BUILDING PEACE THROUGH NATIONAL DIALOGUES: WHAT ROLE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN CAMEROON AND IN AFRICA?

NCHONGAYI BEGEALAWUH

Thesis submitted to the University of Ottawa
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Doctor of Philosophy Degree in International Development

School of International Development and Global Studies
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Ottawa

THESIS ADVISOR:

Dr. Stephen Baranyi
School of International Development and Global Studies (SIDGS)
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa

THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBERS – INTERNAL:

Dr. Benjamin Zyla
School of International Development and Global Studies (SIDGS)
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa

Dr. Rita Abrahamsen
Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA)
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa

Dr. Marie-Eve Desrosiers
Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA)
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa

EXTERNAL EXAMINER:

Dr. TIMOTHY A. DONAIS
Department of Global Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University

ABSTRACT

In his quest to define peace, Johan Galtung, one of the pioneers in peace research, distinguishes two types of peace: positive and negative. While negative peace is perceived as the absence of human violence and war, positive peace represents the absence of structural violence. Overtime, Galtung's views have shaped contemporary peacebuilding processes and practices. The distinction between positive and negative peace underscores the need to consider both direct violence (protests, armed attacks, police brutality, etc.) and structural violence (inequalities, social discrimination, marginalization, etc.) in designing sustainable peacebuilding strategies. In recent decades, national dialogues have emerged as viable peacebuilding strategies to address historical, political and socioeconomic disputes. In principle, they should foster social cohesion by engaging various perspectives and ensuring that diverse voices are heard. Yet, most dialogue processes organized across Africa have failed; even a few that have ended with an agreement have suffered from poor implementation, leading to a relapse of violence. Although there is no one-size-fits-all approach to national dialogues, it is essential to consider various factors contributing to their failures. The practical puzzle here is to explore strategies that can be employed to ensure that dialogue processes are successful and achieve their desired outcomes. Faced with this puzzle, this thesis responds to the question: What is the actual and potential role of civil society organizations in national dialogue processes in Cameroon and Africa?

Civil society organizations can potentially play key roles in political processes such as national dialogues. CSOs can engage in discussions and collaborate with governments, policymakers, and other stakeholders to advance the interests of the people they represent. Notwithstanding, elites and parties to conflict sometimes intimidate civil society organizations using different means, including open crackdowns on their activities, unlawful arrests and persecution, and misuse of state instruments such as terrorism laws, to silence them. While a few civil society organizations can overcome these oppressions, in Cameroon and other African countries, such practices have limited the strength and ability of many CSOs to engage in peace processes.

Although the literature on civil society and their role in peacebuilding and national dialogues has grown significantly in recent years, there is still a need for more rigorous research on the impact and effectiveness of CSOs in national dialogues. Much of the existing literature focuses on well-

known, often international, civil society organizations, overlooking the roles and contributions of local and grassroots organizations, especially those working in fragile and conflict-affected states. Moreover, while the importance of inclusivity in national dialogues is widely acknowledged, there is a gap in understanding how and why CSOs are often marginalized, particularly by state-based elites, and the different options for addressing power imbalances in peace processes. This thesis contributes to the literature on civil society and peacebuilding by addressing these gaps.

Based on data collected through literature review, interviews, and field observations, the thesis argues that national dialogue processes can be manipulated and rendered unproductive when civil society's role is minimal, or their inclusion is approached superficially. I posit that a social contract between the state and the population and a certain level of social cohesion is necessary to encourage the transparent inclusion of politically marginalized actors in African dialogue processes. Based on primary data from Cameroon, the research findings suggest that elites have deceptively used catchphrases and other false narratives to discredit the legitimate grievances of civil society organizations, intimidating or preventing them from challenging existing power structures. This has often reinforced deeply rooted mistrust and inequalities. The literature on the local turn in peacebuilding emphasizes the significance of employing local agency and contextual knowledge for effective peacebuilding. These normative principles could potentially address Cameroon's Anglophone crisis. However, their application in practice (through national dialogues) has unfortunately reinforced power imbalances and the marginalization of civil society and other non-state actors. This thesis concludes that including CSOs in national dialogues is essential for ensuring transparency, addressing power imbalances, and fostering social cohesion. It provides valuable suggestions on how national dialogue stakeholders in Cameroon and beyond can approach meaningful inclusion.

Keywords: Cameroon, Civil Society, Inclusion, National Dialogues, Peacebuilding

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to all the victims of the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon, including my immediate family and friends who have been affected by the conflict, and to those who continue to fight for peace through justice and respect for human rights.

First, they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out
– because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out
– because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out
– because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me
– and there was no one left to speak for me.

-Martin Niemöller-

ACRONYMS

AfDB	African Development Bank
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ARCSS	Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan
ASAP	African Solution to African Problems
CACSC	Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium
CPDM	Cameroon People's Democratic Movement
DW	Deutsche Welle
FCAS	Fragile and Conflict-Affected States
FSD	Front pour la Sauvegarde de la Démocratie
KNDR	Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation
NDs	National Dialogues
NDM	National Democratic Movement
NPI	Nkafu Policy Institute
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
ODM	Orange Democratic Party
PNU	Party of National Unity
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDF	Social Democratic Front
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SPLM -FDs	Sudan's People's Liberation Movement (Former Detainees)
SPLM – IO	Sudan's People's Liberation Movement (In Opposition)
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
URNG	Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca
WPS	Women Peace and Security

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support of numerous individuals in Cameroon, Canada, and beyond. This project began in the middle of a pandemic, and I cannot overstate my gratitude to God almighty for the divine protection and guidance throughout this journey.

I would like to sincerely thank a few individuals without whom the completion of this work would not have been possible. I thank my supervisor, Professor Stephen Baranyi, who has been an invaluable mentor, provided countless opportunities for me to be a better scholar and constantly challenged me to reach new heights. I am deeply appreciative of his mentorship, which has set the stage for my professional journey.

I would like to thank my advisory committee, Drs Benjamin Zyla, Rita Abrahamsen, and Marie-Eve Desrosiers, for their willingness to lend their time to reviewing and providing thoughtful comments on this thesis. Special thanks to Ben for motivating me to broaden my research approach/methodologies by involving me in his 'NATO Burden Sharing' project. I would also like to thank Dr. Timothy A. Donais of Wilfrid Laurier University for accepting the invitation to serve as an external examiner for this project.

I was fortunate to receive financial support from the University of Ottawa through the PhD Student International Research Scholarship and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Doctoral Research Awards, which made this research and my fieldwork in Cameroon possible.

I would like to acknowledge the Nkafu Policy Institute, in Yaoundé, the Alliance for Sustainable Development in Buea, and other local civil society groups in Cameroon for their support during fieldwork. I thank faculty members and administrators at the School of International Development and Global Studies, University of Ottawa, for supporting me navigate this complex process.

The PhD process is often isolating and doubt-inducing. I sincerely thank my fellow PhDs at the school of International Development, with whom we have shared so much. Special thanks to Jody-Ann Anderson, Paul Okpanachi, Axel Pueugue Simo, Jean Clarck Charles who have become much more than colleagues.

I am fortunate to be surrounded by incredible friends who have supported me throughout this process. Special thanks to my friends Dr. Richard Nyiawung, Dr. Billy Masara, Mr. Asongcha Theophilus, and Mr. Tazoacha Francis. I would also like to thank some of my fellow legal minds and activists in Cameroon, particularly Barristers Lewis Anyang and Tamo Benazia.

Finally, I thank my family for their love and support. My deepest gratitude goes to my beloved wife, Kelly Begealawuh, and my adorable daughter, Adrielle Begealawuh, whose love, patience, and devotion have made this accomplishment possible. My incredible mom, Nchongayi Esther, and grandmom, Tatuh Veronica, for teaching me the values of hard work and perseverance. Special thanks to my father- in-law, Richard Nkafu, and Mother-in-law, Grace Nkafu, who have supported me whole heartedly and unconditionally. I am particularly grateful to my Uncle Tatu Nico Atem, my Aunt Tatuh Rose, and all my siblings. A warm thank you to Micheal Njungoh, Sidonnie Bezankeng, Acha Elizabeth, Asong Marie, Racheal Begeakeh and Derick Amin, Jane Atehgwa, Villian Amindeh and Bekongchu Deric for your generosity and kindness throughout this journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER TWO

HARNESSING THE POWER OF INCLUSION: THE POLITICS OF NATIONAL DIALOGUES FOR PEACEBUILDING IN AFRICA

CHAPTER THREE

MISSED AND MISUSED OPPORTUNITY: TRUST, INCLUSION AND LOCAL OWNERSHIP IN CAMEROON'S NATIONAL DIALOGUE

CHAPTER FOUR

WHERE IS CIVIL SOCIETY? WHERE ARE THE WOMEN? BARRIERS TO INCLUSION IN CAMEROON'S NATIONAL DIALOGUE

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION

APPENDICES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

As far back as the 1990s, African countries such as Benin, Mali, Niger, and Togo held national conferences in efforts to move from authoritarian to democratic governments.[1] Today, such dialogues have gained traction as vital instruments for peace transformation at the local and national level.[2] Framed as inclusive and participatory processes, national dialogues are often seen as pathways to sustainable peace.[3] Yet, the effectiveness of dialogue processes in Africa remains uneven.[4] The implementation of dialogues in many contexts continues to fall short of their transformative potential, even though many of those processes are locally driven.[5] Since the year 2000, scholarly attention has turned to the "local turn" in peacebuilding, criticizing externally driven and technocratic approaches while advocating for local agency, ownership, and knowledge recognition in peacebuilding.[6] However, this discourse is also under scrutiny as critics highlight the risks of instrumentalization of the "local" in practice.[7] These concerns are salient in national dialogue processes, particularly because they are often framed as inclusive and participatory but may marginalize meaningful local engagement in practice. Moreover, the selection of dialogue participants and the idea of inclusivity will always be closely scrutinized and contentious in most dialogue processes.[8] This thesis contributes to the ongoing discourse on the "local turn" in peacebuilding by examining its application in African national dialogue processes. It draws on two core principles of the local turn, local agency and contextual knowledge, while engaging with the core elements of national dialogues: inclusivity, representation, legitimacy, and trust building. Using the case of Cameroon, where both primary and secondary data were collected, and a comparative analysis of four national dialogues in Africa (Kenya, Tunisia, Mali, and South Sudan) based on secondary data, the thesis explores the disconnect between the scholarly vision of the local turn and the superficial ways it is operationalized in practice. It also highlights instances where national dialogues meaningfully engaged local actors in practice and in line with the normative understanding of the local turn. In doing so, the thesis illustrates both the challenges

and the potential of genuinely empowering local actors or embedding local knowledge in local peacebuilding.

Another major concern in the normative vision of the local turn is the inclusion of diverse local actors in peacebuilding processes.[9] The local turn advocates for the participation of civil society, women, and political elites in peace processes for sustainable outcomes. However, this inclusion is neither automatic nor unproblematic in practice. The mere inclusion of diverse actors does not necessarily guarantee their substantive participation in decision-making. Additionally, the participation of local actors, particularly civil society and women, may vary significantly across contexts, with their roles sometimes limited to consultation rather than decision-making. For instance, despite the influential role that women and civil society play in Cameroon's Anglophone crisis, their participation in the dialogue process was restricted to pre-dialogue consultations. Moreover, political elites (who are themselves considered part of the locals) can act as both enablers and/or spoilers of inclusive processes, depending on their interests and incentives. In Kenya, for example, influential regional elites with contextual knowledge successfully pressured national political leaders to facilitate inclusion in the dialogue process. In contrast, in Mali and South Sudan, elites were more inclined to consolidate power, resist broad-based participation, and limit the influence of civil society and marginalized groups, thereby undermining the potential for genuinely inclusive dialogue. These dynamics are further shaped by structural power imbalances and the persistent exclusion of marginalized groups. This raises important questions about who is included, on what terms, and with what influence. As such, this thesis interrogates the presence of diverse actors in national dialogues and the power relations, strategic behaviors, and trust deficits that condition their participation and shape the outcomes of these processes.

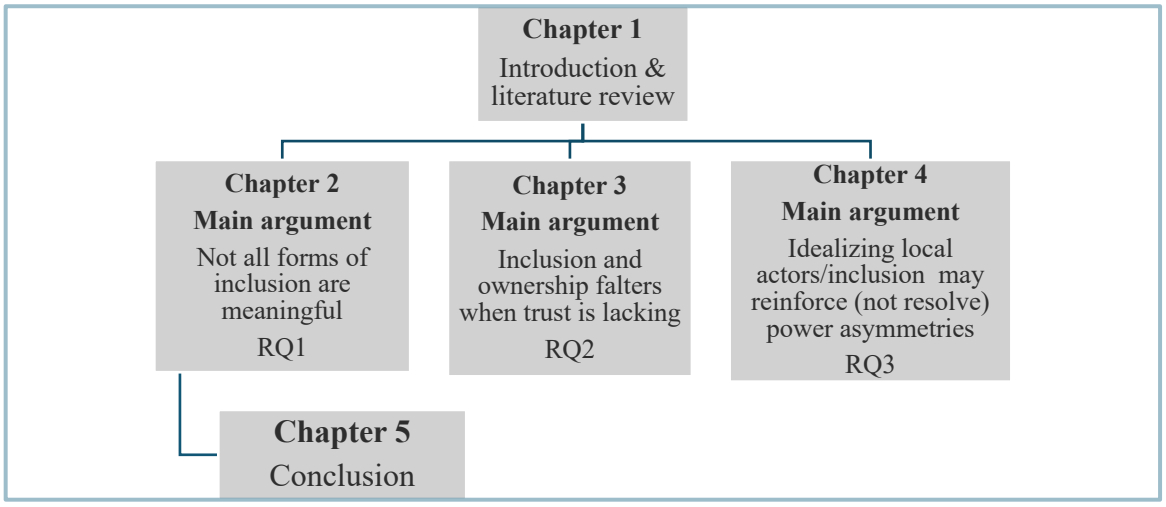
Summarily, this thesis contributes to the discourse on the local turn by revealing that including local actors does not automatically translate into influence in dialogue processes and that local actors operate within complex and unequal power dynamics.[10] It demonstrates that the term "local" is not inherently inclusive but shaped by internal hierarchies, competing interests, and contested legitimacy. Through five case studies of dialogue processes, the thesis highlights both the challenges and the potential of national dialogues to meaningfully engage local actors, showing that genuine inclusion depends on political will, trust, and context-specific conditions. The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows: the next section discusses the overarching

research questions, thesis structure, and format. Then, the research objectives are outlined, followed by the literature review, conceptual framework, research methodology and design, ethical considerations, and contributions of the study.

1.2 **Research Questions, Structure, and Thesis Format**

A research project of this nature should "pose a question that is important in the real world" while contributing to an identifiable scholarly literature.[11] As explained below, the research questions of this study were drawn from a clear identification of gaps in the literature, as well as from a relevant theoretical framework. This research is organized in a thesis-by-article format, allowing the researcher to present the project in a manner that facilitates publication in reputable journals. The project has five chapters in total. This introductory chapter (1) sets the stage for the research, while the concluding chapter (5) summarizes the overall research findings and implications. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are written as standalone journal articles, each targeting a specific research question. Each chapter has its own endnotes and bibliography section because of the thesis structure. The researcher acknowledges that parts of the introduction and conclusion chapters have been published as blog articles with the London School of Economics and Political Science and the Peace News Network blog series, respectively. Chapter three has been published as a journal article in the African Security Review Journal, while chapter four has been accepted for publication by the Conflict, Security and Development Journal. Chapter two is under revision and will be resubmitted to the Journal of Peacebuilding and Development for publication.

Chart 1: Thesis Structure



The three research questions and their corresponding chapters are as follows:

Question one: *How does the politics of civil society inclusion shape dialogue outcomes in Africa and influence the meaningful participation of local actors in peacebuilding?*

Chapter 2, entitled "Harnessing the Power of Inclusion: The Politics of National Dialogues for Peacebuilding in Africa," answers the first research question. This chapter explores the politics of national dialogues in Africa through four dialogue cases (Kenya, Tunisia, Mali, and South Sudan). It traces the relationship between inclusion and dialogue effectiveness, arguing that not all forms of inclusion are meaningful. Drawing from the 2008 Kenyan national dialogue and the 2013 dialogue process in Tunisia, the chapter illustrates how inclusion and local ownership can be positively operationalized. In contrast, Mali and South Sudan dialogue processes reveal how superficial or elite-controlled inclusion can undermine the core principles of the local turn. The chapter concludes that these contrasting trajectories expose the local turn's promise and limitations. This chapter lays the foundation for a critical examination of the theoretical underpinnings of the local turn and its inconsistent application in practice, in Cameroon.

Question two: *How does trust affect the implementation of inclusion and local ownership, and what are the key factors affecting trust-building in Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis?*

Chapter Three, "Missed and Misused Opportunity: Trust, Inclusion and Local Ownership in Cameroon's National Dialogue," critically examines the interplay between political elites and marginalized locals. It focuses on key moments and situations that could have fostered inclusion and sustainable peace in Cameroon but were either missed or misused by local stakeholders. These scenarios reveal that the absence of trust between citizens and elites undermined inclusion and local ownership efforts. By highlighting these dynamics, the chapter illustrates the importance of addressing communication gaps, power asymmetries, inequalities, and structural marginalization in the operationalization of the local turn.

Question three: *To what extent have power imbalances between civil society including women and other non-state actors, and the political elites affected inclusion in national dialogues?*

Chapter Four, "Where is Civil Society? Where are the Women? Barriers to Inclusive Peacebuilding Dialogue in Cameroon," engages with the core concerns of the local turn by

critically examining the structural and cultural barriers to inclusion in local peacebuilding in Cameroon. Drawing on the 2019 national dialogue process in Cameroon, the chapter interrogates power imbalances among local actors, particularly between dominant political elites and marginalized groups such as women, grassroots civil society, and minority voices. It reveals how entrenched hierarchies and local hegemony, shaped by party politics, patriarchal norms, and systemic inequalities, continue to obstruct the meaningful inclusion of diverse local actors. The chapter argues that idealizing inclusion without addressing these embedded asymmetries risks reinforcing rather than transforming existing power structures. While the policy literature and documents such as UN resolution 1325 often assume that local ownership and participation are inherently inclusive or emancipatory, academic scholars like Richmond and MacGinty have long warned that such assumptions fail to account for structural exclusion that can persist even in locally driven peacebuilding. For national dialogues to reflect the normative aspirations of locally driven peacebuilding, this chapter contends that both national actors and external stakeholders must dismantle structural exclusions and create enabling conditions for equitable participation.

1.3 Research Objectives

The overarching objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To critically examine the relationship between national dialogue processes and the academic discourse on the local turn in peacebuilding, focusing on how normative commitments to local ownership and inclusion are articulated in theory as essential to sustainable peace but are often instrumentalized or misapplied in practice.
2. To use national dialogues as a framework to investigate the disconnection between the scholarly ideals of the local turn and the realities of its implementation (analyzing how power dynamics, elite control, and superficial forms of inclusion affect dialogue processes and outcomes) in selected African cases.
3. To conduct original research on Cameroon's national dialogue to examine how trust deficits, political power asymmetries, and communication gaps among local actors shaped the process and constrained its capacity to foster genuine local ownership and inclusive participation.

1.4 Literature Review

This section reviews the relevant literature and concepts that will be used to examine key debates and to answer the above research questions. This section is organized into six sub-sections. The first examines national dialogue processes across Africa. The second outlines the historical trajectories of power dynamics in Cameroon. The third explores the Anglophone Crisis and the Major National Dialogue. The fourth discusses the issue of inclusion in peacebuilding. The fifth analyzes power asymmetries, elite dominance, and trust in local peacebuilding. The sixth and final sub-section focuses on local ownership and its role in shaping peacebuilding outcomes.

1.4. National Dialogues in Africa

The persistence of conflicts across Africa seems to have fueled the search for the right conflict resolution mechanisms. National dialogues have gained traction as vital instruments for peace transformation and are usually initiated to deal with a wide range of issues, including political reforms, constitution-making, and peacebuilding.[12] They are increasingly seen as an important tool for participatory and inclusive conflict transformation.[13] Since the early 2010s, Africa has witnessed a proliferation of national dialogue processes. Across the continent, from the Central African Republic to Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, South Sudan, Sudan, and Tunisia, to name but a few, national dialogues have been organized to resolve conflicts. Dialogue processes usually bring together hundreds of delegates and a broad agenda to offer the possibility of bringing unrepresented and marginalized groups to problem-solving tables.[14] A key objective of national dialogues is to build consensus and a shared vision for peace and security.[15]

The Arab Spring of the Middle East and North Africa regions that occupied international attention in the early 2010s generated hope for African national dialogue processes.[16] In the summer of 2013, the National Dialogue Quartet, a coalition of civil society groups, came together in Tunisia, the birthplace of the Arab Spring, as the country was at the crossroads between democracy and violence. The group successfully drew up a plan of action that would steer Tunisia away from the path of conflict and move the country toward political compromise.[17] Despite recent reports suggesting that Tunisia's democratic future is precarious, the success of the Quartet in 2013 remains a notable example for analyzing local dynamics and their impact on inclusive peacebuilding. The Tunisian 2013 national dialogue, which was very instrumental in resolving the

political crisis at that time, was primarily driven by local actors. Local civil society organizations such as the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT), the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA), the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH), and the Tunisian Order of Lawyers played key roles in the dialogue process. These four organizations brokered the formation of a caretaker government and led the country to new elections and the adoption of the most progressive constitution in the Arab world.[18] Their efforts were recognized with the Nobel Peace Prize.[19] The Quartet's work demonstrated the importance of local ownership in practice. The overall communication and interaction on the ground in Tunisia during these processes offer valuable lessons that can be useful for other African dialogue processes.

Furthermore, in response to the post-electoral violence that erupted in Kenya following the 2007 elections, the country organized the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR) process in 2008.[20] The KDNR brought together political leaders, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to address the underlying issues that had fueled the conflict and to foster reconciliation among the affected communities.[21] As reported by the Kofi Annan Foundation, key local actors participating in the process identified long-standing issues threatening the unity of Kenya at that time and agreed to take several steps to address them.[22] While former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and a Panel of Eminent African Personalities provided mediation support, the process was primarily led by Kenyan actors and focused on addressing the country's unique political, social, and economic challenges. The participation of various local actors, including political parties, civil society, and grassroots organizations, contributed to the dialogue's success in fostering reconciliation and paving the way for the adoption of a new constitution in 2010.[23] Despite Kenya currently facing another period of political uncertainty and crisis,[24] the lessons learned from the short-term successes of the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation process remain valuable in analyzing the potential of locally driven peacebuilding processes that are inclusive. While the experiences in Kenya and Tunisia exemplify the potential of a local turn approach, the situations in South Sudan and Mali appear to present contrasting scenarios. The main differences lie in power dynamics, strategies, and mechanisms of inclusion, interaction, and communication among actors, and existing trust levels. In Mali, the dialogue process involved multiple sessions held in October 2019 at the local, district, and regional levels, as well as with the diaspora. Leading opposition groups boycotted the dialogue.[25] Local actors, including political parties, civil society organizations, women, and youth groups, participated in the dialogue

process.[26] Yet rights groups reported that despite their participation, their voices were not adequately considered or incorporated into the decision-making process.[27] This raised concerns about the inclusivity and ownership of the dialogue process. Additionally, the 2016 national dialogue process in South Sudan can be viewed as an attempt by the government to demonstrate its ability to lead a locally driven peace process to find solutions to violence. However, deepening divisions and deteriorating trust between parties at the time were not conducive to such a locally driven project. Moreover, the power dynamics at play further hindered the potential for inclusive and effective dialogue, raising questions about the government's capability to facilitate an inclusive and locally owned process in that context. These four dialogue processes shall be critically examined in the next chapter of this thesis. In the section that follows, I will provide a historical background of power dynamics in Cameroon for a better understanding of the challenges of inclusion in that context.

1.4.2 Historical Trajectories and Power Dynamics in Cameroon

Cameroon was a German colony between 1884 and 1916.[28] After the defeat of Germany during the First World War, Cameroon was divided into two parts and jointly administered by Britain and France.[29] While France controlled a larger portion of the country, alongside other French-occupied territories in Central Africa, Britain was handed a smaller portion of Cameroon (today Anglophone Cameroon) closer to other British territories in Nigeria.[30] In 1961 (during the heyday of independence struggles in Africa), the former British territory (West Cameroon) and the former French-occupied (East Cameroon) came together in a union and formed a federation.[31] The terms of the federation were discussed and agreed upon at the Foumban Constitutional Conference of July 1961.[32] Yet in 1972, former president Ahidjo unilaterally altered the union's structure, abandoning federalism and transforming the country into a unitary state known as the United Republic of Cameroon.[33] The root of Cameroon's Anglophone crisis can be traced back to this colonial past, the Foumban conference, and Ahidjo's unilateral, repressive policies.

From a general point of view, constitution-making processes in pre- and post-independent Africa were elite-driven, top-down, and non-participatory.[34] The outcome of such processes was institutional arrangements that failed to adequately constrain the state and did not provide newly independent states (especially those with diverse ethnic groups like Cameroon) the mechanisms

needed for peaceful coexistence.[35] Cameroon has had at least three constitutions and numerous constitutional amendments.[36] The last amendment was made in 2008, with a notable modification of Article 6(2) of the 1996 constitution, which removed the two-term limit for current and future presidents.[37] Although articles 26-36 of the present constitution draw a distinct line between executive power and legislative power, article 37(3) of the Cameroon constitution states that the president shall guarantee the independence of the judiciary by appointing members of the judiciary. This contradiction has given way for the executive to directly or indirectly infringe on the independence of the judiciary. It, therefore, takes away the power of judicial review of executive actions.[38] This explains why in Biya's Cameroon, and within the context of the Anglophone crisis, magistrates and judges presiding over cases of rights abuse and marginalization see themselves as civil servants reporting to the executive and not as an independent arm of government.[39] Furthermore, legislative and partisan institutions in Cameroon have contributed to the survival of Cameroon's authoritarian regime.[40] Morse reviews original biographical data of over nine hundred legislators between 1973 and 2019 in Cameroon.[41] The data reveal that there is an increased proportion of business people and a preference for former civil servants in the legislative branch of government in Cameroon. Morse's recent research concludes that civil service is an important pathway into the legislature in Cameroon, thus stabilizing Cameroon's authoritarian regime. The Cameroonian legislature, therefore, operates as part of the regime's hegemonic apparatus since former civil servants and businesspeople joining this arm of the government have previously benefited from the regime in one way or another.[42] This situation dismisses the potential for inclusion and accountability in Cameroon.

In addition, there is an extensive and uncontrolled use of executive decrees and orders for permanent rather than temporary law-making in Cameroon, thereby undermining the standard law-making responsibility of the legislator.[43] For example, Cameroon has ten regional governors and fifty-eight divisional officers, all appointed by the president and organized under the Ministry of Territorial Administration.[44] These administrative officials or civil servants cover the entire country, represent the president in all regional and sub-regional or divisional matters, and report to the seat of power in Yaoundé.[45] They are also empowered to govern their regions and local areas using decrees and ministerial ordinances.[46] Hence, it is easy for executives (through regional and local officials) to make controversial laws through decrees, challenge court decisions, and even circumvent the Constitution.[47] This weakens the power of the parliament and legislature in general

and widens the gap between the government and the governed. Additionally, due to the excessive centralization of power in Cameroon, local voices, perspectives, and needs are easily overlooked in peace processes, further underscoring the often-ignored issue of checks and balances in local turn discussions.

The term "Anglophone Crisis" is used in this research to describe an armed conflict that has rocked Cameroon's English-speaking regions since 2016, following a peaceful protest by lawyers and teachers against increasing economic, political, and social marginalization.[48] Trust between the Anglophone public, civil society activists, and the government was undermined in the early days of the Anglophone crisis following the arrest of civil society leaders and the shutting down of the internet in the Anglophone regions in January 2017. Since then, sporadic violence and 'ghost towns' (a stay-at-home protest) organized every Monday and during national events have become a way of life in these regions.[49] Continuous repression by security forces in the Anglophone regions has further radicalized public opinions.[50] It has transformed what started as a peaceful protest into a separatist movement, with some Anglophones clamoring for an independent state called "Ambazonia."[51] CIVICUS found that since the start of that crisis, CSOs, particularly those of Anglophone origin, have been subjected to politically motivated persecution through the military court and under Cameroon's anti-terrorism law.[52] This has shrunk civic spaces, hindering the participation of less influential local actors in political and peacebuilding processes. The number of civilian populations affected by the conflict continues to rise. UN sources reveal that over 700,000 civilians have been displaced, and nearly 60,000 people have fled to neighboring Nigeria.[53] More so, hundreds have died, and many activists have been rounded up and jailed.[54] International and regional efforts to encourage Cameroon's reclusive octogenarian leader to find a long-lasting solution to the Anglophone crisis after the failed 2019 dialogue process have also failed. [55] This makes Cameroon an interesting case study for analyzing the challenges of implementing local peacebuilding projects in situations of active conflict.

Cameroon's power dynamics are characterized by a strong hierarchy, with significant power held by the central government (composed mainly of people within Biya's inner circle and members of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement – CPDM).[56] The country is officially a multiparty democracy, but in practice, the political landscape has been dominated by one party since the 1960s.[57] The current leader of the party, President Paul Biya, has been in power since 1982, making

him the longest-serving president in the country's history.[58] Political elites at different levels of government (often graduates of the National School of Administration and Magistracy) are included in this hierarchical structure. Traditional chiefs and co-opted elites also wield considerable power, often projecting themselves as representatives of the government.[59] As documented by Freedom House, individuals within this category have superior access to public resources, information, opportunities, and security, often at the expense of the larger Cameroonian public.[60] These power hierarchies and advantages create barriers to achieving inclusion.

1.4.3 Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis and Major National Dialogue

In an unusual outing on national television in September 2019, President Paul Biya announced that Cameroon would organize a national dialogue.[61] While the primary focus of the national dialogue was the Anglophone Crisis, the security situation in Cameroon's Far North region was also to be included in the discussions. Critics argued that this was a strategy to distract the focus on the Anglophone Crisis. In his announcement, Biya listed a series of measures taken by the government to address the marginalization, including efforts to make available the English version of the OHADA business law, creating a common law department at the Supreme Court and at the National School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM).[62] Biya noted that despite these efforts, radical movements mainly inspired from abroad have taken advantage of the situation to propagate secessionist ideology by funding armed groups.[63] He went on to indicate that the purpose of the national dialogue would be to unite Cameroonians in reflecting on national unity and security. An immediate pre-dialogue consultation process was launched by Prime Minister Joseph Dion Ngute following Biya's dialogue announcement.[64] While Cameroon's dialogue process can be seen as an attempt by President Biya to engage local actors in a peace process, concerns about the lack of transparency in setting the agenda and the way other local actors, particularly separatists abroad, were sidelined raise questions about the process.

The actual dialogue process began on 30th September and ended on October 04th, 2019.[65] The dialogue brought together thousands of Cameroonians to chart a path toward lasting peace.[66] The dialogue structure was organized as follows: the central bureau, consisting of a chair and four vice-chairs, was led by the Prime Minister. The bureau also included a general rapporteur, who was assisted by three additional rapporteurs. In total, nine individuals (seven males and two females)

led the central bureau, which served as the main organizing structure for the dialogue. This research found that at least five individuals listed as members of this bureau also appear on the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) party webpage as influential actors within the party.[67] Below the bureau in the organizational hierarchy were the commissions. These commissions were created to address specific topics and issues. Each commission was typically composed of a chair, a vice chair, rapporteurs, and resource persons. There were eight commissions in total: (1) Bilingualism, Cultural Diversity, and Social Cohesion (2) Education System (3) Judicial System (4) Decentralization and Local Development (5) Reconstruction and Development of Crisis-Affected Regions (6) Return of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (7) Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (8) Role of the Diaspora in the Crisis and its Contributions to the Country's Development. Key separatist leaders abroad boycotted the discussions, while some civil society members walked out of the talks halfway through.[68] An influential civil society activist, Christopher Fomunyoh, who was invited as chair of one of the dialogue commissions, declined the invitation, citing a lack of inclusion in various aspects of the dialogue process.[69] Like the central bureau, the number of males in these commissions surpassed the number of females. They were predominantly comprised of members from the CPDM. The dialogue structure and strategy deployed by the ruling class suggest the need to investigate gender imbalances and party politics in local peacebuilding.

Dozens of recommendations were proposed by different commissions. The majority of those recommendations were aspirational and not significantly different from previous unfulfilled promises made by the government. For example, the Bilingualism Commission proposed recommendations to strengthen the implementation of bilingualism at all levels of society, starting from preschool, and to ensure regional balance and equitable access to resources and security.[70] These aspirations are not new and are yet to be fully implemented. The lack of implementation can be attributed to the creation of structures like the Bilingualism and Multiculturalism Commission, which appear to prioritize political appointments over effectively addressing existing social issues. Critics argue that the funds allocated to such structures could have been better used to address long-standing challenges of bilingualism through education, training, and fighting corruption rather than merely maintaining the status quo. In addition, although national dialogues remain a promising tool for intra-sate conflict in Africa, Ndekwo found that in Cameroon and many other sub-Sharan African countries, dialogue processes are often characterized by numerous

inefficiencies and lack of inclusivity of opposition, activists, and other key stakeholders.[71] Cameroon's dialogue has been criticized because it was held three weeks after its announcement, leaving stakeholders with limited preparation time.[72] Some analysts have argued that external pressure pushed the government into organizing a stage-managed dialogue that painted a good picture for the international community.[73] This raises concerns about the genuineness of local peacebuilding projects, especially in complex contexts like Cameroon. The following section reviews the relevance and challenges of inclusion in peacebuilding.

1.4.4 **Inclusion in Peacebuilding**

Achieving inclusive participation of diverse actors and perspectives in peacebuilding is a well-known challenge.[74] Inclusion necessitates the involvement of a broad spectrum of actors, along with the assurance that these actors can meaningfully contribute to and shape peacebuilding processes.[75] Despite the increasing attention on the impacts of inclusion in peacebuilding, it has not been easy to translate inclusion into practice.[76] Understanding the intricacies of inclusion, the roles of various actors, and the power dynamics at play remain crucial in developing more effective and equitable peacebuilding strategies.[77] This is because the issue of inclusion in peacebuilding is often more complex than simply ensuring the participation of a broad range of actors. The challenges and prospects of incorporating the inclusivity norm in peacebuilding processes have been discussed by Donais and McCandless.[78] They argue that while the issue of including diverse actors such as civil society and women has become prominent in peacebuilding, its practical implementation often falls short. Their argument suggests the need for a more nuanced understanding of inclusion – one that moves beyond representation to ensure that inclusion is meaningful. Inclusivity in peacebuilding entails giving a voice to the marginalized, improving the social contract between the state and society, and promoting responsive and accountable institutions.[79] Yet, that literature offers a vague insight into how those aspirations can be meaningfully put to use.[80] The ambiguity around the term inclusivity has resulted in a spectrum of interpretations, prompting some analysts to use the terms inclusivity and inclusion interchangeably.

Furthermore, inclusivity describes the norm, while inclusion refers to a range of activities that include actors and topics in the peace process.[81] Using the example of the New Deal for

Engagement in Fragile States, Donais and McCandles argue that the idea of inclusivity marks a significant shift toward fulfilling a longstanding commitment to respecting domestic actors in peacebuilding processes.[82] However, this also reveals a persistent gap between the normative aspirations of inclusion and its actual implementation in practice, highlighting the need for more context-sensitive and power-aware approaches that move beyond symbolic or procedural formalities in the operationalization of inclusion. Inclusion in peacebuilding can be categorized into short-term and long-term.[83] The former typically refers to the immediate outcome of inclusion, which often manifests as representation within political institutions as defined by peace agreements. On the other hand, long-term inclusion encompasses sustained and meaningful engagement of diverse actors in decision-making processes, fostering structural transformations that promote equitable and durable peace.[84]

According to Suazo, sustained inclusion can be realized through formal inclusion mechanisms, public participation initiatives, and continuous relationship-building processes.[85] This can be realized by challenging power structures and adapting to changing realities on the ground. Additionally, inclusion can be examined through the political logic of exclusion.[86] This perspective offers insights into the power dynamics and structural factors that lead to the marginalization of certain actors in peacebuilding processes. Moreover, it allows for an examination of key actors who may be excluded from the peacebuilding process, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities and challenges associated with fostering genuine inclusion. Many scholars have argued that to attain genuine inclusion, civil society actors should be involved in national dialogue processes as facilitators and direct participants, or assigned specific roles in the post-dialogue implementation processes.[87] This argument has been supported by researchers such as Cuhadar and Druckman, who argue that in peace processes like national dialogues, commissions created to facilitate peacebuilding are inclusive only if they have representatives from civil society or a wider segment of the political spectrum, such as opposition leaders, women, religious and traditional leaders, etc.[88] These perspectives align with the local turn, which advocates for more inclusive and locally driven approaches that transcend formal political institution and involve a broad range of local actors, particularly those who are often marginalized.[89] The emphasis on inclusive participation is seen as crucial for achieving sustainable peace, as it acknowledges the complex dynamics of conflict-affected societies and fosters more

comprehensive and context-sensitive peacebuilding strategies.[90] In the following paragraphs, I will examine how local actors such as civil society and women can be included or systematically excluded from peacebuilding projects.

a) Civil Society and Inclusion in Peacebuilding

"Civil society" is defined as "a sphere of social interaction between the household and the state, manifest in norms of community cooperation, structures of voluntary association, and networks of public communication." [91] Civil society is also regarded as a set or system of self-organized intermediary groups that are independent from public authorities and private units of production and capable of deliberating and taking collective actions to defend or promote their interests and those of the people they represent.[92] The concept of civil society has been employed by scholars to explain development challenges in various parts of the world. The burgeoning academic literature on the meaning and definition of CSO also suggests that the concept is hard to define or empirically imprecise and ideologically laden.[93] Despite its imprecise definition, the activities of CSOs are always embedded in the problems of particular times and particular societies.[94] This suggests the need for state actors to strike a balance between encouraging and restraining civil society activities. Moreover, the degree of civil society inclusion in a peace process can be conceived along the dimensions of horizontal and vertical social cohesion. Horizontal social cohesion ensures diverse group representation across society, while vertical social cohesion involves the depth of inclusion and its impact on decision-making within a peace process.[95] There is an increasing wealth of scholarship on how governments around the world have enacted laws to limit the scope and activities of civil society organizations.[96] In their research, Brechenmacher and Carothers found that CSOs and civic activists worldwide are no strangers to repression.[97] In sub-Saharan Africa, the operating environment for civil society organizations has been deteriorating as governments are increasingly using state machinery and legislation to intimidate civil society organizations and social justice activists, thereby shrinking the civic space.[98] Civic activism in countries like Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and Ethiopia has been met with restrictive laws that violate freedom of expression, making it difficult for activists to speak out and hold governments accountable for their actions.[99] Restrictive laws on civil society not only hinder them but also exclude influential civil society voices from peacebuilding dialogues. Notwithstanding, civil society activists continue to resist oppression, a situation referred to by Raker as civil society

standing up against "democratic erosion" in Africa.[100] This resistance, however, has not been entirely successful. Civil society's resistance to "democratic erosion" underscores the ongoing struggles for meaningful inclusion. It also illustrates that the concept of inclusion extends beyond physical representation in political processes to include the rights to express dissent, organize protests, and shape public policy to facilitate inclusion without fear of retaliation from powerful actors.

Despite continuous attempts to understand the effects of government crackdowns on civil society and their prospective role in local peacebuilding, our understanding of their specific contributions when included or the ramifications of their exclusion within national dialogues remains limited. This underscores the need for further research to better grasp the dynamics and implications of civil society involvement in peacebuilding processes. There seems to be an apparent disconnection between the literature on the local turn in peacebuilding and the reality of shrinking civic spaces, especially in Africa. While the local turn emphasizes the need to engage local actors and civil society activists in peacebuilding initiatives, this category of local actors continues to face repression from national actors.[101] As CSO activists remain optimistic about their "people's representative" mandate, analytical observers have become pessimistic due to their reading of past and present political trends. This shows that inclusion can be theoretically idealized but practically constrained. This is so because the state is not separate from civil society, but part of it, and state mechanisms of social control rest partly on societal relations that are in meltdown.[102] This also illustrates the complex, contested, and conditional role of civil society in local peace projects. Moreover, as posited by Hegelian, Marxian, and Gramscian theories, civil society is a sphere of social life that falls outside the state, though not necessarily free from state intervention.[103] It is a site where the interaction between state and society takes place, with civil society claiming to be the people's representative.[104] This perspective suggests that inclusion is not just about bringing civil society to peacebuilding tables, but also includes navigating complex power dynamics in different contexts where they operate.

Furthermore, as "people's representatives," CSOs may be useful if included in local peacebuilding.[105] For example, in Syria, they collectively demanded that the League of Arab States take a tougher stand on human rights abuses. In Timor-Leste and Cambodia, CSOs contributed to conflict prevention and mitigation by supporting early warning systems.[106] However, it cannot be

assumed that CSOs are inherently good for security and development in all societies. For example, the Taliban in Afghanistan began as a civil society movement before developing into a politically repressive, undemocratic, and violent regime.[107] This highlights the necessity for a critical reassessment of civil society's role before potentially recognizing them as transformative agents in peacebuilding. It cannot be assumed that civil society is inherently essential for all local peacebuilding projects, as sometimes suggested by policy documents and frameworks. Instead, a more nuanced approach that involves carefully examining their potential contributions and challenges, while considering the socio-political context, will enable a more realistic and context-sensitive understanding of civil society's role in fostering inclusive and sustainable peace processes.

b) Women and Inclusion in Peacebuilding

Women's inclusion in peacebuilding is one of the themes that dominate search results on inclusion, and as posited by De Waal, this is not a coincidence.[108] Across academic discourse, grassroots initiatives, and policy frameworks (such as the Women, Peace and Security framework), women's role in peacebuilding has been characterized as potential beneficiaries and crucial actors in achieving sustainable peace. The role of women in peacebuilding cannot be overstated despite their marginalization in many local contexts.[109] Many activists have argued that the involvement of women in peace processes increases the likelihood of reaching agreements.[110] Additionally, the adoption of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda in the year 2000 was intended to facilitate women's participation in peace processes, including national dialogues.[111] However, recent scholarly debate on the role of women in peacebuilding has raised significant concerns regarding the WPS agenda.

Furthermore, like other critical aspects of local peacebuilding (ownership, inclusion, trust), understanding the local context and critical challenges affecting women is at the center of women's inclusion in peacebuilding. Therefore, the imperative to understand local contexts and specific challenges that women face is at the heart of genuine inclusion of women.[112] This indicates that inclusion must go beyond superficial representation to prevent negative peacebuilding outcomes and reflect intersectional and context-specific engagement.[113] This aligns with the local turn that challenges global peacebuilding projects and frameworks to recognize and empower local agency

as a key to sustainable peace. These perspectives are relevant when considering grassroots women in fragile states like Cameroon, whose lived experiences and community-based peacebuilding efforts embody the very principles of local agency and context-specific engagement that the local turn advocates. As argued by Cerezo et al., it is essential to understand the different forms of oppression against women,[114] to properly analyze the depths of inequalities, marginalization, and the relationships between women and other local actors during armed conflict.[115] For example, in some conflict settings, female CSO leaders are often viewed negatively for exhibiting traditional masculine behaviors, especially in marginalized communities. As a result, assertive female leaders are hated, while assertive male counterparts are respected.[116] This and other existing stereotypes can hurt women and female activists in many ways. In Cameroon, women have demonstrated remarkable courage within the local conflict landscape. As posited by Annan et al., they have been actively involved in peacebuilding initiatives such as forming and participating in women-led organizations, networks, and task forces.[117] This showcases their resilience and dedication to fostering peace and security amidst adversity. However, the inclusion of women in peace initiatives in Cameroon remains challenging. Moussi's research on women's inclusion in Cameroon highlights the potential consequences of excluding women from peacebuilding. She argues that women's exclusion or insufficient inclusion in peacebuilding, as illustrated by the implementation of the country's national action plan, could potentially exacerbate existing inequalities and discrimination.[118] Hence, there is a need to address gender-based inequalities and promote women's agency and leadership to achieve inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding outcomes in that context.

Although progress has been made in promoting women's inclusion in peace processes,[119] more efforts are needed to address cultural barriers slowing down women's role in peacebuilding in Africa.[120] Aili Mari Tripp argues that, despite the progress achieved by adopting gender quotas in countries like Uganda, Liberia, and Rwanda, there is a persistent need to bolster women's influence and effectiveness in decision-making processes. While the introduction of quotas has undeniably shaped women's roles in democratization processes, addressing other barriers to their meaningful participation is essential to further enhance gender equality and ensure the success of post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. This reflects the broader concern within the literature on the local turn, which calls for greater attention to context-specific dynamics of inclusion to ensure inclusion is not just by numbers but by voice, legitimacy, and influence.[121] For instance, quotas may elevate

elites or urban-based women into national dialogues and other peace negotiations, while ignoring grassroots and less influential women whose perspectives may be critical for sustainable peace. Moreover, promoting women's participation in peacebuilding requires addressing existing structural inequalities and recognizing the diversity in their experiences.[122] Without this deeper engagement, symbolic inclusion, such as including women in peace processes merely to fulfill quotas or satisfy donor expectations, tends to dominate and can obscure the underlying realities of gendered power dynamics in local peacebuilding efforts.[123]Additionally, Atim's research found that the experiences of female combatants in African conflicts challenge the traditional narratives that often portray women as passive victims or mere bystanders. She emphasizes the need to recognize women's agency and their active roles in conflict situations, highlighting the complex interplay between patriarchy, violence, and peacebuilding.[124] While Atim rightly challenges the dominant narrative that frames women as passive victims, her analysis could be further nuanced by engaging with the local turn literature. This may help us uncover how local socio-cultural norms, power hierarchies, and elites influence and mediate the exclusion or inclusion of female actors in peace processes.

