to note that the economy of Victoria was relatively self-sufficient, with communities relying on a combination of agriculture, fishing, and local trade to meet their basic needs<sup>124</sup>. This traditional way of life began to change with the arrival of Baptist missionaries and the establishment of plantations, which introduced new economic dynamics and crops to the region. While the indigenous people were not primarily known as traders, there was a system of trade in place. Early markets were established near the coast, facilitating trade between coastal communities and inland farming villages<sup>125</sup>. These markets allowed for the exchange of agricultural produce for fish caught by coastal fishermen<sup>126</sup>. Trade networks existed between coastal communities and inland farming villages. These exchanges involved agricultural produce like farrowing, maize, and cocoyam in return for fish and seafood.

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<sup>123</sup> Interview with Vivian Eposi, 64, farmer, New Town, 12<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with Martha Bisala Ngongang, 89, former business owner, Coconut Island Limbe, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

<sup>125</sup> Interview with Rebecca Bisala Ngomin, 65, business woman, Coconut Island Limbe, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Marthins Njei, 65, fisherman, Botoland, 12<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE STRUCTURE OF VICTORIA BEFORE THE INDEPENDENCE (1858-1961)**

Victoria has a rich history that spans several distinct periods of colonial and post-colonial rule. From its establishment in 19<sup>th</sup> century to its development under the German colonization and subsequent administration by the League of Nations and the United Nations Organisation. Victoria has undergone significant structural changes in its administrative, socioeconomic and political dimensions. How was Victoria structured in different periods? This has led us to ask sub questions like; how was Victoria organized during the Baptist Mission era? What structures were laid during the German period and finally what was the structure of Victoria under the League of Nations and the United Nations Organization? This chapter delves into the structure of Victoria, providing a comprehensive analysis of how the town transformed over time. By examining the different periods and corresponding influences, valuable insights into the forces that shaped Victoria's development, and its place within the broader historical context of colonial and post-colonial Cameroon is gained.

### **I. VICTORIA AFTER ITS FOUNDING (1858-1884)**

Following its establishment by the English Baptist Missionary, Victoria began to develop a distinct administrative, socio-economic and political structure. Situated at an almost exclusively European town, Victoria's population consisted of missionaries, traders, liberated slaves and local Cameroonians employed by the Europeans.

#### **1. Administrative structure**

After its establishment, the administrative structure of Victoria was primarily under the English Baptist missionary who had established this settlement in 1858. Due to the British reluctance to declare Victoria a British colony and assume direct administration, the missionaries took it upon themselves to establish a functioning governance system<sup>1</sup>. With Alfred Sakar at the forefront, the missionaries played a crucial role in governing the settlement and establishing order in the community.

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<sup>1</sup> Fanso, *Cameroon history*, p. 63.



### 1.1. Missionary Influence

The English Baptist missionaries who played a significant role in the establishment of the settlement initiated the administration of Victoria town from 1858 to 1884<sup>2</sup>. As the settlement evolved, missionaries, traders, liberated slaves, and local Cameroonians working for Europeans formed the majority of the population<sup>3</sup>. The missionaries, having founded Victoria, sought to establish British colonial rule over the township, but the British government in London was hesitant. Consequently, the missionaries took it upon themselves to organize an administration through the establishment of a Court of Justice<sup>4</sup>. This missionary-led administration had a notable influence on the cultural dynamics and power structure within Victoria. Recognizing the need for oversight and accountability, the administration of Victoria maintained regular communication with the British Consul stationed at Fernando Po<sup>5</sup>. The Court of Justice diligently reported its activities, decisions, and notable cases to the British Consul. This practice ensured that the British government remained informed about the proceedings and developments within Victoria.

**Photo 3: The Alfred Sakar Monument in down Beach Limbe**



Source: Photo by Gracious Meteke Isange, Down beach Limbe, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2023

The Alfred Sakar's monument was erected by the centenary on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March 2010, in memory of his devoted work to mark the Centenary of Victoria.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> Fanzo, *Cameroon history*, p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> NAB, File N° Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958, p.79.

## 1.2. Governance and Decision-Making

To establish a system of governance, the missionaries created the Court of Justice as the administrative body responsible for maintaining law and order within Victoria. The Court comprised individuals from diverse backgrounds. Thomas Horton Johnston, a black trader, served as the chairperson, while a senior missionary typically held the notary position<sup>6</sup>. This arrangement represented a blend of European and local influence in the administration. The Court of Justice served as the primary administrative body in Victoria. While the senior missionaries held influential positions within the Court, decisions regarding governance and policies were often made collectively. The administration operated through consensus building and consultations with prominent traders and local representatives. This participatory approach aimed to incorporate various perspectives and ensure a degree of inclusivity in decision-making processes. The missionaries' familiarity with British legal systems likely influenced the legal framework and procedural aspects of the Court.

The Court of Justice played a pivotal role in upholding the rule of law and ensuring the smooth functioning of the township. It enforced regulations, settled disputes, and imposed penalties for various offences. Minor infractions were given fines, contributing to the treasury's finances<sup>7</sup>. However, for more severe offences, the Court relied on corporal punishment, administered by either a designated constable or the chairperson of the Court. This public display of punishment aimed to deter future misconduct and maintain order within the community.

This court acted as the main regulatory body, responsible for enforcing laws, resolving disputes and imposing fines for various offenses committed within the township<sup>8</sup>. For ordinary breaches of the law, fines were imposed by the court as a means to generate income for the town's needs. However, for offenses that cannot be condoned, the court relied on corrective powers of corporal punishment. Whippings were administered to offenders, particularly to those working for the Europeans<sup>9</sup>. The whipping was generally carried out by a special constable or, at times, by the chairperson of the court in front of the tribunal.

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<sup>6</sup> NAB, File N° Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958, p.79.

<sup>7</sup> Laburthe- Tolra, "Christianisme et ouverture", p.211.

<sup>8</sup> Ekali, "The fluctuating fortunes", p.323.

<sup>9</sup> Fanso, *Cameroon history*, p. 117.

Thomas Horton Johnston, a black trader who held a prominent position in Victoria, chaired the court of justice<sup>10</sup>. He likely oversaw the proceedings and decisions made by the court. The notary on the other hand was the senior missionary of Victoria, responsible for documenting the activities and outcomes of the court. Reports of the court of Justice were sent to the British consul at Fernando Po<sup>11</sup>. This communication likely served as a way to keep British authorities informed on the activities and governance within Victoria. During this period, the administrative structure was informal and lacked direct oversight of the British government, as they had not yet declared Victoria a formal colony.

To enhance safety of residents and maintain order, an administrative system consisting of a Governor and council was established<sup>12</sup>. The Governor who acted as its representative led the administration. The council composed of individuals of good character and mostly property owners assisted the Governor in decision-making. The council, consisting of no more than 12 members had equal representation. The Governor chose half of its members, while homeowners chose the other half<sup>13</sup>. They had the responsibility of overseeing public roads, transportation, landing areas and bays. They made sure cleanliness regulations was ensured and had the authority to convene and pass judgements on anyone violating the laws. The penalties imposed by the council did not exceed twenty shillings or one month of imprisonment with labour.

The foundations of all laws by this council were the respect of religious freedom and the worship of the true God, which demanded the submission of individuals' lives. Other laws included:

- While the population shared similar views on Christian worship, individuals with a different opinion on worship or Christian duty will equally enjoy the freedom of worship. Efforts will be made to ensure uninterrupted worship on the Sabbath, with all work suspended on that day. It will be regarded as a sacred day for worship and rest<sup>14</sup>.
- Concerning trade and commerce within the town and neighbouring communities, complete freedom will be granted. There will be unrestricted importation of goods, including clothing, commercial articles, machinery, and other commodities. However, certain items such as rum and other liquors will be permanently prohibited from trade and sale. Brandy, gin and wine will be allowed for medical purposes

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<sup>10</sup> Fanson, *Cameroon history*, p. 117.

<sup>11</sup> NAB, File N° Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958, p.79.

<sup>12</sup> Mveng, *L'histoire*, p.178.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> NAB, File N° Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958, p.79.

only, without intent for sale or trade, subject to a ten per cent royalty on their value. Strong or ordinary beer, intended for sale or trade will also be regulated<sup>15</sup>.

Violation of the aforementioned laws will result in penalties, including property confiscation and other fines. For the first offense, a fine of five pounds will be imposed, followed by ten pounds for the second offense and expulsion for the third offense<sup>16</sup>.

### **1.3. Indigenous Involvement and Economic Considerations**

Although European missionaries and traders predominantly led the administration, indigenous Cameroonians from neighbouring villages were also involved in the governance of Victoria. Some indigenous individuals served as local representatives or held positions within the Court of Justice, contributing to the decision-making processes and incorporating local perspectives.

Additionally, economic considerations played a crucial role in the administration of Victoria. Regulations for trade, oversight of commercial activities, and management of shipping, warehousing, banking, and insurance were important aspects of missionary activities, evolving colonial interests, and the socio-economic dynamics of the region<sup>17</sup>. The administrative structure reflected the unique circumstances and influences of the time, as well as the aspirations and challenges of a growing European settlement in Victoria. The administrators aimed to create an environment that facilitated economic growth and prosperity in line with the objectives of the missionaries and traders<sup>18</sup>. Throughout this period, the administration of Victoria operated within the broader context of European

After looking at the administrative structure of Victoria after its founding, it is important to know what socio-economic structure it had.

## **2. Socio-economic structure**

During the period 1858-1884, Victoria under the influence of the Baptist missionaries witnessed a modest economic development, primarily driven by trade and missionary activities.

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<sup>15</sup> NAB, File N° Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958, p.79.

<sup>16</sup> Mveng, *L'histoire*, p. 178.

<sup>17</sup> Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 190.

<sup>18</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p. 35.

### 1.1. Settlement and Demographics:

The London Baptist Missionary Society initially established Victoria as a missionary settlement. The early settlers in Victoria primarily consisted of missionaries, traders, liberated slaves, and Cameroonians from neighbouring communities who worked for Europeans. As a result, the population of Victoria was diverse, with a mixture of European, African, and mixed race inhabitants. The first settlers were the missionaries such as Joseph Wilson and son Joseph Wilson Junior, Stephen Burnley, Henry Scott, Daniel Moore and Hannah Michael<sup>19</sup>. The dominant social influence of Victoria was that of the Baptist missionaries, led by Alfred Sakar.

This diversity contributed to the cosmopolitan and heterogeneous nature of the settlement. The presence of European missionaries, traders, and administrators significantly influenced Victoria's social fabric. European settlers, including missionaries and traders, formed a notable portion of the population and played a significant role in shaping the town's development. Alongside European settlers, the indigenous population, including Cameroonians from neighbouring areas, played an essential role in the social structure of Victoria<sup>20</sup>. They worked in various capacities, such as labourers on plantations and as employees in the trading sector.

Victoria's population became increasingly heterogeneous as people migrated from neighbouring villages and countries, including Sierra Leoneans, Liberians, Dahomeyans, Togolese and Nigerians<sup>21</sup>. This multicultural composition, combined with the influence of the European, resulted in a cosmopolitan atmosphere and a blend of cultural practices and influences. The interaction of this population combined with trade, commerce and education, led to the emergence of a social elite or aristocratic class in Victoria. Accumulated wealth, access to education and participation in administrative and judicial roles contributed to the stratification of society, leading to friction and tension among social classes<sup>22</sup>.

Another set of population found in Victoria were traders. These traders brought with them cultural practices, language and social norms creating a Europeanized environment within the settlement. The traders along with missionaries, constituted the privilege class in Victoria. In addition to religious activities, commerce and trade became vital activities in Victoria. The German firm Woermann established a branch in Victoria in the early years, engaging in trade

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<sup>19</sup> Ngomba, "The fluctuating fortunes", p. 321.

<sup>20</sup> Fanson, *Cameroon history*, p. 117.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Ngomba, "The fluctuating fortunes", p.321.

with Europeans and non-Cameroonian Africans. Furthermore, by 1869, John Holt, a British trading firm, and Amba Bay trading company set up their headquarters in Victoria, boosting commercial interactions<sup>23</sup>. Victoria saw the emergence of social classes within its society. There was an elite class consisting of wealthy individuals involved in trade and commerce, as well as those occupying administrative positions. Meanwhile, the lower class comprised labourers, servants, and individuals engaged in small-scale economic activities. The interaction of this population combined with trade, commerce and education, led to the emergence of a social elite or aristocratic class in Victoria.

The English Baptist missionaries in Victoria recognized the importance of education in uplifting the local communities. They established schools to provide basic education and impart Christian teachings. These missionary schools aimed to teach reading, writing, and basic arithmetic skills, along with promoting Christian values<sup>24</sup>. The availability of educational opportunities was limited during this period. The focus of education was primarily on basic literacy skills, and the curriculum revolved around Christian teachings. The schools mainly catered to the children of missionaries, traders, and liberated slaves, as well as some Cameroonians from neighbouring areas who worked for Europeans<sup>25</sup>. The missionaries played a crucial role in the administration and teaching within the schools. They served as educators, administrators, and religious leaders, ensuring the smooth functioning of the educational institutions. Their efforts contributed to the spread of literacy and the establishment of a rudimentary educational system in Victoria during this time. The missionaries played a crucial role in shaping the social fabric of the settlement, introducing Christianity, and establishing educational facilities. By 1862, a school was opened in Victoria by Sakar, which was rooted on religious standard<sup>26</sup>. It was important to have knowledge of the Bible before one could be Baptist. Education helped in improving the literacy rate, which in turn helped in evangelization. The school was first run by the Englishman Reverend Diboll, and later by the Jamaican Francis Pinnock. Education became compulsory, leading to increased school enrolment of about 60 pupils by 1862 and up to 210 pupils by 1881, some pupils included some indigenous African such as Peter Mokoko, David Nanjia Carr and Samuel Eyum Sama<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup>NAB, File N° Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958, p.51.

<sup>24</sup> Ngomba, "The fluctuating fortunes", p.322.

<sup>25</sup> NAB, File N° Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958, p.21.

<sup>26</sup> Ngomba, "The fluctuating fortunes", p.322

<sup>27</sup> NAB, File N° Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958, p. 22.

## 1.2. Commercial Activities and Trade

Commerce and trade played a crucial role in Victoria's economy. The presence of European trading firms, such as the German firm Woermann, the John Holt trading firm, and the Amba Bay Trading Company, established headquarters in Victoria<sup>28</sup>. These companies facilitated trade between Europeans and non-Cameroonian Africans, contributing to the growth of commercial activities. The waterfront area of Victoria became a bustling hub for trade, with warehouses and trading houses catering to the needs of traders and exporters. Supporting services, including shipping, warehousing, banking, and insurance, were also developed to meet the demands of the growing commercial sector<sup>29</sup>. Victoria attracted a diverse population of non-Cameroonian Africans such as Nigerians (John O and Kalu I)<sup>30</sup>, Jamaican immigrants, and European Jamaican immigrants.

They brought in their entrepreneurial spirit and established large-scale land ownership, primarily for cocoa plantations which became a significant economic activity, leading to increased trade and demand for imported goods<sup>31</sup>. The presence of plantation companies and related services created employment opportunities for the local population. Jobs in trading, fishing, farming and tailoring emerged to cater to the needs of plantation workers. The economic vibrancy of Victoria attracted migrants seeking economic prospects. Land ownership became profitable, especially with the booming cocoa business. The intensification of plantation activities led to an increased agricultural produce. This influx of immigrants along with trade stimulated the economic growth of Victoria

## 1.3. Agricultural Development

Agriculture, particularly the cultivation of cash crops, played a significant role in Victoria's socioeconomic structure. The Baptist missionaries initiated trial plantations of coffee, cocoa and macabo crop. These crops held great promise for the region's agricultural development. The macabo, a tuberous plant known by its local name Likao, was of particular interest. Pastor Clarke and Doctor Prince originally brought it from Jamaica to Fernando Poo in 1841<sup>32</sup>. Later, black missionaries Alexander Fuller and Joseph Merrick introduced it to

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<sup>28</sup>NAB, File N° Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958, p. 42.

<sup>29</sup> Ngomba, "The fluctuating fortunes", p.322.

<sup>30</sup> Courade, *Croissance urbaine*, p.69.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Laburthe-Tolra, "Christianisme et ouvertue", p. 210.

Cameroon. In Victoria and among the *Kpe* community, the macabo was commonly referred to as *Likao*, a name that was later transformed into *Dikao*, *akaba* and eventually macabo by different linguistic groups such as the Duala and Bulu<sup>33</sup>. The macabo quickly gained popularity and spread along the coast and inland, becoming an integral part of the local diet. Its versatility and nutritional value made it a staple food source in the region during this period. The Baptist missionaries played a crucial role as pioneers in the agricultural development area. Their efforts in cultivating coffee, cocoa and macabo displayed their commitment to fostering agricultural practices<sup>34</sup>. These initiatives contributed significantly to the growth and prosperity of the agricultural sector in Victoria.

To sum up, dominant religious groups, educational initiatives, social stratification and a multicultural environment characterized the social structure of Victoria after its founding. On the other hand, the economic structure revolved around commercial activities, entrepreneurship, plantation, economic activities and land ownership. These intertwined elements contributed to the growth and development of Victoria as a religious, commercial and multicultural center.

After examining the socio-economic structure of Victoria after its founding, it is important to look at the Political structure of Victoria. This is the main concern of the next part.

### **3. Political structure**

The political structure of Victoria from 1858-1884 underwent significant changes as the settlement evolved and transitioned through different faces of governance, such as formation of a local government. This section discusses the political structure of Victoria after its founding.

#### **3.1. Formation of Local Government**

The English Baptist missionaries who founded Victoria in 1858 took the initiative in establishing a local administration for the settlement. While they desired British colonial administration, the missionaries initially organized a system of local governance<sup>35</sup>. Notable figures within this structure included influential community leaders, missionaries themselves, and representatives from various groups residing in Victoria. They collectively addressed the needs of the growing community, made decisions, and resolved disputes. To ensure the

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<sup>33</sup>Laburthe-Tolra, "Christianisme et ouverture", p. 210.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup>Fanso, *Cameroon history*, p. 117.



maintenance of law and order, a formal government was established, making an important milestone in the town's history a constitution was drawn up to outline the political framework of Victoria.

The constitution created two crucial instruments of power: a town council and a court<sup>36</sup>. The resident missionary Consul Richard Burton, who acted as the governor, played a central role in the administration of the settlement. The governor, typically a European missionary, wielded considerable authority and influence in shaping the political landscape of Victoria. The town council, comprising individuals of both European and mixed heritage, played a crucial role in the governance of Victoria<sup>37</sup>. The council members were chosen based on their character and if possible, their property ownership. This ensured that the council consisted of respected individuals who could contribute to the development and welfare of the settlement<sup>38</sup>.

### **3.2. Development of Political Institutions**

As Victoria expanded and its population grew, formal political institutions started to emerge. Town meetings became a common practice where residents gathered to discuss and debate local issues, propose policies, and elect representatives. These representatives acted as intermediaries between the residents and colonial authorities, advocating for the interests and concerns of Victoria's population. Some prominent individuals who played significant roles in the political structure during this period include Tomas Horton Johnston: A black trader who served as the chairman of the Court of Justice, which was established as a local governing body. Missionary Leaders: Senior missionaries, such as the notary of the Court of Justice, contributed to the political structure alongside their religious roles<sup>39</sup>.

