

## Exploring Ahidjo's impact on the federated state of East Cameroon from 1961 to 1971: An analysis of historical events

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**Abstract:** This paper examined the influence of Ahmadou Ahidjo's governance on the federated state of East Cameroon from 1961 to 1971. As the inaugural President of Cameroon, Ahidjo significantly impacted the political, social, and economic development of East Cameroon during this critical period. The research endeavored to provide a comprehensive understanding of his influence by analyzing key historical events, including the consolidation of power, centralization of authority, and the implementation of various policies. The study investigated the strategies employed by him to establish his authority in East Cameroon and the enduring repercussions of his governance on the region's socio-political landscape. This was accomplished through meticulous archival research and document analysis, which facilitated a thorough evaluation of both primary and secondary sources. Ultimately, the research aimed to offer fresh insights into Ahidjo's leadership in East Cameroon and to elucidate the lasting effects of his rule on the federated state's development.

**Keywords:** 1961-1971, Ahidjo, Analysis, East Cameroon, Federal system, Historical events, Impact

### 1. Introduction

The decade spanning from 1961 to 1971 represented a pivotal chapter in Cameroon's historical narrative, particularly within the federated state of East Cameroon. This period was defined by the capacity of the nation to reconcile the challenges and advantages presented by its newfound independence, significantly influenced by the leadership of President Ahmadou Ahidjo. As a primary architect of Cameroon's emergence from colonial oversight, he held considerable authority and played a critical role in steering East Cameroon through its formative years as an independent state.

This research sought to conduct a comprehensive analysis of Ahidjo's influence on the federated state of East Cameroon, focusing on the significant historical events, policies, and decisions that characterised his governance during this transformative era. His rise to power in 1960 marked a defining moment for East Cameroon, initiating a new phase of governance that prioritised centralisation and nation-building. He endeavoured to solidify state authority, promote economic development, and ensure political stability; however, such initiatives were often met with controversy and dissent among various segments of the population.

One notable aspect of Ahidjo's administration was his implementation of centralisation policies intended to promote unity and cohesion within the diverse regions of Cameroon. Yet, these strategies frequently marginalised the unique identities and autonomy of East Cameroon, which had its historical, cultural, and sociopolitical contexts. This marginalisation raised critical questions regarding the effectiveness and inclusivity of his governance model, as the push for a unified national identity came at the expense of the recognition of regional diversity.

Moreover, his approach to governance included a systematic repression of dissent and political opposition in East Cameroon, leading to considerable concerns regarding the erosion of democratic principles and human rights within the region. The methods employed by the Ahidjo regime to exert control and suppress opposing

voices contributed to a pervasive atmosphere of fear and repression, which affected the socio-political landscape and public sentiment throughout his tenure.

This study will analyse the existing literature and the 1961 federal constitution. It sought to establish Ahmadou Ahidjo's key positions and dominance in East Cameroon in contrast to West Cameroon. It demonstrated that his control over East Cameroon was cultivated by colonial powers starting in 1947, culminating in its enforcement by 1958. To sustain his authority in East Cameroon, He pursued constitutional changes strategically. In 1962, he took advantage of the constitution to confront the so-called "gang of four," led by the prominent political figure André-Marie Mbida, as well as to counteract the subversive activities of the Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC).

Ahidjo's primary objective when drafting the 1961 federal constitution, in collaboration with French legal experts, was to dominate West Cameroon, which posed a significant obstacle to his ambition of nationwide governance, a desire that was further supported by French interests in the region (Richard, 1978). This strategic aim was evident in his decision to conceal the draft constitution until the 1961 Foumban Conference, where its unveiling surprised the Anglophone delegation, led by John Ngu Foncha. This concealment illustrated his preoccupation with establishing a legal framework that could effectively mitigate the resistance posed by Anglophone politicians, who sought greater autonomy and freedom within the federal structure.

West Cameroon presented a unique challenge for Ahidjo, primarily because the territory had not been under French colonial influence, and he had little political experience there. The British administration had governed this region, and the people of West Cameroon held political experiences rooted in interactions with Nigeria rather than French Cameroon. With this historical context in mind, he crafted a constitution designed to grant him more powers within the federal system than were necessary, a calculated move aimed at progressively asserting control over West Cameroon.