1.4.5 Power Asymmetries, Elite Dominance, and Trust in Local Peacebuilding

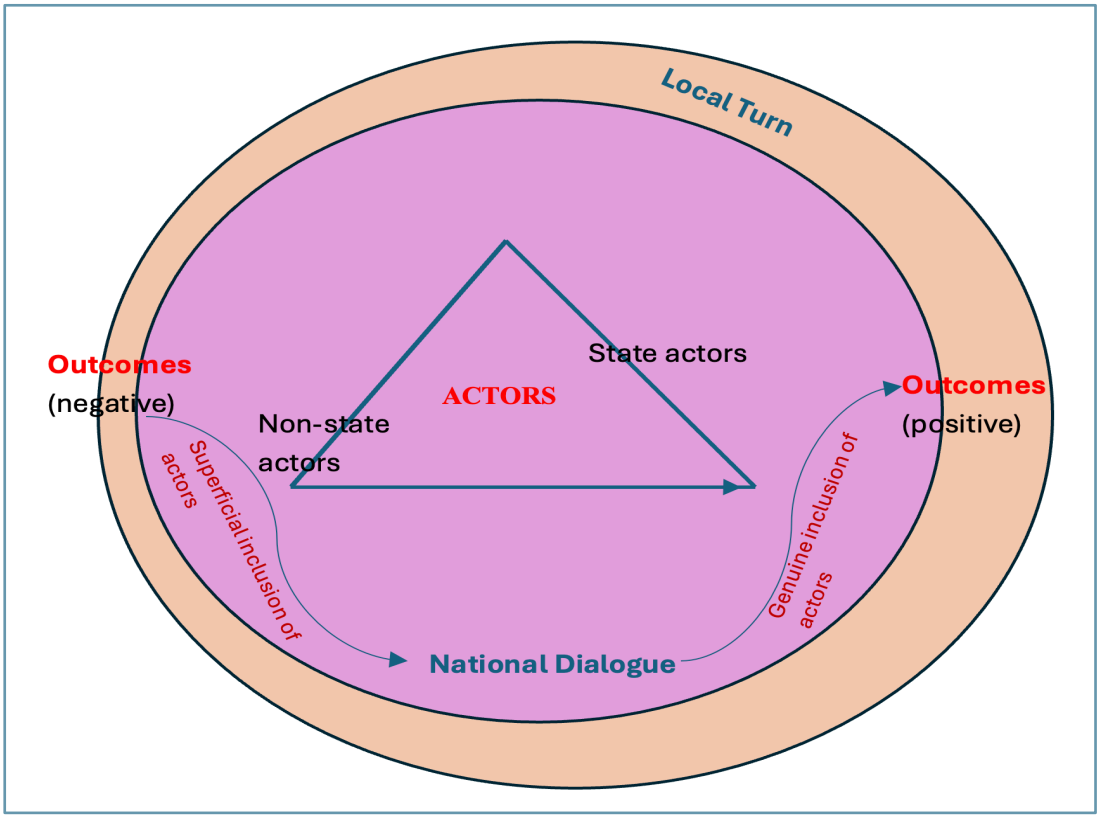
Peacebuilding processes in Africa are frequently influenced by power imbalances and the dominance of elites. These dynamics can significantly affect the inclusivity and effectiveness of peace efforts.[125] This situation poses a considerable challenge to trust-building and the inclusion of marginalized actors in peace processes.[126] For instance, despite the acknowledged importance of women's role in peacebuilding initiatives, elite influence often dominates local peace projects.[127] As a result, those in power tend to control the narrative and strategic decision-making, which can undermine the potential for inclusive and sustainable peace outcomes.[128] In addition, studies by Wade, investigating the influence of political elites in political processes in El Salvador, found that local elites can exploit peace processes and peace agreements to further their interests and consolidate power, thereby hindering sustainable peace. Wade's analysis underscores the importance of considering local power dynamics and the role of various actors in shaping peace processes and their outcomes. These studies highlight the need to challenge elites' dominance and empower marginalized actors in peacebuilding. Moreover, the findings of six provocative case studies presented in the "Paradoxes of Peacebuilding Post-9/11" reinforce the argument that,

indeed, like elsewhere, peacebuilding processes in Africa are constantly shaped by entrenched power imbalances and elite domination.[129] Thus, as suggested by Baranyi, without deliberate strategies to counter elite dominance and address deep-rooted inequalities, local peacebuilding projects risk reinforcing hierarchies rather than fostering genuine inclusion.

Furthermore, the term "elite capture," while initially prevalent in development studies, is increasingly used in peace studies to explain the roles of powerful local actors and their influence over less influential ones.[130] Elite capture describes a situation where powerful elites manipulate or co-opt political processes, resources, or decision-making frameworks meant to benefit the broader society, often to the detriment of marginalized or less powerful groups.[131] This phenomenon has been particularly prevalent in Mali and Cameroon, where dialogue processes appear to be guided by the interests of political elites, often sidelining marginalized groups. The practice of elite capture has been criticized for neglecting to address the root causes of conflicts. Furthermore, elite capture may involve the manipulation of peace agreements or the misallocation of resources, exacerbating existing inequalities.[132] As illustrated in this thesis, the implementation of national dialogue resolutions in Cameroon has been dominated by elites, leading to the establishment of multiple structures and redundant government organs like the Bilingualism Commission. Rather than addressing the core issues, these measures appear to reward political loyalties and promote party politics, further entrenching elite interests at the expense of inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding. Therefore, the nature of local power dynamics and the ways in which peacebuilding resources are distributed play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness and sustainability of peace efforts.[133] This explains why, in some dialogue processes discussed by this thesis, elites are seen as actors compromising inclusion and hindering trust-building needed to drive sustainable peace. As a result, the absence of the local population and other less influential groups in such dialogue processes reproduces exclusionary structures. As shall be argued in subsequent chapters, the interplay between power asymmetries, elite dominance, and trust is central to understanding the challenges of inclusive and sustainable local peacebuilding. This argument remains important because while local turn in peacebuilding discourse increasingly advocates for local ownership and inclusive participation, elite capture distorts peace processes and sometimes transforms them into elite bargains rather than genuinely participatory initiatives.

In Chart 2, I illustrate the interplay between key elements of the local turn and national dialogue in peacebuilding. The larger circle represents the local turn, while the smaller inner circle symbolizes national dialogue as an approach within the local peacebuilding context. National dialogues involve multiple actors, as illustrated by the triangle. The first two lines (vertical and horizontal) of the triangle represent nonstate actors - civil society, social movements (including women's groups), and other truly local actors. The last vertical line of the triangle represents national or state actors. As depicted by the chart, while non-state actors may constitute the majority of local stakeholders, they are often less influential compared to state and other powerful actors. Using five dialogue processes across Africa, this thesis illustrates that power relations among local actors contributed to varied outcomes in those cases. For example, superficial inclusion of local actors may result in negative outcomes as seen in Cameroon, Mali, and South Sudan. In contrast, their genuine inclusion was seemingly productive in Tunisia and Kenya.

Chart 2: The Local Turn and National Dialogue



1.4.6 Local Ownership in Peacebuilding

A recurrent issue in the academic discourse on local ownership is the recognition that peacebuilding initiatives that are not locally owned are unlikely to reflect the needs and aspirations of the people.[134] In this literature, a common challenge is around identifying individuals or groups that constitute the "locals."[135] In the context of national dialogues, the issue of local ownership becomes complex, particularly as they are framed as "national" but with the intention to serve as inclusive mechanisms, bringing together a wide range of actors beyond national elites. The ambiguity on who qualifies as a local and how their legitimacy as representatives of locals can be established is crucial for local peace initiatives. Addressing this fundamental challenge may allow peacebuilding initiatives to effectively engage and respond to the needs of the affected population.[136] Moreover, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, this ambiguity created room for state actors in South Sudan and Mali to manipulate dialogue processes by selectively including participants that align with their interests or those of the political parties they represent. This tension reflects an existing challenge in the local turn - the need to not only localize peace processes but to critically question the representativeness and the authenticity of the contributions that local stakeholders bring if included in national dialogues. Moreover, local "owners" include both state (government officials, security leaders, political and economic elites) and non-state actors such as civil society, women, and other politically marginalized and often underrepresented actors.[137] It is crucial not to equate the local turn with the simple inclusion of various actors; instead, attention must be directed towards addressing monopolies and countering local hegemony during its implementation, particularly in the context of national dialogues.

Furthermore, from a constructivist or Gramscian perspective, it becomes evident that local ownership is not a straightforward, uncontested process but can be significantly influenced and even co-opted by dominant political forces.[138] In Cameroon, this tension is most visibly manifested in party politics, where certain norms are shaped and different narratives projected to allow elites to exercise control. As Cox postulated, such control may not necessarily be through direct coercion but by crafting a social consensus that aligns with their interests to consolidate power.[139] In this sense, local ownership is socially constructed and contested, as it is shaped by the interplay of power, identity, and political strategy, reinforcing existing power dynamics rather than facilitating genuine inclusivity.[140] As such, the idea of local ownership, while central to peacebuilding

discourse, requires careful examination of how it can be manipulated by political elites to serve their political agenda.

Additionally, a nuanced understanding of local ownership requires more than just rhetorical commitments. Translating the concept into actionable strategies requires acknowledging the diverse capacities, interests, and power dynamics of various actors.[141] This suggests that while the concept might be widely endorsed in theory, its application in practice remains challenging.[142] This is particularly visible in national dialogues where the question of who is considered local and whose voices in the dialogue process are genuinely local remains unanswered. Additionally, many researchers have examined the concept of local ownership and its application in conflict and post-conflict societies in line with their critiques of liberal peacebuilding. According to Richmond, the practice of local ownership must advance beyond instrumentalization and embrace an emancipatory model that truly redistributes power and authority to local actors. [143] He asserts that this would ensure a more genuine and inclusive process that enables local communities to drive peacebuilding initiatives and address the root causes of conflict. Therefore, as Muggah and Altpeter further contend, inclusive ownership should not just be about including more locals in the process but also transforming relationships between citizens and the state, which is often at the heart of conflict in fragile states.[144]

From an ontological perspective, local ownership assumes that in conflict-affected societies, the people affected have a strong understanding of the causes of violence and can propose potential solutions.[145] This view underscores the value of local knowledge and agency. The experience of the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, comprising social movement groups and non-state actors with excellent knowledge of the conflict and their successes in the 2013 Tunisian dialogue, offers a compelling example. Amid the political crisis following the 2011 revolution, these local actors drew on their deep understanding of the socio-political climate to successfully facilitate a peaceful transition.[146] Moreover, as rightly posited by Richmond, "contextual environments need to be understood, not as a recipient of assistance but as the agents of their own solutions and knowledge systems."[147] Hence, when local actors are empowered as legitimate owners, they may contribute to leading inclusive national dialogues, as seen in Tunisia.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This section presents the theoretical framework guiding this study. I examine the normative aspirations of the local turn and its implementation challenges through national dialogues. While this section provides an overview of the framework, detailed theoretical discussions are also presented in subsequent chapters to guide the reading of specific discussions within each chapter.

1.5.1 Historical Trajectory of Peacebuilding

The idea of peace (in contrast to war and conflict) can be traced back to the Enlightenment period, with key figures like Immanuel Kant[148] and Jean-Jacques Rousseau[149] playing major roles in shaping these discussions. A review of peacebuilding debates since 1975 reveals that the concept of peacebuilding has attracted a variety of definitions, particularly because it is associated with different ideologies. There is no comprehensive definition of peacebuilding. In fact, most peacebuilding studies reviewed always began with phrases along the lines of "peacebuilding defies a single definition,"[150] "it is difficult to define the concept of peace," etc.[151] This ambiguity reflects its evolving nature of ideological and contextual perspectives shaping how peacebuilding is practiced. The term "peacebuilding" was coined in a 1975 essay by Johan Galtung, who emphasized the need to consider not just the primary goal of ending direct conflict and violence but also the importance of eradicating structural violence and addressing the underlying causes of conflict.[152] Galtung's peacebuilding perspectives resonate with the need to dismantle oppressive structures for inclusive peacebuilding. The distinction between positive and negative peace in Galtung's definition marks a shift from a traditionally narrow definition of peace focusing on the cessation of violence to a multidimensional approach that includes structural violence and the underlying causes of conflict among the actors involved.

With the end of the Cold War, the international community faced new security challenges of internal violence and state failure.[153] By 1992, Boutros-Ghali's "Agenda for Peace" emerged in the aftermath of the Cold War as the United Nations sought to define a new global order. The "Agenda" proposed different approaches for peacebuilding, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and preventive diplomacy to effectively address conflicts.[154] Three decades later, in July 2023, "A New Agenda for Peace" emerged from the present UN Secretary-General, António Guterres. The new agenda also emphasizes the importance of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The new agenda

acknowledges that conditions shaping the post-Cold War era no longer apply and stresses the need to rebuild trust in peacebuilding. A recurrent message in the new agenda seems to be that states must establish their own mechanisms to address current challenges. The new agenda suggests that the UN should primarily focus on fostering "national infrastructures for peace."[155] Additionally, it encourages individual states and CSOs to proactively develop their own strategies to address internal issues independently rather than relying solely on the Security Council or donor directives.[156]

In parallel, the emphasis on the role of non-state actors (civil society, social movements, grassroots activists, and other local actors) grew in the 1990s and nurtured the idea of peace from below.[157] The question of whether peace should be built from the bottom-up or top-down, and who should be engaged and what roles they should play, was raised and discussed by John Paul Lederach using the so-called "Peacebuilding Pyramid."[158] The pyramid consists of three main levels involving different types of actors: top-level leadership (involving high-ranking political officials), middle-range actors (involving academics, media, and other actors that bridge the gap between top-level and grassroots leadership), and grassroots leadership (involving local communities and individuals directly affected by conflict).[159] It is worth noting that many of the conditions that create conflicts, such as social and economic marginalization, insecurity, gender and political discrimination, and human rights violations,[160] are often experienced at the grassroots level.[161] While Lederach acknowledges the importance of grassroots actors in peacebuilding, their role may be underestimated because of multi-level arrangements and the involvement of top-level leadership. Lederach's pyramid highlights the importance of vertical and horizontal integration of different actors in peacebuilding to ensure that the interconnected social, cultural, and political issues within a society are effectively managed.[162] By emphasizing the importance of building local capacities, Lederach's approach echoes the need for fostering a sense of ownership and commitment among stakeholders.[163]

By the early 2000s, a new generation of international peace operations emerged, reflecting a shift in the scope and ambition of global peacebuilding efforts. Departing from the narrowly focused peacekeeping efforts in the Cold War era, much attention was given to state-building, governance, and human rights.[164] Against this backdrop, Kofi Annan, the then UN Secretary General, announced an approach to peacebuilding that emphasizes building local capacity for conflict

resolution. The main argument was that domestic peace would be achieved through "reformed systems of governance that are responsive to people's basic needs at the local, regional, and national level."[165] Additionally, researchers noted that aside these civilian focused efforts, the role of international military forces also evolved during this period.[166] For instance, military forces were no longer deployed just to manage cease fires, but were also engaged in supporting governance reforms.[167]Such efforts undermined local ownership and legitimacy. Notwithstanding, scholars such as Paris and Chandler recognize the need for peacebuilding approaches to focus on local agency and contextual knowledge.[168] These perspectives also contributed to the emergence of post-liberal peace and the "local turn," acknowledging the limitations of previous technocratic approaches to peacebuilding by calling for more inclusive approaches prioritizing local ownership and legitimacy.[169]

1.5.2 The Local Turn in Peacebuilding

Over the past decades, practitioners and scholars have increasingly highlighted the crucial role of local actors in inclusive peacebuilding processes.[170] One of the most significant "turns" discussed in the peacebuilding literature is the local turn (which emphasizes the role of local actors in peacebuilding). The metaphor of "turns" has been used in social sciences to draw attention to emerging theoretical developments. Social scientists have applied this term in different contexts. For example, the "intersectional turn" has been used to discuss social categories such as race, gender, and class structure that shape inequalities.[171] In a similar way, the "spatial turn" explores the importance of space, place, and geography in social relations and power dynamics.[172] Other social scientists have also used the term "cultural turn" to discuss the importance of culture in shaping social behaviors.[173]As highlighted above, the local turn emerged as a direct critique of the liberal peacebuilding project,[174] which has often overlooked the complex realities and local dynamics in conflict-affected societies.[175]The emphasis on local actors suggests a shift from top-down, externally driven approaches towards more context-sensitive and locally driven strategies in peacebuilding.[176] Advocates of the local turn argue that sustainable peace is more likely to be achieved when local actors are meaningfully engaged and have full ownership of the peace process.[177] It essentially transfers agency from external actors to local actors and emphasizes the roles of local communities and civil societies in peacebuilding and democratization.[178]

In this literature, research addresses the common error of treating "the local" as a homogenous entity and the inadequate reflection on existing power imbalances between local actors in different contexts.[179] The literature on the local turn continues to evolve. The first local turn stressed the agency of local actors in peacebuilding. This was noticeable in the works of Lederach.[180] It marked a shift from state-centric approaches to peacebuilding by acknowledging the potential of local actors in conflict resolution. In the second local turn, scholars such as Mac Ginty, Richmond, and Paffenholz expanded on Lederach's idea to discuss local actors' resistance to external interventions.[181] This phase developed a more nuanced understanding of local dynamics as scholars engaged in the discussion to uncover a diverse range of actors, interests, and tensions within local contexts. The third local turn has focused on practical strategies for transferring power, agency, and resources from foreign to local actors.[182] Key issues raised in the third local turn literature revolve around decolonizing knowledge (relying on local knowledge and experiences rather than foreign expertise), replacing technocratic programming with creative and participatory approaches, and promoting risk-positive funding strategies that empower local actors.[183] The three turns of the local turn in peacebuilding are interconnected through their shared emphasis on understanding power dynamics, promoting inclusion, and acknowledging the critical role of different local actors in peacebuilding processes. They all emphasize that for local peacebuilding projects to be authentic and legitimate, such processes must be rooted in local contexts and address affected populations' specific needs and expectations.[184] Drawing from the above understanding, this thesis will argue that despite its emancipatory ideas, the operationalization of the local turn in practice has faced numerous challenges. In the next section, I will summarize the local turn's normative aspirations and practical challenges it faces through the lens of national dialogues.

1.5.3 Practical Challenges of Local Turn in National Dialogues

The local turn in peacebuilding emphasizes the centrality of local agency and contextual knowledge in shaping peace processes.[185] Local agency refers to the active role of local actors (see chart two above) in identifying solutions to conflict, making decisions, and driving peace initiatives.[186] Contextual knowledge, on the other hand, underscores the importance of understanding the unique historical, social, and political dynamics of a given locality when designing peacebuilding strategies.[187] This section discusses both themes and their practical challenges in National Dialogues.

a) Local Agency

Within the local turn literature, the issue of local agency emerged as a counterpoint to externally driven approaches that often impose predefined liberal peace models.[188] One of the core aspirations of the local turn is that the locals should not just be consulted but should have the ability to make decisions and the legitimacy to define peace processes.[189]Recent research on the local turn has been critical not only of the recurrent failure of international interventions to genuinely consider local perspectives but also of the conceptual ambiguity surrounding the term "local."[190] The term "local" has been used in various ways in the local turn literature, leading to different interpretations and applications.[191] In some contexts, "local" refers to institutions and actors that operate at the national or sub-national level, including state actors and formal institutions.[192] In other contexts, the term is used to describe non-elite actors, such as civil society organizations, community and diaspora groups, and grassroots movements.[193] Notwithstanding, a deep understanding of different actors at different scales and power relations among them is essential.[194] This is so because inclusivity in African dialogue processes under study has been challenged by power imbalances, structural issues, and elite capture. According to Mac Ginty and Richmond, local actors and agency can be understood as:

> […] a range of locally based agencies present within a conflict and post-conflict environment, some of which are aimed at identifying and creating the necessary processes for peace, perhaps with or without international help, and framed in a way in which legitimacy in local and international terms converges.[195]

However, national dialogue processes may adopt a narrower definition of local agencies or who constitutes a local. Their definitions are frequently shaped in official announcements or elite-driven frameworks. Moreover, while the term "national dialogue" implies a broad-based, inclusive process, it may inadvertently obscure the true meaning of local agency and emphasis in the local turn. Additionally, positioning dialogue processes under national institutions or elite design frameworks may risk undermining the emancipatory intent of the local turn.[196] For instance, in Cameroun, when President Biya announced his national dialogue, he invited the following actors:

> […] the dialogue, which will be chaired by the Prime Minister, Head of Government, will bring together a wide range of personalities: parliamentarians, politicians, opinion leaders,

> intellectuals, economic operators, traditional authorities, religious authorities, members of the diaspora, etc. Representatives of the Defence and Security Forces, armed groups, and victims will also be invited.[197]

Although Biya's announcement of national dialogue presented an image of an inclusive locally owned project, the top-down manner in which locals were defined reveals that even when peace processes are framed as locally owned, the selection and naming of local actors and their agencies can remain under elites who can instrumentalize inclusion. As shall be discussed in subsequent chapters, such practices reinforce power structures, patriarchy, and other cultural barriers.

b) Contextual Knowledge

Another issue at the core of the local turn discussion is the recognition that peace processes must be grounded in specific socio-cultural, political, and historical contexts. This normative aspiration seeks to challenge the one-size-fits-all approaches of liberal peacebuilding.[198] As Paris posits, despite aiming to promote liberal values, international peacebuilding efforts often suppress local agency by imposing top-down, state-centric reforms that create dependency and exclude meaningful local participation. He calls for a more nuanced approach that balances institution-building with genuine local empowerment to ensure that peace processes are both legitimate and sustainable.[199] Even so, Richmond and Mac Ginty emphasize that "the local" should not be treated as a passive recipient of international peacebuilding but as an active, complex, and sometimes resistant force that can negotiate, reshape, or even subvert external interventions. They argue that local actors are not always inherently progressive or unified, and that local agency often manifests in hybrid forms.[200] The conceptualization of local agents as a binary opposition between the "local" and "international" is seemingly problematic. Such conceptualization could create blind spots in the analysis of the dominant role or privileges that some elites might have within locally owned initiatives.[201] Thus, recognizing the fluid and layered nature of local agency underscores the importance of contextual knowledge in identifying who truly represents local interests, rather than assuming all local actors operate from the same positionality. Furthermore, the benefits of having contextual knowledge and local agency have been demonstrated through the national dialogue processes in Kenya and Tunisia. As shall be discussed in subsequent chapters, having deep contextual knowledge facilitated inclusion in Kenya and Tunisia. In Tunisia, for example,

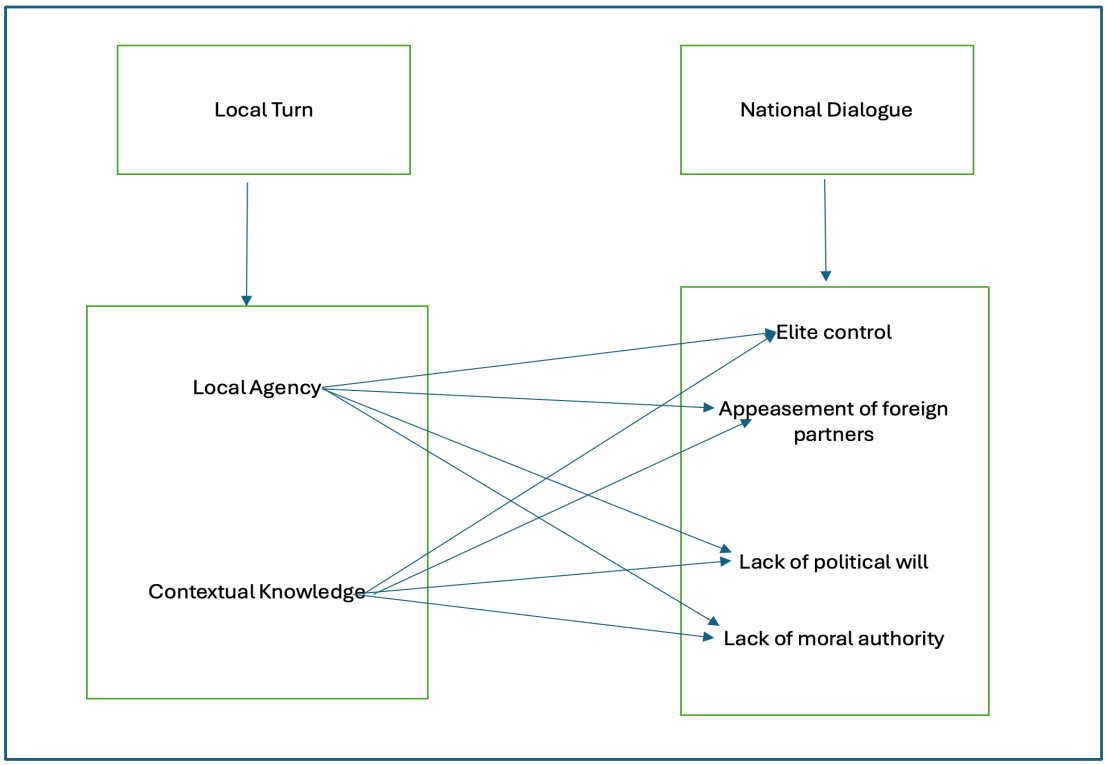
the dialogue process was a homegrown initiative led by the Quartet, who were themselves affected by the conflict. In both contexts (Kenya and Tunisia), key facilitators benefited from their deep social roots, moral legitimacy, and contextual understanding of community dynamics.

However, while contextual knowledge is essential in fostering inclusive peace processes, it is not sufficient on its own. Strong political will is needed to drive peace processes.[202] For example, having contextual knowledge and lacking the political will to implement inclusive dialogue processes could result in instrumentalization by elites to maintain the status quo. In Cameroon, despite the government's deep understanding of the Anglophone Crisis and having held several consultations with affected locals (some of whom submitted written proposals on how to resolve the crisis through dialogue), the actual process was widely perceived as superficial.[203] Many activists opined that the process lacked the genuine intent to address the root causes of marginalization and the centralization of power. Another issue that may hinder the local turn's aspiration for contextual knowledge is the tendency of national actors to prioritize the expectations of international donors over genuine local needs.[204] In South Sudan, while government and opposition elites possess deep contextual understanding of the conflict's root causes (such as ethnic divisions, historical grievances, and competition over resources), the peace process often reflected externally driven imperatives.[205] The desire to secure international legitimacy and funding led to agreements that echoed global peacebuilding templates rather than locally grounded solutions.[206] Furthermore, many of the elites involved in the dialogue lacked the moral authority to represent the broader population, especially communities directly affected by the conflict, despite having deep contextual knowledge. Thus, the disconnect between having contextual knowledge and the lack of political will, moral authority, and donors' influence weakened trust in the process and undermined the inclusivity needed to ensure sustainable peace.

Drawing on the above understanding of the evolution of the peacebuilding discourse, the local turn, and two of its core aspirations (local agency and contextual knowledge), this thesis argues that although national dialogues are frequently advocated as inclusive mechanisms capable of promoting sustainable peace by engaging a wide range of actors, in practice, they face several constraints. These constraints include the ambiguity surrounding the definition of "local," the issue of elite capture, and insufficient mechanisms for ensuring genuine participation. Further, it contends that despite some notable successes (such as the Tunisian National Dialogue and the

Kenyan National Dialogue for Reconciliation), many dialogues in Africa have failed to redistribute power or build the necessary trust to ensure productive outcomes. The thesis concludes that, although the local turn presents a compelling framework for rethinking peacebuilding through more inclusive, context-sensitive strategies, its implementation in national dialogues may continue to reproduce exclusionary practices unless intentional efforts are made to interrogate superficial inclusion and address structural inequalities.[207] The chart below summarizes the challenges of applying the two core elements of the local turn (local agency and contextual knowledge) in practice through national dialogues.

Chart 3: Challenges of applying local turn to national dialogue



1.6 Research Design and Methodology

According to King et al., four key elements must be considered when designing a research project of this nature. These include research questions, theory, data, and the use of data.[208] The research methods underpinning this thesis were designed to explore the challenges of applying the local turn in practice, using national dialogue case studies. In the following section, I justify and explain my case studies and selection rationale, methods of data collection, analysis, ethical

considerations, and use of data. As this thesis follows an article-based format, each chapter (article) contains a detailed description of its respective conceptual framework, design, and methodology. Thus, the current section only provides an overview of the research approach.

1.6.1 Case Study Selection and Rationale

a) Case selection

Case selection is a critical component of qualitative research. It determines the cases to be studied and establishes a framework to study them.[209] The case study approach used in this thesis enabled the researcher to focus on specific spaces and times. This allows for an opportunity to collect and analyze both primary and secondary data. The design of this thesis incorporates two case selection strategies: a diverse case approach and a typical case approach. As posited by Gerring, a diverse case strategy requires selecting a set of two or more cases to capture the breadth and diversity of a phenomenon. This helps the researcher to provide a nuanced interpretation of different aspects of its potential outcomes.[210] A typical case study, on the other hand, focuses on a single case that exemplifies common characteristics that are typical of a phenomenon.[211] The primary rationale for using a diverse case study is that the researcher wanted to inductively explore a diverse set of cases to gain a broader understanding of ownership and inclusion in national dialogues. This initial exploration helped identify key patterns. Ideas emerging from that initial analysis yielded a more nuanced understanding of different aspects of inclusion, which was used in the second part of the thesis, focusing on Cameroon, using a case study approach. Through this approach, the typical aspects of national dialogues are investigated by focusing on the interaction between local actors, their impacts on dialogue processes, and the idea of inclusivity, only in Cameroon and within the context of the country's Anglophone crisis. This blended approach allows me to explore national dialogues as a peacebuilding tool, understand how they can address the limitations of the local turn, and illustrate how missed opportunities led to failed outcomes in that context.

b) Rationale for Cameroon

The choice of Cameroon as a case study is justified by the complex conflict dimensions. As illustrated in the literature review, the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon involves multiple historical, political, and socio-economic dimensions. This has attracted various local actors, leading to

asymmetric power dynamics and interests. This complexity makes it interesting to interrogate the meaning of "local" in the local turn, examine its fuzziness, identify different categories of locals within that context, and explore its relevance in the context of the country's national dialogue process. Additionally, the choice of Cameroon can be further justified by its ongoing conflict and the active implementation of the dialogue process. This allows for real-time analysis and learning. Finally, this choice is justified by my deep experience and broad contacts in my country of birth.

1.6.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The first part of the project, employing a diverse case selection strategy, primarily relies on data obtained from secondary sources. The subsequent section, focusing on a typical case study, utilizes both primary and secondary data. These complementary approaches enabled a comprehensive understanding of national dialogues. Both primary and secondary data for this research were obtained from various sources: see the justification of data collection methods below and detailed information on source specifications provided in the methodology section of each chapter.

a) Secondary Data

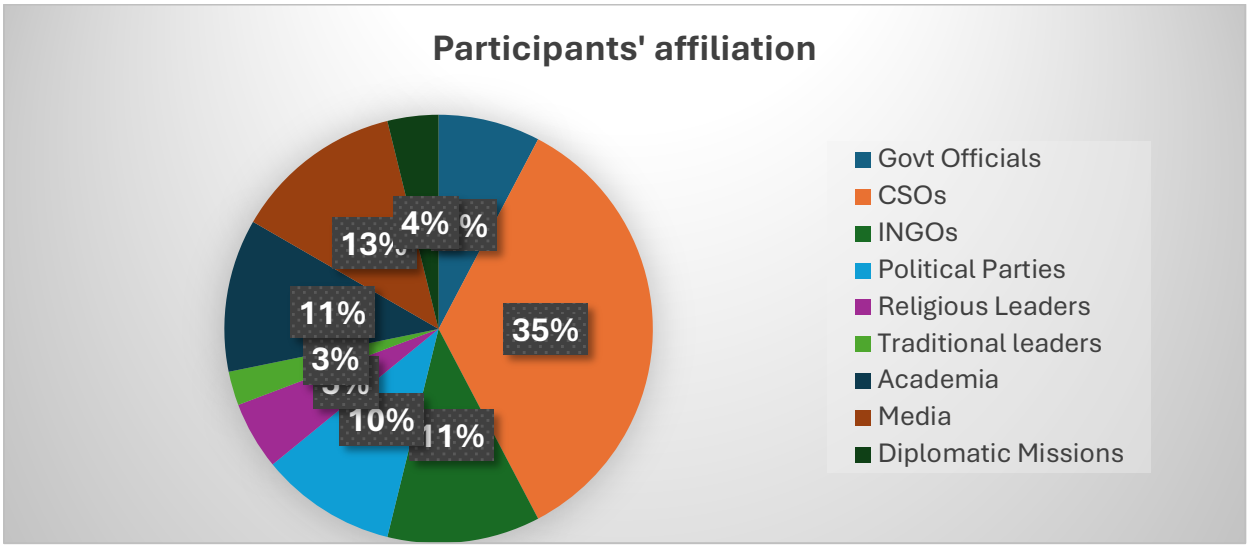
This research bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and the practical application of local turn and national dialogue. As such, secondary data were drawn mainly from existing academic literature and reports from government agencies and international development organizations. The scholarly works of Paffenholz[212] and Papagianni[213] and other academic literature on civil society and national dialogues in Africa were examined. This research also delved into the United States Institute of Peace research on national dialogues led by Elizabeth Murray and Susan Stigant. Reports from government departments (such as regional delegations of territorial administration and the national school of local administration in Buea that hosted the post-dialogue follow-up committee meetings) were collected and analyzed. Additional secondary data came from reports by the OECD, UN Women, and other development agencies. Reports from INGOs such as the Norwegian Refugee Council, International Crisis Group, the Committee to Protect Journalists, etc., were also examined. Local civil society reports such as those published by the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa, Reach Out NGO, Nkafu Policy Institute, Alliance for Sustainable Development NGO, Recover and Rehabilitate for Better Tomorrow, etc., were also collected through online searches and during fieldwork in Cameroon. Key speeches, press releases, concept

notes, participants' lists, presentations, reactions, and reports from different commissions created during the dialogue process were collected from the national dialogue webpage and analyzed. Information was also obtained from political party websites such as the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) party website, Elections Cameroon (ELECAM) web page, and the webpage of the Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon, particularly for the analysis of key stakeholders.

b) Research Interviews

Focusing on Cameroon as the primary study site, fieldwork was carried out using a combination of interviews and observation techniques. This approach aimed to gather valuable insights into people's attitudes and perceptions[214] of inclusion in national dialogues, particularly the 2019 national dialogue process in Cameroon. Interviews were useful in collecting information about government initiatives towards peacebuilding. According to Lloyd Evans in *Doing Development Research,* there are three different types of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured.[215] Key stakeholders were interviewed through an in-depth semi-structured interview. Participants were drawn from different sectors of society and included government officials, civil society, international non-governmental organizations, political parties, religious and traditional leaders, academia, media, and diplomatic missions in Cameroon, as shown in Chart 3 below.

Chart 3: Participants' Affiliation and Representation



Source: Fieldwork in Cameroon, January – April 2023

The recruitment process considered 78 participants from diverse backgrounds. Of these numbers, 19 participants were from Bamenda, 26 from Buea, and 33 from Yaoundé. The analysis in Chapter Two draws primarily on secondary data, rendering interview materials less relevant. The subsequent chapter (chapter three) focuses on the Southwest and Northwest regions, which led to the selection of 45 interviews from the larger project for a more targeted analysis. Chapter four incorporates all 78 interviews. Semi-structured interview questions were developed in a flexible manner to allow discussions in other areas not anticipated by the researcher but within the research focus. See appendices 7 and 8 for the bilingual interview guide.

1.6.4 Field Observation

This research entails sharing sensitive information about a political process and the interaction between elites and grassroots actors. As posited by Depelteau,[216] in conducting observation, researchers often focus on their own observation in a way that complements or enhances the perspectives shared by participants. For this research, interviews were conducted concurrently with field observations for two reasons. First, to allow the researcher to obtain data about national dialogue stakeholders' behaviors and beliefs in a natural setting. Secondly, in a deeply discriminatory and patriarchal society like Cameroon, combining observation and interviews allows the researcher to understand certain nuances and complexities, enabling the researcher to identify discrepancies between what participants say and what the researcher observes. Since this research focuses on a real-life situation and an ongoing debate in Cameroon, the researcher was able to understand existing inequalities, structural barriers, and power dynamics within this context by reconciling the differences between what participants said and what the researcher observed.

1.6.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is usually a multi-step 'sensemaking' endeavor.[217] Several steps were taken to ensure accuracy and reliability in the analysis of secondary data. All data collected from semi-structured interviews and field observation notes were thoroughly cleaned to ensure their quality and relevance as well. The different files were then named field observation, participant 1, participant 2, participant 3, and so on to protect the identity of participants. Each chapter contains a detail explanation of its own data analysis process.

1.7 Methodological Limitations

Potential limitations of this research include the risk of selection bias, the reliability of interview data, and the researcher's positionality. The issues of selection bias and reliability of interview data were addressed by employing a purposive sampling technique during participant recruitment, ensuring a diverse pool of participants from various backgrounds, including government actors, civil society, religious leaders, traditional authorities, and others. Furthermore, positionality can affect various aspects of research, such as the formulation of questions, data collection, analysis, and presentation of findings.[218] As argued by Holmes, certain beliefs, values, and interests are shaped by our personal experiences, gender, ethnicity, geographic location, social class, history, etc.[219] These positionalities can influence the perspective the researcher adopts in carrying out research, the ways in which research is conducted, and its outcomes. The researcher was born and raised in a rural community in Anglophone Cameroon. The ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroon has affected the researcher directly and indirectly. Undoubtedly, my background and personal experiences shaped my perspective and impacted the research process. To overcome these limitations, the researcher has made conscious efforts to be reflexive and transparent about these positionalities throughout this study. To minimize the limitation of positionality in the interpretation of data, multiple secondary data sets were used to triangulate primary data collected through interviews. As explained in subsequent chapters, different conceptual frameworks were employed to analyze research findings. Additionally, the use of Nvivo in the data analysis process also helped mitigate these limitations.

1.8 Ethical Considerations

This research entailed collecting sensitive information from participants. As such, all interviews were held in a secure and private location and based on a mutual agreement between the participants and the researcher. As explained above, data collected from interviews were coded upon completion and unique codes were assigned to each participant to respect confidentiality and privacy protocols. The researcher followed the University of Ottawa's Research Ethics Board guidelines for fieldwork involving human participants, particularly those relating to the management of personal information and the identity of informants. Ethics approval was obtained from the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (REB), as demonstrated in Appendix 9. The

researcher also worked with a local civil society organization in Cameroon, Nkafu Policy Institute (NPI), namely by applying for and obtaining a 'Letter of Affiliation' from NPI, shown in Appendix 10. This allowed the researcher to have access to NPI resources, professional contacts, and networks to facilitate the data collection process. The researcher carefully assessed potential risks with this research and developed different risk mitigation strategies ahead of the field trip: see each chapter for details of specific risks associated with different parts of the study.

As part of the principle of free and informed consent, also codified in the University of Ottawa's ethical guidelines, the recruitment and participation of informants was based on freely given informed consent: see consent forms in French and English, appendix 5 and 6, respectively. Although the payment of research participants in some research may be considered as an inducement and can be exploitative to interviewees, a non-monetary form of compensation (more likely to be non-coercive) is usually needed, depending on the nature of the project.[220] Compensation of participants (through special gifts, money, or tips) can present many ethical dilemmas for research on this matter. To avoid these challenges and for ethical reasons, no participant was offered monetary compensation. Some participants, however, were reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses related to securing safer transportation means to interview sites or preferred meeting points. The recruitment process took into consideration the fact that individuals could refuse or withdraw from the process. In addition, the research followed ethical requirements for informed consent and snowballing in the recruitment of interviewees.

1.9 Knowledge Gap and Contributions

There is a plethora of literature on "local turn" and "national dialogue" in peacebuilding and development practice in general. Cameroonian scholars, such as Emmanuel Konde, have analyzed various processes of inclusion in these approaches, with a focus on the experiences of women in Cameroon's male-dominated political landscape.[221] Annan et al., have also demonstrated the challenges of the local turn, notably its sharp contrast with the literature on shrinking civic spaces.[222] Other African scholars, Cyril Obi, assert that while African countries have adopted democratic systems on the surface, the actual practice of inclusion within these systems often falls short.[223] Local turn and national dialogues have also been discussed in connection with social cohesion[224], in relation to SDGs,[225] or by incorporating dimensions like gender to analyze

inclusion.[226] Considering the importance and interconnectedness of these dimensions, more research is needed to address the knowledge gaps on the challenges of implementing local turn and national dialogue. As a contribution to the existing body of knowledge, this research deepens our understanding of the disconnect between the normative aspirations of the local turn (genuine inclusion, agency, context sensitivity) and the realities of national dialogues (often shaped by elite interests, exclusionary practices and donor driven agendas).

---

[1]Nzouankeu, the Role of the National Conference in the Transition to Democracy in Africa
[2] Barnes, Dilemmas of Ownership, Inclusivity, Legitimacy and Power
[3] Murray & Stigant, *National dialogues in peacebuilding and transitions*
[4] Blunck et al., National Dialogue Handbook
[5] Ibid, no.3
[6] Leonardsson & Rudd, the "local turn" in peacebuilding; see also Richmond & Mac Ginty, Where now for the critique of the liberal peace?
[7] Randazzo, *Beyond liberal peacebuilding: A critical exploration of the local turn*
[8] Hirblinger & Simons, The good, the bad, and the powerful
[9] Paffenholz, Unpacking the local turn in peacebuilding
[10]Paffenholz et al., *Making women count – Not just counting women*
[11] Gerring, Case Selection for Case-Study Analysis, p. 15
[12] Paffenholz, et al., What *makes or breaks national dialogues? Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative.*
[13] Ibid, no.12
[14] Murray & Stigant, National Dialogues in Peacebuilding and Transitions
[15] Blunck et al., National Dialogue Handbook
[16] Mia, National Dialogue Quartet in Democratic Transition of Tunisia
[17] Ibid, no.16
[18] International Crisis Group, Crisis Group congratulates the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet
[19] Norwegian Nobel Committee, *The Nobel Peace Prize for 2015*
[20] Cho et al., Preventing post-election violence based on the Kenyan experience
[21] Murray & Stigant, *National dialogues in peacebuilding and transitions*
[22] Kofi Annan Foundation, *The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation: Two years on, where are we?*
[23] The Elephant, The role of Kenyan civil society in democratic governance.
[24] Elias, *what is behind Kenya's protest movement?*
[25] Freedom House, Mali: Freedom in the World 2020 country report
[26] United Nations Security Council, Situation in Mali
[27] Ibid, no. 26
[28] Mbapndah & Samah, German Colonialism and the Cameroonian Chieftaincy Institution, 1884-1916
[29] Dze-Ngwa, The First World War and Its Aftermath in Cameroon
[30] Ibid no, 29
[31] Ibid no. 29
[32] Achankeng, The Foumban "Constitutional" Talks and Prior Intentions of Negotiating
[33] Ibid no. 32
[34] Ndifor, The Politicization of the Cameroon Judicial System; Le Vine, The Fall and Rise of Constitutionalism in West Africa
[35] Ibid no. 35
[36] Enonchong, The Constitution and Governance in Cameroon
[37] Amin, Understanding the Protest of February 2008 in Cameroon; also see Enonchong, The Constitution and Governance in Cameroon
[38] Ndifor, The Politicization of the Cameroon Judicial System

[39] Agwenjang, The Tussle with Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law; Kamdem, The Political (in)Dependence of the Judiciary in Cameroon
[40] Gandhi, J. (2008). Political Institutions Under Dictatorship
[41] Morse, The legislature as political control
[42] Ibid, no. 41
[43] Mbaku, & Takougang, The Leadership Challenge in Africa
[44] Ibid, no.43
[45] Kange, Governance Challenges and Opportunities
[46] Ibid, no.45
[47] Ibid, no.45
[48] Pommerolle & Heungoup, The "Anglophone Crisis":
[49] International Crisis Group, Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis at the Crossroads
[50] International Crisis Group, Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis at the Crossroads; Unah, Why Are Young Anglophone Men Taking Up Arms to Fight Cameroon's Military?
[51] Ekah, The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon
[52] CIVICUS. (2018). Journalists Facing Serious Charges for Reporting Amid Raising Repression in Cameroon
[53] UNHCR, More Cameroonian Refugees Flee to Nigeria,
[54] O'Grady, Divided by Language
[55] Orock, Cameroon's Separatist War
[56] International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Democracy tracker - Cameroon.
[57] Forje, Building a vibrant state-civil society in Cameroon facing the changes of the new millennium
[58] German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Political situation in Cameroon
[59] Nyamnjoh & Rowlands, Elite associations and the politics of belonging in Cameroon
[60] Freedom House, *Cameroon*
[61] Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon, *President Paul BIYA convenes Major National Dialogue*.
[62] Ibid, no. 61
[63] Ibid, no. 61
[64] Prime Minister's Office, Prime Minister pursues pre-dialogue consultations
[65] Al Jazeera, Cameroon dialogue starts as Anglophone separatists pull out.
[66] Begealawuh, *Cameroon celebrates national dialogue anniversary, but critics say outcomes remain unmet*
[67] See "*Site Web Officiel du RDPC"*
[68] Newsday Cameroon, Christopher Fomunyoh Snubs Grand National Dialogue,
[69] Ibid, no 84
[70]Fuh, An Appraisal of the Major National Dialogue as a Panacea to the Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon
[71] Ndekwo, *National Dialogue as a Strategy for Intra-state Conflict Resolution in Africa*
[72] International Crisis Group, Cameroon's Anglophone Dialogue
[73] Ibid, no.72
[74] Interpeace, *Track 6: A strategy for inclusive peacebuilding*.
[75] Interpeace, Inclusiveness *and Peacebuilding*
[76] Castillejo, *Dilemmas and experiences of international support for inclusive peacebuilding*
[77] Paffenholz, *Can inclusive peace processes work?*
[78] Donais and McCandless, International Peace Building and the Emerging Inclusivity Norm.
[79] Bloomfield et al., Reconciliation after violent conflict; See also Paffenholz, Inclusivity in peace processes; Mac Ginty, *International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance*
[80] Donais and Edgar, International Development Assistance and the Inclusivity Paradox in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States
[81] Von Burg, On Inclusivity
[82] Ibid no. 78
[83] Suazo, Tools of change
[84] Ibid, 83
[85]Ibid, 83
[86] De Waal, Inclusion in peacemaking
[87] Elfversson and Nilsson, 'The pursuit of inclusion'
[88] Cuhadar and Druckman, 'Let the people speak! What Kind of Civil Society Inclusion Leads to Durable Peace?'
[89] Van Leeuwen et al., The 'local turn' and notions of conflict and peacebuilding

[90] United Nations & World Bank, *Pathways for peace: Inclusive approaches to preventing violent conflict*.
[91] Bratton, Civil Society and Political Transition in Africa, p2
[92] Orvis, Civil Society in Africa or African Civil Society?
[93] Ibid, no. 92
[94] Sadowski, The Contextuality of the Concept of Civil Society-from Particular Meanings to the Common Vector of Emancipation.
[95] Dudouet, 'Surviving the Peace'
[96] Davenport, State repression and political order.
[97] Brechenmacher & Carothers, Defending Civic Space: Is the International Community Stuck?
[98] Smidt, Shrinking civic space in Africa:
[99] Xinwa, Freedom under Siege
[100] Rakner, Don't Touch My Constitution!
[101] Ibid, no. 78
[102] Brandsen et al., the state and the reconstruction of civil
[103] Mohan, Role and Relevance of Civil Society Organizations; see also Chandler, the Constructivist Thesis
[104] Ibid, no.103
[105] Ibid, no.103
[106] Moinina & Nlem, The Role of the Civil Society in Conflicts
[107] Paffenholz, Civil Society & Peacebuilding
[108] Ibid, no.86
[109] See Paffenholz & Spurk, Civil Society, Civic Engagement, and Peacebuilding.
[110] Oxfam, Born to Lead
[111] Cohn et al., Women, peace and security resolution 1325
[112] Dharmadasa, Inclusion of women and youth peacebuilders
[113] Ibid, no. 115
[114] Cerezo et al., Identity as Resistance
[115] UN Women, Intersectional Feminism
[116] Agarwal, Not Very Likable
[117] Annan et al., Civil society, peacebuilding from below and shrinking civic space
[118] Moussi, Women, Peace and Security in Cameroon
[119] Ibid, no. 121
[120] Tripp, Women and power in post-conflict Africa
[121] Ibid, no. 123
[122] Chitando, *Women and Peacebuilding in Africa*
[123] Ibid, no. 125
[124] Atim, Patriarchy, Conflict and Peace: The Role of Female Combatants in Africa
[125] Ruppel, Power imbalances and peace building
[126] Does, Inclusivity and local perspectives in peacebuilding
[127] Ibid, no. 123
[128] Ibid, no. 128
[129] Baranyi, What Kind of Peace is Possible in the Post-9/11 Era.
[130] Labonte, From patronage to peacebuilding?
[131] Powis, Systems of capture
[132] Ibid, no. 134
[133] Ibid, no.133
[134] Nathan, *No Ownership, No Commitment*
[135] ibid
[136] Donais, Peacebuilding and local ownership
[137] Mobekk, Security Sector Reform and the Challenges of Ownership
[138] Gramsci, Selections from the Prison notebooks
[139] Cox, Social forces, States and World Orders
[140] Bourdieu, The Logic of Practice
[141] Donais, Operationalising local ownership
[142] Hellmüller, The power of perceptions
[143] Richmond, A Post-Liberal Peace

[144] Muggah & Altpeter, Peacebuilding and Postconflict Recovery
[145] Autesserre, *Conflict resolution and the everyday politics of international intervention*.
[146] Ibid, no.144
[147] Richmond, *A post-liberal peace*
[148] Kant, 'Perpetual Peace
[149] Rousseau, The social contract
[150] Tschirgi, "Securitisation and Peacebuilding''
[151] Ryan, The Evolution of Peacebuilding
[152] Galtung, Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding
[153] Leonardsson & Rudd, The 'local turn' in peacebuilding
[154] Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, Peacemaking, and Peacekeeping*.
[155] United Nations, A new agenda for peace
[156] Ibid, no.154
[157] Ibid, no. 152
[158] Lederach, Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies.
[159] Ibid, no. 157
[160] *Maiese, Levels of Action*
[161] Larmer, Social movement struggles in Africa.
[162] Ibid, no. 157
[163] Ibid, no. 157
[164] Paris, *at war's end; see also* Chandler, The responsibility to protect?
[165] United Nations, *No exit without strategy*
[166] Ibid, no. 129
[167] Ibid
[168] Ibid, no. 163
[169] Ibid, no. 142
[170] Paffenholz, Unpacking the Local Turn in Peacebuilding
[171] McKibbin et al., The intersectional turn in feminist theory
[172] Engel, U., & Nugent, Introduction: The spatial turn in African studies
[173] Bonnell & Hunt, Beyond the cultural turn
[174] Ejdus, Revisiting the Local Turn in Peacebuilding
[175] Ljungkvist & Jarstad, Revisiting the Local Turn in Peacebuilding
[176] Mac Ginty & Richmond, The local Turn in Peace Building
[177] Leonardsson & Rudd, The 'Local Turn' in Peacebuilding
[178] Ljungkvist, K., & Jarstad, Revisiting the local turn in peacebuilding–through the emerging urban approach.
[179] Ibid, no.177
[180] Ibid, no. 157
[181] Mac Ginty & Richmond, the local turn in peace building; Paffenholz, Unpacking the local turn in peacebuilding
[182] Paffenholz, et al., Toward a Third Local Turn
[183] Ibid, 177
[184] Leonardsson & Rudd, The 'local turn in peacebuilding; Mac Ginty and Richmond
[185] Ibid, no. 185
[186] Ibid, no 185
[187] Ibid, no. 185
[188] Randazzo, Beyond *liberal peacebuilding*
[189] Ibid, no. 182
[190] Jungkvist & Jarstad, Revisiting the local turn in peacebuilding
[191] Richmond, The use and misuse of the 'local turn'.
[192] Lambek, Catching the Local
[193] Pouligny, Civil Society and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding
[194] Ibid, no. 144
[195] Ibid, no.182, p. 769
[196] Ibid, 182
[197] Ibid, no.76
[198] Richmond & Mac Ginty, The 'local turn' in peacebuilding

[199] Paris, Saving liberal peacebuilding
[200] Mac Ginty, Hybridity
[201] Paffenholz, Unpacking the local turn in peacebuilding
[202] Paffenholz, Inclusion in peace processes
[203] Fofung & Mbapndah, *Cameroon: Major National Dialogue was a colossal failure of historic proportions*
[204] Paffenholz, et al., Toward a Third Local Turn
[205] Wilson Center. *Narrowing the gap between local and international peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan*
[206] Ibid, no.200
[207] Muggah & Altpeter, *Peacebuilding and postconflict recovery*
[208]KKV, The importance of research design
[209] Seawright & Gerring, Case selection techniques in case study research
[210]Gerring, John, ' Case Selection for Case-Study Analysis
[211] Ibid, no.211
[212] Paffenholz, Civil Society and Peace Negotiations
[213] Papagianni, National Dialogue Processes in Political Transitions
[214] Desai and Potter, *Doing Development Research*, p.147).
[215] Ibid no. 215, page 144-5
[216]Dépelteau, La démarche d'une recherche en sciences humaines
[217] DeCuir-Gunby et al., Developing and Using Codebook for the Analysis of Interview Data, p.137
[218] Holmes, Researcher Positionality
[219] Ibid, no. 219
[220] Paradis, Feminist and Community Psychology Ethics in Research with Homeless Women.
[221] Konde, African Women and Politics
[222] Annan et al., Civil society, peacebuilding from below and shrinking civic space
[223] Obi, No Choice, But Democracy
[224] Zahar & McCandless, Sustaining peace one day at a time.
[225] Mahmoud, How Can the UN Sustaining Peace Agenda Live Up to Its Potential?
[226] De Jonge Oudraat & Brown, Gender and security: Framing the agenda

Bibliography

Achankeng, F. (2015). The Foumban "Constitutional" Talks and Prior Intentions of Negotiating: A Historical Theoretical Analysis of False Negotiation and the Ramifications for Political Development in Cameroon. *Journal of Global Initiatives: Policy, Pedagogy, Perspective, 9*(2), 129-154.

