

## Catalysts Of The Destruction Of National Integration: John Nkemngong Nkengasong's *Across The Mongolo*

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**Abstract:** Many years after independence and more than fifty years after reunification, a steadfast national unity is still a farfetched asset for Cameroon. The Cameroonian writer John Nkemngong Nkengasong is bent on the issue since 2004 in his work *Across The Mongolo*. He portrays concepts that spur the destruction of national integration and instigate sociopolitical perturbations. Many have read this work and considered it as the oppression and victimization of Anglophones by Francophones, thereby inciting the former to revolution via resistance and violence. This paper analyses this novel as a prophecy according to which obstacles to nation building such as subalternism, exclusion, discrimination, otherness and nepotism could be eradicated in advance, so as to avoid crisis, conflicts or separation. In this process, the paper adopts textual analysis of the literary text under study as method. Postcolonial and new historicism theories are mirrors through which the study is conducted. The author exposes societal ills endured by all Cameroonians in the bit to create awareness and avoid instability or crisis. This is a call onto the government to build from ruins, before conceiving an effective national integration.

**Keywords:** National integration, discrimination, living together, exclusion, otherness

### Catalyseurs de la destruction de l'intégration nationale : John Nkemngong Nkengasong dans *Accros the Mongolo*

**Résumé :** Plusieurs années après l'indépendance et plus de cinquante ans après la réunification, une unité nationale solide reste encore un défi pour le Cameroun. L'écrivain camerounais John Nkemngong Nkengasong s'intéresse à la question depuis 2004 dans son ouvrage *Across The Mongolo*. Il décrit des concepts qui stimulent la destruction de l'intégration nationale et suscitent des perturbations sociopolitiques. Beaucoup ont lu cet ouvrage et l'ont considéré comme une oppression et une victimisation des anglophones par les francophones, incitant ainsi les premiers à la révolution par la résistance et la violence. Cet article analyse ce roman comme une prophétie selon laquelle les obstacles à la construction d'une nation tels que le subalternisme, l'exclusion, la discrimination, l'altérité et le népotisme pourraient être éradiqués à l'avance, afin d'éviter les crises, les conflits ou la séparation. Dans ce processus, l'article adopte comme méthode l'analyse textuelle du texte littéraire étudié. Les théories postcoloniales et du nouvel historicisme sont les miroirs à travers lesquels l'étude est menée. L'auteur expose les maux sociétaux endurés par tous les Camerounais afin de sensibiliser et d'éviter l'instabilité ou la crise. Il s'agit d'un appel au gouvernement à reconstruire sur les ruines, avant de concevoir une intégration nationale effective.

**Mots clés :** Intégration nationale, discrimination, vivre ensemble, exclusion, altérité.

## Introduction

Nation building alongside national unity, naturally fit into political action of Cameroon. The years of unrest that marked the return to a multi-party system and somehow hindered the national integration process which started since Reunification. This was followed by the Federal then the unitary State. It is easy to understand the challenges involved in the construction of a united and integrated nation Cameroon has always faced. Various initiatives have been taken to promote harmonious living together and defeat those centrifugal trends which have not failed to express themselves. National unity and national integration have been so officially presented as the advanced stage of national unity. Decree NO. 2011/408 of 09 September 2011, in addition to assigning to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education the task of developing and implementing Government's policy in the field of youth and civic education, also entrusted it with the mission of promotion of national integration. This is a cross sectional task. However, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education is the one in charge within governmental structures. (H. Maapou, 2018, p. 4). These are some of the facts behind the creation of *Across the Mongolo*; a work that resonates with historical, social and political realities of Cameroon. This essay poses that the Cameroonian elite have failed to lead the country to a solid national unity. What could account to such a failure of native leaders more than 60 after independence? May be the strategies to an effective nation building are erroneous. The postcolonial theory is used as a mirror through which the study is conducted. The main concern here, is to pinpoint the exact forces which hinder a steadfast national unity in Cameroon. This paper aims at bringing to broad light the main causes of the bankruptcy of national integration in Cameroon such as subalternism, otherness, oppression in order to eradicate them before rebuilding a steadfast national unity on a stronger and purer foundation.

### 1. Summary of *Across the Mongolo*

John Nkemngong Nkengasong's *Across the Mongolo* tells the story of Ngwe, an intelligent boy from the English speaking part of Kamangola. After completing his primary and secondary education in Attah village, he travels to Ngola to enroll in the faculty of law in the University of Besaadi. He is subjected to disillusionment right from the Mongolo river bridge to the University, passing through Lewola. He is victim of oppression, discrimination, rejection, torture and hardship from Gendarmes, thieves, Policemen, University Administrators and political system because he speaks only English language and refuses to learn French. Ngwe's plight is too much for him to bear so much so that he goes insane. Finally he is brought back to his village for treatment by some young men that the Fon of his village assigned.

## 2. Analyses

### 2.1. Setting Analysis

Literature is not written in a vacuum. It is the reflection of the lives of the people of a given society at a given time. It is worth understanding the spatial context of the happenings in the novel, with an in depth analysis of its setting in place. It is an appraisal of the localities, towns and villages wherein events of the plot take place. "All these plots...symbolize the life experiences of the Anglophone Cameroonians before and after gaining independence by reuniting with French Cameroon. Thus, Kama stands for West (English Cameroon) while Ngola represents East Cameroon (French Cameroon)" (N. Swirri,

2019, p. 5). In other words, Kama stands for the English speaking part while Ngola refers to the French speaking part of Cameroon. Kama characterizes order, dignity and morals. Ngola is a symbol of anarchy, disorder, immorality, corruption and laziness. The Mongolo represents the boundary between these two states. It is the River Mungo in the south west region of Cameroon which separates the South west to the Littoral region. It is from this river that the novel derives. Ngwe leaves his village located in Lebialem, a Division in the south west region of Cameroon to get to Bessadi University. He passes through Lewola which is Douala, the economic Capital of Cameroon. The University of Besaadi is the actual University of Yaoundé 1; which was the lone university of Cameroon still 1994. When Andas is sick, he is admitted in a hospital in Kromba which is actually Kumba, the Headquarter of the Meme Division in the Southwest region.

## 2.2. Characters Analysis

Ngwe is the main character who “develops an interest to become eminent like BabaJoro. In the bid to honour his aspirations he travels to study in Ngola. He is a young English speaking Kamangolian, a History then Law student at the University of Besaadi. He is unable to grasp an academic degree after 6 years in the university. Consequently, he is so frustrated and disappointed to the extent that he goes mad.

Minister Wankili is an English speaking Kamangolian who lives in Ngola. He is the Minister in charge of Special Duties at the Presidency who speaks French and English. He is bent on serving the Nation and not solving Anglophones problems. He is considered as a traitor by some Anglophones. Babajoro is the tyrant president of the republic of Kamangola. He is indifferent to the ordeal of Anglophones in the nation. Dr. Amboh is an English speaking Lecturer in the University of Besaadi who does not teach main courses because he has an Anglosaxon Ph.D and does not speak French. Ngwe Salo is the Secretary General at the Presidency. He is an English speaking Kamangolian. He is respected and feared by the French speaking Commissioner at the Cinquième Police Station.

Abeso Louis Le Vin is the Director of Civil Cabinet at the Presidency. He is French speaking and a God father to Minister Wankili. He is Sherila's Sugar daddy and an enemy to Ngwe. M'menyika is Ngwe's mother. She has never been to Ngola but she believes it is another country. Judiciary institution or police is made up of Anglophones and Francophones. It is self-centered, discriminatory and indifferent about what happens to the English speaking people. The forces of law and order are corrupt and barbaric. The traditional institution is represented by the Fon and Alloh Mbong the traditional healer. English speaking people culture embodies order, respect dignity and responsibility. They believe in Fuandem the God who is the fortress to the Attah community.

An in-depth analysis of names of places in the novel *Across the Mongolo* shows without reasonable doubt that John Nkemngong Nkengasong paints an expressive image of the postcolonial Cameroon society by emphasizing the status quo of the citizens of this bilingual country.

## 3. Threats to national integration

National integration is a political philosophy which entails that all citizens, no matter their cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds; have same opportunities, treatments, be fulfilled where ever they find themselves in the national territory without their peculiarities being an obstacle. Dangers to national

integration comprise of tribalism, ethnicity, nepotism, which continue to show their ugly heads especially when it comes to matters of employment and admission into important professional schools. The slogan for regional balance is not respected in appointments and admissions. In this paper, the following obstacles to national integration are analysed, namely: subalternism, otherness, discrimination, oppression and nepotism as painted by John Nkengasong in *Across the Mongolo*.

### 3.1. Subalternism a wild gangrene

The term subaltern was adopted by Antonio Gramsci to refer to those groups in the society who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes (B. Ashcroft, G. Gareth, et H. Tuffin, 2007, p. 198). Ashcroft stipulates that subaltern classes include peasants, workers and other groups denied access to hegemonic power. It has to do with the dehumanizing, degrading and under looking of a particular group of people. It is depicted in Nkemngong Nkengasong's *Across The Mongolo*. In this novel, we come across a character Dr Amboh, a lone Ph.D holder who lectures at Besaadi University. It is thanks to him that Ngwe finds himself at the reception in the residence of a junior Anglophone Minister in charge of Special Duties at the presidency of the Republic of Kamangola. It is here that Ngwe, the protagonist, becomes conscientious concerning Anglophone otherness. This statement shocks most of his guests. Anglophones in the country to note: "...the Francophone government uses our Anglophone brothers to destroy us, ruin our heritage, assimilate us and clearly wipe out our traditions."(p.135). Hence it is seen in the text that some of the Anglophones who have posts like Minister Wankili, no longer identify themselves with their Anglophone brothers. During the party, he warns the Anglophones that his office is not a place to solve Anglophones problems. The underlying meaning of his words is that he does not consider Anglophones as people he will serve at his new post; He will instead solve Francophones' problems. The former are not considered as citizens who are served by the Minister.

Furthermore, there is an Anglophone traitor in the text: Mr Kwenti the clerk who refuses to speak English to Anglophones in the University of Besaadi. This is because he believes French language is superior to his first official language which is English. He uses this foreign language in order not to identify himself with his Anglophone culture. We realize that at the Besaadi university, major courses are dispensed and examinations written in French. During lectures, Ngwe is not free to express himself in his language (English) because he will be shouted at by his Francophone classmates. Dr. Amboh, the lone Anglophone lecturer in the university who is described as hardworking and intelligent cannot teach main courses. This character cannot have promotion because the administration claims that they do not understand the nature of Degrees in British universities. What makes him grieve most is the ministerial order requesting all Ph.D holders from abroad to enroll for and defend the "Doctorat d'Etat.<sup>1</sup>" (p.126). This clearly shows that the Francophone Administration of the University of Besaadi in Kamangola, actually underestimates the British Educational system by giving an upper hand to their degrees. The real fact behind this bias is that Dr. Amboh is an Anglophone lecturer who obtained his degree in Britain. His plight is that of stress, debasement and humiliation attached to his linguistic identity.

To add, in the literary work *Across the Mongolo*, since the "Anglophones" are considered as second class citizens or pariah of the society by "Francophones" Ngwe the protagonist of the novel in order to

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<sup>1</sup> State Doctorate(notre traduction)

fight for the reassertion of his position, forms the Young Anglophone Movement (YAM). He does this because he is afraid that after his education, his knowledge acquired will go in vain. He becomes the president of this movement but the President Babajaro tried to kill him and some members. He explains: "I had wanted to be the president of the Young Anglophone Movement. Was actually one when Babajaro wanted my head. He wanted to eat me raw" (p. 26). Ngwe has the freedom to create an association according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Cognisant of this right, the President of Kamangola, Babajaro, sends forces of law and order to arrest him. This Association aims at advocating their rights as full citizens of Kamangola. He sees his right smashed on the basis of his linguistic background. One may think that if the movement is created by a French speaking Kamangolian, it will function smoothly. The principle of equality of all citizens of a country is not respected in a society wherein just a handful of people have certain privileges and others do not. In this vain, they cannot be integrated if they are not one and considered equal. The freedom of association of the people is not fully respected for they create movement but are not free to hold working sessions.

### 3.2. Otherness in Nkengasong's *Across the Mongolo*

Another impediment to the attainment of national integration is otherness. The International Encyclopedia of Human Geography defines Otherness as the result of a discursive process by which a dominant in group ("Us," the Self) constructs one or many dominated out-groups ("Them," Others) by stigmatizing a difference- real or imagined- presented as a negation of identity and thus a motive for potential discrimination. Otherness is a process by which individual, or groups are given identities and societal positions, values and so on through certain and specific qualities. In *Across the Mongolo*, people and cultures are put aside not only by the French speaking people but also by a system in place. English language has no place in the University of Besaadi. It is almost a taboo given that no lecture is done in English language. Examinations are set in French language only and questions are only asked in French language and nothing there is done in English language. Hence, the narrator explains: "but the fac guys... told us that no one knew about the University of Besaadi which was the capital of Kamangola" (p. 22). Ngwe on his part had never considered French as part of what he ought to learn. He did not care about it nor show any interest in French in the Secondary school. What catches him once in the University of Besaadi. He observes that: "I had done a bit of French in school but I had always considered it the language of people of another country and so I wasn't interested in it." (p. 26)

When Ngwe and Nwolefeck get to Lewola, they cannot find their way to the train station and cannot speak French. Some bastardly dressed fellows question and classify them: "C'est sont les Anglos<sup>2</sup>" (p. 43) they further proceed: "ils sont mort.<sup>3</sup>" Ngwe and his friend are strangers, the fellows of Lewola try to rob them. Ngwe still on his way to Besaadi, nurses a feeling of hatred for a place he does not know in anticipation because he does not belong to this other part of the nation. He has put himself aside, he says, "As we moved along, some sacred hatred of this strange world began to settle at the bottom of my consciousness" (p. 44). He wonders how he is going to cope in this strange place which is found in his country.

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<sup>2</sup> They are anglophones (notre traduction)

<sup>3</sup> They are dead (notre traduction)

In Chapter Seven, at the Prefecture where Ngwe needs to sign some documents, a lady there makes it clear that she does not want to mix with English speaking people. She considers them as pests. She replies to him: “Ne m’ennouille pas! Je suis pas la pour les Anglo.”<sup>4</sup> (p. 57) Similarly, Ngwe does not want to learn French as he keeps translating notes from French to English. Lecturers do not want to learn English. Forces of law and order shower Ngwe with insults as he tries to explain himself in English when he is arrested. The narrator makes us understand that the people in offices in Besaadi loathe English language so much so that when they see applications written in English: “The fellow was going to squeeze the documents and throw them in the garbage can.” (p. 102).

English-speaking people of Besaadi also consider their English speaking brothers as not being part of them. The protagonist recounts: “My brother Nkwenti disowned me because I spoke the language of the pariah and that I was going to contaminate him with the vapors of English language.” (P.100). During the riot done by students at the University, Ngwe is caught, beaten by policemen. They describe him to be: “élément subversif!”<sup>5</sup> and threaten to shoot him as they note: “Tu bouges, je tire.”<sup>6</sup>; “C’est un Anglo meme, là tu es mort!”<sup>7</sup> “Anglofou, esclave, idiot, salaud, anglo!”<sup>8</sup> (p. 108). French speaking policemen describe the narrator as someone who causes disorder although they do not catch him doing it. They credited him as a madman, a person with limited reasoning capacities and as a thing that he disposes of at will. French-speaking people behave as having authority or better still supremacy on English-speaking people of Kamangola. Policemen treat Ngwe as a mere thing by showering insults on him. Again, the Commissioner at the Cinquième Police station orders Ngwe to speak in French as he tries to explain himself in English language.

The Narrator uses his exact words to describe his victimisation: “Parlez en Francais. Est-ce que je comprends ton patois la.”<sup>9</sup> (p. 113). Similarly, when he tries to meet the Dean he asks the private secretary if he could meet him. The narrator explains: “She looks at me angrily and threw the audience form on the table in front of me” (p. 121). She demonstrates hatred for Ngwe and thinks that he should not see the Dean just because he is an Anglophone. Members of the administration hate English Language. Ngwe says that when he meets the Dean and expresses himself in English, he immediately sends him to the Vice Dean. Anglophones’ subjugation is sustained by Ashutantang in her work “Cameroon Literature 1959-90: A brief overview”. She cites Bate Besong: “Weka, in *Epie Ngome, s What God Has put Asunder* captures the double colonization of the Anglophone Cameroonian... the metaphor of marriage helps to encode what is realistically portrayed as a human agony in an oppressive system.” (J. Ashutantang, 2016, p. 120). She posits that: “Garba’s oppressive and exploitative nature becomes a representation of what Anglophone Cameroonians refer to as the Anglophone problem.” Many are the Anglophone Cameroonians who believe that Francophones have authority over Anglophones just as former colonial masters. Therefore, they are victims of ill treatments,

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<sup>4</sup> Don’t disturb me, i am not there for Anglophones (notre traduction)

<sup>5</sup> Subversive element! (notre traduction)

<sup>6</sup> You move, I shoot (notre traduction)

<sup>7</sup> He is even an Anglophone, so he is dead (notre traduction)

<sup>8</sup> Foolish Anglophone, slave, idiot, bastard, Anglophone (this is considered as an insult by English speaking Cameroonians) (notre traduction)

<sup>9</sup> Speak in French. Do i understand that your dialect? (notre traduction)

injustice and exclusion. Nicheng Gilda in her work “Marginalisation and Unbelonging in John Nkemngong Nkengasong’s *Across the Mongolo*” argues:

Francophones behave like the colonisers who see themselves to be at the centre - the metropolis and the Anglophones - the colonised to be at the margin... with the power that Francophones possess, they exclude and marginalise the Anglophones in virtually all spheres of life. Political marginalisation is rife as there is unequal distribution of posts of responsibility by Anglophones who are at the centre. (G. Nicheng, 2018, p.85)

Nevertheless, English speaking people also dehumanize the French speaking people as they refer to them as “frogs”. When the list of those who shall be given scholarships is out, Ngwe’s name appeared on it but it is wrongly spelled. Nwofeck tells Ngwe: “These frogs are fond of misspelling” (p.120). The word used to describe the French speaking administrators of the University of Besaadi is “frogs”. He could have used another word but the metaphor presents Francophones as animals who are heartless and void of any humanity. Ngwe’s mother, M’meyika excludes herself from the people of Ngola and believes they are strangers. This is what is understood when the narrator says: “She did not understand why her only son was abandoning her again to go to another country, a country where he had lived for many years and yet he was not showing any sign of coming home finally.” (P.156). She considers her village Attah as “home” and Ngola as “another country”. The protagonist’s mother is an illiterate. She has never been to Ngola before. So, she does not know the beliefs, cultures, values and behaviours of the French speaking people of Kamangola. What she has are a preconceived, wrong and exaggerated image of them. Besides, she auto-excludes herself from belonging to Ngola which she considers as another country and Kama her own country. By implication, she puts a barrier between French speaking people of her country and herself through a false mindset that she builds by herself. This is without any doubt the conception of people of Attah village, which is taken over to the English-speaking people of Kamangola. This image is passed down from one generation to another.

### 3.3. Oppression of the Minority Group

Some Cameroonians believe that they are still enduring the realities of colonialism because they suffer a lot in their independent country. It is in this sense that Nicheng stipulates that:

Colonialism has led Francophone Kamangolians to colonise Anglophone Kamangolians. Colonialism, the practice where a powerful country directly controls less powerful countries and uses the latter’s resources to increase its power and wealth which was practiced by European countries on other nations of the world, is practiced now by some groups on others. (G. Nicheng, 2018, p. 84).

The Anglophones’ plight is summarized in the concept of oppression. Oppression is a danger to national integration. *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* states that oppression is when people are governed in an unfair way that prevents them from having opportunities and freedom. The oppression of Anglophones is seen in ministerial appointments. In a cabinet of forty ministers, there is no Anglophone with ministerial portfolio. Ngwe puts in place the YAM, an association to advocate the rights of Anglophones at the university. He does not attain this goal because forces of law will not let him do so. They tracked him down like a criminal with the difference that they wanted him dead: “he wanted to eat me raw.”(p.26). Babajoro sends policemen to arrest Ngwe thus forbidding him to fully express his freedom to form an association.

Another aspect of oppression is seen in the treatment that gendarmes give to English speaking people in Kamangola. As Ngwe's bus crosses the river separating Kama to Ngola, he admires the architecture of the bridge which he associates with images of slaves chained to one another, he narrates "... a hand gripped me fiercely on the collar of my shirt." (p.40). It was one of the gendarmes who controlled the car. He asks for "impot<sup>10</sup>", Ngwe replies in English trying to say he does not understand. The gendarme shouts at him, he harasses Ngwe as he explains; "He grasped my collar so tight that I could not breathe freely, he dragged me towards the bus ... then he hit me on the head ... the other gendarme fell on me, hitting and cursing and forced me to the ground on my buttocks."(p. 40). The gendarmes give Ngwe such an ill treatment just because he does not understand French and that what they require from him is his student identity card which he provides together with his national identity card. After going through, they say, "Un fraudeur! Un Awarien,<sup>11</sup>" (p. 41). In French, these appellations mean a fraudster and someone who stands on the way to another's fulfillment. These form an excuse to get rid of Anglophone Kamangolians and exercise their hegemony power on them. They then kick him again and still search for another problem claiming that Ngwe's names on the two cards are not the same. We know that he is treated like this because he comes from Kama (part of the country where English is spoken) and not from Ngola (part of the country where French is spoken). These gendarmes are on duty to ensure peace and order in the nation, they rather cause disorder and pain on the citizens.

### 3.4. Discrimination of minority group

Cambridge Encyclopedia dictionary defines discrimination as the state of being distinguished or set apart. It can also be termed or seen as an arbitrary imposition of unequal tariff for substantially the same service. Since the unification of the two Cameroons, most Anglophone Cameroonians believe that they have been victims of economic, social, political and cultural injustices from their Francophone dominated government. (J. Ashutantang, 2018, p. 82-83). In John Nkemngong *Across the Mongolo*, French language is used by Babajoro to transform the Anglophones into French speaking people. In this vain, the French system of education is adopted and French is used as the language of instruction. Dr Amboh is not given main courses because he is an Anglophone. He is refused promotion on the pretext that he needs to do a "doctorat d'état" to qualify as a full lecturer in the University (p.126). Documents are all written in French, although English language is also an official language in the country. For example: "...Attestation de presentation de pieces d'originaux, Attestation de lieu de naissance, Attestation de depot, Certificat de date de naissance<sup>12</sup>." (p. 57). Cameroon is a bilingual country with two official languages; French and English. However, only French is used in naming official documents and in public services. The above listed documents should have been followed by their equivalent in English language. Not only is the language excluded, but the people who speak it. Also, all communication is done in French. That is why workers at the prefecture<sup>13</sup> say: "... il faut repasser, monsieur.<sup>14</sup>" (p. 57) "Monsieur le Préfet has a scéance de travail ... Repassez demain.<sup>15</sup>" (p. 58). Those Kamangolians who speak solely English language are not considered when all communication is

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<sup>10</sup> Tax (notre traduction)

<sup>11</sup> A fraudster, a neither nor (notre traduction)

<sup>12</sup> Testimonial of presentation of original documents, Attestation of place of birth, Proof deposit, Certificate of date of birth (notre traduction)

<sup>13</sup> The SDO's Office (notre traduction)

<sup>14</sup> Come back later sir (notre traduction)

<sup>15</sup> Mr SDO has a workshop... come back tomorrow (notre traduction)



done only in French. This stipulates that when French-speaking people go to a service, they are attended to but when an English -speaking asks the same favour, he is humiliated, unattended and sacked from the office. Consequently, French speaking people are favoured whereas English-speaking are minimized, relegated to the second rank and ignored. One may think that policies makers intentionally put them aside. It is clear that, the latter do not want English speaking students in Kamangola succeed, since they expect them not to submit the above listed documents.

Anglophones in Kamangola are politically discriminated against. Not many Anglophones are ministers. It is Minister Wankili, the only English-speaking Minister but he has a lesser position as the minister in charge of special studies the Presidency of the Republic. This administrative bias is captured in the excerpt below as the narrator observes:

Ngwe is ridiculed at the “scolarité<sup>16</sup>”. When he submits his documents to the man at the *scolarité*, he cannot identify those required because he does not understand French. He describes the man’s reaction: “he sighed and flung the documents at me... I held it back and gathered the papers. I went on my knees and pleaded but the man does not care about him. He instead orders him to out of his office. The more I pleaded with the man to accept my documents, the more he came offended. He pulled away his legs violently and made a move to kick me and then sent me out of his office (P.60).

The presence of an Anglophone Kamangolian seems to be irritating to Francophones. The Anglophone Kamangolian are treated with no respect. They are not treated as being at home. Their needs are not considered and their dignity is smashed down by the system in place and by their Francophone brothers. However, if a Francophone Kamangolian finds himself in the same situation, he will not receive the same treatment. The word “Anglo” or Anglophone is already dehumanizing and categorizing the English speaking people of Kamangola as being at the margin and the French speaking people at the centre. They rule everywhere. This justifies the fact that all lecturers were Francophones except Dr. Amboh who despite his rich academic background in legal matters, is given a main course. Thus, he could never have been of any influence to the Francophones. English speaking citizens of Kamangola are discriminated upon. Their lecturers are not treated as French speaking lecturers.

Discrimination is rampant in Kamangola. Francophones consider Anglophones as inferior and not belonging. There is also discrimination and exclusion amongst Anglophones (H. Maapou, 2018, p .67). In a flash back, in the College of Arts, students are stratified according to social status. Members of the political science club call themselves “future leaders of the nation.” (p. 85). Students who are not members are to become future mere citizens of the nation and club members will rule over them. Club members call non-members “Lizards” and they called them “empty calabashes.”(p. 86). This is the treatment Anglophone students give one another back in Ngwe’s village. In Cameroon, people subdue one another. There is humiliation, lack of consideration and disrespect amongst Anglophones, Francophones and the two groups of people. Nevertheless, the ideal nation is one in which cultural, economic, special differences should not be a weakness but rather a strength to build a steadfast sovereignty. Discrimination as a societal gangrene must not exist amongst people no matter their

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<sup>16</sup> School attendance (notre traduction)

social, financial and cultural background. If each human's rights are respected without consideration of their peculiarities, this lays the foundation for a long lasting national unity.

### 3.5. Nepotism in all domains

Cambridge Encyclopedia Dictionary defines nepotism as undue attachment to relations; favoritism shown to members of one's family; bestowal of patronage in consideration of relationship, rather than of merit or legal claim. In a society whose goal is to achieve national unity, nepotism is an obstruction to the attainment of this aim. Nepotism can still be defined as using power or influence to obtain good jobs or unfair advantages. In Nkengasong's *Across the Mongolo*, nepotism is portrayed in a few instances. At the University of Besaadi, when the list for scholarships is out, Nwofeck's name appears on the first list but Ngwe's name does not appear. The latter precises that the criteria for the scholarship are not clear. Besides, he has to repeat the first year. He realizes that the secret behind success is to have someone "at the top of the ladder." He laments: "It was some obscured business and you needed a godfather behind you to succeed. I had none." (p.95) However, it is sad to discover that Ngwe, who as the novel says, is the "gem" of the clan, has 10 papers in the G.C.E ordinary level and 4 papers at the G.C.E Advanced level; but is unable to validate all his courses in the Law department. This is because he has nobody who is highly placed in the society to ensure his success. Merit has no room in Besaadi University. Not only students suffer because of this debasement, lecturers do go through the same ordeal. Dr. Amboh, a PhD holder who of course has a foreign PhD certificate because he studied in Britain does not teach main courses in the faculty but he is given minor courses. If he had a godfather, he would push him to the top and make him have major courses.

In Kamangola, if you do not know someone who is highly placed and who recommends you, things will be very tough for you see, Impossible. Another example of this common practice in the novel is when Ngwe is caught, tortured and jailed. When he is taken from the Cinquième<sup>17</sup> police station to a building, he is questioned by the commissioner of the police, then by the superior military officer. Ngwe says: "He asked me whether i was the son of the Secretary General, Monsieur Ngwe Salo. I did not know what it meant but i answered in the affirmative. He picked the phone, dialed and ordered that I should be taken back to the Police Station where my dresses and identification papers were to be given back to me." (p.116). Ngwe escapes torture, condemnation and is released because he is mistaken to be the son of the Secretary General. If not of this false identity attributed to him, he would have been jailed for a long period. In line with this, Ngwe is given the opportunity to enter the office of the Dean of the faculty of law because his name sounds and is written like that of the secretary general at the presidency of the republic of Kamangola.

Nepotism is so common that those who practice it declare it in public. Minister, Wankili, the Minister in charge of special duties at the Presidency of the Republic, at the party he throws on the occasion of his promotion to his new post, puts it clear that he does not deserve the post if merit is put forward. During the party, the Minister is given the floor to introduce himself. What rather happens is: " Minister Wankili took the floor not to introduce himself but to introduce the man he calls the guest of honour and his godfather Mr Abeso Louis le Vin who was the Director at the Civil Cabinet at the Presidency. His existence wholly depends on Mr. Abeso Louis Le Vin. This is why he can stoop so low to greed him.

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<sup>17</sup> Fifth (notre traduction)

He even speaks his language, French and he accepts all what Abeso says: “Oui monsieur!”<sup>18</sup> (p.130). Minister Wankili makes everyone at the party know that his post is given to him not because of his competence or experience but because of his relationship with Mr. Abeso Louis le Vin. So do many people in the country get jobs, posts and promotions. Meanwhile, those who have no one to back them up, assure their rise to the top but have aptitudes are not recruited nor promoted. This practice is bias and contrary to morals.

## Conclusion

Some Anglophone Cameroonian writers have long illustrated on the victimization of Anglophone Cameroonians. Epie Ngome believes that the solution to the Anglophone problem is the return to federation. (F. Ashuntantang, 2016, p. 120). Contrarily to what many people believe, Nkengasong aver that for national integration to be attained, rejection of the other’s culture, subalternism, otherness, oppression, discrimination and nepotism must stop. When one refuses to speak the other’s language, you reject the person and cannot understand him. Ngwe refuses what is supposed to put him at the centre. French is a threshold to his success in Ngola, but he refuses to learn it. He victimizes himself. Similarly, Francophones who do not want to hear English language nor have to do with English speaking people exclude the language and its speakers. Anglophones and Francophones who do not learn each other’s languages respectively, put themselves at the margin. Such attitudes should be erased for a real living together. He denounces catalysts of disintegration but does not call for secession. Punishment to fundamentalism is madness. This work portrays Nkengasong as a nationalist who fights for nation building by hugging the people to stop practices that set people apart. He calls on all Cameroonians to fight against societal ill and open up to other cultures for a steadfast and lasting national integration.

Despite the efforts the government enacted to maintain a peaceful and united nation, the Anglophone crisis broke in 2016. This reveals that catalysts to the destruction of national integration are the top of the iceberg and the sociopolitical, linguistic crisis in which the country has lived for the past 6 years is the bottom of it. What Nkengasong foresaw and tried to warn the people to take preventive measures finally occurred. In spite of all the strategies used by the government, including the National Dialogue which went from the 30th September to the 4th 2020, they have faced more violent incidents. Today the crisis has generated into a conflict which threatens to tear the country apart. Nation building is at stake as there is alarming insecurity, deaths, dislocated families, economic crisis and hatred amongst Cameroonians. What is quite unfortunate is that, Anglophones have in mind to separate from the Francophones. They wish to form their own state which they shall call “Ambazonia” and they call the French speaking part of the country “la republique”<sup>19</sup>. If this takes place, it will mean that Cameroon’s national unity or efforts to build national integration has failed.

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<sup>18</sup> Yes Sir (notre traduction)

<sup>19</sup> The republic (notre traduction)

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