

Intellectual Housewives, Journalism, and Anglophone Nationalism in Cameroon, 1961–1972

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ABSTRACT This article argues that female journalists used their advice columns in the West Cameroon State to maintain Anglophone Cameroonian cultural identity and unity from 1961 to 1972. As public intellectuals, they sought to regulate women's behaviors in order to preserve and redefine ideas of Anglophone Cameroonian political identity as well as concepts about gender norms and cultural values. From this position, they urged women to follow what they deemed suitable African cultural values and to join women's organizations. At the same time, they endeavored to protect what they imagined as a unified Anglophone cultural identity within a hegemonic Francophone republic. By applauding the activities of female political elites, they directly advocated for Anglophone Cameroonian political identity and autonomy. Yet through all of this they emphasized they were mere housewives, strategically suppressing their roles as public intellectuals and thereby making themselves less politically threatening to their readers, communities, and the patriarchal state.

RÉSUMÉ Cet article soutient que les femmes journalistes utilisaient leurs rubriques de conseils dans l'Etat du Cameroun de l'ouest pour maintenir l'identité culturelle et l'unité anglo-camerounaise de 1961 à 1972. En tant qu'intellectuelles, elles cherchaient à réguler le comportement des femmes afin de préserver

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et redéfinir les idées sous-tendant l'identité politique anglo-camerounaise, ainsi que les concepts concernant les normes relatives aux sexes et les valeurs culturelles. Depuis cette position, elles exhortaient les femmes à suivre les valeurs culturelles africaines qu'elles jugeaient convenables, et à joindre des associations de femmes. En même temps, elle oeuvraient pour protéger une identité culturelle anglophone qu'elle concevaient comme unifiée à l'intérieur même d'une république francophone hégémonique. En acclamant les activités des élites politiques féminines, elles revendiquaient directement l'identité politique et l'autonomie anglo-camerounaise. Cependant, malgré tout cela, elles se présentaient comme de simples femmes au foyer, dissimulant de manière stratégique leur rôle d'intellectuelles pour se présenter comme moins menaçantes, politiquement parlant, vis-à-vis de leur lecteurs, de leurs communautés, et de l'état patriarcal.

“Women have tried from time to time to form groups. Such groups have always ended up in quarrels and fighting as a result of one woman gossiping. . . . Call the next meeting after that and only the president and secretary will attend,” runs a May 1964 column in the *Cameroon Times* by West Cameroonian journalist Ruff Wanzie.¹ She lamented the disintegration of her country's women's sociopolitical organizations and blamed gossip and idleness, saying it reduced members to frivolity and flippancy, neglectful of proper morals and nationalist duties. These societies were nominally social, but they had strong political ties, and prominent politicians' wives held leadership positions. “These various groups at last fail to live up to which their society was formed,” Wanzie further proclaims. She contrasted the weakening West Cameroonian societies with the strength of a Sierra Leonean women's secret society: “The women of Sierra Leone [in] ‘The Bondo Society’ . . . hold fast that people should concern themselves with only what concerns them. They have actually run this society up to date without any aid from men.”² She described the Bondo Society as successful in petitioning the government, unlike its West Cameroonian counterparts.

Wanzie was one of several female journalists who wrote women's advice columns in English-language newspapers in the federated state of West Cameroon during the 1960s and early 1970s. These journalists emphasized that they were “simple housewives” and often went by a familial term such as “aunty,” “cousin,” or “sister.” However, most had formal schooling and many worked as civil servants for the Southern British Cameroons government and later the West Cameroon government. The advice they offered on social etiquette, marriage, and cookery really amounted to instructions designed for upper-middle-class women about their appropriate social, domestic, and nationalist conduct.

Journalists like Wanzie used their acute awareness of sociopolitical conditions in other Anglophonic African and European countries to challenge or reaffirm

preexisting ideologies about gender norms, political identity, and cultural values in the West Cameroon State. The idea that gossip and idleness both undermined West Cameroonian unity was a common theme. Columnists underlined the discursive arenas in which they struggled to regulate women's behavior and to shape ideas about sociopolitical identity and unity among urban elites in Anglophone Cameroon. In this environment, Wanzie's statement that women's gossip weakened her country's women's sociopolitical organizations constitutes more than moralistic censure. She understood that gossip weakened loyalty within the group and fostered poor morale, and could undermine the political power of women's organizations.