Agwenjang, P. N. (2020). The Tussle with Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law: The Case of Cameroon. *SOAS LJ*, *7*, 65.

Agwanda, B., Nyadera, I. N., & Asal, U. Y. (2020). Cameroon and the Anglophone Crisis. *The Palgrave Encyclopaedia of Peace and Conflict Studies*, p. 1-12. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-11795-5 115-1

Atim, G. (2022). Patriarchy, conflict and peace: The role of female combatants in Africa. Editorial Board, 144.

Al Jazeera. (2019, September 30). Cameroon dialogue starts as Anglophone separatists pull out. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/9/30/cameroon-dialogue-starts-as-anglophone-separatists-pull-out

Al Jazeera. (2017, September 20). Cameroon using 'anti-terror' law to silence media: CPJ. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/9/20/cameroon-using-anti-terror-law-to-silence-media-cpj

Alvarado Cóbar, J.., Bjertén-Günther, E., & Jung, Y. (2018). “Assessing gender perspectives in peace processes with application to the cases of Colombia and Mindanao”. SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security No. 2018/6.

Amin, J. A. (2012). Understanding the Protest of February 2008 in Cameroon. *Africa Today*, *58*(4), 21-43.

Annan, N., Beseng, M., Crawford, G., & Kewir, J. K. (2021). Civil society, peacebuilding from below and shrinking civic space: the case of Cameroon’s ‘Anglophone’ conflict. Conflict, Security & Development, 21(6), 697–725. https://doi.org/10.1080/14678802.2021.1997454

Andreas T. Hirblinger and Claudia Simons, ‘The Good, the Bad, and the Powerful: Representations of the “Local” in Peacebuilding’, *Security Dialogue* 46, no. 5 (2015): 422–39

Aulin, J. (2019). Civil Society Inclusion in Peacebuilding. https://repository.graduateinstitute.ch/record/296888?ln=en&v=pdf

Autesserre, S. (2014). *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention*. Cambridge University Press

Baranyi, S. (2008). Introduction: What Kind of Peace is Possible in the Post-9/11 era. The Paradoxes of Peacebuilding post-9/11, 3-31.

Barnes, C. (2017). Dilemmas of ownership, inclusivity, legitimacy and power. *Towards transformative national dialogue processes*, *46*.

Begealawuh, N. C. (2024, November 11). *Cameroon Celebrates National Dialogue Anniversary, but Critics Say Outcomes Remain Unmet*. The CIPS Blog. https://www.cips-cepi.ca/2024/11/11/cameroon-celebrates-national-dialogue-anniversary-but-critics-say-outcomes-remain-unmet/

Blunck et al. (2017). National Dialogue Handbook: A Guide for Practitioners. *Berlin: Berghof Foundation.* Retrieved from https://www. berghoffoundation. org/fileadmin/redaktion/ Publications Other_Resources/NationalDialogue/BF-NationalDialogue-Handbook

Bloomfield, D., Barnes, T., & Huyse, L. (2003). Reconciliation After Violent Conflict: A Handbook.

Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford University Press.

Bratton, M. (1994). *Civil Society and Political Transition in Africa* (Report no.6, vol 11). Institute for Development Research (IDR). Retrieved from https://africanphilanthropy.issuelab.org/resources/19673/19673.pdf

Brandsen, T., Trommel, W., & Verschuere, B. (2017). *The State and the Reconstruction of Civil Society*. International Review of Administrative Sciences, 83(4), 676-693.

Brechenmacher, S., & Carothers, T. (2019). *Defending Civic Space: Is the International Community Stuck?* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/10/22/defending-civic-space-is-international-community-stuck-pub-80110

Björkdahl et al. (2015). Translating UNSCR 1325 From the Global to the National: Protection, Representation and Participation in the National Action Plans of Bosnia-Herzegovina

and Rwanda. Conflict, Security & Development, 15(4), 311-335.
Boege, V., Brown, A., Clements, K., & Nolan, A. (2009). Building Peace and Political Community in Hybrid Political Orders. *International Peacekeeping*, *16*(5), 599–615. https://doi.org/10.1080/13533310903303248
Botea, I., & Del Bono, M. (2022). *A Tale of Two Countries: Labor Market Profiles of Youth in Urban and Rural Cameroon.* The World Bank, Jobs Group. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/196e784e-4535-5b8f-8470-367a0491b996/content
Bonnell, V. E., & Hunt, L. (Eds.). (2023). *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* (Vol. 34). Univ of California Press.
Bouta, T., Frerks, G., & Bannon, I. (2005). *Gender, Conflict, and Development*. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications.
Boutros-Ghali, B. (1992). *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, Peacemaking, and Peace-keeping*. United Nations. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/145749?ln=en&v=pdf
Cameroon People's Democratic Movement. (n.d.). Site Web Officiel du RDPC. Retrieved April 18, 2025, from https://www.rdpcpdm.cm/
Castillejo, C. (2017). Dilemmas and Experiences of International Support for Inclusive peacebuilding. Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF).
Cerezo et al. (2020). Identity As Resistance: Identity Formation at the Intersection of Race, Gender Identity, and Sexual Orientation. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *44*(1), 67-83.
Chandler, D., & Chandler, D. (2004). The Constructivist Thesis. Constructing Global Civil Society: Morality and Power in International Relations, 25-56.
Chandler, D. (2004). The Responsibility to Protect? Imposing the "Liberal Peace". International Peacekeeping, 11(1), 59–81. https://doi.org/10.1080/1353331042000228454
Cho, S. Y., Connors, E., Fatima, F., & Yalim, U. (2015, March 13). Preventing post-election violence based on the Kenyan experience. Stanford University. https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Cho-Connors-Fatima-Yalim-Preventing-Post-Election-Violence-Based-on-the-Kenyan-Experience.pdf
Clark, S. (2022). 'The 'Local-Visual Turn': Understanding Peacebuilding in Post-conflict Societies Using Photo-elicitation. Peacebuilding, 12(1), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2022.2085941
Chitando, A. (Ed.). (2021). Women and Peacebuilding in Africa. *Routledge.*
Cohn, C., Kinsella, H., & Gibbings, S. (2004). Women, Peace and Security Resolution 1325. International Feminist Journal of Politics, 6(1), 130–140.
Cox, R. W. (1981). Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory. *Millennium*, *10*(2), 126-155.
Cuhadar, E., & Druckman, D. (2015). Let the People Speak! What Kind of Civil Society Inclusion Leads to Durable Peace? International Negotiation, 20(1), 1–35.
Danielsson, A. (2020). *Transcending Binaries in Critical Peacebuilding Scholarship to Address "Inclusivity" Projects.* Third World Quarterly, 41(7), 1085–1102.

https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2020.1760087
Davenport, C. (2007). *State Repression and Political Order*. Annual Review of Political Science, 10(1), 1–23.
Davies, G., Barbelet, V., & Mayhew, L. (2024). Reducing Violence and Strengthening Protection of Civilians: Debunking Assumptions. HPG Policy Brief. London: ODI Global. https://media.odi.org/documents/HPG_protection_policy_brief_final.pdf
DeCuir-Gunby, J. T., Marshall, P. L., & McCulloch, A. W. (2011). Developing and Using Codebook for the Analysis of Interview Data: An Example from a Professional Development Research Project. *Field Methods*, *23*(2), 136-155.
Desai, V., & Potter, R. (Eds.). (2006). *Doing Development Research*. Sage.
Dépelteau, F. (2000). La Démarche d'une Recherche en Sciences Humaines : De la Question de Départ à la Communication des Résultats. Presses de l'Université Laval
De Waal, A. (2017). Inclusion in Peacemaking: From Moral Claim to Political Fact. In The Fabric of Peace in Africa: Looking Beyond the State (pp. 165–186).
Dharmadasa, V. (n.d.). Inclusion of Women and Youth Peacebuilders. Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC). Retrieved April 18, 2025, from https://www.gppac.net/what-we-do/inclusion-women-and-youth-peacebuilders
Does, A. (2013). Inclusivity and Local Perspectives in Peacebuilding: Issues, Lessons, Challenges.
Donais, T. (2012). Peacebuilding and Local Ownership: Post-conflict Consensus-building. Routledge.
Donais, T. (2015). Operationalizing Local Ownership. In Local Ownership in International Peacebuilding (pp. 39–54). Routledge.
De Jonge Oudraat, C., & Brown, M. E. (2020). Gender and Security: Framing the Agenda. *The Gender and Security Agenda*, 1-27.
Donais, T. (2008). Understanding Local Ownership in Security Sector Reform. In T. Donais (Ed.), *Local Ownership and Security Sector Reform*. DCAF Yearbook 2008. Geneva: Lit Verlag.
Donais, T. (2009). Empowerment or Imposition? Dilemmas of Local Ownership in Post-conflict Peacebuilding processes. *Peace & change*, *34*(1), 3-26.
Dupuits, E. (2016). Actors other than States: The Role of Civil Society and NGOs as Drivers of Change. *Environment, Climate Change and International Relations*, *114*
Dze-Ngwa, W. (2015). The First World War and Its Aftermath in Cameroon: A Historical
Džuverović, N. (2021). 'To Romanticise or not to Romanticise the Local': Local Agency and Peacebuilding in the Balkans. *Conflict, Security & Development*, *21*(1), 21-41.
Enonchong, L. S. E. (2021). *The Constitution and Governance in Cameroon* (p. 272). Taylor & Francis.
Ekah, R. E. (2020). The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon: A Geopolitical Analysis. Retrieved from https://ssrn.com/abstract=3529815 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3529815.SSRN

3529815
Engel, U., & Nugent, P. (2007). Introduction: The Spatial turn in African Studies. In *Respacing Africa* (pp. 1-9). Brill
Elias, M. (2023, March 13). *What is Behind Kenya's Protest Movement?* Crisis Group. https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/east-and-southern-africa/kenya/what-behind-kenyas-protest-movement
Ejdus, F. (2017). Local ownership as International Governmentality: Evidence from the EU Mission in the Horn of Africa. Contemporary Security Policy, 39(1), 28–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2017.1384231
Freedom House. (2020). Mali: Freedom in the World 2020 country report. https://freedomhouse.org/country/mali/freedom-world/2020
Freedom House. (2022). Cameroon: Freedom in the World 2022 country report. https://freedomhouse.org/country/cameroon/freedom-world/2022
Forje, J. W. (1999). Building a Vibrant State-Civil Society in Cameroon Facing the Changes of the New Millennium. https://journals.openedition.org/apad/461
Fofung, A., & Mbapndah, A. (2020, September 14). *Cameroon: Major National Dialogue was a Colossal Failure of Historic Proportions—Federalist Society leader Dr. Wilson Lobe Eseme.* Pan African Visions. https://panafricanvisions.com/2020/09/cameroon-major-national-dialogue-was-a-colossal-failure-of-historic-proportions-federalist-society-leader-dr-wilson-lobe-eseme/
Fuh, N. V. (2024). An Appraisal of the Major National Dialogue as a Panacea to the Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon. *Journalism*, *14*(1), 31-51.
Galtung, J. (1975). Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding. In J. Galtung (Ed.), Peace, War and Defense - Essays in Peace Research (Vol. 2, pp. 282-304). Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers.
Gandhi, J. (2008). *Political Institutions Under Dictatorship.* New York: Cambridge University Press.
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2024). Political situation in Cameroon. https://www.bmz.de/en/countries/cameroon/political-situation-52202
Gerring, J. (2007). Case Selection for Case study Analysis: Qualitative and Quantitative Techniques. In C. Boix & S. C. Stokes (Eds.), The Oxford handbook of comparative politics (pp. 645–684). Oxford University Press.
Gramsci, A. (2020). Selections from the Prison Notebooks. In *The Applied Theatre Reader* (pp. 141-142). Routledge.
Heather L. Johnson, 'Narrating Entanglements: Rethinking the Local/Global Divide in Ethnographic Migration Research'. *International Political Sociology* 10, no. 4 (2016): 383–97.
Hendricks, C. (2017). Progress and Challenges in Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the African Union's Peace and Security Architecture. *Africa Development*, *42*(3), 73-98.
Hellmüller, S. (2013). *The Power of Perceptions: Localizing International Peacebuilding*

Approaches. International Peacekeeping, 20(2), 219–232.
Hirblinger, A. T., & Landau, D. M. (2021). Inclusive of whom, and for what purpose? Strategies of inclusion in peacemaking. In *Rethinking Peace Mediation* (pp. 115-138). Bristol University Press
Holmes, A. G. D. (2020). Researcher Positionality: A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research-A New Researcher Guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, *8*(4), 1-10.
Hossain et al. (2019). *Development Needs Civil Society: Implications for Sustainable Development Goals*. Geneva: ACT Alliance
Inclusive Peace. (2021). Can Inclusive Peace Processes Work? https://www.inclusivepeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/briefing-note-can-inclusive-processes-work-en.pdf
Interpeace (2018). Local Leadership to Local ownership – An Essential Element for Effective Peacebuilding and conflict prevention. https://www.interpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Why_Local_ownership_matters-policy_note-21-Sept.pdf
Interpeace. (2012). *Inclusiveness and peacebuilding: Operational Perspectives*. Geneva: Interpeace.
Interpeace. (2017, October). Track 6: A Strategy for Inclusive Peacebuilding. https://www.interpeace.org/fr/2017/10/strategy-inclusive-peacebuilding/
International Crisis Group. (2015, October 9). Crisis Group Congratulates the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet. https://www.crisisgroup.org/who-we-are/crisis-group-updates/crisis-group-congratulates-tunisian-national-dialogue-quartet
International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. (2024). Democracy tracker – Cameroon. https://www.idea.int/democracytracker/country/cameroon
International Crisis Group. (2017). Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis at the Crossroads. Retrieved from https://media.africaportal.org/documents/cameroons-Anglophone-crisis-at-the-crossroads_1.pdf
Julian, R., Bliesemann de Guevara, B., & Redhead, R. (2019). From Expert to Experiential Knowledge: Exploring the Inclusion of Local Experiences in Understanding Violence in Conflict. *Peacebuilding*, *7*(2),
Jungkvist, K., & Jarstad, A. (2021). *Revisiting the Local Turn in Peacebuilding – through the Emerging urban Approach.* Third World Quarterly, 42(10), 2209–2226. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1929148
Kange, A. E. (2006). *Governance Challenges and Opportunities: A Qualitative Exploration of Leadership in Cameroon*. Capella University.
Kant, I. (1795). 1991.'Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch'. *Kant: Political Writings. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (93–130)*.
Kaldor, M. (2001). New Types of Conflict. *Gewalt und Konflikt in einer globalisierten Welt: Festschrift für Ulrich Albrecht*, 24-50.
Kendhammer B & Sullivan R. (2022). Peacebuilding Needs Local Partners — But How Do You

Define 'Local'? https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/08/peacebuilding-needs-local-partners-how-do-you-define-local

King, G., Keohane, R. O., & Verba, S. (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press.

Konde, E. (2008). *African Women and Politics: Knowledge, Gender, and Power in Male-dominated Cameroon*. Nordic Africa Institute.

Kofi Annan Foundation. (2010, December 3). *The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation: Two years on, where are we?* Report of the meeting. Nairobi, Kenya. https://www.kofiannanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/KA_KNDR2010_FULLReport2011_0.pdf

Labonte, M. T. (2012). From Patronage to Peacebuilding? Elite Capture and Governance from Below in Sierra Leone. African Affairs, 111(442), 90–115.

Lambek, M. (2011). Catching the Local. *Anthropological Theory*, *11*(2), 197-221.

Larmer, M. (2010). Social Movement Struggles in Africa. *Review of African political economy*, *37*(125), 251-262.

Lederach, J. P. (1997). Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies. *Washington, DC: USIP*

Lederach, J. P., & Appleby, R. S. (2010). Strategic Peacebuilding: An Overview. *Strategies of Peace: Transforming Conflict in a Violent World*, 19-44.

Leonardsson, H., & Rudd, G. (2015). The 'Local Turn' in Peacebuilding: A Literature Review of Effective and Emancipatory Local Peacebuilding. *Third world quarterly*, *36*(5), 825-839.

Ljungkvist, K., & Jarstad, A. (2021). Revisiting the Local Turn in Peacebuilding–through the Emerging Urban Approach. *Third World Quarterly*, *42*(10), 2209-2226.

Mahmoud, Y. (2023). How Can the UN Sustaining Peace Agenda Live Up to Its Potential?.In *Adaptive Peacebuilding: A New Approach to Sustaining Peace in the 21st Century* (pp. 49-90). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Mac Ginty, R., & Richmond, O. P. (2013). The Local Turn in Peace Building: A Critical Agenda for Peace. *Third world quarterly*, *34*(5), 763-783.

Mac Ginty, R., & Mac Ginty, R. (2011). Hybridity. *International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance: Hybrid Forms of Peace*, 68-90.

Maiese, M., Burgess, G., & Burgess, H. (2003). Levels of Action (summarizing John Paul Lederach). Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Beyond Intractability.

Mbapndah, N., & Samah, W. (2009). German Colonialism and the Cameroonian Chieftaincy Institution, 1884-1916: The Politics of Convenience, Tyranny and Hegemony. *Lagos Historical Review*. Retrieved from doi: 10.4314/lhr.v9i1.48055

Mbaku, J. M., & Takougang, J. (Eds.). (2004). *The Leadership Challenge in Africa: Cameroon Under Paul Biya*. Africa World Press.

McGhie, M. P., & Wamai, E. N. (2011, March 01). Beyond the Numbers: Women's Participation in the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation. *Africa Portal*. Retrieved from

https://www.africaportal.org/publications/beyond-the-numbers-womens-participation-in-the-kenya-national-dialogue-and-reconciliation/

McKibbin, G., Duncan, R., Hamilton, B., Humphreys, C., & Kellett, C. (2015). The Intersectional Turn in Feminist theory: A response to Carbin and Edenheim (2013). *European Journal of Women's Studies*, *22*(1), 99-103.

Mia, M. (2016). National Dialogue Quartet in Democratic Transition of Tunisia: An Analysis. *Asian Studies*, *35*, pp.125-134. Retrieved from http://govpoliju.com/upload/research_file/asian-studies-2016.pdf#page=127

Mission 21. (2025). *Education for Secure Livelihoods in Cameroon*. https://www.mission-21.org/en/projects/secured-life-basics-through-education/

Mitchell, C. R., & Hancock, L. E. (Eds.). (2012). *Local Peacebuilding and National Peace: Interaction between grassroots and elite processes*. A&C Black.

Migrationsverket, L. (2023, January 4). The Cameroon Anglophone Crisis (2021 – 2023) https://lifos.migrationsverket.se/dokument?documentAttachmentId=50140

Mobekk, E. (2011). Security Sector Reform and the Challenges of Ownership. In M. Sedra (Ed.) *The Future of Security Sector Reform*. Ontario: The Centre for International Governance Innovation

Morse, Y. L. (2021). *The Legislature as Political Control: Change and Continuity in Cameroon's National Assembly (1973–2019).* The Journal of Modern African Studies, 59(4), 485–506.

Moussi, C. A. (2020). *Women, Peace and Security in Cameroon: The Missing Voices of the Anglophone crisis.* LSE Women, Peace and Security.

Mohan, S. (2002). Role and Relevance of Civil Society Organizations. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, *63* (2/3), 193-211.

Moinina, V. & Nlem, A. P. N. (2020). The Role of the Civil Society in Conflicts: The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon, *AHBV Akdeniz Havzası ve Afrika Medeniyetleri Dergisi (AKAF)*, *2*(2), 26-36.

Müller, K. B. (2006). *The Civil Society–State Relationship in Contemporary Discourse: A Complementary Account from Giddens' Perspective*. The British Journal of Politics and International Relations, 8(2), 311-330.

Muggah, R., & Altpeter, C. (2014). *Peacebuilding and Post-conflict Recovery: What Works and What Does not?* International Peace Institute. https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/1407_ief_peacebuilding_and_postconflict_recovery.pdf

Murray, E., & Stigant, S. (Eds.). (2021). *National Dialogues in Peacebuilding and Transitions: Creativity and Adaptive thinking.* United States Institute of Peace.

Nathan, L. (2007). *No Ownership, No Commitment: A Guide to Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform*. Birmingham: Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform, University of Birmingham.

Newsday Cameroon (2019): Christopher Fomunyoh Snubs Grand National Dialogue, Replaced by Simon Munzu in One of the Commissions. In: Newsday Cameroon, 1 October 2019. Retrieved from https://newsdaycameroon.wordpress.com/2019/10/01/christopher-

fomunyoh-snubs-grandnational-dialogue-replaced-by-simon-munzu-in-one-of-the-commissions/

Ndekwo, R. (2020). *National Dialogue as a Strategy for Intra-state Conflict Resolution in Africa: the Case Study of Anglophone Cameroon* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).

Ndifor, B. F. (2014). The Politicization of the Cameroon Judicial System. *J. Glob. Just. & Pub. Policy*, *1*(27), pp. 28-58. Retrieved from, SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3172973

Norwegian Nobel Committee. (2015, October 9). The Nobel Peace Prize for 2015. NobelPrize.org. https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2015/press-release

Nzouankeu, J. M. (1993). The Role of the National Conference in the Transition to Democracy in Africa: The cases of Benin and Mali. African Issues, 21(1-2), 44–50.

Nyamnjoh, F., & Rowlands, M. (1998). Elite Associations and the Politics of Belonging in Cameroon. *Africa*, *68*(3), 320-337.

Nzouankeu, J. M. (1993). The Role of the National Conference in the Transition to Democracy in Africa: The cases of Benin and Mali. African Issues, 21(1–2), 44–50.

Obi, C. I. (2008). *No Choice, But Democracy: Prising the People out of Politics in Africa?* Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University; Nordiska Afrikainstitutet

Odendaal, A. (2021). Local Infrastructures for Peace. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190904418.013.43

O'Grady, S. (2019). Divided by Language: Cameroon's Crackdown on its English-Speaking Minority is Fueling Support for a Secessionist Movement. *The Washington Post.* Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/world/cameroon-Anglophone-crisis/

Orock, R. (2021). Cameroon's Separatist War: Anglophone Grievances and Its Diaspora. *South Africa Institute for International Affairs.* Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep36163.pdf

Orvis, S. (2001). Civil Society in Africa or African Civil Society? *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, *36*(1), 17-38.

OXFAM International (2020). Born to Lead: Recommendations on increasing women's participation in South Sudan's peace process. Retrieved from https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620934/bp-south-sudan-women-peace-processes-300120-en.pdf

OXFAM International. (2014). The African Union Compendium. Retrieved from https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/african-union-compendium

Paradis, E.K. (2000). Feminist and Community Psychology Ethics in Research with Homeless Women. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 28(6), 839–858.

Paris, R. (2010). Saving Liberal Peacebuilding. *Review of international studies*, *36*(2), 337-365.

Paffenholz, T. (Ed.). (2010). *Civil Society & Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment* (pp. 43-64). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Paffenholz, T., & Ross, N. (2015). Inclusive Peace Processes—An Introduction. *Development*

Dialogue, *63*(1), 28-37.
Paffenholz, T. (2014). Civil Society and Peace Negotiations: Beyond the Inclusion-Exclusion Dichotomy. *Negotiation Journal*, *30*(1), 69-91.
Paffenholz, T. (2015). Unpacking the Local Turn in Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment Towards an Agenda for Future Research. *Third world quarterly*, *36*(5), 857-874.
Paffenholz, T., Poppelreuter, P., & Ross, N. (2023). Toward a Third Local Turn: Identifying and Addressing Obstacles to Localization in Peacebuilding. *Negotiation Journal*, *39*(4), 349-375.
Paffenholz, T., Ross, N., Dixon, S., Schluchter, A.-L., & True, J. (2016). Making Women Count Not just Counting Women: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on Peace Negotiations. *Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative and UN Women.*
Paffenholz, T., Zachariassen, A., & Helfer, C. (2017). What Makes or Breaks National Dialogues? Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative.
Paffenholz, T. Philip Poppelreuter, Nicholas Ross; Toward a Third Local Turn: Identifying and Addressing Obstacles to Localization in Peacebuilding. *Negotiation Journal*2023; 39 (4): 349–375. doi: https://doi.org/10.1111/nejo.12444
Papagianni, K. (2014). *National Dialogue Processes in Oolitical transitions*. EPLO.
Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon (2019, September 10). *President Paul BIYA convenes Major National Dialogue*. https://www.prc.cm/en/news/3779-nord-ouest-sud-ouest-paul-
Prime Minister Office – Cameroon. (2019, September 18). Prime Minister pursues pre-dialogue consultations. https://www.spm.gov.cm/site/prime-minister-pursues-pre-dialogue-consultations
Pommerolle, M. E., & Heungoup, H. D. M. (2017). The "Anglophone Crisis": A Tale of the Cameroonian Postcolony. *African Affairs*, *116*(464), 526-538.
Pouligny, B. (2005). Civil Society and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Ambiguities of International Programmes aimed at Building 'new'societies. *Security dialogue*, *36*(4), 495-510.
Ramsbotham, O. (2016). *When Conflict Resolution Fails: an Alternative to Negotiation and Dialogue: Engaging Radical Disagreement in Intractable Conflicts*. John Wiley & Sons
Randazzo, E. (2017). Beyond Liberal Peacebuilding: A Critical Exploration of the Local Turn. *Routledge.*
Richmond, O. P., & Mac Ginty, R. (2015). Where Now for the Critique of the Liberal Peace?. *Cooperation and Conflict*, *50*(2), 171-189.
Richmond, O. (2024). The Use and Misuse of the 'Local Turn.' Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=4818705 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4818705
Rousseau, J. J. (1987). 1762. The Social Contract. *The Basic Political Writings*.
Ryan, Stephen. 2013. ''The Evolution of Peacebuilding''. In *Routledge Handbook of Peacebuilding,* edited by Roger Mac Ginty, 25-35. London: Routledge.
Ruppel, S. (2021). *Power Imbalances and Peace Building: A Participatory Approach between Local and International Actors.* Africa Amani Journal, 8(1), 1–29.
Sadowski, I. (2009). The Contextuality of the Concept of Civil Society-from Particular Meanings

to the Common Vector of Emancipation. *Polish Sociological Review*, *165*(1), 63-80.
Seawright, J., & Gerring, J. (2008). Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options. *Political Research Quarterly*, *61*(2), 294-308.
Secretary-General, U. N. (2005). In larger freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for all: Report of the Secretary-General.
Shepherd, L. J. (2016). Sex, Security and Superhero (in)es: From 1325 to 1820 and Beyond. In Gender, Governance and International Security (pp. 16–33). Routledge.
Suazo, A. E. (2013). *Tools of Change: Long-term Inclusion in Peace Processes*. PRAXIS: The Fletcher Journal of Human Security, 28(1), 5–27.
Tresbosc, C. (2023, May 12). *What Can be Learned from the Local Turn in International Peacebuilding?* https://www.peaceagency.org/what-can-be-learned-from-the-local-turn-in- international- peacebuilding/#:~:text=In%20theory%2C%20the%20local%20turn,and%20the%20localization%20of%20practice
Traniello, M. (2008). Power-sharing: Lessons from South Africa and Rwanda. *International Public Policy Review*, *3*(2), 28-43
Tripp, A. M. (2015). Women and Power in Post-conflict Africa. *Cambridge University Press*.
The Berghof Foundation (2023). National Dialogues at crossroads: A series. https://berghof-foundation.org/files/publications/2023_BF-National-Dialogues-x-Climate- Change.pdf
The Elephant. (2020, October 16). *The Role of Kenyan Civil Society in Democratic Governance*. https://www.theelephant.info/opinion/2020/10/16/the-role-of-kenyan-civil-society-in-democratic-governance/
Tschirgi, Necla. 2013. ‘’Securitisation and Peacebuilding’’. In *Routledge Handbook of Peacebuilding,* edited by Roger Mac Ginty, 197-210. London: Routledge.
Xinwa, S. (2020). Freedom Under Siege: The Shrinking Civic Space and Violations of Freedom of Association and Assembly in Sub-Saharan Africa: Strategies for Countering Restrictions. *CSVR.* Retrieved from *https://media.africaportal.org/documents/Freedom* Under_Siege_for_Web.pdf
United Nations Security Council. (2019). Situation in Mali - Report of the Secretary-General (S/2019/983). https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/situation-mali-report-secretary-general-s2019983
United Nations Security Council. (2020, December 28). Situation in Mali - Report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/1281). https://press.un.org/en/2020/sgsm20117.doc.htm
United Nations. (2021). A new agenda for peace: Building peace for future generations. United Nations.https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-new-agenda-for-peace-en.pdf
Unah, L. (2019). Why Are Young Anglophone Men Taking Up Arms to Fight Cameroon’s Military? *TRT World*. Retrieved from https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/why-are-Anglophone-men-taking-up-arms-to-fight-cameroon-s-military-20275
UNHCR (2020). More Cameroonian Refugees Flee to Nigeria, Bringing Total Arrivals Close to

60,000 Mark. Retrieved from https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2020/2/5e452d2b4/cameroonian-refugees-flee-nigeria-bringing-total-arrivals-close-60000-mark.html

UN Women. (2020). Intersectional Feminism: What It Means and Why it Matters Right now. *UN Women*.

United Nations. (2001, April 20). No Exit Without Strategy: Security Council Decision-Making and the Closure or Transition of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (S/2001/394). https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/PKO%20S%202001%20394.pdf

United Nations & World Bank. (2018). Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict. https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/publication/pathways-for-peace-inclusive-approaches-to-preventing-violent-conflict

Van Leeuwen, M., Nindorera, J., Kambale Nzweve, J. L., & Corbijn, C. (2019). The 'Local Turn' and Notions of Conflict and Peacebuilding – Reflections on local peace committees in Burundi and eastern DR Congo. Peacebuilding, 8(3), 279–299. https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2019.1633760

Wade, C. J. (2016). Captured Peace: Elites and Peacebuilding in El Salvador. *Ohio University Press.*

Wilson Center. (2023). Narrowing the Gap between Local and International Peacebuilding Efforts in South Sudan. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/narrowing-the-gap-between-local-and-international-peacebuilding-efforts-south-sudan

Zartman, I. W., Wallensteen, P., Högbladh, S., Nathan, L., Abu-Nimer, M., Lundgren, M., ... & Schwoebel, M. H. (2023). *Conflict Mediation in the Arab World*. Syracuse University Press.

Zahar, M. J., & McCandless, E. (2020). Sustaining Peace One Day at Time: Inclusion, Transition Crises, and the Resilience of Social Contracts. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, *14*(1), 119-138.

CHAPTER TWO

HARNESSING THE POWER OF INCLUSION: THE POLITICS OF NATIONAL DIALOGUES FOR PEACEBUILDING IN AFRICA

2.1 Introduction

Inclusion is often framed as the active involvement of local actors – particularly those affected by the conflict in peacebuilding. Achieving higher levels of inclusion in peace processes has been associated with sustainable peace.[1] The issue of inclusion is crucial in African peacebuilding processes, given that conflicts often stem from grave power imbalances. The continent's diverse cultural and ethnic composition also accounts for why inclusion is critical. The persistence of intra-state conflict across Africa seems to have fueled the search for better conflict resolution mechanisms. National dialogues have been proposed as a tool for conflict resolution and political transformation.[2] The primary goal of most national dialogue processes is to bring together all relevant stakeholders for an inclusive and broad-based discussion.[3] As a technique for conflict resolution and/or political reform, national dialogues are used to extend discourse beyond a typical elite-driven, top-down model.[4] However, there is a risk of overestimating national dialogues and their capacity to generate transformative impacts.[5] In sub-Saharan Africa, national dialogues have been initiated to deal with a wide range of issues, including political reforms, constitution-making, peacebuilding, and social cohesion.[6] Notwithstanding, they have also been misused and manipulated by authoritarian regimes to consolidate power[7]and buy time, notably for military preparation in anticipation of domestic violence.[8] As shown in Chart 1, the number of national dialogues organized to resolve intra-state conflicts in different African contexts has increased since 2008.[9] While these dialogues have succeeded in curbing violence in some contexts, many have been criticized for failing to produce the desired results. Recently, Stigant and Murray described national dialogue as a process: 1) that encompasses a broad set of issues or problems; 2) exists outside the permanent institutions of governance; 3) that must have buy-in from key stakeholders positioned to implement post-dialogue recommendations.[10] While many studies on national dialogues have compared dialogue processes across Africa and other regions, only a few have demonstrated that not all forms of inclusion are equal or meaningful in African dialogues. Even

so, fewer attempts have been made to analyze key factors such as civil society and elites' inclusion/exclusion shaping national dialogue processes and their outcomes across the region.[11]

Additionally, African dialogue processes are often characterized by numerous inefficiencies and lack of meaningful inclusion of opposition, activists, and marginalized actors such as civil society and women.[12] Many scholars have argued that a broader inclusion of CSOs in national dialogues increases the credibility of the process while contributing to sustainable outcomes.[13] The civil society is an arena encompassing the collective actions and institutional structures that emerge from shared interests, purposes, and values outside the domains of the state, family, and market.[14] These organizations are characterized by their autonomous nature, a strong sense of civic virtue, and active engagement in the public sphere.[15] If included in dialogue processes, marginalized civil society actors such as women can contribute to fostering advocacy and mediation in policy development, identifying development priorities, fostering and criticizing problematic policies, and proposing practical solutions.[16] Inclusion can come in many forms. For example, in the Kenyan national dialogue process, civil society organizations were never official delegates. Yet, they provided technical input by advocating certain positions to the mediation team and lobbying the public for more productive dialogue.[17] Notwithstanding, including civil society in peace processes like national dialogues does not automatically guarantee their success; the way in which they are included and their voices represented matters. The overarching question of this chapter is: how does the politics of civil society inclusion shape dialogue outcomes in Africa and influence the meaningful participation of local actors in peacebuilding? This research contributes to the growing literature on national dialogues by analyzing key elements of national dialogues and how these factors shaped dialogue processes and outcomes in four African comparator cases. Despite the differences in historical and political contexts within which each dialogue took place, the overarching goal of each was to end violence and build peace while resolving some of the most contentious political problems in these countries. Although none of the dialogue processes studied provided sustainable and long-lasting solutions to political violence, the outcomes in Kenya and Tunisia demonstrated more meaningful inclusion and substantive involvement by a broader range of local actors. This sets them apart from the more elite driven and exclusionary processes observed in Mali and South Sudan. In the cases of Kenya and Tunisia, the analysis focuses only on the successes of the 2008 and 2013 national dialogue processes, respectively, and lessons that could be learned from these and the other two processes to build more sustainable dialogues in the future.

Since the inclusion modalities employed in the national dialogue processes of Mali (2019) and South Sudan (2016) hindered their overall effectiveness, no substantial progress has been observed in these countries. Moreover, the timing of these dialogues will also be considered in the analysis to better understand the context and conditions that influenced their outcomes. The puzzle here is, what aspects of inclusion were approached differently, and how did this influence varied peacebuilding outcomes in the four cases?

Chart 1: National Dialogues in Africa, 2008-2023

Year	Country
2008	Kenya
2011	Mauritania
2013	Tunisia
2014	Nigeria
2015	Sudan
2016	D.R Congo
	Mauritania
	South Sudan
2017	Gabon
2018	Equatorial-Guinea
	Lesotho
2019	Benin
	Burkina Faso
	Cameroon
	Mali
	Zambia
	Zimbabwe
2020	Cote d'Ivoire
	Central African Republic
	Libya
2021	Ethiopia
2022	Chad
2023	Egypt

Source: *[Google Maps]. African map (with added information) showing timelines and countries where dialogues have been organized between 2008-2023. The red markers indicate the four comparator cases.*

2.2 Methodology

This qualitative research relied on secondary sources of data. It applied contextual and descriptive approaches and observations to accumulate information about a purposive sample of four African dialogue processes. For a balanced analysis, two of the four cases selected were in countries where national dialogues demonstrated relatively meaningful levels of genuine inclusion: Kenya and Tunisia. The other two cases focused on countries where dialogues were marked by limited or superficial inclusion and were therefore largely unproductive: Mali and South Sudan. Though those contexts differ, key patterns and trends were identified from an in-depth inductive analysis of the information gathered. Relevant journals, reports, newspapers, monographs, and other articles were searched through the University of Ottawa and Carleton University libraries using online library tools and databases such as Factiva and Academic Search Complete. A combination of keywords or search strings such as "national dialogue and Kenya," "national and dialogue and Mali," "Arab Spring and dialogue and Tunisia," "South Sudan and national dialogue," etc., were used to retrieve the most relevant search results. Considering the controversies involved in using newspapers as a secondary data source, information obtained from newspapers was triangulated with data from other secondary sources to control editorial bias. Secondary data was also obtained from reports by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), UN agencies, and the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State Building. Press statements, announcements, and related information were collected from official websites and social media handles of the United Nations, the Berghof Foundation, and national governments. In addition, observations were made from live video recordings of dialogue consultations and from published debates on dialogue processes in the countries under study. The rest of this paper is structured as follows: the next part engages in a theoretical discussion on the local turn and inclusion. An empirical analysis of secondary data is then conducted to reveal the advantages of inclusion in Kenya and Tunisia and the barriers or illusory aspects of inclusion in South Sudan and Mali. The paper concludes by summarizing the research findings, highlighting the complexities of inclusion within the local turn framework.

2.3. Power and Inclusion in Dialogue

As previously discussed, one of the key limitations of inclusion in the local turn approaches is its assumption that all local actors are equal or can have equal representation in peace processes.[18]

This assumption is largely due to the fact that by the 1990s, peacebuilding research was primarily focused on identifying and discussing the approaches and achievements of external actors in ending armed conflicts and wars.[19] Over time, peacebuilding practices evolved, realizing that achieving sustainable peace requires involving a broad range of actors and approaches.[20] This growing complexity has made it necessary to distinguish between different actors in local peacebuilding. Importantly, there is a need to disaggregate the "domestic actors" category, as they operate with differing capacities, interests, and sources of influence. While national actors are often seen as central to peacebuilding efforts, the contributions of non-state actors (whose legitimacy frequently derives from grassroots engagement, social embeddedness, and moral authority) can also advance sustainable peace.[21] As we shall see in this chapter, national elites, often possessing substantial political or economic influence, can play facilitative roles in peace processes. Yet, their involvement may also lead to the instrumentalization of inclusion for strategic political gains. Civil society organizations, professional associations, and national social movements typically pursue broader participatory aims, drawing on their societal credibility and moral standing to foster more inclusive and legitimate outcomes. Moreover, to provide insights on how peacebuilding efforts can be improved, Anderson and Olson underscore the importance of clarity in defining and understanding peacebuilding practices, ensuring that efforts remain focused and effective.[22] Doing so will ensure that interventions do not inadvertently contribute to conflict or undermine local capacities.[23] Even so, considering that national dialogue processes are inherently political, such processes can be influenced by existing power dynamics and social inequalities.[24] This explains why the way power is construed and used in dialogue processes can impact its outcomes.

Furthermore, the emphasis on the role of civil society organizations in sustainable peacebuilding has also been dominated by the works of Crocker et al.,[25] Whitfield,[26] Reychler, and Paffenholz.[27] These scholars argue that CSOs play a vital role in enhancing the legitimacy, inclusivity, and resilience of peacebuilding processes. They often do so by representing the interests of marginalized voices, thus bridging the gap between political elites and local communities and fostering broader societal ownership of peace initiatives. These studies underline the need to move beyond state-centric models of peacebuilding and recognize the multifaceted contributions of civil society actors. Despite these studies, Paffenholz argues that the increase in peacebuilding initiatives has not been matched by in-depth research and debate on the nexus of civil society and

peacebuilding until recently.[28] Notwithstanding, the analysis of civil society's role in national dialogues to build peace and the politics of their inclusion (as well as how these factors contribute to effectiveness) remains insufficient. A 2006 study analyzing 22 peace negotiations over 15 years by Wanis-St. John and Kew found that there is a positive correlation between the degree of civil society involvement in peace negotiations and the sustainability of agreements.[29] This suggests a correlation between civil society inclusion and durable peacebuilding. The above correlation also supports the core assumption of the local turn, that engaging those affected by violence in peace processes increases the likelihood of outcomes that reflect the needs and realities of people in those communities.[30] Therefore, from the local turn perspective, inclusion holds the potential to yield positive outcomes when it is genuine and grounded in local legitimacy and ownership. However, despite civil society's critical role in peacebuilding, Wanis-St. John and Kew's research also cautioned against neglecting various factors in the inclusion process, such as the diversity of actors and the quality of civil society inclusion. This caution suggests that the local turn's emphasis on inclusion may encounter practical implementation challenges in some contexts.

