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# The Interplay Between Colonial History and Postcolonial Institutions: Evidence from Cameroon<sup>1</sup>

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## ***Abstract***

*We study the long-term impacts of Cameroon's colonial history and its interplay with postcolonial institutions. We exploit both the arbitrary division of the German Colony of Kamerun between France and Britain after World War I and the 1961 reunification of British Southern Cameroons and the French-speaking République du Cameroun. Comparing individuals from the same ethnic homeland but living on either side of the British-French border within Cameroon, we find that individuals on the British side had higher educational attainment before the reunification, but that this initial advantage was partially erased by post-reunification governance. Despite achieving higher educational attainment overall, individuals on the British side have worse employment outcomes and roughly similar infant mortality rates. We provide further evidence of the interaction between colonial origins and postcolonial institutions by analyzing how the outcomes of individuals in former Southern Cameroons differ from their hypothetical outcomes, had they instead opted to join Nigeria in the 1961 plebiscite. We find that they have lower educational attainment, higher infant mortality rates, and worse employment outcomes relative to their co-ethnics living on the Nigerian side of the border between former Southern Cameroons and Nigeria.*

**JEL Classification:** D02, I20, I25, J21, J24, N37, O1.

**Keywords:** *Colonial history, Postcolonial institutions, Cameroon, British Southern Cameroons, French Cameroons, République du Cameroun, Reunification, Federalism, Centralization.*

# 1 Introduction

In this study, we examine the long-term impacts of the colonial history of Cameroon, with a particular focus on the interplay between its colonial origins and postcolonial institutions in determining the long-term outcomes of men, women, and children in the country. The colonial era in Cameroon was characterised by the rule of three different European empires. Between 1884 and 1916, Cameroon was part of the German colony of Kamerun. Following its defeat at the end of World War I, Germany lost its colonies, and the erstwhile Kamerun territory was partitioned between France and the United Kingdom into two distinct territories as Mandated Territories of the League of Nations. French Cameroons and British Cameroons became Trust Territories of the United Nations following World War II. These two territories were delimited by an arbitrary border, drawn up in Europe, that cut across regions that were culturally, politically, economically, demographically and geographically homogeneous. For more than four decades, Britain and France governed their respective territories as colonies. The main territorial borders of present-day Cameroon were established in 1961. After a referendum was organized in British Cameroons on February 11, 1961, the northern population voted to join Nigeria while the southern population voted to join the French-speaking “République du Cameroun” following its independence. The reunification of British Southern Cameroons and the République du Cameroun became effective on October 1, 1961, and gave birth to the Federal Republic of Cameroon.<sup>1</sup> We exploit this historical experiment in combination with household data and data from several other sources to conduct an empirical analysis of how colonial legacies interact with postcolonial institutions to shape long-term outcomes.

Different colonial powers brought with them different kinds of institutions. The British and the French colonial systems significantly differed in terms of their administrative rules, legal systems, educational systems, labor policies, and population policies (see, for example, [Acemoglu et al. \(2001\)](#), [La Porta et al. \(2008\)](#), [La Porta et al. \(1998\)](#), [Lee and Schultz \(2012\)](#), [Anderson \(2018\)](#), [Guarnieri and Rainer \(2018\)](#), [Dupraz \(2019\)](#), and [Canning et al. \(2021\)](#)). Studies have found that these institutional differences tend to

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<sup>1</sup>Between 1919 and 1960, the French territory in Cameroon was called Cameroun. Following its independence on January 1, 1960, this territory was renamed République du Cameroun. The British territory, called British Cameroons between 1919 and 1961, was initially formed of Northern Cameroons and Southern Cameroons. Following the reunification that led to the Federal Republic of Cameroon, the République du Cameroun took the name of the Federated State of East Cameroon (or East Cameroon for short), and Southern Cameroons took the name of the Federated State of West Cameroon (or West Cameroon for short). In present-day Cameroon, these territories are no longer called by these names. When referring to them in a precise historical context, each will be called by the name it had in that context. Otherwise, they will simply be referred to as Francophone Cameroon and Anglophone Cameroon, respectively. Today, the territory of Anglophone Cameroon corresponds administratively to the North West and South West Regions, and the territory of Francophone Cameroon represents the rest of the country.

result in significant disparities in present-day economic and political outcomes across African countries, with former British colonies outperforming former French colonies in most cases. While the cross-country comparison followed in most of the studies is useful in analyzing the long-term effect of colonial institutions, it does not address the issue of how colonial legacy is modified or undermined by postcolonial institutions. Cameroon presents a unique experiment that can be exploited to investigate this question.

Prior to the 1961 reunification of Southern Cameroons and the République du Cameroun, the Anglophone minority advocated for a loose form of federalism (Ebune (2016), Awasom (2002), Konings (1999)), with a view that the positive elements of the administrative traditions inherited from the French and British colonial experience would be blended together to offer Cameroon a unique administrative system in Africa. According to Konings (1999), this form of federalism was to guarantee equal partnership for both partners and preserve the cultural heritage and identity of each. The kind of federalism favoured by the leaders of the Anglophone minority contrasted with the highly centralized form of administration established by the leaders of the Francophone majority. Although the Francophone majority under the leadership of President Ahmadou Ahidjo promised before the plebiscite that the reunification would not be an annexation or assimilation of Southern Cameroons by the République du Cameroun<sup>2</sup>, in practice, this was not the case (Nfi (2014, 2021)). The reunified Cameroon was crafted as a highly centralized two-state federation (West Cameroon and East Cameroon), with almost all power concentrated within the hand of the President. The constitution reserved for the President excessive powers which gave him the latitude to appoint and dismiss all federal and state officials, including the Prime Ministers of West Cameroon and East Cameroon. He unilaterally controlled all government actions. A process of centralization was then set in motion beginning with the creation of a single national political party. This was followed by the concentration of administrative decision-making in the capital city Yaoundé, and culminated in the dissolution of the federation and the installation of a unitary state in 1972. In 1972, the country was also renamed the United Republic of Cameroon. The name of the country changed again to the Republic of Cameroon in 1984, two years after President Ahmadou Ahidjo resigned and was succeeded by Paul Biya, the current President of the country. The highly centralized state that emerged following this political development meant that the Anglophone system, which was rooted in the Anglo-Saxon culture, gradually changed into a French-based system. The influence of the Francophone system became predominant and superseded the British impact, as all traces of British inspired local government had virtually disappeared (Adamolekun et al. (1988)). Some scholars have likened this predominance of the Francophone system through the centralized ad-

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<sup>2</sup>It is argued that in July 1960, before the constitutional talks proper, Ahidjo had made several declarations in Tiko, Victoria, and Buea (cities in Southern Cameroons) claiming unambiguously that reunification was to be undertaken in an atmosphere of equality between the representatives of the République du Cameroun and Southern Cameroons (see, for example, Nfi (2014, 2021)).

ministration of Cameroon to an annexation and assimilation of Southern Cameroons, and argued that this has prompted the Anglophone minority to develop a sense of political, economic, and socio-cultural marginalization (Takougang and Amin (2018)).

We exploit the unique nature of Cameroon’s colonial and postcolonial experience to address our main research question of how colonial origins interact with postcolonial institutions to determine long-term outcomes. The outcomes we analyze are education, employment, and infant mortality, with the latter being a usual proxy of child and household poverty. When analyzing these outcomes, we also seek to understand how the impacts differ for males and females. Analysis is performed using a combination of individual-level data from the Demographic and Health Surveys and historical data on the spatial location of pre-colonial ethnic homelands in Africa derived from George Peter Murdock’s Ethnographic Map of Africa (Murdock (1959)). Empirical analysis is done through the implementation of a spatial Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD) with ethnic homeland fixed effects. Specifically, we exploit the arbitrarily drawn British-French border within Cameroon to compare individuals residing close to the border and who are within the same ethnic group but are living on different sides of the border. Thus, our identification strategy accounts for hard-to-observe cultural and geographic characteristics associated with the outcomes of interest. Since focusing on areas very close to the border might not be sufficient to fully control for geographic differences that could potentially bias our estimates, we augment our main empirical strategy with a set of controls for geographic characteristics and natural endowments including elevation, soil suitability for agriculture, and geodesic distance to national border.

Our main finding is that colonial origins not only matter, but they also significantly interact with postcolonial institutions. Indeed, educational attainment is greater for Anglophone men and women than for their Francophone counterparts. However, this effect is larger among cohorts who were likely to have completed these levels of education before the 1961 reunification took place. This finding implies that the positive effect of the British rule on education has been partially erased by policies adopted following the reunification. Indeed, despite the constitutional biculturalism of the Cameroon Federation, which recognized two educational subsystems, namely the Anglophone and Francophone subsystems with two examination systems, in practice, the Anglophone educational system was gradually dominated by the Francophone culture in the post-reunification era (Nfi (2014)). It is argued that this led to a ‘Francophonisation’ of the Anglophone educational system (Nfi (2014)), with this ‘Francophonisation’ mainly affecting educational outcomes at the secondary level.

Despite having higher educational attainment overall, Anglophone men and women are less likely to find employment in the non-agricultural sector. Agricultural activities are among the lowest-paid jobs in most developing countries (Christiaensen et al. (2020)). In addition to receiving low salaries, agricultural workers have very poor work conditions

that expose them to different kinds of environmental hazards. Our finding therefore implies that Anglophones are less likely to be found in better paid employment and more likely to be poor compared to their Francophone counterparts. Finally, we do not find that infant mortality differs between Anglophone and Francophone boys and girls. In our sample, all the children were born after 1969, which is after the 1961 reunification. This finding is in line with the fact that post-reunification education—a key determinant of child health in developing countries—does not differ significantly for Anglophones and Francophones.