### **3.3. Engagement with Colonial Powers**

While Victoria desired British colonial administration, the British government initially displayed reluctance in assuming formal control. Despite this, interactions with external powers, particularly the British Consul stationed at Fernando Po (a nearby British colony), influenced the political landscape of Victoria. The reports of the Court of Justice sessions were sent to the British Consul, indicating a level of engagement and potential influence on local affairs.

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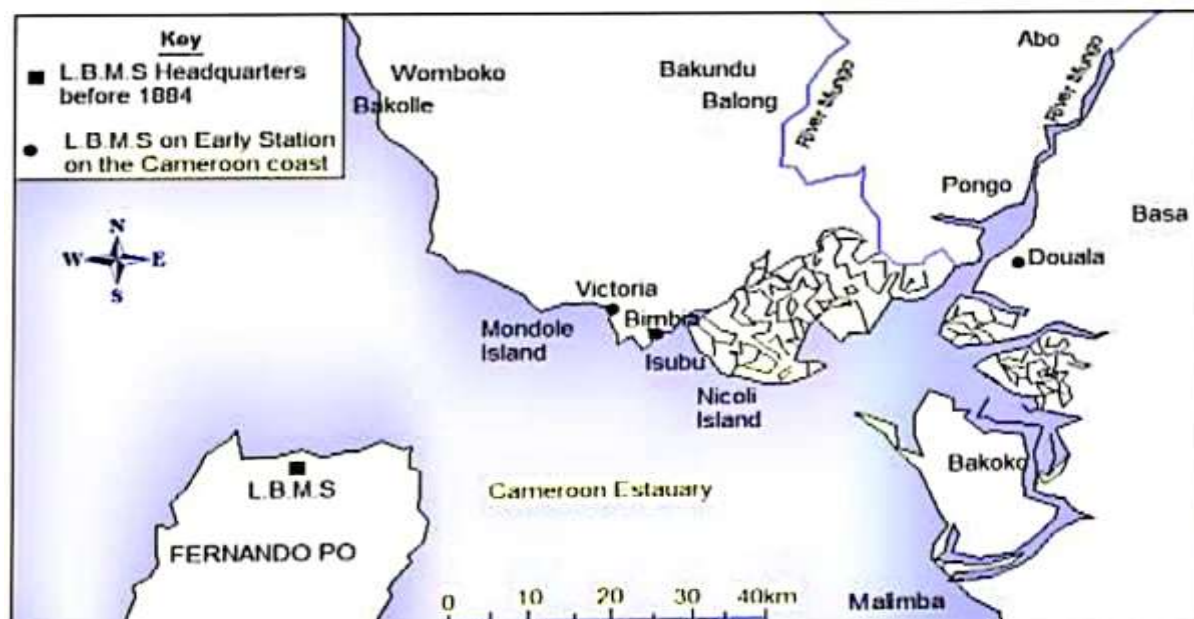
<sup>36</sup> Ngomba, "The fluctuating fortunes", p.323.

<sup>37</sup> NAB, File N° Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958, p.79.

<sup>38</sup> Underhill, *Alfred Sakar*, p. 189.

<sup>39</sup> Fanso, *Cameroon history*, p.118.

**Map 1 : The Cameroon Estuary showing Early Missionary Posts**



**Source:** Roland Ndille et D. Litt et Phil (UNISA-Pretoria), “Missionaries as Imperialists: Decolonial Subalternity in the missionary enterprise on the coast of Cameroon 1841-1914”, *The international journal of Africa Historical Studies*, vol.7, N°.1, p. 23<sup>40</sup>.

The above map shows the early missionary post around the Cameroon coast before 1884. It shows the different headquarters and stations put in place by the Baptist Missionaries during their early settlement in Cameroon between 1841-1914. The different stations were found in Douala, Victoria, Bimbria and a headquarter in Fernando Po.

After examining the structure of Victoria after its founding, it is important to look at the structure of Victoria under the Germans. This section looks at the administrative, socioeconomic and political structure of Victoria under the Germans.

## **II. VICTORIA UNDER THE GERMANS (1884-1916)**

Under German colonial rule from 1884 to 1914, the town of Victoria experienced profound transformations in its administrative, socio-economic, and political structures. The German annexation of Cameroon in 1884 marked a power shift and introduced a new era of governance in Victoria. The Germans aimed to establish a colonial presence, exploit economic resources, and exert political control over the region. This period witnessed the imposition of German administrative systems, the restructuring of the socio-economic landscape, and the

<sup>40</sup> Roland Ndille, Litt et Phil (UNISA-Pretoria), “Missionaries as Imperialists: Decolonial Subalternity, in the missionary enterprise on the coast of Cameroon 1841-1914”, *The international journal of Africa Historical Studies*, vol.7, N° 1, p.23.

establishment of a colonial political order<sup>41</sup>. These changes would leave a lasting impact on the town and its inhabitants, shaping the trajectory of Victoria's development during the German colonial era. This section delves into the details of the administrative, socio-economic, and political structures that characterised Victoria under German rule.

## **1. Administrative structure**

During German colonisation of Cameroon, the administrative structure of Victoria experienced a shift from the missionaries to the German colonial administrators who under the German government introduced a new administrative structure. This is the focus of this section of this document.

### **1.1. Colonial Administration**

During the colonization of Cameroon in 1884, the Germans replaced the existing governance structures of the court of equity set in place by the Missionaries with the establishment of the Native Mixed Court (NMC)<sup>42</sup>. Under German rule, Victoria became an administrative center with a German administrator as the resident official<sup>43</sup>. This administrator was responsible for overseeing the town's administration, governance, and the implementation of German policies. German officials appointed by the German government led the colonial administration in Victoria. The highest authority was the colonial governor, who was responsible for overseeing the administration of the entire German Kamerun colony<sup>44</sup>. The governor's office, located in Victoria, served as the central hub for administrative activities. The governor was tasked with implementing German policies, maintaining law and order, and managing the overall governance of the colony. To assist the administrator in managing the district, an advisory council was established<sup>45</sup>. The council provided guidance and support in decision-making processes and the day-to-day affairs of the town. They worked closely with other German officials and departments to ensure the smooth functioning of the administration. German officials appointed by the German government led the colonial administration in Victoria. The highest authority was the colonial governor, with notable individuals such as Jesko von Puttkamer (1895-1906)<sup>46</sup>. He served as the third German colonial governor of

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<sup>41</sup> H. R. Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroon, 1884-1914: A case study in modern imperialism*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1938, p.80.

<sup>42</sup> Takougang, "Chief Johannes" p.13.

<sup>43</sup> Ngomba, "The fluctuating fortunes", p.326.

<sup>44</sup> Fanson, *Cameroon history*, p. 179.

<sup>45</sup> Ngho, *Cameroon 1884*, p. 54.

<sup>46</sup> Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroon*, p.80.

Kamerun, overseeing the establishment of administrative structures in Victoria. Theodor Seitz (1907-1910). He succeeded von Puttkamer and played a crucial role in the consolidation of German rule, including the expansion of administrative infrastructure in Victoria. Karl Ebermaier (1912-1916): He was the last German colonial governor of Kamerun before the outbreak of World War I<sup>47</sup>.

## 1.2. District Administration

The administrative structure of Victoria included the establishment of districts within the colony. German district officers who reported directly to the colonial governor headed these districts. Each district had its own administrative offices, typically located in the district's major town with the district commissioner resident in Victoria<sup>48</sup>. The district officers were responsible for overseeing the day-to-day administration of their respective districts, including the enforcement of colonial laws, taxation, land administration, and the collection of resources<sup>49</sup>. They acted as intermediaries between the colonial administration and the local population. The administrative structure of Victoria included several districts, each headed by a German district officer.

## 1.3. Local Collaboration

The German colonial administration in Victoria recognized the existing political and social structures of the local population. To facilitate governance, they often collaborated with indigenous chiefs and leaders. Local chiefs were co-opted into the administrative structure to help enforce German policies and maintain control over their communities<sup>50</sup>. The chiefs were given some level of authority and responsibility for local governance, although they ultimately answered to the German officials<sup>51</sup>. This collaboration aimed to combine German administrative control with the traditional leadership structures already in place. The German colonial administration recognized the existing traditional leadership structures and chiefdoms in Victoria. They often sought the cooperation and collaboration of local chiefs who held influence and authority over their communities. These chiefs were expected to enforce German policies, collect taxes, and maintain order among their people. Indigenous chiefs and leaders

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<sup>47</sup> T. L Victor, *The Cameroons: From mandate to independence*, California, University of California Press, 1864, 25.

<sup>48</sup> Falso, *Cameroon history*, p.179.

<sup>49</sup> Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroon*, p.80.

<sup>50</sup> J. Gomsu, "La formation des Camerounais en Allemagne pendant la période coloniale", *Cahiers d'Allemand et d'Etudes Germanique*, Vol 1, N°2, 1882, p.52.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Chief Epupa Samuel Ekum, age 75, Traditional ruler of Dikolo village Bimbina and Honorary Chairman of Fako Chief Conference, New Town Limbe, 29 March 2023.

acted as intermediaries between the German administrators and the local population<sup>52</sup>. They provided valuable insights into local customs, traditions, and concerns, helping the German authorities navigate cultural nuances and gain the support of the community. Chiefs were sometimes appointed as advisors to the German administration, offering their expertise and knowledge<sup>53</sup>.

Local chiefs played a role in the administration of justice within their communities. They would handle minor disputes and maintain order according to customary laws and traditions, under the supervision and influence of the German colonial administration. Chiefs were responsible for mediating conflicts, resolving disputes, and ensuring compliance with German regulations<sup>54</sup>. Indigenous chiefs were often responsible for the collection of taxes and levies on behalf of the German administration. They would ensure that the prescribed taxes were collected from their communities and delivered to the colonial authorities<sup>55</sup>. This collaboration provided the German administration with a means of revenue generation and control over economic activities.

## **2. The socioeconomic Structure**

With the German annexation of Cameroon, the socio-economic structure of Victoria took a different turn, as there was an improvement in the socioeconomic structure, with improvement in agriculture, the demographic structure and labour force. This section of this work is focused on examining the socioeconomic structure of Victoria under the Germans.

### **2.1. Plantations and Agricultural Development**

The Germans aimed to exploit the economic potential of the region, particularly in agriculture. Plantations, established by European settlers, played a crucial role in Victoria's economy. These plantations focused on the cultivation of cash crops and the acclimatization of useful tropical species. The installation of German plantations was a way of promoting commercial development<sup>56</sup>. The German Victoria Plantation Company was particularly

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<sup>52</sup> Takougang, "Chief Johannes", p.13.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Chief Epupa Samuel Ekum, age 75, Traditional ruler of Dikolo village Bimbina and Honorary Chairman of Fako Chief Conference, New Town Limbe, 29 March 2023.

<sup>54</sup> J. Gomsu, "Problématique de la collaboration : Les chefs traditionnels du Sud-Cameroun dans l'administration coloniale Allemande". Paper presented at the *Colloque international* on "cent ans de relations entre l'Afrique et les Allemagnes 1884-1984 : Les cas du Cameroun", Yaounde, University of Yaounde, April 8-14, 1985.

<sup>55</sup> Fanzo, *Cameroon history*, p.180.

<sup>56</sup> M. Marc, "Les plantations Allemands du mont Cameroun (1885-1914)". In : *Revue Française d'histoire d'outre-mer*, Tome 57, N° 207, 2e trimestre, 1970, p.183.

influential in the cultivation and exportation of agricultural products. Its activities, along with other plantations, contributed to the economic growth of Victoria and its surrounding areas. The introduction of plantations brought about changes in the agricultural landscape, with vast areas dedicated to the cultivation of cash crops.

This shift from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture had a significant socio-economic impact on the town. Several plantations were established in and around Victoria, focusing on cash crops such as cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and bananas. These plantations played a vital role in the colonial economy and were primarily owned and operated by German companies or European settlers. Some notable plantations included the West African Plantation Company, the German Plantation Company, and the Woermann Plantation Company. These plantations brought in European techniques and technologies to enhance productivity and maximise profits. The *Westafrikanische pflanzungsgesellschaft* Victoria (WAPV). This German-owned Company created in 1897, established large-scale plantations in the region, primarily cultivating palm oil and rubber<sup>57</sup>.

It played a significant role in the economic development of Victoria. Another German Company that operated plantations, specializing in the cultivation of cocoa and palm oil was the Berlin West Africa plantation company<sup>58</sup>. It contributed to the growth of the agricultural sector and generated substantial revenue. The Woermann Plantation Company: Owned by the Woermann family, this company operated plantations cultivating various crops, including cocoa<sup>59</sup>. The Woermann were prominent German merchants and played a significant role in the economic activities of Victoria<sup>60</sup>. The introduction of plantations brought about changes in the agricultural landscape, with vast areas dedicated to the cultivation of cash crops. This shift from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture had a significant socio-economic impact on the town. Table 1 shows the different companies in Victoria under the Germans.

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<sup>57</sup> Ngomba, "The fluctuating fortunes ", p.325.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Marc, "Les plantations, p. 184.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

**Table 1: Companies in Victoria under the German annexation**

<b>Name of company</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Nature of products</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
<i>Westafrikanische pflanzungsgesellschaft</i> Victoria(WAPV)	German	Its main products were cocoa and rubber	Formed in 1897
The Prince Alfred plantation	German	Coffee, cocoa, and rubber	It belonged to the WAPV
Deutsche Kautschukaktiengesellschaft	German	Cocoa, rubber and palm oil	Founded in 1907
Afrikanische Frucht Compagnie	German	Fruits and banana	Founded in 1912
The Bimbia plantation	German	Cocoa	Was founded in 1906 and sold to C. Woermann
<i>Moliwe-pflanzungs-Gesellschaft</i>	German	Cocoa and rubber	Founded in 1899
<i>West Afrikanische pflanzhngs Gesellschaft Bibundi</i>	German	Cocoa, rubber and oil palms	Founded in 1887 and it had no connection with WAPV
The Idenau Plantation	German	Cocoa, rubber and oil palm	Founded in 1898
The Dibuncha plantation	German	Cocoa and rubber	Founded in 1905
Woodin and Co. limited	British	Carried out export and import	Founded in 1916 and operating a branch in Victoria
Jacob Adebona	Nigerian	Petty trader	Had factories in Victoria since 1916

Source: NAB, file N° Ba/1916/3, Reports on various matters relating to the Cameroons<sup>61</sup>.

From the above table, we can see that under the Germans, Victoria experienced a great number of establishments of companies and plantations. This explains the growth that Victoria experienced during the German period and the availability of jobs and infrastructures.

<sup>61</sup> NAB, file N° Ba/1916/3, Reports on various matters relating to the Cameroons.

The botanical garden was established by the German colonial administration in 1892 through the efforts of a German team led by Paul Rudolph Preuss as part of their efforts to explore and exploit the region's rich natural resources<sup>62</sup>. Their objective was to create a trial garden that would serve as a hub for experimenting with and acclimatizing valuable tropical species<sup>63</sup>. The garden played a crucial role in cultivating and adapting plants like rubber, coffee, cocoa, oil palm, banana, teak, and sugar cane, which were intended for use in Kamerun (Cameroon) and other German colonies. Widely recognized as a significant tropical botanical garden during its peak, it held a prominent position among similar establishments worldwide. The Kamerun Garten served multiple purposes. Firstly, it acted as a center for botanical research, where German scientists and botanists studied the local flora and fauna<sup>64</sup>. This research aimed to identify valuable plant species, investigate their potential economic uses, and promote agricultural development in the region.

The garden provided a controlled environment for experimentation and cultivation of various plant species, including both indigenous plants and introduced species from other parts of the world. Secondly, the botanical garden served as an educational and recreational space<sup>65</sup>. It provided an opportunity for the local population, as well as European settlers and visitors, to learn about the diverse plant life in Cameroon. The garden featured well-maintained pathways, labelled plant specimens, and informative displays, making it a popular destination for leisurely walks, picnics, and educational excursions. The Kamerun Garten also played a role in displaying the German colonial presence and promoting the image of German expertise and civilization. It was seen as a symbol of German colonial progress and the mastery over nature. The well-manicured garden, with its carefully curated collection of plants, demonstrated the Germans' control over the local environment and their ability to harness its economic potential. Additionally, the botanical garden contributed to the local economy by cultivating and introducing new plant species that had commercial value. For example, the garden experimented with various crops such as coffee, cocoa, rubber, and tropical fruits. It aimed to identify suitable plants that could be cultivated on a larger scale and contribute to the colonial

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<sup>62</sup> NAB, File N° Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958, p.48.

<sup>63</sup> Rudin, *Germans in Cameroon*, p.175.

<sup>64</sup> Ngho, *Cameroon 1884*, p.59.

<sup>65</sup> Bederman, "Plantation agriculture", p. 355.



economy. The knowledge gained from the garden's research and experiments on plant species would later be shared with plantation owners and farmers in the region<sup>66</sup>.

**Photo 4: photo of the botanical Garden in Victoria**



**Source: Photo by Mopao, 2017 derieved from <https://commons.wikimedia.org> on 4 October 2024**

During the early 1900s, the establishment of a government higher agricultural school took place in Victoria with specific objective in mind<sup>67</sup>. The school aimed to provide agricultural training to indigenous graduates who possessed a strong knowledge of the German language, acquired from either government or mission elementary schools<sup>68</sup>. This training was intended to equip them for agricultural work within the colony. The duration of the course was two years, during which students received not only free instructions but also additional benefits. First year students were granted free board, while second year students received a monthly pocket allowance of five marks<sup>69</sup>. To ensure commitment and continuity, students were required to enter into a contractual agreement. This contract bound them not only to complete

<sup>66</sup> Rudin, *Germans in Cameroon*, p. 175.

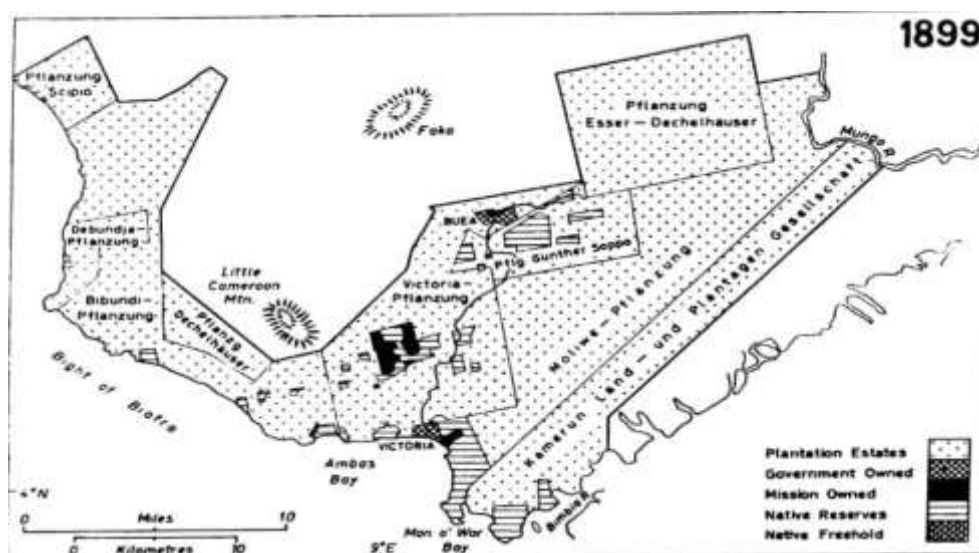
<sup>67</sup> Fanzo, *Cameroon history*, p.188.