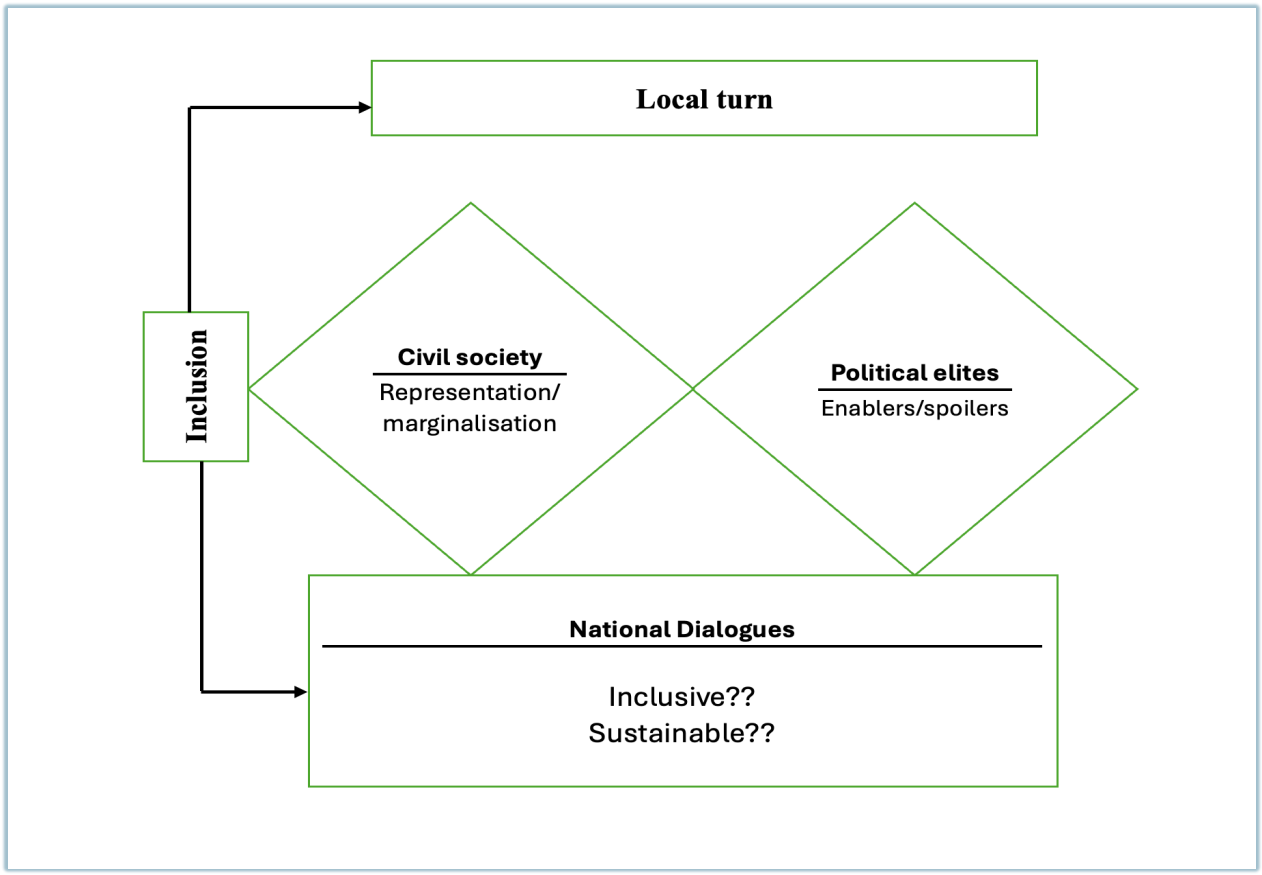
According to Aall, civil society actors, social movements, and other structured nonstate actors, if genuinely included in peace processes, can complement national elites by bringing their unique resources, expertise, and perspectives to enhance the effectiveness of local peacebuilding.[31] This understanding has been justified in several studies across different case studies using context-specific examples of opportunities and challenges faced by nonstate actors, particularly those related to inclusion and mechanisms of inclusion in peacebuilding. Some of these studies include those conducted by Foley in El Salvador,[32] Belloni in Bosnia,[33] and Orjuela in Sri Lanka,[34] etc. Similar studies have been conducted in Africa by Maingi on civil society in Kenya,[35]Ginanjar on civil society in South Sudan,[36] and more recently by Annan et al. on Cameroon and within the context of the Anglophone crisis.[37] These studies show that at the local and national level, non-state actors and social movements play key roles in peacebuilding. Moreover, in addition to civil society's role in shaping dialogue outcomes, other actors, particularly the national elites, have played key roles in influencing the direction of dialogue processes.

In recent times, scholars have increasingly focused on the accumulation and distribution of wealth and power among specific groups in a society.[38] This renewed interest has led to a resurgence of studies on elites, with many of these studies shedding light on the various ways elites exert

influence over politics and the economy.[39] There are multiple channels through which elite power and control manifest, providing a more nuanced understanding of their impact on local turn and national dialogues. The predominant focus of most studies in local peacebuilding has been on examining the role of external actors and revealing how they may neglect the contributions of domestic actors,[40]particularly civil society. As a result, the literature on the local turn often falls short in discussing the influence of national elites in shaping peacebuilding processes.[41] This research gap emphasizes the need for further exploration of elite involvement in local peacebuilding initiatives to comprehend better their impact on the overall effectiveness and sustainability that the local turn aims to achieve. Elite contributions to peace processes can manifest in two forms: either as facilitators who support and promote conflict resolution or as spoilers who hinder and obstruct peacebuilding efforts.[42] In some African contexts, elite involvement has positively influenced peaceful transitions. For example, in South Africa, cooperation between Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk during the early 1990s facilitated the nation's shift from conflict to democracy.[43] Similarly, in Kenya, elite-level mediation in 2008 resolved the post-election crisis, resulting in power-sharing and constitutional reforms.[44] However, elites have acted like spoilers using national dialogues to serve their own political interest rather than build peace. In South Sudan, for example, dialogue processes were manipulated by elites to stall international pressure while failing to implement structural reforms or address the root causes of violence.[45] Likewise, elites' manipulations also undermined the dialogue process in Mali. Despite its label as "inclusive dialogue," key opposition figures boycotted talks, citing President Keita and other national elites' lack of inclusivity and transparency. Even armed groups participated only under certain conditions.[46] This illustrates how elite-driven dialogues under the guise of inclusivity can marginalize other critical stakeholders. This raises critical questions about the assumption that all actors are equally positioned or capable of contributing constructively to peacebuilding. The role of elites in South Sudan and Mali suggests that when elites dominate spaces intended for inclusion, they often undermine other local actors. This reinforces power hierarchies in society and then transforms them. These factors continue to shape national dialogue processes across Africa. The chart below illustrates that while inclusion is central to the local turn, it is not as straightforward as often projected. Rather, it is conditional. The chart demonstrates that civil society actors can either be meaningfully included or marginalized. Similarly, political elites

may act as enablers of inclusive dialogue or as spoilers who undermine it. These dynamics determine if dialogues are genuinely inclusive and can lead to sustainable peace.

Chart Two: Inclusion Dynamics in National Dialogues



2.4 Data Analysis

This section explores the relationship between the local turn, inclusion, and its impact on national dialogues. Drawing from secondary data on dialogue processes in Kenya, Mali, South Sudan, and Tunisia, I demonstrate that inclusion (despite being a central tenet of the local turn) is not as straightforward as often portrayed. Although the local turn emphasizes the crucial role of local actors in achieving sustainable peacebuilding, the analysis of four dialogue cases reveals that not all forms of inclusion, particularly those involving civil society and elites, are transformative. In some instances, inclusion may be superficial or manipulated, serving more as a performative gesture than a genuine attempt to foster sustainable peacebuilding. These variations suggest that

the effectiveness of national dialogues hinges not only on the presence of local actors but also on the quality, structure, and intent behind their inclusion.

2.4.1 Benefits of Meaningful Inclusion – Kenya

The Kenyan national dialogue process following the 2007–2008 post-election violence[47] is a classic example of how meaningful inclusion (when aligned with the principles of the local turn) can contribute to the success of a national dialogue. The local turn considers the agency and contextual knowledge of local actors, particularly civil society and community leaders, as central to effective peacebuilding.[48] In Kenya, the involvement of a broad range of local actors, including religious leaders, civil society organizations, and political elites, facilitated trust-building and helped craft reforms that addressed deep-rooted grievances in 2008.[49] Kenya has long portrayed itself as an island of peace, enabling the post-independent regimes of Kenyatta and Moi to cultivate a positive international image despite their despotic leadership at home.[50] By the time of the 2007 presidential election, enduring ethnic and regional inequalities and economic and governance challenges raised the ire of many Kenyans who were frustrated with President Kibaki's politics.[51] Kibaki was declared the winner and secretly sworn in as president by a biased national election commission, even as his rival Odinga refused to concede defeat.[52] That triggered protests and violence nationwide, marking a new beginning in the lives of most Kenyans, shaped by the Kenyan National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR) framework.[53] When the government of Kenya launched a national dialogue and reconciliation process on 28 January 2008,[54] the dialogue was facilitated by the Panel of Eminent African Personalities, who provided mediation support to resolve the political crisis and address the underlying political and governance issues.[55] The mediation effort of Kofi Annan, supported by the African Union and the UN, was widely considered a success because it ended the immediate violence and created a coalition government that spearheaded constitutional and institutional changes.[56]

National and regional actors gathered in Nairobi to broker peace after the outbreak of violence in 2007. The first attempt was made by Bethuel Kiplagat and Lazaro Sumbeiyo, who had experience mediating in Somalia and Sudan, respectively.[57] That attempt was unsuccessful. Nobel Peace Laureate Desmond Tutu later joined them.[58] Kenyan scholar Gilbert Khadiagala recounts that at first sight, the Kenyan government saw regional mediators as an affront to Kenya's sovereignty, a

move compounded by a legacy of national pride given Kenya's role in mediating conflict among her East African neighbors.[59] The initial resistance to include external actors reveals tensions between sovereignty and inclusion, illustrating that inclusion must be carefully managed to avoid undermining local ownership – a core concern of the local turn. In January 2008, the Kofi Annan-led three-member Panel of Eminent African Personalities began a new mediation effort through the Kenyan National Dialogue and Reconciliation process.[60] The other two members of Annan's team, Benjamin Mkapa (former president of Tanzania) and Graca Machel (former education minister in Mozambique), had the advantage of familiarity with the context as a neighbor and a regional actor.[61] Machel, for example, had a particular interest in issues affecting women and children and was influential in conveying the concerns of women who were not at the dialogue table. Given that Machel previously led the Kenyan review process under the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), she was familiar with the structural causes of the conflict.[62] Machel's advocacy helped incorporate the perspectives of women and children. This underscores the need for a creative interpretation of inclusion. For example, in this case, the idea of inclusion goes beyond physical presence with the goal of ensuring that diverse voices are represented as promised by the local turn. The Panel of Eminent African Personalities registered their first achievement when they successfully persuaded the protagonists (Kibaki and Odinga) to publicly shake hands as a sign of goodwill and confidence-building.[63] The successes of inclusion in Kenya were largely rooted in contextual knowledge and regional familiarity.[64]

Moreover, the Panel developed three critical strategies to manage the process. First, they insisted that there would be only one mediation process, led by themselves. Secondly, it deliberately carried out consultations with civil society, women, youth, businessmen and women, and religious leaders who were not on the dialogue table.[65] The wider public was informed of the dialogue process through regular meetings and media use.[66] The third strategy involved mediating between the two principals (Kibaki and Odinga) as well as the eight negotiators appointed by Kibaki's Party of National Unity (PNU) and Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) as their main team.[67] The principal actors, Kibaki and Odinga were only engaged intermittently as Annan's team worked full-time with their negotiators.[68] That strategy helped break the deadlock on the proposed power-sharing arrangement. The communication strategy adopted by the panel served to counter elite dominance, a prevalent situation in a political crisis of this nature. This strategy also offers the wider public the convenience to engage or stay informed in the process, particularly those not

represented at the dialogue table. Moreover, the importance of high-level communication during the process cannot be overemphasized as it enabled the Annan team to break the deadlock through a power-sharing arrangement between Kibaki and Odinga, after forty-two days of negotiation.[69] Once the power-sharing arrangement was reached and the political crisis resolved, the panel continued deliberations on the root causes of the crisis. The Annan team successfully guided negotiations around four key issues: (1) cessation of violence, (2) addressing the humanitarian crisis, (3) resolving the political crisis, and (4) addressing the root causes of the conflict.[70] By February 2008, the main protagonists, Kibaki and Odinga (and their respective parties), addressed the first item of the power-sharing agreement by agreeing to take immediate action to end violence and restore rights and liberties.[71] In the end, violence was stopped through the concerted efforts of civil society groups as well as regional diplomacy, which culminated in Kenya's national dialogue and a power-sharing agreement.[72]

In addition, mediation expert Neha Sanghrajka explains how Kenyan civil society, drawing on decades of advocacy experience and well-organized institutions, played a key role in shaping proposed solutions to the Kenyan conflict.[73] Coalitions of civil society groups, such as Concerned Citizens for Peace (CPP), engaged the public through prayers for peace. The group also engaged mobile phone operators to send messages of peace to their subscribers. This move was complemented by their "Open Forum," where they developed the so-called 'Citizens Agenda for Peace,' which was later presented to the mediation team.[74] In another strategic move, they organized their discussions at the Serena Hotel, where Kofi Annan and his team conducted their mediation; this strategy allowed them to interact and even invite key actors like Annan to chair some of their meetings.[75] Another civil society organization, Kenyans for Peace, Truth, and Justice (KPTJ), was influential in shaping the dialogue agenda and constantly engaging with the AU panel.[76] This shows that the effectiveness of local civil society inclusion and participation in national dialogues depends on their capacity and advocacy skills. Moreover, the successes registered by those CSOs rested on the fact that the mediation team led by Annan wanted a more transparent and inclusive process with civil society directly involved. This explains why, despite not being directly involved, the AU panel spent several days meeting with civil society groups to hear their concerns before the actual negotiations.[77] This modality of inclusion ensured that their voices were heard and represented. This case study also highlights that when inclusion is genuine,

civil society can contribute to the agenda even without physically being at the table. Hence, inclusion requires both the agency of local actors and the enabling institutions of political elites.

2.4.2 Civil Society's Contributions to Inclusion in Tunisia

CSOs played a key role in the Tunisian dialogue of 2013. On December 17, 2010, a 26-year-old Tunisian fruit and vegetable street vendor harassed by the police in the city of Sidi Bouzid set himself on fire and triggered the Arab Spring – a series of anti-government protests across North Africa and the Middle East.[78] Protesters demanded better living conditions, decent jobs, and greater freedoms.[79] That led to the ousting of longtime Tunisian President Ben Ali. By the end of 2011, Ben Ali's party was disbanded, and an interim government that recognized new political parties was ready to drive reforms.[80] In October 2011, Tunisia's moderate Islamist Ennahda party won the country's first democratic elections and formed a coalition with two secular parties.[81] Yet the country remained divided in 2012, as the government struggled to contain calls for and against a more conservative religious government. Tensions mounted the following year when two prominent secular politicians (Belaid and Brahmi) were assassinated, triggering another large-scale protest.[82] A national dialogue was then set up to resolve the political crisis underpinning the assassinations.[83]Unlike the other three national dialogue processes examined in this paper, the 2013 national dialogue in Tunisia was not planned in advance. Instead, it was an ad hoc response to an urgent political situation.[84] The national dialogue in Tunisia began as an initiative of the Tunisian General Labor Union a year before the crisis in 2013. Their call for dialogue was reiterated in July 2013 when they proposed that a caretaker government should replace the Troika government and that an agenda should be set to finalize the constitution. Three other institutions, the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts, the Tunisian Human Rights League, and the Tunisian Order of Lawyers, later joined them, and a quartet was formed. Twenty-one political parties later joined the Quartet. Contrary to many externally driven dialogue processes that the local turn critiques, the Tunisian dialogue process originated organically from within national social movements, embodying the local turn's core assumptions. Their role in this context suggests that the inclusion of national social movements could be a major marker of inclusion, particularly as they often include many local affiliates. This underscores the notion that local actors possess the capacity and legitimacy to initiate and maintain peace processes, challenging the traditional reliance on external actors. In the case of Tunisia, the Quartet facilitated talks between

political elites. It had the moral clout to mobilize public opinion and steer a national debate, leading to the dialogue's success.[85]The importance of building trust, understanding local contexts, and creating spaces for a social contract that facilitates inclusion and sustains peacebuilding outcomes is evident in the Quartet's role in the Tunisian dialogue.

Furthermore, Tunisia found itself on the edge of war after the optimism of the Arab Spring. The country was engulfed in a storm of political unrest that saw a series of protests, strike actions, terrorist attacks, and high-profile assassinations in the aftermath of the Arab Spring.[86] In such a volatile scenario, the "National Dialogue Quartet" allowed Tunisia to transition from violence to peace by building a coalition between the government and opposition parties. The Tunisian dialogue brought together diverse stakeholders and resulted in the drafting of a new constitution. In Tunisia, inclusivity did not mean expanding political participation beyond political and military elites. The dialogue was organized as a forum for discussion among political elites.[87] As citizen-led protests and a lack of trust in state institutions prevailed in the Tunisian case, the idea of inclusion emerged and created an opportunity for Tunisians to envisage a new state-society relation through a social contract, which opened space for the creation of the National Dialogue Quartet.[88] Despite numerous challenges, the Quartet was able to identify and pressure political parties to accept the roadmap they presented.[89] This paved the way for the much-needed transition to democracy following a parliamentary and presidential election held on October 26 and November 23, 2014, respectively.[90] The role of the Quartet provides valuable lessons on how moral factors can facilitate inclusion in local peace processes. Furthermore, while the Quartet functioned as non-state actors, their authority did not stem from ad hoc grassroots mobilization but rather from their long standing structured national institutions and social movements (such as trade unions, professional associations and human rights organizations). The legitimacy of these institutions were deeply rooted in broad social constituencies rather than direct state patronage. Hence a more complex form of "local" agency different from the simplified one often implied in Richmond's formulations. Moreover, the Quartet involvement exemplifies a nuanced form of bottom-up agency: although rooted in established national federations and not spontaneous grassroot movements, the moral authority that propelled the dialogue was nevertheless grounded in societal pressures and popular demands for change. This crisis driven, socially embedded approach fostered inclusivity, reflecting the spirit of the local turn. At the same time, it challenges the oversimplified assumptions about what constitutes "the local" in peace processes.

2.4.3 The Illusion of Inclusion in Mali and South Sudan

Although inclusion succeeded in fostering peace in Kenya and Tunisia due to deliberate and meaningful engagement with diverse local actors, the same cannot be said for dialogue processes in Mali and South Sudan. Mali's "*Dialogue National Inclusif"* (inclusive national dialogue) of 2019 was an attempt by President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita to rally the nation to find responses to the multifaceted security challenges that have plagued the country since 2012.[91] Mali has experienced unprecedented political and security challenges over the past decades.[92] Despite the challenges of shrinking civic space in Mali, civil society actors provided a framework for negotiating a social contract between the Malian authorities and citizens.[93] In convening a national dialogue in 2019, Malian President Keita justified the move as necessary in light of the strong demand from CSOs.[94] The dramatic ways in which some CSOs have triggered national dialogue processes in Africa, and more specifically in Mali, are an indication that state-civil society relations in Africa are a key terrain of struggles between those in power and those seeking change. That dynamic explains why those seeking change are in a constant struggle for inclusion in political processes. Moreover, despite Keita's claims of responding to civil society demands, the dialogue process occurred within a constrained civic space.[95] The inabilities of civil society to participate in agenda setting reveal a key tension in the local turn literature. The fact that local actors can initiate local peace processes but are unable to influence meaningful inclusion because of power imbalances and political manipulations. This suggests that, inclusion may be more performative than transformative without genuine power-sharing between both actors. During the dialogue process, President Keita, a stakeholder in the political crisis, presented a roadmap to the national dialogue committee he appointed through a presidential decree.[96] This top-down approach in creating the dialogue structure reflects the dominant power imbalances in this context, diminishing the potential for a truly transformative peace process that the local turn seeks to achieve.

Furthermore, the government of Keita struggled to get many people to participate by opting to host decentralized meetings as close as possible to the population.[97] During the dialogue, participants recommended the government organize talks with prominent insurgent leaders Ghaly and Koufa.[98]Yet between 2019-2020, the number of civilian massacres in Mali increased, prompting public protests to draw attention to the lack of action on dialogue recommendations (notably the failure of the state to engage insurgents).[99] Key stakeholders, such as the leaders of the jihadist

groups, were not invited to the dialogue, even though the previous national conference of 2017 had recommended dialogue with those groups.[100] Analysts contend that the absence of opposition actors, such as Soumaila Cissé of FSD (Front pour la Sauvegarde de la Démocratie), discouraged influential civil society, thus weakening their role in the dialogue process and contributing to counterproductive outcomes.[101] Multiple factors further obstructed the participation of civil society organizations and negatively affected the outcomes of the dialogue process. For example, the lack of public trust in the process, stemming from skepticism about constitutional reform, the way the dialogue was convened, and the way facilitators were appointed, undermined trust in the national dialogue.[102] The situation was further compounded by a series of disagreements over the structure and objectives of the dialogue, with stakeholders differing on various aspects of the process.[103] This posed challenges to the genuine engagement of local CSO groups. The above scenario underscores the distinction between Tunisia's genuine local inclusion and Mali's top-down, elite-driven inclusion approach. This contrast highlights the importance of understanding the nature and quality of inclusion, as the effectiveness of the local turn relies on the meaningful participation of local actors rather than performative gestures. Moreover, unlike most African dialogues, where follow-up commissions are usually created or structures put in place to implement resolutions, the Mali dialogue ended without establishing a dedicated body to follow through on the discussions.[104] The Malian case sheds light on how a dysfunctional social contract, characterized by competing interests and a lack of shared values, poses a challenge to civil society inclusion. It also suggests that while inclusion can foster social contracts and sustainable peace, the exclusion of key actors (such as rebel groups in this case) may contribute to perpetuating violence. This is because such actors could become peace spoilers if excluded from the process.[105] Notwithstanding, the mere presence of local actors does not guarantee meaningful inclusion.

Faced with widespread violence and continued international pressure, a national dialogue was initiated in South Sudan in 2016.[106] The South Sudanese national dialogue was part of the government’s attempts to address the root causes of the conflict and advocate for a ceasefire to achieve peace and progress in the country.[107] The nature of the armed conflict alone in this context was enough to suggest that any dialogue process that excludes rebel groups and key opposition leaders was a waste of time.[108] Recognizing efforts to revitalize the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) that was underway, the national dialogue framers realized that an elite-driven, top-down peacebuilding initiative presented limited prospects for stability in

South Sudan.[109]Many South Sudanese were skeptical about the effectiveness of a national dialogue at the time, given the high level of exclusion of local actors in previous peace agreements, such as the 2015 ARCSS.[110] Despite being spearheaded by high-level national officials, peacebuilding initiatives in South Sudan did not successfully trickle down to the grassroots level and failed to bring about meaningful change.[111] The dialogue organizers held several grassroots meetings for almost four years before concluding in November 2020 with a national conference.[112] While the South Sudanese dialogue was crucial to gaining support from the international community,[113] it failed to address its desired outcomes, notably by not ending violence in South Sudan. In addition, analysts contended that given the humanitarian crisis and the widespread human rights violations in South Sudan at the time, it was unfeasible to carry out a meaningful national dialogue.[114] Influential South Sudanese, including members of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Former Detainees (SPLM-FDs), SPLM-IO (in Opposition), and the National Democratic Movement (NDM), distanced themselves and their followers from the dialogue process.[115] Those political actors did not engage in the dialogue process, or only participated because their interests were not affected by it.[116] During the dialogue process, a prominent South Sudanese politician, Dr. Lam Akol accused President Kirr of lacking moral authority to lead a dialogue and being the least qualified to call for a dialogue in the first place due to his direct involvement in the conflict.[117] The South Sudan dialogue process illustrates that ownership of dialogue processes is not as straightforward as projected by the local turn. The dialogue process was shaped by the desire to gain approval from the international community rather than foster genuine inclusion and ownership. As assumed by the local turn, international actors did not participate in the dialogue. However, their validation was a key motivator for elites initiating the process. Consequently, ownership became performative, as demonstrated by the need for compliance with external actors' expectations. The South Sudanese case indicates that even when peace processes are domestically led, there is no guarantee that they will be effectively owned at the local level, particularly if their primary goal is to appease international stakeholders rather than address the root causes of conflict.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the practical complexities and nuances of inclusion through the lens of the local turn. It has demonstrated that while the local turn rightly emphasizes the agency and participation of local actors, the politics of inclusion remain highly contested as not all forms of

inclusion are meaningful or transformative. This paper analyses national dialogue processes in Kenya, Tunisia, Mali, and South Sudan to argue that the local turn's assumption about inclusion is not without limitations. In Kenya and Tunisia, deliberate and structured inclusion of civil society and other domestic actors benefited dialogue processes. However, inclusion in Mali and South Sudan was superficial. Inclusion was either used to validate elite-driven processes or appease international actors, rendering dialogue processes in Mali and South Sudan less effective. These cases underscore the need for meaningful, politically informed inclusion embedded in genuine engagement and ownership of dialogue. Furthermore, the paper has argued that superficial inclusion risks reproducing existing inequalities and local hegemony rather than fostering sustainable outcomes. of inclusion. Although the gains of the Kenyan dialogue in 2008 and the Tunisian dialogue in 2013 have not lasted to date, their examples highlight the potential for success in dialogues when the process is not stage-managed for political reasons. From the above discussion, it is evident that certain factors shaping national dialogue processes, such as inclusivity, choice of facilitators, and roles of civil society and elites, are critical and should be adapted to the different contexts where dialogues are organized. These factors can facilitate or hinder inclusion. National dialogues are likely to be misused for political aggrandizement or to buy time for further manipulations by political elites instead of building peace if facilitators lack the moral authority and sufficient buy-in from civil society. Moreover, this chapter has demonstrated that the politics surrounding national dialogues are central to determining their successes or failures. For example. dialogue processes are likely to be unproductive where the idea of inclusion is politically approached as a box-ticking exercise and where the social contract is dysfunctional. Nevertheless, further research is needed to fully explore the instrumentalization of national dialogues by elites and to understand the intricacies of power relations in local peacebuilding.

---

[1] Doyle & Sambanis, *Making war and building peace*
[2] Berghof Foundation, *National dialogues*
[3] Ibid, no. 2
[4] Blunck et al, *National Dialogue Handbook*
[5] Planta, Prinz & Vimalarajah, *National dialogue:*
[6] Dessu and Yohannes, *National Dialogues in the Horn of Africa*
[7] Stigant and Murray, *National dialogues in Peacebuilding and Transitions*
[8] Gemechu, Ethiopia's New National Dialogue Cannot Deliver Inclusive Peace
[9] Mehler, *Dialogue as the New Mantra in Responding to Political Crisis in Africa? The cases of Mali and Cameroon*
[10] Stigant and Murray, *National Dialogues: A Tool for Conflict Transformation?*
[11] McCandless, Resilient Social Contracts and Peace

[12] Ndekwo, National Dialogue as a Strategy for Intra-state Conflict Resolution in Africa
[13]McGhie and Wamai, Beyond the Numbers
[14]Pouligny, Civil Society and Post-conflict Peacebuilding
[15]Paffenholz, Civil society and peacebuilding
[16]Akinsolu and Raji, Civil Society Engagement in the Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals
[17]Zanker, Legitimate Representation
[18] Leonardsson, H., & Rudd, G. (2015)
[19] Lederach, Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies.; see also Boutros-Ghali, An agenda for peace
[20] Lederach, *The moral imagination:*
[21] Pouligny, Civil society and post-conflict peacebuilding
[22] Anderson & Olson, *Confronting war: Critical lessons for peace practitioners*
[23] Ibid, no.26
[24] Autesserre, *Conflict resolution and the everyday politics of international intervention*.
[25] Crocker & Aall, Can State and Society Be Woven Together?
[26] Whitfield, Civil society as idea and civil society as process
[27] Paffenholz, & Reychler, towards better policy and programme work in conflict zones
[28] Paffenholz & Spurk, Civil society, civic engagement, and peacebuilding
[29] Kew & John, Civil society and peace negotiations
[30] Ibid, no. 35
[31] Aall, what do NGOs bring to peacemaking?
[32] Foley, Laying the groundwork
[33] Belloni, Civil society and peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina
[34] Orjuela, Civil society in civil war
[35] Maingi, *Role and impact of civil society on Kenya's development agenda*
[36] Ginanjar, Civil Society and Peace
[37] Annan et al., Civil society, peacebuilding from below and shrinking civic space
[38] Henriksen & Seabrooke, Elites in transnational policy networks
[39] Amsden, DiCaprio & Robinson, *the role of elites in economic development*; See also Cannon, *The Right in Latin America: Elite power, hegemony and the struggle for the state*.
[40]Donais, Empowerment or imposition?
[41] Grimm & Weiffen, Domestic elites and external actors in post-conflict democratization
[42] Garbiras-Díaz, García-Sánchez & Matanock, Political elite cues and attitude formation in post-conflict contexts
[43] Lederach, *Building peace;* Sisk, T. D. *Democracy at the crossroads*
[44] Kofi Annan Foundation, *Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation*.
[45] Sudans Post, *Akol calls National Dialogue 'futile attempt to impose one view-point*
[46] NIMD, *NIMD-backed dialogue opens up reforms in Mali*
[47] Kofi Annan Foundation, *The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation*
[48] Paffenholz, Unpacking the local turn in peacebuilding
[49] Ibid, no. 58
[50] Mutua, Human Rights and State Despotism in Kenya
[51] Branch and Cheeseman, Democratization, Sequencing, and State Failure in Africa
[52] Kagwanja, Courting Genocide
[53] Khadiagala, Forty Days and Nights of Peacemaking in Kenya
[54] Brown, The National Accord, Impunity, and the Fragile Peace in Kenya
[55] USAID Kenya, Continuing the Gains from the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation Process
[56] World Peace Foundation,'Kenya Short Mission Brief'
[57] Lacher, The Malian Crisis and the Challenge of Regional Cooperation
[58] Ibid, no.55
[59] Ibid, no.55
[60] Ibid, no.55
[61] Machel and Mkapa, Back from the Brink
[62] Ibid no. 72
[63] Ibid, no. 72
[64] Ibid, no. 72
[65] Ibid, no.55
[66] Ibid no. 55

[67] Ibid, no. 55
[68] Ibid, no. 55
[69] Ibid, no. 55
[70] Ibid, no. 55
[71] Klopp, Kenya's Unfinished Agendas
[72] Ibid, no. 55, see also Wachira, Citizens in Action Making Peace in the Post Election Crisis in Kenya
[73] Neha, Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation
[74] Ibid no. 55
[75] Wachira, Citizens in Action Making Peace in the Post Election Crisis in Kenya
[76] Kanyinga, Stopping a Conflagration
[77] Ibid no. 55
[78] Lageman, Remembering Mohamed Bouazizi
[79] Abouaoun, Tunisia Timeline: Since the Jasmine Revolution.
[80] Ben Salem,The national dialogue, collusive transactions
[81] BBC News, Tunisia's Islamist Ennahda Party Wins Historic Poll
[82] Ibid, no.91
[83] Ibid, no. 91
[84] Haugbølle et al., Tunisia's 2013 National Dialogue
[85] Ibid, no. 91
[86] Mia, National Dialogue Quartet in Democratic Transition of Tunisia
[87] Thornton, The Rocky Path from Elections to a New Constitution in Tunisia
[88] Ibid, no. 98
[89] Mayai, The South Sudan National Dialogue
[90] The Carter Center, Legislative and Presidential Elections in Tunisia
[91] Mutizwa, Mali Inclusive National Dialogue Pushes Ahead Despite Opposition Boycott
[92] Lacher, The Malian Crisis and the Challenge of Regional Cooperation
[93] Thera, In Mali Civil Society Takes on New Role in the Democratic Transition; HRW, Word Report 2024
[94] Diallo, Un "Dialogue National Inclusif "au Mali: Comment, Avec Qui et Pour Quoi Faire?
[95] Ibid, no.105
[96] Amen, A Roadmap of the Malian President Aims to Favor Dialogue to Restore Peace and Security in the face of the multiplication of Jihadist attacks and inter-community violence
[97] Diallo, Un "Dialogue National Inclusif "au Mali: Comment, Avec Qui et Pour Quoi Faire?
[98] Ibid no. 108
[99] International Crisis Group, Mali: Enabling Dialogue with the Jihadist Coalition
[100] Diallo, Représentants Des Groupes Armés au Dialogue National, "Forces de Proposition" ou Facteurs de Crispation?
[101] Sidibé, Dialogue National Inclusif (DNI)
[102] African News, Mali *inclusive national dialogue pushes ahead despite opposition boycott*
[103] Ibid, no. 113
[104] Ibid, no.113
[105] Zahar and McCandless, Sustaining Peace One Day at a Time
[106] The Sudd Institute, South Sudan's National Dialogue
[107] Liaga, The South Sudan National Dialogue
[108] Vhumbunu, The National Dialogue Initiative in South Sudan
[109] Mayai, The South Sudan National Dialogue
[110] IGAD, Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan
[111] Ibid, no. 121
[112] Mohajer and Deng, South Sudan's People Have Spoken on Peace.
[113] Abdulbari,The Sudan National Dialogue and Constitutional Reforms
[114] Ibid, no.124
[115] Ibid, no 124
[116] McGhie and Wamai, Beyond the Numbers
[117]Mayai, The National Dialogue Final Resolutions

Bibliography

Aall, P. (2001). What Do NGOs Bring to Peacemaking? In C. Crocker, F. Hampson, & P. Aall (Eds.), Turbulent Peace (pp. 365-383). Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Abdulbari, N. (2016). *The Sudan National Dialogue and Constitutional Reforms*. https://constitutionnet.org/news/sudan-national-dialogue-and-constitutional-reforms-co-opting-mild-opponents

Abouaoun, E. (2019, July 12). *Tunisia Timeline: Since the Jasmine Revolution*. United States Institute for Peace. https://www.usip.org/tunisia-timeline-jasmine-revolution

Akinsolu, A., & Raji, R. (2018). *Civil Society Engagement in the Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals*. https://ijhumas.com/ojs/index.php/niujoss/article/view/430/402

Amen, E. (2019, June 26). *A Roadmap of the Malian President Aims to Favor Dialogue to Restore Peace and Security in the face of the multiplication of Jihadist attacks and inter-community violence*. Deutsche Welle. https://www.dw.com/fr/le-dialogue-pour-un-retour- %C3%A0-la-paix-au-mali/a-49368452

Annan, N., Beseng, M., Crawford, G., & Kewir, J. K. (2021). Civil Society, Peacebuilding from Below and Shrinking Civic space: The Case of Cameroon's 'Anglophone' Conflict. *Conflict, Security & Development*, *21*(6), 697-725.

Amsden, A. H., DiCaprio, A., & Robinson, J. A. (Eds.). (2012). *The role of elites in economic development*. Oxford University Press.

Anderson, M. B., & Olson, L. (2003). *Confronting war: Critical lessons for peace practitioners*. The Collaborative for Development Action.

Autesserre, S. (2014). *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention*. Cambridge University Press.

BBC News. (2011, October 27). *Tunisia's Islamist Ennahda Party Wins Historic Poll*. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-15487647

Belloni, R. (2008). Civil society and peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Journal of Peace Research, 45*(3), 345–363.

Ben Salem, M. (2016). The National Dialogue, Collusive Transactions and Government Legitimacy in Tunisia. *The International Spectator, 51*(1), 99–112. https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2016.1127768

Berghof Foundation. (2017). *National dialogues: A tool for conflict transformation?* (Policy Brief No. 194). Swisspeace. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/194714/PB194-National-Dialogues.pdf

Blunck, M., et al. (n.d.). *National Dialogue Handbook: A Guide for Practitioners*. Berghof Foundation.

Brown, S. (2012). The National Accord, Impunity, and the Fragile Peace in Kenya. In *Transitional Justice and Peacebuilding on the Ground* (pp. 238-254). Routledge.

Branch, D., & Cheeseman, N. (2009). Democratization, sequencing, and state failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya. *African Affairs, 108*(430), 1–26.

Brown, S. (2011). The National Accord, impunity, and the fragile peace in Kenya. *Journal of Modern African Studies, 49*(3), 315–340.

Cannon, B. (2016). *The Right in Latin America: Elite power, Hegemony and the Struggle for the State*. Routledge.

Crocker, C. A., & Aall, P. (2016). Can State and Society be Woven Together? In C. A. Crocker, F. O. Hampson, & P. Aall (Eds.), *Diplomatic strategies for peace and security: Integrating mediation and peacebuilding* (pp. 15–30). United States Institute of Peace Press.

Dessus, A., & Yohannes, A. (2020.). *National Dialogues in the Horn of Africa*. ISS. https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/ear-32.pdf

Diallo, A. (2019). *Un "Dialogue National Inclusif" au Mali: Comment, Avec Qui et Pour Quoi Faire?*. Jeune Afrique. *https://www.jeuneafrique.com/840846/politique/un-dialogue-national-inclusif-au-mali-comment-avec-qui-et-pour-quoi-faire/*

Donais, T. (2009). Empowerment or Imposition? Dilemmas of Local Ownership in Post-conflict peacebuilding processes. *Peace & Change, 34*(1), 3–26.

Doyle, M. W., & Sambanis, N. (2006). *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations*. Princeton University Press.

El-Naggar, M. (2017). *National dialogue: Concepts, processes, and practices* (IPS Background Paper No. 1). Berghof Foundation. https://berghof-foundation.org/files/publications/IPS_Background-Paper_1_National-Dialogue.pdf

Klopp, J. M. (2009). Kenya's Unfinished Agendas. *Journal of International Affairs*, *62*(2), 143-158.

Foley, M. W. (1996). Laying the groundwork: The struggle for civil society in El Salvador. *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, *38*(1), 67-104.

Garbiras-Díaz, N., García-Sánchez, M., & Matanock, A. M. (2024). Political elite cues and attitude formation in post-conflict contexts. *Journal of Peace Research, 61*(5), 874–890.

Gemechu, D. (2022). *Ethiopia's New National Dialogue Cannot Deliver Inclusive Peace*. Aljazeera. https://www.aljazeera.com/author/milkessa-m-gemechu

Ginanjar, A. (2022). *Civil Society and Peace*.

https://jurnal.amikom.ac.id/index.php/nsjis/article/view/495

Grimm, S., & Weiffen, B. (2018). Domestic Elites and External Actors in Post-conflict Democratisation: Mapping Interactions and their Impact. *Conflict, Security & Development, 18*(4), 257–282. https://doi.org/10.1080/14678802.2018.1483556

Haugbølle, R. H., Joffé, G., & Lutterbeck, D. (2014). Tunisia's 2013 National Dialogue: A Path to Peace or a temporary reprieve? *The International Spectator, 49*(1), 55–71. https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2014.903808

Henriksen, L. F., & Seabrooke, L. (2021). Elites in transnational policy networks. *Global Networks, 21*(2), 217–237. https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12301

IGAD. (2018). Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. https://www.peaceagreements.org/viewmasterdocument/2112

International Crisis Group (2021). Mali: Enabling Dialogue with the Jihadist Coalition JNIM. https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel/mali/mali-enabling-dialogue-jihadist-coalition-Jnim

Ismail, O. M. (2014). *Security Activities of External Actors in Africa*. Oxford University Press; Oxford.

Kagwanja, P. (2009). Courting genocide: Populism, ethno-nationalism and the informalisation of violence in Kenya's 2008 post-election crisis. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies, 27*(3), 365–387.

Kanyinga, K. (2009). Stopping a conflagration: The response of Kenyan civil society to the post-2007 election violence. *Politikon, 36*(1), 85–109.

Kew, D., & John, A. (2018). Civil society and peace negotiations: Beyond the inclusion–exclusion dichotomy. *International Negotiation, 23*(1), 121 148. https://doi.org/10.1163/15718069-23011162

Khadiagala, G. M. (2008). Forty days and nights of peacemaking in Kenya. *Journal of African Elections, 7*(2), 4–33.

Kofi Annan Foundation. (2010). *Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation*. Retrieved April 18, 2025, from https://www.kofiannanfoundation.org/

Kofi Annan Foundation & African Union Panel of Eminent African Personalities. (2011). *The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation: Two years on, where are we?* Kofi Annan Foundation. https://www.kofiannanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/KA_KNDR2010_FULLReport2011_0.pdf

Klopp, J. M. (2008). Kenya's unfinished agendas: Post-election analysis. *Journal of International Affairs, 62*(2), 97–118.

Lacher, W. (2012). The Malian Crisis and the Challenge of Regional Cooperation. *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) Comments, 11*, 1–8.

Lageman, T. (2020, December 17). *Remembering Mohamed Bouazizi: The Man Who Sparked the Arab Spring*. Aljazeera. https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/12/17/remembering-mohamed-bouazizi-his-death-triggered-the-arab

Liaga E. (2017). 'The South Sudan National Dialogue: Hope through Inclusive Processes'. The Wilson Center. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/the-south-sudan-national-dialogue-hope-through-inclusive-processes

Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. United States Institute of Peace Press.

Lederach, J. P. (2005). *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*. Oxford University Press.

Leonardsson, H., & Rudd, G. (2015). The "Local Turn" in Peacebuilding: A Literature Review of Effective and Emancipatory Local Peacebuilding. *Third World Quarterly, 36*(5), 825–839.

Machel, G., & Mkapa, B. (2014). Back from the Brink: the 2008 Mediation Process and Reforms in Kenya. Kofi Annan Foundation. https://www.kofiannanfoundation.org/mediation-and-crisis-resolution/back-from-the-brink-the-2008-mediation-process-and-reforms-in-

kenya/
Maingi, M. (2016). *Role and Impact of Civil Society on Kenya's Development Agenda*. https://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/100070
Mayai, A. T. (2020). *The South Sudan National Dialogue*. The Sudd Institute. https://www.suddinstitute.org/publications/show/5fc607f47c50b
Mac Ginty, R., & Richmond, O. P. (2013). The Local Turn in Peace Building: A Critical Agenda for peace. *Third World Quarterly, 34*(5), 763–783. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2013.800750
Mutua, M. W. (1994). Human Rights and State Despotism in Kenya: Institutional Problems. *Africa Today*, *41*(4), 50-56.
McGhie, M. P., & Wamai, E. N. (2011). Beyond the Numbers: Women's Participation in the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation. https://www.africaportal.org/publications/beyond-the-numbers-womens-participation-in-the-kenya-national-dialogue-and-reconciliation/
Mehler, A. (2021). *Dialogue as the New Mantra in Responding to Political Crisis in Africa? the cases of Mali and Cameroon*. Arnold Bergstraesser Institute. https://www.arnold-bergstraesser.de/sites/default/files/field/pub-download/abi_working_paper_17_mehler_tull_glund.pdf
Mezzera, M., Sogge, D., & Lister, S. (2016). Engaged Societies, Responsive States: The Social Contract in Situations of Conflict & Fragility. *UNDP Concept Note*. https://www.undp.org/publications/social-contract-situations-conflict-and-fragility
Mia, M. (2016). National Dialogue Quartet in Democratic Transition of Tunisia: An Analysis. *Asian Studies*, *35*, pp.125-134. Retrieved from http://govpoliju.com/upload/research_file/asian-studies-2016.pdf#page=127
Mohajer & Deng. (2021). South Sudan's People Have Spoken on Peace. Is Anyone Listening. https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/04/south-sudans-people-have-spoken-peace-anyone-listening
Moyo, D. (2009). *Dead aid: Why Aid is not Working and How there is a Better Way for Africa*. Macmillan.
Mutua, M. W. (1994). Human Rights and State Despotism in Kenya: Institutional Problems. *Africa Today*, *41*(4), 50-56.
McCandless et al. (2018). *Forging Resilient Social Contracts: A Pathway to Preventing Violent Conflict and Sustaining Peace*. Oslo, Norway: UNDP - Oslo Governance Centre.
Mutizwa N. (2019). Mali Inclusive National Dialogue Pushes Ahead Despite Opposition Boycott. https://www.africanews.com/2019/12/18/mali-inclusive-national-dialogue-pushes-ahead-despite-opposition-boycott//
Ndekwo, R. (2020). *National Dialogue as a Strategy for Intra-state Conflict Resolution in Africa: the Case Study of Anglophone Cameroon* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).
Neha S. (2021). 'Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation'. *United States Institute for Peace*. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep34023.6.pdf

Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD). (2020, October 15). NIMD-backed dialogue opens up reforms in Mali. https://nimd.org/nimd-backed-dialogue-opens-up-reforms-in-mali/

Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD). (2019, January 15). *NIMD-backed dialogue opens up reforms in Mali*. https://nimd.org/nimd-backed-dialogue-opens-up-reforms-in-mali/

Nilsson, D. (2012). Anchoring the peace: Civil Society Actors in Peace Accords and their Influence on peace processes. *International Studies Perspectives, 13*(2), 148-171. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1528-3585.2012.00469.x

Orjuela, C. (2008). Civil Society in Civil War: The Role of non-governmental Organizations in \ Peacebuilding. *Development and Change, 39*(5), 813-838. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2008.00511.x

Paffenholz, T. (2018). Unpacking the Local Turn in Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment Towards an Agenda for Future Research. In *The 'Local Turn' in Peacebuilding* (pp. 41- 58). Routledge

Paffenholz et al., (2017). *What Makes or Breaks National Dialogues?* Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IPTI-Report-What-Makes-Breaks-National-Dialogues.pdf

Paffenholz, T. (Ed.). (2010). *Civil Society & Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment* (pp. 43-64). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Paffenholz, T. (2009). *Civil Society and Peacebuilding*. The Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Genevahttps://gsdrc.org/document-library/civil-society-and-peacebuilding/

Pouligny, B. (2005). Civil Society and Post-conflict Peacebuilding: Ambiguities of International Programmes Aimed at Building 'new'societies. *Security dialogue*, *36*(4), 495-510.

Sidibé, M. (2019). *Dialogue National Inclusif (DNI): Un franc Succès; Le Pardon Solennel de la Plateforme ; le renoncement à toute lutte indépendantiste par la CMA ; la honte pour le FSD*. Mali web. Net. https://malijet.com/la_societe_malienne _aujourdhui /actualite_de_la nation_malienne/237266- dialogue-national-inclusif -dni-un-franc-succes-le-pardon- solenne.html, date of access: 25 June 2020.