Our findings seem to support the view that the centralized administration that emerged following the 1961 reunification was detrimental to the Anglophone minority. This is a fact that raises the question of whether this minority would have been better off today had its members voted to join Nigeria instead of the République du Cameroun. We answer this question by comparing the outcomes of Anglophone Cameroonians to those of their Nigerian co-ethnics. We find that the people of former Southern Cameroons had similar educational attainment as their Nigerian co-ethnics before the 1961 reunification, but they became worse off following reunification. Moreover, Anglophone Cameroonians are less likely to work in the non-agricultural sector and have higher infant mortality rates compared to their Nigerian counterparts. These findings effectively suggest that the Anglophone minority in Cameroon would have been better off by joining Nigeria in 1961. Additionally, the findings are consistent with the view that the Anglophone minority has been marginalized by the Francophone majority through the centralization of administration (Takougang and Amin (2018)). This investigation again underscores the significant interplay between colonial origins and postcolonial institutions in the determination of long-term outcomes.

This study contributes to the broad literature documenting the historical origins of comparative economic development. The main historical events examined in the African context include the transatlantic slave trade, colonization and various colonial policies, and European missionary activities (see, for example, Acemoglu et al. (2001), La Porta et al. (2008), Nunn (2008), Nunn and Wantchekon (2011), Lee and Schultz (2012), Cogneau and Moradi (2014), Okoye and Pongou (2014, 2017, 2021), Okoye (2021), Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2016), Anderson (2018), Guarnieri and Rainer (2018), Dupraz (2019), Okoye et al. (2019), Archibong and Obikili (2020), Dev et al. (2016), Canning et al. (2021), Nunn (2020)). Studies by Lee and Schultz (2012), Guarnieri and Rainer (2018), and Dupraz (2019) are the closest in spirit to this study. These studies exploit, as we do, the British-French division of Cameroon after the First World War. Lee and Schultz (2012) study the effect of the British-French colonial legacy on household wealth, while Guarnieri and Rainer (2018) and Dupraz (2019) focus on female empowerment and education, respectively. Although these authors exploit the same setting as we do, the questions they address differ markedly from ours. This study assesses how colonial

origins interact with postcolonial institutions to determine long-term outcomes. Indeed, as a by-product of our main findings, we will show that the established positive long-run effect of British colonization on economic outcomes in Cameroon is entirely driven by the period before the 1961 reunification of British Southern Cameroons and the République du Cameroun. This study further contributes to the literature by providing the first empirical evidence on whether the Anglophone minority in Cameroon would have been better off today had its members voted to join Nigeria instead of the République du Cameroun.

The rest of this study unfolds as follows. In Section 2, we provide a brief background on the history of Cameroon. Section 3 discusses the data. Section 4 explains our estimation strategy. Section 5 presents our main results highlighting how colonial institutions interact with postcolonial institutions to shape long-term outcomes for men, women, and children in Cameroon. Section 6 concludes.

## 2 Historical Background

### 2.1 From Colonization to Independence

The colonial era in Cameroon is characterised by the presence of three colonial powers, with Cameroon first being colonized as a German protectorate then subsequently colonized by the French and the British concurrently.

**German Kamerun (1884 - 1916)** The colonial period of Cameroon’s history began in 1884 when the German explorer and imperialist Gustav Nachtigal signed protectorate treaties with Kings Bell and Akwa of Douala, bringing Cameroon under German control. The borders of the German Cameroon known as Kamerun (top left of the map in Figure 1) were settled in the Berlin Conference (1884-1885). The German colonial policy in Cameroon initially prioritised exploration over administration. The colony relied heavily on a system of forced labor in order to create plantations and to build the roads and railways necessary for exporting plantation products and the country’s natural resources (Le Vine (1964), Gardinier (1967), Rubin (1972), O’Neil et al. (1996), Nana (2016)). During the period of German rule, the territories of Kamerun expanded vastly. As part of the settlement of the “Agadir Crisis”, France ceded to Germany its territories in the French Equatorial African colony of Middle Congo (now the Republic of Congo). By 1911, the so called Neu-kamerun (including portions of present-day Chad, Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, and Gabon) was also absorbed into the German colony of Kamerun, as shown by the orange maps in Figure 1. In World War I, German Kamerun was invaded by Allied Expeditionary Forces as part of the Kamerun campaign. By February 1916, the Germans had been defeated and ousted from Cameroon by British,

French, and Belgian Forces (Nfi (2021)).

**British Cameroons (1916 - 61) and French Cameroons (1916 - 60)** Following Germany's defeat during World War I, the territories of Neu-kamerun were reintegrated into the French colonies which had been dispossessed of them five years earlier. The erstwhile Kamerun territory was partitioned between Great Britain and France into two distinct territories, first as "Mandated Territories" of the League of Nations and later as "Trust Territories" of the United Nations following World War II (Gardinier (1967), Le Vine (1964), Konings (1999)). The borders of the British-French Mandates/Trusts in Cameroon were settled by the so called "Picot line". On March 4, 1916, Lancelot Olyphant, an official of the British Foreign Office, met with George Picot, a French diplomat in London. Olyphant presented a map of Cameroon to Picot and the latter drew a line running from North to South (Yearwood (1993), Nfi (2021)). The French chose the area to the East of the line, referred to as Cameroun or French Cameroons (the blue area on the top right map in Figure 1), and the British chose the area to the West of the line, referred to as British Cameroons (the red area on the top right map in Figure 1). British Cameroons was further divided into two parts known as Southern Cameroons (the West part of the actual Cameroon) and Northern Cameroons (Nfi (2021)).

For more than four decades, Britain and France administered their respective portions of Cameroon as colonies. While French Cameroons was administered by France as a separate unit, the British ruled their portion of Cameroon as an extension of Nigeria by integrating Northern Cameroons and Southern Cameroons into Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria, respectively. By the end of the colonial period, the territories administered by these two colonial powers had undergone very different colonial experiences (Nfi (2021)).

French Cameroons gained independence on January 1, 1960, becoming the "République du Cameroun" with Ahmadou Ahidjo as the Country's first President. Ahidjo and his party, the "Union camerounaise", pledged to build a capitalist economy and to maintain close ties to France. Ahmadou Ahidjo's presidency was immediately contested by nationalist leaders as they believed that he was brought to power by the French (Bayart (1978)). This resulted in a violent rebellion spearheaded by the "Union des Populations du Cameroun (U.P.C.)", the first Cameroonian nationalist movement created by Ruben Um Nyobé in 1948 and which was officially banned by the French government in 1955.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, the political evolution of British Cameroons took place in a much more

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<sup>3</sup>Joseph (1975) suggests that the French-German rivalry over French Cameroons between World War I and world War II was an important factor in the emergence of this radical nationalist movement. The U.P.C. demanded both the independence of French Cameroons and its reunification with British Cameroons. Joseph (1975) notes that "although the U.P.C. was eventually crushed by French troops, its two goals of independence and reunification were finally achieved, albeit in circumstances favourable to preserving French influence [ ]."

peaceful political atmosphere. It was due to divisions among the political leaders in Southern Cameroons that the United Nations organised a plebiscite in British Southern Cameroons in February 1961 (Konings (1999), Nfi (2021)). While the majority of Southern Cameroons' population wanted continued UN Trusteeship under the British leading to independence, they were not offered this option during the plebiscite as the British believed that Southern Cameroons was not economically strong enough to survive on its own (Ebune (1992), Chem-Langhëë (1995), Fanso (2009)). Indeed, the electorates were to choose between independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria and independence by reunifying with the independent République du Cameroun (former French Cameroons). The majority in Southern Cameroons opted for independence through reunification with the République du Cameroun under the leadership of John Ngu Foncha as Prime Minister (Nfi (2021)). The reunified Cameroon took the name of the Federal Republic of Cameroon. In the federation, British Southern Cameroons became the Federated State of West Cameroon (or West Cameroon), and the République du Cameroun became the Federated State of East Cameroon (or East Cameroon).

At unification, British Southern Cameroons and the République du Cameroun differed significantly in their institutions, reflecting differences in British and French rules. British Southern Cameroons had economic and administrative systems that were influenced significantly by the British. For example, the territory's legal system was based on the Common law of England and Wales, its educational system was modeled after that in Britain, and the language of government business was English. However, institutions of the République du Cameroun were inherited from France. For example, in addition to educational and administrative systems that were modeled after those in France, the République du Cameroun also had a legal system that was based on the French Civil law, and French was the official language for government communication. An important issue at unification in 1961 was whether to create uniquely Cameroonian institutions, harmonize those inherited from colonialism, or maintain dual administrative and legal systems. The Founban Accords, which were the foundation for reunification, opted for a dual system, which however, was later abandoned by the Francophone-dominated central government. In doing so, the central government effectively abrogated most Anglophone institutions and replaced them with those of the République du Cameroun, as the next section will show.

## **2.2 The Post-Independence Era: A Francophone-Dominated State**

The diverging trajectories of West Cameroon (former British Southern Cameroons) and East Cameroon (former République du Cameroun) began to converge in the early 1960s with the establishment of the Federal Republic of Cameroon. The structure of the Cameroon federation was the outcome of uneasy compromises between the centralist

view of the Francophone leadership and the federalist approach of the Anglophone leaders. Anglophones and Francophones agreed that reunification was to be undertaken in an atmosphere of equality between the representatives of the République du Cameroun and Southern Cameroons (Nfi (2014)), and should preserve the cultural heritage and identity of each. However, in practice, the leaders of the Francophone majority favoured instead a highly centralized unitary state. They regarded the 1961 constitutional arrangements as an unavoidable stage in the establishment of a strong unitary state, and employed various tactics to achieve this objective. Essentially, the Federal Republic of Cameroon was a centralized two-state federation. At federation in 1961, there were two prime ministers for West Cameroon and East Cameroon, respectively, and a federated President assisted by a Vice President who had virtually no constitutional powers. The Vice President's only powers were potential since the Federal Constitution states that "In the event of a vacancy of the Presidency by death or by permanent incapacity established by the Federal Court of Justice to which effect has been taken by the President of the Federal National Assembly, the powers of the President of the Republic shall be exercised ipso jure by the Vice President until the election of the new President". A process of centralization was set in motion beginning with the creation of a single national political party - the Cameroon National Union (CNU) in 1966, followed by the concentration of administrative decision-making in the capital city Yaoundé, and culminating with the dissolution of the federation and the installation of a unitary state in 1972. As time went on, the Anglophone system, which was rooted in the Anglo-Saxon culture, gradually changed into a French-based system. It has been claimed that the French influence which became predominant entirely superseded the British impact after independence, as all traces of British inspired local government had virtually disappeared (Adamolekun et al. (1988)). This view is also shared by Mawhood (1983), when he asserts that as from 1972, following the 'neutralization' of Southern Cameroons and the destruction of its political and administrative institutions, the East Cameroon system of administration was imposed in all essentials throughout the national territory. Some scholars liken this reality to an annexation and assimilation of British Southern Cameroons by the République du Cameroun, and argue that this has prompted the Anglophone minority to develop a sense of political, economic, and socio-cultural marginalization (Takougang and Amin (2018)). This has culminated in the recent Anglophone crisis in the country.