<sup>68</sup> NAB, File N° Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958, p.88.

<sup>69</sup> E. Madiba, "Enseignement scolaire et expansion économique au Cameroun sous l'administration Allemande", *Colloqué international*, on "Cent ans de relations entre l'Afrique et les Allemagnes 1884-1984 : Le cas du Cameroun", Yaoundé, University of Yaounde, April 8-14, 1985, p. 98.

the two-year course but also to work for the administration for a period of five years after their graduation. Breaching this contract incurred a fine of 200 marks per year of training for the student<sup>70</sup>.

**Map 2 : Plantation and reserves in Victoria Division in 1899**



**Source:** Bederman A. H, “Plantation agriculture in Victoria Division, West Cameroon: An historical introduction”, *Geography*, Vol 5, N° 4, 1966, p.356<sup>71</sup>.

## 2.2. European Settlers and Business Community

Alongside the German companies, a significant number of European settlers, primarily of German and British origin, were attracted to Victoria. These settlers, often referred to as colonists, played a crucial role in the socioeconomic landscape. As European settlers established themselves in Victoria, a distinct residential area was created. These areas were characterised by European-style buildings, including colonial-style houses and administrative buildings<sup>72</sup>. The European settlers created a distinct social and cultural community within Victoria, reflecting their influence and presence in the town. They established businesses, engaged in trade, and contributed to the development of infrastructure and services in the town<sup>73</sup>. European merchants, traders, and entrepreneurs formed a vibrant business community, driving economic activities and shaping the commercial landscape of Victoria. Victoria's socio-economic growth was accompanied by improvements in communication infrastructure<sup>74</sup>. The

<sup>70</sup>Fanso, *Cameroon history*, p.188.

<sup>71</sup> Bederman, “Plantation agriculture”, p.356.

<sup>72</sup> Ngomba, “The fluctuating fortunes “, p.327.

<sup>73</sup> NAB, file N° Ba/1916/3, Reports on various matters relating to the Cameroons.

<sup>74</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p. 64.

establishment of a post office in 1888 and telephone communication in 1898 facilitated faster and more efficient communication within the town and with other locations<sup>75</sup>. European settlers were instrumental in the development of infrastructure in Victoria. They invested in the construction of roads, bridges, warehouses and other essential facilities to support their business activities. The waterfront area of Victoria area became a hub for commercial activities, with trading houses, shipping companies and warehouses catering the needs of European traders and exporters.

The town's economic expansion attracted migrants from different regions, resulting in a rapid increase in population. This population growth further fuelled economic activities and contributed to the overall development of the town. Victoria emerged as an economic and commercial hub, hosting major trading firms, commercial houses, and banks. The presence of these institutions and businesses solidified its position as a center for trade and economic activity in Victoria.

### **2.3. Indigenous Labour Force**

The socioeconomic structure of Victoria also heavily relied on the local labour force. Indigenous Cameroonians, including those from the Duala ethnic group, formed the backbone of the labour force in plantations, construction projects, and other economic endeavours. They were often engaged as plantation workers, labourers, and domestic servants. The Germans utilized their labour to maximize agricultural production and support the overall economic development of the town. The local population's involvement in the colonial economy, however, was often characterized by exploitative labour practices and unequal power dynamics<sup>76</sup>. The plantation workers were recruited from the grass field. Traditional rulers played a crucial role in supplying labour to plantation. A good example is Fon Galega of Bali who supplied workers to the *Westafrikanische pflanzungsgesellschaft* Victoria, for which he received an annual gift of 300 marks<sup>77</sup>. However, the workers sent to the plantation by Fon Galega faced exploitation on two fronts. Firstly, they were paid a meagre monthly salary of around eight marks. Secondly, upon their return to Bali, Fon Galega exploited them by taking a portion of their hard-earned wages. In other cases, German plantation owners, the colonizers often resorted to coercion and force. Chiefs who refused to cooperate with the administration of worker recruitment were sometimes punished. Governor Puttkamer even issued a decree

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<sup>75</sup> Ngomba, "The fluctuating fortunes", p.326.

<sup>76</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p. 63.

<sup>77</sup> Gomsu, "Problematique de la collaboration", p. 36.

stating that an entire village could be burned down if the villagers tried to escape when recruiting officers visited<sup>78</sup>.

The use of forced labour by the Germans, especially in the plantations, was strongly resented by the African workers. Some plantation owners resorted to Kidnapping labourers chaining them together, and marching them long distance to work. Since the native workers were often taken to unfamiliar environments, they frequently experienced feelings of loneliness and homesickness<sup>79</sup>. Those who were unfortunate enough to work in malaria-infested areas often returned to their villages only to succumb to diseases. Poor living conditions, inadequate food, overwork, lack of medical care and disease contributed to a high mortality rate among plantation workers<sup>80</sup>. In 1913, for example, out of 1430 natives who left the Bamenda district to work on plantations in the south, there were 157 deaths within nine-month period, resulting in an annual death rate of 148 per 1000<sup>81</sup>.

After examining the socio-economic structure of Victoria, it is important to look the political structure of Victoria under the Germans.

### **3. Political structure**

During the German colonial period, Victoria experienced significant changes in the political structure. These changes came because of the transition of governance from the English settlement to the German government.

#### **3.1. Transition of Governance**

With the transition from an English settlement to a German administrative and political center, Victoria's status as an administrative hub was reinforced. The town became the seat of the German administration, replacing the previous English administration. The German administrator, along with the advisory council, took charge of the town's governance and decision-making processes. The council provided support and advice to the administrator in managing the district's affairs. The appointment of Chief Manga William in 1908 into the NMC marked a crucial transition<sup>82</sup>. His role expanded beyond the court, encompassing the district headship of Victoria. However, this move departed from traditional democratic values, as his

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<sup>78</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p. 63.

<sup>79</sup> NAB, file N° Ba/1916/3, Reports on various matters relating to the Cameroons.

<sup>80</sup> Bederman, "Plantation agriculture", p. 354.

<sup>81</sup> NAB, file N° Ba/1916/3, Reports on various matters relating to the Cameroons.

<sup>82</sup> Takougang, "Chief Johannes" p.14.

authority was not based on customary lineage but on attributes like youth, intelligence, and the ability to bridge the gap between natives and the administration<sup>83</sup>.

### 3.2. Legal Headquarters

Victoria also became the legal headquarters under German rule. The town housed the legal institutions responsible for enforcing German laws and regulations. The advisory council, along with the officer in charge of the district, assisted in administering and implementing these laws<sup>84</sup>. They ensured the smooth functioning of the legal system within Victoria. The German influence on Victoria's political structure was evident in the naming of streets and buildings. Streets were given German names, such as Soden Strasse and Puttkamer Strasse, named after successive German governors<sup>85</sup>. The construction of the Basel Mission church reflected a shift from the English Baptist Missionary Society to the German Missionary Society. This change symbolized the transition of influence from English to German authorities in various aspects of Victoria's governance and cultural landscape.

### 3.3. Colonial Policies and Objectives

German colonial authorities implemented policies and regulations to shape Victoria's political structure. These policies aimed to maintain administrative control, regulate land acquisition, and preserve the town's European character. In 1911, new building regulations were introduced to improve the aesthetic beauty of the town. Traditional African dwellings, which were seen as spoiling the town's appearance and posing health and fire hazards, were prohibited<sup>86</sup>. The introduction of these regulations also aimed to segregate European and African residential areas, enforcing a racial and socio-economic divide within the town's urban space.

The economic policies enforced by the Germans and colonial authorities and German firms compelled the natives to engage in cash crop production, which eventually integrated Cameroon into the global market economy. In order to transport these products, the German colonial authorities, along with the German plantation owners had to construct new and durable communication infrastructure<sup>87</sup>.

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<sup>83</sup>Takougang, "Chief Johannes" p.14.

<sup>84</sup> Ngomba, "The fluctuating fortunes", p.326.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p.327.

<sup>87</sup>Madiba, "Enseignement scolaire", p. 42.

The introduction of an educational law in April 1910<sup>88</sup> reflected the German colonial administration's interest in shaping the education system to align with their objectives and ideologies. The law allowed the German authorities to have control over the curriculum, teaching methods, and overall direction of education in Victoria<sup>89</sup>. This control was an extension of their political influence and aimed to further their colonial agenda. The educational law served as a means to integrate German policies and values into the educational system of Victoria. The curriculum was designed to promote German language and culture, instil loyalty to the German colonial administration, and educate the local population according to German ideals<sup>90</sup>.

The law ensured that education played a role in disseminating and reinforcing German colonial ideologies and goals, thereby consolidating the political structure through indoctrination and control. Education has a profound influence on social and political structures, as it shapes individuals' knowledge, values, and skills. By implementing an educational law, the German authorities sought to shape the mind-set and perspectives of the local population in Victoria<sup>91</sup>. The educational system likely aimed to produce a workforce that aligned with German colonial economic interests and fostered obedience to the colonial administration, thereby reinforcing the existing social and political structure under German rule.

After examining the structure of Victoria under the Germans, it is important to look at Victoria as part of the Mandate B and Trusteeship territory under the League of Nations and the United Nations Organisations.

### **III. VICTORIA UNDER THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION (1922-1961)**

Victoria underwent significant changes during its transition from German colonial rule to its status as a League of Nations Mandate and later as part of the United Nations Trust Territory. From 1922 to 1961, the administrative, political, and socioeconomic structures of Victoria evolved under the supervision and influence of the League of Nations and the United Nations Organization. These changes were driven by the shifting dynamics of international governance, decolonization movements, and the aspirations of the local population. This work

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<sup>88</sup> Rudin, *Germans in Cameroon*, p. 356.

<sup>89</sup> Fanso, *Cameroon history*, p.187.

<sup>90</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p. 63.

<sup>91</sup> Madiba, "Enseignement scolaire", p. 32.

provides an overview of Victoria's transformation during this period, examining the key aspects of its administrative, political, and socioeconomic structures.

## **1. Administrative structure**

The administrative structure of Victoria Division from 1922-1961 underwent several changes during this period, from the German administrative system to the British administrative system.

### **1.1. British Control and Division**

Following the outbreak of World War, I, British and French forces invaded the German colony of Kamerun. By December 1914, the British had gained control over the Victoria Division. The British administration took over the governance of the region, implementing their administrative systems and policies<sup>92</sup>. After the British gained control over Victoria Division; they established a colonial administrative structure to govern the region. The British administration appointed officials, such as district commissioners and administrative officers, to oversee the day-to-day affairs of the division<sup>93</sup>.

District commissioners were key figures in the administrative hierarchy of Victoria Division. They were responsible for maintaining law and order, collecting taxes, overseeing local administration, and representing the colonial government in the region. District commissioners played a crucial role in implementing British policies and directives at the local level<sup>94</sup>. Assisting the district commissioners, administrative officers were responsible for specific administrative tasks within the division. They managed various departments, such as agriculture, education, healthcare, and infrastructure development. Administrative officers played a vital role in implementing government policies and ensuring effective service delivery.

The British administration established local administrative structures, including native authorities and village councils, to maintain control and facilitate governance. Native authorities consisted of traditional leaders who worked in collaboration with the British officials to administer local affairs and resolve disputes<sup>95</sup>. Village councils were established to

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<sup>92</sup> Bederman, "Plantation agriculture", p. 356.

<sup>93</sup> NAB, File N° V3264/51, Victoria Divisional Council Financial Committee, p.9.

<sup>94</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p. 147.

<sup>95</sup> NAB, File N° V3264/51, Victoria Divisional Council Financial Committee, p.9.

address community-level issues and promote cooperation between the local population and the colonial administration.

The administrative structure of Victoria Division under British control aimed to establish a centralized system of governance that aligned with British colonial practices. The British officials exercised significant control and decision-making authority, with limited opportunities for local participation in the administrative processes. The primary objective of the British administration was to maintain order, extract resources, and promote British interests in the region<sup>96</sup>.

Over time, however, there were some limited efforts to involve local elites and educated individuals in administrative positions. This allowed for a degree of local influence within the overall framework of British control. Nonetheless, the administrative structure remained predominantly hierarchical, with ultimate authority vested in the British colonial administration.

## **1.2. League of Nations Mandate**

In July 1922, the smaller British portion of Kamerun, including Victoria Division, became a mandate of the League of Nations. This meant that the division was placed under international supervision and entrusted to the United Kingdom as the administering authority<sup>97</sup>. The League of Nations mandated territories were subject to certain provisions and regulations set forth by the League to ensure their proper administration and development. The mandate system aimed to ensure responsible administration and development of the former German territories. The United Kingdom was assigned the administration of Victoria Division, which was administered together with Nigeria<sup>98</sup>.

Under the League of Nations mandate, the British introduced their administrative structures and institutions to the Victoria Division. The British appointed officials to govern the region and implemented policies for governance, law and order, and economic development. They established administrative offices, courts, and other governmental institutions to maintain control and ensure effective administration<sup>99</sup>. Under the League of Nations mandate, the British colonial administration continued to govern the Victoria Division.

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<sup>96</sup> NAB, Ba (1938), File N° 24457, Cameroons Province: Note for the League of Nations Report, 1938.

<sup>97</sup> NAB, File N° Ba (1920), special Report on the Cameroons province, February 1920.

<sup>98</sup> Fanso, *Cameroon History*, p. 236.

<sup>99</sup> Ngoh, "Political evolution", p.80.



The administrative structure remained largely unchanged, with district commissioners and administrative officers overseeing the day-to-day affairs of the division<sup>100</sup>. The British officials implemented policies and directives in accordance with the League's guidelines. As a League of Nations mandate, Victoria Division came under international scrutiny.

The League of Nations monitored the administration of the division to ensure that the rights and welfare of the local population were respected. Reports and periodic inspections were conducted to assess the progress and adherence to the League's mandates<sup>101</sup>. Victoria Division was administered jointly with Nigeria during the League of Nations mandate period. The British colonial authorities coordinated with Nigerian officials to manage the affairs of the division. This collaboration involved sharing resources, personnel, and administrative expertise to govern the region effectively.

The League of Nations mandate brought a degree of international oversight and accountability to the administration of Victoria Division. The mandate system aimed to promote the welfare and development of the mandated territories, including Victoria Division, under the guidance and supervision of the League of Nations<sup>102</sup>. However, it is important to note that ultimate decision-making authority and control remained with the British colonial administration, and the interests of the local population were not always adequately represented or prioritised.

### **1.3. United Nations Trust Territory**

After World War II, in 1946, the British Cameroons (including Victoria Division) were converted into a Trust Territory under the United Nations<sup>103</sup>. The Trust Territory system was established by the United Nations to guide the administration and development of former colonial territories and ensure their eventual self-government and independence. As a United Nations Trust Territory, Victoria Division was placed under the trusteeship of the United Kingdom. The British colonial administration continued to govern the division, but with increased international supervision and guidance from the United Nations. The administration aimed to prepare the territory for self-government and eventual independence. The primary objective of the United Nations Trust Territory system was to foster self-government and

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<sup>100</sup>NAB, File N° Ag 8, Assessment Report Victoria Division 1928/1929.

<sup>101</sup> NAB, File N° Ba (1940), Annual and league of Nations report, 1939.

<sup>102</sup> NAB, Ba (1938), File N° 24457, Cameroons Province: Note for the League of Nations Report, 1938.

<sup>103</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884*, p.14.

independence for the territories under trusteeship<sup>104</sup>. In the case of Victoria Division, efforts were made to develop local governance structures, institutions, and leadership, with the aim of transitioning to self-rule<sup>105</sup>.

During the period of United Nations trusteeship, Victoria Division continued to be administered jointly with Nigeria. The British colonial authorities worked in collaboration with Nigerian officials to manage the division's affairs and implement policies in line with the goals and principles of the United Nations Trust Territory system. The United Nations Trust Territory status brought increased international attention and support to the administration of Victoria Division. The focus shifted towards preparing the territory for self-government and independence, fostering local leadership and institutions, and ensuring the welfare and development of the population<sup>106</sup>. However, it is important to note that the ultimate decision-making authority and control still rested with the British colonial administration, and the interests and aspirations of the local population were not always fully realised during this period.

There was the presence of native courts in accordance to the native courts ordinance, Cap 142 laws of Nigeria<sup>107</sup>, which had a function to maintain laws and order by enforcing legal sanctions on the decision of the native authority. These courts are established on clan basis in order to ensure uniformity of language and customs throughout the area of jurisdiction<sup>108</sup>. These courts have limited powers on matters concerning land, inheritance, marriage except Christian marriage. With respect to criminal cases, their power is limited only to cases that can be punished by 3 months imprisonment or in other cases, 6 months 42 strokes or a fine of £5 or the equivalent by native law<sup>109</sup>.

## **2. The socioeconomic Structure of Victoria**

Under the British Victoria, Victoria underwent some changes in its socioeconomic structure. These changes were encouraged by different factors such as agricultural dominance during this period and trade.

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<sup>104</sup> Bederman, "Plantation agriculture", p. 336.

<sup>105</sup> Ngoh, political evolution, p.80.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> NAB, File N° LG919 ja/a (1957)1, local government reforms.

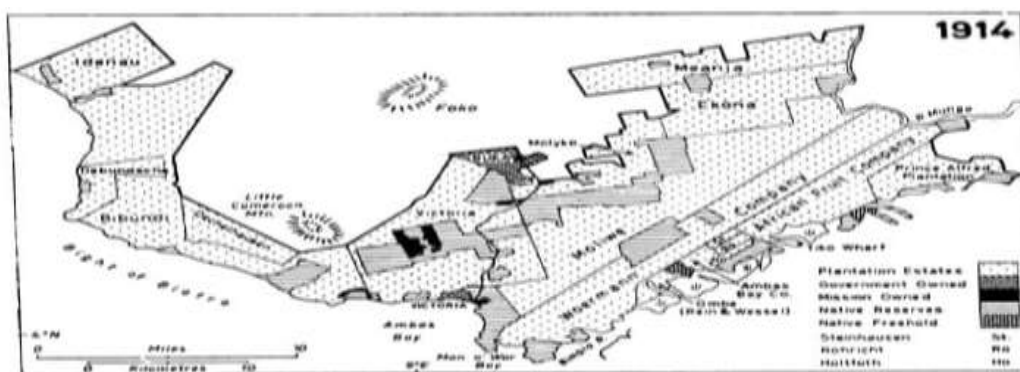
<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2.1. Agricultural Dominance

Agriculture played a central role in the socioeconomic structure of Victoria Division during this period. The division was characterised by extensive plantations, and the cultivation of cash crops formed the backbone of the economy<sup>110</sup>. The main plantation crops included bananas, rubber, oil palm, and cacao. Plantations, particularly those owned by the Cameroons Development Corporation (CDC) and private British companies, dominated the agricultural landscape. The CDC, established in 1947<sup>111</sup>, managed expropriated German land and played a crucial role in cultivating and exporting crops. The banana industry, although affected by diseases in the mid-1950s, remained a significant contributor to the economy. Apart from bananas, rubber and oil palm gained prominence as major plantation crops. Considerable acreage was dedicated to their cultivation<sup>112</sup>. Cacao, mainly grown on African farms, also contributed to the export earnings of Victoria Division. The expropriation and subsequent repurchase of land from former German owners shaped the land ownership patterns. The CDC and private British companies owned substantial portions of the expropriated German property, particularly in the southeast region of the division<sup>113</sup>

**Map 3: plantation and reserves in Victoria Division in 1914.**



**Source:** Bederman A. H, “Plantation agriculture” p.357<sup>114</sup>.

The above map shows the various plantations and reserves in Victoria Division under the Germans in the year 1914.