Planta, K., Prinz, V., & Vimalarajah, L. (2015). *National dialogue: Concepts, processes and tools* (IPS Background Paper No. 1). Berghof Foundation. https://berghof-foundation.org/files/publications/IPS_Background-Paper_1_National-Dialogue.pdf

Sidibé, M. (2019). *Dialogue National Inclusif (DNI): Un franc succès; Le Pardon Solennel de la Plateforme ; le renoncement à toute lutte indépendantiste par la CMA ; la honte pour le FSD*. Mali web. Net. https://malijet.com/la_societe_malienne _aujourdhui /actualite_de_la nation_malienne/237266- dialogue-national-inclusif -dni-un-franc-succes-le-pardon- solenne.html, date of access: 25 June 2020.

Stephen, C. (2015, December 8). *The Tunisia Quartet: How an Impossible Alliance Saved the*

Country from Collapse. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/08/tunisia-quartet-arab-spring-islamist-nobel-peace-prize

Stigant, S., & Murray, E. (2021a). *National dialogues in Peacebuilding and Transitions.* United States Institute of Peace. https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/06/national- -dialogues peacebuilding-and-transitions-creativity-and-adaptive

Stigant, S., & Murray, E. (2021b). *National Dialogues: A Tool for Conflict Transformation?* United States Institute of Peace. https://www.usip.org /publications/2015/10 national-dialogues-tool-conflict-transformation

Sudans Post. (2020, November 9). Akol calls National Dialogue 'Futile Attempt to Impose One View-point'. https://www.sudanspost.com/akol-calls-national-dialogue-a-futile-attempt-to-impose-one-view-point/

The Carter Center. (2014). *Legislative and Presidential Elections in Tunisia*. https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace publications/ election_reports/tunisia- final-rpt-2014-elections.pdf

The Sudd Institute. (2017). *South Sudan's National Dialogue: What it Should be and Why it Should be Supported*. Sudd Institute. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep32867

Thera, T. (2023, April 5). *In Mali Civil Society Takes on New Role in the Democratic Transition*. United States Institute of Peace. https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/04/mali-civil-society-takes-new-role-democratic-transition.

Thornton, C. (2014). The Rocky Path from Elections to a New Constitution in Tunisia: Mechanisms for Consensus-Building and Inclusive Decision-Making. Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. https://hdcentre.org/insights/the-rocky-path-from-elections-to-a-new-constitution-in-tunisia/

United Nations. (2017). Human Rights in South Sudan. https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2017/03/human-rights-council-holds-interactive-dialogue-commission-human-rights

United Nations. (2012). Guidance for Effective Mediation. Retrieved from https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/GuidanceEffectiveMediation _UNDPA2012%28english%29_0.pdf

USAID Kenya. (2013). Continuing the Gains from the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation Process. https://2017-2020.usaid.gov/kenya/fact-sheets/continuing-gains-kenya-national-dialogue-and-reconciliation-process

Von Burg, C. (2015). On Inclusivity: The Role of Norms in International Peace Mediation. *Bern: NOREF/Swiss Peace*.

Vhumbunu, C. H. (2018). The National Dialogue Initiative in South Sudan: Assessing Progress and Pitfalls. *Conflict Trends*, *2018*(1), 27-34. https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.10520/EJC-ecff04924

Wachira, G. (2010). Citizens in Action Making Peace in the Post Election Crisis in Kenya.

https://www.africaportal.org/publications/ citizens-in-action-making-peace -in-the-post-election-crisis-in-kenya/

Wamai, N. (2018). The 2008 Kenyan Mediation Process: Lessons and Dilemmas for Conflict Prevention in Africa. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Peacebuilding in Africa* (pp. 119-135). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Welz, M. (2021). *Africa Since Decolonization: The History and Politics of a Diverse Continent*. Cambridge University Press.

World Peace Foundation. (2017). 'Kenya Short Mission Brief' In *African Politics, African Peace*. https://sites.tufts.edu/wpf/files/2017/07/Kenya-brief.pdf

Whitfield, L. (2007). Civil society as idea and civil society as process. *Development and Change, 38*(4), 615-634. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2007. 00413.x

Zahar, M. J., & McCandless, E. (2020). Sustaining Peace One Day at a Time: Inclusion, Transition Crises, and the Resilience of Social Contracts. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, *14*(1), 119-138.

Zanker, F. (2014). Legitimate Representation: Civil Society Actors in Peace Negotiations Revisited. *International Negotiation*, *19*(1), 62-88.

CHAPTER THREE

MISSED AND MISUSED OPPORTUNITY: TRUST, INCLUSION, AND LOCAL OWNERSHIP IN CAMEROON'S NATIONAL DIALOGUE

3.1. Introduction

'In Africa, when there is a dispute within a family, we will hold a meeting under a Baobab tree.'[1] The Baobab tree metaphor reflects trust and respect for local practices, capturing the essence of local turn. As highlighted in chapter one, the "first Local turn" emphasizes the importance of paying attention to a wide range of local actors and ownership. The idea of local ownership has been recognized and discussed in the local turn in peacebuilding literature for at least a decade.[2] Yet analysts have argued that local ownership is inherently difficult to achieve, partly because of the lack of capacity of many local actors to govern themselves.[3] In addition, including diverse actors and stakeholders in locally driven peace processes would entail navigating a complex web of interests, needs, and perspectives as rightly pointed out by Lederach.[4] Among several scholars, Mac Ginty,[5] Autesserre,[6] and Donais[7] in the early 2000s, argued that inclusion and local ownership are critical for sustainable peace at the local level. While the local turn may assume that local actors are more trustworthy or legitimate than international actors,[8] it risks overlooking the nuances of power dynamics – including intimidation, excessive praise singing and the attitudes of elites who may deny the root causes of conflict at the local level. As Mac Ginty argues, inclusion and legitimacy in local peacebuilding processes are not automatic but are negotiated and shaped by power relations, histories of conflict, and the dynamics between local and international actors. This argument suggests that local actors do not form a homogenous group, and that trust must be built rather than assumed.[9] The puzzle here is although trust has been widely acknowledged as essential in implementing local peace, its function and construction within national dialogue processes remain underexplored and theorized. This reveals a gap in our understanding of how trust operates, evolves, and influences the dynamics of inclusion, legitimacy, and decision-making within national dialogue processes, particularly in contexts marked by entrenched inequalities and

elite dominance. The overarching research question of this chapter is: how does trust affect the implementation of inclusion and local ownership, and what are the key factors affecting trust-building in Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis?

Cameroon is located at the crossroads of many West and Central African states. The country was once regarded as a haven of peace in the turbulent Central African sub-region due to its relative political stability.[10] However, recent years have seen Cameroon facing serious security challenges, with the Anglophone crisis being a major contributor.[11] To address Cameroon's security challenges, a national dialogue was organized in 2019, with the aim of fostering trust, peace, and social cohesion. However, mistrust among local actors might have hindered the dialogue process. The lack of genuine inclusion and power asymmetries exposed deep-rooted divisions and limited the dialogue's ability to foster meaningful collaboration. Cameroon's experience illustrates tensions at the heart of the local turn. Even though local actors are recognized as vital for legitimacy and sustainable peacebuilding, their mere inclusion does not guarantee the trust needed for sustainable peace.[12] This indicates that trust is not inherently present at the local level. It also explains why, even if a national dialogue was organized by local actors, it cannot be assumed that it was inclusive because it was locally led. The analysis of this chapter reveals that, in Cameroon, where legitimacy is contested and conflict is deeply rooted in grievances and mistrust, the local turn exposes fractures rather than healing them. The essay further argues that locally led processes, such as national dialogues, could be designed to address these fractures. In Cameroon, the national dialogue failed to address deep-seated divisions and mistrust. Recent developments suggest that calls for future dialogue to address these issues are ongoing, as presented in Chapter Five.

Furthermore, there is scant literature on the lack of trust and its consequences on the relationship between key local actors in peacebuilding. In Cameroon, multiple studies, by Ngam,[13] Mbuwir,[14] and even Seemndze,[15] have found that cultural diversity in Cameroon has been politically manipulated for selfish or economic gains, leading to a high trust deficit among local actors. However, the consequences of these manipulative practices are more complex than they appear in those studies. For example, mistrust resulting from intimidation and praise singing can undermine ownership and inclusion in national dialogue. Moreover, there is a gap in understanding the implications of those manipulative and exploitative practices, especially as they can potentially slow down peace efforts or exacerbate conflicts. Cameroon serves as a compelling case study due

to its rich cultural diversity. This diversity has been manipulated by elites, presenting a unique context to examine recent peacebuilding challenges and opportunities. Despite Cameroon's rich cultural diversity, the Anglophone crisis has posed significant challenges to peace and stability within the Anglophone regions and neighboring communities.[16] Addressing such crises requires effective peacebuilding strategies that consider the complexities of the local context and the role of various stakeholders in building trust, social cohesion, and reconciliation.

A recent study by Lekunze found that more than 6,000 people have lost their lives, over 765,000 people have been displaced, and more than 600,000 children have been out of school since violence erupted in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon.[17] The crisis has been presented as an end product of marginalization and Francophonization of the education and legal systems in the country's English-speaking regions by the Biya regime.[18] The regime has sought to maintain control in these regions by co-opting and leveraging predatory Anglophone elites.[19] Analysts have argued that building trust and a sense of shared understanding between historically divided individuals and groups can go a long way in preventing violence and supporting local peacebuilding.[20] However, fostering local trust in Cameroon in the context of national dialogue, remains challenging if elites who are perceived to be part of the problem are in a position of power within the dialogue process. In this context, trust seems to have been undermined by state or patronage elites who deliberately mobilize identity politics for personal gains.[21]

Since the advent of Cameroon's Anglophone crisis, several government reports and activities have coalesced around the notion that there is a need to build trust and live together. However, there seems to be a gap between the government's endorsement of the rhetoric of trust-building and its actual practice on the ground, particularly in the Anglophone regions. Additionally, the government has used the term 'social cohesion' to market several national events. For example, the 2022 national day in Cameroon was themed 'Defence and Security Forces at the Service of People in Preserving Social Peace and National Cohesion, a Guarantee for an Emerging Cameroon.'[22] Despite "Living Together in Peace" being a key theme of Cameroon's 2019 national dialogue and one of the eight commissions dedicated to social cohesion, the actions of government officials, particularly Anglophone elites, contradicted this objective and influenced dialogue outcomes negatively. The government seems to have been promoting social cohesion and "living together" initiatives from a top-down perspective, which excludes the genuine participation of

grassroots actors in practice. In this context, slogans are used to mask the exclusion of other local actors in the local turn. This chapter analyzes situations and opportunities where elites could have acted differently to promote the trust needed for inclusion and ownership of the national dialogue process in Cameroon but were missed or misused. The chapter argues that declining or non-existent trust among citizens or between citizens and the state could negatively affect inclusion and local ownership in peacebuilding.[23] As will be discussed below, praise-singing, political manipulations, and individual practices by elites have contributed to widening power imbalances, increased tensions, and weakened interactions between local actors in peacebuilding. Trust-building is crucial in this context, as it provides the foundation for the cohesiveness required to establish meaningful social relationships and successful peacebuilding.[24]

3. 2 Methodology

This qualitative case study involved a review of academic, grey, and unpublished literature, field observation, and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of 45 participants in Bamenda and Buea. Those cities have borne the brunt of the Anglophone crisis, suffering from ghost towns, indiscriminate killings, arson attacks, and arbitrary arrests. In addition, the region's distinct linguistic characteristics have often given rise to claims of marginalization and a trust deficit between the population and political elites. This makes it an interesting case for understanding the importance of trust-building in implementing inclusion and local ownership ideas that are central to the local turn in the peacebuilding literature.

The researcher faced various risks during fieldwork. Carrying government-issued items such as identity cards or riding in a car with a government-approved license plate posed significant risks in separatist-controlled areas in Anglophone communities. Ghost towns posed additional risks due to the tense atmosphere in these regions on ghost town days. To reduce risk, the license plate of the car the researcher hired was removed when visiting these communities. No interview appointment was booked on Mondays or during national events like the 11th February (fête de la Jeunesse). As a national holiday in Cameroon, the 11th of February celebration is officially rooted in the 1961 plebiscite where English-speaking Southern Cameroons voted under controversial and contested conditions to join the Republic of Cameroon.[25] The day has been celebrated as Youth

Day in Cameroon, though it bears little genuine historical connection to youth. Many Anglophone activists have long opposed these celebrations, and in recent years, armed separatists have enforced ghost towns to disrupt activities leading up to, and during the 11th February celebrations in the Anglophone regions. As such, no interviews were scheduled around these events.

In January 2023, Global Affairs Canada released a statement, signaling their engagement with the Cameroonian government and non-state actors for a potential dialogue process facilitated by Canada.[26] However, days later, the government of Cameroon refuted this statement, asserting that it had not requested any country's mediation support.[27] As a Cameroonian researcher based at a Canadian University and conducting research on the same issues at the time of this diplomatic disagreement, there were risks of being perceived as a spy, especially by government participants. To mitigate that risk, the researcher began each interview with a disclaimer explaining the academic nature of the project and its lack of political intentions, though the findings may be valuable for future peacebuilding initiatives undertaken by Canadian and Cameroonian authorities.

Of the 45 participants interviewed between January and April 2023, 26 were from Buea, and 19 were from Bamenda. Participants were selected through a non-random purposeful sampling and targeting different stakeholders (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Number of Participants per Region and their Affiliations

Affiliations	Buea	Bamenda	Total
Government Officials	01	03	04
Civil Society Organizations	10	06	16
INGOs	03	02	05
Political Parties	02	02	04
Religious/Traditional Leaders	01	02	03
Academia	05	02	07
Media	04	02	06
Total Participants	**26**	**19**	**45**

Source: Fieldwork in Cameroon, January-April 2023

Field observation was conducted simultaneously with semi-structured interviews. This research focuses on a real-life situation and an ongoing debate in Cameroon. Thus, field observation allowed the researcher to capture the nuances of trust building and reconcile discrepancies between participants' perspectives and the researcher's observations before employing triangulation to minimize potential biases. To preserve the anonymity of research participants and for ethical reasons, only their broad institutional affiliations and the location where interviews were conducted are disclosed.

Interview transcripts and field notes were loaded into QSR Nvivo version 14 software. Codes were generated based on the research questions and objectives. Data analysis involved reading through the researcher's field notes and all 45 interview transcripts and selecting the most relevant quotes for coding. Coding was conducted using an inductive thematic approach. The different perspectives of research participants were brought together using themes that were common across interview transcripts. These themes were "political manipulations and exclusion", "denying or minimizing the root causes of the crisis", "intimidation", "praise singing and individual self-interest", "ghost towns or civil disobedience." Secondary data, including journal articles, local newspapers, and reports from international organizations, local civil society groups, government agencies, and human rights groups, were analyzed and used to triangulate interview findings and obtain the perspectives of different participants.

3.3 Trust and Legitimacy in the Local Turn

Discussions on the local turn emerged in peacebuilding debates in response to critiques of top-down approaches dominated by international actors.[28] While the local turn's promise for sustainable peace is based on localization, inclusion, and ownership, scholars have cautioned against romanticizing the "local" as inherently more trusted and inclusive.[29] The discussion around building trust for sustainable peacebuilding has often focused on the contested role of foreign intervention.[30] As a result, the analysis of trust among local actors, often erroneously assumed to be legitimate, remains largely underdeveloped.[31] In addition, studies conducted by Bakaki and Dorussen in Haiti argue that, while there is no evidence that local organizations are more trustworthy than foreign NGOs, there appears to be variation in trust levels for different organizations working in peacebuilding.[32] It is well-known that violent conflicts occur due to the

breakdown of trust and that rebuilding trust is a necessary first step to building peace.[33]However, in the context of national dialogue, trust cannot be assumed or imposed from above to drive the process; rather, it has to be diligently cultivated through deliberations, inclusive processes, and addressing concerns.[34]

This chapter's understanding of trust-building highlights two key issues: first, trust is not merely a moral aspiration but a practical necessity for peacebuilding. Second, trust allows for the meaningful inclusion of diverse actors, promoting broader participation.[35] The lack of trust among local actors in Cameroon, primarily demonstrated through the prevalence of "ghost town" operations and other practices, impedes collaboration. As Paffenholz posits, such practices may lead to unsustainable outcomes in national dialogues.[36] In their work, Lewicki, McAllister, and Bies differentiate between two forms of trust: calculus-based trust, which is founded on deterrence, and identity-based trust, which stems from shared values. [37] Calculus-based trust involves assessing risks and rewards in relationships, while identity-based trust arises from mutual understanding, empathy, and a common ground of values and goals. This distinction sheds light on how trust can develop and function in diverse social contexts. Although both calculus-based and identity-based trust may play different roles in Cameroon's fragility, the Anglophone crisis seems more closely related to identity-based trust. While the local turn assumes that trust can be inherently fostered through local interactions, it falls short of accounting for identity-based dynamics like praise singing, shaping mistrust and divisions at the local level. These issues will be examined in the empirical section of this chapter.

Furthermore, in a Weberian governance arrangement, trust is expected to be built through transparent and fair institutions and permeate throughout society.[38] This suggests that sustainable peace necessitates trust beyond interpersonal relationships. It is important to consider that trust-building requires time and consistent efforts, particularly in post-conflict societies. [39] Notwithstanding, recent studies by the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy in Hamburg found that trust has numerous benefits for the interactions between different groups, such as citizens and elites or security actors. Their study further emphasizes that asymmetric power relations can influence trust-building in unexpected ways.[40] As Rothstein and Stolle argue, trust in the judiciary, police, transitional justice mechanisms, and related institutions may contribute to

fostering civic cooperation and adherence to societal norms.[41] As seen in previous chapters, the failure to establish institutional trust in South Sudan led to renewed violence.[42]

In addition, by reducing the complex dynamics of conflicts to simplified data on methods, customs, and resilience, the local turn risks portraying local actors as isolated or micro-territorial entities.[43] Moreso, the assumption that engaging local actors cultivates trust and cohesion sometimes overlooks deep fractures within communities. In Cameroon, increasing tensions among local actors are symbolized through Ghost Towns. Ghost Town operations are born from historical grievances and political exclusion, often involving a significant portion of the Anglophone population deliberately disengaging from state-led processes. This environment does not favor a constructive national dialogue. Ghost Town operations have persisted since the Anglophone crisis began, and this has diminished trust levels among various local actors, hindering inclusion and local ownership. By failing to address persistent Ghost Town activities in Cameroon, key opportunities to foster inclusion were overlooked in the dialogue process, leading to unsuccessful outcomes. As a locally led process, the dialogue's failure to acknowledge and engage with these realities indicates that the proximity of local actors to conflict-affected communities was not effectively utilized to promote inclusion and ownership. Thus, while proximity to communities can increase trust as projected by the local turn, local actors' proximity does not guarantee trust. Moreover, trust is contextual and can be manipulated by intergroup rivalries. These dynamics illustrate broader patterns and tensions that will be explored through specific contextual examples in this chapter.

Furthermore, the relationship between inclusion and peace has long been established. According to researchers such as Nilsson,[44] Yousuf[45] and Krause et al.,[46] inclusion is critical for ending armed conflicts and transitioning from violence to peace.[47] This body of literature emerged in the mid-2000s, as scholars increasingly advocated for a greater focus on the agency of local actors in advancing peace and critiqued the prevailing peacebuilding approaches for being top-down.[48] Within this body of work, it is clear that trust facilitates genuine inclusion, and meaningful inclusion requires trust. Moreover, the increasing focus on the inclusion of civil society and politically marginalized actors in peacebuilding is closely linked to the local turn, as discussed in previous chapters.[49] This growing attention on civil society has influenced mediation policies and practices at different levels.[50] At the policy level, several policy documents from organizations

such as the African Union,[51] the European Union,[52] and the UN's guidelines for effective mediation[53] stress the importance of civil society inclusion. The idea of inclusivity remains a frequent topic in policy briefs.[54] At the practice level, mediation processes continue to experience varying degrees of success and failure in promoting civil society inclusion. As previously discussed, the dialogue processes in Kenya in 2008 and Tunisia in 2013 successfully incorporated civil society, whereas similar attempts in South Sudan in 2016 and Mali in 2019 were unsuccessful. Three rationales for inclusion were advanced to justify its critical role in local peacebuilding processes: increasing legitimacy, protecting or empowering marginalized groups, and building trust to transform relationships.[55] At their best, national dialogues hold the promise of ensuring that these rationales are integral to local peacebuilding processes.[56] However, when intimidation is employed by local elites or armed separatists to influence or suppress participation, it contradicts the trust and inclusivity that national dialogues aim to foster. These practices diminish genuine local ownership and perpetuate exclusionary patterns that the local turn seeks to discourage. As recently posited by Richmond, while the local turn initially aimed to challenge state-centric models and amplify subaltern voices, it has largely been co-opted by neoliberal, nationalistic, and counterinsurgency interests. As a result, its transformative potential has been diminished.[57]

As shall be discussed below, the national dialogue process in Cameroon did not adequately fulfill the promises of inclusion, particularly as relevant stakeholders, including separatist and opposition groups, were not represented.[58] Prior to the dialogue, the government employed various tactics, including the use of the anti-terror law to intimidate opponents, labeling potential participants as terrorists. This paper argues that such practices contributed to failed dialogue outcomes, as the dialogue process could not address historical grievances and mistrust in government efforts to resolve the Anglophone Crisis.[59] While the Cameroon dialogue process faced significant challenges, our analysis of the process leading up to it, as presented in this paper, provides lessons for future dialogues, emphasizing the importance of trust and inclusivity in sustainable local peacebuilding. This chapter complements existing research on inclusion in the local turn by providing an in-depth empirical study of how individual and elite practices and interactions among local actors exacerbate trust gaps instead of fostering inclusion in peacebuilding.

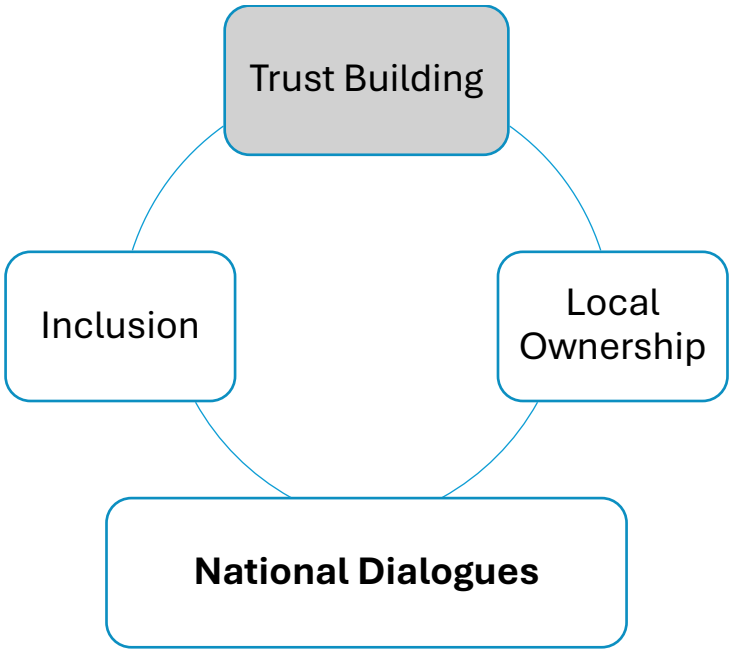
Moreover, the term "ownership" describes the varying capacities of domestic stakeholders to lead and participate in peacebuilding activities.[60] Although the principle of local ownership has long

been a part of peacebuilding discourse, it has received renewed attention in response to critiques of elite-driven local peacebuilding models, as addressed in Chapter One. Distinguishing between inclusion and local ownership is essential in analyzing how key opportunities to foster them in Cameroon's national dialogue were missed or misused. Inclusion focuses on the participation of diverse stakeholders in peace processes, while local ownership emphasizes the agency and control that local actors exert in these processes.[61] Elite actors claiming "ownership" may sometimes downplay or completely deny the existence of problems fueling conflict. This is common when powerful actors are keen to maintain the status quo. Unfortunately, claims of local "ownership" have become rampant, with many external donors claiming to promote peace by identifying and working with preferred groups and individuals as owners of the initiative.[62] In fact, it seems as though merely implying local "ownership" is enough to secure external funding or is sufficient to maintain good relations with external partners.[63] As a result, phrases such as "locally driven," "locally owned," "building local capacities," and "strengthening social bonds" have become commonplace in peacebuilding designs and proposals[64], yet their application is often limited. Hence, the local turn's aim to foster inclusion, legitimacy, and ownership through context-sensitive approaches has encountered limitations in practical applicability. The emancipatory potential of this approach could be undermined by disregarding or denying the root causes of conflict. This erodes trust and diminishes legitimacy, particularly when the causes of violence are linked to inequalities, historical marginalization, and structural issues. Using Cameroon as a case study, this paper posits that when government actors, as one set of local owners, deny societal problems, it fosters mistrust between them and other segments of society, which are also vital stakeholders in local peacebuilding. This tension undermines ownership and inclusive collaboration. Denying the causes of conflict allows grievances to fester, potentially fueling further tension and violence. Additionally, this paper posits that the language of inclusion and ownership has been distorted by a lack of trust, revealing the limitations of the local turn. As documented in the next section, in Cameroon, elites have co-opted the discourse of inclusion for their strategic interests while stifling grievances that challenge the status quo. Thus, when local engagement is superficial or manipulated by elites, it not only erodes trust but also reinforces power imbalances, thereby disrupting the relationship between inclusion and ownership that the local turn seeks to strengthen.

In chart one below, I illustrate the dynamic relationship between trust, inclusion, and local ownership, as well as the tensions among these elements. The three pillars depict how trust among

local and national actors can bolster inclusion and, at the same time, enhance local ownership, thereby fostering a conducive environment for genuine dialogue. This supports the core premise of the local turn: sustainable peace is most effectively achieved by those directly affected. However, certain practices can disrupt this relationship. In the case of Cameroon, such practices include praise-singing and ghost towns eroding trust, denial of root causes of conflict weakening ownership, and unnecessary intimidation discouraging inclusion. The empirical analysis section below provides further details on how these dynamics affected the national dialogue.

Chart 1: Relationship between trust, inclusion, and local ownership in national dialogues



3.4 Empirical Analysis

The empirical section of this chapter presents various practices, such as ghost towns, praise singing, intimidation, and political manipulation, as well as the denial or downplaying of the root causes of conflict in public discourse. It demonstrates how these individual and elite practices widened trust gaps, thereby undermining inclusion and local ownership in the 2019 dialogue process in Cameroon. The chapter argues that numerous opportunities for local peacebuilding were either missed or misused due to these practices. This analysis accentuates the limitations of the local turn as it highlights that while inclusion and local ownership can foster context-sensitive peacebuilding, they can also expose fractures when trust is assumed rather than intentionally

cultivated. This situation can significantly affect national dialogue processes, given that local actors are not immune to engaging in exclusionary practices.

3.4.1. Ghost Towns

Persistent Ghost Town practices in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon have contributed to a trust deficit and limit the potential of civil society and other local groups to be included in peace processes. In Cameroon, Ghost Town operations are often imposed by non-state armed groups and their sympathizers. As posited by Cramm and Nieboer, social disorder of this nature discourages trust in many ways.[65] Since the Anglophone crisis started in 2016, communities across the two regions have been observing Ghost Towns (Ville Morte) every Monday, called by separatists to express disagreements with the central government in Yaoundé.[66] This scholar explained that: '[…] on Ghost Town days, stores are closed, businesses are shut down, and traveling is difficult'.[67] Deutsche Welle (DW) Africa reporters working in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon corroborated this observation by reporting that since 2016, separatist groups have imposed Ghost Towns in the form of 'stay at home' orders on Mondays and occasional lockdowns during public events and national days such as 11 February, to resist the state's agenda.[68] That approach serves as a form of civil disobedience to disrupt existing power structures. International Crisis Group[69] found that Ghost Town calls are usually made from abroad and sometimes within the ranks of armed secessionist groups on the ground in Cameroon. The local population in Anglophone communities is now participating in Ghost Town operations out of fear of violent reprisals from secessionist and federalist groups.[70] Analysts have argued that Ghost Towns are seemingly the only way the population can express discontent against the government without risking their safety.[71] Many believed that persistent Ghost Town operations could push conflicting parties to negotiate a national dialogue. However, Ghost Town operations have detrimental impacts on the advancement of trust. In the Anglophone regions, Ghost Towns have disrupted economic activities, and as a result, the level of resentment and desperation among the affected population has increased.[72] This government official, who has witnessed the negative impacts of Ghost Towns laments as follows:

> […] how do you expect somebody whose shop was burnt down either by separatists or unknown arsonists because they opened during Ghost Town days to trust the government or separatists?[73]

Since Ghost Town operations usually occur during days when the government has organized an activity or event as a show of opposition, it is highly likely that peace dialogues organized by the government could attract separatist resistance. They might label the day as a "Ghost Town Day", making it difficult for locals to attend such events. Ghost Town measures have deepened the existing state-society divide. The ability of non-state actors to create fear in the minds of the population to ensure that Ghost Town operations are effective suggests that government influence is diminishing. To counter that narrative, government forces have been cracking down on citizens for respecting Ghost Towns rather than addressing their grievances. This explains why the 2019 national dialogue process failed to quell the occurrence of Ghost Towns, a situation that continues to divide actors' opinions and exacerbate exclusion. Addressing the underlying trust issues attracting ghost towns is essential for inclusion and local ownership in Cameroon. Ghost Town operations illustrate a critical limitation of the local turn. It reveals that when the appearance of engagement among local actors masks unresolved power asymmetries and fails to contend with identity-based mistrust and deep-rooted grievances, it undermines national dialogue.

3.4.2 Praise Singing

In the context of the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon, praise singing and individual self-interests have created a culture where elites are more concerned with flattering those in power than truthfully addressing the real issues plaguing society. This has increased the lack of trust in the elites' efforts to resolve the conflict. Trust is essential for inclusion and local ownership as it enables the development of a strong relationship among actors, including government and civil society.[74] This researcher observed that, in the streets of Bamenda and Buea in Anglophone Cameroon, the ironic catchphrase "we thank the head of state" is becoming a running gag.[75] It is easy to tell that the phrase has lost its real meaning and has become more of a meme than a serious statement. For example, in the early hours of Thursday, 2nd February 2023, the researcher walked into an interview venue in Bamenda to meet a participant. The pre-interview exchange between the researcher and the interviewee went as follows:

Researcher: Hello. Good to finally meet you sir; how are you doing this morning?

Interviewee: I am doing good my brother; we thank the head of state.[76]

Upon further probing, the researcher found that the participant's statement, 'We thank the head of state' was not intended to show appreciation to the president of Cameroon; instead, it was used in a sarcastic way to imitate Anglophone elites. Elites have often used such catchphrases to persuade the population, a situation many people living in these regions have become familiar with. A government official in Bamenda had this to say regarding the catchphrase:

> […] if you take a closer look at the people saying that thing [we thank the head of state], most of them benefit from the system.[77]

An opposition leader in Bamenda recounted that:

> […] we have had situations in Bamenda where the military killed people for just no reason, and the people benefiting from the system blamed the Ambas [separatists], saying we thank the head of state for providing security in the Southwest and Northwest [...] it is shameful how politics has reduced our brothers to this level.[78]

Indeed, there is an apparent disconnect between the rhetoric of the elites and the actual situation on the ground in these regions. The increasing mistrust between the elites and the population is largely because many in these regions have become too familiar with or fed up with catchphrases and empty praises that do not translate into government actions on the ground. This explains why the consultation process between the Prime Minister and members of the civil society prior to the dialogue did not contribute to trust-building needed for the dialogue process. In recounting the prime minister's visit to the two restive regions during the consultation phase of the major national dialogue, this member of the civil society in Bamenda explains that: '[…] the Prime Minister came here, knelt in front of the population, spoke Pidgin English and left'.[79] The civil society leader believes that speaking in Pidgin English and kneeling in front of the population was merely a ploy to win the trust and support of the people for their interest or to cover for the exclusion of the marginalized in political processes. In the participant's opinion, the fact that the Prime Minister did not follow through with this rhetoric to act accordingly during the national dialogue and the

lack of concrete progress after that shows the manipulative nature of the elites. The same civil society leader further inquired:

> […] was he speaking to the right people [when he knelt]? Did he visit those in the bushes [armed separatists]? Did he take any action points to work on [during the dialogue process]? The answer as far as I know, is No.[80]

The unwillingness of elites to acknowledge their role in the issues affecting their communities represents another missed opportunity in the peacebuilding process. By not taking responsibility or sharing the blame, elites further erode trust among stakeholders and exacerbate existing divisions. This lack of accountability undermines the potential for fostering a sense of shared ownership. This researcher, affiliated with the University of Buea, wondered why the Prime Minister visited one of the two regions at the peak of the crisis and stated that: '[…] Pa [Paul Biya] has sent me to talk with you people so that a solution will be looked upon'.[81] According to the researcher, such statements were intended to '[…] praise the head of state for sending him down here and not to show genuine sympathy to the problems'.[82] Therefore, praise singing, individual self-serving interests, and the propagation of false rhetoric about government efforts have eroded trust between the elites and the population who feel excluded. This has created a vicious cycle of mistrust and frustration, hindering inclusion and local ownership in peacebuilding processes. Elites' role in building peace in this context is often seen negatively because of a lack of trust. Another scholar in Bamenda noted that previous attempts to resolve the conflict through a peacebuilding dialogue had failed mainly because:

> […] the organizers [of the major national dialogue] were barons from the regime who served President Biya. So, I cannot say that they were serious because the Anglophone crisis would have been solved if they were serious.[83]

As argued by Brown and Zahar, peacebuilding studies must avoid the trap of limiting their analysis to relations between state and society by paying attention to different kinds of activities embedded in this relationship and digging deep to understand the nuts and bolts of those who participate and how they participate in those activities.[84] To build the trust needed for peacebuilding in Cameroon, stakeholders must consider the above individual and group dynamics. For example, praise singing encourages a culture of flattery and insincerity. Moreover, while the local turn assumes that

engaging local actors, particularly elites, can translate to context-sensitive peacebuilding,[85] in practice, when elite participation is driven by praise singing and self-interest, it renders local peace projects like national dialogues performative rather than transformative. This often results in people being more concerned about their vested interests than pursuing a common agenda. This practice is a major barrier to national dialogues and peacebuilding in Cameroon.

3.4.3 Intimidation

Although the local turn emphasizes the value of local agency and knowledge in fostering sustainable peace,[86] there are critical nuances to the assumption that all local agents and knowledge are positioned equally or can constructively contribute to peace.[87] This study found that the dominant power of elites in fragile states like Cameroon undermines the local turn promises and instead reproduces patterns of coercion and intimidation. Political manipulations by elites and state actors have, in many ways, encouraged division and polarization in Cameroon – thereby hindering trust building. In particular, the anti-terrorism law has been misused to target and intimidate Anglophone activists.[88] This creates a 'us versus them' mentality, which hinders inclusion and local ownership in the peacebuilding process. This shows that rather than facilitating inclusion, political elites may suppress and manipulate other actors. Hence, distorting the legitimacy of local ownership. In addition, through public statements, speeches, and televised debates, elites have pushed for the narrative that anyone who expresses discontent with the regime is a "terrorist" and that there is no need to make peace with terrorists.[89] The government's misuse of its anti-terror legislation has created the perception that laws are either ineffective or are not being applied according to their intended purpose, and this has made many people discontented with the state's actions. A development expert working with an INGO in Buea explains that:

> […] the state needs to understand that people have their grievances, and they need to express them […] once you expressed such in Cameroon, it becomes a problem because most leaders are so much into politics that they have politicized the terrorism law.[90]

Before the events of 2016 that led to the Anglophone crisis, Cameroon had been using its anti-terror law to suppress dissent and silent critics.[91] Amnesty International reports that the number of Anglophones intimidated and charged under the terrorism law in Cameroon skyrocketed at the start of the separatist conflict in 2016.[92] A media practitioner who has covered the conflict

extensively recounted how people who were neutral or had been providing lifesaving services in Anglophone communities were also charged with terrorism:

> […] people who are offering just humanitarian services are locked up [detained] because they went into a community that government officers or military cannot get into because of hostilities there, […] the interpretation of the government will be that they got into that place because they worked with Ambas [the separatists].[93]

Reports from human rights groups indicate that a notable state official, Mr. Atanga Nji Paul, has in the past accused NGOs, including Human Rights Watch, Doctors Without Borders, and Amnesty International, of fueling terrorism and destabilizing Cameroon with unfounded accusations.[94] In practice, elites sometimes view NGOs and humanitarian organizations as potential threats to their political interests.[95] This often result in many state actors implementing restrictive measures to intimidate NGOs or limit their activities.[96] The local turn often fails to account for this complex power interplay at the local level, and its impact on trust and peacebuilding. There also seems to be a lack of clarity on what constitutes terrorism in Cameroon, making it possible for the government and elites to stretch the definition to target people who challenge their manipulative rhetoric.[97] As another media practitioner further observed:

> […] If you look at the definition of terrorists in Cameroon, a lot of us moving around are just terrorists[...] it's just that no warrant has not been issued for us yet.[98]

As a result of the vagueness in the definition of terrorism, Cameroonian officials and influential elites have, on several occasions, stated that the government will not dialogue with "terrorists."[99] The approach of labeling rivals as terrorists has sparked outrage among locals and civil society groups, and rights activists who see it as a political tool to silence legitimate dissent.[100] A Buea-based civil society leader recounted how people who have organized protests to bring attention to the deplorable conditions of roads and the lack of social amenities in Anglophone communities had been unjustly imprisoned under the guise of "terrorism" citing the following example:

> […] take someone like Mancho Bibixy, who led a peaceful protest in Bamenda because of the bad roads; he was not even involved with the Anglophone crisis. He was taken to the military court and is in prison today.[101]

The responses from participants on the manipulative use of the word "terrorism" or the anti-terror legislation in Cameroon, particularly in the case of Mancho Bibixy, are consistent with the findings of human rights organizations such as Amnesty International,[102] Lawyers Watch Canada,[103] and International Federation of Human Rights.[104] This adds credence to the argument that elites' manipulative anti-terror law has widened social divisions and encouraged the lack of confidence in the government's ability to protect citizens. Moreover, efforts at peacebuilding through national dialogues in Cameroon have failed mainly because elites manipulated the ambiguous anti-terrorism law to craft a narrative that having an opinion that opposes that of the government is terrorism, and people with such opinions cannot be invited, let alone included in the dialogue process.[105] This situation has created a deep-seated mistrust between the population and elites, making it difficult for peacebuilding to be successful. This journalist working in the Anglophone regions opined that for peacebuilding initiatives such as national dialogue to be inclusive:

> […] they [government] will have to remove that designation of separatists as terrorists so that people can have that freedom to talk to them and bring back their opinions to the public.[106]

Relatedly, a civil society activist in Bamenda argues that influential stakeholders in the Cameroon's Anglophone conflict could not attend the national dialogue despite the invitation because they have been labeled as terrorists, an offense punishable by a death sentence in Cameroon. The civil society leader stated:

> […] many of those so-called elites like the Ngolle Ngolles' [referring to an Anglophone notable, Elvis Ngolle Ngolle, a university professor and pioneer coordinator of Biya's CPDM Academy] have stated on television that the separatists are terrorists, saying the government will never dialogue with terrorists.[107]

These responses show that elites and state officials have shifted attention from addressing the root causes of the conflict to creating a false narrative of terrorism among activists and dissenters. As we shall see below, this tactic serves to delegitimize opposition voices and actions, thereby obscuring ownership. It also reveals how local powerholders can manipulate the narrative to maintain hierarchical structures, an issue not sufficiently dealt with in the local turn literature.[108]

Furthermore, according to the United Nations, preventing and addressing cases of intimidation in every society is closely associated with the state's obligation to ensure a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders and civil society organizations.[109] Intimidation and trust building are inversely related in many ways. The rise in cases of intimidation and reprisals in conflict-affected societies can challenge efforts to build trust and sustainable peace. According to Amnesty International, rights defenders and activists from several organizations in Cameroon are being targeted with death threats and intimidation.[110] In the early days of the Anglophone crisis, the government created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity by intimidating and eventually banning influential civil society groups such as the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium (CACSC). As posited by Enyeyi, CACSC championed the initial demands to end marginalization and return to a two-state federation, release of Anglophone political detainees, and preserve the Anglophone legal and educational systems.[111] Both sides nearly agreed in January 2017, when the government accepted 21 out of 25 demands. The relationship between both parties collapsed weeks later, leading to the arrest of CACSC members. A civil society leader in Buea who followed these negotiations between the government and CACSC agreed with Moinina and Nlem and stated that: "[…] the arrest of [CACSC leaders] Agbor Balla and Fontem Neba created a sense of mistrust between the government and the public."[112] Their arrest following the breakdown of negotiations between the government and non-state actors in 2017 stoked skepticism about the safety of participants in subsequent peacebuilding processes. Eventually, it prevented their participation in the 2019 dialogue process. By intimidating activists, the government created an atmosphere of fear, suspicion, and distrust, making it difficult for key local stakeholders to include and own the process. Thus, while local turn approaches promote the inclusion of local actors to foster ownership, they can overlook how state driven intimidation tactics can distort local agency. This underscores that the mere assumption that local agency can contribute to sustainable peace is not a guarantee for successful national dialogues, especially when participation is constrained by fear and intimidation.

3.4.4 Denying the root causes of the crisis

Another important dynamic exposing the limitations of the local turn is the assumption that engaging those affected by conflict will naturally lead to sustainable outcomes.[113] While this assumption may hold true in certain contexts, in others, there is a need for a nuanced interpretation

of who is a local and what level of power do they hold,[114] as elites are often categorized as local alongside the broader community despite possessing significant power and vested interests. Influential local actors, such as political elites, may exploit their positionality to protect entrenched interests, often by denying the existence of the root causes of the crisis. Before the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon spiraled in 2016, a good number of Anglophone elites in government had made claims and public statements that there was no Anglophone problem in Cameroon, dismissing the real issues and daily occurrences in Anglophone communities.[115] For example, Cameroon's minister of territorial administration parroted the narrative that the problem of marginalization did not exist, stating: "[…] how can you be talking about marginalization when for the past 25 years all Prime Ministers of Cameroon have been Anglophones."[116] Indeed, since 1992, beginning with Mr. Simon Achidi Achu, Prime Ministers in Cameroon have typically come from the Anglophone regions.[117] As argued by Anchimbe, in Cameroon, "the post of Prime Minister is understood to be set aside for an Anglophone, while the President is Francophone; an arrangement often touted by pundits as a balancing act between the two colonially instituted groups."[118] Yet that analysis does not mention that since 1992 all five Anglophone Prime Ministers have been members of Biya's Cameroon People Democratic Movement (CPDM) party, which has been in office for four decades.[119] Numerous studies have documented how the larger Anglophone population has been systematically marginalized and disenfranchised despite Anglophone representation in the government.[120] By denying the existence of social marginalization and discrimination, ruling elites fueled mistrust and disillusionment among the affected Anglophone population. This questions the legitimacy of leaders and institutions, as revealed in the following responses from some participants in this research:

> […] funny enough, the same people [Anglophone elites] who said there is no Anglophone problem came back here [Bamenda] with peace plants to preach peace and want us to believe them.[121]

The participant response suggests that the deployment of elites to the conflict-affected regions prior to the dialogue process, as mentioned above, did not contribute to trust building between the elites and the population. A civil society leader in Buea further paints a picture of how residents of these regions perceive elites based on personal experiences or interactions shaped by the lack of trust between both groups:

> […] these people are just praise singers to President Paul Biya, and they don't bring results […] some of the ministers openly said the Anglophone problem did not even exist, even a blind man can tell you that we are not treated the same in this country.[122]

This journalist described who these distrusted elites are and their roles in the dialogue process:

> […] some of them are directors, some of them are generals, some of them are traditional authorities […] they attended the dialogue to show President Paul Biya that they are working to maintain their positions.[123]

The above responses illustrate the level of inequality and trust deficit between elites and the Anglophone population. The resentment between both groups in part resulted from the elites' approach of denying the existence of marginalization. This was well intended to disconnect the population from reality while making empty promises to maintain their stay in government. This illustrates how local agency or the deep involvement of the so called "affected locals" can be co-opted to maintain the status quo rather than fostering inclusion. This manipulation reinforces existing power structures, thereby hindering the transformative potential of the local turn. In addition, a former opposition leader, Mr. Fru Ndi (RIP), also expressed frustration that these elites continue to be appointed into political positions for driving wrong narratives and misrepresentations about an ongoing crisis.[124] According to Fru Ndi, "appointing Mr. Atanga Nji and Ms. Nalova Lyonga as ministers is a provocation to Anglophones."[125] The politician continued by stating that "these are the very people who stoked the embers of the Anglophone crisis by way of false, irresponsible utterances and dictatorial behaviors."[126] Fru Ndi's view aligned with those of this Cameroonian scholar who believes that denying the existence of the problem instead undermined elites' legitimacy in the national dialogue process:

> […] people who denied the existence of the Anglophone problem were never supposed to be there [in the national dialogue] you cannot say something does not exist and then participate in a dialogue to end what you said does not exist.[127]

The above perspectives suggest that declining trust between stakeholders had far-ranging effects beyond interpersonal connection and social cohesion.[128] According to participant responses in this

research, engaging key local actors to address the root causes of the Anglophone crisis is a necessary first step. However, the local turn's failure to adequately differentiate between various local power holders, obscures power imbalances and risks reinforcing elite dominance under the guise of local ownership. This undermines the legitimacy, trust, and inclusivity that the local turn aims to promote in national dialogues.

3.5 Conclusion

This research has demonstrated that progress toward trust-building is necessary for convening an inclusive national dialogue. As argued by Cox et al., such a dialogue process can contribute to lasting peace and further enhance social cohesion in deeply divided societies.[129] However, this essay has also illustrated that, while the local turn emphasizes the need to engage all local actors, it often overlooks the power asymmetries, political interests and identity-based divisions among local actors. This is critical in shaping trust, inclusion and local ownership. In the Cameroonian context, practices such as praise singing, ghost towns, intimidation, and the denial of underlying grievances have widened trust deficits and undermined the credibility of national dialogue processes. These dynamics expose critical limitations in the assumptions of the local turn (particularly its tendency to treat all local actors as equal or representative). The above tendency can be used as a justification for the performative nature of the Cameroon national dialogue.