It follows that the colonial institutions inherited from British rule have been modified and undermined in important ways following reunification. In the analysis that follows, we will examine how the interplay between colonial origins and postcolonial governance have shaped the long-term outcomes of men, women and children in Cameroon.

### 3 Data and Descriptive Statistics

This section describes our main data sources for the empirical investigation.

#### 3.1 Individual Level Data

The first dataset used in our empirical analysis is drawn from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS). The DHS are a nationally representative survey program carried out in over 75 countries in the global South since 1986. DHS are administered at regular intervals and are standardized to allow comparisons across countries and over time. These surveys collect detailed information on a host of demographic, health, and socio-economic characteristics at both the individual and household level.<sup>4</sup> For the purpose of this study, we focus on DHS data collected in Cameroon and Nigeria. We excluded from our analysis any observations for which the location coordinates of enumeration areas (typically villages in rural areas or neighborhoods in cities) is unavailable. In addition, we only consider Demographic and Health Surveys conducted before the start of the Cameroon’s armed conflict (also known as the Anglophone crisis) in 2017. Thus, our empirical analysis relies upon two recent Demographic and Health Surveys of Cameroon (CDHS 2004 and CDHS 2011) and three Demographic and Health Surveys of Nigeria (NDHS 2003, NDHS 2008 and NDHS 2013). For identification purposes (see Section 4), we further restrict our sample to individuals living in ethnic homelands divided by either the former British-French border within Cameroon (also referred to the border between Anglophone Cameroon and Francophone Cameroon) or the border between Anglophone Cameroon and Nigeria.<sup>5</sup> This leaves us with a sample of 5,446 respondents living across the British-French border within Cameroon and 1,046 respondents living across the British Southern

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<sup>4</sup>Information collected through DHS is generally recorded at different levels. The analysis in this paper relies mainly on the Household member Recode (PR) files, the Individual Recode (IR) files, the Men Recode (MR) files and the Birth Recode (BR) files. The HR file contains one record for every household member. For each household member, we have information on the level of education. Thus, for the purpose of our analysis, we use the PR database to measure education. However, the PR file does not collect information on employment or health. The IR and the MR files have one record for every women aged 15-49 and men aged 15-59. In addition to the level of education, the IR and the MR files also have information on employment, which we use to define our measure of non-agricultural worker. Finally, the BR file provides information on the birth history of all women interviewed. We use this file to measure infant mortality.

<sup>5</sup>As noted in the Introduction, we refer to Anglophone Cameroon and Francophone Cameroon to designate respectively the two territories that took the names of West Cameroon and East Cameroon in the federation following the 1961 reunification of British Southern Cameroons and the République du Cameroun. Prior to the reunification, these territories had had other names, and they are no longer called by the names they took in the federation in present-day Cameroon. Because individuals in our sample were born between 1909 and 1993, the different names taken by the territory of present-day Cameroon or by the two aforementioned territories that form this country can be used. We refer to these territories as Francophone Cameroon and Anglophone Cameroon for simplicity and for expositional purposes. Similarly, the border between Anglophone Cameroon and Nigeria is the same as the British Southern Cameroons-Nigeria border in the period 1919-1961.

Cameroons-Nigeria border. On average, one third of the sample across the British-French border within Cameroon reside on the British side (former Southern Cameroons) of the border. Similarly, around 31% of the sample across the British Southern Cameroons-Nigeria border are residing on the Nigerian side of the border (see *Panels A and B* in Table 1).<sup>6</sup>

The DHS contain rich individual-level information on education and labor force participation. We use this data to construct two measures of school participation (dummies for the completion of primary and secondary cycles), and a measure of employment in the non-agricultural sector. In both Cameroon and Nigeria, children normally attend primary school between the ages of six to twelve (though with high repetition rates, students up to age 14 are often included (Dupraz (2019))), and students generally attend secondary schools between the ages of twelve and nineteen. To ensure full exposure to primary and secondary education, our empirical analysis will focus on respondents aged 20 or older. On average, 77% of the sampled individuals living across the British-French border within Cameroon and 56% of the sampled individuals living across the British Southern Cameroons-Nigeria border have completed primary education. These figures fall to 9% and 15% for completion of secondary school (see Table 1). Moreover, Table 1 shows that, on average, close to 50% of the respondents in our analysis are working in the agricultural sector.

Alongside the rich socio-economic information, the DHS gathers information on the fertility history of women of reproductive age. For each live birth per interviewed woman, the DHS collect information on the date of birth of the child and its date of death if the child is not alive. Using this information, we construct our fourth variable of interest, which is a measure of infant mortality, that is, mortality occurring within the first year of life. To reduce statistical bias, our analysis will consider only children fully exposed to the risk of mortality in their first year of life. In particular, the empirical analysis below excludes children less than one year old at the time of the survey. On average, less than 10% of children in our analysis died before their first birthday (see Table 1).

### 3.2 Ethnicity Level Data

Our empirical strategy relies on the arbitrary division of ancestral ethnic homelands across the British-French border within Cameroon and the British Southern Cameroons-Nigeria border (see Section 4), in order to control for hard-to-observe ethnocultural differences.<sup>7</sup> To implement this strategy, it is necessary to identify historical ethnic homelands that

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<sup>6</sup>This is based on the subsample of eligible women (IR file), men (MR file) and children (BR file) that were selected to provide information on personal socio-economic and demographic characteristics. See *Panels C and D* of Table 1 for the sample with every household member.

<sup>7</sup>Most African countries are characterized by rich ethnic and cultural diversity, with Cameroon being one of these countries (Mbaku (2005)). Our identification strategy accounts for the influence of ancestral cultures and traditions.

were divided by the aforementioned borders. To this end, we draw historical data on the spatial location of pre-colonial ethnic homelands in Africa from George Peter Murdock’s Ethnographic Map of Africa (Murdock (1959)). This map portrays the spatial boundaries of 826 ethnic groups across Africa in the eve of the colonial era. By superimposing the 1961 country boundaries of the République du Cameroun (former French Cameroons), British Southern Cameroons and Nigeria on the ethnic pre-colonial settlements in Murdock’s map, we create a dataset of country-ethnicity areas. We identify 10 ancestral ethnic homelands divided by the historical British-French border within Cameroon and 11 ancestral ethnic homelands divided by the British Southern Cameroons-Nigeria border (see Figure 2).<sup>8</sup> Most DHS data also contain geographical coordinates (longitude and latitude) for the enumeration areas, which we use to associate each individual in the DHS to his/her ancestral ethnic homeland. Thus, we include in our estimations ethnic homeland fixed effects to control for hard-to-observe cultural differences that are relevant for human capital accumulation.

### 3.3 Pixel Level Data

Because the validity of our spatial RDD design rests on continuity of all factors besides treatment at the historical borders, our empirical strategy also accounts for geographic characteristics that are likely to vary at the historical borders of interest and which could potentially bias our results if unaccounted for. We measure these geographic characteristics at a pixel unit of  $12\text{km} \times 12\text{km}$ . For each pixel, we rely on different sources (see Section A1 in the Appendix) to collect information on the following measures of geographic and natural endowments: elevation, soil suitability for agriculture, and closest distance from the centroid of a pixel to the national border. In the empirical analysis, we control for these potential confounding factors and show that our results are not driven by differences in geographical endowment.

## 4 Identification Strategy

To assess the long-term impact of colonial origins on present-day outcomes in Cameroon, we exploit the internal border across the former British and French areas in this country (see the blue line in Figure 2). Specifically, we implement a Regression Discontinuity Design which compares Cameroonians who are from the same ethnolinguistic background but are living on different sides of the former British-French border within Cameroon.

Our main empirical specification is represented by the following equation:

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<sup>8</sup>This approach is common in the literature analyzing the long-term economic impacts of colonial and pre-colonial institutions in Africa (see, for example, Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2014, 2016), Anderson (2018), and Canning et al. (2021)).

$$Y_{ipet} = \alpha + \beta \text{British}_p + f(\text{BD}_{pce}) + \delta_e + \gamma_t + X'_{ipet}\sigma + Z'_{pe}\mu + \varepsilon_{ipet} \quad (1)$$

where  $Y_{ipet}$  is the outcome variable of interest for an individual  $i$ , born at time  $t$ , and whose current residence is in the historical homeland of ethnic group  $e$ , located in pixel  $p$ .  $\text{British}_p$  is equal to one if pixel  $p$  is located in Anglophone Cameroon (former British Southern Cameroons) and equal to zero if it is located in Francophone Cameroon (former French Cameroons).  $\beta$  is the coefficient of interest. It measures the local average effect of British (vs. French) rule on the outcome of interest.  $\delta_e$  and  $\gamma_t$  correspond to ethnic homeland fixed effects and cohort of birth fixed effects, respectively.  $X'_{ipet}$  is a vector of individual controls including age dummies, religion dummies and whether the respondent is living in an urban or rural area.