<sup>110</sup>Bederman, “Plantation agriculture”, p. 337.

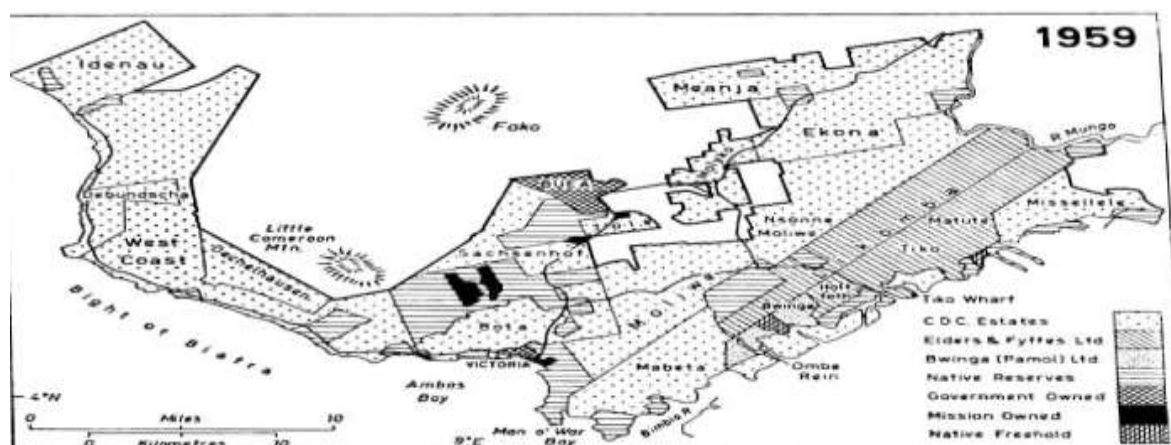
<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*, p.337.

<sup>112</sup> Bederman, Sanford H, *The Cameroon Development Cooperation: Partner in National Growth* Bota, Columbus, Geo Abstract, 1968, p.15.

<sup>113</sup> NAB, File No Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958, p.49.

<sup>114</sup> Bederman, “Plantation agriculture”, p.357<sup>114</sup>

**Map 4: plantation and reserves in Victoria Division in 1959.**



**Source:** A. H. Bederman, “Plantation agriculture” p.358<sup>115</sup>.

The above map shows the various plantations and reserves in Victoria Division under the League of Nations and the United Nations Organisations in the year 1959.

## 2.2. Trade and Income Sources

Trade, both domestic and international, played a vital role in Victoria Division's socioeconomic structure during this period. Despite the aftermath of World War I and the loss of German ownership, trade with Germany remained a significant source of income<sup>116</sup>. Prior to World War II, German trade served as the principal source of revenue for the division. The export of plantation crops, such as bananas, rubber, oil palm, and cacao, formed the basis of international trade. These products were exported to various destinations, contributing to the division's income and economic growth<sup>117</sup>. Large-scale immigration from Nigeria occurred during this period, driven by the need for labour on the plantations<sup>118</sup>. The influx of Nigerian workers had both positive and negative effects on the socioeconomic structure. While it provided labour for the plantations, it also raised concerns among the indigenous population, who felt overwhelmed and feared further assimilation into Nigeria.

Trade as highlighted by scholars like Mathias Middell and Katia Naumann, was central to globalization, and Victoria epitome this by facilitating the transfer of modernity through its bustling trade networks. In 1909 alone, Victoria boasted 16 active firms with substantial

<sup>115</sup>Bederman, “Plantation agriculture”, p.358.

<sup>116</sup>*Ibid*, p.359.

<sup>117</sup> NAB, File No Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958, P.50.

<sup>118</sup>Bederman, “Plantation agriculture”, p.337.

workforce comprising both European and Cameroonian employees'<sup>119</sup>.leading firms like John Holt and United African Company (UAC) extended their operations from Victoria to the hinterlands, contributing to the economic expansion of regions like Kumba and Bamenda<sup>120</sup>. These companies specialized in the procurement and trading of palm products, crucial for European industries with Victoria serving as the pivotal port for exporting these goods to Europe. The competition between companies like John Holt and UAC intensified by 1920s, with UAC even establishing extractions and processing facilities in places like Mamfe in the 1930s<sup>121</sup>.The table below shows the different trading companies and merchants during this period that were involved in the exportation and importation of goods.

**Table 2 : Trading companies and merchants in Victoria 1921-1947.**

Name of company	Nationality	Nature of business	Remark
John Holt and Co.	British	Export, import and retail	Established in Victoria in 1933
Compagnie forestiere Saangha Oubangui	French	Forestry	Established in 1947
J. Lawani Marsha	Nigerian	Retail petty trader	Established in 1924
Z. P Thope	Sierra Leonean	Retail petty trader	Established in 1924
A. G Thompson	Togolese	Retail	Established in 1923
Body Lawson	Togolese	Trader-import exports	Established in 1923
S. D Johnson	Togolese	Importer/exporter	Established in 1922
Silas Attipo	Liberian	Trader	Established in 1923

<sup>119</sup> Mathias Middell, Katia Naumann, "Global History and the Spatial turn: From the impact of area studies to the study of critical junctions of Globalisation", *Journal of Global History*, Vol 5, issue 1, 2010, p.149.

<sup>120</sup> Nkwi, "Salt wata modernity, p.40.

<sup>121</sup> W. G. Nkwi, *Kfaang and its technologies: Towards a social history of mobility in Kom Cameroon*, Leiden, ASC Publications, 2011, p.1.

S. Hays	Sierra Leonean	Trader	Established in 1922
Charles Abbey	Monrovia	Trader	Established in 1922
Mpondo Elame alias Freeborn	Douala – import and export	Wholesale trader	Established in 1922
De Bandera	Greek	Retail	Established in 1921
Hausa Co.	British	Dealer of goods of German origin	Established in 1923

**Source:** W. G. Nkwi, “Salt wata modernity”p.39<sup>122</sup>.

From the above diagram, one can see that Victoria served as a significant hub for commercial activities, attracting traders from various areas such as West Coast, Greece and France, with British companies dominating the scene.

### 2.3. Labour Force and Employment

Plantations heavily relied on labour, and the majority of labourers were classified as unskilled. The labour force consisted of both local inhabitants and migrant workers from Nigeria. In some instances, local labour was insufficient to meet the demands of the plantations, necessitating the recruitment of workers from outside the division<sup>123</sup>. The CDC, established to manage expropriated German land, employed a significant number of workers. It had various responsibilities, including cultivation, buying and selling produce, engineering work, and social welfare provision for its employees.

The socioeconomic structure of Victoria Division was shaped by the interaction between the plantations, labour force dynamics, and the inflow of migrant workers<sup>124</sup>. The presence of immigrant labourers, along with the interests of plantation owners and the indigenous population, had social and economic implications that influenced the division's development. During the period from 1919 to 1961, Victoria Division's socioeconomic

<sup>122</sup> Nkwi, “Salt wata modernity”, p.39.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> NAB, File No Ac/87, E. W. Ardener, Historical notes of West Cameroon, Victoria Southern Cameroons 1858-1958, p.93.

structure revolved around agriculture, plantation economies, international trade, and the complex dynamics of labour. The division's economic activities were closely tied to the cultivation and export of cash crops, with trade serving as a crucial source of income. The influx of migrant workers and the management of plantations by entities like the CDC played significant roles in shaping the division's socioeconomic landscape<sup>125</sup>.

### 3. Political structure

The political structure of Victoria from 1919 to 1961 underwent significant changes as it transitioned from German colony to a British administered territory under the League of Nations and later a United Nations Trust territory. Below is the overview of the political structure.

#### 3.1. League of Nations Mandate (1922-1946)

After World War I, Victoria Division, formerly part of the German colony of Kamerun, came under British control and became a mandate of the League of Nations in 1922.<sup>126</sup> As a mandate territory, Victoria Division was entrusted to the United Kingdom for administration. The League of Nations provided a framework for the governance of mandate territories, aiming to promote their development and prepare them for self-government. The British governor appointed by the United Kingdom administered the Victoria Division, assisted by local administrative and judicial institutions.

Under the League of Nations Mandate, efforts were made to promote local political representation and participation in Victoria Division. Indigenous populations were gradually included in various administrative bodies, advisory councils, and legislative institutions<sup>127</sup>. These bodies provided platforms for indigenous individuals to voice their concerns, contribute to policy discussions, and participate in the decision-making process. The inclusion of local representatives aimed to ensure that the interests and perspectives of the indigenous population were taken into account in the governance of Victoria Division<sup>128</sup>.

Local advisory councils were established to advise the British governor on local matters and serve as intermediaries between the colonial administration and the indigenous communities. These councils allowed for the representation of local chiefs and other influential

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<sup>125</sup> Ngomba, "The fluctuating fortunes", p.333.

<sup>126</sup> Ngoh, "*Political evolution*", p.77.

<sup>127</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon*, p.146.

<sup>128</sup> Ngoh, "*Political evolution*", p. 82.

individuals, who could articulate the needs and aspirations of their communities. The councils played a role in shaping policies and influencing the decision-making process within Victoria Division. They acted as a representative body as its members were either selected, nominated or elected among the electorate of the area so that every selected unit can be represented.

The person should be 21 years or over, lived in one area of the electoral unit from which he seeks election. Has paid tax with respect to the period of 12 months, should be of sound mind, solvent and not convicted within a period of 5 years from the day of election of an offense and sentenced to a term of imprisonment exceeding 3 months without the option of fine, and finally not an employee of any native authority<sup>129</sup>

### **3.2. British Administration and Governance**

During the League of Nations mandate period, Victoria Division, as part of the British Cameroons, was under the administration of the British government. The governor, appointed by the British government, held executive authority over Victoria Division. The British administration made key political decisions, implemented policies, and ensured the overall governance of the division. In addition to the British officials, there were indigenous African chiefs who had advisory roles in the administration. These chiefs provided input, advice, and local perspectives to the British administration<sup>130</sup>. However, the ultimate decision-making authority and power resided with the British governor. The British Cameroons, including Victoria Division, was jointly administered with Nigeria. The British governor worked in collaboration with Nigerian authorities to provide administrative support, infrastructure development, and governance to the division. This joint administration aimed to integrate Victoria Division within the broader regional context.

### **3.3. United Nations Trust Territory (1946-1961)**

Following World War II, the League of Nations was replaced by the United Nations, which assumed responsibility for the governance of former League of Nations mandates. In 1946, Victoria Division, along with the rest of the British Cameroons, became a Trust Territory under the United Nations. The United Nations supervised the administration of the Trust Territory, with the goal of preparing it for self-government and eventual independence<sup>131</sup>. With the transition to the United Nations Trust Territory, the focus on local political representation and development continued. Efforts were made to further empower the indigenous population

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<sup>129</sup> NAB, File No LG919 ja/a (1957)1, local government reforms.

<sup>130</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon*, p.147.

<sup>131</sup> Fanso, *Cameroon history*, p.264.



and prepare them for self-governance. Local advisory bodies and legislative institutions were strengthened, allowing for greater participation of indigenous representatives.

The United Nations facilitated the establishment of more inclusive legislative institutions, such as the Legislative Council, which included elected representatives from Victoria Division. These representatives had the opportunity to contribute to the law making process and advocate for the interests of their constituents. The aim was to foster a sense of ownership and self-determination among the indigenous population, ensuring their active involvement in shaping the future of Victoria Division<sup>132</sup>. Additionally, the United Nations encouraged the formation of political parties and civic organisations to promote grassroots participation and mobilization. These organizations played a crucial role in advocating for the rights and aspirations of the local population. They provided platforms for political engagement, public discourse, and the advancement of local interests.

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<sup>132</sup> S. B. Smith, *Recollections of British Administration in the Cameroons mid Northern Nigeria 1921-1957*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1969, p.19.

## **CHAPTER III: THE EVOLUTION OF VICTORIA AFTER INDEPENDENCE (1961-1982)**

The evolution of Victoria, a town found along Cameroon's coastline, has been a fascinating journey marked by multifaceted societal and demographic changes. As the city's history unfolded, it bore witness to a tapestry of social, cultural, and economic shifts that moulded its identity and trajectory. What significant changes can be seen in Victoria after independence? Faced with this question, sub questions arise such as; what significant social changes can be seen in Victoria? What political and economic changes can be seen in Victoria after independence? This chapter goes into the dynamic landscape of Victoria's evolution, unravelling the intricacies of its social fabric and demographic dynamics. From the ebb and flow of population growth to the emergence of diverse ethnic identities, this chapter illuminates the profound impacts of historical, political, and economic forces that have shaped Victoria's social and demographic landscapes.

### **I. SOCIAL EVOLUTION OF VICTORIA**

The social evolution of Victoria, Cameroon's coastal gem is a narrative of transformation and adaptation. This section delves into the profound shifts that have unfolded within the city's social framework. As Victoria navigated through eras of political change, economic growth, and urbanization, its society underwent metamorphoses that touched upon every facet of daily life. From demographic patterns to cultural expressions, this exploration unveils how Victoria's social dynamics reflect the interplay of tradition and modernity, community and diversity, and continuity and change.

#### **1. Demographic evolution**

At the heart of Victoria's transformation lies the demographic evolution that has sculpted its population mosaic. This section traverses the city's historical journey, shedding light on the factors that have shaped its demographic landscape. With a focus on population growth, migration patterns, and ethnic diversity, we uncover the intricate tapestry of communities that have converged to create Victoria's vibrant social fabric. From colonial influences to contemporary urbanization, the demographic evolution serves as a lens through which we decipher the complex interplay of historical forces and contemporary trends that have woven the very essence of Victoria's populace.

### 1.1. Population growth

The population growth in Victoria can be attributed to several factors including rural-urban migration, natural population increase, and the city's economic opportunities<sup>1</sup>. The growth has led to increased demand for housing services, and infrastructure, prompting urban planning initiatives to accommodate the expanding population.

Between 1964 and 1967, the population of Victoria experienced an increase from 22,152 to 23,474, representing a growth of over 1,000 people. The 1964 census reported a population of 15,919, which then reached 17,486 in 1966/1967<sup>2</sup>. By 1972, the population had surged to 26,500. These figures are based on various sources including censuses and estimates. The table below shows the population change over different years after the independence of Cameroon.

**Table 3: Population change over a period from 1964 to 1972**

Year	Population
1964	15,919
1965	140000
1966/1967	17, 486
1971	128888
1972	26,500

**Source:** NAB, File No Cf1963/2, Economic and political report Victoria Division 1963-1972, classified by Prince Baim H.A, 29/04/1994, p.76<sup>3</sup>.

From the above table, Victoria experienced a huge population growth between 1964 and 1972 of 1,577 to 26,500, caused by several reasons such as urban migration, and natural population increase. The population of Victoria has experienced significant growth throughout its history. In 1924, it was estimated to be around 1,577 inhabitants. By 1929, the population had increased to 3,131, and further rose to 10,025 in 1953. It is worth noting that Victoria experienced a doubling of its population between 1930 and 1950, followed by another doubling between 1950 and 1964, and yet another between 1964 and 1974. This rapid growth demonstrates the dynamic nature of the city's population after independence<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Nkwi, "Salt wata", p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> NAB, File No Cf1963/2, Economic and political report Victoria Division 1963-1972, classified by Prince Baim H.A, 29/04/1994, p.76.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.11.

However, it should be noted that this overall increase was not uniform across all neighbourhoods. The following table illustrates the population variations observed between 1963 and 1967. It is a population observed in two years' intervals.

**Table 4: The population variation observed in different districts**

Neighbourhood	Population variation
Beach( station, New Town, Sakar College, Buea Road)	+7.2%
Bota ( G.R.A, CDC)	+4.8%
Mokeba farm( gardens)	+23.3%
Middle farm( Limbe CDC)	-6.8%

**Source:** Courade , *Victoria, Bota Croissance Urbaine et Migratoire*,p.30<sup>5</sup>.

From the above table, the rate of population increase varies depending on the age of the districts. The middle farm district shows a decrease, which can be attributed to reduced activity in the plantations. On the other hand, Mokeba farm and Buea road have a higher underestimation of population growth, indicating that the actual increase in population is greater in these two neighbourhoods. Population changes in specific districts such as Bota, Limbe, and Middle farm were influenced by labour demands of plantations and the government and improved technological facilities<sup>6</sup>. The numbers of residents in these areas fluctuate based on the level of activity in the industrial plantations and administrative functions. For example, before independence to 1964, the population in these districts increased from 4,352 to 6,233 but remained relatively stable in 1967<sup>7</sup>. Layoffs at the C D C, the closure of the Bota oil Mill, and a decline in the port activity, impacted population decline in these districts.<sup>8</sup>

The number of Europeans in Victoria also experienced changes over time. It peaked at around 250 individuals in 1962 but has since been decreasing<sup>9</sup>. Factors such as the closure of British branches, the localization of executive positions and reduced technical assistance contributed to the decline. In 1967, there were approximately 150 Europeans in Victoria<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>5</sup>Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.30.

<sup>6</sup> Ngomba, "The fluctuating fortunes", p.333.

<sup>7</sup> NAB, File No Cf1963/2, Economic and political report Victoria Division 1963-1972, classified by Prince Baim H.A, 29/04/1994, p.77.

<sup>8</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.30.

<sup>9</sup> NAB, File N° Cf1963/2, Economic and political report Victoria Division 1963-1972, classified by Prince Baim H.A, 29/04/1994, p.193.

<sup>10</sup> Ngomba, "The fluctuating fortunes", p.333.

After looking at the population growth of Victoria from 1964 to 1973, it is important to examine the population dynamics of Victoria

## 1.2. Population dynamics

During the period between 1961 and 1982, Victoria experienced population dynamics that influenced its ethnic composition. These dynamics were shaped by various factors including political changes and migration patterns. The population of Victoria witnessed significant growth during this time. However, the available data on the population dynamics is limited. In the 1964, the population was estimated to be around 15,919, with an increasing trend observed. It is worth noting that the figures provided are estimates based on administrative censuses and sample surveys<sup>11</sup>. In terms of ethnic composition, the indigenous ethnic groups from the Southwest region such as the Bakweri, Isubu and Buea continued to be an integral part of the town's population<sup>12</sup>. However, the relative importance of these groups decreased over time. Other ethnic groups from different regions of Cameroon and neighbouring countries also contributed to the ethnic diversity of Victoria.

During this period, the population dynamics saw an increase in the number of non-native Cameroonians, reaching approximately 9,000 in 1964<sup>13</sup>. However, their relative importance in the population declined compared to previous years. The ethnic composition was influenced by the political power of the time. The Ibo ethnic group, originally from Nigeria, became the most prominent ethnic group in Victoria during this period, with their population exceeding 4,000 individuals. Additionally, the Bantoid groups from the Western and central plateaus such as the Bamileke, as well as the forest regions, also experienced significant growth accounting for more than 30% of the total population by 1964<sup>14</sup>.