Additionally, the ways in which elites behave towards the population have a strong impact on social trust.[130] This chapter has shown how, in Cameroon, elites have routinely used catchphrases such as 'we thank the head of state', whereas state actions have failed to convince the population that the government is doing enough to resolve the conflict. The use of such deceptive narratives to distort reality and discredit legitimate grievances of the population has been employed by the elites in a desperate attempt to prevent the masses from challenging existing power structures or local hegemony. In addition, notable state officials have denied the existence of marginalization in the Anglophone regions despite considerable evidence to the contrary. These and other tactics employed by elites have contributed to deeply rooted mistrust between the elites and the population. In sum, this paper contends that trust, inclusion, and ownership can be enhanced by recognizing and addressing the root causes of marginalization, eliminating all forms of political manipulation and exclusion, refraining from unnecessary praise singing and individual self-

interest, addressing issues underpinning ghost towns and social disobedience, and opening civic spaces for activists and political rivals. Future studies could explore barriers and opportunities for more inclusive and gender-sensitive national dialogues in this context.

---

[1] Spencer, "Under the Baobab Tree"
[2] De Coning, Understanding Peacebuilding as Essentially Local
[3] Antonia Does, Inclusivity of local perspectives in peacebuilding
[4] Lederach, Building peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies
[5] Mac Ginty, Everyday Peace: How So-Called Ordinary People Can Disrupt Violent Conflict
[6] Autesserre, Peaceland: Conflict resolution and the everyday politics of international intervention.
[7] Donais, *Peacebuilding and local ownership: Post-conflict consensus-building*.
[8] Kappler, The dynamic local: Delocalisation and (re-) localisation in the search for peacebuilding identity.
[9] Mac Ginty, R. (2010). Hybrid peace: The interaction between top-down and bottom-up peace. *Security dialogue*, *41*(4), 391-412.
[10] Sama, Cultural Diversity in Conflict and Peace Making in Africa
[11] International Crisis Group, *Cameroon's Worsening Anglophone Crisis Calls for Strong Measures*
[12] Mac Ginty, "Hybrid Peace: The Interaction Between Top-Down and Bottom-Up Peace
[13] Ngam, Reasons and Scenarios of Ethno-Political Tensions in Cameroon
[14] Mbuwir, From Cultural differences in Africa to Cultural Divides
[15] Seemndze, Politicization of cultural diversity and its impact on nation-building in Cameroon:
[16] See Willis et al., 'We Remain Their Slaves'; Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, Cameroon
[17] Lekunze, Insurgency and National Security
[18] Mateş, Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis
[19] See Jua and Konings, Occupation of Public Space Anglophone Nationalism in Cameroon
[20] Lichtenheld et al., Mobilizing Communities to Build Social Cohesion and Reduce Vulnerability to Violent Extremism
[21] Browne, State Fragility and Social Cohesion
[22] Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon, Cameroon Celebrates Golden Jubilee of Unitary State
[23] Ndinga-Kanga et al., Forging a Resilient Social Contract in South Africa
[24] Ibid, no.32
[25] Konings & Nyamnjoh, Negotiating an Anglophone identity
[26] Global Affairs Canada, *Statement on Peace Process in Cameroon*
[27] Global News, Cameroon Denies Seeking Help to Mediate Separatist Conflict After Canada Pledges Aid
[28] See Richmond, 2011; Mac Ginty, 2010
[29] Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015; Millar, 2014
[30] Paris, Saving liberal peacebuilding
[31] Anderson, *Do no harm: how aid can support peace--or war*
[32] Bakaki, & Dorussen, Trust in peacebuilding organizations: A survey experiment in Haiti.
[33] Horne, *Building trust and democracy Transitional justice in post-communist countries.; see also* Interpeace, Building trust
[35] Ibid, no.4
[36] Paffenholz, "Inclusivity in Peacebuilding
[37] Lewicki, R. J., McAllister, D. J., & Bies, R. J. (1998). Trust and distrust: New relationships and realities. *Academy of management Review*, *23*(3), 438-458.
[38] Weber et al., From Max Weber: Essays in sociology

[39] Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict*
[40] Institute of Peace Research and security policy, Fostering Constructive Relations
[41] Rothstein & Stolle, "The State and Social Capital
[42] Boswell, South Sudan's Elusive Peace
[43] Richmond, O. P. (2024). The use and misuse of the 'local turn'.
[44] *Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs, 'Revisiting an Elusive Concept*
[45] *Yousuf, Navigating Inclusion in Peace Transitions*
[46] *Krause, Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations and the Durability of Peace*
[47] *Castillejo, Promoting Inclusion in Political Settlements*
[48] Björkdahl, A Progressive Peace; Richmond & Mitchell, Introduction–towards a post-liberal peace
[49] Mac Ginty & Richmond, The local turn in peace building
[50] Hellmüller, Broadening perspectives on inclusive peacemaking
[51] See also *African Union Mediation Support Handbook*.
[52] European Union, *EU Peace Mediation.*
[53]See United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation
[54] Paffenholz, *Broadening Participation in Peace Processes*
[55] Hirblinger, A. T., & Landau, D. M. (2021). Inclusive of whom, and for what purpose? Strategies of inclusion in peacemaking. In *Rethinking Peace Mediation* (pp. 115-138). Bristol University Press.
[56] Stigant & Murray, *National Dialogues*
[57] Richmond, O. P. (2024). The use and misuse of the 'local turn'.
[58] Begealawuh, *Cameroon Celebrates National Dialogue Anniversary, but Critics Say Outcomes Remain Unmet*
[59] Fuh, An appraisal of the Major National Dialogue as a panacea to the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon.
[60] Schirch, Lisa et al., Local Ownership in Security
[61] Lehti & Lehti, Towards a locally owned inclusive peace process
[62] Donais, Peacebuilding and Local Ownership: Post-Conflict Consensus-Building
[63] Ibid, no.49
[64] McCann, Local ownership – an imperative for inclusive peacebuilding
[65] Cramm & Nieboer, Social Cohesion and Belonging Predict the Well-being of Community-Dwelling Older People
[66] Cameroon Intelligence Report, *Southern Cameroon Crisis*
[67] Interview 01, scholar affiliated with the University of Bamenda
[68] Song & Kaledzi, Cameroon's Ghost Towns Days: How Residents Cope in Lockdown.
[69] International Crisis Group, Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis at the Crossroads
[70] Ibid, no.6
[71] Ibid, no. 74
[72] Field Observation
[73] Interview 10, government official
[74] Paffenholz, T., & Spurk, C. (2006). Civil society, civic engagement, and peacebuilding. Social Development Papers: Conflict Prevention & Reconstruction, 36
[75] Field notes
[76] Interview 05, civil society leader Bamenda
[77] Interview 11, government official in Bamenda
[78] Interview 14, political party representative in Bamenda
[79] Interview 05, civil society leader in Bamenda
[80] Interview 05, civil society leader in Bamenda
[81] Interview 24, Scholar affiliated with the University of Buea
[82] Interview 24, Scholar affiliated with the University of Buea
[83] Interview 2, Scholar affiliated with St Louis University Institute, Bamenda
[84] Brown & Zahar, Social Cohesion as Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic and Beyond
[85] Millar, Disaggregating hybridity

[86] Džuverović, To romanticise or not to romanticise the local
[87] See Bargués-Pedreny, *Deferring peace in international statebuilding*
[88] Ibid, no.43
[89] Mutah, Global Responses to Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis
[90] Interview 36, employee of an INGO in Buea
[91] US Department of State, *Country Report on Terrorism 2019*
[92] Amnesty International, Cameroon: More than a Hundred Detainees from Anglophone Regions and Opposition Party Languishing in Jail for Speaking Out.
[93] Interview 39, media practitioner in Buea
[94] Schumann at al., *Cameroon Conflict Human Rights Report*
[95] Chaudhry, *The assault on democracy assistance*
[96] Ibid, no.94
[97] Ngangum, the 'Trumping Effect'of Anti-Terrorism Legislations:
[98] Interview 39, media practitioner in Buea
[99] See CGTN News, Cameroon *President Ready for Dialogue Over Anglophone Crisis*
[100] Aljazeera, Cameroon Using 'Anti-terror' Law to Silence Media
[101] Interview 28, civil society leader in Buea
[102] Ibid no. 45
[103] Lawyers Right Watch Canada, *WGAD Determines that Mancho Bibixy Tse is being Arbitrary Detained*
[104] IFHR, Cameroon*: Mr Mancho Bibixy Tse Sentenced to 15 years in prison.*
[105] Ibid, no.43; Ngangum, the 'Trumping Effect'of Anti-Terrorism Legislations
[106] Interview 42, media practitioner in Buea
[107] Interview 19, civil society leader in Bamenda
[108] Paffenholz, Unpacking the local turn in peacebuilding
[109] ISHR; Preventing and Addressing Reprisals and Intimidation in Relation to Engagement with the UN Security Council
[110] Ibid, no.62
[111] Enyeji, Resolving the Anglophone Crisis
[112] Interview 32, civil society leader in Buea
[113] Randazzo,The paradoxes of the 'everyday'
[114] Schierenbeck, Beyond the local turn divide
[115] Field notes
[116] Amin, President Paul Biya and Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis, p.104
[117] World Atlas, *Prime Ministers of Cameroon*
[118] Anchimbe, The Roots of the Anglophone Problem, p.173
[119] Ibid, no.29; Field Notes
[120] Ezemenaka & Ekumaoko, Beyond Language; Fonchingong, The Quest for Autonomy
[121] Interview 05, civil society leader in Bamenda
[122] Interview 27, civil society leader in Buea
[123] Interview 42, media practitioner in Buea
[124] See Fru Ndi's interview with Cameroon Postline, *Appointing Atanga Nji, Nalova Lyonga Ministers Is Provocation of Anglophones*
[125] Ibid, no.53
[126] Ibid, no. 39
[127] Interview 02, Scholar affiliated with St Louis University Institute, Bamenda
[128] World Economic Forum, Engaging Citizens for Inclusive Futures
[129] Cox, Duituturaga & Scheye, *Building on local strengths*
[130] Gluckman et al., Addressing the Challenges to Social Cohesion

Bibliography

Adunimay, "Secessionists Movements and their Implications for Security in Africa: the Case of Southern Cameroons". https://www.accord.org.za/publication/secessionists-movements-and-their-implications-for-security-in-africa-the-case-of-southern-cameroons/ (2021)

African Union. (2014). *African Union Mediation Support Handbook*. https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/06-au-mediation-support-handbook-2014.pdf

Agejoh, "Cameroon's Anti-Terrorism Law and the Trials of Ex-British Southern Cameroons' Activists in a Military Tribunal." *Porcupine in a Python's Throat: The Ambazonia Story in West Central Africa*, 249 (2023)

Albaugh, "An Autocrat's Toolkit: Adaptation and Manipulation in 'Democratic' Cameroon." In Democratization in Africa: Challenges and prospects (pp. 114-140). Routledge (2013)

Aljazeera, "Cameroon Using 'Anti-Terror' Law to Silence Media: CPJ". https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/9/20/cameroon-using-anti-terror-law-to-silence-media-cpj (2017)

Amin, "President Paul Biya and Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: A Catalog of Miscalculations." *Africa Today*, *68*(1), 95-122 (2021)

Amnesty International, "Cameroon: More than a Hundred Detainees from Anglophone Regions and Opposition Party Languishing in Jail for Speaking Out". https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/01/cameroon-more-than-a-hundred-detainees-from-anglophone/(2022, January 24).

Anchimbe, "The Roots of the Anglophone Problem". *Current History*, *117*(799), 169-174 (2018).

Anderson, M. B. (1999). *Do no Harm: How Aid can Support Peace--or war*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Antonia Does. (2013). Inclusivity of Local Perspectives in Peacebuilding. Policy Paper 08, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation. https://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/PP-08-Inclusivity-of-Local-Perspectives-in-PB-July-2013.pdf

Autesserre, S. (2014). Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention. *Cambridge University Press.*

Bakaki, Z., & Dorussen, H. (2023). Trust in Peacebuilding Organizations: A Survey Experiment in Haiti. *World Development*, *172*, 106375.

Bargués-Pedreny, P. (2018). *Deferring Peace in International Statebuilding: Difference, Resilience and Critique*. Routledge.

Begealawuh, N. (2024, November 11). *Cameroon's National Dialogue is Repeating Other Countries' Mistakes*. Africa at LSE

Begealawuh, N. C. (2024, November 11). *Cameroon Celebrates National Dialogue Anniversary but Critics Say Outcomes Remain Unmet.* Centre for International Policy Studies.

Beseng et al., "From 'Anglophone Problem' to 'Anglophone Conflict' in Cameroon: Assessing Prospects for Peace." *Africa Spectrum*, *58*(1), 89-105. (2023).

Bottoni, "Validation of a Social Cohesion Theoretical Framework: A Multiple Group SEM strategy." *Quality & Quantity*, *52*(3), 1081-1102 (2018).

Brown & Zahar, "Social Cohesion as Peacebuilding in The Central African Republic and Beyond". *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, *10*(1), 10-24 (2015).

Browne, "State Fragility and Social Cohesion." *GSDRC Helpdesk Research*. https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/ document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi =c00d71878967587e8e5303d9d1360b241c449e58, (2013).

Boswell, A. (2019). "South Sudan's Elusive Peace: Between Power and Trust." *African Affairs*, 118(472), 388–411.

Boutros-Ghali, B. (1992). An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-Keeping. United Nations. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/145749?ln=en&v=pdf

Björkdahl, A. (2014). A Progressive Peace–A Gender-Just Peace. *Challenges of Peace Research*, 24.

Castillejo, C. (2014). *Promoting Inclusion in Political Settlements: A Priority for International Actors?* The Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre

Cameroon Intelligence Report. "*Southern Cameroon Crisis: Ghost Towns for a Better Environment."* https://www.cameroonintelligencereport.com/southern-cameroons-crisis-ghost-towns-for-a-better-environment/, (2022, August 15).

Cameroon Post line. "*Appointing Atanga Nji, Nalova Lyonga Ministers Is Provocation Of Anglophones-Fru Ndi"* https://cameroonpostline.com/appointing-atanganji-nalova-lyonga-ministers-is-provocation-of-anglophones-fru-ndi/%E2%80%8B (2018).

CGTN, Africa. "Cameroon President Ready for Dialogue Over Anglophone Crisis." https://africa.cgtn.com/cameroon-president-ready-for-dialogue-over-anglophone-crisis/,(2023).

Chan & Chan, "Reconsidering Social Cohesion: Developing A Definition and Analytical Framework for Empirical Research." *Social Indicators Research*, *75*. (2006).

Chaudhry, S. (2016). *The Assault on Democracy Assistance: Explaining State Repression of NGOs* (Doctoral dissertation, Yale University).

Cramm & Nieboer, "Social Cohesion and Belonging Predict the Well-being of Community-Dwelling Older People." *BMC geriatrics*, *15*(1), 1-10 (2015).

Cox, M., Duituturaga, E., & Scheye, E. (2007). *Building on local strengths: Evaluation of Australian aid to Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, 2000–2004.* AusAID**.**

Damaschin, "The Essential Role of Intercultural Dialogue in Social Cohesion, Equality Promotion, Reconciliation between Peoples and Peace Among Nations". *The Role of Intercultural Communication*, 37 (2017).

De Coning, Cedric. 2013. Understanding Peacebuilding as Essentially Local. Stability 2(1): 6, pp. 1-6 http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/sta.as

Donais, T. (2012). *Peacebuilding and Local Ownership: Post-Conflict Consensus-Building*. Routledge.

Džuverović, N. (2021). 'To Romanticise or not to Romanticise the Local': Local Agency and Peacebuilding in the Balkans. *Conflict, Security & Development*, *21*(1), 21-41

Ekah, "The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon: A Geopolitical Analysis." https://ssrn.com/abstract=3529815 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3529815.SSRN 3529815(2020).

Enyeji, "Resolving the Anglophone Crisis: Between Myths and Realities". *Available at SSRN 3929473* (2021).

Esse, "Construction of Social Cohesion and Living Together in the Cameroonian Public Space: Differences of Opinion versus the Emergence of a Common Sense in Discourse." *International Journal of Communications, Network and System Sciences*, *14*(6), 75-94 (2021).

European Union. (2009). *EU Peace Mediation.* https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/isp2_ mediation_factsheet_for_publication_20022021.pdf

Fonchingong, "The Quest for Autonomy: The Case of Anglophone Cameroon". *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, *7*(5), 224 (2013).

Fuh, N. V. (2024). An Appraisal of the Major National Dialogue as a Panacea to the Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon. *Journalism and Mass Communication*, 14(1), 31-51. https://www.davidpublisher.com/Public/uploads/Contribute/65eeb66c11a0f.pdf

Fundacion Mujeres Por África, "*Edith Kah Walla (Cameroon).*" https://mujeresporafrica.es/en/perfiles/edith-kah-walla-camerun-2/

Global Affairs Canada, "*Statement on Peace Process in Cameroon.*" https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2023/01/ statement-on-peace-process-in- cameroon.html#(2023).

Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. (2024)."Cameroon." https://www.globalr2p. org/countries/cameroon

Global News. (2023, January). Cameroon Denies Seeking Help to Mediate Separatist Conflict After Canada Pledges Aid. https://globalnews.ca/news/9431003/cameroon-violence-canada-peace/

Gluckman et al. (2023). "Addressing the Challenges to Social Cohesion."[Discussion Paper]. University of Aukland

Hellmüller, S. (2024). Broadening Perspectives on Inclusive Peacemaking: The Case of the UN Mediation in Syria. *Third World Quarterly*, *45*(5), 963-980.

Hirblinger, A. T., & Landau, D. M. (2021). Inclusive of Whom, and for What Purpose? Strategies of Inclusion in Peacemaking. In *Rethinking Peace Mediation* (pp. 115-138). Bristol University Press.

Horne, C. M. (2017). *Building Trust and Democracy: Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Countries*. Oxford University Press.

Inclusive Peace, "Inclusion and State Legitimacy." https://www.inclusivepeace.org/ - project/inclusion-and-state-legitimacy/

Institute of Peace Research and Security Policy (2022). Fostering Constructive Relations: Approaches to Trust- Building in Peacebuilding Interventions. https://ifsh.de/file/publication/Research_Report/008/Research_Report_008_EN.pdf

International Crisis Group, "*Cameroon's Worsening Anglophone Crisis Calls for Strong Measures."* https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-a frica/ cameroon/130- cameroon-worsening-anglophone-crisis (2017, October 19).

International Federation for Human Rights(IFHR), "*Cameroon: Mr Mancho Bibixy Tse Sentenced to 15 years in prison."* https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/cameroon-mr-mancho-bibixy-tse-sentenced-to-15-years-in-prison, (2018).

International Monetary Fund, "Income Inequality: Introduction to Inequality." https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/Inequality/introduction-to-inequality

International Service for Human Rights. (2019). "Preventing and Addressing Reprisals and Intimidation in Relation to Engagement with the UN Security Council." https://ishr.ch/wp- content/uploads/2019/06/ishr_reprisals report_2019_web_0.pdf

Interpeace. (n.d.). Building Trust: Trust is the Keystone of Peace. *Interpeace. https://www.interpeace.org/our-approach/pillars-of-peacebuilding/building-trust/*

Interpeace. (2020). *Building Trust: Trust is the Keystone of Peace.* https://www.interpeace.org/resource/building-trust-trust-is-the-keystone-of-peace/

Jenson. (1998)."*Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Canadian Research*." Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks,

Jua & Konings, "Occupation of Public Space Anglophone Nationalism in Cameroon." *Cahiers d'études Africaines*, *175*(3), 609-634 (2004).

Kappler, S. (2018). The dynamic local: Delocalisation and (re-) Localisation in the Search for Peacebuilding Identity. In *The'Local Turn'in Peacebuilding* (pp. 59-73). Routledge.

Krause, J., Krause, W. and Bränfors, P. (2018). Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations and the Durability of Peace. *International Interaction*s, 44(6): 985–1016.

Kindzeka, "Cameroon PM Says Peace Returning to Separatist Regions; Residents Not so Sure." https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-pm-says-peace-returning-to-separatist-regions-residents-not-so-sure-/6688399.html (2022).

Konings, P., & Nyamnjoh, F. B. (2003). *Negotiating an Anglophone identity: A study of the politics of recognition and representation in Cameroon* (Vol. 1). Brill.

Küfeoğlu, "SDG-16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions." In *Emerging Technologies:*

Value Creation for Sustainable Development Cham: Springer International Publishing, 487-496 (2022).

Lawyers Right Watch Canada, "*Cameroon: WGAD Determines that Mancho Bibixy Tse is being Arbitrary Detained."* https://www.lrwc.org/cameroon-wgad-determines-that-mancho-bibixy-tse-is-being-arbitrarily-detained-news/(2019).

Lederach, J. P. (1997). Building peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies. *United States Institute of Peace Press.*

Lekunze, "Insurgency and National Security: A Perspective from Cameroon's Separatist Conflict." *Third World Quarterly*, 1-19 (2023).

Lehti, M., & Lehti, M. (2019). Towards a locally owned inclusive peace process. *The Era of Private Peacemakers: A New Dialogic Approach to Mediation*, 155-163.

Lewicki, R. J., McAllister, D. J., & Bies, R. J. (1998). Trust and Distrust: New Relationships and Realities. *Academy of management Review*, *23*(3), 438-458

Li & Dervin, "Constructions of Social Justice, Marginalization, and Belonging." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedias: Education*. Oxford University Press (2019).

Lofredo, "Social Cohesion, Trust, and Government Action Against Pandemics." *Eubios Journal of Asian and International Bioethics 30 (4):182-188.* (2020).

Mateş, "The Internationalization of the Secessionist Crisis in Cameroon." *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai-Studia Europaea*, *66*(2), 5-22 (2021).

Mac Ginty, R. (2022). Everyday Peace: How So-Called Ordinary People Can Disrupt Violent Conflict. *Perspectives On Politics*, *20*(1), 294-296.

Mac Ginty, R., & Richmond, O. P. (2013). The Local Turn in Peacebuilding: A Critical Agenda for peace. *Third World Quarterly*, 34(5), 763-783.

Mac Ginty, R. (2010). "Hybrid Peace: The Interaction Between Top-Down and Bottom-Up Peace." *Security Dialogue*, 41(4), 391–412

Mbuwir. (2020). From Cultural differences in Africa to Cultural Divides: The Search for an African Ethics of Managing Cultural Diversity. *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies,* 7(3), 53-61

McCandless, "Resilient Social Contracts and Peace: Towards a Needed Reconceptualization." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, *14*(1), 1-21 (2020).

McCann, J. (2017, February 27). Local Ownership – An Imperative for Inclusive Peacebuilding. https://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/DHF_DD63_p16-27.pdf

Mercy Corps, "Understanding the Links Between Social Cohesion and Violence: Evidence from Niger". https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/Niger_SCViolBrief_v6-2.pdf (2021).

Mehler, "*Dialogue as the New Mantra in Responding to Political Crisis in Africa? The Cases of Mali and Cameroon*."ABI Working Paper Nr. 17. https://www.arnold-bergstraesser.de/ sites/default/files/field/pub-download/abi_working_paper_17_

mehler_tull_glund_0.pdf (2021).
Millar, G. (2014). Disaggregating Hybridity: Why Hybrid Institutions do not Produce Rredictable Experiences of Peace. *Journal of Peace Research*, *51*(4), 501-514..
Moinina & Nlem, "The Role of the Civil Society in Conflicts: The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon", *AHBV Akdeniz Havzası ve Afrika Medeniyetleri Dergisi (AKAF)*, *2*(2), 26-36 (2020).
Mukunto, "National Dialogue and Social Cohesion in Zambia." *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, *21*(2), 58-80 (2021).
Mutah, "Global Responses to Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: The Inadequate International Efforts to End the World's Most Neglected Conflict." *The SAIS Review of International Affairs* (2022).
National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism. (2019). "*NCPBM: Explores a Befitting Multicuturalism Setting Towards Cementing Unity, Peace and National Cohesion in Cameroon*." https://www.cnpbm.cm/en/news/the-united-nations-high-commissioner-for-human-rights-praises-ncpbm-for-what-they-have-been-doing-to-bring-peace-to-the-conflict-zones-in-cameroon
Ndekwo, "*National Dialogue as a Strategy for Intra-state Conflict Resolution in Africa: The Case Study of Anglophone Cameroon*." [Masters Thesis, University of Nairobi], (2020).
Ndinga-Kanga, M., Van der Merwe, H., & Hartford, D. (2020). Forging a Resilient Social Contract in South Africa: States and Societies Sustaining Peace in the Post-Apartheid era. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, *14*(1), 22-41
Ngam, P. A. (2020). Reasons and Scenarios of Ethno-Political Tensions in Cameroon. The Lansing Institute. https://lansinginstitute.org/2020/12/10/reasons-and-scenarios-of-ethno- political-tensions-in-cameroon/
Ngangum. (2020). "The 'Trumping Effect'of Anti-Terrorism Legislations: The Case of Cameroon." *Tierra, Derechos Humanos y desarrollo: supuestos y visiones desde África y América*.
Nilsson, D. and Söderberg Kovacs, M. (2011). Revisiting an Elusive Concept: A Review of the Debate on Spoilers in Peace Processes. *International Studies Review*, 13(4): 606–26.
Niyitunga. (2023). "Conflict, Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion in African Governance." *Handbook of Public Management in Africa*, 247
Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2016). *States of fragility 2016: Understanding violence*. OECD. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2016/11/states-of-fragility 2016_g1g73458.html#:~:text=Understanding%20Violence%20finds%20that%20development,the%20centre%20of%20our%20efforts
Paris, R. (2010). Saving Liberal Peacebuilding. *Review of international studies*, *36*(2), 337-365.
Paris, R. (2004). *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict***.** Cambridge University Press.

Paffenholz. (2008). “Exploring Opportunities and Obstacles for a Constructive Role of Social Capital in Peacebuilding.” *Social Capital and Peace-Building: Creating and Resolving Conflict with Trust and Social Networks*, 186-194

Paffenholz, T. (2015). Unpacking the Local Turn in Peacebuilding: a Critical Assessment Towards an Agenda for Future Research. *Third world quarterly*, *36*(5), 857-874

Paffenholz, T. (2015). “Inclusivity in Peacebuilding: Essential Ingredient or Political Compromise?” *Berghof Foundation Handbook Dialogue Series*, No. 13.

Paffenholz, T. 2014a. *Broadening Participation in Peace Processes: Dilemmas & Options for Mediators.* Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue ttps://hdcentre.org/insights/mediation-practice-series-broadening-participation-in-peace-processes/.

Paffenholz, T., & Spurk, C. (2006). Civil Society, Civic Engagement, and Peacebuilding. *Social Development Papers: Conflict Prevention & Reconstruction,* 36

Prime Minister’s Office, “Prime Minister Pursues Pre-Dialogue Consultations.’’ https://www.spm.gov.cm/site/?q=en/content/prime-minister-pursues-pre-dialogue-consultations.

Randazzo, E. (2016). The Paradoxes of the ‘Everyday’: Scrutinising the Local Turn in Peace building. *Third World Quarterly*, *37*(8), 1351-1370.

Richmond, O. P., & Mitchell, A. (2012). Introduction – Towards a Post-Liberal Peace: Exploring Hybridity via Everyday Forms of Resistance, Agency and Autonomy. In *Hybrid forms of peace: From everyday agency to post-liberalism* (pp. 1-38). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Robert, “Uprising and Human Rights Abuses in Southern Cameroon-Ambazonia.” In *Education, Human Rights and Peace in Sustainable Development*. https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/71206 (2020).

Rothstein, B., & Stolle, D. (2008). “The State and Social Capital: An Institutional Theory of Generalized Trust.” *Comparative Politics*, 40(4), 441–459.

Sama, “Cultural Diversity in Conflict and Peacemaking in Africa.” *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, *7*(2), 193-218 (2007).

Seemndze, “Politicization of Cultural Diversity and Its Impact on Nation-building in Cameroon: A Political Philosophical Analysis.” *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, *9*(4), 159-175 (2016).

Schierenbeck, I. (2015). Beyond the Local Turn Divide: Lessons Learnt, Relearnt and Unlearnt. *Third World Quarterly*, *36*(5), 1023-1032.

Schirch, Lisa and Mancini-Griffoli, Deborah (Eds.). (2015) Local Ownership in Security: Case Studies of Peacebui

lding Approaches. The Hague: Alliance for Peacebuilding, GPPAC, Kroc Institute. https://gppac.net/files/2019-01/Local%20Ownership%20in%20Security%20Report.%2015%20March%202016.pdf

Schumann at al., “Cameroon Conflict Human Rights Report 2022/23 From January 2021 to April 2023.” https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Cameroon-Conflict-Human-Rights-Report-2022_23.pdf, (2023).

Song & Kaledzi, “Cameroon’s Ghost Towns Days: How Residents Cope in Lockdown.” *Deutsche Welle (DW) News*. https://www.dw.com/en/cameroons- ghost-town-days-how--how-residents-cope-in-lockdown/a-67110298 (2023, October 23).

Spencer “Under the Baobab Tree: A Visit with Justice Mukete Tahle Itoe”. *Peace Magazine.* https://peacemagazine.org/archive/images/181.jpg?1704699199, (2024, January-March)

Stigant, S., & Murray, E. (2021b). *National Dialogues: A Tool for Conflict Transformation?* United States Institute of Peace. https://www.usip.org /publications/2015/10 /national-dialogues-tool-conflict-transformation

US Department of State, “Country Report on Terrorism 2019: Cameroon.” *Bureau of Counter Terrorism* (2019).

United Nations. (n.d). United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation. https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/default/files/document/files/2022/09/guidanceeffectivemediationundpa2012english0.pdf

Weber, M., Gerth, H. H., & Mills, C. W. (1958). *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Oxford University Press

Willis et al., ‘We Remain their Slaves’: Voices from the Cameroon Conflict. *SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3576732*(2020).

World Atlas. (n.d). *Prime Ministers of Cameroon*. https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/prime-ministers-ofcameroon.html#:~:text=Other%20personalities%20who%20have%20Yang%20(2009%2 Dpresent)

World Economic Forum, “Engaging Citizens for Inclusive Futures: Rebuilding Social Cohesion and Trust through Citizen Dialogue.” https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Citizen_Perspectives_on_a_Just_Great_Reset_2021.pdf (2021).

Yousuf, Z. (2018). *Navigating Inclusion in Peace Transitions: Beyond Elite Bargains*. Conciliation Resources. https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Navigating_inclusion_in_peace_transitions_beyond_elite_bargains_Accord_Spotlight.pdf

CHAPTER FOUR

WHERE IS CIVIL SOCIETY? WHERE ARE THE WOMEN? BARRIERS TO INCLUSION IN CAMEROON'S NATIONAL DIALOGUE

4.1 Introduction

The armed conflict between separatist groups in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon and government forces is in its eighth year. Local civil society groups, the majority headed by women, led the first humanitarian action at the outset of the crisis.[1] For example, a coalition of grassroots women peacebuilders advocated for a national dialogue and led a delegation to the Prime Minister's office before the national dialogue to make proposals on ways to resolve the conflict.[2] Yet, they were largely excluded from the actual dialogue process. Cameroonian activists abroad used their social media platforms[3] in the early days of the crisis to signal their intentions to continue supporting violence if a genuine dialogue process was not initiated. Despite their active role in the conflict, many of them were not present at the dialogue table; a few who received last-minute invitations turned it down, citing security concerns.[4] At the end, the dialogue saw a limited number of women in attendance. Even among those present, many had strong ties with the regime. Given that inclusion is crucial in fostering locally driven peacebuilding projects,[5] the lack of inclusion in the Cameroon national dialogue warrants attention and analysis and will be the focus of this essay. The essay explores how exclusion of key local actors, notably women and civil society with grassroot legitimacy and deep community ties, undermines the potential of the dialogue process, thereby hindering the implementation of local turn. Focusing on key actors and their agency within the local turn, I examine the obstacles that have marginalized civil society and women to reveal what a genuinely inclusive peace process could look like in Cameroon.

The term local often refers to a wide range of actors (excluding foreign actors) connected to a specific context where peacebuilding takes place.[6] In the context of Cameroon's Anglophone crisis and a major national dialogue to resolve it, this paper considers local actors to be local civil society groups, separatists, diaspora and women groups. These groups are considered local because of their role in shaping conflict dynamics and peacebuilding outcomes within this context.

Additionally, analysts have argued that an ideal local peacebuilding process is often understood as one that addresses exclusion by involving actors who challenge the state in a dialogue to reduce violence.[7] This perspective is particularly relevant in the Cameroonian context, where meaningful inclusion of dissenting voices was largely absent from the national dialogue, thereby undermining its potential to address the root causes of conflict. Also, the concept of inclusion is highly relevant in the Cameroonian context, especially considering that exclusion was one of the key issues that led to the Anglophone Crisis.[8]

Inclusivity is often conceptualized as involving women, civil society, and other politically marginalized actors in local peacebuilding.[9] It is not always certain that these actors constitute the "good society" as often imagined by many analysts.[10] More so, it is understood that "the mere existence of and support for civil society does not automatically lead to successful peacebuilding" outcomes.[11] However, the growing divide between privileged and underprivileged members of society is increasingly becoming a common issue in many countries,[12] struggling to build peace through locally led initiatives like national dialogues. This explains why in those societies, civil society organizations often find themselves at a disadvantage in their peacebuilding efforts compared to other local actors who may be part of the privileged class.[13] Despite being positioned as agents for grassroots engagements,[14] CSOs' influence is often curtailed by limited access to political power and decision-making arenas.[15] In contrast, elites are often well-positioned to shape peacebuilding agendas because of their established networks, access to economic resources, and sometimes proximity to foreign donors. [16] Furthermore, donor-driven frameworks may unintentionally favor well-connected individuals to the detriment of non-influential grassroots actors. As argued by Kappler, donor agendas have intentionally and unintentionally undermined the role of civil society in fragile states.[17] This can cause local turn initiatives to reflect the interest of the most influential local actors, thereby marginalizing civil society voices.[18] Hence, it is important to explore and understand who gets a seat at the dialogue table and who does not, as this plays a crucial role in determining peacebuilding outcomes.[19]

Furthermore, being local entails a fusion of political representation that reflects the voices of the people,[20] particularly those affected by violence. What is unclear in the local turn literature is who gets to decide what/who is local and who controls power locally.[21] As this remains a heavily

contested and evolving debate, incorporating gendered and civil society perspectives in active conflict scenarios like Cameroon may help provide deeper insights into this discussion.

As previously highlighted, a locally driven peace process requires the involvement of local actors willing to exercise ownership for conflict transformation;[22] however, in practice, this ownership is complex and not always as straightforward as suggested by the local turn. In the case of Cameroon, ownership is shaped by internal power struggles and deeply rooted historical grievances that limit meaningful cooperation among actors, often broadly referred to as "local owners" in the local turn. Notwithstanding, the argument in this paper does not romanticize local ownership as inherently good and foreign involvement as inherently bad. Rather, it broadens the scope of the argument presented in the previous chapter by demonstrating that local ownership is meaningless if inclusion and inclusive measures are not well implemented.[23] Indeed, local ownership is not immune to power dynamics and can be manipulated.[24] Thus, despite the relevance of local ownership in peacebuilding, it risks becoming a mere exercise without substance in national dialogues, particularly as these processes are inherently political.

The reality of Cameroon's 2019 national dialogue process exemplifies the challenges of local ownership. The first time Cameroon's reclusive president, Paul Biya, publicly acknowledged the instability in the country's English-speaking regions was on September 10, 2019, when he announced his intentions to start a "Major National Dialogue" to end violence in the Anglophone regions.[25] While there is a plethora of empirical evidence supporting the notion that inclusion in such processes can positively influence peacebuilding, existing research and understanding of specific reasons or mechanisms of exclusion seem incomplete.[26] For example, in the case of Cameroon, the dialogue process was coordinated by the Prime Minister, with Mr. Biya and separatist actors in absentia. The process began on September 30 and ended on October 04th with eight commissions created to coordinate discussions in the weeklong event. Throughout the dialogue process, elite actors dominated discussions, largely to the exclusion of grassroots women, civil society, and Cameroonian diaspora separatist groups. For instance, of all the eight commissions, only the "Education System" commission was chaired by a woman. Even so, that individual had strong ties with the regime in power. The dialogue ended with the adoption of a series of proposals such as granting a "special status" for the two Anglophone regions, restoration

of the house of traditional chiefs, integration of ex-combatants, etc.[27] However, violence continues unabated, with kidnappings and ghost town-related tensions persisting in the Anglophone regions, despite that the national dialogue was intended to address these problems.[28] The implementation of dialogue outcomes has also been criticized for its lack of inclusivity. This has resulted in continued calls for another dialogue process to resolve the so-called Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon. This chapter analyzes existing power dynamics between local actors and elites to demonstrate how imbalanced relationships can hinder inclusive local peacebuilding. The article asks the question: To what extent have power imbalances between civil society, including women and other non-state actors, and the political elites affected inclusion in national dialogues? It highlights the importance of understanding complex power relations among key actors. The paper also challenges the common oversimplification of the term "local agency" in the local turn literature.

4.2 Methodology

The qualitative research method employed for this study involved field interviews and observations, a review of academic and grey literature, online media analysis, and the examination of social media data. This research attempts to map out national dialogue stakeholders' affiliations to accentuate their contributions to the exclusion of politically marginalized locals in local peacebuilding processes and outcomes. Researchers have rightfully prioritized local actors and their knowledge in the local turn literature, but often fail to account for the imbalances and intricate relationships between influential and less influential locals that can impact the effectiveness of inclusion. Moreover, the need to address the potential of the local elite to dominate or manipulate local peace processes to the exclusion of other locals is critical in Cameroon. The 2019 national dialogue process in Cameroon provides an ideal context to analyze these issues. It is easy to understand barriers to the effective inclusion of different local actors by examining the relationship between the ruling elites and politically marginalized civil society and women's groups in this context. In addition, the 2019 national dialogue process in Cameroon presents an opportunity to examine how entrenched patriarchal power structures, maintained through hegemonic forces, perpetuate gender inequality and restrict women's participation in political processes. Selecting Cameroon as a case study is further justified by my roots as a Cameroonian-born researcher, which

has afforded me a deep understanding of the cultural, social, and political contexts. This personal knowledge helped the researcher navigate the research environment more effectively and facilitated field observation and communication. Moreover, by studying a familiar context, the researcher was more aware of potential biases and adopted strategies to mitigate their impacts on this research.

Interviews were conducted with a semi-structured question checklist and lasted 45-60 minutes. Field observation and interviews were carried out in three regions: the Northwest, Southwest, and Central regions. These research sites were selected based on two strategic criteria: 1) regions impacted by the Anglophone crisis and 2) the capital city, where state power is centralized, and which hosted the 2019 national dialogue. This approach ensured that the study covered diverse experiences and peacebuilding perspectives of less influential locals living in conflict-affected regions, as well as those of influential elites and activists around the political hub and decision-making corridors in Yaoundé. Research participants were mainly from Bamenda and Buea, the capital cities of the Northwest and Southwest regions, respectively, and Yaoundé, the political capital of Cameroon. Seventy-eight participants (19 from Bamenda, 26 from Buea, and 33 from Yaoundé) were interviewed between January and April 2023.

This paper primarily focuses on local Cameroonian actors, including influential elites, less powerful and often politically marginalized civil society, media, and women's groups, to understand their roles, experiences, and perspectives in the 2019 national dialogue process. The diverse nature of the research participants allowed the researcher to capture a wide range of experiences, opinions, and insights, leading to a more nuanced understanding of different barriers to the inclusion of some local actors. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their identities were kept confidential. Only their affiliations and interview locations are disclosed.

Several risks were linked to this study, including daily risks stemming from clashes between armed separatists and government forces in Anglophone regions and the potential for arbitrary arrest in all three regions. To mitigate these risks, a safety and security plan was developed ahead of fieldwork with the help of Cameroonian-based researchers at Nkafu Policy Institute. The researcher also adopted a low-profile approach that involved dressing appropriately for the local contexts, being discreet with personal information, and avoiding sensitive areas and situations.

Data was analyzed by importing interview transcripts and field notes into QSR NVivo version 14 software. Codes were developed based on research questions and objectives. The analysis involved reviewing the researcher's field notes and all 78 interview transcripts and selecting key quotes for coding. An inductive thematic approach was employed for coding. Common themes across interview transcripts were identified to integrate various participant perspectives. Secondary data from journal articles, local newspapers, and reports from international organizations, local civil society groups, government agencies, and human rights groups were also analyzed. The National Dialogue website provided a list of key stakeholders invited to head different commissions and members of the Dialogue Bureau. A stakeholder analysis, which involved matching names to political, traditional, religious, and other inclinations, was conducted to identify stakeholders' affiliations and gender. A list of central committee members and regional officers from the ruling Cameroon's People Democratic Movement (CPDM) party and other resources were obtained from the party's website to cross-reference dialogue stakeholders affiliated with the party. Other political stakeholders were identified using online resources from Elections Cameroon (ELECAM) and the Cameroon National Assembly. Religious and traditional leaders were recognized through public statements and social media resources. Civil society representatives and individuals whose political or religious affiliations could not be determined were marked as 'Others.' These secondary data sources were used to triangulate interview findings to capture participants' diverse perspectives.

Methodologically, the Cameroon national dialogue is used as a case study to interrogate the broader meaning of the term "local" and shed light on the diverse range of actors who can be considered "local" in national dialogues – notably by focusing on the role of women in the Dialogue. This approach diverges from the traditional state-centric, top-down understanding of local actors, which often focuses more on political elites and overlooks the critical role other local actors may play in local peacebuilding. Civil society and women's groups may have unique motivations and contributions that are essential to consider for effective inclusion. However, as seen in Cameroon, their voices and roles may be overshadowed by local political elites dominating locally owned dialogue processes. The next section discusses the theoretical perspectives on local agency and national dialogue, followed by the empirical analysis and conclusion of study.

4.3 Local Agency and National Dialogue

Local agencies are often considered essential for sustainable peacebuilding; however, their theoretical application is sometimes fraught with complexities and tensions. The notion of "local agency" has emerged as a central aspect in recent peacebuilding discussions, particularly in the context of national dialogue.[29] According to the Berghof Foundation's national dialogue handbook, local ownership is a key issue in national dialogue as it empowers local actors to take the driver's seat in designing and implementing dialogues.[30] Yet, the ambiguity on the meaning of local owners has facilitated the strategic deployment of "localness" by both local and external actors to legitimize their respective agendas,[31] leading to failed dialogue outcomes. The lack of agreement on the meaning of local[32] is largely due to widespread scholarly recognition that it encompasses a diverse range of actors, interests, and forms of agency.[33] As posited by Autesserre, the term is context-dependent and challenging to apply across all settings.[34] Other scholars, such as Lambek, opine that the term can be understood as a combination of individual actions and their consequences.[35] It seems these authors and others tend to rely on definitions provided by other authors or on self-descriptions offered by the local people themselves in identifying who is a local. Hence, the term must be approached with analytical flexibility and context sensitivity. Moreover, the term "local" is sometimes used to refer to public institutions, national actors, and institutions at the bottom of the administrative hierarchy, such as municipal and local councils.[36] Yet another interpretation instead attributes the term "local" to non-elite and non-state actors such as civil society,[37] diaspora,[38] and citizens. Mac Ginty and Richmond posited that while the "local" has a physical dimension with distinct spatial characteristics, it consists of intricate networks, individuals, and resources that transcend geographical boundaries. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize this conceptual ambiguity to ascertain who speaks for the locals and whose interests are being prioritized in national dialogues.

Furthermore, hybrid peace processes often integrate international and local mechanisms for conflict resolution, leading to negotiated and context-specific forms of peace.[39] However, since these forms of peace are neither purely external nor purely local, they often risk oversimplifying the roles, interests, and capacities of local actors and their agencies as well.[40] Richmond argues that doing so may inadvertently promote liberal frameworks that prioritize externally defined

norms and practices over local perspectives, further undermining genuine local ownership and participation in peacebuilding processes.[41] Since national dialogues are locally driven, engaging different categories of locals in those processes is critical. As posited by Leonardsson and Rudd, a local peace process requires not just the presence of local actors but also their meaningful inclusion.[42] This appears to be lacking in the Cameroon dialogue process. In this context, the government appears to assert national ownership while simultaneously aiming to please the international community. By doing so, the government presents an image of inclusion and local ownership to the international community while nominally involving women and civil society leaders closer to their inner circles. This led to government actors prioritizing appearances over genuine inclusion in practice. For example, by treating women's roles as symbolic rather than substantive. This is demonstrated by the inclusion of female political elites rather than grassroots actors and affected women in the dialogue process in Cameroon. Additionally, a nuanced understanding of "local actors" sheds light on internal hierarchies and lived realities.[43] This is particularly relevant in Cameroon, where grassroots women and other marginalized groups are often excluded from peace initiatives. It has also been argued that neglecting to prioritize or specifically focus on the local may lead to the loss of crucial context-specific dynamics.[44] This explains why researchers have emphasized the importance of tailoring peacebuilding approaches to specific local needs and contexts to prevent a mismatch between peacebuilding models and lived realities.[45] By doing so, peacebuilders can effectively address historical grievances, facilitate interactions among local actors, and foster lasting peace. Recognizing that the use of local agency in local turn oversimplifies the complex realities on the ground, particularly those relating to local actors' identities, interests, and interactions,[46] this study examines the intra-local power dynamics in Cameroon to understand how internal power relations among locals determine who participates in national dialogues and who is excluded.

Additionally, the issue of local ownership can also be linked to constructivist perspectives on hegemony. There appear to be tensions between local ownership versus local hegemony, manifested through party politics in Cameroon. Constructivists have discussed the different ways through which the dominant group can exercise control, sometimes not necessarily by coercion but by shaping norms, values, and narratives to favor them.[47] From a Gramscian perspective, local ownership can be socially constructed and contested.[48] This means that those who hold power may

define who and what counts as local; this is sometimes contested by the less powerful locals. Moreover, feminist constructivist scholars have argued that women's voices are often excluded in locally owned peace processes, not because of their absence (as projected in the local turn) but because they are discursively devalued.[49] This critique highlights another possible blind spot in the local turn's emphasis on inclusion. For example, women's exclusion is not necessarily due to their physical absence from the dialogue table; it can occur because their views were not integrated into the peace process.[50] As seen in the Kenyan dialogue (discussed in chapter two), women were never physically present at the dialogue table in the 2008 dialogue in Kenya, yet their voices and views were considered and integrated into the dialogue discussion. Notwithstanding, not all local voices would be heard equally because the process was locally owned. This research uses gender norms and hierarchies to determine whose voices were valued and whose were systematically excluded in Cameroon's dialogue process. Combining constructivist and local peace approaches is useful in our analysis of how power dynamics affect locally driven projects like national dialogues. This lens also reveals that claims of local ownership can mask the elites' ulterior agenda.

The table below summarizes the key issues and theoretical arguments of the local turn and their implications for national dialogues, as discussed in this chapter.