Ahidjo realized his ambitions through a series of reforms that deviated sharply from the Mfoumban Agreement. For instance, he replaced the Pound Sterling with the CFA franc, substituted the mobile police with gendarmes and police forces from East Cameroon, and replaced the common law system with the French civil law system. Most significantly, he redefined the status of West Cameroon, transforming it into an administrative unit rather than a fully autonomous federal entity (Ndi, 2014). This transformation underscored his preference for a French-style constitution, one that not only served his interests but also undermined West Cameroon's aspirations.

In contrast to East Cameroon, where he had the backing of French military support since pre-independence, he sought legitimate measures to establish his authority in West Cameroon. The latter was less susceptible to his influence, necessitating a more cautious approach. Consequently, he delayed the exploitation of the Limbe oil reserves until May 1972. This decision raised pertinent questions about his motives: Why did he refrain from tapping into the recently discovered oil reserves in Limbe during the federal system? Why did he wait for the transition to a unitary system to exploit these resources? Furthermore, why did he not adopt a similar approach to resource management in East Cameroon, which also had political leaders, such as Prime Minister Charles Assale and later Simon Pierre Tsoungui? This questions without doubt gives the go ahead for an enquiry to see the grounds that sustained his supremacy in this part of Cameroon (East) during the federal system.

## **2. Research methodology**

This study consecrated on Ahidjo's influence in East Cameroon during the federal system necessitated a clear methodology for results. To achieve this, the study employed a qualitative research methodology informed by a diverse array of primary and secondary sources. The researcher utilised materials from the Cameroon National Archive in Yaoundé to uncover a wealth of governmental documents and legislative records from the crucial years of 1961 to 1971, including the federal constitution enacted in 1961. This foundation of data was further

enriched by consulting significant first-hand resources, such as materials housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), the British Online Archive, and a variety of relevant newspapers that chronicled this period.

Additionally, scholarly books and articles focusing on Cameroon's history, politics, and legal frameworks provided critical context and analytical depth to the investigation. These sources were obtained from university libraries in Yaoundé as well as online libraries from some subscribed and open access websites including the Internet Archive, Jstore, and Project Muse and many more.

Employing content analysis as a key technique through thematic coding of recurring themes in the available documents, facilitated an in-depth evaluation of the concepts and arguments presented within the gathered data, enabling the researcher to assess the validity and accuracy of the claims made regarding Ahidjo's influence on East Cameroon. By analysing the available evidence, the study aimed to answer the central research question: What factors contributed to Ahidjo's inherent influence and control in the federated state of East Cameroon?

### **2.1. Research objective**

Ultimately, this research aimed to produce a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted challenges and opportunities that emerged in East Cameroon under Ahidjo's leadership. By highlighting the historical complexities of post-colonial state-building and governance across Africa, the study sought to contribute to the broader discourse on the implications of leadership and policy on regional development in the context of emerging African nations. Through a critical lens, it endeavoured to illuminate the enduring legacy of his rule on the socio-political fabric of East Cameroon, thereby enriching the scholarship on Cameroon's political history.

### **2.2. Research scope**

This study focused specifically on East Cameroon to investigate how France prepared and reinforced Ahidjo's political leadership in the region to safeguard its interests throughout Cameroon. By examining the historical dynamics of this context, the study aimed to illuminate the complexities involved in the interplay between colonial legacies, governance structures, and regional politics in post-independence Cameroon.

The factors contributing to his dominance in the federated state of East Cameroon are manifold, and they warrant thorough examination. To understand this dynamic fully, it is essential to first outline the historical context of East Cameroon during the French colonial period.

## **3. Brief presentation of the State of East Cameroon**

The defeat of German forces in Cameroon in 1916 by British and French troops led to the partitioning of the territory. The British portion was further subdivided into Northern and Southern Cameroon, while the larger share became French Cameroon. The French administered their portion through a direct governance system, led by a succession of commissioners and high commissioners, including notable figures such as Joseph Aymerich, Lucien Fourneau, and Pierre Messmer (Abwa, 2000). These officials played pivotal roles in shaping the political landscape of French Cameroon, which comprised eight regions: Centre, South, East, West, Littoral, Far North, North, and Adamawa. Initially functioning as a mandated territory from 1922 to 1945 and subsequently as a trusteeship until 1959, French Cameroon operated under a highly centralised governance system (Enyegue, 2008).