After examining the population dynamic of Victoria, it is necessary to study the ethnic diversity of this population.

## 1.3. Ethnic Diversity

The demographic growth of the city has brought about significant changes in its ethnic composition, as outlined in the provided passage. Political factors have played a crucial role in

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<sup>11</sup> NAB, File N° Cf1963/2, Economic and political report Victoria Division 1963-1972, classified by Prince Baim H.A, 29/04/1994.

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

<sup>13</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.30.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

shaping the ethnic makeup of the city, with its demographic influence expanding after gaining independence and extending to the English-speaking hinterland. This transformation has notably impacted the African population, particularly groups from Cameroon, which transitioned to a French-speaking identity during the German colonial period, as well as individuals from Nigeria during the British Mandate and Anglophone Cameroon following independence<sup>15</sup>.

Between 1961 and 1964, the number of native Cameroonians, who were not particularly prolific, experienced a proportional decrease. In contrast, the population of non-native Cameroonians witnessed a significant increase, reaching 9,000 individuals by 1964. However, their relative importance in the city was lower compared to 1928 when they constituted 68% of the total population<sup>16</sup>. By 1972, non-native Cameroonians accounted for 39% of the population, while Nigerians represented 44%<sup>17</sup>. Examining the ethnic composition of the city in 1962, the dominant group consisted of the Bakoko, an ethnic group closely related to the Bassa. The Bali, Banyang, Bana, Menda, and Yoruba followed them, among others. Notably, the groups that held significance under German administration, such as the Bali, a Sudanese-origin people allied with the Germans, and the Bana, Bamileke from French-speaking Cameroon, were well represented<sup>18</sup>. Moreover, various ethnic groups held prominence in specific regions influenced by the German colonial presence. For instance, the Menda, residing in the contact zone between the plateau and the savannah, occupied the territory where the German invaders had established the military post of Bamenda. Other groups like the Banyang from the Cross River region (also known as Manyu), the Bakoko from the Sanaga<sup>19</sup> area, contributed to the ethnic diversity.

Over time, the ethnic dynamics shifted, and the Ibo, a prominent ethnic group from eastern Nigeria, emerged as the largest group in 1964, comprising over 4,000 individuals, including 115 urban residents<sup>20</sup>. Subsequently, the Bantoid groups, encompassing the western plateau (including the Menchum valley and the actual Momo department), the central plateau (consisting of the "Tikar" peoples in the central Grassfields), and the forest regions

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<sup>15</sup> NAB, File No Cf1963/2, Economic and political report Victoria Division 1963-1972, classified by Prince Baim H.A, 29/04/1994.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.30.

<sup>18</sup> Aderner, *Plantation*, p.163.

<sup>19</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.30.

<sup>20</sup> NAB, file No cf1963/2, Economic and political reports, Victoria division 1963-1972, classified by Prince Mbain H.A 1994.

(encompassing the Mamfe area), experienced significant progress and collectively accounted for more than 30% of the total population<sup>21</sup>. The evolution of the ethnic composition in the city can be characterised as a pluralistic phenomenon, wherein a few groups exerted preponderant influence at different periods. Initially dominated by the Bakoko, the African population later came under the dominance of the Ibo and, currently, groups from the western edge and the centre of the Grassfields.

After studying the ethnic diversity of Victoria, it is essential to look at the level of urbanisation in Victoria.

## **2. Urbanisation**

Urbanisation refers to the proportion of the total population residing in urban areas, and is characterized by an increase in the population of cities or towns and the transformation of these places through various processes. In this context, urbanization will be used to describe the increase in the population of Victoria and the changes in the town's processes, including the shift from agriculture to other pursuits, changes in behaviour patterns, and the concentration of population coordinating important activities. Victoria, like many other places in Africa, has experienced rapid urban growth and increasing urbanization over the years. The demographic history of Victoria shows a progressive increase in its population, with the town's inhabitants growing significantly from 15,919 in 1964 to 26,500 in 1972. The rate of urban growth in Victoria has been estimated to be around 6% to 7%, which is higher than the world average of 3.1% for localities with over 20,000 inhabitants<sup>22</sup>.

After assessing the introduction of Victoria's urbanisation, it is salient to go deeper into the different aspects of urbanisation in Victoria.

### **2.1. Infrastructural development**

The urban landscape of Victoria is characterised by a fundamental binary division space. The town is divided into two zones from East to West, emanating from the poles of activity represented by Bota plantations and the commercial, administrative and missionary areas in Victoria<sup>23</sup>. Historically, these zones were intertwined during the German colonial era, but they grew apart until establishment of the Government Residential Area (G.R.A) at Bota

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<sup>21</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.30.

<sup>22</sup> Ngende "Urbanisation", p.11.

<sup>23</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.9.

in 1970<sup>24</sup>, which brought them back into coherence. However, they remain physically, socially, juridical, geographically and sociologically separated<sup>25</sup>. Urbanisation in Victoria has witnessed substantial infrastructural development. This includes the construction and improvement of roads, bridges, public transportation systems, healthcare facilities, educational institutions and recreational spaces<sup>26</sup>. Infrastructure projects have been aimed at enhancing connectivity, improving access to services, and promoting sustainable urban development.

Road network in Victoria saw significant expansion and improvement. New road networks were constructed and existing ones were upgraded to better connect different parts of the town. The Government, CDC, and the area councils served Victoria with roads networks constructed and maintained. The opening of the Tiko-Douala road in 1969<sup>27</sup>, the rebuilding and construction of the Victoria- Tiko road in December 1973 by the Razel Company<sup>28</sup>. The short road from Mile 4 to Buea was constructed; the road from Victoria to Man O'war Bay where the 11<sup>th</sup> company of the Cameroon army is based was improved on, although not tarred<sup>29</sup>. Due to a community development program, the Buea-Sasse-Victoria road was completed; this was possible by the Federal government grant. The CDC resurfaced the road linking Victoria to Idenau in the West Coast and Victoria to Mabeta. The construction of these roads was to serve for the evacuation of rural farm products to the urban centers of Buea and Muea<sup>30</sup>. The improved road infrastructure facilitated better transportation and accessibility within and around Victoria supporting economic activities and urban growth<sup>31</sup>.

The improvement of healthcare was another crucial aspect of development in Victoria. New hospitals and health centers were established to provide quality healthcare service to the growing populations for example the General hospital in Victoria that was accorded the status of a provincial hospital in 1972, the PAMOL dispensary of Bwenga, and the Ekona hospital<sup>32</sup>. The expansion of healthcare facilities helped in improving public health and overall well-being

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<sup>24</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p. 21.

<sup>25</sup> Ngende "Urbanisation", p.11.

<sup>26</sup> NAB, File N° Cf1963/2, Economic and political report Victoria Division 1963-1972, classified by Prince Baim H.A, 29/04/1994.

<sup>27</sup> J. le Fall-Jacob, E M. Tobe, "Translated version of Victoria Bota, Urban growth and migration", *Institute of Social Science*, ONAREST, March 1976, p.24.

<sup>28</sup> NAB, file N° Cf 1963/2, economic and political reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972, classified by Prince Mbain H. A, 1994, p.48.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 49.

<sup>30</sup> NAB, file N° Cf 1963/2, economic and political reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972, classified by Prince Mbain H. A, 1994, p.48.

<sup>31</sup> Aderner, *Plantation*, p.360.

<sup>32</sup> NAB, File N° Cf1963/2, Economic and political report Victoria Division 1963-1972, classified by Prince Baim H.A, 29/04/1994.



The government focused on expanding and upgrading the water supply system in Victoria. Efforts were made to ensure a more reliable and accessible water supply for residents, businesses and institutions. Access to clean and safe water improves the quality of life and supports economic activities<sup>33</sup>.

The provision of electricity was extended to more areas of Victoria in 1966. The expansion of the electricity grid brought about better lighting, enhanced communication and improved the living conditions of residents. Telecommunication infrastructure also experienced advancements in 1966. Telephone lines were extended and communication services were improved, connecting Victoria to the rest of Cameroon. The increasing population led to the development of new housing areas and urban expansion such as GRA in Bota, Limbo camp, Gardens, Buea road built in 1973<sup>34</sup>. Efforts were made to provide affordable housing options for residents and planned urban development projects were initiated to accommodate the growing population<sup>35</sup>. Government offices and administrative facilities were upgraded and expanded to meet the needs of the growing regional administration. Victoria played a crucial role as an administrative centre and improvements in public services helped in effective governance.

After examining the infrastructural development of Victoria, it is important to look at the Urban sprawl of Victoria.

## **2.2. Urban sprawl**

Urban sprawl<sup>36</sup> is a significant phenomenon that emerged in Victoria during the period between 1961 and 1982<sup>37</sup>. As the town experienced population growth and demographic changes, it led to the expansion of the urbanised areas and the transformation of the town's landscape<sup>38</sup>. In 1965, the population of Victoria was at 140000, various reasons accounted for this growth; first of which was an increase in medical facilities which resulted to a decrease in infant mortality rate and a low death rate among the general population. Secondly, an improvement in the transportation means which allowed for population movement<sup>39</sup>. By 1966,

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<sup>33</sup>NAB, File N° Cf1963/2, Economic and political report Victoria Division 1963-1972, classified by Prince Baim H.A, 29/04/1994.

<sup>34</sup> Tobe, "Translated version of Victoria Bota", p. 20.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Mathias Abungah, age 65, CDC worker, Moliwe Limbe, 15 July 2023.

<sup>36</sup> Urban sprawl is the spread of a city into the area surrounding it, often without planning.

<sup>37</sup> Ngende "Urbanisation", p.13.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Dora Ngonnack Koffi, age 68, retired CDC worker, Mile 4 Limbe, March 2023.

<sup>39</sup> NAB, File N° Cf1963/2, Economic and political report Victoria Division 1963-1972, classified by Prince Baim H.A, 29/04/1994.

multiple tribes existed in the Division, prominent being the Bakweri around the slopes of the mountain and the Coastal area. The Balongs in the Muyuka sub division, the Bambokos also in the Muyuka sub division. There was also a large influx of other tribal groups such as the Igbos, Ibiobos, Ijaws from Nigeria who were mostly fishermen. They inhabited the Creeks areas of Tiko and the West Coast<sup>40</sup>.

During the 1960s, Victoria saw an influx of immigrants, primarily attracted by economic opportunities and administrative activities. The population growth was not adequately managed, leading to unplanned expansion and the emergence of informal settlements. New town, the indigenous town witnessed a rapid increase in population, with its inhabitants living in densely packed houses, many of them makeshift structure<sup>41</sup>. The allure of job opportunities in industries such as the oil refinery Société Nationale de Raffinage (SONARA created in 1973) and improved living conditions pulled individuals from rural areas to urban center. The migration stream contributed to the town's population growth and cultural diversity, as people from different backgrounds settled in the area<sup>42</sup>. The town's vibrant markets, social spaces and nightlife fostered social interactions and cultural exchanges. Informal settlements sprouted up in various locations, especially in the interstices of the urban fabric, between cultivated lands and around transportation routes<sup>43</sup>. These settlements were often characterised by poor living conditions, limited infrastructure and the lack of proper sanitation.

As Victoria continued to grow, there was an attempt to manage urban expansion and accommodate the rising population. They initiated planned development projects such as the Governmental Residential Area (G.R.A) in Bota and lotteries in designated areas like Half Mile and Lump Sum quarters. These efforts aimed to provide more structured housing for middle and upper- class residents, including expatriates and indigenous officials<sup>44</sup>. The G RA in Bota and the senior service quarters were developed with well-organised residential units, comprising bungalows surrounded by manicured lawns and hedges. These areas were primarily reserved for high ranking government officials and expatriate employees, offering better living conditions compared to the informal settlement.

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<sup>40</sup> NAB File N° Cfl1963/2, Economic and political report Victoria Division 1963-1972, classified by Prince Baim H.A, 29/04/1994.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Paul Ndivi, age 70, retired teacher, Bota Land, 20 August 2023.

<sup>42</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Dora Ngonnack Koffi, age 68, retired CDC worker, Mile 4 Limbe, March 2023.

<sup>44</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.22.

### 2.3. Migration trend

There is a significant gender imbalance among the immigrants. While the number of boys and girls is nearly equal from ages 0 to 20, with a slight male dominance among the 10-15 age group (135% more boys), this balance shifts dramatically in older age groups<sup>45</sup>. Among immigrants, aged 35 to 55, men outnumber women by three to one. In contrast, more women are present among natives aged 10-20 and over 50. This discrepancy highlights the influx of young, single adult men as immigrants. The city also sees a loss of native men, particularly young and elderly, as women tend to stay due to stronger family ties. This complex migration pattern is influenced by the long history of migration, attracting men from elsewhere while losing native residents<sup>46</sup>.

The stronger gender imbalance in the immigrant population indicates higher immigration rates compared to emigration. Comparing the age of native and immigrant populations reinforces these observations. There is 73% of the population under 15 years old. There are more women than men between ages 5-30 (13% more) and over 50 (120% more)<sup>47</sup>. Among those aged 30-50, men outnumber women by 14%. This unusual structure results from the emigration of men born in Victoria but not belonging to local ethnic groups, including Germans over 50 and young adults during British-Nigerian administration. These men may have returned to their ancestral countries or moved to more prosperous Nigerian cities for education or employment due to a lack of high schools in Anglophone Cameroon<sup>48</sup>. The immigrant age indicates the prominence of adults, particularly those aged 10-35 (69% of the total) to the small number of entire immigrant families.

There are consistently more men than women among immigrants, many of whom are single<sup>49</sup>. The majority of immigrants arrive between ages 10-40 (76.5% of the total), with younger men coming for education or apprenticeships and older ones for employment. Women typically migrate between ages 5-30, often to marry or find work. This migration pattern mainly involves young adult men, especially those aged 20-30, and women aged 15-30<sup>50</sup>. Children also migrate for education or marriage prospects. The youthfulness of immigrants can be

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<sup>45</sup>Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.22.

<sup>46</sup> V. Pierre, « La croissance urbaine en Afrique noire et Madagascar, l'exemple du Cameroun » in : *Cahiers d'outre-mer*, n° 105, 1974, p.95.

<sup>47</sup> H.J Durupt, P. Holin, F. Turlot, « La population du Cameroun Occidental, résultat de l'enquête démographique de 1964 », *I.N.S.E.E, Département de la coopération*, vol 5, p.22.

<sup>48</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.22.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, p.22.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p.23.

understood in terms of social and psychological factors, such as opportunities for those who adapt well to urban life and receive support from already settled family members or influential community members. Women either migrate to find a husband or are brought by an immigrant who has saved some money to choose a wife from their village, sometimes immediately after finishing high school to work in an office.

The immigrant population's origin can be understood by examining their ethnic backgrounds and birthplaces. However, focusing solely on birthplace underestimates the number of immigrants in the city since many children of immigrants are born there<sup>51</sup>. The 1967 census did not include ethnic data due to political reasons, likely to downplay or eliminate certain ethnic distinctions. Therefore, we used the 1964 census to compare these two aspects, providing crucial insights into the presence of immigrant groups historically and currently<sup>52</sup>. People from Fako ethnic groups (mainly Bakweri and Bimbia) make up only 12% of the population, whereas 40% of residents were born in Fako but live in the city. This discrepancy highlights the long history of immigration and the small number of natives<sup>53</sup>. The largest group in the city by ethnicity is from the Grass fields and Manyu regions (42%), although this group is diverse<sup>54</sup>. They are followed by Nigerians (mostly Ibo, making up three-quarters of this group), Francophone Cameroonians, and finally, the Fako ethnic groups. The Ibo group is the largest single ethnic group, more than twice the size of the Bakweri, the second-largest group<sup>55</sup>.

In 1967, the vast majority (80%) of immigrants living in Victoria came from three main regions: the Bamenda (Northwest Province), the Southwest Province (the forested area of Anglophone Cameroon), and Eastern Nigeria<sup>56</sup>. Each of these regions contributed at least a quarter of the immigrants (with Bamenda contributing a third). Francophone regions of Cameroon contributed only 13%, while the remaining 3.5% of immigrants came from Western and Northern Nigeria and other various countries<sup>57</sup>. There were no significant differences in the birthplaces of adult immigrants compared to the overall immigrant population. However, within these major regions, there were notable differences among the districts. In the Northwest Province, Bamenda-Bali district provided half of the emigrants from this province, while Nwa

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<sup>51</sup> Vennetier, « La croissance urbaine », p. 96.

<sup>52</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.22.

<sup>53</sup> NAB, File N° Economic and Political Reports Victoria Division, 1963-1972.

<sup>54</sup> Durupt, « La population du Cameroun Occidental », p.23

<sup>55</sup> NAB, File N° cf 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by Prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

<sup>56</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.22

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

district did not contribute at all. Gwofon (now Momo division) and Wum, significant sources of plantation workers, followed Bamenda with 7% and 5% of Victoria's immigrants, respectively. More northern and affluent districts like Nkambe, Ndop, and Nso contributed only 1-2% each<sup>58</sup>. The more isolated Njinikom district had a very low participation in migration. In the Southwest Province, Mamfé district, about 200 kilometres from Victoria, was the largest contributor with 51% of the emigrants<sup>59</sup>. Less active districts like Nguti, Bamusso, Akwaya, and Fontem, which are poorly connected to Victoria, had minimal participation in migration. The prosperous Tombel district did not contribute to Victoria's immigration but was drawn to other towns in the Mungo area<sup>60</sup>. Bangem, Ndian, and Muyuka each contributed 1% of Victoria's immigrants<sup>61</sup>. Kumba was unique among the prosperous regions, contributing over a third of the immigrants from the Southwest Province<sup>62</sup>. From these observations, a few general conclusions can be drawn with caution. The primary sources of immigrants to Victoria in 1967 were specific regions with particular characteristics, such as the level of prosperity, connectivity, and historical migration patterns.

### 3. Educational evolution

The period from 1961 to 1982 marked a transformative phase in the educational landscape of Victoria, Cameroon. After gaining independence, the town witnessed a surge in efforts to expand educational opportunities and improve access to quality education. As Victoria evolved into a key economic and cultural center in the region, education became a pivotal aspect of its growth and development. This work explores the educational evolution of Victoria during this crucial period, analysing the establishment of educational infrastructure, shifts in curricula, and the growth of higher education institutions.

#### 3.1. Education in Victoria after independence

In the aftermath of gaining independence and the formal establishment of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, Victoria witnessed a surge in efforts to expand its educational infrastructure. The government prioritized education as a means of fostering progress and inclusivity in the young nation. After gaining independence, the government of Cameroon focused on expanding educational opportunities in Victoria. Efforts were made to establish

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<sup>58</sup>Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.22.

<sup>59</sup> Le Fall-Jacob, "Translated version of Victoria Bota", p.24

<sup>60</sup> NAB, File N° cf 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by Prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup>Vennetier, «La croissance urbaine », p. 96.

schools and educational institutions to cater to the growing population's educational needs<sup>63</sup>. Primary and secondary schools were set up to provide basic education to children in the region<sup>64</sup>. New schools were opened in 1962 in Bakingili by the Basel mission, Bwiyuku by the Baptist Mission, Ekona Mbenge by the Baptist Mission, Tole/Sasse by the Roman Catholic Mission, and Ebenezer in Victoria by the Baptist Mission, Saxenholf by the Roman Catholic Church and in Buea by the Roman Catholic Church<sup>65</sup>. The independence era witnessed an emphasis on promoting education as a means of fostering national development and unity. The government invested in educational infrastructure, building new schools and expanding existing ones. Access to education was prioritised and efforts were made to ensure that more children had the opportunity to attend school. Educational institutions contributed to human capital development and empowered the local population<sup>66</sup>.