Table 1: Key Debates on Local Agency and National Dialogues

Key issues	Key debates	Implications for national dialogue
Patriarchal power structures	The use of the term "local" owners often disregards differences in power, identity, and legitimacy among actors (Mac Ginty, 2015).	National dialogues risk elites' dominance/overrepresentation overshadowing marginalized voices, (Berghof Foundation, 2017).
Oversimplification of ownership	Hybrid peace oversimplifies local agency/capacities (Richmond, 2015).	Oversimplifying local actors, reinforces power dynamics and undermines meaningful inclusion in NDs.
Exclusionary practices	Context-specific knowledge is crucial in local peacebuilding and can be overlooked or misunderstood by external actors leading to misinterpretation of local concerns (Autesserre, 2014)	Even with context specific knowledge, influential local actors can still exclude others by instrumentalizing national dialogues (Mehler, 2021).
Party Politics	Political elites may wield power based on historical and social hierarchies, to exclude women and marginalize actors (Richmond, 2011).	Exclusion is not only physical. It can also manifest as ideational exclusion (Enloe, 2000).

4.4 Empirical Analysis

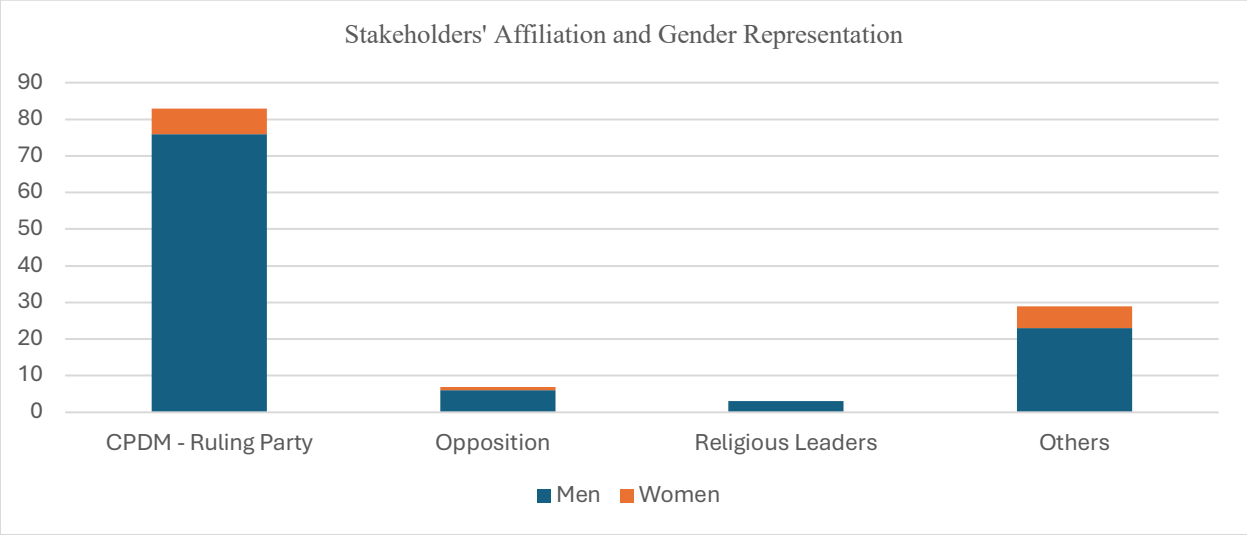
The empirical analysis below employs the 2019 national dialogue process in Cameroon to illustrate how power structures can hinder the local turn and its core principles of ownership and agency. By examining key constraints imposed by exclusionary practices, party politics, and patriarchal power structures, the evidence drawn from research participants' testimonies reveals a disconnect between the local turn's theoretical aspirations and its practical application in Cameroon.

4.4.1 Exclusionary Practices

Exclusionary practices have become persistent in recent peacebuilding efforts.[51] While much of the local turn advocates for the need to build the capacity of local actors to promote inclusion,[52] it sometimes overlooks the fact that many local elites are fully aware of inclusive practices and their benefits but may deliberately choose to be exclusionary. The assumption that exclusion stems from a lack of contextual understanding is also questionable, as both local and foreign actors can engage in exclusionary practices knowingly or unknowingly, regardless of whether they possess a deep understanding of the local context or not.[53] The national dialogue process in Cameroon serves as an example where exclusionary practices dominated the process despite actors' understanding of the context. Prior to the dialogue, many civil society organizations had presented proposals on how the issues affecting Cameroon could be resolved through a dialogue. Civil society groups such as the Southwest/Northwest Women's Task Force (SNWOT), through different campaigns like the 'Stop the killing' and 'We want dialogue', made strong demands for an inclusive dialogue process to resolve the crisis.[54] Yet, a majority of their leaders were excluded from the actual dialogue process. Many civil society activists interviewed in this research opined that they were largely excluded from the process in favor of political elites and that the agenda and discussions were one-sided and not inclusive. As posited by Stigant and Murray, national dialogue agendas must be tailored toward addressing the root causes of the conflict. This would allow participants to have substantive conversations around major grievances of key interest groups.[55] Many participants of this research opined that the national dialogue agenda, deliberations, and outcomes in Cameroon were stage-managed and strategically designed to exclude other local actors for political reasons. Many individuals who were invited to lead the dialogue commissions were members of the ruling

party in Cameroon. During the national dialogue process, the combined representation of religious leaders, opposition members, and other stakeholders whose institutional affiliations were not identified was significantly lower than that of the CPDM ruling regime, as illustrated below.

Chart 1: Stakeholders' Affiliation and Gender Representation in Dialogue Commissions



The above chart (generated from data in Appendix 4) also demonstrates that the percentage of women in dialogue commissions was significantly lower than that of men.

This imbalance further highlights the challenges of achieving genuine local ownership and inclusive participation when power dynamics favor certain groups over others. It also underscores the prevalence of party politics and its effects on contemporary dialogue processes, as we shall see below. A government official who participated in the pre-dialogue process recounts that:

> […] I remember I was in the delegation that went to see the Prime Minister during the pre-dialogue process […]. Even before the dialogue, some of us already knew that the dialogue will not succeed because the agenda did not go in line with the expectations of the people […] the agenda was designed by the head of state and given to the PM to preside over.[56]

This participant further explains that:

> […] I have been a mayor for five years, and I know exactly what the people want. A special status is not what they are asking for […]. If it were to be a good dialogue, they will find a way to convince separatists to shift from the extremist secessionist position and find a middle ground that will be fair and better to end marginalization […].[57]

The participant's view suggests that to control the discourse and maintain hegemony, political elites prepared an exclusionary, pre-planned agenda with little or no input from other local actors affected by the conflict. A diplomatic representative in Yaoundé had this to say regarding the lack of inclusion in the process:

> […] They did not really use the people who are experts in peacebuilding such as group of indigenous people, instead the organizers focused on inviting big names […] they should have organized things from different regions, then select people that can contribute technically not people they know or have connections with.[58]

From the participants' testimonies above, I argue that exclusion is not just a result of ignorance or a lack of capacity and understanding of context. Despite possessing context-specific knowledge, national elites may disregard such knowledge in pursuit of local hegemony, as illustrated above.

Furthermore, exclusionary practices can be reinforced through intimidation. This occurs when marginalized groups are threatened or pressured to prevent them from participating in peace processes. Exclusionary practices through intimidation can be deliberate, an indication that a shift from foreign to local ownership in the local turn does not guarantee success, as local actors can resist inclusion. Numerous studies indicate that the general clampdown on the fundamental rights of civil society groups where women's voices are anchored is a prevalent issue in Cameroon.[59] Influential local actors have introduced anti-terror legislation and other strategies to clamp down on less powerful local actors.[60] This prevents them from engaging in locally led processes like national dialogue. Women and civil society, in general, frequently faced threats, intimidation, and harassment, mainly due to the contraction of civic spaces in Cameroon.[61] A government official in Bamenda illustrates this as follows:

> […] those organizations [civil society] were frustrated. They were constrained; they were not able to talk freely because if they talked, the government would say they were taking

> sides with the separatists. And you know […] the government has a way to make you come begging or put them in a disadvantage position.[62]

The harassment and intimidation of civil society groups and other politically marginalized actors in Cameroon is not by government actors alone. Separatist fighters are also attacking civil society groups. For example, a female civil society leader in Buea stated that they did not attend the national dialogue for fear of harassment:

> […] I didn't attend the dialogue and like myself, many people who would have attended the dialogue were under severe threats. In terms of safety, there was no security for participants, especially those returning to the regions [Southwest/Northwest] after the dialogue […].[63]

The experience of this participant suggests that individuals, particularly women who do not align with the interests of the more powerful local, felt threatened and unprotected. The different harassment, intimidation, and manipulative tactics employed by powerful actors created an environment of fear and self-censorship, making it difficult for effective inclusion. Moreover, some participants stated that influential female opposition leaders were sidelined in the dialogue process for fear that they might challenge the status quo. As explained by this Bamenda-based civil society leader:

> […] Political activists like Kah Wallah, who had made significant contributions since the crisis started, were not invited for political reasons [...]. I even wonder whether women could contribute or influence discussions in different commissions because the way I saw some of those women crying on camera, it tells it all [sic].[64]

The above analysis shows that more attention needs to be given to understanding how power is wielded by the locals. This observation underscores a discrepancy between the assumptions of the local turn and the actual implementation of inclusion and local ownership through dialogue processes. There is a need for a more nuanced exploration of various strategies of coercion and manipulation that are often overlooked in discussions of local ownership and national dialogue. This will enable a deeper understanding of the complex power dynamics that perpetuate exclusion and hinder inclusive dialogues.[65]

4.4.2 Party Politics

Despite its perceived virtue, local ownership "is not necessarily a benign or egalitarian, and peace formation at the local level may be dominated by elites or embedded in unequal power relations."[66] As posited by Mac Ginty, local ownership can be shaped by elites instrumentalizing the language of "local solutions" to further their interests. This suggests that analysts must interrogate who counts as local and under what conditions to avoid a situation where inclusion is based on political loyalty. In Cameroon, President Biya and his supporters refused foreign interference in local peace efforts, arguing the need for foreign actors to respect Cameroon's sovereignty. While this was indeed an opportunity for the locals to drive the national dialogue, it was instead exploited to systematically exclude other local actors to enable the regime to further their interests. An opposition party leader in Bamenda opined that the national dialogue process in Cameroon was one-sided, stating:

> […] the only party to this discussion was the government […] they did all they could to prevent the other parties from participating in the deliberation. They tried to distinguish or exclude their opponents and at the end of the day, it was a monologue.[67]

By systematically excluding political opponents, elites were able to manipulate and control the narrative in the dialogue process. This example reveals a flaw in the local turn assumption that local ownership inherently fosters inclusivity when, in practice, it can legitimatize exclusion through party politics. This Bamenda-based civil society leader explains that majority of those invited to head the different dialogue commissions were party loyalists, stating:

> […] there were eight commissions in total. Majority of those who headed most commissions were either loyalists to the government or ex-ministers. And those who were concerned, like the separatist leaders were absent […]. Now you start asking yourself, who was the government discussing with? That's where the problem lies […].[68]

As illustrated above, the participant's testimony suggests that selective inclusion by the dominant party affected the genuine inclusion and participation of other locals in the Cameroon context. This also reveals the extent to which local hegemony can affect local ownership. A human rights activist who participated in the "Judicial System" commission illustrates this by stating:

> […] In the judicial system commission that I participated in, some participants were intimidated or shy to give their opinions on certain things because their bosses [who belong to the ruling party] were present. […] the presence of the Minister of Justice in the judicial system commission intimidated some judges and members invited to that commission […].[69]

The above perspectives highlight an important limitation of the local turn: its oversimplification of ownership and agency. This may lead to its inability to account for internal power hierarchies. As we have seen in chapter two, the appointment of individuals to lead different aspects of national dialogue is sometimes fraught with disagreements, particularly in the African context.[70] In the case of Cameroon, the members of the central bureau and dialogue commissions were appointed by the political elites. This affected the credibility of the process and, subsequently, its outcomes. One of the dialogue participants explained that:

> […] seeing that we had a good number of government officials leading almost every aspect of the dialogue was a problem […]. There was a belief that the government had monopolized the whole thing […]. That is why at the end of the day, it was no longer called a dialogue but a monologue. It was like a usual government assembly where officials come to make speeches and explain one or two things [sic].[71]

The above account underscores how party politics can influence a locally designed project, transforming it into a top-down process. This reinforces skepticism about national dialogue outcomes. The participants' perspectives on the influence of party politics on inclusion indeed confirm that hegemony is a struggle for consent and control. In this context, political elites use their power to secure participation and outcomes that align with their interests. This manipulation transforms national dialogue into an instrument to maintain control rather than fostering local peacebuilding. The success and failures of any peace and development approach hinge on existing power dynamics.[72] This explains why, in local peacebuilding projects such as national dialogues, stakeholders involved must "imagine, co-create, manage, and adapt power dynamics for productive collaboration."[73] Considering that national dialogues are political processes, the inherent differences between local actors in terms of interests, identity, and unequal access to resources will often lead to disagreements. As argued by Betts Fetherston in their critique on the

lack of power analysis in Lederach's approach, power dynamics among local actors can affect the outcome of local peace projects.[74] The outcomes of the 2019 national dialogue process in Cameroon reflect this in many ways. On August 11, 2023, a government-designated committee on the follow-up of national dialogue recommendations held its fifth session in Buea. The session was organized under the chairmanship of President Biya's special envoy, Prime Minister Dion Ngute, to ascertain the achievements of the 2019 dialogue.[75] Multiple reports from the follow-up committee suggest that there has been a gradual return to normalcy in the daily lives of people in affected regions.[76] While these efforts are commendable, a scholar affiliated with the University of Buea posited that:

> […] the outcome of the national dialogue reflected what the government anticipated, not the wishes of the civil society, and this explains why most of them [CSOs] think it was a monologue, not a dialogue.[77]

A civil society activist working with an international organization in Buea further explains that, given the non-inclusive nature of the national dialogue process, its outcomes also suffered from lack of inclusivity. This was so because "[…] those implementing them have their own political agendas […], how can they be talking about post-conflict reconstruction when the conflict is still going on?'[78] Additionally, the lack of inclusion of relevant local actors in national dialogues can lead to outcomes that do not address the main issues driving the conflict as this civil society leader explains:

> […] the reason for a national dialogue was to stop ghost towns and end kidnappings in the regions but as we all saw recently, Senator Regina Mundi was kidnapped in the Northwest. We have also seen how five CDC [Cameroon Development Corporation] workers were killed and many injured just last week [sic].[79]

Another civil society activist based in Bamenda corroborated the above views by citing another situation of kidnapping to explain that dialogue outcomes were cosmetic:

> […] the major national dialogue created the House of Chiefs […] shortly after the dialogue, the President of the House of Chiefs in the Northwest region, Fon Kevin Sumetang of Bambalang was kidnapped […] no action has been taken by the state to secure his release

> from the captives […] this is just to show you that the whole idea of creating these new structures was window dressing.[80]

Therefore, for local peacebuilding projects such as national dialogues to be successful, stakeholders must recognize and address possible blind spots inherent in the dominant role of elites within local contexts.[81] In the case of Cameroon, the political environment and power relations among local actors continue to shape peacebuilding outcomes.

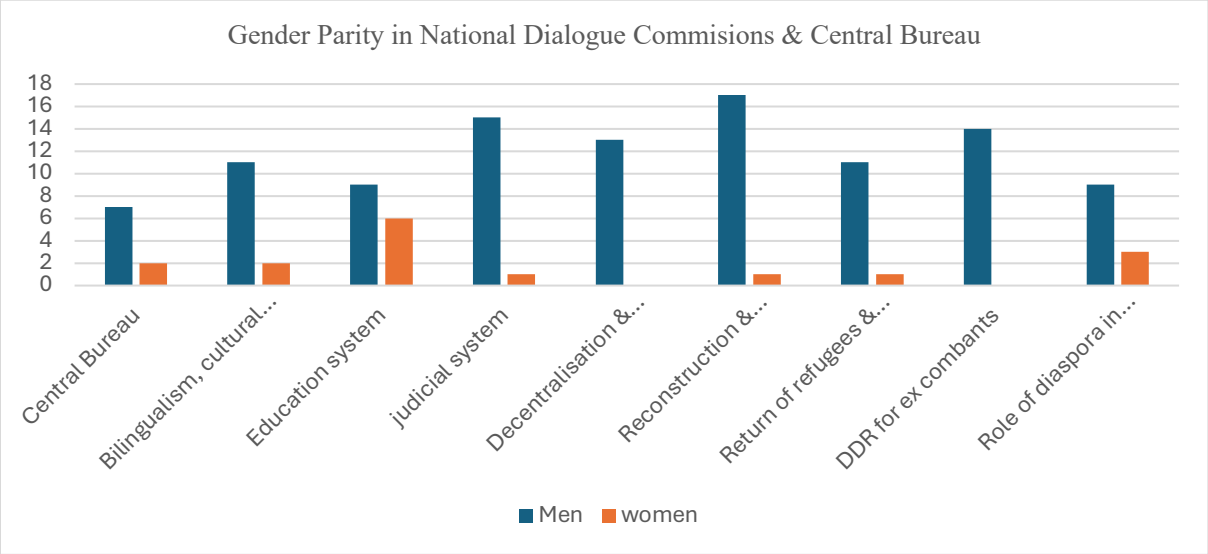
4.4.3 Patriarchal Power Structures

While the local turn initially focuses on empowering local actors, it is marked by ambiguity on the meaning of local. As outlined above, one of the main criticisms is that the term local often glosses over identities, gender and power imbalances among local actors.[82] This simplification risks neglecting how patriarchal power structures influence exclusion and dialogue outcomes. Experts on national dialogue at the Berghof Foundation found that dialogue processes are vulnerable to the overrepresentation of elites whose control over the process marginalizes women and reinforces patriarchy.[83] If local turn approaches are not designed to challenge discriminatory norms and power structures, they risk reinforcing gender inequalities and hindering local peacebuilding projects.[84] Despite the growing awareness of the vital role of women in peacebuilding, they still face significant barriers to full and meaningful participation in local peacebuilding projects. While many women have been victims of the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon, some have claimed their agency by advocating for peace and a 'return to normalcy.' These women, especially those living in the Northwest and Southwest regions, have mobilized themselves through NGOs and Taskforces such as Women for a Change Cameroon, Southwest and Northwest Women Task Force, Mother of Hope Cameroon etc. The government, through its NAP acknowledged the critical role of women in peacebuilding, stating that "women are not only victims of war and conflict. They are also promoters and agents of consolidation of peace."[85] The general exclusion of women in local peacebuilding projects in Cameroon contradicted the country's national action plan's explicit call for their inclusion. As shown in Chart 2 below, women were largely absent in the dialogue bureau and different commissions. For example, the decentralization and rural development and the DDR for ex-combatant commissions lacked female representatives entirely.

This glaring omission suggests the possibility of dialogue outcomes not being all-inclusive, particularly from a gendered perspective.

According to this activist and scholar, women were excluded in the process because the organizers 'think that it is politics and politics is not a woman's thing […] only a few women who are in decision-making positions were called[…].[86] To address the issue of marginalization that triggered the Anglophone crisis, it was crucial to understand not only the power dynamics between elites and non-elites but also how these power relations among local actors reinforce patriarchy, gender discrimination, and structural inequalities in that context.

Chart 2: Gender Imbalance in Cameroon's National Dialogue



Furthermore, patriarchal norms and structural discrimination problems are not only present in societies where conflicts occur, like Cameroon but have the potential to delay local peacebuilding efforts.[87] Women's expertise is often overlooked in formal and high-level peace initiatives such as national dialogues because of deeply embedded patriarchal norms and practices.[88] An influential gender activist who followed the national dialogue process closely recounted how women's contributions to the dialogue process in Cameroon were overlooked, stating:

> […] Women to my person were the first voice at the UN Security Council to talk about the humanitarian crisis in Cameroon. However, when it came to the major national dialogue,

> we were accepted for pre-consultations. They [government] took our resolutions and our recommendations. When commissions were created [during the actual dialogue] the women voice was lost. It became an issue of friendship. I know you; you know me [sic].[89]

This testimony supports numerous reports and analyses of how patriarchal values affected gender representation in the 2019 national dialogue.[90] Moreover, researchers such as Green have contended that cultural ideologies are often used to justify patriarchy by attributing gender inequality to inherent differences between men and women.[91] For example, a traditional ruler in Buea justifies the exclusion of women in the national dialogue process by arguing that:

> […] within this crisis [the Anglophone crisis], men have suffered the most because we [men] are the ones being abducted. We [men] are the ones being killed, not the women. So, you cannot say the women are the ones suffering the most […] they are only consoling with the men [sic].[92]

The above views, however, are not consistent with the happenings on the ground. The Anglophone crisis in Cameroon has affected women on many fronts.[93] Women account for about 51% of the internally displaced.[94] Women, such as Comfort Tumassang[95] and Mbah Florence[96] have been brutally killed by armed separatists for allegedly collaborating with security forces. On the other side of the conflict, security forces have been accused of rape.[97] Reports from local civil society groups suggest that government forces have physically assaulted, tortured, and detained many women unjustly, including Kongnso Antionette Gohla, an alleged ex-girlfriend of a separatist fighter.[98] However, despite acknowledging the challenges faced by women and their attempt to be included in the peace process in Cameroon, some key informants argued that greater inclusion of women in the dialogue was not needed. A government official in Buea stated this:

> […] I don't see the issue of excluding women or not creating a commission for them as a big deal [...]. Commissions were created only on thematic areas to answer the problems that were in place. Women empowerment was not part of the problem that led to the crisis [sic].[99]

These suggestions demonstrate that patriarchal norms can determine who and what is considered local. In this situation, the composition of the national dialogue was influenced by privileged males

marginalizing less influential women. While 'women empowerment' did not directly contribute to the crisis as suggested, it was necessary for stakeholders to address existing cultural barriers and gender inequalities that may have exacerbated the root causes of the conflict. Moreover, although commissions are often created in local peacebuilding processes for inclusive purposes,[100] the roles and impacts of less influential actors in those commissions remain marginal and understudied.[101] This underscores the need for a deeper analysis of the impacts of patriarchal power structures on exclusion and national dialogue outcomes. Addressing patriarchy and structural discrimination that often hinder the meaningful participation of women and other minority groups in local peacebuilding projects, like national dialogues may contribute to more successful and inclusive outcomes in Cameroon.

4.5 Conclusion

This article contributes to the local turn in peacebuilding literature by examining various dimensions of power imbalances among influential and less influential local actors, and how these imbalances hinder inclusion in local peacebuilding initiatives such as national dialogues. National dialogues inherently incorporate key elements of the local turn, as they are typically designed to engage local actors and address context-specific issues.[102] However, the limitations in defining who constitutes a local can create opportunities for locals in positions of power to exploit these ambiguities to their advantage. This study underscores the need to understand who qualifies as a local actor during inclusive dialogue processes. It emphasizes the necessity of critically examining power imbalances among local actors in local turn projects. In Cameroon, power imbalances have negatively impacted inclusion. Local actors and their international partners must pay close attention to these unbalanced relations when designing or supporting local peacebuilding projects. This paper has argued that the national dialogue process in Cameroon failed to address the core issues it was designed to solve because influential elites employed exclusionary practices through party politics, patriarchy, and other forms of suppression and discrimination, particularly against women. This raises questions about whether any meaningful role was ever truly assigned to civil society, women and other marginalized actors, as they are consistently marginalized despite claims of inclusion. Additionally, the challenges of implementing the resolutions of the 2019 dialogue in Cameroon can be attributed to the dialogue's lack of inclusivity. For instance, separatists who were

largely excluded continue to enforce ghost towns in Anglophone communities every Monday to undermine state control. Civil society actors still face intimidation and marginalization, while unequal access to resources remains unaddressed. Separatist leaders abroad who viewed the dialogue as a sham continue to sponsor armed groups on the ground in Cameroon. Addressing these power dynamics and ensuring inclusive participation in this context is crucial. This can be realized by integrating the perspectives of the Cameroonian diaspora, particularly those sponsoring armed groups, and engaging less influential local actors to ensure their concerns and priorities are considered in the planning, discussions, and implementation of dialogue outcomes.

---

[1] Field observation
[2] Participant no 29, Civil society leader in Buea
[3] Nouhou, Language and Peace on WhatsApp and Facebook Messages on the Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon
[4] Al Jazeera, *Cameroon Dialogue Starts as Anglophone Separatists Pull Out*
[5] Gruener and Hald, Inclusive Peacebuilding: Recognized but Not Realized
[6] Kendhammer & Sullivan, *Peacebuilding Needs Local Partners*
[7] Bell, "New Inclusion Project: Building Inclusive Peace Settlements "
[8] Ezemenaka & Ekumaoko, Beyond language: Further issues in the Anglophone Cameroon conflict.
[9] Paffenholz, Inclusivity in peace processes.
[10] Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Inclusive *Peacebuilding: Recognised but not Realised*.
[11] Paffenholz & Spurk, Civil society, civic engagement, and peacebuilding
[12] Strachwitz, Civil Society as an Agent of Change.
[13] Paffenholz, *Civil society & peacebuilding: a critical assessment*
[14] Lederach, Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies
[15] Paffenholz & Spurk Civil society, civic engagement,
[16] Mac Ginty, *International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance*
[17] Kappler, *Local Agency and Peacebuilding*
[18] Richmond, *A Post-Liberal Peace*
[19] Bell & Pospisil, Navigating inclusion in transitions from conflict
[20] Hughes, Öjendal, & Schierenbeck, The Struggle Versus the Song – the Local Turn in Peacebuilding
[21] Ibid, no.6
[22] ZIF, Local Ownership in Peacebuilding and Development
[23] Wong, The local Turn in Peacebuilding:
[24] Donais, *Peacebuilding and local ownership*
[25] Hazbun and Opalo, Cameroon *Must Make Concessions to End the Anglophone Crisis*
[26] Cuhadar, *Understanding Resistance to Inclusive Peace Processes*
[27] Chimtom, 'Cameroon's conflict: Will the National Dialogue Make any Difference?'
[28] Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, *Cameroon.*
[29] Mac Ginty & Richmond, The Local Turn in Peace Building:
[30] Berghof Foundation, The National Dialogue Handbook:
[31] Koenigs, The Local Trap in Peacebuilding
[32] Ruppel & Leib, Same but Different: The Role of Local Leaders in the Peace Processes in Liberia and Sierra Leone

[33] Ibid no.29
[34] Autesserre, *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention*
[35] Lambek, Catching the Local
[36] Ibid, no.17
[37] Pouligny, Civil Society and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding
[38] Demmers, Diaspora and Conflict: Locality, Long-distance Nationalism, and Delocalisation of Conflict Dynamics
[39] Mac Ginty, R. (2011). *International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance*.
[40] Richmond & Mitchell, Hybrid forms of peace: From everyday agency to post-liberalism.
[41] Richmond, *The dilemmas of peacebuilding: Confronting the realities of post-conflict peace processes.*
[42] Leonardsson and Rudd, 2015
[43] Autesserre, *Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention*.
[44] Leonardsson & Rudd, The 'Local Turn' in Peacebuilding
[45] See Mac Ginty, *Hybrid peace;* see also Autesserre, *Conflict resolution and the everyday politics of international intervention*.
[46] Richmond, The Dilemmas of a Hybrid Peace: Negative or Positive?
[47] Gramsci, Selections from the prison notebooks; see also Bates, Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony.
Carroll, Crisis, Movements, Counter-Hegemony
[49] Enloe, *Maneuvers: The international politics of militarizing women's lives*
[50] Institute of Inclusive Security, *Making women count*
[51] John, Peace processes, secret negotiations and civil society
[52] Ibid, no. 29
[53] Donais, Inclusion or exclusion?
[54] Annan et al., 'Civil Society, Peacebuilding from Below and Shrinking Civic Space'
[55] Murray and Stigant, 'National Dialogues: A Tool for Conflict Transformation?'
[56] Participant no. 11
[57] Participant no. 11
[58] Participant no. 62
[59] Ibid, no.42
[60] Ngangum, The 'Trumping Effect'of Anti-Terrorism Legislations:
[61] Ibid at 85
[62] Participant no. 11
[63] Participant no. 29
[64] Participants no. 54
[65] Paffenholz et al., *What Makes or Breaks National Dialogues?*
[66] Ibid, no.34
[67] Participant no. 14,
[68] Participant no.71
[69] Participant no.32
[70] Papagianni, *National Dialogue Processes in Political transitions*
[71] Participant No. 50
[72] Voices of Resilience and Empowerment, *Impact of power Dynamics in Conflict Mediation*
[73] Kwuelum, *Shifting Power Dynamics, Localization, and Decolonization*
[74] Fetherston, Peacekeeping, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding
[75] Nkeze, 'Recommendations of the Major National Dialogue'
[76] Fokwen, 'PM Chairs Strategic Session in Buea Today'
[77] Participant number 20
[78] Participant no. 36

[79] Participant no. 71
[80] Participant no. 05
[81] Ibid, no.15
[82] Ibid, no.34
[83] Bramsen, I. (2023). National Dialogues at Crossroads:
[84] Ibid, no.26
[85] See Cameroon National Action Plan, p. 12
[86] Participant no. 21
[87] Patricia, Peace at the Margins?
[88] Brot fur die Welt, 'Inclusion of Women in Peace building Processes'
[89] Participant no. 29
[90] Ibid, no. 12
[91] Green, 'Patriarchal Ideology of Motherhood'
[92] Participant no. 45
[93] Kindzeka, 'Cameroonian Women Say They are Underrepresented in Peace Talks'
[94] Ibid at no. 35
[95] Mudge, 'Horrific Videos Shows Cameroon Killing'
[96] Azohnwi, 'Cameroon-Anglophone Crisis'
[97] Human Rights Watch, Cameroon
[98] CHRDA, Report on the Arrest of General No Pity's Ex girlfriend in Buea
[99] Participant no. 35
[100] Murphy and Walsh, 'Agonistic Transitional Justice'
[101] Ibid
[102] Haider, National Dialogues: Lessons Learned and Success Factors

Bibliography

Al Jazeera. (2019, September 30). *Cameroon Dialogue Starts as Anglophone Separatists Pull Out*. Retrieved from https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/9/30/cameroon-dialogue-starts-as-anglophone-separatists-pull-out

Amin, J. (2025). *Cameroon Could do with Some Foreign Help to Solve Anglophone Crisis – But the State Doesn't Want It.* The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/cameroon-could-do-with-some-foreign-help-to-solve-anglophone-crisis-but-the-state-doesnt-want-it-244770

Annan, N., Beseng, M., Crawford, G., & Kewir, J. K. (2021). Civil Society, Peacebuilding from Below and Shrinking Civic Space: The Case of Cameroon's 'Anglophone' Conflict. *Conflict, Security & Development*, *21*(6), 697-725

Autesserre, S. (2014). *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention*. Cambridge University Press.

Azohnwi, A. (2019, October). Cameroon-Anglophone Crisis: Video of Separatist fighters Slaugthering Wardress Ayafor Florence Stuns the World. *Cameroon Info Net.* http://www.cameroon-info.net/article/cameroon-anglophone-crisis-video-of-separatist-fighters-slaughtering-wardress-ayafor-florence-stuns-the-world-353502.html#google_vignette

Bates, T. R. (1975). Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, *36*(2), 351-366.

Begealawuh, N. C. (2024). Missed or Misused Opportunity? Social Cohesion, National Dialogue and Peacebuilding in Cameroon. *African Security Review*, 33(4), 497–513.

Bell, C. (2019). 'New inclusion project: building inclusive peace settlements', in Andy Carl (ed.) *Negotiating inclusion in peace processes* (Accord 28, Conciliation Resources)

Bramsen, I. (2023). National Dialogues at Crossroads: A Series - National Dialogues x Protest Movements. https://www.berghof-foundation.org/library/national-dialogues-crossroads-series

Bell, C., & Pospisil, J. (2017). Navigating inclusion in transitions from conflict: The formalised political unsettlement. *Journal of International Development, 29*(5), 576–593. https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3281

Berghof Foundation. (2017). *The National Dialogue Handbook: A Guide to Practitioner*. https://berghof-foundation.org/files/publications/NDH_Executive_Summary_englisch.pdf

Brot fur die Welt.(n.d). *Inclusion of Women in Peace building Processes (negotiation and mediation): Women's Peace and Security Agenda*. https://afsc.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/inclusion-of-women-in-peacebuilding-processes-negotiation-and-mediation-womens-peace-and-security-agenda_0.pdf

Carroll, W. K. (2010). Crisis, Movements, Counter-Hegemony: In Search of The New. *Interface: A Journal for and about Social Movements*, 2(2), 167-196.

Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa(CHRDA) (2021). *Report on the Arrest of General No Pity's Ex girlfriend in Buea*. https://www.chrda.org/report-on-the-arrest-of-general-no-pitys-ex-girlfriend-in-buea/

Chimtom, N. K. (2019, October). Cameroon's Conflict: Will the National Dialogue Make Any *Difference?* BBC News. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-49931662

Cuhadar, E. (2020). *Understanding resistance to inclusive peace processes* (Vol. 159). Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation. (2015). *Inclusive Peacebuilding: Recognised but not Realised*. https://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/DD63_DHF_final_web.pdf

Demmers, J. (2002). Diaspora and Conflict: Locality, Long-distance Nationalism, and Delocalisation of Conflict Dynamics. *Javnost-The Public*, *9*(1), 85-96.

Donais, T. (2012). *Peacebuilding and local ownership: Post-conflict consensus-building*. Routledge.

Donais, T. (2017). Inclusion or exclusion? Local ownership and the international peacebuilding project in Afghanistan. In C. de Coning & C. T. Call (Eds.), Rising powers and peacebuilding: Breaking the mold? (pp. 77-102). Palgrave Macmillan.

Enloe, C. (2000). *Maneuvers: The international politics of militarizing women's lives*. Univ of

California Press.
Ejdus, F. (2021). Revisiting the local turn in peacebuilding. *A Requiem for Peacebuilding?*, 41-58.
Ezemenaka, K. E., & Ekumaoko, C. E. (2022). Beyond language: Further issues in the Anglophone Cameroon conflict. *Social Identities*, *28*(2), 200-216.
Fetherston, A. B. (2013). Peacekeeping, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding: A Reconsideration of Theoretical Frameworks. In *Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution* (pp. 190-218). Routledge.
Fokwen, M. (2023, August). *PM Chairs Strategic Session in Buea Today.* https://theguardianpostcameroon.com/post/1480/en/pm-chairs-strategic-session-in-buea-today
Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. (2024, December 1). *Cameroon.* https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/cameroon/
Gramsci, A. (2020). Selections from the prison notebooks. In *The applied theatre reader* (pp. 141-142). Routledge.
Green, F. J. (2010). Patriarchal ideology of motherhood. *Encyclopedia of motherhood*, *1*, 970-971.
Gruener, S., & Hald, M. (Eds.). (2015). Inclusive Peacebuilding: Recognised But Not Realised. Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation.
Haider, H. (2019). National Dialogues: Lessons Learned and Success Factors. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c864ffced915d07cae406da/543 National_Dialogues_Lessons_Learned.pdf
Hazbun, C. & Opalo, K. (2019, *September 27). Cameroon Must Make Concessions to End the Anglophone Crisis.* Foreign Policy. https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/09/27/cameroon-must-make-concessions-to-end-the-anglophone-crisis-paul-biya/
Hirblinger, A. T., & Simons, C. (2015). The Good, the Bad, and the Powerful: Representations of the 'local'in Peacebuilding. *Security Dialogue*, *46*(5), 422-439
Hughes, C., Öjendal, J., & Schierenbeck, I. (2015). The Struggle Versus the Song – the Local Turn in Peacebuilding: An Introduction. *Third World Quarterly,* 36(5), 817–824. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1029907
Human Rights Watch .(2019, July). Cameroon: Security Forces Killed Civilians, Rape Women. https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/07/22/cameroon-security-forces-kill-civilians-rape-woman
International Crisis Group. (2019, September 26) Cameroon's Anglophone Dialogue: A Work in Progress. https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/cameroons-anglophone-dialogue-work-progress
Institute of Inclusive Security. (2016). *Making women count – Not just counting women: Assessing women's inclusion and influence on peace negotiations*. Inclusive Security. https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/publication/making-women-count-not-just-counting-women/
John, A. W. S. (2008). Peace processes, secret negotiations and civil society: Dynamics of

inclusion and exclusion. *International Negotiation*, *13*(1), p1-9.

Kappler, S. (2014). *Local Agency and Peacebuilding: EU and International Engagement in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus and South Africa*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Kendhammer, B. & Sullivan, R. (2022). *Peacebuilding Needs Local Partners — But How Do You Define 'Local'?* United States Institute of Peace. https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/08/peacebuilding-needs-localdefine-local -partners-how-do-you-

Kindzeka, M.E. (2022, September). Cameroonian Women Say They are Underrepresented in Peace Talks. *Voice of America. https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroonian-women-say-they-are-underrepresented-in-peace-talks-/6755115.html*

Koenigs, T. (2020). "The Local Trap in Peacebuilding: A Critical Review." *Peacebuilding***,** 8(1), 1–17.

Kwuelum, C. (2023, December 4). *Shifting Power Dynamics, Localization, and Decolonization: Implications for Community-based Peacebuilding*. Movement for Community-led Development. https://mcld.org/2023/12/04/shifting-power-dynamics-charles-kwuelum/

Lambek, M. (2011). Catching the Local. *Anthropological Theory*, 11(2), 197-221.

Lederach, J. P. (1997). Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies. *Washington, DC: USIP*.

Leonardsson, H., & Rudd, G. (2015). The 'Local Turn' in Peacebuilding: a Literature Review of Effective and Emancipatory Local Peacebuilding. *Third World Quarterly*, *36*(5), 825–839.

Ljungkvist, K., & Jarstad, A. (2021). Revisiting the Local Turn in Peacebuilding – through the Emerging Urban Approach. *Third World Quarterly*, 42(10), 2209–2226. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1929148

Mac Ginty, R., & Richmond, O. P. (2013). The Local Turn in Peace Building: A Critical Agenda for Peace. *Third world quarterly*, *34*(5), 763-783.

Mac Ginty, R. (2015). Where is the Local? Critical Localism and Peacebuilding. *Third World Quarterly,* 36(5), 840-856.

Mac Ginty, R. (2011). *International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance: Hybrid Forms of Peace*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Migrationsverket, Lifos (2023, January 4). *The Cameroon Anglophone Crisis (2021 – 2023)* Retrieved from https://lifos.migrationsverket.se/dokument?documentAttachmentId=50140

Mudge, L. (2020, August). Horrific Videos Shows Cameroon Killing: Separatist Abuse Continues in Southwest. *Human Rights Watch.* https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/08/14/horrific-video-shows-cameroon-killing

Murray, E., & Stigant, S. (2021). National Dialogues in Peacebuilding and Transitions: A Creativity and Adpative Thinking. *United States Institute for Peace.* https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/06/national dialogues -peacebuilding-and-transitions-creativity-and-adaptive

Murray, E., & Stigant, S. (2015). National Dialogues: A Tool for Conflict Transformation? *United States Institute for Peace.* https://www.usip.org/publications/2015/10/national-

dialogues-tool-conflict-transformation
Murphy, E., & Walsh, D. (2022). Agonistic Transitional Justice: A Global Survey. *Third World Quarterly*, *43*(6), 1380-1398.
Ngangum, P. T. (2020). The 'Trumping Effect'of Anti-Terrorism Legislations: The Case of Cameroon. *Tierra, Derechos Humanos y desarrollo: supuestos y visiones desde África y América*.
Nkeze. (2023, August). Recommendations of the Major National Dialogue: PM Chairs Follow Up Committee in Buea Today. *Cameroon Tribune*. https://www.cameroon-tribune.cm/article.html/59428/fr.html/recommendations-of-the-major-national-dialogue-pm-chairs-follow-up-committee-in-buea
Nouhou, P. Z. (2022). Language and Peace on WhatsApp and Facebook Messages on the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon. International Journal of Linguistics and Translation Studies, 3(4), 26-41.
Paffenholz, T. (Ed.). (2010). *Civil Society & Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment* (pp. 43-64). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
Paffenholz, T. (2015). Unpacking the Local Turn in Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment Towards An Agenda for Future Research. *Third world quarterly*, *36*(5), 857-874.
Paffenholz, T. (2015). Inclusivity in Peace Processes. *Briefing paper for the UN High-level Review Panel*.
Paffenholz, T., & Spurk, C. (2006). Civil Society, Civic Engagement, and Peacebuilding. *Social Development Papers: Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction*, *36*(2006), 10-55.
Paffenholz, T., Zachariassen, A., & Helfer, C. (2017). *What Makes or Breaks National Dialogues?*. Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.
Papagianni, K. (2014). *National Dialogue Processes in Political Transitions*. EPLO. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/176342/National-Dialogue-Processes-in-Political-Transitions.pdf
Patricia, R. (2024). Peace at the Margins? Peacebuilding and Patriarchal World Ordering in Sierra Leone, *Global Studies Quarterly*, Volume 4, Issue 3, July 2024, ksae069, https://doi.org/10.1093/isagsq/ksae069
Planta, K., Prinz, V., & Vimalarajah, L. (2015). *Inclusivity in National Dialogues: Guaranteeing Social Integration or Preserving Old Power Hierarchies?* (IPS Paper No. 1). Berghof Foundation. https://berghof-foundation.org/library/inclusivity-in-national-dialogues-guaranteeing-social-integration-or-preserving-old-power-hierarchies
Pouligny, B. (2005). Civil Society and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Ambiguities of International Programmes Aimed at Building 'new'societies. Security Dialogue, 36(4), 495-510.
Richmond, O. P. (2015). The Dilemmas of a Hybrid Peace: Negative or Positive?. *Cooperation and Conflict*, *50*(1), 50-68
Richmond, O. P. (2011). *A Post-Liberal Peace***.** Routledge
Richmond, O. P., & Mitchell, A. (2011). Hybrid forms of peace: From everyday agency to post-

liberalism.
Richmond, O. P. (2015). *The dilemmas of peacebuilding: Confronting the realities of post-conflict peace processes***.**Edinburgh University Press.
Ruppel, S., & Leib, J. (2022). Same but Different: the Role of Local Leaders in the Peace Processes in Liberia and Sierra Leone. *Peacebuilding*, *10*(4), 470-505.
Strachwitz, R.G. (2022). Civil Society as an Agent of Change. In: Glückler, J., Meyer, HD., Suarsana, L. (eds) Knowledge and Civil Society. Knowledge and Space, vol 17. Springer,Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-71147-4_3
Voices of Resilience and Empowerment. (2024). *Impact of Power Dynamics in Conflict Mediation*.VORECOL. https://vorecol.com/blogs/blog-impact-of-power-dynamics-in-conflict- mediation-10229
Wong, W. (2013). The local turn in peacebuilding: Critical agendas and challenges. UNU-IAS UpClose & Personal Perspective, 1. https://postgraduate.ias.unu.edu/upp/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/upp_issue1-WONG.pdf
ZIF. (2007). *Local Ownership in Peacebuilding and Development: Conceptual Clarifications and Critical Aspects.* ZIF - Center for International Peace Operations. https://www.zif-berlin.org/sites/zif-berlin.org/files/inline-iles/Local_Ownership_Workshop_Report_Dezember_07.pdf

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of Research Findings

This thesis critically investigates the relationship between the evolving academic discourse on the local turn and national dialogue processes in Africa. As most states in Africa grapple with persistent fragility, national dialogues are emerging as a vital mechanism for conflict resolution. Considering that both national dialogues and local turn in peacebuilding gain renewed traction in response to the limitations of top-down, liberal peacebuilding models, this thesis critically explores how these evolving frameworks interact. The research established different areas of convergence between national dialogues and the local turn, particularly in terms of their shared normative emphasis on inclusion, local agency, and contextual legitimacy.

Implementing the local turn's aspiration in dialogue processes remains challenging for multiple reasons. First, because dialogue processes are political in nature, local agency and having a contextual knowledge of the process often encounters certain challenges, thereby affecting inclusion. Drawing on an extensive theoretical and case-based analysis, this study has explored how two key normative aspirations (local agency and contextual knowledge) articulated in the local turn literature, alongside concepts like ownership, trust, and legitimacy, often fall short in practice. Using empirical case studies of dialogue processes in Cameroon, Mali, South Sudan, Tunisia, and Kenya, this thesis has examined the varying approaches to national dialogue and the roles played by different levels of actors in shaping these processes. It has argued that the relevance and effectiveness of national dialogues are closely linked to the nature of actor involvement, including the degree of local ownership. In addition, the analysis highlights how differing configurations of locals have shaped the outcomes and legitimacy of dialogue initiatives. In the next section, I will revisit these findings by distinguishing between the more nationally rooted approaches observed in Kenya and Tunisia and other cases.

Three primary research questions were proposed to guide this study. The first research question investigate how different modalities of inclusion in Africa national dialogues affects their

outcomes and the extent to which the so-called local actors can meaningfully participate in national dialogues. It is evident from the research that, different modalities of inclusion in African national dialogue processes shape their outcomes and the extent to which local actors can meaningfully participate in the process. The research finds that while the local turn in peacebuilding places strong normative emphasis on local agency and contextual knowledge, a mere fact that dialogues are led by stakeholders with deep contextual understanding does not guarantee meaningful inclusion. In cases like Kenya (2008) and Tunisia (2013), the deliberate and structured inclusion of civil society and other domestic actors contributed to a more credible and locally resonant dialogue process. Regional facilitators with deep contextual knowledge, societal trust, and moral legitimacy worked closely with local actors to help mediate tensions and promote collective ownership of outcomes. In contrast, the dialogues in Mali and South Sudan demonstrate how inclusion can become superficial, used instrumentally either to legitimize elite-controlled processes or to appease international stakeholders. Hence, undermining the potential for genuine participation and durable peace. These comparative insights highlight that the form and quality of inclusion matter greatly. Without intentional efforts to foster genuine engagement and redistribute power, national dialogues risk reinforcing existing hierarchies and exclusionary practices. Although progress in Kenya and Tunisia was not sustained, these cases still underscore the potential of meaningful inclusion when dialogues are not merely symbolic or stage-managed for political reasons.