During this time, numerous waves of nationalism emerged, tracing back to the German colonial era. Nationalist sentiments gained momentum in cities like Douala, with figures such as Rudolf Manga Bell and Martin Paul Samba. The resistance to colonial rule continued under French control, illustrated by the Gbaya Resistance and the activism of Sultan Ibrahim Njoya, who ultimately faced exile in Yaoundé (Meyomesse, 2010). The formation of the Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC) in 1948 signalled a significant shift in political activism. Founded by Léonard Bouli and supported by stalwarts like Ruben Um Nyobe and Félix Roland Moumié, the UPC aimed to address the nationalistic aspirations of the Cameroonian populace. However, it quickly met resistance from the Bloc Démocratique Camerounais (BDC), a counterparty led by Aujoulat, which sought to undermine the UPC's reforms (Meyomesse, 2007).

French Cameroon achieved independence on January 1, 1960, establishing itself as the Republic of Cameroon. However, this independence came with considerable conditions resembling neo-colonial ties, symbolised by a set of agreements that retained French interests at the forefront (Eyinga, 1984). Meanwhile, British Southern Cameroon, led by Foncha, was preparing for independence and a potential reunification with the newly established Republic of Cameroon. The Foumban Conference of 1961 laid the groundwork for this union, establishing the terms for the federal structure that would subsequently emerge.

Following reunification on October 1, 1961, British Southern Cameroon rebranded itself as West Cameroon, while the Republic of Cameroon became East Cameroon. This classification was not merely nominal; it signified a continuation of the colonial legacy, as East Cameroon served as an extension of French Cameroon. Despite a change in political status, the geographic and administrative structures remained largely intact, marking a seamless transition without significant alterations, other than demographic growth.

Historically, France had vested interests in French Cameroon, employing indigenous figures as custodians of its imperial wealth. Ahidjo emerged as a principal beneficiary of this scheme, leveraging French support throughout his political career. This study seeks to investigate how France consistently secured and consolidated Ahidjo's power in French Cameroon, the Republic of Cameroon, and ultimately in the federated state of East Cameroon between 1961 and 1971.

### **3.1. Ahidjo's Political Ascent and Dominance in Former French Cameroon**

Amadou Babataura Ahidjo was born in 1922 in Garoua to a relatively obscure lineage, with a Malian merchant father of uncertain identity (Gaillard, 1994). His status as the son of an unknown father rendered him an outcast, subject to prejudices from the local feudal lords. This stigma posed a significant barrier that he had to navigate as he embarked on his political journey. The question arises: did he break these barriers independently, or did he rely extensively on French support? Evidence suggests that French colonial authorities played an instrumental role in facilitating his ascent to power.

Ahidjo's political career commenced at the tender age of 22 with the establishment of the Representative Assembly of Cameroon (ARCAM) in 1946, following the Brazzaville Conference, which sought increased political representation for indigenous populations. Recognised by the colonial administration for his potential as a reliable ally, he faced numerous obstacles in securing his position within ARCAM. However, the influence of French High Commissioner Robert Delavignette proved pivotal in Ahidjo's appointment. He was designated as representative

without electoral contest due to significant French backing, demonstrating the initial reliance on colonial support rather than popular endorsement (Meyomesse, 2010).

Following his term in ARCAM, which concluded in 1952, he transitioned to the Territorial Assembly (ATCAM) in 1952, aligning himself with the BDC under Aujoulat's leadership. Aujoulat, a staunch advocate for preserving French interests in Cameroon, forewarned against the notion of independence, highlighting the insubstantial resources and political readiness of the territory (Meyomesse, 2010). Despite fierce competition and political machinations within ATCAM, he cultivated alliances with colonial authorities, notably Guy Georgy, who allegedly manipulated electoral outcomes to ensure his victory (Deltombe et al., 2019). Thus, Ahidjo's political rise continued to be buoyed by the machinations of French colonialism.

Ahidjo's ascent culminated when he assumed the position of Vice Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior in André-Marie Mbida's government in 1957, thanks to the strategic endorsement of Pierre Messmer, the French High Commissioner. While initially benefitting from French favour, Mbida's increasingly radical stance and anti-colonial rhetoric alienated both French officials and local political factions. In response to Mbida's diminishing support, France deployed Jean-Paul Ramadier with the directive to replace him with Ahidjo. Ramadier's intervention was instrumental in facilitating a shift in power, culminating in Ahidjo's formal appointment as Prime Minister on February 18, 1958 (Mbembe, 1984).

As prime minister, he continued to grapple with dissent from UPC militants refusing to accept his governance model. He turned to French military resources to suppress opposition, notably orchestrating the assassination of UPC leader Ruben Um Nyobe on September 13, 1958 (Meyomesse, 2015). While Ahidjo was nominally celebrated as a national leader, many scholars contend that he did not possess a robust political agenda independently; rather, he often relied on the guidance of French authorities and their pre-existing frameworks to navigate the political landscape of Cameroon.

### **3.2. The February 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon**

Upon achieving independence, the newly established Republic of Cameroon, along with Ahidjo's leadership, created a constitution on February 21, 1960, which augmented executive powers significantly, resembling the constitutional structure of the French Republic under Charles de Gaulle. The constitution was ostensibly designed to secure French interests in the region, allowing him to maintain authority while serving as a willing accomplice in protecting French economic and political objectives (Meyomesse, 2010).

French officials, notably jurist René Journiac, contributed to the draughting of legislation that consolidated Ahidjo's power. His influence proved crucial in shaping the legal framework that ultimately allowed him to establish a regime characterised by authoritarian rule. The powers vested in Ahidjo were profound, reflected in Law No. 59-56 of October 31, 1959, which granted the government significant legislative authority under the guise of facilitating national governance (Guiffo, 1977).

### **3.3. The October 1, 1961, Federal Constitution**

With British Southern Cameroon on the verge of independence, the geopolitical manoeuvres became increasingly intricate. The British Southern Cameroon politicians remained divided regarding their future – some favoured reunification with French Cameroon while others considered integration with Nigeria (Awasom, 2002). In this precarious context, Ahidjo, guided by French advisors, developed a concealed proposal for a federal constitution that would preserve French interests and was only revealed at the Fouban Conference in

1961. This surprise move exploited divisions among Anglophone politicians and further solidified his authority (Fanso et al., 2014).

The resulting constitution reflected Ahidjo's objectives and ensured that he held significant executive powers, undermining the aspirations of British Southern Cameroon leaders (Percival, 2008). The draughting process was led by French legal experts, again underscoring the pervasive influence of colonial interests in Cameroon's governance framework (Ngoh, 2019). He emerged from this arrangement with considerable might, operating as a de facto king during the federal period, effectively curtailing the political autonomy of West Cameroon while simultaneously enshrining his dominance in the political landscape of East Cameroon.

#### **4. Ahidjo's Authority in East Cameroon and the 1961 Federal Constitution**

This section explored the extent of Ahmadou Ahidjo's influence in East Cameroon, particularly through the lens of the 1961 Federal Constitution. While it is widely acknowledged that French experts designed this constitution to preserve his power across both East and West Cameroon, a significant aspect of the analysis reveals his preoccupation with the Anglophone population, as opposed to the Francophones, who he had predominantly controlled since 1958, excluding the UPC and some independent nationalist contesters. This examination will assess the stark differences in how he exerted control over East Cameroon compared to West Cameroon, particularly regarding the autonomy afforded to each region. The analysis will demonstrate how the federal government, under his leadership, effectively absorbed East Cameroon with minimal resistance, contrasting sharply with the ongoing challenges faced in West Cameroon.

##### **4.1. The 1961 Federal Constitution: A Rubber Stamp for Control**

The 1961 Federal Constitution served as a slight yet significant modification of the 1960 constitution. In legal studies, a constitution is understood as the foundational framework governing a state's operations. For Cameroon, it became a tool through which France sought to safeguard its interests by enabling Ahidjo to maintain authority. As noted by scholars such as Richard Joseph (1986) and Philippe Gaillard (1994), the constitution essentially became a vehicle for Ahidjo to implement policies without operational hindrances. He leveraged this framework to solidify his dominance in what later became known as the federated state of East Cameroon, commencing from his initial rise to power in 1958.

In 1960, with the independence of French Cameroon, a new constitution was crafted that maintained the objective of preserving French interests while entrenched within a federal structure. This constitution was not genuinely new for East Cameroonians, as they had not previously engaged politically with French Cameroon during colonial rule. Scholars like Fombad (2015) argued that this constitution simply rehashed prior frameworks, presenting it as a federal assembly but in actuality maintaining centralised control comparable to the prior arrangements.

The structural contrast between the political apparatus of East Cameroon and that of West Cameroon was stark. The constitution governing East Cameroon consisted of only two chapters, focusing on legislative and executive powers, whereas West Cameroon's constitution included comprehensive provisions addressing legislative authority, executive frameworks, police powers, finance structures, and civil service regulation (Ndi, 2016). This stark difference illustrated that East Cameroon operated more as an extension of Ahidjo's prior authority than as a fully autonomous federated state. The limitations imposed by this sparse constitutional structure raised concerns about the viability of true governance in East Cameroon.