However, the educational system faced challenges, such as a lack of adequate funding and qualified teachers, particularly in rural areas<sup>67</sup>. The government sought to address these issues by increasing the education budget and encouraging more qualified individuals to pursue teaching career for example, scholarship award was offered to Oscar Williams by the council due to the need to train new teachers for the growing schools<sup>68</sup>. During this period, efforts were made to adapt educational curricula to reflect the country's cultural and historical context<sup>69</sup>. The curriculum aimed to instil a sense of national identity and pride among students while also providing them with essential skills for future employment. Subjects such as history, literature, and local languages gained prominence alongside traditional academic disciplines.

As educational infrastructure flourished in Victoria, the subsequent years witnessed a focus on curriculum and literacy enhancement efforts to further elevate the educational landscape.

### **3.2. Expansion of Educational Opportunities**

Victoria experienced a significant expansion of educational opportunities, marking a pivotal period in the town's educational evolution. As the government of the Republic of

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<sup>63</sup> NAB, File N° V3264/52, Victoria divisional council education subcommittee.

<sup>64</sup> NAB, File N° Economic and political Reports Victoria Division, 1963-1972.

<sup>65</sup> NAB, File N° cf 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

<sup>66</sup> NAB, File N° V3264/51, Victoria Divisional Council Finance Committee, p.1.

<sup>67</sup> NAB, File N° cf 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

<sup>68</sup> NAB, File N° V3264/51, Victoria Divisional Council Finance Committee, p.1.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Hans Ashu, age 70 retired teacher, Mile 4 Limbe, 5 September 2023.

Cameroon recognized the vital role of education in fostering social and economic progress, concerted efforts were made to broaden access to quality education for the town's residents. This section explores the key initiatives and developments that contributed to the growth of educational opportunities in Victoria during this period. From the establishment of new schools and educational institutions to the introduction of innovative programs, this era saw transformative changes that shaped the educational landscape and empowered the younger generation for a brighter future.

In the 1970s, the government continued to prioritize education and worked towards improving access to education in Victoria<sup>70</sup>. Educational initiatives were launched to increase school enrolment and reduce gender disparities. Scholarships and financial aid programs were introduced to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds, the Victoria Divisional Council granted ensuring that education was accessible to all Francis Wotany a student in the Baptist teacher's training college. These institutions such as Saxenholf, Sasse and Ebenezer College offered diverse academic disciplines, catering to the educational needs of students aspiring to pursue careers in various fields, including sciences, humanities, and business<sup>71</sup>. The government recognized the importance of technical and vocational education in meeting the country's development needs. Technical schools and vocational training centers were set up in Victoria to equip students with practical skills for employment in various industries<sup>72</sup>.

Amidst the progress in curriculum and literacy enhancement, Victoria faced various challenges that set the stage for the educational landscape's transformation in the subsequent years.

### **3.3. Challenges and Prospects**

Victoria's educational development encountered various challenges. As the educational system expanded, there were challenges in maintaining quality infrastructure and adequate resources for the growing number of students. The government focused on improving school facilities, ensuring access to educational materials, and enhancing teachers training programs<sup>73</sup>. Socio-economic factors continued to influence educational outcomes in Victoria. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds often faced barriers to accessing quality

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<sup>70</sup> Interview with Joan Ngulefac, age 65years, teacher, Mile 2 Limbe, 10 September 2023.

<sup>71</sup>NAB, File N° of 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Ashu Hans, age 70, retired teacher, Mile 4 Limbe, 5 September 2023.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Joan Ngulefac, age 65years, teacher, Mile 2 Limbe, 10 September 2023.

education. By the early 1980s, Victoria's educational landscape had evolved significantly<sup>74</sup>. The town had become a hub of educational opportunities, offering diverse options for students at various levels. The government's continued commitment to education and development initiatives provided hope for further progress in the coming years.

## **II. POLITICAL EVOLUTION OF VICTORIA (1961-1982)**

The period from 1961 to 1982 witnessed significant political changes in Victoria, as it transitioned from a colonial territory to an integral part of the Federal Republic of Cameroon. The town's political landscape underwent multiple transformations, including the establishment of local governance structures, integration into the newly formed nations. This section explores the key milestones and developments that shaped the political evolution of Victoria during this era.

### **1. Local Government**

After Southern British Cameroons gained independence and voted to join the Republic of Cameroon, Victoria Division became an integral part of West Cameroon. Under the federal system of the Federal Republic of Cameroon (1961-1972), the country was divided into two regions: West Cameroon and East Cameroon (the former French Cameroon)<sup>75</sup>. Each region had its legislative and executive bodies, and Victoria Division had its local administration overseeing civic affairs, public services, and day-to-day governance. The establishment of local government in Victoria Division allowed for the representation of regional interests and the adaptation of policies to address specific local issues<sup>76</sup>. It provided the opportunity for people in the division to participate in decision-making processes and fostered a sense of belonging within the broader national context. With a degree of autonomy granted by the federal system, Victoria Division's local authorities could address regional concerns, promote cultural diversity, and safeguard local traditions while contributing to the overall political fabric of the Federal Republic of Cameroon<sup>77</sup>.

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<sup>74</sup> Interview with Frida Matute, age 75, retired teacher, New Town Limbe, 17 August 2023

<sup>75</sup> Ngoh, *Political history*, p. 190.

<sup>76</sup> NAB, File N° cf 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

<sup>77</sup> NAB, File N° cf 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by Prince Mbain H.A, 1994.



### **1.1. Administrative structure**

Victoria Division had a local government administrative structure that includes districts. These units are responsible for managing local affairs, delivering essential services, and maintaining law and order within the division.

### **1.2. Responsibilities**

During the period of 1961-1982, after Victoria became part of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, the local government played a vital role in addressing the needs and development of the community. As part of West Cameroon, Victoria Division's local authorities worked tirelessly to improve the living standards of residents and contribute to the overall growth of the region<sup>78</sup>. The local government's<sup>79</sup> responsibilities encompass various sectors such as education seen through the granting of scholarship opportunities, healthcare, infrastructural development, agricultural support and community welfare. Local authorities worked towards improving the living standards of residents and addressing their needs<sup>80</sup>. The local government focused on enhancing the educational system in Victoria division during this period. Efforts were made to improve school infrastructure, provide teacher training and ensure access to quality education for all residents.

After examining the responsibilities of the local government, it is important to know about the community participation.

### **1.3. Community participation**

Local government promoted community participation in decision making processes, encouraging citizen's involvement in shaping policies and development plans for the division. Local governments organised various mechanisms to engage citizens such as town hall meetings, public consultations, focus groups, and surveys<sup>81</sup>. These platforms provide opportunities for community members to voice their opinions, express concerns and share ideas with policymakers and officials. Community participation ensures that diverse voices are heard representing various social, economic and cultural groups within the division. It aims to be inclusive, considering the perspectives of women, youth, marginalized populations and

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<sup>78</sup> NAB, File N° cf 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by Prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

<sup>79</sup> Local government is the administration of a particular country or district, with representatives elected by those who live there.

<sup>80</sup> NAB, File N° cf/1963/2 Political and economic reports Victoria Division 1963-1972.

<sup>81</sup> NAB, File N° cf 1978, Report on the political, social and economic situation in Fako Division for period ending October 1978, classified by Prince Mbain Henry on the 23rd June 2007.

vulnerable communities. Engaging citizens in decision-making builds trust between the governments and the community. It fosters social capital, promoting cooperation and collective action for betterment of the division.

Haven looked at the community participation, it is important to look at the integration into the Federal Republic.

## **2. Integration into the Federal Republic**

The integration of Victoria Division into the Federal Republic of Cameroon in 1961 marked a significant milestone in the country's political evolution. It solidified the unity of the former British and French Cameroons, which had distinct colonial histories and cultural backgrounds. Victoria Division's integration into West Cameroon allowed for a cooperative and harmonious relationship between the two regions, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. As part of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, Victoria Division's involvement in the national political landscape contributed to the country's overall socio-economic development, with its unique contributions enriching the nation's cultural diversity and political dynamics. West division was renamed Fako Division by presidential decree No 68/DF/509 of 30th December 1968<sup>82</sup>.

### **2.1. Governance Integration (1961-1972)**

Victoria Division's administrative and governance structures were modified to align with the federal system of Cameroon. This process involved adapting local administrative units, such as districts or municipalities, to fit within the overall federal framework. It ensured a seamless flow of information, resources, and decision-making between the local and national levels of government.

After looking at the integration into the Federal Republic, it is important to exam the impact of this integration.

### **2.2. Impact of this integration**

The integration of Victoria Division into the Federal Republic of Cameroon allowed the division's economic activities to contribute to the country's overall economic growth. The division's agriculture, particularly the production and export of various crops, played a crucial

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<sup>82</sup> NAB, File N° of 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

role in generating revenue and foreign exchange earnings for the nation. This economic contribution helped strengthen Cameroon's position in the international market<sup>83</sup>.

After examining the impact of integration, it is important to look at the representation and influence.

### **2.3. Representation and Influence**

As part of the larger nation, Victoria Division gained representation in the national government. Elected officials and local authorities from the division had the opportunity to advocate for the division's interests and concerns at the federal level. This representation ensured that the division's unique needs and priorities were considered in national policies and development plans, fostering an inclusive and participatory decision-making process.

After looking at the presentation and influence, it is important to know about decentralisation and regional development.

### **3. Decentralization and Regional Development:**

In the 1960s and early 1970s, the government of Cameroon pursued decentralization efforts to empower local communities and promote regional development in 1974 through the promulgation of law N° 74/23 of 5<sup>th</sup> December 1974 which stated in article 1 that “a council shall be a decentralised public authority having status of cooperate body”<sup>84</sup>, including in Victoria Division<sup>85</sup>. The regional government in West Cameroon invested in various development projects in Victoria Division. Infrastructure development, such as road networks, bridges, and transportation facilities, improved connectivity between communities and facilitated the movement of goods and services<sup>86</sup>. Decentralisation allowed local authorities in Victoria Division to tailor policies and initiatives that addressed the specific needs and aspirations of the people in the region. This led to the creation of local development plans, investment in education and healthcare facilities, and the promotion of economic activities to improve the living standards of the population<sup>87</sup>.

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<sup>83</sup> Ekali, *Fluctuating fortunes*, p.335.

<sup>84</sup> B. J. Gemandze, *“The failure of decentralisation policy in Cameroon: An analysis of the 1974 law on local Government reform (1974-1994)”*, Netherlands, The Hague, 1994, P.30.

<sup>85</sup> NAB, File N° cf 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> NAB, File N° Ja/e (1961), Council, Victoria divisional Council minutes on medical and health committee, 1961.

### 3.1. Empowering Regional Authorities

Decentralisation policies in Cameroon aimed to empower regional authorities in Victoria Division. This involved delegating decision-making power and resources to local officials and institutions. With increased autonomy, regional authorities were better positioned to design and implement development initiatives that aligned with the division's unique needs and priorities.

### 3.2. Political organization and parties

The main political party as of 1971 was the Cameroon National Union (CNU) due to the huge attendance during state occasions and public manifestations. However, some people who held party post were not active as some of them live out of reach of their militants. Many people enthusiasms died when they were unable to earn remuneration at the House of Assembly<sup>88</sup>. In 1972, the main political party remained the CNU, which was accepted by the population. However, the Victoria sub-section did not improve much. There was poor attendance to convened meetings and conference and some branches hardly convene meetings to discuss on the activities of the party<sup>89</sup>. In the Tiko subsection, the Women Cameroon National Union (WCNC) was the only active organ, with Hon. Imma as president the secretary of State for primary education<sup>90</sup>. The Muyuka sub section was active to an extent. In the Victoria sub section, a number of branches faced moribond state. In the Buea sub section, the situation was better than that of the Victoria subsection. In 1978, Victoria Division was divided into 4 administrative units namely Victoria, Tiko, Muyuka Sub Division and the District of Buea created by the presidential decree N° 152/CAB/PR of 14<sup>th</sup> July 1978<sup>91</sup>.

### 3.3. CDC's Role in Agricultural Development

The Cameroons Development Corporation (CDC) played a crucial role in supporting agricultural development in Victoria Division. Through its efforts, the CDC may have provided resources, technical expertise, and financial support to local farmers and plantations, leading to increased agricultural productivity and export opportunities<sup>92</sup>. This, in turn, contributed to the division's economic prosperity and growth. Through the implementation of decentralisation

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<sup>88</sup> NAB, File N° cf 1978, Report on the political, social and economic situation in Fako Division for period ending October 1978, classified by Prince Mbain Henry on the 23rd June 2007.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

policies, investments in infrastructure, and support for agricultural development, Victoria Division would have experienced improved economic growth and development. Empowering regional authorities and local communities to make decisions that best suited their needs and priorities allowed for a more balanced and sustainable development approach within the division<sup>93</sup>. These efforts likely contributed to the division's overall prosperity and well-being within the broader context of Cameroon's regional development.

Alongside the political changes, the town also experienced notable economic growth and infrastructural advancements that further shaped its trajectory during this period.

### **III. ECONOMIC EVOLUTION OF VICTORIA (1961-1982)**

From the early 1960s to the early 1980s, Victoria experienced significant economic growth and diversification. As the agricultural sector, particularly plantation agriculture, remained a dominant force, the town also witnessed the emergence of new industries and an increasing focus on regional economic development. This section delves into the key economic transformations, including infrastructural developments and industrial growth, which contributed to Victoria's prosperity during this period.

#### **1. Agricultural Evolution in Victoria Division**

Agriculture has long been the backbone of Victoria's economy, and the period from 1961 to 1982 saw significant changes in the agricultural landscape. The town's strategic location and favourable climatic conditions made it a prime area for agricultural production. This section explores the shifts in agricultural practices, crop diversification, and the role of key players such as the Cameroons Development Corporation. Agriculture remained the backbone of Victoria Division's economy during this period.

##### **1.1. Dominance of Agriculture in Victoria's Economy**

Throughout the period from 1961 to 1982, agriculture remained the backbone of Victoria Division's economy. The region's strategic location, favourable climate, and fertile lands made it a prime area for agricultural production. The cultivation of crops and the management of plantations were critical contributors to the division's economic growth and prosperity<sup>94</sup>. As the dominant economic sector, agriculture provided livelihoods for many

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<sup>93</sup>NAB, File N° cf 1978, Report on the political, social and economic situation in Fako Division for period ending October 1978, classified by Prince Mbain Henry on the 23rd June 2007.

<sup>94</sup> Bederman, "Plantation agriculture", p.359.

residents and played a significant role in shaping the division's socio-economic landscape<sup>95</sup>. Agriculture's central role in the economy of Victoria Division was a driving force for its development during this period. The region's fertile lands and suitable climate made it conducive for cultivating a wide range of crops. The division's agricultural output not only contributed to the local economy but also played a vital role in Cameroon's overall agricultural performance<sup>96</sup>.

## **1.2. C.D.C. and Plantation Management**

The Cameroons Development Corporation (C.D.C.) played a pivotal role in the management of large-scale plantations in Victoria Division. These plantations produced significant quantities of crops like bananas, rubber, palm oil, and others. The C.D.C.'s expertise, investment, and organised agricultural practices were instrumental in driving the division's agricultural development and export capacity.

## **1.3. Shift in Export Crops**

Bananas were a significant export crop for Victoria Division, generating substantial revenue for the region. However, during the period from 1961 to 1982, the banana industry faced challenges, leading to declining profits. Changes in land usage and other factors contributed to a significant decrease in banana production by 1965<sup>97</sup>. As a result, the export dynamics shifted, leading to the emergence of other crops as major export items. While bananas were once the leading export crop, their decline in profitability and changing land use practices caused a shift in the division's export focus<sup>98</sup>. Coffee emerged as the major export item by value, surpassing bananas. Oil palm products and rubber also played significant roles in the region's export revenue. This diversification of export crops demonstrated the division's ability to adapt to changing market conditions and prioritize crops with higher economic potential.

Throughout the period from 1961 to 1982, Victoria Division's agricultural landscape witnessed notable changes, driven by factors such as the role of the Cameroons Development Corporation and the shift in dominant export crops. Despite challenges, the division's

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<sup>95</sup> NAB, File N° Cf 1978, Report on the political, social and economic situation in Fako Division for period ending October 1978, classified by Prince Mbain Henry on the 23rd June 2007.

<sup>96</sup> Bederman, "Plantation agriculture, p.359.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> NAB, File N° cf 1978, Report on the political, social and economic situation in Fako Division for period ending October 1978, classified by Prince Mbain Henry on the 23rd June 2007.

agricultural sector remained resilient, contributing substantially to the region's economic growth and development.

## 2. Economic Activities and Centers

After independence, Victoria experienced significant economic growth and transformation, solidifying its position as a major economic centre in Cameroon. The town's development at this time was influenced by various factors, including strategic location, industrialisation efforts, and the expansion of trade and commerce. The town became a hub for various industries each contributing significantly to its economic prosperity.

### 2.1 Commercial Activities

Victoria's geographical location along the Atlantic Ocean made it an ideal port town. The port of Victoria played a pivotal role in facilitating international trade. As a gateway for imports and exports, the port became a central point for commerce in the region. Its modernisation and expansion during this period to further enhance its capacity to handle cargo and handle larger vessels attracting businesses from across the globe<sup>99</sup>. Different areas within Victoria cater to specific economic activities. Bota is associated with the activities of the Cameroon Development Corporation, the towns economy was depended on agriculture that was mostly promoted by the CDC. The CDC and PAMOL LTD both played an excellent role in the economic life of Victoria<sup>100</sup>. They played a role in plantation agriculture and predominantly cultivates palm, rubber, tea and banana. The export of coffee, cocoa, palm oil, kennele and rubber was carried out by the CDC, PAMOL Ltd, West Cameroon Marketing Board and the Cameroon banana organizations for example the Robusta coffee marketed during the period January 15 to March 1972 was 175 tons as compared to 219 tons marketed during the same period in 1971<sup>101</sup>.

While Victoria serves as the commercial, administrative and missionary hub. New Town and Half Mile emerged as lively centres of economic activities with diverse businesses, street markets and entertainment venues that add vibrancy to the urban atmosphere<sup>102</sup>. Victoria boasted a diverse range of industries each playing a crucial role in its economic development. The town experienced substantial growth in the manufacturing sector during this period. Industries such as food processing and textile manufacturing and other consumer goods

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<sup>99</sup> Nkwi, "Salt water", p. 34.

<sup>100</sup> NAB, File N° of 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by Prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Titah Godlove Tunga, age 80 years, watch repairer, Old Market Limbe, 11th August 2023.

production thrived. This growth was fuelled by the availability of raw materials from the region's agricultural activities and the access to international markets via ports. Victoria's vibrant commercial centers, particularly the main market in New Town, were bustling with trade and economic activity. The availability of a wide variety of products attracted traders from neighbouring regions and beyond, creating a dynamic and diverse marketplace. Local businesses and entrepreneurs flourished as a result, contributing to the town's prosperity<sup>103</sup>. The economic growth of Victoria was also driven by the expansion of the service sector. The town became a centre for financial services, hospitality and other service-orientated businesses. As the population and economic activities increased, there was a growing demand for various services, leading to the establishment and growth of businesses in these sectors<sup>104</sup>.