The second research question investigates how trust (or the lack thereof) affects inclusion and ownership in national dialogues and key factors negatively influencing trust building in the context of Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis. Evidence suggests that the presence of state and non-state with contextual knowledge, as inspired by the local turn, may not translate into trust-building that is needed for ownership and inclusion, especially in the absence of political will to do so. In Cameroon, this disconnect arises because of political manipulations and power asymmetries among local actors. The findings further reveal that trust cannot be manufactured by proximity or shared identity alone. Therefore, depending on the context , the political will (rather than attempts to appease foreign partners) are needed to translate local agency into an inclusive dialogue. Moreover, in that context, practices such as praise-singing, ghost towns, intimidation, and the denial of legitimate grievances have all emerged to signal the lack of trust and moral authority by

elites, undermining their credibility and ability to lead national dialogue processes. Unnecessary praise singing through the use of catchphrases like "we thank the Head of State" to distort the narrative and elites' efforts to downplay the root causes of the conflict have further eroded public trust, especially when state actions fail to align with these rhetorical gestures. This limits the potential for an inclusive and locally owned process, despite the fact that the dialogue was locally driven. In response to the second research question, the analysis reveals that meaningful trust-building in the Cameroonian context requires a commitment to addressing the root causes of exclusion, dismantling elite manipulation, acknowledging legitimate grievances, and creating spaces for civic engagement to attract diverse views. Without these foundational steps, the aspirations of the local turn are unlikely to translate into genuine ownership or sustainable peace.

Finally, the last research question set out to examine the extent to which power imbalances between non-state actors and influential elites affected the quality and depth of inclusion in national dialogues in Cameroon. The research found that power imbalances among local actors undermined inclusion in the Cameroon dialogue process. The problem emerges from the narrow definition of "local" and the selection of participants based on President Biya's list of invitees suggested in the dialogue announcement. This strategy allowed elites to manipulate the process by including more of their party loyalists rather than a diverse range of local actors. This manipulation reveals that, while the local turn aspires to include diverse local actors in peace processes like national dialogues, it can be co-opted by elites, leading to exclusion. Moreover, the study found that many separatists abroad dismissed the dialogue process, calling it a political performance. Yet elites continue to portray the dialogue as successful, insisting that the implementation of its resolution is still underway. This rhetoric reflects the effects of the selective engagement of local actors and their impacts on inclusivity and overall credibility. It also reveals the need to confront structures that enable elites' dominance for meaningful inclusion. Many participants in this research suggested that elite dominance was manifested and reinforced through party politics, social hierarchies, patriarchy, and marginalization. They also noted that the failure to address these power imbalances critically explains why key issues, such as ghost towns and intimidation, remain unresolved, despite the dialogue being organized to address them. This disconnect highlights the gap between the aspirational goals of the local turn, which emphasize inclusive, grassroots

participation, and the actual practices of national dialogues, which are shaped by elite interests and exclusionary politics.

5.2 Theoretical Contributions

This section reflects on the study's theoretical contributions by situating its findings within the broader debate of peacebuilding and national dialogue. It highlights the need for a critically engaged theoretical approach to understanding national dialogues and local agencies in conflict-affected states. The first theoretical contribution of this study lies in its critical engagement with the prevailing assumptions of the "local turn" in peacebuilding. The local turn has been widely embraced for its emphasis on grassroots participation and context-specific solutions.[1]However, this research has demonstrated that local ownership can be co-opted by elites to entrench existing hierarchies and exclusions. Moreover, the issue of romanticizing the local is not new in the peacebuilding literature. Researchers such as Poulingny[2] and Mac Ginty[3] have contributed to the increasing debate on romanticization by exploring how local spaces can serve as sites for elite control and exclusionary practices.[4] This research makes an additional contribution by showing how state actors can strategically instrumentalize the "local" by legitimizing exclusionary practices under the guise of national ownership. National dialogues offer such opportunities, given how the very framing of "national" dialogue can obscure exclusions while projecting an image of unity and inclusion. This study has illustrated how the Cameroonian government mobilized the idea of "national" dialogue to selectively include loyalists while sidelining dissenting voices. Moreover, the study shed more light on the linkages between perceived legitimacy and sustainable peace. The study has argued that legitimacy cannot be assumed simply because a process is labelled by political elites as "national" as the case in Cameroon or "inclusive" as the case may be in Mali. In both contexts, inclusivity was filtered through partisan or state control mechanisms, leading to less productive dialogue outcomes. Future research can employ a constructivist reading of national dialogue to interrogate how terms like "national", "inclusion," and "local" are framed and often deployed by those who benefits from their framings.

Furthermore, despite the increasing recognition of national dialogues in peacebuilding, there is no unified theory explaining their functioning.[5] The academic and policy literature on national dialogue discusses national dialogue as a political instrument or a policy framework rather than

examining it as a theoretically grounded concept. This explains why there is a gap in understanding how dialogues operate beyond their formal structures. In particular, there is a gap in explaining how, beyond formal structures, key aspects such as power, legitimacy, gender, and the role of civil society shape dialogue processes. This research draws on these lenses to analyze the Cameroonian case and four other dialogue processes in Africa. It argues that dialogue processes must be intentionally designed to safeguard against elite control and to prioritize the meaningful inclusion of women, civil society organizations, and other local actors. Future research could explore the evolving role of youth and digital activism in redefining what participation and legitimacy mean in contemporary dialogue processes. By addressing these gaps, future scholarship can help move the discourse beyond normative assumptions and toward a more grounded, critical understanding of national dialogues as complex and contested political practices.

Additionally, the distinction between inclusion through physical presence and inclusion as meaningful influence has already been well established in peacebuilding literature. Scholars have increasingly emphasized that the superficial presence of women, civil society, and other marginalized groups does not necessarily translate into real decision-making power or the ability to shape outcomes.[6] While much of this discussion has focused on post-conflict and transitional justice settings, this study extends the conversation by examining how this dynamic unfolds in the context of national dialogues in Africa and in an active conflict scenario. By doing so, it contributes to emerging efforts to rethink inclusion as a relational and power-laden process, rather than a box-checking exercise. Furthermore, the rise of political activism led by the so-called Gen Zs in Africa, as seen in the 'EndSARS' protests in Nigeria and the 'RutoMustGo' protests in Kenya, is recently reshaping how demands for accountability and reform are articulated, often bypassing traditional forums such as national dialogues. The increasing convergence of online activism and street protests reflects a broader shift in how younger generations engage with state institutions and advocate for change. These developments not only challenge the relevance of conventional physical dialogue platforms but may also limit their potential for elite instrumentalization. This shift underscores the need to reconceptualize inclusion in national dialogues—not merely as participation within formal spaces, but as a broader, evolving social engagement that reflects changing modes of political expression. Future research should explore how these emerging forms of activism affect both the frequency and effectiveness of dialogue processes and how they might

redefine what inclusive peacebuilding looks like in contemporary African contexts. Additionally, while this study emphasizes the distinction between genuine and performative inclusion, it acknowledges that many dialogue processes involve a complex interplay of both. Further empirical work is needed to unpack these variations and to understand how inclusion manifests across different political and social contexts.

5.3 Suggestions for Future National Dialogues in Cameroon

Calls for another dialogue process in Cameroon have emerged from analysts and humanitarian groups.[7] The call for a renewed dialogue seems to have been driven by lingering concerns over the effectiveness of the 2019 dialogue, particularly its failures to include relevant stakeholders. These calls are also motivated by the perception that the 2019 dialogue failed to effectively address the long-standing Anglophone crisis and issues of marginalization in the regions.[8] Notwithstanding, participants of this research offered several suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of future dialogue processes in Cameroon. These suggestions addressed the following aspects: motives and strategies for inclusion, as well as power dynamics between key actors. In addition, the Kenyan and Tunisian national dialogues offer valuable lessons for Cameroonian stakeholders, underscoring the importance of learning from past African experiences in designing future inclusive dialogue processes.

5.3.1 Motives and Strategies for Inclusion in National Dialogues

As discussed in previous chapters, inclusion attracts a broad-based representation and meaningful participation. The national dialogues in Kenya and Tunisia both serve as examples of how direct and indirect inclusion of CSOs and their participation in dialogue processes can contribute to advancing democratic transitions in Africa. In the case of Cameroon, an opposition leader in the city of Bamenda, Cameroon explains that:

> […] we need an inclusive dialogue where all the sons and daughters of this country will sit on a round table to look at each other eyeball to eyeball […]and say the truth […] and from there we shall move forward.[9]

When inquired about whose presence could ensure inclusivity, another participant suggested that:

> […] they [dialogue organizers] should bring people from the diaspora claiming to be leaders of different separatist groups or people belonging to different fractions of the so called Ambazonia [separatist] government and members of the separatist government in prison.[10]

A civil society leader in Bamenda further recommended:

> […] when you are looking for peace, you don't go looking for friends, you look for your enemies and convert them to friends. The government should not shy from inviting people with opposing views like the CSOs, journalists, Bishops and political prisoners to dialogue with […].[11]

The participant's perspectives thus suggest that for future dialogues to be meaningfully inclusive, a wide range of stakeholders, including separatist leaders detained in connection with the Anglophone crisis, should be invited for a broad-based dialogue. However, it is still difficult to identify or develop a strategy to invite separatist leaders abroad. As this Buea-based journalist suggested: '[…] the government has its own people they consider as Ambazonia [separatist] diaspora, and the Ambas [separatist] on the ground have theirs.' Moreover, there are other challenges related to engaging key separatist leaders for an inclusive dialogue. First, the separatist leadership abroad consists of different fractions with different agendas.[12] Second, individuals claiming to be separatist leaders abroad through social media platforms may not necessarily have actual authority on the ground or influence within the movement.[13] Given that Cameroonian authorities usually crack down on these individuals, many within the separatist leadership (home/abroad) may be operating discreetly.[14] The above scenarios and the absence of a formal separatist structure complicate prescriptive recommendations about the right individuals and how to invite them in future dialogues. Even though national dialogue processes, by default, can name the different actors and parties in their announcements, as illustrated in chapter three, the overall argument points to the fact that in fragmented situations, it might be difficult to engage some locals, even if they have been identified. To address these issues, it is essential to develop a better understanding of the context and engage experts capable of managing interests and power relations, as illustrated by the cases of Kenya and Tunisia.

Furthermore, the division among separatists presents a significant challenge, which the regime in Cameroon may be exploiting to its advantage. In similar contexts, we have observed opposition groups working together to establish a more united front for negotiation with the regime. Such collaboration might help balance the power dynamics. For instance, in Guatemala, we have seen the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) guerrilla movement collaborate with civilian social movements to negotiate peace agreements with a regime that was itself going through a democratic and generational transition.[15] Similarly, in East Timor, Portugal, the European Union, and the Catholic Church played instrumental roles in uniting left-leaning and right-leaning opposition elements to negotiate with the Indonesian neo-colonial regime.[16] In the context of Cameroon, it appears highly improbable that the Biya regime or its successors would engage in sincere negotiations or uphold a transitional framework emerging from any dialogue process without the formation of a broad and united opposition front. This united front may need to include not just Anglophone or 'Ambazonia' opposition groups but also Francophone-dominated pressure groups such as the Brigade Anti-Sardinard (BAS),[1] Stand Up for Cameroon (SUC), etc. to enhance the likelihood of successful engagement with the regime.

As discussed in chapter two, the issues around the transparent selection of national dialogue facilitators are critical and can influence inclusion and dialogue outcomes in the region. Transparency in the selection of dialogue facilitators played a crucial role in both the Kenya and Tunisia national dialogues, offering valuable lessons for other African countries engaging in similar processes. To ensure a transparent selection of dialogue facilitators in future dialogues in Cameroon, participants suggested the following:

> […] the government should not draft their own agenda with the solution they have in mind and imposed it on people. […] they should select individuals from the communities

[1] Brigade Anti-Sardinards (BAS), is a movement within the Cameroonian diaspora that opposes President Paul Biya and his supporters.

> affected in a transparent manner to facilitate the process and report to Cameroonians and not to the head of state alone.[17]

A civil society leader in Yaoundé who participated in the dialogue opines that the fact that President Biya convened the dialogue in a televised speech and was absent throughout the process casts doubt on the transparency of facilitators. Moreover, the fact that the main dialogue facilitator, the Prime Minister, had previously been involved in praise-singing practices, as identified by research participants in chapter three, was enough to discourage genuine inclusion and ownership by other locals. This explains why the Prime Minister and other Biya-appointed facilitators showered him with empty praises throughout different sessions and even promised that the dialogue recommendations would be reported to Biya. This further fueled concerns about transparency, inclusion, and ownership. According to this participant:

> […] when we talk about national dialogue, it should be truly national [...] the head of state is a national figure and should be present throughout the process. […] we all know that this too much talk of reporting to the head of state is just a propaganda.[18]

Thus, in Cameroon and other African countries, scrutinizing the criteria for selecting dialogue facilitators and their relationships with influential elites is essential to maintain transparency, impartiality, and credibility in national dialogue processes.

5.3.2 Addressing Local Power Imbalances

African countries seeking to address structural challenges through national dialogues can draw valuable lessons from the Kenyan and Tunisian national dialogue processes. Specifically, on how the facilitators (notably the Annan team in Kenya and the Quartet in Tunisia) were able to strategically address local power relations in those contexts. As illustrated in Chapter Two, these efforts were instrumental in stopping violence and addressing some of the most contentious issues fueling conflict. Moreover, in both cases, stakeholders recognized the importance of devolving power to sub-national levels of government to address regional disparities, improve service delivery, and promote more inclusive governance. This can serve as a model for other African countries grappling with centralized state structures. In Cameroon, the government avoided critical

discussions on the state structure and instead granted a poorly defined special status to the regions affected.[19] Critics maintain that a more comprehensive dialogue that includes discussions around federalism was essential and could only be considered if the power dynamics between one class of local, the privileged local, with access to resources, etc., and the less privileged local with limited access to these resources could be dealt with. These unequal power relations explain why some topics were not allowed to be discussed. According to this Buea-based civil servant:

> […] I suggest that there should be no taboo topic. […] discussing federation was a taboo in the last dialogue. The idea of considering federalism as a no-go area of discussion by government officials is wrong. […] everyone should participate in that discussion to determine the form of the state.[20]

Another participant who attended the dialogue recounted how a few CSOs who attended the dialogue attempted to walk out when it was announced that there would be no discussion on the form of state. The participant stated:

> […] the atmosphere was tense that day, people were furious […] they wanted to leave Yaoundé immediately. […] I believe, and this is also the perspective of the majority of the population, that our current state structure should be discussed.[21]

Most Anglophone groups, especially activists calling for a return to a federal system of government, have demanded the form of state.[22] However, the government's reluctance to discuss the form of the state appears to be driven by its perception that such discussions would amount to conceding to separatist demands.

5.3.3 External Mediation

Participants of this research were divided in their opinions as to whether external mediation is needed for future dialogue processes in Cameroon. A good number of participants opined that the state should seek external support from foreign partners to facilitate a more inclusive and impartial dialogue. On the other hand, some participants believed that national stakeholders could organize a successful dialogue independently, provided key issues of inclusivity, trust, and transparency outlined above are addressed. A media practitioner in Yaoundé explains that:

> […] we have Cameroonian experts in almost every aspect of the dialogue we are talking about, both home and abroad. I have seen Cameroonians facilitate dialogues in other countries. […] they are many top UN diplomats of Cameroonian origin working to build peace around the world […] we don't need to look anywhere if we keep politics aside and use our own resources.[23]

Contrary to this opinion, a civil society leader in Buea recommended that the government embrace the opportunity to engage with Canada or any other foreign partner to facilitate a dialogue process. As previously discussed, Canada had expressed its willingness to facilitate such a process in Cameroon. The participant stated:

> […] what government should do is to commit to the Canadian process. This could lead to outcomes that may be accepted by many, including myself. There is no need for the government to claim they can resolve these issues; they can't be a judge in their own case.[24]

The issue of having an external mediator in a dialogue process has been a topic of debate in the local turn, with varying outcomes observed in different countries. As we have seen in the Tunisia dialogue, external mediators were not involved; instead, the Quartet played a crucial role in facilitating the process. In the Kenya dialogue, regional actors serving as mediators contributed to peace. These experiences underscore the importance of considering multiple perspectives and assessing the potential advantages and disadvantages of engaging external mediators in national dialogues.

In sum, the demand for another dialogue in Cameroon is driven by the recognition that previous dialogues did not successfully address the above concerns. These factors are critical for future dialogue processes, among other suggestions. As Cameroon continues its search for solutions to security challenges in its Anglophone regions, the recommendations put forth by participants in this research may be useful for future dialogues or peacebuilding projects.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

This study has critically examined the gap between the normative aspirations of inclusion in the local turn, and their superficial implementation in national dialogues. Despite its contributions, the following limitations should be acknowledged:

Firstly, Chapter Two of this study identifies twenty-three national dialogue processes held across Africa between 2008 and 2023. However, the comparative analysis conducted there focuses on only four cases (Kenya, Mali, South Sudan, and Tunisia) based primarily on secondary literature. A key limitation is the study's limited empirical scope, which may constrain its ability to capture the full diversity, complexity, and context-specific dynamics of national dialogues across the continent. Future research could address this by conducting more in-depth fieldwork in selected cases, thereby complementing and expanding upon the secondary findings presented here – as we have done in the case of Cameroon. Alternatively, scholars may opt to examine a different subset of the twenty-three identified dialogues using varied methodological approaches. Such efforts could yield richer insights into the political and social dimensions of dialogue processes, as well as deepening our understanding of how inclusion is negotiated, contested, and operationalized within African national dialogues.

Another important limitation of this study lies in its limited engagement with informal or community-based dialogue initiatives that often take place in tandem with formal national dialogue processes. While the focus on formal dialogue processes offers valuable insight into the institutional dynamics and elite-driven mechanisms of peacebuilding, it may inadvertently marginalize or overlook alternative spaces where meaningful engagement of marginalized actors occurs (as may have been the case in South Sudan and Mali). Future research could consider integrating both formal and informal dialogue processes to develop a more holistic understanding of peacebuilding through national dialogues.

---

[1] Mac Ginty & Richmond, The local turn in peace building

[2] Pouligny, Civil society and post-conflict peacebuilding:

[3] Mac Ginty, The Romanticisation of the local

[4] Poulingny and Mac Ginty

[5] Mandikwaza, A Conceptual Framework for National Dialogues
[6] Paffenholz, Making Women Count, Not Just Counting Women
[7] See International Crisis Group, *Canada Initiative Offers Opportunity for Cameroon Peace Process*
[8] Ibid, no 6
[9] Participant no. 15, political party representative in Bamenda
[10] Participant no. 2, scholar at the university of Bamenda
[11] Participant no. 19, CSO in Bamenda
[12] Bobo, *Cameroon: Lucas Ayaba Cho, public enemy number one*
[13] Jules, Inside the Virtual Ambazonia
[14] See Fox & Gittleman, Risk of Mass Atrocities in Cameroon
[15] See Jonas, Of Centaurs and Doves
[16] Salla, Creating the 'Ripe Moment' in the East Timor Conflict
[17] Participant no 17, traditional ruler in Bamenda
[18] Participant no 56, civil society leader in Yaounde.
[19] Bone, *Cameroon Grants 'Special Status' to its Restive Regions*
[20] Participant no, 35, government official in Buea
[21] Participant no, 64 media practitioners in Yaoundé
[22] International Crisis Group, *Canada Initiative Offers Opportunity for Cameroon Peace Process*
[23] Participant no, 65, media practitioner in Yaounde
[24] Participant no, 33, civil society leader in Buea

Bibliography

Bobo Yves. (2023). *Cameroon: Lucas Ayaba Cho, Public Enemy Number One*. The African Report. https://www.theafricareport.com/311839/cameroon-lucas-ayaba-cho-public-enemy-number-one/

Bone, Maxwell. (2020). *Cameroon Grants 'Special Status' to its Restive Regions. They Don't Feel Special.* African Arguments. https://africanarguments.org/2020/01/cameroon-grants-special-status-

Fox, K., & Gittleman, A. (2020). *Risk of Mass Atrocities in Cameroon*. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/countries/cameroon/policy-brief-risk-of-mass-atrocities-in-cameroon

International Crisis Group. (2023, February). *Canada Initiative Offers Opportunity for Cameroon Peace Process*. https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/canada-initiative-offers- opportunity-cameroon-peace-process

Jonas, S. (2000). Of Centaurs and Doves: Guatemala's Peace Process (1st ed.). *Routledge.* https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429498596

Jules Roger, S. E. (2018). *Inside the Virtual Ambazonia: Separatism, Hate Speech, Disinformation and Diaspora in the Cameroonian Anglophone crisis*. https://repository.usfca.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2242&context=thes

Mac Ginty, R. (2008). *The Romanticisation of the Local: Welfare, Culture and Peacebuilding.* International Peacekeeping, 15(3), 405–423.

Mac Ginty, R., & Richmond, O. P. (2013). *The Local Turn in Peacebuilding: A Critical Agenda for Peace*.Third World Quarterly, 34(5), 763–783.

Mandikwaza, E. (2024). A Conceptual Framework for National Dialogues: Applied Theories and Concepts. https://www.accord.org.za/ajcr-issues/a-conceptual-framework-for-national-dialogues-applied- theories-and-concepts/

Paffenholz, T., Ross, N., Dixon, S., Schluchter, A.-L., & True, J. (2016). Making Women Count Not just Counting Women: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on Peace Negotiations. *Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative and UN Women.*

Pouligny, B. (2005). *Civil Society and Post-conflict Peacebuilding: Ambiguities of International Programmes Aimed at Building 'new' Societies*. Security Dialogue, 36(4), 495–510. https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010605060448

Salla, M. E. (1997). *Creating the 'Ripe Moment' in the East Timor Conflict.* Journal of Peace Research, 34(4), 449–46

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Codebook (exported from NVivo)

Building Peace through National Dialogues: What role for Civil Society Organizations in Cameroon and in Africa

Codes

Name	Description	Sources	References
Denying or minimizing the root causes of the crisis	Reference to elite's attitudes or practices that downplayed/undermined the root causes of the Anglophone crisis. Also include opportunities that were missed or misused to build peace and foster inclusion.	55	135
Dialogue Agenda	Reference to gaps in the national dialogue agenda and overall explanations of why/how the dialogue process itself was a failure	64	216
Dialogue Outcomes	Reference to the overall outcomes of the national dialogue process. Captures discussions on the challenges of implementing national dialogue outcomes and suggestions for future dialogues	52	79
Ghost towns or civil disobedience	General mentions of the practice of ghost towns or any form of stay-at-home protests and civil disobedience. Also captures discussions on the overall role of separatist in the Anglophone crisis.	25	48
Intimidation and Shrinking Civic Space	General discussions on civil society's role in national dialogue, how and why they were marginalized, intimidated, and suppressed before/during/after the dialogue process in Cameroon.	75	273
Inequality	Reference to existing inequalities in Cameroon. Includes justifications of why and how inequalities affect the recognition and implementation of 'special status'. Also captures discussions on hegemony and unfair treatment of women.	32	47
Participation	Reference to discussions on the participation of different stakeholders in the 2019 national dialogue process in Cameroon. Also captures suggestions on what should have been done to	58	162

Name	Description	Sources	References
	ensure inclusive participation.		
Patriarchy	Reference to discussions on male dominance, rigid gender roles and expectations. Also used to capture discussions on women's role in peace building and national dialogue.	65	126
Political Manipulations and Exclusion	Reference to discussions on political manipulations and other practices by elites, primarily on the misuse of the terrorism law.	25	40
Positive		40	60
Praise singing and individual self-interest	Reference to elites' self-serving interests and praise singing attitudes. Also includes suggestions that the whole process was a monologue as opposed to a dialogue as projected by elites.	47	96
Suggestions for Future Dialogues	Captures suggestions on what should be done for future dialogue processes to be inclusive.	55	97

APPENDIX 2

Observation Grid

Area of observation	Date/time	Notes
Participant's behavior *emotions, attitudes, beliefs, etc.*		
Social norms/cultural practices *shared values, customs, tradition, rituals, religious beliefs, etc.*		
Communication *verbal language, body language, tone, ironic slangs etc.*		
Decision making processes. *hierarchies, priorities, reasoning etc.*		

APPENDIX 3

Anonymous List of Participants

Interviews	Affiliation	Location	Language
Interview 1	Academia	Bamenda	English
Interview 2	Academia	Bamenda	English
Interview 3	CSO	Bamenda	English
Interview 4	CSO	Bamenda	English
Interview 5	CSO	Bamenda	English
Interview 6	CSO	Bamenda	English
Interview 7	INGO	Bamenda	English
Interview 8	INGO	Bamenda	English
Interview 9	Gov't Officials	Bamenda	English
Interview 10	Gov't Officials	Bamenda	English
Interview 11	Gov't Officials	Bamenda	English
Interview 12	Media	Bamenda	English
Interview 13	Media	Bamenda	English
Interview 14	Political Party Rep	Bamenda	English
Interview 15	Political Party Rep	Bamenda	English
Interview 16	Religious Leader	Bamenda	English
Interview 17	Traditional Ruler	Bamenda	English
Interview 18	CSO	Bamenda	English
Interview 19	CSO	Bamenda	English
Interview 20	Academia	Buea	English
Interview 21	Academia	Buea	English
Interview 22	Academia	Buea	English
Interview 23	Academia	Buea	English
Interview 24	Academia	Buea	English
Interview 25	Academia	Buea	English
Interview 26	CSO	Buea	English
Interview 27	CSO	Buea	English
Interview 28	CSO	Buea	English
Interview 29	CSO	Buea	English
Interview 30	CSO	Buea	English
Interview 31	CSO	Buea	English
Interview 32	CSO	Buea	English
Interview 33	CSO	Buea	English
Interview 34	CSO	Buea	English
Interview 35	Govt Official	Buea	English
Interview 36	INGO	Buea	English
Interview 37	INGO	Buea	English
Interview 38	INGO	Buea	English

Interview 39	Media	Buea	English
Interview 40	Media	Buea	English
Interview 41	Media	Buea	English
Interview 42	Media	Buea	English
Interview 43	Political Party Rep	Buea	English
Interview 44	Political Party Rep	Buea	English
Interview 45	Traditional Leader	Buea	English
Interview 46	Academia	Yaoundé	English
Interview 47	Academia	Yaoundé	English
Interview 48	Govt Official	Yaoundé	French
Interview 49	Govt Official	Yaoundé	English
Interview 50	CSO representative	Yaoundé	English
Interview 51	CSO representative	Yaoundé	English
Interview 52	CSO representative	Yaoundé	English
Interview 53	CSO representative	Yaoundé	English
Interview 54	CSO representative	Yaoundé	English
Interview 55	CSO representative	Yaoundé	English
Interview 56	CSO representative	Yaoundé	English
Interview 57	CSO representative	Yaoundé	English
Interview 58	CSO representative	Yaoundé	English
Interview 59	CSO representative	Yaoundé	English
Interview 60	CSO representative	Yaoundé	English
Interview 61	Diplomatic Missions	Yaoundé	French
Interview 62	Diplomatic Missions	Yaoundé	English
Interview 63	Diplomatic Mission	Yaoundé	English
Interview 64	Media	Yaoundé	French
Interview 65	Media	Yaoundé	English
Interview 66	Media	Yaoundé	English
Interview 67	Media	Yaoundé	French
Interview 68	INGO	Yaoundé	French
Interview 69	INGO	Yaoundé	English
Interview 70	INGO	Yaoundé	English
Interview 71	INGO	Yaoundé	English
Interview 72	Political Parties	Yaoundé	English
Interview 73	Political Parties	Yaoundé	English
Interview 74	Political Parties	Yaoundé	English
Interview 75	Political Parties	Yaoundé	English
Interview 76	Religious Leaders	Yaoundé	English
Interview 77	Religious Leaders	Yaoundé	English
Interview 78	Religious Leaders	Yaoundé	English

APPENDIX 4

NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMISSIONS AND CENTRAL BUREAU MEMBERS

CENTRAL BUREAU			
	Stakeholders	**Gender**	**Political Affiliations**
CHAIR	Dr Joseph Dion Ngute	M	CPDM-ruling party
1st VICE-CHAIR	Bishop Kome	M	Religious
2nd VICE-CHAIR	Garga Haman Adji	M	Pro CPDM
3rd VICE-CHAIR	Emilia Nkeze	F	SDF -opposition
4th VICE-CHAIR	Fadimatou Iyawa	F	Others
General Rapporteur	Mbayu Felix	M	CPDM-ruling party
Rapporteur No.1	Essomba Pierre	M	CPDM-ruling party
Rapporteur No.2	Churchil Ewumbue	M	CPDM-ruling party
Rapporteur No.3	Prof. Cheka Cosmas	M	Others
COMMISSIONS			
BILINGUALISM, CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL COHESION			
CHAIR	Joshua Osih	M	SDF-opposition
VICE-CHAIRS	Moukoko Mbonjo Pierre	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Ama Tutu Muna	F	CPDM-ruling party
	S.M Rene Effa	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Daniel Abwa	M	Others
RAPPORTEURS	Chi Asafor Cornelius	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Doka Yamigno Serge	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Bekila Gisele	F	CPDM-ruling party
	Mulua Ernest	M	Others
	Bawe Mohamadou	M	Others
RESOURCE PERSONS	Peter Mafany Musonge	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Wakata Bolvine	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Bello Bouba Maigari	M	NUDP- pro-ruling party
EDUCATION SYSTEM			
CHAIR	Dorothy Njeuma	F	CPDM-ruling party
VICE-CHAIRS	Paul Ghogomu Mingo	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Efoua Mbozo'o Samuel	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Tomaino Ndam Njoya	F	CDU-opposition
	Ivo Tambe Leke	M	CPDM-ruling party
RAPPORTEURS	Lois Ikome	F	Others

	Nguele Abada Marcelin	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Tameh Valentine	M	Others
	Nkuo Theresa	F	CPDM-ruling party
RESOURCE PERSONS	Jacques Fame Ndongo	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Mme Lyonga Nalova	F	CPDM-ruling party
	Laurent Serge Etoundi Ngoa	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Asheri Kilo	F	CPDM-ruling party
	Issa Tchiroma Bakari	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Monouna Foutsou	M	CPDM-ruling party
JUDICIAL SYSTEM			
CHAIR	Benjamin Itoe	M	CPDM-ruling party
VICE-CHAIRS	Fogui Jean Pierre	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Mbah Ndam	M	SDF-opposition
	Achu George	M	Others
	Kofale Nkale Ndive	M	Others
	Tchakounte Patie Charles	M	Others
RAPPORTEURS	Emile Essombe	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Gwanmesia George	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Doh Collins Regine	F	Others
	Fonkwe Fongang	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Ewang Sone Andrew	M	Others
	James Mouangue Kobila	M	Others
RESOURCE PERSONS	Laurent Esso	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Nguihe Kante	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Dooh Jerome Penbaga	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Clement Atangana	M	CPDM-ruling party
DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT			
CHAIR	Ngole Philip Ngwese	M	CPDM-ruling party
VICE-CHAIRS	Lekene Donfack	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Cheka Cosmas	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Abouem Tchoyi	M	Others
	Flambeau Ngayap	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Mbella Moki Charles	M	CPDM-ruling party
RAPPORTEURS	Ebongue Makolle	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Essomba Pierre	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Cheuwa Jean Claude	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Mbombo Abel	M	CPDM-ruling party
RESOURCE PERSONS	Elanga Obam Georges	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Philippe Mbarga Mboa	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Bassiliken Achille	M	CPDM-ruling party

RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CRISIS AFFECTED REGIONS			
CHAIR	Fumunyoh Chris (declined) Replaced by Simon Munzu	M	Others
VICE-CHAIRS	Ngambo Fonjo Pierre	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Forbi Chinda Simon	M	SDF-opposition
	Tawamba Celestin	M	Others
	Eric Njong	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Jean Jacques Ekindi	M	MP-opposition
	Uphie Melo Chinje	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Seini Boukar Lamine	M	CPDM-ruling party
RAPPORTEURS	Paul Tasong	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Matoya Cletus	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Orgock Ntui	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Mvele Guy Donald	M	Others
RESOURCE PERSONS	Alamine Ousman Mey	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Mbairobe Gabriel	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Talba Malla Ibrahim	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Celestine Ketcha Courtes	F	CPDM-ruling party
	Nganou Djoumessi Emmanuel	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Hamadou Moustapha	M	CPDM-ruling party
RETURN OF REFUGEES AND IDPS			
CHAIR	Cardinal Christian Tumi	M	Religious
VICE-CHAIRS	Ngolle Ngolle Elvis	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Simon Munzu	M	Others
	Cabral Libil	M	CPNR-opposition
RAPPORTEURS	Kenne Blaise	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Yap Abdou	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Charles Atangana Manda	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Maina Anatole	M	CPDM-ruling party
RESOURCE PERSONS	Paul Atanga Nji	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Pauline Irene Nguene	F	CPDM-ruling party
	Gregoire Owona	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Manaouda Malachie	M	CPDM-ruling party
DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION OF EX-COMBATANTS			
CHAIR	Saibou Moussa	M	Others
VICE-CHAIRS	Fai Yengo Francis	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Mengot Arrey	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Mgr George Nkuo	M	Religious
	Ngalla Gerald	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Eyeya Zanga Louis	M	CPDM-ruling party

	Ajume Wingo	M	Others
	Fung Ivo	M	Others
	Samy Kumbo	M	Others
RAPPORTEURS	Fru Jonathan	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Gapsa Sixtus	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Tcheuwa Jean Claude	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Oumar Bichair	M	CPDM-ruling party
RESOURCE PERSONS	Beti Assomo	M	CPDM-ruling party
ROLE OF DIASPORA IN THE CRISIS AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT			
CHAIR	Atangana Amougou Jean Louis	M	CPDM-ruling party
VICE-CHAIRS	Barrister Nkafu Julius	M	Others
	Eric Nchinje	M	Others
	Calixte Beyala	F	Others
	Dr Dongmo	M	Others
	Lucie Mboto Fouda	F	Others
RAPPORTEURS	Fozein Kwanke Thomas	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Mbafor Afesi Jean Marc	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Machinkou Ndzesop Nadine	F	Others
	Ntoumba Leonel	M	CPDM-ruling party
RESOURCE PERSONS	Mbella Mbella Lejeune	M	CPDM-ruling party
	Mohamadou Moustapha	M	CPDM-ruling party

Source: Adapted from Bureau of the Major National Dialogue in Cameroon

Appendix 5

Formulaire de consentement

Titre de l'étude:
Construire la paix à travers les dialogues nationaux : Quel rôle pour les organisations de la société civile au Cameroun et en Afrique ?

***Nom du chercheur principal**:*
Nchongayi Christantus Begealawuh
Affiliation (Département, Faculté, Institut)
SIDGS, FSS

***Nom du superviseur:** Prof. Stephen Baranyi*
Affiliation (Département, Faculté, Institut)
SIDGS, FSS

Thèse de doctorat
Sous la supervision du Prof. Stephen Baranyi

Invitation à participer : Je suis invité à participer à l'étude de recherche susmentionnée menée par Nchongayi Begealawuh.

Objectif de l'étude : L'objectif de l'étude est d'examiner les rôles de la société civile dans le dialogue national, un mécanisme de consolidation de la paix dans la crise anglophone du Cameroun.

Participation : Ma participation consistera à prendre part à un entretien qualitatif approfondi semi-structuré de 45 à 60 minutes et à répondre aux questions posées par le chercheur. Au cours de cet entretien, on me posera des questions sur les relations entre l'État et la société civile au Cameroun, sur le rôle de la société civile dans les dialogues nationaux et sur les différents facteurs affectant la participation de la société civile aux dialogues de consolidation de la paix.

Cette conversation n'est pas enregistrée et aucun enregistreur ne sera autorisé.

Risques : Ma participation à cette étude implique que je donne volontairement des informations personnelles et que je discute de sujets sensibles qui peuvent susciter des émotions chez moi en tant que partie prenante du conflit au Cameroun. J'ai reçu l'assurance des chercheurs que tout sera fait pour minimiser les risques liés à la révélation de mon identité.

Avantages : Ma participation à cette étude sera bénéfique pour le gouvernement du Cameroun, la société civile camerounaise et les acteurs internationaux car elle contribue à l'avancement des connaissances sur ce sujet.

Confidentialité et vie privée : J'ai reçu l'assurance des chercheurs que les informations que je partage resteront strictement confidentielles. Je comprends que le contenu ne sera utilisé qu'aux fins pour lesquelles les données collectées seront utilisées et que mon identité sera protégée.

1

Conservation des données : Les données recueillies par le biais des notes d'entretien seront conservées de manière sécurisée.
Participation volontaire : Je ne suis pas obligé de participer et si je choisis de participer, je peux me retirer de l'étude à tout moment et/ou refuser de répondre à toute question, sans subir de conséquences négatives. Si je choisis de me retirer, toutes les données recueillies jusqu'au moment du retrait seront retirées de l'ensemble des données et ne seront pas utilisées dans l'étude.

Si j'ai des questions sur l'étude, je peux contacter le chercheur ou son superviseur. Si j'ai des questions concernant la conduite éthique de cette étude, je peux contacter le Bureau de l'éthique et de l'intégrité de la recherche p

Il m'est recommandé de (conserver/imprimer/sauvegarder) une copie de ce formulaire de consentement pour mes dossiers.

Acceptation : En signant mon nom ci-dessous, j'accepte de participer à cette étude de recherche.

Nom du participant _____ Date: _____
Signature du participant _____ Date: _____
Signature du chercheur : _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 6

Consent Form

Title of the study:
Building Peace through National Dialogues: What Role for Civil Society Organizations in Cameroon and in Africa?

Name of Principal Investigator: *Nchongayi Christantus Begealawuh*
Affiliation (Department, Faculty, Institute) *SIDGS, FSS*

Name of Supervisor: *Prof. Stephen Baranyi*
Affiliation (Department, Faculty, Institute) *SIDGS, FSS*

Doctoral Thesis
Under the supervision of Prof. Stephen Baranyi

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the above-mentioned research study conducted by Nchongayi Begealawuh

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to investigate the roles of civil society in national dialogue, a mechanism for peacebuilding in Cameroon's Anglophone crisis.

Participation: My participation will consist of; participating in a 45-60 minutes in-depth semi structured qualitative interview and responding to questions posed by the researcher. During this interview, I will be asked questions on state-civil society relations in Cameroon, the role of civil society in national dialogues and different factors affecting civil society participation in peacebuilding dialogues.

This conversation is not recorded and no recorder would be allowed.

Risks: My participation in this study will entail that I volunteer personal information and discuss sensitive topics that may cause me to be emotional as a stakeholder in the conflict in Cameroon. I have received assurance from the researchers that every effort will be made to ensure the risks of revealing my identity will be minimized.

Benefits: My participation in this study will benefit the government of Cameroon, Cameroonian civil society and international actors as it contributes to the advancement of knowledge on this topic.

Confidentiality and Privacy: I have received assurance from the researchers that the information I share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for purposes for which the collected data will be used and that my identity will be protected.

1

Conservation of Data: The data collected through interview notes will be kept in a secure manner.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be removed from the dataset and not used in the study.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or their supervisor. If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

It is recommended that I (keep/print/save) a copy of this consent form for my records.

Acceptance: By signing my name below, I agree to participate in this research study.

Participant's name: _____ Date: _____
Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____
Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 7

Draft questions for civil society, traditional and religious leaders

Questions de recherche pour la société civile, les chefs traditionnels et religieux

1. How would you describe the 2019 national dialogue process in Cameroon?
   Comment décririez-vous le processus de dialogue national de 2019 au Cameroun?
2. How would you describe civil society participation in the dialogue process?
   Comment décririez-vous la participation de la société civile au processus de dialogue?
3. Were there specific roles assigned to CSOs? What do you think were their overall contributions to the dialogue process?
   Des rôles spécifiques ont-ils été attribués aux OSC? Quelles ont été, selon vous, leurs contributions globales au processus de dialogue?
4. What would you say was most exciting/frustrating for CSOs in the 2019 dialogue process in Cameroon?
   Selon vous, qu'est-ce qui a été le plus excitant ou le plus frustrant pour les OSC dans le processus de dialogue de 2019 au Cameroun?
5. Any thoughts about what went well or wrong as far as the relationship between the state and civil society is concern during the national dialogue process?
   Avez-vous des idées sur ce qui s'est bien ou mal passé en ce qui concerne la relation entre l'État et la société civile au cours du processus de dialogue national?
6. Do you think the ND process succeeded in bringing together the main actors of the Anglophone crisis?
   Pensez-vous que le processus de dialogue national a réussi à rassembler les principaux acteurs de la crise anglophone?
7. How would you describe the relationship between the state and civil society during the ND process?
   Comment décririez-vous la relation entre l'Etat et la société civile au cours du processus de dialogue national?
8. Would you say local legislations such as the anti-terror law discouraged or encouraged civil society and rights advocates from participating in the national dialogue?
   Diriez-vous que les législations locales telles que la loi anti-terroriste ont découragé ou encouragé la société civile et les défenseurs des droits à participer au dialogue national?
9. what could be done differently, to improve the structure and substance of a future national dialogue.
   Qu'est-ce qui pourrait être fait différemment, pour améliorer la structure et le contenu d'un futur dialogue national ?
10. What would you say about the dialogue agenda, discussions and overall outcomes?
    Que diriez-vous de l'ordre du jour du dialogue, des discussions et des résultats globaux ?
11. Can you recognize any of the commissions/ dialogue recommendations that specifically deal with issues of women and gender?
    Pouvez-vous reconnaître certaines des commissions/recommandations du dialogue qui traitent spécifiquement des questions relatives aux femmes et au genre ?
12. In your view, what considered steps should have been taken during the ND process to encourage state-civil society relations in resolving the Anglophone crisis?

Selon vous, quelles mesures réfléchies auraient dû être prises pendant le processus de la DS pour

encourager les relations entre l'État et la société civile dans la résolution de la crise anglophone ?

13. Have you noticed any changes since the 2019 dialogue to resolve the anglophone crisis was organized? --- [Follow up] how do civil society fit into those changes?
    Avez-vous remarqué des changements depuis l'organisation du dialogue de 2019 pour résoudre la crise anglophone ? --- [Suivi] comment la société civile s'inscrit-elle dans ces changements ?
14. Would you say the dialogue provided solution to issues of women affected by the Anglophone crisis?
    Diriez-vous que le dialogue a apporté une solution aux problèmes des femmes affectées par la crise anglophone?
15. How are CSOs engaging with dialogue stakeholders towards implementing ND recommendations?
    Comment les OSC s'engagent-elles avec les parties prenantes du dialogue pour la mise en œuvre des recommandations de la DN?

Appendix 8

Draft questions for dialogue participants/activists

Questions de recherche pour les participants/activistes du dialogue

16. How would you describe the 2019 national dialogue process in Cameroon?
    Comment décririez-vous le processus de dialogue national 2019 au Cameroun?
17. How would you describe civil society participation in the dialogue process?
    Comment décririez-vous la participation de la société civile dans le processus de dialogue?
18. Were there specific roles assigned to CSOs? What do you think were their overall contributions to the dialogue process?

    Des rôles spécifiques ont-ils été attribués aux OSC ? Quelles ont été, selon vous, leurs

    contributions globales au processus de dialogue?

19. What would you say was most exciting/frustrating for CSOs in the 2019 dialogue process in Cameroon?
    Selon vous, qu'est-ce qui a été le plus excitant ou le plus frustrant pour les OSC dans le processus de dialogue de 2019 au Cameroun?
20. What would you say was the most frustrating or exciting for civil society during the dialogue process?
    Qu'est-ce qui, selon vous, a été le plus frustrant ou le plus excitant pour la société civile au cours du processus de dialogue ?
21. What would you say about the dialogue organizers?
    Que diriez-vous des organisateurs du dialogue?
22. Anything about the dialogue participants?
    Que diriez-vous des participants au dialogue?
23. What do you make of the national dialogue venue?
    Que pensez-vous du lieu du dialogue national ?
24. Was the timing right for this dialogue?
    Le moment était-il bien choisi pour ce dialogue?
25. What would you say about the dialogue agenda, discussions and overall outcomes?
    Que diriez-vous de l'ordre du jour du dialogue, des discussions et des résultats globaux ?
26. Who do you think was absent or was not supposed to be present in the ND process?
    Qui, selon vous, était absent ou n'était pas censé être présent dans le processus du DN
27. what could be done differently, to improve the structure and substance of a future national dialogue?
    qu'est-ce qui pourrait être fait différemment, pour améliorer la structure et le contenu d'un futur dialogue national?
28. Can you recognize any of the commissions/ dialogue recommendations that specifically deal with issues of women and gender?
    Pouvez-vous reconnaître certaines des commissions/recommandations du dialogue qui traitent spécifiquement des questions de femmes et de genre ?

29. Have you noticed any changes since the 2019 dialogue to resolve the anglophone crisis was organized? --- [Follow up] how do civil society fit into those changes?
    Avez-vous remarqué des changements depuis l'organisation du dialogue de 2019 pour résoudre la crise anglophone ? --- [Suivi] comment la société civile s'inscrit-elle dans ces changements ?
30. Would you say the dialogue provided solution to issues of women affected by the Anglophone crisis? Diriez-vous que le dialogue a apporté une solution aux problèmes des femmes affectées par la crise anglophone ?

APPENDIX 9

[Certificate of Ethics Approval]

29/06/2022

Université d'Ottawa
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa
Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

CERTIFICAT D'APPROBATION ÉTHIQUE | CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS APPROVAL

Numéro du dossier / Ethics File Number	S-06-22-8104
Titre du projet / Project Title	Building Peace through National Dialogues: What Role for Civil Society Organizations in Cameroon and in Africa?
Type de projet / Project Type	Thèse de doctorat / Doctoral thesis
Statut du projet / Project Status	Approuvé / Approved
Date d'approbation (jj/mm/aaaa) / Approval Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	29/06/2022
Date d'expiration (jj/mm/aaaa) / Expiry Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	28/06/2023

Équipe de recherche / Research Team

Chercheur / Researcher	Affiliation	Role
Nchongayi BEGEALAWUH	École de développement international et mondialisation / School of International Development and Global Studies	Chercheur Principal / Principal Investigator
Stephen BARANYI	École de développement international et mondialisation / School of International Development and Global Studies	Superviseur / Supervisor

Conditions spéciales ou commentaires / Special conditions or comments

550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154
Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5 Canada

550 Cumberland Street, Room 154
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 Canada

613-562-5387 • 613-562-5338 • ethique@uOttawa.ca / ethics@uOttawa.ca
www.recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie | www.recherche.uottawa.ca/ethics

Appendix 10

[Letter of Affiliation]

Denis & Lenora Foretia foundation

NKAFU POLICY institute

18 January 2023

To whom it may Concern,

This is to confirm that Mr. Nchongayi Christantus Begealawuh, is currently a research intern with the Peace and Security Division of the Nkafu Policy Institute of Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation based in Yaoundé.

Mr Nchongayi is currently conducting interviews with government stakeholders, politicians, scholars, diplomats, civil society activists, traditional and religious leaders who were opportune to follow the 2019 national dialogue process in Cameroon or are conversant with peacebuilding processes in general. As a Cameroonian based think tank hosting this research intern for the above purposes, we fully support Mr Nchongayi's project and hope you can assist him in this regard.

Sincerely,

Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation P.O. BOX 14015 YAOUNDE

Tazoacha Francis,
Director, Peace, and Security Division
Nkafu Policy Institute
Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation