

Long-Term Social Effects of Colonisation on the Culture of the Colonised

Jean-Paul Kouega

ABSTRACT

The study set out to check what has become, years after decolonisation, of the long-term social features that were introduced at gun point into the culture of the colonised during the colonisation years. The data were collected via a 26-item questionnaire that focused on key cultural elements including food, body modification, dressing, language, religion, marriage, and naming. A total of 300 informants were contacted of whom 110 were male and 190 were females, with 170 educated in English and 130 in French. They were students majoring in English on the one hand, and science-oriented students specialising in mechanical, electrical, computer, insurance, and banking engineering and learning business English on the other hand. The analysis revealed that, for each cultural token tested, there was a tendency for the colonised to mimic the coloniser. Imported meals were eaten regularly, body lotions were produced by the coloniser, the wigs they wore were made with the coloniser's natural hair, clothes thrown away by the coloniser were bought, the coloniser's language was widespread, artificial nails resembling the coloniser's were gummed on the colonised fingers, the faith of the coloniser was adopted by some people, emphasis was put on church marriage by some people, polygamy was rejected by some people following the injunctions of their pastors, and names were taken from a repertoire drawn up by the coloniser. In short, several years after decolonisation, the social cultural features that the coloniser imposed at gun point on the colonised parents were joyfully adopted by the colonised, to the point that the latter spends huge sums of money to acquire these features that make him or her look like the coloniser.

Keywords: Body modification, Clothing colonisation, Culture, Food, Language, Religion.

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J. P. Kouega*

Department of English, University of Yaounde I, Cameroon.

(e-mail: jkouega@yahoo.co.uk)

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper sets out to examine long term effects of colonisation on the culture of the colonised. While previous researchers who tackled this issue focused on the economic and political impacts, the present work considers the long-term social impact. The study is guided by the following four research questions: (1) what are the universal cultural traits that the colonialist chose to change? (2) Before colonisation, how were these cultural traits operating in the colonised's community? (3) During colonisation, what changes were brought in and how were these changes implemented? (4) Close to a century after colonisation, what has become of these changed cultural traits? Answers to these questions will shed light on the development problems that the colonised are facing today and that need to be addressed for effective development to be achieved. The study is divided into three sections. Section One takes up the background to the study while Section Two presents the research design. Lastly, Section Three analyses the data and discusses the findings.

II. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

For several centuries, Africa has been a victim of Slave Trade on the one hand, and colonisation on the other. The practice of slavery predates the arrival of Europeans in Africa. In many African empires, especially Islamic ones, there were household slaves, agriculture slaves, army slaves, and palace slaves, to name only these (Iliffe, 1995). In some communities, they represented as many as 30% of the population. These slaves fell into three broad categories. Some were war captives caught during raiding expeditions conducted deep into the African continent. They were carted along the trans-Saharan caravan routes to destinations like Egypt and Libya. Another category included slaves given over in exchange for unpaid debts, while a third category was made up of children given as slaves to tribal chiefs by their parents. These

chiefs used their slaves; actually, owing slaves was a status symbol: the richer a family was, the more slaves this family had. In short, ancient African Slavery was a form of indentured servitude that integrated the slaves into the property and care of their owners; it was a mixture of debt recovery slavery, detention for wrong doings, war captives, neglect of children, and children born to slaves.

Transatlantic Slave Trade (Mazrui, 1969) started with the arrival of Europeans. They set up trading posts along the coast and slaves were brought to them by local buyers. In return for the slaves, these buyers were given printed cotton textile, utensils and bangles, pewter plates and pots, iron bars, hats, trinkets and jewels, and, most importantly, gun powder, firearms, and alcohol. The first people to be sold as slaves were prisoners, especially those serving a life sentence. As the demand for slaves increased, crimes which were previously punished for relatively short periods of detention were straightforwardly sanctioned by enslavement. When chieftains ran out of prisoners, they moved on to war captives: communities were raided and the captives sold as slaves. These slaves were then chained and taken to the coast, on foot. Many of them could not reach the coast as they died on the way because of various ailments: physical exhaustion, lack of food, lack of water, lack of clothing, and diseases like scurvy and dysentery, to name only these.

The slaves that made it to the coast remained chained for weeks or months till the arrival of the ships. During this time, those who died were thrown into the ocean. When the ships eventually arrived, these slaves were placed in rows in the holds, with their chains on, and they sat in that position till they reached the New World weeks or months later. Again, in the event of death, their corpses were carried and thrown overboard, into the ocean. It is reported that over the centuries, some 12 to 20 million slaves were taken from Africa by European slave traders, of whom some 15% died during the voyage. Those who made this arduous journey to America had survived various diseases, persistent malnutrition, poor hygienic conditions, numbness due to confined space, the screams of agonising neighbours in a row, and the painful trauma of the ship.

Regarding the colonisation process, it was generally divided into four stages of various durations. First, explorers visited an area and collected data on its potentials. Second soldiers and traders invaded the area, and settled on fertile land and mineral-rich area. Third, more traders and missionaries occupied the area, with soldiers crushing any resistance moves. Finally, they all embarked on the process of assimilation of the primitives, including teaching them the words of God (Pakenham, 1991). Annexation of territories was motivated by two major factors. First, acquiring land in various places in the world including Africa was viewed in Europe as a sign of power, wealth, and self-esteem: the more powerful a country was, the more territories in the world it would conquer. Secondly, the capital acquired from the Slave Trade facilitated the creation of industries. The industrialisation process brought up many changes in Europe including unemployment, poverty, homelessness, and displacement of people from rural to urban areas. It is evident that some people could not be absorbed by the capitalist industries. There was therefore a need to invade new land where surplus population could settle. Thirdly because of major social problems like unemployment and homelessness, Europeans had experienced a Christian revival. Missionaries endeavoured to bring spiritual salvation to people in need and to make the Bible available to workers. Their success in Europe pushed them to think of moving to the annexed land and preach the Gospel (Rodney, 1974; Abraham, 1987; Birmingham (1995). Within Africa, some factors facilitated the invasion process. First, hospitality caused the rapid annexation of land. According to the social commands of Africans transmitted orally from generation to generation, murder or unjustified killing of strangers is proscribed. In compliance with this command, Africans trusted any strangers who visited their land. It was when these strangers had killed a good number of them that they attempted to retaliate. Annexation of land could not have been so fast and so easy if the killing of human beings, especially strangers, was not proscribed in the African societies. Secondly, with the capital raised from the Slave Trade, Europeans invented and manufactured the Maxim machine gun. It was a gun which could fire as many as 11 bullets per second. No such weapon was available in Africa then. With this weapon, Europeans had no difficulty in crushing a high number of people before these people knew what was going on. Some localities, especially those rich in minerals, lost the whole of their populations. It is reported that when missionaries arrived in a community, they instructed the dwellers to line up and receive baptism. When they objected, they were killed one after the other till some of them agreed to be baptised. When no one agreed, genocide ensued, which was never reported nor accounted for. Initially, trade was carried out on the coast, with Europeans hardly moving inland because of the risks of contacting deadly tropical diseases. Thanks to technological advances, effective conquest of the African mainland was possible. Drugs were made to keep tropical diseases in check, the telegraph was used for communication, and ships and railways facilitated the transportation of goods. Resources like ivory, rubber, timber, palm oil, cocoa, diamonds, tea and tin were carted to Europe, which helped to keep the industries running. As Europeans started penetrating deeply inland, there was a need for guidelines to be established to avoid conflicts among them. The 1885 Berlin conference was organised, and countries were carved out of the map of Africa, with little concern over the people who lived in these territories. As a result, people having nothing in common were lumped together into one country, and well-organised communities fell into separate countries. In short, Africa gave the European powers all

they needed to be wealthy (Mahmood Mamdani, 1996). First, it gave them slaves whom they sold to raise the capital they needed to set up industries. Second, it gave them free raw materials to run these industries. Third, it gave them free labour to garner minerals and raw materials, and to build roads and railways for carting these materials away, as the African workers they employed received no wages. Next, it gave them soldiers to fight for them during the two wars, with no compensation for those who died or who survived with handicaps. Most importantly, it gave them weight during international bargaining.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

The instrument used was a 26-item questionnaire that focused on key cultural elements, i.e., food, body modification, dressing, language, religion, marriage, and naming, drawn from the taxonomy set up by Brown (1991). The informants were university students of various levels aged 20-30 years; some were married while others were not. They were contacted in five different towns and there was a close to equal proportion of francophone and anglophone subjects, but a higher proportion of women than men. Actually, when a woman was approached, she invited her friends - occasionally by phone - to join in, while men did not do this (see Table I).

TABLE I: INFORMANTS' GENDER AND LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

Informants (n=300)	Gender		Language of instruction	
	Male	Female	English	French
	110	190	170	130
	36.6%	63.3%	56.6%	43.3%

Regarding these informants' fields of specialisation, they were either language students majoring in English or science students (mechanical, electrical, computer engineering, and insurance and banking) taking business courses in English. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher in person, who was available for any clarification. For example, as the questions were written in English, some francophone subjects, who were encouraged to answer in English or French, needed to verify their understanding of certain words, like "wig" and "court marriage". On hearing the heated debate engaged in by students over some questionnaire items, some eight lecturers aged 30-40 became interested in the exercise, and they too filled in the questionnaire. As the researcher was physically present throughout the exercise, the 300 copies given out were all returned.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The data collected are analysed and the results are discussed here. The analysis is segmented into four sections labelled as follows: feeding and body lotions (A), hairstyle, dressing, and language (B), religion (C), marriage (D), and personal names (E). These are considered in turn.

A. Feeding and Body Lotions

In the pre-colonial days, the staple crops of Africans were maize, various traditional types of yams, potatoes, corn, and some varieties of bananas. All of these crops had names in indigenous languages. In the Fe'efe'e language spoken in Cameroon for example, words such as "lat", "kadii", "nkwele" and "to'kah" refer to species of bananas while "lua", "ku", "njwet" and "ku'ka" are species of yams and cocoyams. All of these crops were cooked with palm oil from palm tree nuts and meat from game, and from domestic animals like fowls, goats, sheep, and cattle. Besides, there were various types of beans and leafy vegetables, some of which were grown while others were gathered. Other sources of proteins were various species of insects and mushrooms. During the colonial years, "cassava" and other species of bananas were introduced alongside rice, processed foodstuffs, and wheat-based stuffs. Large plantations of the species of bananas the colonialists ate were created on seized fertile lands. Processed foodstuffs were served to unpaid labourers who were drawn from their homelands and taken to road and railway construction sites. Rice and wheat-based stuffs constituted the staple meals of the colonialists. With the departure of the colonialists, the colonised had two options: either adopt or get rid of what was alien to them, which is what this study set out to check.

The 300 informants of the study were asked (Q1) to indicate any three meals which were cooked in their houses regularly. A look at the three-item list of each informant revealed that it contained both local and imported meals, as shown in Table II.

TABLE II: FREQUENT MEALS COOKED/SERVED IN HOUSEHOLDS

Q1. Name the three meals which are regularly cooked/served in your family house?		
Meals (n=300)	Local	Imported
	180 (60%)	120 (40%)

Of the various meals cited by the 300 informants, 60% were local and 40% were imported. The local meals included plantain and vegetable, “fufu or corn paste and eru, a type of vegetable”, and corn “fufu” and groundnut soup. Regarding imported meals, they were mainly rice and wheat-based stuffs like bread, spaghetti, macaroni, and noodles. What is interesting here is that on each list, one or two imported meals were entered. It should be noted that colonised countries, especially francophone countries like Cameroon, are not allowed to grow wheat though they all have very good land for its growth. It is feared that African farmers would outperform European ones and therefore make them go bankrupt. European governments rather prefer to produce wheat and sell it in their former colonies. Besides, efforts to grow rice are thwarted, which causes imported rice to be cheaper than the home-grown one. Actually, home-grown rice is exported while rice sold in the colonised countries is imported. Lastly, these informants were asked (Q2) to comment on the imported foodstuffs they eat. These foodstuffs were said to be “easy to prepare”, “cheap”, and “easy to find” but “not fresh” and “not nutritious”.

Concerning body lotions, Africans had used creams extracted from various nuts: palm oil, kernel oil, shea butter, and many others, were available in all homes. During colonisation, imported creams were brought in, with most of them containing skin lightened components. What has been going on after colonisation has received little attention. Q3 of this study focused on the body lotions that the informants or their friends used. Some informants (especially men) said that they do not use lotions at all while most female informants entered two or more lotions. Those who used lotions (Table III) cited various tokens which can be grouped into two categories, i.e., local and imported.

TABLE III: BODY LOTIONS USED		
Q3. What body lotions do you or your friends rub?		
	Local	Imported
Body lotions (n=250)	80 (32%)	170 (68%)

The local lotions included coconut oil, palm oil, kernel oil, cocoa butter, and shea butter. The imported lotions cited came from various European and American countries. A look at a few of these imported lotions in a nearby market showed that a good number of them – the names of which need not be cited here – are skin-lightening products. Simply put, the sale of skin-lightening lotions and creams is a prosperous business in Cameroon, as a sizeable proportion of the population, especially female – seem to be changing the colour of their skin so that it becomes lighter or less dark. Put bluntly, they want their skin to look like that of European women. Rich women find rubbing creams and lotions for skin lightening demanding and time-consuming; to speed up the process they take injections that lighten the body in one go and for a longer period of time. These injections are chemical products designed to treat known sicknesses and that are diverted for skin lightening. The health consequences of the misuse of these products in cosmetics are numerous: kidney troubles, hypertension, diabetes, skin cancer, glaucoma, cataract, and difficulty for the skin to be stitched during surgical operations are some of the consequences frequently mentioned. That is the extent to which colonised women can go in order to resemble the colonisers and, therefore, to feel that they are beautiful.

B. Hairstyle, Dressing and Language

The most common hairstyle in Africa was hair plaiting. Women skilfully plaited their mates’ hair, craftily developing various styles. Such creams as coconut oil, shea butter, neem, and kernel oil were used to smoothen their hair and prevent dandruffs. During colonisation, various products were introduced. Women were encouraged to use quicklime to straighten their hair, thus making it less frizzy and more like European women’s hair. As a result, the sale of this product and similar ones flourished. As far as dressing is concerned, Africans wore clothes made out of banana tree barks, sisal, and other plants. Europeans brought in cotton-made clothes, which rapidly replaced traditional clothes. Regarding languages, each community had a common language which served all communication purposes. The bulk of these indigenous languages were transmitted orally, as they were not converted to writing. After colonisation, several changes took place but were not quantified.

Considering hairstyle, informants were asked (Q4) to indicate the various types they wore. They cited “pass mesh”, braids, rasta, pony tail, and wig. This was followed by another question (Q5) asking them to cite the local hairstyles they wore, even occasionally. A few informants mentioned “long-long”, “bakala” or corn rows, “motobo”, and “ndomo ndomo”. A high proportion of informants skipped the latter question, which reflects a hidden fact: many Cameroonian women, like many other women in colonised countries, have abandoned their traditional hairstyles. They do their hair in hair saloons using exactly the same

products as women in European countries. The use of wigs has become popular; they are made out of the natural hair of people living in Europe, Brazil, Peru, and China. These natural hair wigs are so expensive that only middle- or high-class women can afford to buy them. Lower middle class and lower-class women manage with artificial wigs made in China. Today very few women in colonised countries move about with their natural hair; they cherish long hair that fall off like European women's hair. The same goes for nails. The informants were asked (Q6) whether they or their friends wore artificial nails and a high proportion said they did, as shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV: WEARING OF ARTIFICIAL NAILS

Q6. Do you or your friends wear artificial nails,
even occasionally?

Artificial nails (n=280)	Yes	No
	252 (90%)	28 (10%)

Actually, women wear artificial nails when going on an outing. These products are gummed on their natural nails, which increases the length of these nails. They believe that having long nails like those of European women makes them more beautiful. In the shops where these fake nails are fitted, these women also buy fake eyebrows, fake eyelids and wigs. Strangely enough, they also receive injections to make their breasts bigger and more roundish, and their buttocks larger. Such shops abound in all neighbourhood market places, even in rural localities.

Asked (Q7) whether they buy second-hand products and objects imported from Europe, these informants all agreed. They were then called upon (Q8) to indicate which of a number of items their friends usually bought. It turned out that all the informants or their friends usually buy breast wears, dresses, jewellery, pants, shirts, shoes, and wigs. Actually, in all marketplaces, there are retailers who handle such goods. It is reported that these second-hand materials are of better quality than the new ones from China. Furthermore, the informants were asked (Q9) to name the traditional items of clothing that their friends usually wore. They mentioned a few items of clothing that do exist, but that they do not wear regularly. These include: "beads", "African wear", "toghu", "gandoura", "sanje", "ndop", "raphia", "Ankara", and "wax". In short, Africans are the only people on earth that wear used clothes thrown away in Europe.

Turning now to language use, four questions were set. First, the informants were asked (Q10) whether their friends spoke their mother-tongue or any Cameroonian language and the answer was yes. They were further asked (Q11) if their children or their brothers communicated in a Cameroonian language and the answer was positive. They were further asked to indicate the common language they used when they converse with their children or brothers (Q12) and when their friends converse with their children and brothers (Q13). Two combinations of four languages, i.e., English, French, Pidgin, and Camfranglais were listed. Anglophone informants entered in order English, Pidgin and French and francophone informants entered French, Camfranglais, and English. Actually, French is one of the two official languages of Cameroon and the medium of instruction of francophones; English on the other hand, is the other official language of the country and the medium of instruction of Anglophone informants. Pidgin is a lingua franca that is widespread among Anglophones in Cameroon (Kouega, 2015) while Camfranglais is a created language commonly used by francophone youngsters (Kouega, 2013). As can be seen, these language combinations do not include indigenous languages, which are being neglected in many colonised countries.

C. Religion

Africans believed in one Almighty Supreme Being who is very far away from them and yet lives with them. This Supreme Being who is the Creator of the universe, was believed to have four major attributes, i.e., omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and benevolence. This God needed to be worshipped and worship usually took various forms including sacrifices, offerings, prayers, invocations, blessing, salutations, and intercessions. God was believed to be such a powerful being that one could not dare to address him personally or directly. The services of an intercessor were needed, and this intercessor was the ancestors of the living people. Africans spoke to their ancestors who knew them very well, who were believed to know God more than they did; they believed these ancestors knew how to pass on their pleas to the Almighty Being in the most acceptable way. That is why there was usually a specific place in a compound where people communicated with their ancestors for onward transmission of the message to God. This place was usually a very quiet setting like a cave, a remote hut, a mountain, a shrine, a river bank, a waterfall, or even a big tree. There was usually an altar, a small spot where sacrifices and offerings were made. When a person was desperate, he could require the mediation or assistance of a diviner or a seer, who would help him to pass on his prayers and requests to God through the person's ancestors. Africans knew that there were a number of wrong doings that had to be avoided by all means. These included, amongst others: murder, adultery, stealing, false accusations, greed or desire to seize someone else's property. They also knew that respect for one's parents and for elders was mandatory. That is what obtained before colonisation.