The validity of our empirical strategy rests on the continuity of all factors besides treatment at the historical borders. Thus, our main identification assumption is that there are no systematic differences in dimensions relevant to our outcomes across the two sides of the historical borders of interest in this study. For example, we may “wrongly” conclude that the treatment effect given by the coefficient  $\beta$  in equation 1 is causal and driven by differences in colonial legacy if the areas on the two sides of the border differed systematically in geographical features and ethnic characteristics that matter for human capital accumulation.<sup>9</sup> While we are not directly testing for this continuity assumption, in addition to the inclusion of ethnic homelands fixed effects in our specification, we account for the possibility that geographical features may drive our results by controlling for a rich set of location and geographical variables including the shortest distances from the centroid of the pixel to the national border, mean elevation in the pixel, soil suitability for agriculture, and the pixel area. These variables are measured at the pixel level and are denoted by the vector  $Z'_{pce}$ .  $f(\text{BD}_{pce})$  represents a second order RD-polynomial of the minimum distance from the centroid of each pixel to the British-French Cameroon border. This variable controls for smooth functions of geographic location of pixel  $p$ . Standard errors are clustered at the DHS survey cluster level.

A potential threat to our identification strategy comes from the fact that *spillover effects* induced by migration from other regions and by migration across the historical British-French border could possibly bias our results. Indeed, using the current place of residence to identify the ancestral ethnic homeland of an individual, as we do in our main empirical strategy, has potential limitations. First, if areas close to the border attract individuals from other regions of the country and from different cultural backgrounds,

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<sup>9</sup>Guarnieri and Rainer (2018) find no discontinuity of geographic features (climate and altitude) and ethnic characteristics (dependence on gatherings, the use of plough, the prevalence of bride price, and the practice of polygamy) at the British-French border in Cameroon.

then including those individuals in the analysis could bias our baseline estimates, as they do not properly control for culture. Second, it is most likely that, at a certain point in their lifetime, some people might have permanently or temporarily migrated from the British side to the French side of the historical British-French border in Cameroon and vice-versa. These individuals are therefore likely to be exposed to both British and French colonial legacies, leading to an attenuation bias. It follows from this second limitation that estimates from the analysis below can be interpreted as lower bound estimates of the true effect of colonial origins.

When investigating the interaction between colonial origins and postcolonial institutions, we modify equation 1 accordingly (see Section 5.2). This question is addressed using both the samples of individuals living across the British-French border in Cameroon and of individuals living across the British Southern Cameroons-Nigeria border (see the red line in Figure 2). We describe the methodology used to address this question later.

## 5 Findings

In this section, we present the main results from our estimations of equation 1. We focus on four outcomes variables: completion of primary education, completion of secondary education, employment in the non-agricultural sector, and infant mortality (see the description of these variables in Section 3). We first present estimates of the long-term effect of British rule on present-day human capital and employment outcomes in Cameroon by comparing individuals across the British-French internal border in this country. Second, we investigate how this effect interacts with post-colonial institutions. Then, to address our second research question, we present results from an analysis that compares outcomes across the Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria border.

### 5.1 The Long-term Impacts of Colonial Origins

Before presenting the results for our estimation of equation 1, we first provide a graphical illustration of the Regression Discontinuity estimates. Figures 3 and 4 offer a visual display of the relationship between distance to the British-French border and our outcomes of interest. The fitted line on these figures represents the correlation between distance to the former British-French border in Cameroon and the outcomes of interest, along with the correlations' 95% confidence intervals (from an OLS regression of the outcome of interest on distance). The dots on the figures mark local averages of the outcome of interest in 2-kilometre bins. The dots in Figure 3 represent the share of respondents with complete primary or secondary education (at the top and bottom of the figure respectively). While in Figure 4 they represent the share of respondents who are working in the non-agricultural sector (on the top of the figure) and the share of children who have died

before their first birthday (at the bottom of the figure). In each RD graph, the blue color is used for Francophone Cameroon while the red color is used for Anglophone Cameroon. We see from Figure 3 that the share of individuals who have obtained a primary education is higher in Anglophone Cameroon (compared to Francophone Cameroon). However, Figure 4 shows that Anglophones in Cameroon are less likely to work in non-agricultural sectors than their counterparts in Francophone Cameroon. By contrast, there is no strong discontinuity at the British-French border in Cameroon for the share of individuals who have obtained a secondary education (bottom of Figure 3). There is also no strong discontinuity found for the risk of dying within the first year of life (bottom of Figure 4). These results hold even when we examine men and women separately. It will be seen below that these general patterns are consistent with the findings from our regression-based analysis.

**Education.** The results obtained from estimating the long-term impact of British rule on educational attainment in Cameroon using equation 1 are displayed in Table 2. Each specification controls for ethnicity fixed effects, the set of controls listed in Section 4, and a second-order polynomial of the distance from the centroid of the pixel to the British-French border in Cameroon. The first three panels *panels A, B, and C* of the table display results from the RDD analysis, where  $Y$  is the probability of completing a primary education. The three panels at the bottom of the table (*panels D, E, and F*) show the RDD results where the dependent variable is the probability of completion of the secondary education level. In panels A and B, we estimate equation 1 for the whole sample of men and women. We see that the probability of completing primary education is significantly higher in Anglophone Cameroon (compared to Francophone Cameroon). On average the estimates show that completion of the primary education level is 8 percentage points higher for Anglophone Cameroonians than for Francophone Cameroonians. This estimate is about 12% of the mean primary education completion rate observed in the sample. By contrast, British rule has no statistically significant effect on the probability of completing secondary education (*panel D*). For both outcomes we also run equation 1 for different sub-samples of individuals located close to the historical British-French border. Specifically, in columns (2)-(4) we estimate the effects for different bandwidths (or distances to the border). Overall, our results are robust to alternative bandwidth choices. Additionally, the results on primary educational attainment are qualitatively similar when we examine men and women separately. Estimates in *panel B* and *E* show that the legacy of British colonial rule significantly increases the primary education rates in Cameroon for both Anglophone men and Anglophone women (relative to their counterparts in Francophone Cameroon). Similarly, the effects on secondary education remains small and statistically insignificant when we examine males and females separately.

**Labor Force Participation.** Another outcome variable that we examine is labor participation in the non-agricultural sector. Employment in the agricultural sector is among the lowest paid activities in developing countries (Christiaensen et al. (2020)). In Cameroon, although the agricultural sector is a major contributor to the economy with agricultural activities accounting for roughly 14.5 percent of the gross domestic product in 2019 (World Development Indicators, 2019), 68 percent of individuals working in this sector live below the poverty line (Kumase (2018)). It follows that employment in the non-agricultural sector can therefore be viewed as a proxy for having a higher socioeconomic status for the individuals in the sample.

Results from estimating equation 1, where the dependent variable is a binary indicator for employment in the non-agricultural sector, are shown in Table 3. Panels A, B, and C in this table show results for the whole sample, the sample of men, and the sample of women, respectively. As we can see, the probability of working in the non-agricultural sector is significantly 9 percentage points lower for Anglophones compared to their Francophone co-ethnics. The magnitude of the effect is equally important for men and women as shown in panels B and C of Table 3, and it changes little with distance to the historical British-French border.

These findings imply that, despite having higher levels of educational attainment, individuals belonging to the Anglophone minority in Cameroon have less access to higher paying jobs. The analysis therefore tends to support the view that these individuals continue to be subjected to marginalization from the centralized administrative system that has been in place since the 1961 reunification.

**Infant Mortality.** We also analyze the effect of colonial origins on infant mortality. This latter outcome is defined as the probability of dying before reaching the first birthday. In African countries, the majority of deaths occurring before the age of five take place during the first year following birth (Pongou et al. (2019)). In addition, death rates are generally higher for male than for female children, due to a combination of prenatal and biological factors (Pongou (2013, 2015), Pongou et al. (2017)). In Cameroon, infant mortality decreased from 32.7 percent in 1965 to 14.5 percent in 2019 (World Development Indicators, 2019). Declining trends have been observed in sub-Saharan Africa in general (Kudamatsu (2012)). The survival disadvantage of male children has also decreased in recent years, and this has been partly attributed to improvement in the quality of institutions (Pongou et al. (2017), Mabeu and Pongou (2020)). Infant and child mortality is considered a key indicator of child well-being, and its high sensitivity to income also makes it a privileged measure of household poverty (Ross (2006)).

The empirical analysis for this variable is presented in table 4. We do not find that British rule affects infant mortality. Its estimated coefficient is almost zero, and this is true for both male and female children. Again, this finding is intriguing, especially in light

of the fact that, relative to Francophones, Anglophones have higher levels of educational attainment (Table 2) and parental education has been found to positively affect child survival rates (see, for example, Breierova and Duffo (2004), Grépin and Bharadwaj (2015), and Andriano and Monden (2019)). The analysis therefore seems to imply that other factors which are detrimental to Anglophone individuals offset the benefits of higher parental education. It is also to be noted that all the children in our sample were born after 1969, that is, after the reunification. If the political development that followed this latter historical event did not preserve the institutional legacy of British rule as some scholars have argued (see, for example, Mawhood (1983), Adamolekun et al. (1988), and Takougang and Amin (2018)), then this might explain the null effect of British rule on infant mortality.

## 5.2 The Interplay between Colonial Origins and Postcolonial Institutions

The analysis in this section addresses the question of how colonial origins interact with postcolonial institutions to shape long-term outcomes. As noted in the Introduction, the British and the French significantly differed in terms of their administrative rules, legal systems, and educational systems (see, for example, La Porta et al. (1998), Acemoglu et al. (2001), La Porta et al. (2008), Lee and Schultz (2012), Cogneau and Moradi (2014), and Anderson (2018)). Studies examining the long-term impacts of colonial origins generally find that British colonization is associated with higher economic development in Africa (La Porta et al. (1998), Acemoglu et al. (2001), La Porta et al. (2008), Lee and Schultz (2012), Cogneau and Moradi (2014), Anderson (2018), Guarnieri and Rainer (2018), Dupraz (2019), Canning et al. (2021)). However, no study has so far examined the question of how colonial legacy can be modified or undermined by postcolonial institutions. We exploit Cameroon’s colonial and postcolonial experiment to address this question. Specifically, we exploit the 1961 reunification of British Southern Cameroons and the “République du Cameroun”. According to some scholars, following the reunification, the influence of the francophone system became predominant and superseded the British impact as all traces of British inspired local government had virtually disappeared (Adamolekun et al. (1988)). Others have likened this predominance of the francophone system through the centralized administration of Cameroon to an annexation and assimilation of British Southern Cameroons (Takougang and Amin (2018)). We investigate the validity of such claims by examining if differences in educational attainment between Anglophones and Francophones changed for the cohorts that went through the educational system before and after the 1961 reunification.

We estimate the following regression

$$Y_{ipet} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{British}_p + \beta_2 \text{Post}_i + \beta_3 \text{British}_p \times \text{Post}_i + f(\text{BD}_{pce}) + \delta_e + \gamma_t + X'_{ipet} \sigma + Z'_{pe} \mu + \varepsilon_{ipet} \quad (2)$$

where all variables are defined as in equation 1 except for the new variable  $\text{Post}_i$ .  $\text{Post}_i$  is a dummy variable for being partially or fully treated by the post-reunification era; it is equal to one if an individual  $i$  is born after 1949 or alternatively after 1941. When the outcome is a binary variable indicating whether an individual has completed primary education, we assume that all individuals born before 1949, (that is, individuals who were born at least 12 years before the reunification) were part of the cohorts which were supposed to complete their primary education prior to the 1961 reunification. Similarly, when the outcome is a binary variable indicating whether an individual has completed secondary education, we assume that the cohorts which were supposed to complete this level of education prior to the 1961 reunification is the set of individuals born before 1941 (that is, individuals born at least 20 years before the reunification). The cohorts born after 1949 for the first outcome and after 1941 for the second outcome are therefore assumed to be partially or fully treated by the political developments that followed the reunification as far as education is concerned. Despite the constitutional biculturalism of the Cameroon Federation, which recognized two educational subsystems, namely the Anglophone and Francophone subsystems with two examination systems, in practise, the Anglophone educational system was gradually dominated by the Francophone culture in the years after the reunification. This led to a 'Francophonisation' of the Anglophone educational system (Nfi (2014)). Indeed, Anglophone schools, especially technical colleges in Anglophone Cameroon were predominantly staffed with Francophones who taught lessons and set examinations in French and/or in Pidgin English. It is estimated that Francophones in the Government Technical Colleges of Anglophone Cameroon constituted more than 72 percent of the staff in these schools in the 2011-2012 academic year. Moreover, Government Technical Colleges in Anglophone Cameroon had Francophone examinations such as the "CAP", "PROBATOIRE" and "BACCALAUREAT" rather than the G.C.E anglophone examination as their end-of-course examinations. According to Nfi (2014), these examinations did not promote values cherished by the Anglophones especially self-reliance, civility, moral probity, and honesty. Nfi (2014) notes that the gradual domination of Anglophone education by the Francophone majority has been seen by some authors as an attempt to eradicate the Anglophone culture through the adulteration or pollution of its subsystem of education.

The estimates of the separate and joint effects of colonial origins and exposure to policies that were implemented after the reunification are presented in Table 5. We find that former British rule is associated with a higher probability of completing primary

education (*panel A* of Table 5) for cohorts born before 1949, and secondary education (*panel D* of Table 5) for cohorts born before 1941. However, the negative coefficient of the interaction term between British rule and the treated cohorts (“post-reunification”) shows that the effect of the British rule on primary and secondary education decreases and becomes economically insignificant for cohorts born after 1949 and 1941, respectively. For primary education, these results hold for both men and women. For secondary education, they hold mainly for men. The findings show that the ‘Francophonisation’ of the Anglophone system in the post-reunification era completely erased the pre-reunification advantage in secondary education that Anglophone men had. Overall, the findings imply that the positive effect of the British rule on education has been diminished or cancelled by policies adopted following the reunification.

### 5.3 Cameroon’s Anglophone Minority versus Nigeria

The findings of Section 5.2 are consistent with the view that the centralized administrative system that gradually emerged following the 1961 reunification was detrimental to Cameroon’s Anglophone minority. This fact raises the question of whether individuals belonging to this minority group would have been better off today had British Southern Cameroons voted to join Nigeria in the 1961 plebiscite. Answering this question will provide further evidence of the interaction between colonial origins and postcolonial institutions.

Prior to 1961, the British administered Southern Cameroons and Nigeria similarly, as these two territories had similar administrative, legal, and educational systems.<sup>10</sup> The reunification of Southern Cameroons with the République du Cameroun in 1961 therefore represents a major political and administrative shift for the Anglophone minority. We exploit this experiment to answer the question of how this shift has impacted Anglophone individuals, especially when compared to their Nigerian neighbors and co-ethnics.

We find that individuals in former Southern Cameroons (or *Anglophone Cameroonians* for short) and their Nigerian neighbors did not differ significantly in terms of educational outcomes prior to the 1961 reunification. However, the educational attainment of these Cameroonians began falling behind their Nigerian co-ethnics after the reunification. This effect is especially pronounced in the completion of secondary levels of education. In order to conduct our analysis, we use a Regression Discontinuity Design, similar to the one in equation 2, but with the British dummy equal to one for British Southern Cameroons and zero for Nigeria. In Column (1) of *Panel A* and *Panel B* of Table 6, we only include the binary indicator for British Southern Cameroons, ethnic homeland fixed effects, a polynomial function of distance to the border, and individual controls. In Column (2), we also add the geographic controls. We find that the probability of completing a primary

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<sup>10</sup>In fact, prior to 1954, Southern Cameroons was administered as part of Eastern Nigeria.

education is larger for Anglophone Cameroonians, but the difference is not statistically significant and becomes smaller after geographic controls are added (*Panel A*). Column (1) results show that the probability of completing a secondary education is significantly lower for Anglophone Cameroonians. However, the magnitude of this effect drops and the statistical significance disappears after including the geographic controls in Column (2) (*Panel A*).

In Columns (3) and (4), we add a binary indicator for whether an individual belongs to the cohorts that were supposed to complete their primary (*Panel A*) or secondary (*Panel B*) education after the 1961 reunification. We also add an interaction term between this variable and the dummy for British Southern Cameroons. The positive coefficients on the interaction term in *Panel A* indicate that the probability of completing primary education improved for Anglophone Cameroonians after the reunification. However, the magnitude of this improvement is very small. The negative coefficients on the interaction term in *Panel B* show that, relative to their Nigerian co-ethnics, Anglophone Cameroonians had a lower probability of completing a secondary education after the reunification. This finding is in line with previous scholarship indicating that the gradual 'Francophonisation' of the Anglophone educational system, in the years following the reunification, mainly affected educational outcomes at the secondary level (Nfi (2014)).

We also compare the outcomes of Anglophone Cameroonians and their Nigerian neighbours and co-ethnics for the variables employment in the non-agricultural sector, and infant mortality. The inclusion of an interaction term between the British rule dummy variable and the post-reunification dummy variable when analyzing these outcomes was not possible, as no observations for these outcomes were available for those in the pre-unification cohorts. So, we mainly rely on a specification similar to equation 1, where we define the variable  $\text{British}_p$  as a dummy variable which is equal to one if the individual  $i$  is from a pixel  $p$  which is located in Anglophone Cameroon (former British Southern Cameroons) and equal to zero if the individual is from a pixel  $p$  which is located in Nigeria. All other variables are defined as before. We find that, relative to their Nigerian co-ethnics, Anglophone Cameroonians are significantly less likely to work outside of the agricultural sector (*panel C* in Table 6). We also find that, relative to their Nigerian counterparts, infant mortality is much higher for the Anglophone children of Cameroon (*panel D* in Table 6).<sup>11</sup>

These findings effectively suggest that the Anglophone minority of Cameroon would have been better off had they joined Nigeria in the 1961 plebiscite. Additionally, the findings lend credence to the view that this minority has been marginalized by the Francophone majority through the centralization of administrative systems (Takougang and Amin (2018)). The analysis again underscores the significant interplay between colonial origins and postcolonial institutions in the determination of long-term outcomes.

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<sup>11</sup>In results not shown here, we find that this disparity is primarily driven by boys.

## 6 Conclusion

In this study, we examined the long-term impacts of the colonial history of Cameroon, focusing on the outcomes of men, women, and children. Cameroon was first colonized by Germany. However, following its defeat at the end of World War I, Germany lost its colonies, and the western territories of today's Cameroon were arbitrarily divided between France and the United Kingdom under a League of Nations mandate. We exploited the arbitrary nature of this division in order to compare the outcomes of Anglophones and Francophones who live close to the historical British-French border in Cameroon and who share the same ethnicity and ancestral traditions. We found that Anglophones have a higher level of educational attainment in general. Specifically, we find that British rule has a strong positive effect on the completion of primary education but a much smaller, albeit positive, effect on the completion of secondary education. For both outcomes, the effect is larger for women than for men. The higher educational attainment of the Anglophones does not however, translate into better paid employment or greater well-being for children. Indeed, Anglophones are less likely to work in the non-agricultural sector compared to Francophones, and infant mortality is equally high among children born to parents from these two groups.

We also analyzed the interplay between colonial origins and postcolonial institutions in determining long-term outcomes. We find that the 1961 reunification of Southern Cameroons with “La République du Cameroon” in 1961 has been detrimental to the Anglophone minority. Indeed, the advantage enjoyed by Anglophones in terms of educational attainment entirely vanished after the reunification. Also, while the Anglophones of Cameroon had levels of education comparable to their Nigerian neighbors before the reunification, they became significantly worse off afterwards. We also find that, compared to their Nigerian neighbors, Anglophone Cameroonians are also worse off in terms of non-agricultural employment and infant mortality rates.

Our analysis is consistent with the view that the institutions inherited by the Anglophone minority of Cameroon from the British colonial power have been modified and even undermined by the centralized state that emerged following the 1961 reunification (Adamolekun et al. (1988)). This has erased the positive pre-reunification impact of the British on educational attainment, ultimately resulting in Anglophone men, women, and children becoming worse off overall. Our findings also shed light on the sense of political, economic, and socio-cultural marginalization that has gradually built up in this minority group (Takougang and Amin (2018)), culminating in the recent political crisis in Cameroon.

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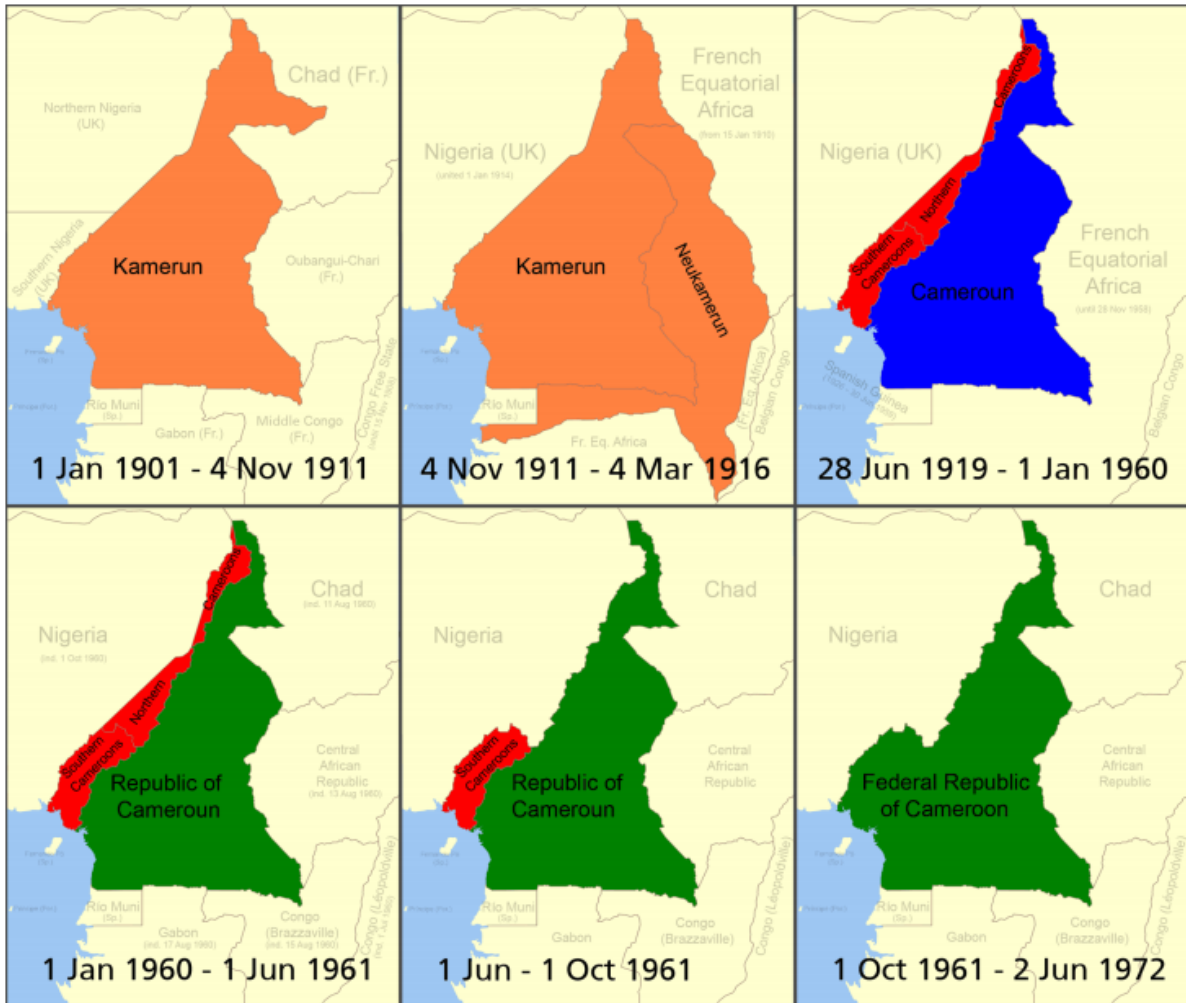
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Figure 1: Cameroon over time



**Note:** The orange maps show the borders of the German Kamerun. The area in red in these maps are the British Cameroons (British Southern Cameroons and British Northern Cameroons). The blue map represents the French Cameroons. Green areas in the first two maps at the bottom of this figure represent the République du Cameroun. The green map on the third map at the bottom of this figure represents the Federal Republic of Cameroon.

Figure 2: Ethnic homelands divided across the British-French border within Cameroon and across the British Southern Cameroons-Nigeria border

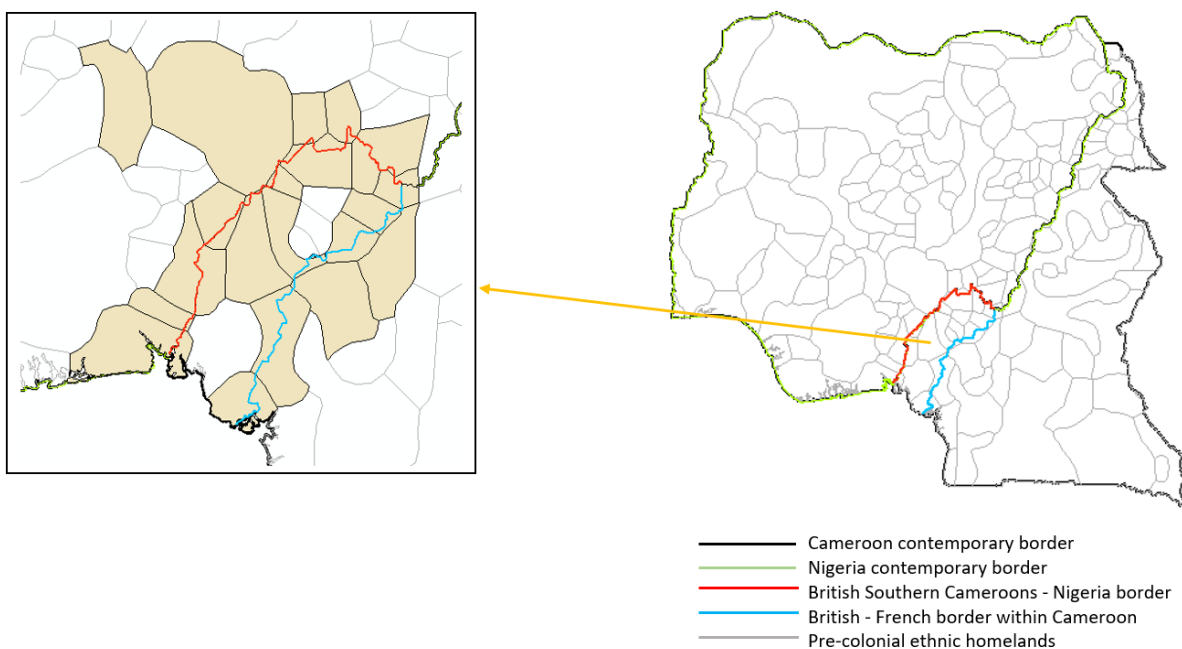


Figure 3: Discontinuity at the British-French border within Cameroon - Education

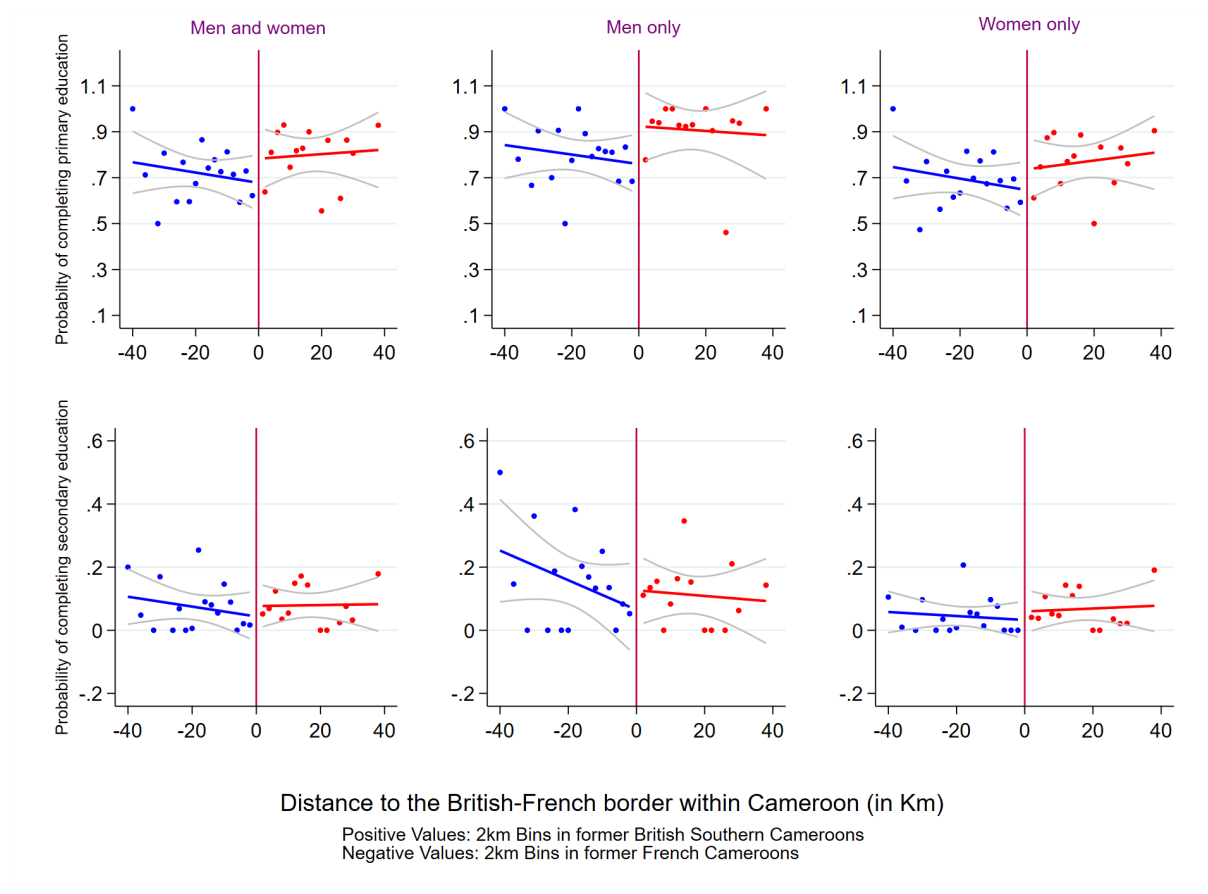


Figure 4: Discontinuity at the British-French border within Cameroon - Employment and Infant Mortality

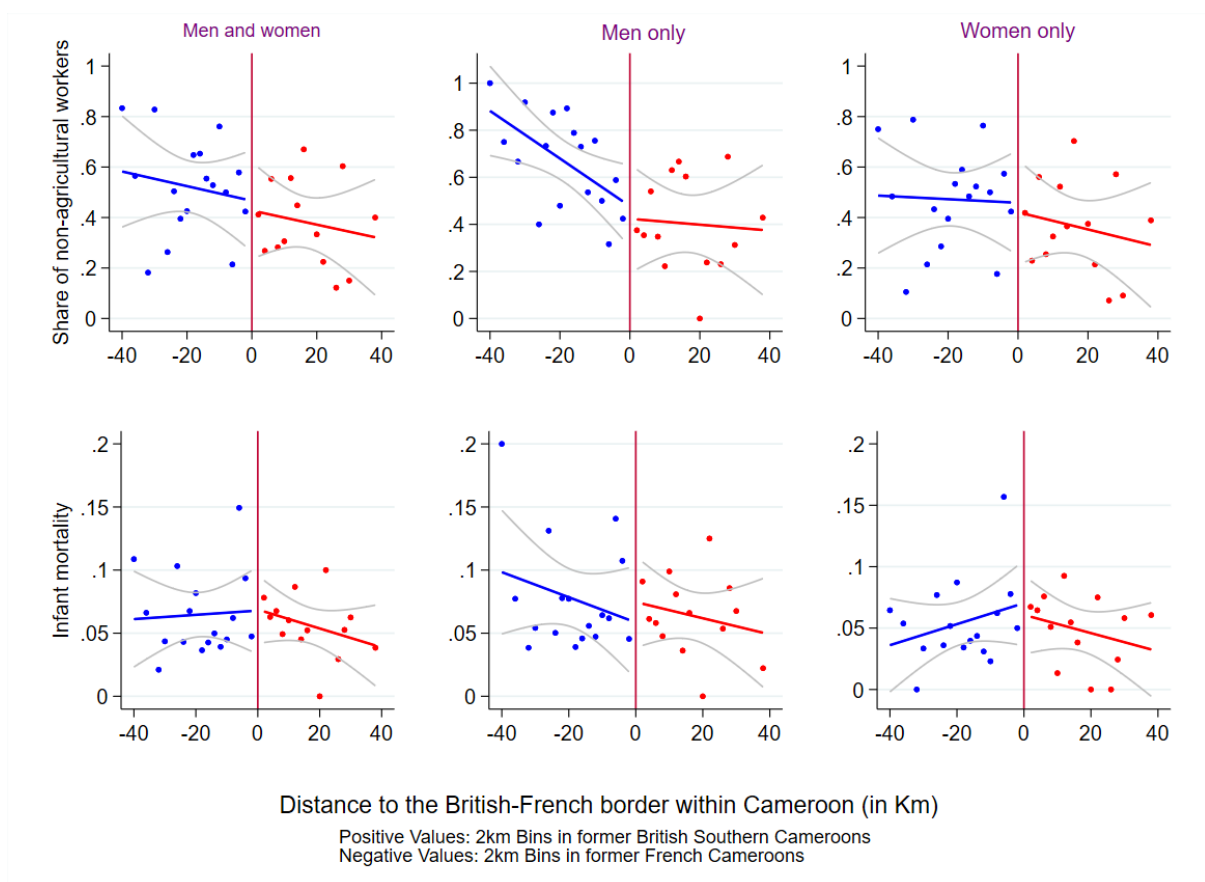


Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. de.	Min.	Max.
<b>Individual and Birth Recode datasets</b>					
<b><i>Panel A: Sample across the British-French border within Cameroon</i></b>					
Age	5,446	32.68	9.46	20	59
Year of birth	5,446	1974	9.94	1944	1991
Christian	5,446	0.78	0.41	0	1
Male	5,446	0.31	0.46	0	1
Living in Southern Cameroons	5,446	0.35	0.48	0	1
Living in urban area	5,446	0.52	0.50	0	1
Completed primary school	5,446	0.77	0.42	0	1
Completed secondary school	5,446	0.09	0.29	0	1
Currently working	5,423	0.83	0.38	0	1
Non-agricultural worker	4,498	0.52	0.50	0	1
Infant mortality	12,761	0.06	0.24	0	1
<b><i>Panel B: Sample across the British Southern Cameroons-Nigeria border</i></b>					
Age	1,046	32.64	8.93	20	59
Year of birth	1,046	1977	9.59	1945	1993
Christian	1,046	0.36	0.48	0	1
Male	1,046	0.28	0.45	0	1
Living in Nigeria	1,046	0.31	0.46	0	1
Living in urban area	1,046	0.18	0.39	0	1
Completed primary school	1,046	0.56	0.50	0	1
Completed secondary school	1,046	0.15	0.36	0	1
Currently working	1,046	0.86	0.34	0	1
Non-agricultural worker	904	0.42	0.49	0	1
Infant mortality	2,964	0.09	0.29	0	1
<b>Household Member Recode data</b>					
<b><i>Panel C: Sample across the British-French border within Cameroon</i></b>					
Age	10,572	40.97	16.72	20	95
Year of birth	10,572	1966	16.97	1909	1991
Male	10,577	0.44	0.50	0	1
Living in Southern Cameroons	10,578	0.34	0.47	0	1
Completed primary school	10,507	0.64	0.48	0	1
Completed secondary school	10,507	0.08	0.27	0	1
<b><i>Panel D: Sample across the British Southern Cameroons-Nigeria border</i></b>					
Age	1,897	40.12	15.88	20	95
Year of birth	1,897	1969	16.39	1911	1993
Male	1,901	0.45	0.50	0	1
Living in Nigeria	1,901	0.34	0.47	0	1
Completed primary school	1,877	0.51	0.50	0	1
Completed secondary school	1,877	0.16	0.36	0	1

*Note:* In *Panels A* and *B* we use the sub-samples of eligible women (IR file), men (MR file), and children (BR file) which were selected to provide information on individual level socio-economic and demographic characteristics. In *Panels C* and *D* we use the sample with every household member.

Table 2: Comparison of Primary Education Across the British-French Border Within Cameroon

	RDD - Bandwidth			
	Full sample (1)	<80 km of bound. (2)	<60 km of bound. (3)	<30 km of bound. (4)
<b>Dependent variable is completion of Primary education</b>				
<b>Panel A: Whole sample</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	0.07*** (0.020)	0.08*** (0.020)	0.08*** (0.020)	0.07*** (0.019)
Observations	10,502	10,261	9,930	8,650
<b>Panel B: Men</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	0.08*** (0.021)	0.08*** (0.021)	0.08*** (0.020)	0.08*** (0.020)
Observations	4,587	4,482	4,341	3,817
<b>Panel C: Women</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	0.07*** (0.027)	0.07*** (0.027)	0.07*** (0.026)	0.06** (0.026)
Observations	5,914	5,778	5,588	4,832
<b>Dependent variable is completion of Secondary education</b>				
<b>Panel D: Whole sample</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	-0.01 (0.018)	-0.01 (0.018)	-0.00 (0.018)	-0.00 (0.018)
Observations	10,502	10,261	9,930	8,650
<b>Panel E: Men</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	-0.02 (0.022)	-0.02 (0.022)	-0.01 (0.022)	-0.01 (0.022)
Observations	4,587	4,482	4,341	3,817
<b>Panel F: Women</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	0.01 (0.017)	0.01 (0.017)	0.01 (0.017)	0.01 (0.017)
Observations	5,914	5,778	5,588	4,832
Ethnic homeland FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Poly RD	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individual controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geographic controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

**Note:** In this table, we refer to Anglophone Cameroon and Francophone Cameroon to designate respectively the two territories that took the names of West Cameroon and East Cameroon in the federation following the 1961 reunification of British Southern Cameroons and the République du Cameroun (former French Cameroons). Individual controls include: age at time of survey, year of birth, religion, and urban-rural dummies. Geographic controls measured at the pixel level include: distance from the centroid of the pixel to the national border, mean elevation, mean soil suitability for agriculture, area of the ethnic homeland, and area of the pixel.

Table 3: Comparison of Labor Force Participation in Non-Agricultural Occupations Across the British-French Border Within Cameroon

	RDD - Bandwidth			
	Full sample (1)	<80 km of bound. (2)	<60 km of bound. (3)	<30 km of bound. (4)
<b>Dependent variable is non-agricultural worker</b>				
<b>Panel A: Whole sample</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	-0.09** (0.041)	-0.09** (0.042)	-0.09** (0.041)	-0.09** (0.041)
Observations	4,488	4,389	4,244	3,714
<b>Panel B: Men</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	-0.10* (0.051)	-0.10* (0.051)	-0.10* (0.051)	-0.09* (0.050)
Observations	1,556	1,521	1,475	1,296
<b>Panel C: Women</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	-0.09** (0.044)	-0.09** (0.044)	-0.09** (0.043)	-0.09** (0.044)
Observations	2,932	2,868	2,769	2,418
Ethnic homeland FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Poly RD	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individual controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geographic controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Note:* In this table, we refer to Anglophone Cameroon and Francophone Cameroon to designate respectively the two territories that took the names of West Cameroon and East Cameroon in the federation following the 1961 reunification of British Southern Cameroons and the République du Cameroun (former French Cameroons). Individual controls include: age at time of survey, year of birth, religion, and urban-rural dummies. Geographic controls measured at the pixel level include: distance from the centroid of the pixel to the national border, mean elevation, mean soil suitability for agriculture, area of the ethnic homeland, and area of the pixel.

Table 4: Comparison of Infant Mortality Across the British-French Border Within Cameroon

	RDD - Bandwidth			
	Full sample (1)	<80 km of bound. (2)	<60 km of bound. (3)	<30 km of bound. (4)
<b>Dependent variable is infant mortality</b>				
<b>Panel A: Whole sample</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	-0.00 (0.008)	-0.00 (0.008)	-0.00 (0.008)	-0.00 (0.008)
Observations	12,097	11,806	11,373	9,842
<b>Panel B: Boys</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	-0.00 (0.010)	-0.00 (0.010)	-0.00 (0.010)	-0.00 (0.010)
Observations	6,141	5,979	5,754	4,973
<b>Panel C: Girls</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	0.00 (0.010)	0.00 (0.010)	0.00 (0.010)	0.00 (0.011)
Observations	5,956	5,827	5,619	4,869
Ethnic homeland FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Poly RD	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individual controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geographic controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Note:* In this table, we refer to Anglophone Cameroon and Francophone Cameroon to designate respectively the two territories that took the names of West Cameroon and East Cameroon in the federation following the 1961 reunification of British Southern Cameroons and the République du Cameroun (former French Cameroons). Individual controls include: twin status, year of birth of children, year of birth of mother, religion, and urban-rural dummies. Geographic controls measured at the pixel level include: distance from the centroid of the pixel to the national border, mean elevation, mean soil suitability for agriculture, area of the ethnic homeland, and area of the pixel.

Table 5: Interplay Between Colonial Origins and Postcolonial Institutions

	RDD - Bandwidth			
	Full sample (1)	<80 km of bound. (2)	<60 km of bound. (3)	<30 km of bound. (4)
<b>Dependent variable is completion of primary education</b>				
<b>Panel A: Whole sample</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	0.16*** (0.027)	0.16*** (0.028)	0.16*** (0.028)	0.15*** (0.029)
Post-reunification	0.51** (0.256)	0.52* (0.267)	0.39 (0.275)	0.31 (0.318)
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon) × Post-reunification	-0.10*** (0.026)	-0.10*** (0.026)	-0.09*** (0.026)	-0.09*** (0.028)
Observations	10,502	10,261	9,930	8,650
<b>Panel B: Men</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	0.15*** (0.043)	0.15*** (0.043)	0.16*** (0.042)	0.16*** (0.046)
Post-reunification	0.16 (0.260)	0.06 (0.246)	-0.01 (0.255)	0.05 (0.243)
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon) × Post-reunification	-0.08* (0.042)	-0.08* (0.042)	-0.09** (0.042)	-0.09* (0.046)
Observations	4,587	4,482	4,341	3,817
<b>Panel C: Women</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	0.12*** (0.031)	0.12*** (0.031)	0.12*** (0.031)	0.10*** (0.031)
Post-reunification	0.71*** (0.236)	0.73*** (0.256)	0.63** (0.255)	0.61** (0.275)
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon) × Post-reunification	-0.06** (0.029)	-0.06** (0.029)	-0.05* (0.030)	-0.05 (0.031)
Observations	5,914	5,778	5,588	4,832
<b>Dependent variable is completion of secondary education</b>				
<b>Panel D: Whole sample</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	0.02 (0.019)	0.02 (0.019)	0.02 (0.019)	0.01 (0.019)
Post-reunification	0.25* (0.126)	0.25* (0.128)	0.24* (0.133)	0.24* (0.143)
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon) × Post-reunification	-0.03 (0.016)	-0.02 (0.016)	-0.02 (0.016)	-0.02 (0.017)
Observations	10,502	10,261	9,930	8,650
<b>Panel E: Men</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	0.03 (0.025)	0.03 (0.025)	0.03 (0.026)	0.02 (0.026)
Post-reunification	0.09 (0.209)	0.14 (0.209)	0.15 (0.214)	0.01 (0.221)
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon) × Post-reunification	-0.05** (0.022)	-0.05** (0.022)	-0.05** (0.023)	-0.04 (0.024)
Observations	4,587	4,482	4,341	3,817
<b>Panel F: Women</b>				
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon)	0.01 (0.018)	0.01 (0.018)	0.00 (0.018)	0.00 (0.018)
Post-reunification	0.24** (0.109)	0.08 (0.100)	0.10 (0.100)	0.09 (0.107)
Anglophone (vs. Francophone Cameroon) × Post-reunification	0.00 (0.015)	0.00 (0.015)	0.01 (0.015)	0.01 (0.016)
Observations	5,914	5,778	5,588	4,832
Ethnic homeland FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Poly RD	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individual controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geographic controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Note:* In this table, we refer to Anglophone Cameroon and Francophone Cameroon to designate respectively the two territories that took the names of West Cameroon and East Cameroon in the federation following the 1961 reunification of British Southern Cameroons and the République du Cameroun (former French Cameroons). The variable "Post-reunification" refers to the cohorts that partly or fully attended primary school (cohorts born after 1949) or secondary school (cohorts born after 1941) after the reunification of Southern Cameroons and the République du Cameroun in 1961. In Panels A, B and C where the dependent variable is a binary indicator for primary education, we define this variable as a dummy equal to one if an individual is born after 1949. In panels D, E and F where the dependent variable is a binary indicator for secondary education, we define this variable as a dummy equal to one if an individual is born after 1941. Individual controls include: age at time of survey, year of birth, religion, and urban-rural dummies. Geographic controls measured at the pixel level include: distance from the centroid of the pixel to the national border, mean elevation, mean soil suitability for agriculture, area of the ethnic homeland, and area of the pixel.

Table 6: Comparison of Human Capital and Non-Agricultural Employment Outcomes Across the British Southern Cameroons-Nigeria Border

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<b><i>Panel A: Completion of primary education</i></b>				
Anglophone Cameroon (vs. Nigeria)	0.10 (0.103)	0.05 (0.092)	0.09 (0.087)	0.03 (0.098)
Post-reunification			0.92** (0.387)	1.04** (0.405)
Anglophone Cameroon (vs. Nigeria) × Post-reunification			0.01 (0.079)	0.02 (0.081)
Observations	1,875	1,875	1,875	1,875
<b><i>Panel B: Completion of secondary education</i></b>				
Anglophone Cameroon (vs. Nigeria)	-0.13* (0.066)	-0.08 (0.082)	-0.11 (0.076)	-0.03 (0.103)
Post-reunification			0.62** (0.301)	0.94** (0.370)
Anglophone Cameroon (vs. Nigeria) × Post-reunification			-0.02 (0.091)	-0.04 (0.093)
Observations	1,875	1,875	1,875	1,875
<b><i>Panel C: Work in the non-agricultural sector</i></b>				
Anglophone Cameroon (vs. Nigeria)	-0.23** (0.085)	-0.45*** (0.138)		
Observations	524	524		
<b><i>Panel D: Infant Mortality</i></b>				
Anglophone Cameroon (vs. Nigeria)	0.05** (0.020)	0.25*** (0.071)		
Observations	1,188	1,188		
Ethnic homeland FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Poly RD	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individual controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geographic controls		✓		✓

**Note:** In this table, we refer to Anglophone Cameroon to designate the territory that took the name of West Cameroon in the federation following the 1961 reunification of British Southern Cameroons and the République du Cameroun (former French Cameroons). The variable “Post-reunification” refers to the cohorts that partly or fully attended primary school (cohorts born after 1949) or secondary school (cohorts born after 1941) after the reunification of Southern Cameroons and the République du Cameroun in 1961. In Panel A where the dependent variable is a binary indicator for primary education, we define this variable as a dummy equal to one if an individual is born after 1949. In panel B where the dependent variable is a binary indicator for secondary education, we define this variable as a dummy equal to one if an individual is born after 1941. In panels A, B and C, individual controls include: age at time of survey, year of birth, religion, and urban-rural dummies. In panel D, individual controls include: twin status, year of birth of children, year of birth of mother, religion, and urban-rural dummies. Geographic controls measured at the pixel level include: distance from the centroid of the pixel to the national border, mean elevation, mean soil suitability for agriculture, area of the ethnic homeland, and area of the pixel.

## A1 Data Appendix

**Elevation:** Average elevation above sea level of each pixel. Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and U.S. National Geophysical Data Center, TerrainBase, release 1.0 (CD-ROM), Boulder, Colorado. *Available at* <http://nelson.wisc.edu/sage/data-and-models/atlas/data.php?incdataset=Topography>

**Soil suitability for agriculture:** Average land quality for cultivation within each pixel. This index is based on the temperature and soil conditions of each grid cell. Source: Ramankutty, N., J.A. Foley, J. Norman, and K. McSweeney. The global distribution of cultivable lands: current patterns and sensitivity to possible climate change. *Available at* <http://nelson.wisc.edu/sage/data-and-models/atlas/data.php?incdataset=Suitability%20for%20Agriculture>

**Distance to the national border:** The geodesic distance to the nearest national border from the centroid of each pixel. Constructed using the border from the digital chart of the world projection *Available at* <https://worldmap.harvard.edu/data>