##### **4.2. Absence of Defined Territory and Governance Competence**

Another critical analysis point involves the lack of a clearly defined territory for exercising genuine competencies within East Cameroon. To disaggregate this point, one can examine two essential factors: the confusion of

stewardship and the shared capital structure for both the federal and East Cameroonian governments. The shared capital, Yaoundé, housed both the federal government and the East Cameroonian administration. The implications of this arrangement were profound; the governor of East Cameroon faced significant limitations as a result of hierarchical protocols stemming from the central government (Enonchong, 2021).

For instance, while both the governor of East Cameroon and the Centre region enjoyed the same nominal prerogatives, the practical authority of the East Cameroon governor was compromised by the proximity to Ahidjo's administration. In contrast, the Prime Minister of West Cameroon, who operated from Buea, had greater autonomy and influence over state governance (Ndi, 2016). Ahidjo's presence in Yaoundé rendered East Cameroon simply another extension of his authority, where he dictated government policies, limiting the Prime Minister's operational efficacy.

This scenario not only undermined the authority of the East Cameroonian administration but also illustrated the complete absorption of this federated state into Ahidjo's agenda. For instance, during his term, the challenges faced by local administrators often resulted in orders being issued directly from Yaoundé, diminishing their capacity to govern independently. This phenomenon was observed during local crises, where regional leaders lacked the mandate to initiate conflict resolution measures, compelling them to defer to his authority (Meyomesse, 2007).

#### **4.3. Legislative Limitations and Governance Constraints**

Both the federal and East Cameroon governments had their legislative bodies situated in Yaoundé; however, the dynamics of their operations were vastly different. The East Cameroonian legislature, despite being granted a semblance of authority through constitutional provisions, remained subservient to the federal government. Ahidjo's strategy effectively silenced dissenting voices within the legislative assembly, limiting its legislative capacity in crucial areas such as budget control and policy implementation (Ngoh, 2019). The residual influence of the French legal framework enabled any legislative actions contrary to his agenda to be obstructed. This structure was distinctly evident in West Cameroon, where substantial local autonomy permitted the prime minister and legislative assembly to wield greater power over governance matters, fostering a landscape where local interests could be articulated and defended more robustly (Monono, 2013).

For example, the political functioning of the West Cameroon legislature was characterised by influential figures such as Augustin Ngom Jua, whose leadership allowed for a more independent legislative environment compared to that of East Cameroon. The momentum generated by West Cameroon's legislative body often led to direct confrontations with Ahidjo's federal policies, cultivating a political arena where local challenges to authority could emerge, albeit with risk. Conversely, the continuity of French colonial influence in East Cameroon significantly stifled independent legislative decision-making, reinforcing Ahidjo's grip on governance (Deltombe et al., 2019).

#### **4.4. Conflict Resolution and Centralised Control**

Ahidjo's role as the sole arbiter of conflict resolution in both the federal and East Cameroon contexts further elucidates his consolidation of power. Tensions escalated with the UPC following a series of violent uprisings against French colonial rule, most notably the massacre in 1955 that was ordered by the colonial administration (Deltombe, 2019). Under his leadership, the UPC emerged as a significant political threat, and decisive actions against them exemplified the absolute authority he wielded in East Cameroon.

With key UPC leaders, notably Ruben Um Nyobe and Félix Moumie, eliminated by 1961, the atmosphere in East Cameroon became increasingly subdued, as Ahidjo and French officials sought to quell dissent especially in the Mounjo and in the Sanaga Maritime Divisions from 1961-1964 (Meyomesse, 2015). The apprehensive atmosphere created by the extermination of UPC leadership curtailed local challenges to authority, as the Prime

Minister of East Cameroon, Charles Assale, became increasingly marginalised in policy formulation and conflict resolution strategies. The absence of consultation with Assale regarding military campaigns against the UPC highlighted Ahidjo's disregard for proper governance protocols, further consolidating his unilateral power (Deltombe, 2019).

This dynamic contributes to a more profound understanding of how governance and conflict resolution in East Cameroon deviated drastically from practices in West Cameroon, where local leaders maintained greater authority and received respect in dealing with issues faced in their regions. The operational differences between Ahidjo's centralised governance and the more autonomous structure in West Cameroon fostered resentment, ultimately creating a rift between the two regions in subsequent decades.

#### **4.5. Non-Existent Autonomy in Finance, Security, and Resource Management**

Ahidjo effectively maintained comprehensive control over the finances and resources in East Cameroon, further solidifying his authority. The absence of an autonomous monetary system or security apparatus exemplified the lack of genuine governance autonomy. East Cameroon relied on the broader federal structures for critical administrative functions, while West Cameroon managed its regional resources through its financial systems, such as the West Cameroon Bank (Agboba, 1999).

This dependency on federal structures hampered East Cameroon's ability to exercise considerable autonomy, as all significant resource allocation decisions were mandated from Yaoundé, typically favouring federal interests. In situations where significant economic decisions were made, Ahidjo held the power to dictate terms with international partners, exacerbating the marginality of East Cameroonian leaders in the decision-making process (Koulibaly, 2005).

Reaffirming this centralised control was the continued reliance on French economic frameworks, as delineated in various treaties and cooperation agreements. For example, the terms dictated by the Franco-Cameroon agreement positioned France as a pivotal partner, further entrapping East Cameroon in a client-state dynamic (Verschave, 2003). His decision to exploit oil reserves in West Cameroon, for instance, necessitated cumbersome negotiations, a process for which this part of the country was not subject, as they retained a level of local influence over resource extraction contracts (Decraene, 1960).

#### **4.6. Ahidjo's Inviolable Dominance in East Cameroon**

His enduring dominance in East Cameroon resulted from a complex interplay of systemic governance structures that included constitutional modifications, legislative limitations, centralised control over conflicts, and direct intervention in regional politics. The analysis of these dynamics delineates a clear picture of how French interests and Ahidjo's overarching authority conflated to absorb East Cameroon fully into a framework of governance that closely resembled colonial rule. In contrast, West Cameroon maintained, albeit precariously, a semblance of autonomous governance capable of voicing regional concerns, thus highlighting the inadequacy of the East Cameroonian political structure.

### **5. Contribution of the study**

These findings contribute to existing discussions on post-colonial governance in Cameroon, revealing the implications of historical legacies and the persistent challenges faced in constructing a genuinely representative federation in a newly independent state. The insights gleaned underscore a momentous period in Cameroonian history, where the interplay between colonial legacies, national identities, and governance frameworks continues to echo in contemporary political discourse across the nation.

## 6. Conclusion

The examination of Ahmadou Ahidjo's impact on the federated state of East Cameroon from 1961 to 1971 revealed a multifaceted interplay of political, social, and economic dynamics that significantly shaped the region during this crucial decade. Through a meticulous analysis of key historical events and governance structures, it became evident that Ahidjo's leadership was characterized by pronounced centralization, strategic constitutional manipulation, and a deliberate obfuscation of the autonomous aspirations of East Cameroon's populace. Rather than fostering a truly federal structure that respected the inherent diversity of the nation, his policies served to reinforce a homogenous national identity aligned with French interests, thereby marginalizing the unique identities and voices of the East Cameroonian population.

The research highlighted how Ahidjo, supported by the legacies of colonial governance, maintained a firm grip on political authority through suppressive measures that quelled dissent and restricted democratic principles. By employing legislative frameworks, such as the 1961 Federal Constitution, largely drafted with French assistance, he consolidated power, rendering regional leaders in East Cameroon effectively subordinate to the central government. The constitutional structure dampened regional autonomy, with stark disparities between the powers afforded to East and West Cameroon, ultimately facilitating a governance model that echoed colonial centralism rather than post-colonial autonomy.

Moreover, his governance strategies extended beyond political repression to encompass economic control and resource allocation, as seen in his avoidance of regional resource exploitation unless it was politically expedient, thereby reinforcing the perception of East Cameroon as an extension of his national agenda. By monopolizing financial resources, legislative processes, and conflict resolution mechanisms, Ahidjo further entrenched his dominance, leaving East Cameroon politically and financially reliant on Yaoundé.

The findings of this research underscored the lasting repercussions of Ahidjo's centralization policies, illustrating a pattern of governance that stifled regional identity and autonomy, which have had enduring effects on East Cameroon's contemporary socio-political landscape. Thus, the legacy of his rule in East Cameroon serves as a critical lens through which to understand the complexities of post-colonial governance, regional marginalization, and the ongoing struggles for representation and autonomy in the face of enduring colonial legacies in Cameroon. In light of these findings, it becomes imperative for scholars and policymakers alike to engage with this historical context in order to address and rectify the socio-political imbalances that persist in the region today.

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