## 2.2. Distribution of Immigrants in Various Occupations

The search for livelihood more accurately, survival has driven many people to Victoria. Immigrants make up a significant portion of the workforce, far exceeding their relative population size. Although they constitute 64% of Victoria's total population, they represent 87% of the active population<sup>105</sup>. This dominant presence of immigrants in the workforce, which breaks down the socio-professional branches by native and immigrant workers. Immigrants dominate most sectors in Victoria. Specifically, 83% of farmers, fishers, and artisans, 93% of service workers, and 94% of labourers are immigrants<sup>106</sup>.

In occupations requiring minimal or no qualifications, immigrants hold a particularly strong position. They also significantly populate the commercial and law enforcement sectors. Natives, in contrast, are more represented in roles that require education, technical skills, or hold responsibilities. For instance, they make up 19% of farmers and have a more substantial presence in administrative, teaching, and supervisory positions for example Martin I a Bakweri man who worked as an office boy in 1960, salesman in 1963, mat-marker in 1965, and labourer in 1967<sup>107</sup>. Despite this, the natives' involvement in the overall workforce remains lower compared to immigrants<sup>108</sup>. Ethnic and regional specialization is apparent within Victoria's professional landscape. For example, Nigerians are prevalent among helpers, servers, butchers, and fishermen example of Clement O an Igbo man from Owerri, who worked as a labourer in

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<sup>103</sup> Interview with Nkechi Nicholas (Nigerian born and raised in Cameroon), age 57 years, trader, Old market Limbe, 11 August 2023.

<sup>104</sup> Interview with Isong James, age 60 years, trader, Old Market Limbe, 11 August 2023.

<sup>105</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.24.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Le Fall-Jacob, "Translated version of Victoria Bota", p.70.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*



CDC. Meanwhile, natives tend to be metalworkers and supervisors. People from Bamenda are often found in law enforcement, while those from Mamfe are numerous among office workers and electricians<sup>109</sup>. This ethnic and regional distribution can be attributed to the cultural tradition of parents passing down their skills to their children or helping them secure employment within the same sectors. This dynamic has led to competition among ethnic groups, often resulting in one group becoming more dominant in a particular sector, like Nigerian fishermen outcompeting their Cameroonian counterparts.

### **2.3. Female Immigrant Workforce**

Female immigrants, though fewer in number than males, play a crucial role in Victoria's economy. One out of seven active immigrants is a woman. However, women tend to occupy positions that require less or no qualifications. They are predominantly found in roles such as small-scale vendors, domestic helpers, and servers for example Esther N a Balundu woman from Ekumbe who worked as a barmaid and prostitute in 1964 and 1968 respectively<sup>110</sup>. Nevertheless, Victoria stands out for having a relatively higher number of women in traditionally male-dominated jobs like taxi drivers, prison guards, and medical professionals, attributed to the region's liberal Anglo-Saxon influences<sup>111</sup>. Among women, natives are more likely to work and hold qualified positions compared to immigrant women. For example, while native women engage more in skilled jobs such as office employees and medical workers, immigrant women are largely involved in unskilled labour. The employment distribution between native and immigrant women reveals distinct patterns. Native women are more frequently employed in roles that require qualifications, while immigrant women dominate unskilled sectors. This difference underscores the varying opportunities and societal roles assigned to women based on their origin.

As commercial activities provided the foundation for economic progress, industrial growth also played a pivotal role in shaping Victoria's transformation during this period.

### **3. Industrial Evolution**

The industrial sector played a critical role in Victoria's economic development, and during the period from 1961 to 1982, the town saw notable industrial expansion<sup>112</sup>. New

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<sup>109</sup>Le Fall-Jacob, "Translated version of Victoria Bota, p. 71.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*, p.70.

<sup>111</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.24.

<sup>112</sup> NAB, File N° cf 1978, Report on the political, social and economic situation in Fako Division for period ending October 1978, classified by Prince Mbain Henry on the 23rd June 2007.

industries emerged, providing employment opportunities and driving economic growth. This section examines the factors that fuelled industrialization in Victoria, the emergence of new sectors, and the impact of industrial growth on the town's socio-economic landscape. The industrial evolution in Victoria Division was closely linked to the agricultural sector, with the Cameroons Development Corporation (C.D.C.) playing a key role. As agriculture remained the backbone of the division's economy, the C.D.C. played a pivotal role in managing large-scale plantations and driving industrial growth<sup>113</sup>. The corporation's focus on cultivating and exporting crops like oil palm, rubber, and tea contributed significantly to the region's industrial expansion.

### 3.1. Expansion of Industrial Sectors

The industrial growth in Victoria Division during this period saw the emergence of new sectors, diversifying the town's economic landscape. The C.D.C.'s efforts went beyond traditional crops like bananas and focused on expanding and diversifying plantation areas. Investments in oil palm, rubber, and tea crops led to increased production and export opportunities, driving the growth of these industrial sectors in the division<sup>114</sup>.

### 3.2. Challenges and Proactive Development Programs

Despite facing challenges, such as declining profits in certain agricultural sectors, the C.D.C. remained proactive in planning ambitious development programs. The corporation's approach involved seeking loans from international institutions like the World Bank and the *Fonds Européen de Développement* (F.E.D.) to finance expansion and diversification initiatives. These loans aimed to support the growth of oil palm, rubber, and tea crops, ensuring sustainable economic development within Victoria Division<sup>115</sup>.

### 3.3. Impact on Sustainable Economic Development

The C.D.C.'s efforts in increasing production and fostering industrial growth had a significant impact on Victoria Division's sustainable economic development. By expanding and diversifying plantation areas, the C.D.C. contributed to the region's economic prosperity, creating employment opportunities and driving overall economic growth<sup>116</sup>. The success of these industrial initiatives also had positive ripple effects on West Cameroon and the broader

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<sup>113</sup>NAB, File N° cf 1978, Report on the political, social and economic situation in Fako Division for period ending October 1978, classified by Prince Mbain Henry on the 23rd June 2007.

<sup>114</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> Bederman, "Plantation agriculture", p. 360.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

Federal Republic of Cameroon, bolstering the country's economic standing and contributing to its development. Overall, the industrial evolution in Victoria Division between 1961 and 1982 was closely tied to the agricultural sector and driven by the Cameroons Development Corporation's proactive approach. Through expansions and diversification, the corporation facilitated the growth of new industrial sectors, boosting employment and driving economic growth in the region. The impact of these industrial efforts extended beyond Victoria Division, contributing to the broader economic prosperity of West Cameroon and the Federal Republic of Cameroon.

## **CHAPTER IV: THE OBSTACLES OF VICTORIA'S URBAN FUNCTIONS**

Transformative changes unfolded in Victoria Division during the pivotal period from 1961 to 1982. Once a vibrant hub, Victoria experienced a gradual decline in its role and significance over time. How did Victoria decline within the period of 1961-1982? Faced with this question, other sub questions arise such as; what were the reasons for the decline of Victoria? In what sectors did Victoria decline? In addition, what were the effects of this decline? This chapter examines the multifaceted shifts in maritime trade patterns, infrastructure development, administrative decisions, economic diversification, urban dynamics, and population changes that collectively shaped the division's trajectory. From the decline in port activity to the impact of decentralisation policies, the challenges posed by competition from other ports to the evolution of industries, this chapter provides a comprehensive exploration of the factors that influenced Victoria Division's economic, social, and urban landscape during this critical phase.

### **I. CHANGES IN MARITIME TRADE PATTERNS**

This section delves into the intricate changes that unfolded in Victoria Division's maritime trade patterns during the period from 1961 to 1982. Through a lens of strategic potential and missed opportunities, we explore the declining port activity that marred the region's growth prospects. The struggles to compete with established ports, limited tonnage, and specialised exports paint a comprehensive picture of the challenges faced by Victoria Division's maritime trade landscape.

#### **1. Decline in Port Activity in Victoria**

The activities of ports in Victoria was closely linked to the needs and possibilities of the area and benefited from its isolation. The ports of Tiko and Bota had to some extent specialised roles. The former imported hydrocarbons and bulk goods and exported woods, bananas, and rubber, while the latter handled the transit of other products. The town's strategic location provided opportunities for a port, but its potential remained largely untapped. Despite having a port, the maritime trade patterns in Victoria did not witness significant growth or

development<sup>1</sup>. Instead, the port faced challenges and struggles to compete with other more established ports in the region. From 1972, the usage of the Bota port by ships declined due to high charges compared to that of Douala. This made it difficult for importers since goods needed to pass through Douala first before coming to Victoria<sup>2</sup>

### **1.1. Competition from the port of Douala**

The port of Victoria faced stiff competition from larger and better-equipped ports such as Douala and Calabar. Since independence, the total traffic of both ports in Victoria had decreased from over 250,000 tonnes to less than 30,000<sup>3</sup>. These ports had better connections to the hinterland and more favourable tax policies, attracting more significant portions of maritime trade. The competition intensified as political borders and transportation routes shifted and improved over time.<sup>4</sup> The activity of the ports in the Anglophone region of Cameroon was closely linked to the needs and possibilities of this area and benefited from its relative isolation. The port of Tiko and Bota were very important in the division before the independence and reunification of Cameroon. However, after independence, the total traffic of both ports decreased from over 250,000 tonnes to less than 30,000. This decline can be attributed to two main factors: the decrease in banana production and timber exploitation, and the competition from Douala, which was connected to Kumba by railway in 1976 and to Tiko by road in 1969<sup>5</sup>.

### **1.2. Limited Tonnage and Specialisation**

The port of Victoria, particularly in Tiko and Bota, specialised in exporting specific products from industrial plantations, such as oil, palm kernels, cacao, bananas, rubber, and wood. However, the overall tonnage of maritime trade remained relatively low, struggling to surpass 75,000 tons annually. Despite some improvements in the export of bananas and wood in the 1960s, the situation did not substantially change, and the port's traffic remained limited compared to other major ports in the country<sup>6</sup>. From 1961 to 1973, the total traffic at these ports dropped dramatically from over 250,000 tonnes to less than 30,000 tonnes. This decline

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<sup>1</sup> NAB, File N° Cf 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by Prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> NAB, File N° cf 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

<sup>3</sup> Nkwi, *Salt water*, p.35.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> NAB, File N° cf 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

<sup>6</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.26.

can be attributed to two main factors: Decrease in Banana Production and Timber Exploitation: There was a significant reduction in the production and export of bananas and timber, which had been major commodities handled by these ports<sup>7</sup>

## **2. Lack of Infrastructure Development in Victoria**

A lack of substantial investment in infrastructure development cast a shadow over Victoria Division's economic aspirations. This section dissects the consequences of inadequate port facilities and constrained transportation links, which hindered the town's ability to accommodate larger vessels and increased cargo demands. As the region grappled with these limitations, its economic potential remained unrealized. Natural features that limit its expansion box in Victoria. The town is surrounded by hills, such as the old volcanic mountain of Mebeta, the lower slopes of Mount Cameroon, and several smaller elevations. The central area of Victoria is established in the small Limbe plain and around the marshes of Dockyard Creek, limiting the available space for building. The area suitable for construction is relatively small due to these geographical constraints, making it difficult to develop a large urban center<sup>8</sup>. The town's elevation varies significantly, with hills reaching heights of 463 meters to the west, 362 meters on Nt Dibamba, 152 meters to the northwest, and 102 meters at the extinct Bota volcano. Within the town center, there are higher areas such as the one where the Senior Divisional Officer's (SDO) residence is built. Additionally, the marshy area of Dockyard Creek presents further challenges to urban development<sup>9</sup>.

### **2.1. Insufficient Infrastructure Investment in Victoria**

One of the significant factors contributing to the limited growth of the port in Victoria Division was the lack of substantial investment in infrastructure development. The port facilities, including the wharf at Victoria and the port installations at Bota, were not adequately developed to handle significant maritime trade. As a result, the port faced challenges in accommodating larger ships and handling increased cargo volumes<sup>10</sup>. The building surface in Victoria is restricted by the presence of steep slopes and marshy lowlands. Although it is possible to reclaim some land by draining marshes, the extent to which this can be done is limited. The type of housing and desired population density also influence the feasibility of development on these challenging terrains. In areas where constructing permanent houses is

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<sup>7</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.26.

<sup>8</sup> Le Fall-Jacob, "Translated version of Victoria Bota", p.70

<sup>9</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.26.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

difficult, wooden houses with corrugated roofs are built side by side, often without proper foundations. This approach to urban development, however, brings its own set of problems. The concept of vertical urbanism, which involves constructing multi-story buildings, is not widely adopted in towns like Victoria and raises questions about its suitability for the local way of life.

## **2.2. Inadequate Connectivity in Victoria**

Limited road and rail connections further hindered the development of the port in Victoria Division. While there were some improvements in road and rail links, they were insufficient to compete with other ports in the region. The lack of efficient transportation connections affected the flow of goods and hampered the port's ability to attract more significant trade volumes<sup>11</sup>.

## **2.3. Effect on Economic Potential of Victoria**

The inadequate infrastructure and limited port capacity affected the economic potential of Victoria Division. The inability to handle larger ships and a higher volume of cargo limited the port's ability to act as a major gateway for exports and imports, hindering the town's economic growth and development<sup>12</sup>.

## **3. Competition from Other Ports**

Victoria Division's journey unfolded amidst fierce competition from well-established ports like Douala and Calabar. This section traces the rise of Douala's dominance as a maritime hub, fuelled by accessibility and larger vessels. Calabar emerges as another formidable competitor, particularly for Cross River plains' exports. The interplay of political choices and investment considerations further coloured the landscape of competition.<sup>13</sup>

### **3.1. Dominance of the port of Douala**

Douala emerged as a dominant port in the region, attracting a considerable share of maritime trade. Its status as a deep-water port and its accessibility to larger vessels made it a preferred choice for many exporters and importers. The competition from Douala adversely affected the growth and expansion of the port in Victoria Division.<sup>14</sup> Beginning in 1967, a portion of the cocoa, coffee, and palm nuts collected by the Marketing Board was diverted to

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<sup>11</sup> Ekali, *Fluctuating Fortunes*, p. 336.

<sup>12</sup> Nkwi, *Salt water*, p.35.

<sup>13</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.26.

<sup>14</sup> Nkwi, *Salt water*, p.35.

Douala, as well as the palm nuts from Pamol and the timber from forestry companies. In August 1969, Texaco ceased its imports of hydrocarbons through Tiko. By April 1972, all exported bananas were transported by truck to the port of Bonabéri. Douala's dominance was further enhanced by lower port tariffs. Even after tariff harmonization in 1973, the situation did not improve. Only a fifth of the region's exports passed through Bota and Tiko, with only palm products maintaining their export levels. One-fifth of coffee and rubber, and half of the cocoa exported, transited through the two ports. It is fair to say that Douala's competition practically halted local port activity, affecting Tiko first, then Bota<sup>15</sup>. The usage of Bota port by ships declined due to high charges compared to that of Douala. This made it difficult for importers since their products have to pass through Douala from where they are transported with a much higher cost<sup>16</sup>. Traders also complained of inadequate importation quota and the ban on second handed clothing, which caused an exodus of traders in Victoria<sup>17</sup>.

### **3.2. Calabar as a Competitor**

Calabar, another port that was close to Victoria, also posed competition to Victoria Division's port activities, particularly for the export of products from the Cross River plains. Calabar's proximity and competitive advantages for certain trade routes further diminished the growth prospects for Victoria's port<sup>18</sup>.

### **3.3. Political and Investment Considerations of Victoria**

The decisions on port investments and political choices significantly influenced the dynamics of competition among various ports. The lack of sufficient investment and political support for Victoria Division's port development limited its ability to compete effectively with other more established ports in the region<sup>19</sup>. The limited growth of the port in Victoria Division during the period from 1961 to 1982 was characterised by changes in maritime trade patterns, the lack of adequate infrastructure development, and competition from more established ports in the region. Despite its strategic location, the port faced challenges in fully realising its potential as a significant maritime gateway.

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<sup>15</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.26.

<sup>16</sup> NAB, File N° cf 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Nkwi, *Salt water*, p.35.

<sup>19</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.26



## **II. OBSTACLES IN THE MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS OF VICTORIA**

This section sheds light on the impact of Cameroonian government policies aimed at decentralization and balanced regional development. We explore the ripple effects of establishing political capitals in elevated areas, the shifting of administrative services between Buea and Victoria, and the subsequent redistribution of government functions. These decisions, while aimed at regional growth, carried implications for Victoria's administrative stature.

### **1. Decentralization and Regional Development Policies**

This section is based on the obstacles faced in the management functions because of government policies of decentralization and regional balance.

#### **1.1. Impact of Political Decisions on Victoria**

The Cameroonian government's decentralisation and regional development policies were aimed at distributing administrative functions and powers across the country. Instead of centralising all services in one city, the government preferred to establish political capitals in elevated areas with pleasant climates. Buea, situated at 1000 metres of altitude, served as the political capital of the Anglophone region from 1901 to 1909 and again from 1961 to 1972<sup>20</sup>. Similarly, Yaoundé, located at higher altitude, became the political capital of the francophone region in 1916. This strategic distribution of power aimed to ensure balanced regional development and avoid over-concentration in a single location.

#### **1.2. Limited Services in Victoria**

Due to the establishment of political capitals in Buea and Yaoundé, Victoria experienced limitations in becoming a major administrative centre. While some services were initially established in Victoria, there was a constant transfer of government institutions and services between Buea and Victoria. This frequent shifting of services reduced Victoria's role as a significant administrative hub, influencing the town's growth and development<sup>21</sup>.

#### **1.3. Redistribution of Services in Victoria**

In recent years, there has been a redistribution of major public services, further reducing Victoria's influence and administrative autonomy. The adoption of French customs, traditions,

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<sup>20</sup> Courade, *Victoria, Bota*, p.27.

<sup>21</sup> NAB, File N° cf 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

and laws after the political and administrative reorganisation in 1972-1973 has integrated Victoria into the francophone region, with some services transferred to Buea<sup>22</sup>. This has led to the town becoming a subordinate prefecture rather than a major administrative centre.

## **2. Modernization and Technological Advancement in Victoria**

Against the backdrop of commercial and industrial activities, Victoria Division struggled to keep pace with modernization and technological advancements. This section unpacks the challenges posed by limited industrial capabilities, competition from larger cities like Douala, and the shifting preferences of clientele. The legacy of the industrial sector and its changing dynamics provide insights into Victoria's evolving economic landscape<sup>23</sup>.

### **2.1. Limited Technological Advancement in Victoria**

Despite its commercial and industrial activities, Victoria faced challenges in keeping up with modernization and technological advancements. The limited infrastructure and industrial capabilities hindered the town's ability to attract significant investment and technological development. As a result, some modern commercial establishments, particularly wholesale and retail stores struggled to thrive.

### **2.2. Local Business Landscape in Victoria**

The modern commercial establishments in Victoria faced competition from businesses in larger cities like Douala. The prosperous clientele of the Fako region increasingly preferred to travel to Douala, about 80 km away, to meet their equipment and consumer goods needs. This preference for larger cities with better amenities affected the growth of Victoria's modern business sector. Traders complained of inadequate importation quota and the ban on second handed clothing which caused an exodus in Victoria<sup>24</sup>

### **2.3. Industrial Legacy in Victoria**

The presence of the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) headquarters in Bota reflects the town's industrial legacy. However, even the CDC experienced challenges, and its second subsidiary, Pamol (Cameroun) Ltd, moved its headquarters from Victoria to Lobé. This relocation signifies the changing dynamics of the industrial sector in the region<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup>NAB, File N° of 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Courade, *Plantation agriculture*, p.22.

### **3. Migration of Government Institutions from Victoria**

This explains the migration of government institutions away from Victoria. It explores the transfer of administrative services, Victoria's role as a prefecture and the dispersal of services in Fako.

#### **3.1. Transfer of Administrative Services from Victoria**

Over time, various government institutions and services have been transferred between Buea and Victoria, leading to changes in the administrative landscape of both towns. The competition between the two towns for administrative functions resulted in the redistribution of services, affecting their roles within the region.

#### **3.2. Role of Victoria as a Prefecture**

Victoria's administrative role has shifted, and it now functions as a subordinate prefecture with limited influence over the Fako department. Buea has taken precedence as the main administrative centre in the region<sup>26</sup>.

#### **3.3. Dispersal of Services in Fako**

Some general services related to the CDC are now dispersed throughout the Fako department, leading to administrative challenges. For instance, financial deficits prompted the CDC to request government support in managing certain institutions and services<sup>27</sup>.

Overall, Victoria's administrative functions have become increasingly limited due to political decisions, changes in government institutions, and the town's limited modernization and technological advancement. These factors have influenced Victoria's status as a major administrative centre and influenced its economic and administrative landscape.

## **III. OBSTACLES IN THE TERTIARY SERVICES OF VICTORIA**

The decline of Victoria in the tertiary sector includes sectors like, retail, finance, education and healthcare. It explores how economic diversification and shifts in industries have affected the demand for services, alongside the urban sprawl and suburbanization on service distribution and accessibility.

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<sup>26</sup>NAB, File No of 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

<sup>27</sup> Courade, *Plantation agriculture*, p.22.

## **1. Economic Diversification and Shift in Industries of Victoria**

Amidst the changing economic currents, this section highlights the lack of industrial compensation for other urban functions. We examine efforts at industrial growth, particularly the establishment of an industrial zone, and their impact on Victoria's economic landscape. The dynamics of the tertiary sector and the town's industrial legacy cast light on its path of economic diversification.

### **1.1. Lack of Industrial Compensation for Other Functions in Victoria**

Despite the impressive building constructed in 1972 for the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the industrial sector in Victoria Division has not compensated for the weaknesses in other urban functions. The town no longer hosts any factories within its boundaries, and its industrial activity is limited to small workshops, such as those involved in construction or printing. The closure of the Bota oil mill in 1972 further contributed to the decline of industrial activities in the area<sup>28</sup>.

### **1.2. Industrial Growth and Development Effort in Victoria**

While an industrial zone was created in Ombé, located between Tiko, Victoria, and Buea, it has seen only limited industrial development<sup>29</sup>. The small factories established in the area focus on producing goods like soft drinks, umbrellas, furniture, and operating warehouses. However, these efforts have not led to significant industrial growth or generated significant employment opportunities. Moreover, the expectations for growth through a small refinery project near Victoria are unrealistic.

### **1.3. Dynamics of the Tertiary Sector in Victoria**

The tertiary sector, which includes services, has experienced mixed development in Victoria Division. The traditional small commerce sector remains relatively active, especially with the influence of Ibo and Bamenda businesspeople. However, compared to other towns, as Tiko, Kumba, and Bamenda, Victoria's tertiary sector appears less dynamic. The declining status of Victoria as compared to Bamenda, which regained its position as a provincial capital, has affected the development of the tertiary sector in Victoria<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Courade, *Plantation agriculture*, p. 28.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

## **2. Urban Sprawl and Suburbanisation in Victoria**

Despite economic challenges, specific services managed to sustain themselves within Victoria's evolving landscape. This section outlines the survival of certain commercial businesses, the limitations in the traditional fishing sector, and the impact of the town's shifting advantages. Victoria's urban advantages gave way to interior cities, influencing its overall significance and influence.

### **2.1. Subsistence of Specific Services in Victoria**

Despite some economic challenges, specific services continue to be sustained in Victoria. The town houses some commercial businesses, pharmacies, banks, professional firms, and small hotels. Additionally, the hospital in Victoria is relatively well equipped, catering to the healthcare needs of the region and even extending its services to Bamusso and Ndian<sup>31</sup>.

### **2.2. Limitations in Some Sectors in Victoria**

The traditional fishing sector, whether conducted traditionally or through modern methods, has not experienced significant growth and has remained relatively limited. Despite rich marine resources, efforts to develop maritime fishing have not been very successful, and the sector was not included in the recent development plans.

### **2.3. Urban Advantages of Victoria Lost to Interior Cities**

Victoria has experienced a loss of past advantages to cities in the interior of Cameroon, primarily to Bamenda, which has regained its status as a provincial capital. This has affected Victoria's significance and influence in the region. The city's role as a significant commercial hub has been relatively diminished, as businesses and industries have shifted their focus to other regions<sup>32</sup>.

## **3. Socioeconomic Changes and Population Dynamics of Victoria**

This final section scrutinizes the role of government initiatives, changing urban landscapes, and population distribution in shaping Victoria's socioeconomic scenario. The impact of administrative decisions and population shifts on urban functions and economic

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<sup>31</sup> Courade, *Plantation agriculture*, p. 28.

<sup>32</sup> NAB, File N° of 1963/2, Economic and Political Reports, Victoria Division 1963-1972 classified by prince Mbain H.A, 1994.

activities are discussed, offering a nuanced understanding of the division's transformation over time.

### **3.1. Dependency of Victoria on Government Initiatives**

The development of Victoria's tertiary sector in 1981 heavily relied on the initiatives and support provided by the government. Without adequate backing from the state, the sector faced relative decline, affecting the overall economic growth and opportunities within the town. As the government prioritises development in inland cities, it affected the growth potential of Victoria's urban functions<sup>33</sup>.

### **3.2. Changing Urban Landscape of Victoria**

The town's urban landscape has experienced significant changes over the years, with various functions shifting and spreading in response to changing economic circumstances. Victoria has lost some of the advantages it once possessed in urban services and industries, which has had implications for its overall socioeconomic development.

### **3.3. Population Distribution and its Impact on Victoria**

Changes in population distribution between cities within the region have had an impact on urban functions. The shifting population dynamics have influenced economic activities, services, and infrastructural developments. As other cities in the interior of Cameroon experience population growth and development, Victoria's relative importance has decreased in certain areas<sup>34</sup>.

These factors highlight the complex interplay of economic, demographic, and urban development elements that have shaped Victoria Division's trajectory over the years. The changes in industries, services, and population dynamics have collectively influenced the division's economic standing and its role within the broader region of Cameroon.

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<sup>33</sup> Ekali, "Fluctuating fortunes", p.336.

<sup>34</sup> Courade, *Plantation agriculture*, p.28.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

The research conducted on the Historical Evolution of Victoria presents a comprehensive understanding of the town's origin, structural developments and evolution after independence. Through exploration of various chapters, several key findings emerge. Victoria's history began with the founding of Fernando Po by Portuguese explorers in 1471. It was later handed to Spain in 1778 through the treaty of *El Pardo*. In 1827, the English settled in Fernando Po due to its strategic location that was needed to fight against slave trade. Followings its discovery, Fernando Po became a focal point for ownership dispute between the Spanish and the Baptist Missionaries. The Baptist Missionaries in 1858 faced criticism from the Catholics in Fernando where they were formerly located which forced them to look for a new home for their settlement with the aim of freedom of worship. This search for a new home commenced on a wet and gloomy morning in June 1858, which landed them at Amba.

They faced numerous challenges such as heavy rain, and chopping winds. Their journey took them to Bimbia, which marked the first stage of the establishment of Victoria. With the consent of King William and his chiefs, the journey to the establishment of Victoria was near completion. Arriving at the Bay of Amboise, Alfred Sakar found it pleasing for the establishment of a settlement for the Missionaries. He named it Victoria after the Queen of England. The founding of Victoria attracted migrants from various ethnic group both indigenous to the region and from other parts of Africa, who sought economic opportunities, refuge, or other incentives offered by Victoria. The influx of migrants resulted in Victoria becoming a melting pot of diverse ethnic groups, each contributing to the town's social, economic and cultural fabric. Ethnic communities brought with them their languages, traditions, and practices, enriching the cultural landscape. The early years of Victoria were characterised by the development of economic, social and cultural networks that reflected the diverse backgrounds of its inhabitants. Economic activities such as trade, fishing, and agriculture contributed to the town's growth.

The exploration of Victoria's structural changes under different periods unveils a rich historical dynamics and transformation. During the Baptist Missionary era, Victoria experienced a structural framework influenced by Missionary activities. The Baptist mission played a pivotal role in shaping the town in the educational, religious, and social sectors. Through their concerted efforts, the Missionaries contributed to the establishment of schools,

churches and community organizations that formed the fundamental structure of Victoria during its early period. These institutions provided not only education, religious and administrative guidance; it also served as a center for social cohesion and community development.

During the era of German colonization, Victoria underwent substantial structural changes that were instrumental in shaping its urban landscape and administrative framework. The German colonial administration introduced comprehensive urban planning initiatives aimed at modernizing and organizing the town according to European standards. This involved the construction of public buildings, roads, and ports, which not only facilitated transportation and commerce but also symbolized German imperial authority and presence in the region. The infrastructure development under German rule was not merely for practical purposes but also served strategic and economic objectives. The construction of roads and ports facilitated the transportation of Victoria's natural resources for the benefits of bureaucratic institutions and administrative offices streamlined governance and centralized control over the town and its surrounding. The structural changes implemented during the German colonization reflected the colonial priorities and aspirations of the German empire for territorial control and economic exploitation. Victoria became a focal point for German colonial ambitions, serving as a hub for trade, administration and military activities along the Cameroonian coastline.

Following the war periods, Victoria's structure had to adapt to new international governance framework and norms under the League of Nations and the United Nations Organizations. The League of Nations introduced international supervision and accountability, promoting welfare and development of Victoria Division. Efforts were made to include indigenous representation in governance structure with the aim to ensure the voices and interest of the local population. The transition to a United Nations Trust Territory further emphasized the preparation for self- governance and eventual independence.

The independence era witnessed shifts in social dynamics within Victoria, reflecting the broader changes occurring across Cameroon. Increased access to education and healthcare led to improvements in living standards and quality of life for many residents. Societal norms and cultural practices evolved as Victoria embraced a newfound sense of national identity and unity. With independence came political parties, civil society organizations, and advocacy groups signalled a growing awareness of civic engagement and democratic principles. The post-independence period brought about shifts in economic policies and priorities as Victoria



sought to chart its own course towards economic development and prosperity. Efforts to diversify the economy and reduce dependence on traditional industries led to the emergence of new economic sectors and opportunities. Victoria became a hub for trade, commerce and investment, attracting both domestic and foreign capital to fuel its economic growth and development.

The period from 1961 to 1982 marked a pivotal chapter in the history of Victoria Division, characterized by a gradual decline in its urban functions and significance. As a once-vibrant hub, Victoria experienced a series of transformative changes that reshaped its economic, social, and urban landscape, ultimately leading to its decline. Changes in global trade routes and shipping practices contributed to a decline in port activity and revenue generation for Victoria. Victoria's infrastructure may have become out dated or insufficient to meet the demands of evolving industries and transportation needs. Policy decisions and administrative measures inadvertently hindered Victoria's growth and development. The failure to diversify the economy and adapt to changing market conditions left Victoria vulnerable to economic downturns and shifts in industry dynamics.

Population changes, urban sprawl, and the emergence of competing urban centers may have diminished Victoria's prominence as a regional hub. Victoria's decline in maritime trade led to a reduction in port activities and associated economic benefits. The lack of investment in infrastructure projects hindered Victoria's ability to compete with other emerging urban centres. The failure to diversify the economy beyond traditional industries limited opportunities for growth and innovation. Population decline, urban decay, and loss of economic vitality contributed to a decline in Victoria's urban functions and significance.

Victoria experienced economic stagnation and decline, resulting in reduced job opportunities and income levels for residents. The decline of Victoria had social implications, including increased poverty, unemployment, and social unrest within the community. Urban decay, deteriorating infrastructure, and declining property values contributed to the deterioration of Victoria's urban landscape. The decline of Victoria resulted in a loss of identity and sense of place for residents, as the city's once-vibrant cultural and historical significance diminished over time.

## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX 1

#### INTERVIEW GUIDE

This guide was developed as a tool for collection of information for the dissertation of a Master's thesis in economic and social history on the following subject:

**"The historical study of "Victoria" town (1858 – 1982)"**

**Last name and first names:** ISANGE GRACIOUS METEKE

**Registration number:** 18K341

**Supervisor:** Prof. Gabriel Maxime DONG MOUGNOL

NB: the information collected during our interview is confidential and cannot be used in the context of this work.

#### ▪ Identification of the Informant

▪ Last name and first names

Age

Date of interview

▪ Status


▪ Place of interview

▪ Contact

#### I - General Question

1. How many groups of peoples are found in the city of Victoria?
2. How was the city of Victoria formed ?
3. What is the origin of the name of the city "Victoria"?
4. What were the main economic activities practiced in the city of Victoria?
5. What are the reasons that led the colonial authorities choosing Victoria as the capital?
6. What are the different migrations that allowed the creation of the city of Victoria?
7. What are the different Western powers that have passed through Victoria?
8. What is the relationship between Victoria and its neighboring people?
9. What are the changes observed between Victoria and Limbe?
10. What was the mode of work in the city of Victoria?
11. What were the impacts of the city's transition from Victoria to Limbe?

## APPENDIX 2

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN PAIX-TRAVAIL-PATRIE ***** UNIVERSITE DE YAOUNDE 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 *****
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### RESEARCH ATTESTATION

I the undersigned, **Professor BOKAGNE BETOBO Edouard** head of the History Department of the Faculty of Art, Letters and Human Sciences of the University of Yaoundé I, attest that the student **ISANGE GRACIOUS METEKE**, Matricule **18K341** has been enrolled in the Master's degree since **October 2022** at the History Department, option Social and Economic History. I am undergoing a research under the supervision of **Pr. Gabriel Maxime DONG MOUGNOL**, on the topic: *« The historical study of "Victoria" In Cameroon 1858-1982 »*.

We recommend her to heads of administrations, documentation centers, archives and any other national or international institution, in order to facilitate her research.

The present authorization is issued to her to serve and assert what is right.

Yaounde, 17.08.2022



**The Head of department**  
*Bokagne Betobo Edouard*  
**Maître de Conférences**

## APPENDIX 3

## APPENDIX I

REGULATIONS FOR THE COLONY  
OF VICTORIA, AMBOISES BAY

AGENCY OFFICE,  
VICTORIA,  
WEST AFRICA.  
*October 1858.*

## LAWS

For the better security of the settlers and for the suppression of disorderly conduct and crime, there shall be a Governor and a Council—the Governor being the owner of the estate or the representative of the owners.

The Council to be composed of men of good character and if possible of substance. This Council is not to exceed twelve persons: half to be chosen by the Governor, and half by the householders.

This Council shall have charge of all public roads and thoroughfares and of the beach and bays, and shall enforce cleaning of the roads and removal of all nuisances summoning to their meeting all who infringe the laws in any way and shall have the power to inflict penalties not exceeding twenty shillings or confinement with labour not exceeding one month.

There shall be entire freedom in all that relates to the worship of the true God; and the word of God is hereby acknowledged as the foundation of all our laws and claims the obedience of our lives.

That although we are now all of one mind in the essentials of Christian worship, yet should there come among us persons of differing opinions as to Christian worship or duty all shall equally share in our freedom of worship as well as in our protection.

That the worship of God be not interrupted the Sabbath shall be regarded: all business shall be suspended and the day esteemed sacred to worship and rest.

There shall be entire freedom in all that relates to trade and barter in the township and with the natives around.

There shall be free importations of all goods of provisions of clothing of trading goods and machinery and of all and every article except the following:

Rum or other spirits as articles of barter or sale for ever prohibited.  
Brandy gin and wine admitted free for medicinal purposes, not

## SOURCES CONSULTED

### A) Primary sources

#### 1. Oral sources

N°	Informant	Age/ Years	Social Status	Place	Date
1	Abungah Mathias	65	CDC worker	Moliwe Limbe	15 July 2023
2	Ashu Hans	70	Retired teacher	Mile 4 Limbe	5 September 2023.
3	Ekeli Josephine	70	Business woman,	Bota Middle Farms	9 <sup>th</sup> August 2023
4	Enene Julliet	27	Grandaunt	Botaland Chiefdom	27 March 2023
5	Eposi Vivian	64	Farmer	New Town	10 <sup>th</sup> August 2023
6	Epupa Ekum Samuel	75	Chief of Dikolo Village	Newtown Limbe	29 March 2023
7	Esombe Nanywe David	56	Traditional ruler and member of Regional Assembly of Chiefs	Chief Palace Mile 4 Limbe	27 March 2023
8	Isong James	60	Trader	Old Market Limbe	11 <sup>th</sup> August 2023
9	Itoe David	70	Farmer	Bojongo	7 <sup>th</sup> August 2023
10	Kwaku Martha	43	Housewife	Botaland Chiefdom Limbe	27 March 2023
11	Litumbe Mathias	70	Businessman	Down Beach Limbe	24 March 2023
12	Matute, Frida	75	Retired teacher	New Town Limbe	17 August 2023.
13	Mbella Catherine	62	Queen and Business woman	Botaland Chiefdom Limbe	27 March 2023

14	Mbella Mirabel	41	Princess and teacher	Botaland Chiefdom Limbe	27 March 2023
15	Mokande Emmanuel	60	Traditional Notable 1	Mile 4 Limbe	26 March 2023
16	Mokoko Gustave Peter	60	farmer	Mile 4 Limbe	24 March 2023
17	Nasako Thomas	82	Retired teacher	Dikolo village	7 <sup>th</sup> August 2023
18	Ndive Paul	70	Retired teacher	Bota Land	20 August 2023
19	Ndive Vivian	68	House wife	Mile 4 Limbe	10 <sup>th</sup> August 2023
20	Ngomin Bisala Rebecca	65	Business woman	Coconut Island Limbe	30 April 2023
21	Ngonnack Koffi Dora	68	Retired secretary	Mile 4 Limbe	28 March 2023
22	Ngonga Bisala Martha	89	Former business owner	Coconut Island Limbe	30 April 2023
23	Ngulefac Joan	65	Teacher	Mile 2 Limbe	10 September 2023.
24	Nitcheu Pierre	60	Driver	Mile 4 Limbe	24 March 2023
25	Njei Marthins	65	Fisherman	Botaland	12 <sup>th</sup> August 2023
26	Nkechi Nicholas	57	Trader	Old market Limbe	11 August 2023
27	Taguela	68	Driver	Mile 4 Limbe	24 March 2023
28	Titah Godlove	80	Watch repairer	Old market Limbe	11 August 2023
29	Wolete Joseph	65	Farmer	New town Limbe	24 March 2023.

## 2. Archival sources

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