When the missionaries arrived, they were welcomed, following the traditional command that one should not kill a human being, especially a stranger. They settled and brought in a completely different conception of God, which subsumes three entities: The Father (God himself), the Son (Jesus-Christ), and lastly the Holy Spirit. This was rather confusing for someone who knew that there was only one God. Next, they brought in the Bible, which was referred to as the Words of God; it centred on issues like the virgin birth of Jesus-Christ, the life of Jesus, the death of Jesus on the Cross, the resurrection of Christ and the Easter Feast, the Second coming of Christ, baptism, and communion. While meat was not to be eaten in Easter, it was to be served plentifully at Christmas. Next to this was the decision to make baptism obligatory; anybody who resisted was killed. Entire communities were wiped out, especially those which were rich in minerals like gold. Overpowered, the few people left agreed to be baptised and to go to church as mandated. They were given Christian names and were lectured on religious issues like life after death, salvation, hell fire, purgatory, life in heaven, demonic issues like idolatry and ancestor worship, and societal issues like marriage, childbearing, and, most importantly, the values of submission, obedience, and poverty. They were told that worshipping any god other than Jesus-Christ was idolatry, and various biblical references were used to back up their points, like the following:

Exodus 20.4–5

4 Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth.

5 Do not bow down to any idol or worship it, because I am the LORD your God and I tolerate no rivals. I bring punishment on those who hate me and on their descendants down to the third and fourth generation.

Leviticus 26, 1

1 The LORD said, Do not make idols or set up statues, stone pillars, or carved stones to worship. I am the LORD your God.

Numbers 33.50-53

50 There in the plains of Moab across the Jordan from Jericho the LORD gave Moses

51 the following instructions for Israel: When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan,

52 you must drive out all the inhabitants of the land. Destroy all their stone and metal idols and all their places of worship.

53 Occupy the land and settle in it, because I am giving it to you.

Deuteronomy 7.23-26

23 The LORD will put your enemies in your power and make them panic until they are destroyed.

24 He will put their kings in your power. You will kill them, and they will be forgotten. No one will be able to stop you; you will destroy everyone.

25 Burn their idols. Do not desire the silver or gold that is on them, and do not take it for yourselves. If you do, that will be fatal, because the LORD hates idolatry.

26 Do not bring any of these idols into your homes, or the same curse will be on you that is on them. You must hate and despise these idols, because they are under the LORD's curse.

It was observed a stark contradiction between the words of the Bible in Exodus (20.4-5) and the practices of the missionaries, who used to sell the statues of Jesus-Christ on the Cross, Mary, Joseph, and various angels. Following Numbers (33, 50-53), thousands of villages were razed and tens of thousands of people were killed by the missionaries and the colonial armies. In Deuteronomy (7, 23-26), the Lord recommends the burning of idols and warns against the stealing of the silver or gold on them. These idols girded by silver and gold were taken away and are still exhibited in museums throughout Europe today.

This propensity for looting and plundering seems to give credit to the substance of an apparently fake 1883 letter from King Leopold II of Belgium to his colonial missionaries. Though seemingly fake, this letter discloses factual and verifiable information, i.e., the true mission of evangelists in Africa was not evangelisation but rather exploitation and predation of mineral resources in the name of Jesus-Christ:

“Reverends, Fathers and Dear Compatriots: The task that is given to fulfil is very delicate and requires much tact. You will go certainly to evangelize, but your evangelization must inspire above all Belgium interests. Your principal objective in our mission in the Congo is never to teach the niggers to know God, this they know already. They speak and submit to a Mungu, one Nzambi, one Nzakomba, and what else I don't know. They know that to kill, to sleep with someone else's wife, to lie and to insult is bad. Have courage to admit it; you are not going to teach them what they know already. Your essential role is to facilitate the

task of administrators and industrials, which means you will go to interpret the gospel in the way it will be the best to protect your interests in that part of the world. For these things, you have to keep watch on disinteresting our savages from the richness that is plenty [in their underground. To avoid that they get interested in it, and make you murderous] competition and dream one day to overthrow you...

(Source: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200510060035.html>)

In short, during the colonial years, Africans who knew God far better than the missionaries, were taught the Gospel or were killed when they objected. They were taught how to be submissive and obedient to the colonisers and were lectured on how poor people on earth would be happy in the kingdom of God when they die.

Three questionnaire items were set to examine the outcome of the evangelisation process the colonised went through. The first question (Q14) checked the frequency of the informants' worship of God in church (Table V).

TABLE V: FREQUENCY OF THE INFORMANTS' WORSHIPPING OF GOD IN CHURCH

Q14. Frequency of the informants' worshipping of God in church			
	Always	Occasionally	Never
Worship in church (n=300)	96 (32%)	84 (28%)	120 (40%)

Of the 300 informants, 40% said that they "never" worshipped God in church; these are non-believers or "pagans". On the other hand, 32% said they "always" did so; these are believers in Christ. These believers are fervent Christians while non-believers are in fact fervent animists. In-between these two extremes are 28% of the informants, who obviously practise Christianity on Sundays and other religions on weekdays.

The second question (Q15) checked the frequency of the informants' worshipping of God as their ancestors used to do (Table VI).

TABLE VI: FREQUENCY OF THE INFORMANTS' WORSHIPPING OF GOD IN THE TRADITIONAL WAY

Q15. Frequency of the informants' worshipping of God as their ancestors used to do			
	Always	Occasionally	Never
Worship of God in the traditional way (n=300)	120 (40%)	84 (28%)	96 (32%)

It was found that 40% of 300 informants always practised God worship through their ancestors while 32% practised God worship through Jesus-Christ. In-between are 28% of the informants who engaged in the two practices.

Lastly, the informants were asked (Q16) to indicate what their friends thought about worshipping God the way their ancestors used to do. The result is presented in Table VII.

TABLE VII: COMMENTS OF THE INFORMANTS' FRIENDS ON TRADITIONAL WORSHIP OF GOD

Q16. What do your friends think about worshipping God the way their ancestors used to do		
Ancestral method of worshipping God (n=298)	Positive comments	Negative comments
	200 (67.1%)	98 (32.8%)

Some 67.1% of 298 informants made positive comments on ancestral worship of God, with some of them wondering why it was practised only in rural areas and hardly in big towns where they lived. On the other hand, 32.8% of these informants made very serious negative comments on the issue. Here is a selection of their comments:

- witchcraft, idolatry, abomination, idol worshipping, animism, human sacrifice, blaspheme, evil, waste of time;
- barbaric, outdated, old-fashioned, primitive, diabolical, ungodly, superstitious, satanic, very bad;
- go to hell;
- some implicate rituals which are sometimes evil.

D. Marriage

In Sub-Sahara Africa, marriage used to be as a union that binds not two individuals of different sexes, but two members of two distinct families; in other words, it is two families that united, not only two individuals of different sexes. As Abraham (1987: 22) rightly pointed out, "marriage in African tradition is the joining of two families through the union of one man and one woman and their children, always to the exclusion of all other men as regards the woman, and in monogamous societies, to the exclusion of all other women as regards the man." As Ogoma (2014) and Bamidele (2020) noted, the marriage process is

generally broken into four stages: the introduction stage (during which some members of the family of the suitor meets some members of the family of the bride), the family requirements stage (during which the two families discuss what should be given), the choosing-a-date stage (during which the two families agree on a specific day after consultation with the ancestors and the living members), the bride price payment and handing over of the bride stage (during which the items listed during the family requirement stage are handed over and in return, the girl is given not to the suitor, but to the representative of his family).

During colonisation, missionaries taught the natives what marriage was. It was not a union between close relations (Leviticus 18:6) and same-sex marriage was strictly forbidden (Leviticus 18:22). Neither was it a union between a believer and an unbeliever accepted (2 Cor 6:14-15); only a union between believers could be accepted (1 Cor 7:39). In short, marriage was a union between two believers of different sexes.

Leviticus 18:6, 22

6 The LORD gave the following regulations. Do not have sexual intercourse with any of your relatives... 22 No man is to have sexual relations with another man; God hates that.

2 Corinthians 6: 14-16

14 Do not try to work together as equals with unbelievers, for it cannot be done. How can right and wrong be partners? How can light and darkness live together?

15 How can Christ and the Devil agree? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

16 How can God's temple come to terms with pagan idols? For we are the temple of the living God!

1 Corinthians 7:39

39 A married woman is not free as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, then she is free to be married to any man she wishes, but only if he is a Christian.

Genesis 2:24

24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one.

Marriage was therefore a union between one man and one woman who together become one flesh, as indicated in Genesis (2:24). In short, it was a covenant, a legally binding agreement between two individuals who were of different sexes and were believers. This was in stark contradiction with traditional marriage, which united two families and not two individuals, irrespective of whether they were believers or not.

After the colonial period, various governments had their own perception of marriage. It was a union between two individuals, with the bride being at least 18 years and the groom 21 years and with the two parties being sound, sane, and not suffering from any mental disorder. This again contradicted traditional marriage, which viewed marriage as a union between two families through their children.

In this study, a total of eight questions were set to examine various aspects of marriage in postcolonial days. Q17 asked the informants whether they got married in court or would get married there and they all approved. Q18 asked them whether they got married in church or would get married there and some 30% of 300 informants said yes. They were also asked whether they got married traditionally and some 80% of the informants who responded said yes. These informants were then asked to comment on each of these three types of marriage. First, Q20 took up traditional marriage, which binds two distinct families and not two individuals. The informants were required to comment on this type of marriage, and they provided both positive and negative comments as shown in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII: COMMENTS ON TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

Q20. What comments can you make on traditional marriage		
Traditional marriage (n=297)	Positive comments	Negative comments
	247 (83.1%)	50 (16.8%)

Positive comments were made by 83.2% of 297 informants, with words and expressions like the following:

- it gives ancestral blessing;
- gives value to the culture and tradition;
- parental and ancestral blessing;
- keeps cultural values;
- it is important and it is a must in my tribe;
- indispensable and necessary;
- commune with ancestors;
- ancestors bless the couple.

On the other hand, 16.8% of these informants made negative comments, like the following:

- it is funny;
- costly, looks more like business;
- selling of their daughters.

Secondly, Q21 considered church marriage, which is understood as the union of two baptised Christian individuals who are already married in court under the matrimonial dispensation of monogamy. In other words, church marriage follows court marriage, with traditional marriage being overlooked. The results are displayed in Table IX.

TABLE IX: COMMENTS ON CHURCH MARRIAGE		
Q20. What comments can you make on church marriage		
church marriage (n=200)	Positive comments	Negative comments
	149 (74.5%)	51 (25.5%)

Only 200 respondents answered this question, with 149 making positive comments (74.5%), like:

- ordained by God and blessed by God;
- obtaining blessings from God, taking Christian vows;
- blessing;
- it blesses your union in the presence of God;
- it is prestigious;
- symbolic;
- it binds the couple in the eye of God.

Conversely, 25.5% made negative comments, a sample of which includes:

- it is important for Christians;
- good if you want to show off.

Thirdly, Q22 dealt with court marriage, which in Cameroon, is a union celebrated officially by a mayor in a town council with a marriage certificate issued and signed by the spouses, their witnesses, and the mayor. The only requirements here are that the man should be at least 18 years old and the woman, 15 years and each of them must have a witness aged 21 and above. Needless to say no reference is made to traditional or church marriage. Most of the informants made positive comments on this form of marriage, like the following:

- a way of legalising courtship;
- legal manner to secure property;
- legal binding;
- secures property;
- lays down the terms of the marriage.

However, there was a negative comment that came up like a leitmotiv, i.e., court marriage is a “contract that can be cancelled any time” whereas traditional marriage cannot be cancelled.

Q23 dealt with one detail of court marriage, i.e., polygamy. In Cameroon, the marriage certificate form includes a slot referred to as “type of prenuptial settlement” which must be filled in with the word polygamy or monogamy. The couple must agree on the one or the other option for the marriage ceremony to be completed. Polygamy, as the mayors officiating marriage ceremonies explain, is the practice in which one man marries two or more wives and lives with them in the same house or different residences. This common practice in precolonial days was forbidden during colonisation. A polygamous marriage is not celebrated in church, even though the Bible does not seem to forbid it. The informants were asked to comment on this practice, and they made both positive and negative comments as shown in Table X.

TABLE X: COMMENTS ON POLYGAMY				
Q20. What comments can you make on polygamy				
Polygamy (n=300)	Positive comments		Negative comments	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
	110 (36.6%)	100 (33.3%)	-	90 (30%)
Total	210 (70%)		90 (30%)	

Positive comments on polygamy were made by 70% of 300 informants while 30% made negative ones. Furthermore, all men (100% of 110 in the pool) made positive comments and so did the majority of women (52.6% of 190 in the pool). As expected, all negative comments came from women. Here is a sample of the positive comments:

- very sexy for women;
- a kind of marriage that helps;
- there are too many women;
- all women have a right to a husband;

- it reduces prostitution.

Here are a few negative comments made:

- not godly, bad and shameful, outdated, horrible, catastrophic, stressful;
- discrimination, disunity, trouble, hell on earth, stupidity;
- I hate it;
- a type of insecure relationship;
- it brings confusion and disunity in most marriages;
- causes so many problems;
- household hostility;
- leads to witchcraft and jealousy;
- even the Bible condemns it.

Q24 took up monogamy which is the other option contrasting with polygamy. It is the practice in which one man marries one and only one wife. The informants were asked to comment on this practice and they made both positive and negative comments as shown in Table XI.

TABLE XI: COMMENTS ON MONOGAMY				
Q20. What comments can you make on monogamy				
Monogamy (n=300)	Positive comments		Negative comments	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
	-	90	110 (36.6%)	100 (33.3%)
Total	90 (30%)		210 (70%)	

As many as 70% of 300 informants made negative comments on monogamy while some 30% made positive ones. Furthermore, all men (100% of 110 in the pool) made negative comments and so did the majority of women (52.6% of 190 in the pool). As expected, all positive comments came from women. Here is a sample of the positive comments:

- very profitable;
- best marriage ever;
- it brings unity and understanding;
- I love it;
- very good;
- ideal form of marriage;
- nice marriage system;
- it is biblical;
- a good ideology to uphold;
- it should be encouraged;
- good because you enjoy your husband alone;
- a man will quit his father/mother and will attach to a woman not WOMEN;
- peaceful, beautiful, good and excellent, trustworthy, modern;
- best form of marriage both in the eyes of Man and God.

Here are a few negative comments made:

- good but it restricts some women from getting married, which leads to prostitution, snatching of husbands, divorce and so on;
- it is difficult to find a man with a single woman in life.

E. Personal Names

The colonized used to be given African names. When the colonizers arrived, they brought in Biblical names. All citizens were to have both African and Christian names. Any community that opposed this practice was exterminated in the name of the Lord. Baptism in the name of Jesus-Christ was compulsory and it is during baptism that Christian names were added to people's names. The number of people who were killed because they refused to be baptized was not recorded anywhere; however oral tales report that some villages lost as many as three-quarters of their population. Scared, the few traumatized people left yielded to baptism and were given Biblical names such as Peter, John, and Mary. In the process, words which were hardly used as names in Europe like Sixtus and Donatus were given to Africans. To reinforce this practice, colonial administrators created a slot in all official documents like birth certificates where forenames had to be filled in; people without forenames had to be baptised to get these official documents. With time, young Africans grew up with the knowledge that their names sequence comprised two elements, i.e., an African name like "Metuge", followed by a Christian name like "John", which surfaces as "Metuge John". When the colonizers left, younger generations of Africans, who knew very little of the trauma their parents went through, continued the practice, even though the risk of being killed was limited. The question at issue in this study is to check what has changed after several years after colonization.

The informants contacted were asked (Q25) whether their friends gave forenames to their children, a

forename in Africa being a name that follows a surname in structure.

TABLE XII: GIVING FORENAMES TO THEIR CHILDREN		
Q25. Do your friends give their children first names or forenames? Give one example of such forenames??		
Giving forenames	Yes	No
(n=300)	300 (100%)	-

As Table XII shows, all the informants' friends (100%) are reported to give forenames to their children, as in the colonial days. The example forenames they provided include "Jean", "Martin", and "Joseph" which are forenames in Europe, as well as "Bonaparte", "Pompidou", which are European surnames used as forenames in Africa. Today, children without forenames are denigrated by their mates in school and by people in public places where names are read aloud. For example, the name "Ngono Ateba" is read aloud as "Ngono Ateba without forename" to distinguish this person from another person who may be called "Ngono Ateba Martin".

Asked where these forenames came from (Q26), the informants cited the Bible first and, in addition, they mentioned history books, the calendar, European movies and stories, the internet, and television channels. In short, a practice that was put in place during the colonial days has been maintained by postcolonial people and their governments. However, a slight change is observed: while the Bible used to be the lone source of forenames in Africa, today, with the development of technology, other sources like the TV and movies are exploited.

V. CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to highlight some of the effects of colonisation on the social development of the colonised. A total of 300 informants filled in a questionnaire which enquired about some aspects of the cultural practices of the colonised after the departure of the coloniser. The cultural features considered included food items, body lotions, hairstyles, fingernails, items of clothing, language, religion, marriage, and personal names. It was found that the coloniser altered these cultural features when they arrived and that the changes, they brought in survived and even intensified several tens of years after the coloniser's departure. In some cases, the colonised goes so far as to reject most of his or her original identity which he or she regards as primitive and uncivilized. To regain its freedom, the colonised has no option but to do away with these foreign cultural features, which are there to remind him of his gloomy encounter with the coloniser. For present-day Africans to talk of development, they have to drop the superfluous ideas that the coloniser inculcated at gun point into their parents' heads and that they are still following blindly, at times at the expense of their health. Future investigation into this issue should consider at least two sociolinguistic parameters, i.e., the informants' cultural background and religion. It was noticed that while Christian informants abhorred polygamy, Muslim ones tended to have a positive attitude to it. On the other hand, both Christian and Muslim informants tended to have a negative attitude to traditional worship of the Supreme Being, while informants who were Animists and non-believers tended to look up to it.

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