This article argues that although female journalists like Ruff Wanzie largely constructed their columns as extensions of the private sphere focused on domestic issues, they took as their project nothing less than maintaining Anglophone cultural identity and unity.³ As such, they emphasized Anglophone Cameroonian separatism within a Francophone-dominated republic. Most of these women had formal political affiliations and were Christians, reflecting the efforts of various Christian missions—such as the Basel Mission and the American Presbyterian Mission—during the British rule.⁴ As public intellectuals, they sought to preserve and redefine West Cameroonian political identity and unity, as well as actively shape ideas about gender norms and cultural values by regulating the behavior of their counterparts between 1961 and 1972. They urged women to follow what they believed to be traditional African cultural values. They also pressed elite women to join women's organizations so as to, in the words of Ruff Wanzie in 1964, “move hand-in-hand with the men to build a successful and well-to-do nation.”⁵ By applauding the activities of West Cameroon's few female politicians and the wives of political heavyweights, and occasionally featuring guest editorials written by such women, they also advocated for West Cameroonian political identity and autonomy. Yet through all of this, they emphasized that they were mere housewives, making themselves less politically threatening to their readers, communities, and the patriarchal state. They carved spaces of sociopolitical power by making social commentaries with strong political undertones, thus contributing to nation-building processes. As this article will show, women, like men, simultaneously overtly and implicitly, shaped political organizations and ideas in early postcolonial Anglophone regions of Cameroon.

Columnists like Wanzie were trying to prevent what ultimately happened: the loss of the West Cameroon State's autonomy in 1972. Anglophone regions of Cameroon were the former British Southern Cameroons, which Britain governed from 1922 until independence in 1961 (the French ruled French Cameroon until 1960).⁶ It was politically a part of Nigeria until 1954, when the British government gave the Southern Cameroons an autonomous House of Assembly in Buea, the capital of the Southern Cameroons from 1949 until 1961 and the capital of the West

Cameroon State until 1972. In 1961, the Southern Cameroons became a part of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, which consisted of two sociopolitically autonomous states—the West (Anglophone) Cameroon State and the East (Francophone) Cameroon State.⁷ Each state had an executive and a bicameral legislature, and West Cameroon had independent (although heavily government-influenced) press, which East Cameroon mostly lacked. The legacy of the joint legislature with Nigeria remained and most West Cameroonian elites had been educated in Nigeria because there were few institutes of higher learning in West Cameroon.

Throughout the federal period, the hegemonic East Cameroon State exercised French policies inherited under the French Mandate, which the Anglophone urban elite perceived as a threat to their political and cultural identity. As some scholars have asserted, the federal republic was in a sense a decentralized unitary state pervaded by policies inherited from French rule.⁸ For instance, West Cameroonians had to drive on the right-hand side of the road in conformity with the practice then in existence in East Cameroon in 1962. In 1964, the federal government forced West Cameroon to replace the imperial system of weights and measures with the metric system.⁹ Anglophone Cameroonian elites imagined other communities of belonging because of their sense of exclusion.¹⁰ In this context, West Cameroonian female journalists used their advice columns as a key forum from which to shape ideas about gendered citizenry and a unified, distinct Anglophone Cameroonian culture.

In examining advice columns such as Wanzie's, this article joins other scholarly work that has highlighted newspaper content as an important historical source regarding colonial and postcolonial Africa.¹¹ For instance, scholars of Anglophone Cameroonian history have underlined the social and political importance of the popular satirical columnist Patrick Tataw Obenson, a daring journalist who exposed social, economic, and political problems and criticized the highest governing authorities throughout the 1960s and 1970s.¹² However, few scholars have given equivalent attention to the nationalist role of women journalists in a period of rising nationalism throughout West Africa. The case of Anglophone Cameroonian female journalists complicates traditional scholarship on intellectual history by illuminating the legacy of dual colonial rule in Cameroon and its influence on contesting ideas about nationalism and political identity—a framework that might underpin future analysis on how print culture and ideas about gender shape nation-building processes and nationalisms in African regions that face intracolonization or express secessionist/separatist intentions, such as in eastern Nigeria, Somaliland, South Sudan, Western Sahara, and Zanzibar.

The few works that highlight how female journalists and advice columns shaped cultural production in mid-twentieth century Africa inspire this article. For instance, Audrey Gadzekpo analyzes the "Gloria" columns, which Mercy Kwarley

Ffoulkes-Crabbe penned, to examine the role of women's columns in 1930s and 1940s urban Ghana. She notes that they provided opportunities for the female elite to speak for themselves, bolster authority for women, and grapple with issues affecting women.¹³ Stephanie Newell scrutinizes how male journalists in colonial British West Africa used female pseudonyms to condemn women's behaviors within domestic spaces. She notes that this form of literary cross-dressing allowed men to penetrate the lucrative magazine business and take points of views not easily vocalized under a male name.¹⁴ Men often penned advice columns geared towards women in the postcolonial period under female pseudonyms, such as the "Dear Dolly" column in *Drum* magazine, which was popular across English-speaking Africa in the same period this article addresses.¹⁵ The columnists I have been able to identify in West Cameroon were women, however. In addition, the few works that underline the social and political importance of female journalists and advice columns in Africa have not addressed the use of advice columns to directly shape political processes in the postcolonial period.

This article focuses on the women's advice columns written by Ruff Wanzie and Clara Manga, both prolific columnists. Manga headed the women's column for the *Cameroon Champion* from 1960 to 1963, writing as "Auntie Clara"; although the newspaper did not identify her, oral and archival evidence establish her identity.¹⁶ Manga had been a civil servant in the British Southern Cameroons government and worked for the West Cameroon government as well.¹⁷ Wanzie wrote the *Cameroon Times* women's columns from 1964 to 1973. Wanzie wrote under her own name until 1966, and then as "Cousin Lizzy" post-1966 when the Francophone one-party state made rival parties, including the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) that had dominated the West Cameroon government, illegal.¹⁸ Wanzie was a civil servant in the West Cameroon government and the wife of Joseph Wanzie, its Secretary of State for Primary Education.

The newspapers Wanzie and Manga wrote for were permeable to state propaganda and political parties intruded on their content although they were, unlike those in East Cameroon, privately owned. John Ngu Foncha (concurrently the first prime minister of the West Cameroon State and vice president of the Federal Republic of Cameroon from 1961 to 1970), helped establish the *Cameroon Times*, which featured Wanzie's column, and the paper supported the KNDP.¹⁹ The *Cameroon Champion*, which featured Manga's column, supported the Cameroon People's National Convention (CPNC), which competed with the KNDP for control of the West Cameroon government during the 1960s.²⁰ As the mouthpieces for these two parties, these newspapers were particularly dedicated to supporting political autonomy in the West Cameroon state.

Tracing the History of West Cameroonian Women's Advice Columns

Several Anglophone Cameroonian journalists in the 1960s had worked for the *West African Pilot*, which ran the leading newspaper women's column in 1940s and 1950s Nigeria.²¹ This tradition may have prompted the editors of West Cameroonian papers to include women's advice columns. Elite educated Anglophone Cameroonians were part of a larger Anglophone print culture that traversed the Atlantic, and Anglophone Cameroonians' access to West African and British/U.S. newspapers that had dedicated women's advice columns may also have influenced their inclusion. As Anthony Yana Zumafor, a former civil servant for the West Cameroon government, told me, referring the 1950s and 1960s:

We were exposed to the enlightenment of the British which existed in Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia. So we were part of British West Africa and we got news [from] the reading culture. Our newspapers came from Britain and Nigeria and the Gold Coast. . . . I remember at the age of 18 my newspapers from Nigeria were the *Daily Times of Nigeria* . . . the *Sunday Times of Nigeria*, the *West African Pilot* . . . [and] *Drum Magazine* . . . was also my favorite. It carried the emotions, the feelings, the aspirations and concerns of women. [In] "Dear Dolly" and in the 1950s and 1960s you had the explosion of . . . love relationships between men and women and they would complain to Dolly and she would write back. . . . The Anglo Saxon world all wrote to Dolly.²²

In a dynamic similar to the one Derek Peterson and Emma Hunter identify in their work on print culture in colonial Africa, in at least one case a newspaper reader influenced newspaper policy.²³ A 1968 letter to the editor of the *Cameroon Express* queried "Why is it that you don't publish a Women's Column? Have women been forgotten?"²⁴ A letter to the *Cameroon Telegraph* in the same year chided, "It may be you have forgotten that you were delivered by a woman and . . . your daily meals are prepared by a woman. Please for courtesy sake, give us a column in your journal."²⁵ Likewise, a 1970 letter to the editor of the *New Cameroon* calls for a women's column and evidenced the influence of a broader Anglophone culture when it said that women had "been described as 'regular readers' by organizations like the London Union of Journalists."²⁶ These readers, most of them women, demanded women's columns—and the editors complied.

Although "Dear Dolly" and the United States' "Dear Abby" led the way in the use of pseudonyms—Marilyn Coleman and Lawrence Ganong point out that the latter allowed Pauline Esther Phillips to take the role of a trusted confidant and "America's mom"—West Cameroonian female journalists also used familial terms.²⁷ From the position of authority and warmth these titles conferred, women journalists valorized West Cameroon identity and cast themselves as

the spokeswomen for women's social and political improvement. They also supported the fiction that the columns pertained solely to domestic issues, a point of view various scholars have shared with respect to Anglophone women's columns in the period in general.²⁸ The relegation of women's columns to the inside of newspapers—never on the front pages—also suggested they were of marginal importance. Yet as Jan Whitt points out, U.S. advice columns, which also ran on the inside of the paper, were seen as safeguarding the “spiritual strength of the nation” or contributing to the “uplifting of our national life” or bringing “wholeness” into the home of readers.²⁹ Institutionalized discrimination confined women to the women's pages.³⁰ Thus, newspapers, and their readership, reinforced the idea of separate spheres for men and women—men ran the world, women took care of home and children and focused on noncontroversial domestic and social pursuits.³¹

As this article will show, Wanzie and Manga used their columns to shape political identity and nation-building. Though they claimed to be “nonpolitical” in their columns, they sometimes applauded the actions of political leaders in the parties their papers supported. They often discussed “women's affairs” while integrating overtly political standpoints. Other scholars have shown that female journalists have played important roles as public intellectuals by entering the political, literary, or civic spheres or discourse.³² Cristina Devereaux Ramírez's analysis of Mexican women journalists between 1875 and 1942 shows they interacted with the community's literary members in order to enrich a liberal democracy.³³ Francis Nyamnjoh asserts that using mass media as a tool of analysis illuminates the critical role print media plays in the democratization process, such as how it can facilitate popular empowerment as a societal project.³⁴ In an indication of their role, West Cameroonian female journalists used pseudonyms in the 1960s in part to avoid imprisonment for their political views, or losing their jobs, first, under the KNDP government and later the increasingly Francophone dominated republic.³⁵ In fact, Cecelia Esemé faced a two-count charge of contempt of court in October 1967 because of an article she wrote under her own name in the *Cameroon Times*.³⁶ Writing under a pseudonym allowed other women to shape ideas about Anglophone Cameroonian nationalism and to demarcate themselves from the hegemonic Francophone state.

“We Must Be Cameroonians . . . Virtually in Color and Customs”: Women and Cultural Preservation

Discussions about maintaining West Cameroonian cultural values often concentrated on the growing ranks of formally educated urban women. Fathers, husbands, or some form of male jurisdiction made most women's decisions.³⁷ Women's fertility, chastity, care for children, respect for the elderly, endurance, effective household management, and respect for their husbands' authority defined adherence to dominant ideas about gender norms.³⁸ As the principal societal leaders, Cameroonian men had long dominated politics.³⁹ Nonetheless, the wealthiest West Cameroonian women had been formally educated under British rule, and some accessed formal employment and formal political participation during the 1940s and 1950s.⁴⁰ The expansion of formal education for women in the 1950s and 1960s led them to increasingly find work as corporate administrators, teachers, bankers, and nurses. The Southern Cameroons' legislative assembly wrote new electoral regulations in 1954, granting women the right to vote, to run for elective office, and be appointed to parliament; Dorcas Idowu was appointed in 1957 to the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly as a special member for women's interests.⁴¹ This new access to money and status threatened the status quo, although men continued to dominate politics.⁴²

West Cameroonian female journalists benefited from women's increased access to formal education and political participation and they generally applauded the change, but their anxiety that women follow dominant gender norms grew in its shadow.⁴³ They proposed that because education increased one's social status, its beneficiaries should model modesty and traditional Africanness, eschewing Western attire, heavy makeup, and speaking or laughing loudly, behaviors they associated with growing Westernization.⁴⁴ They urged women to adhere to recognizably indigenous modern cultural forms and reject selective foreign influence while selectively incorporating new ideas about gender and culture as a means to both preserve and redefine normative ideas about gender and political identity. They implicitly drew on sociopolitical authority to do so.

“Auntie Clara” frequently condemned educated women who equated notions of modernity and social progress with imitating foreign cultural practices. A series of articles in 1961, for example, focused on cookery as a means for women to preserve and continue West Cameroonian cultural identity. The series begins on September 1, when she inquires, “Can we the modern Cameroon girls boast of being able to prepare the delicious dishes our grandmothers used to prepare in their days?”⁴⁵ She laments, “It's such a shame that we have learned so much about other people's ways of eating [and] we have lost ours completely.” Though she

never unambiguously defines who these “other people” are, it can be inferred that she refers to the British or French-influenced East Cameroonians. She continued, “here in the Cameroons, we take delight in imitating other people, such [a loss of African cookery] that should not be our pride.” She admits she herself lacks knowledge and presents a set of Bakwerian recipes, including *ngonya veembe*, a soup made from cocoyam leaves that is frequently consumed with *fufu*, a dough-like substance that is made from starchy food crops like cassava. She promises to learn additional local dishes and present them in future columns, “at least two from every division” of West Cameroon.⁴⁶ The series continues with recipes from English-speaking cities such as Kumba and Buea.⁴⁷

Auntie Clara’s use of food to support nationalistic conceptions participated in a larger tradition of nationalist food movements, which scholars have documented in many postcolonial African countries.⁴⁸ In these movements, the consumption and preparation of “authentic” or local cuisines becomes central to postcolonial nation-building projects. Auntie Clara never once publishes dishes from the East Cameroon State. The theme would recur in columns throughout the early 1960s in which Clara Manga provided West Cameroonian recipes.⁴⁹ These recipes gesture toward something distinctly West Cameroonian that Anglophone Cameroonians could easily identify, consume, and understand. In other words, they invoke notions of an imagined Anglophone community.⁵⁰ In this way she seeks to guard West Cameroonian cultural identity from Francophone-domination in the republic and encroaching foreign influences. Yet she also encouraged women to selectively adapt Western cultural values, such as serving British dishes to British guests.⁵¹

Although she was a formally educated woman employed by the government and a journalist, Clara Manga’s admission that she cannot prepare African cuisine suggests a personal challenge to normative gender roles. Audrey Gadzekpo concludes that there is sometimes a contradiction between the private and public lives of African female journalists like Mercy Kwarley Ffoulkes-Crabbe, a formally educated journalist as well as a teacher who wrote for a Ghanaian newspaper in the 1930s and 1940s.⁵² Ffoulkes-Crabbe had a baby out of wedlock when she was forty and remained single for nine years. Gadzekpo theorizes, based on Ffoulkes-Crabbe’s cultural background and socioeconomic class, that she also imitated the lifestyle of upper-class Europeans in dress and her social and leisure activities. And yet, her “Gloria” columns often asked women to maintain dominant ideas about gender behavior and influence, such as criticizing women who remained unmarried.⁵³ Like Ffoulkes-Crabbe, Manga occupied a space of great ambiguity and contradictions. Although she exhibited Western cultural practices that bolstered and justified her social authority, the access to social power they imply allowed her to craft new cultural identities and shape new ideas of

the “traditional” while condemning behavior that she at times practiced. Like her familial title “Auntie,” her confession that she does not know how to prepare indigenous recipes made her relatable, self-deprecating as well as authoritative.

Ruff Wanzie also questioned educated women’s relationship to West Cameroonian cultural identity. She considered women who had been educated abroad to be the greatest threat. A 1966 column accuses such women of stripping West Cameroonian “indigenous culture” by endeavoring to “revolutionize our customs overnight.”⁵⁴ She contrasts them with men who travel abroad and “bring back just the bare knowledge that took them away from their mother land . . . and should they bring back any strange cultural practices they are usually those that fit squarely or almost into our own cultural practices.” She condemns women who return with haughty attitudes and “shuns the company of certain people on whom lies the foundation of her life in society; talks the [Western] grammar . . . to those who find it difficult to understand; [and] snubs certain classes of people.” She claims they look down on others’ language and social behavior, concluding, “[s]imply because these girls spent six months in Europe, perhaps for a typing course or so, they claim to know all that pertains to education, politics, and journalism, nursing, in short, all fields of mental and social endeavor.”⁵⁵ She directs these criticisms at women alone, betraying gendered assumptions about the behavior of the educated elite.

Wanzie also concedes that some Western cultural values, such as women’s equal access to education, can improve West Cameroonian society. Such values, she writes, “must be carefully skimmed and only the right parts chosen for evaluation. Just as we are so highly selective of the course we go to study in foreign countries, so too we have to be selective of the type of cultural heritage we bring back.” She urges women who have studied abroad to “show our people that we are still the same daughters, free mixers, national builders, etc. as we were when we left home. This would encourage parents and other nationals to advocate ‘away from home study’ rather than disdain it.”⁵⁶ Wanzie implies that women might “prove” the usefulness of their education by adhering to cultural norms and participating in nationalist activities. She also writes that Westernization and “snobbish attitudes” can damage a woman’s marriage prospects. Yet her statement that proper behavior can contribute to “parents and other nationals” being in support of women’s education abroad reveals her strong belief in the educational progress of women as well as the preservation of West Cameroonian cultural values and identity. She concludes by urging her female readers to be “Cameroonians—Africans virtually in color and customs, allowing only a certain amount of foreign influence and of a quality that is not ludicrous as to belittle us in the eyes of others.”⁵⁷ The subject engaged Wanzie on an ongoing basis; in subsequent articles she blamed educated

Westernized women for challenging prevailing cultural norms by boldly pursuing men instead of coyly waiting to be pursued, for demanding engagement rings and not being satisfied with the bridewealth system, and for what she perceived as a rapid rise in divorces.⁵⁸

West Cameroon was typical of nations in early-postcolonial Africa in that the educated urban elite saw themselves as the leaders of nation-building agendas.⁵⁹ Clara Manga's and Ruff Wanzie's commentaries about the proper behavior of educated women demonstrate that education increased one's social status and was a crucial stepping-stone to all other forms of economic, social, and political involvement in West Cameroon.⁶⁰ Recent studies have shown that the educated elite in urban Africa perceived women's growing access to formal education as positive as long as they continued to follow acceptable African gender norms.⁶¹ Emily Callaci, in discussing Tanganyikan nationalist intellectuals in the 1930s, has shown that many educated elites believed collective African progress depended on the rejection of foreign influence and the creation of authentic and recognizably indigenous modern cultural forms.⁶²

Other issues were at stake for the marginalized West Cameroonian elite. Tanganyikan nationalists had a common British heritage and African language that strengthened their anti-colonial rhetoric. West Cameroonian elites such as Wanzie endeavored to shape a distinct Anglophone Cameroonian cultural identity within the context of intracolonization and the perceived threat from Francophone Cameroonians. To do this they framed Anglophone Cameroonian national identity as distinct from its Francophone counterpart as well as in relation to encroaching Western cultural values. They shaped Anglophone Cameroonian nationalism and cultural values within a framework in which they drew from and rejected, selective local and global ideas about gender norms and cultural values. Both Wanzie and Manga placed the most obligation on formally educated working women, holding up elite—educated, selectively Westernized, and “modern”—values as the hallmark of progressive people.⁶³ They condemned educated women who did not balance these forces as unprepared to lead their communities and nation.

“Women Step Forward”: Women's Organizations and “Nonpolitical” Participation

Female journalists more than avowed that educated women might preserve West Cameroonian identity by adhering to cultural norms; they also directly participated in “nonpolitical” women's organizations. Formally educated women led women's organizations throughout urban Africa at the time. In these organizations,

elite women sought to fulfill a perceived responsibility to lead and teach less-educated women about properly preserving gender norms and nationalism within domestic and nationalist spaces. Many of these organizations advocated for the political importance of women's everyday duties by calling for women's economic and social improvement. Many, like the Council of Women's Institute (CWI), the most prominent West Cameroonian women's organization until 1966, were state-sanctioned and tied to prominent political parties; certainly a patriarchal framework curbed their power. But they also articulated the importance of women to the preservation of the nation's cultural identity and political identity.

Wanzie and Manga frequently assured their female readers that women's organizations only simply advanced members' status socially and that they had no political side. These assertions aligned with the leading political parties that financially supported women's organization's position that they were nonpolitical, part of a patriarchal system in which women were understood to have no political power. They sought to unify women of various social and political backgrounds by underplaying the highly political nature of their support for such organizations.

In reality, women's organizations in West Cameroon were deeply political. Male leaders of political parties ensured women's electoral support by funding their activities and proclaiming full support for women's "emancipation." As Alicia Decker's work shows, other postcolonial African governments or political parties had similar objectives. During the 1970s, Idi Amin of Uganda integrated a number of women into his government. He espoused support for women's empowerment to demonstrate that he was a progressive leader despite his military pedigree.⁶⁴ West Cameroonian women worked within a regulated patriarchal framework to address women's social, economic, and political priorities in women's societies and in government administrative positions. As a result, when Wanzie and Manga urged women to join organizations to support the objectives of male and female political leaders, they downplayed the highly political nature of these exhortations by integrating them with discussions of domestic issues and advice on love and courtship. They frequently gave in-depth summaries of the meetings of the women's organizations they attended or made short announcements about the location and times of upcoming meetings, insisting, as Manga wrote in 1962, that the "future of African society rest[s] on the shoulders of women."⁶⁵

Wanzie and Manga repeatedly described women's organizations as a means to women's social and political emancipation and equality with men. They criticized women who failed to fully participate in women's organizations as hindering the progress of women in general. A February 1962 column of Manga's describes such women as needing to "wake from our long sleep and see if we can catch up with other women in other lands."⁶⁶ It urges educated elite women to remember their leadership duties and to include their less-schooled counterparts in nationalist

activities: “Form clubs not only for senior service women but clubs to include all the ranks so that those who are fortunate to have a higher knowledge of things can pass on what they know to the less fortunate ones.”⁶⁷ She called on educated elite women to lead by example in women’s organizations by deliberately including their counterparts in the lower socioeconomic hierarchy. Like the Ghanaian “Gloria” columns, urban West Cameroon women’s columns were frequently class-exclusive in this way, particularly when urging women to participate in nationalist activities.⁶⁸ Moreover, the columns suggested that elite women’s behaviors would filter into a wider and more popular public.

Both journalists invoked changing gender roles as prompting their arguments. For example, an October 1966 column Wanzie wrote begins by claiming: “Once [a woman’s] position was simple. She was to bear children for her husband. Care for them. . . . In olden days, only women who were given chieftaincy honors as queens . . . participated in the political affairs of traditional government at the time.”⁶⁹ However, she asserts women’s acute awareness of their inferior status has allowed them to “now realize that men and women are citizens with identical responsibilities . . . [and now recognize] that women are free to help our country.” Scholars of African intellectual history assert that politically instructive historical writing such as this was a way for some intellectuals in the postcolonial period to spur nationalism among constituents.⁷⁰ Here Wanzie incites nationalistic sentiments by a history in which women once had little power but have gained considerably. She argues for using this status to focus on building the nation.

Wanzie acknowledges that men at times oppose women’s involvement in politics, but argues that women are slowly achieving equality with men. She credits women’s organizations with the change, saying that through them “some Cameroonian women today are no longer relegated to the backgrounds as they were eight or fifteen years ago.”⁷¹ She credits the CWI with sending women “abroad time and time again to specialize in home economics, leadership, child care, etc.,” connecting them to women in Western countries and raising their consciousness. Wanzie articulates a global sisterhood: “There are few women now in Europe, America and Africa . . . studying courses like law, medicine science. . . . Groups of women have visited the United Kingdom, France, United States, West Germany. . . . Through these contacts it has been refreshing to go through international meetings that women’s problems are identical.”⁷²

Like the commentary of black men who contributed to *Bantu World*, the first newspaper targeting black South Africans, criticisms such as Wanzie’s suggested transatlantic connections and an awareness of the sociopolitical status of women in Europe and the United States.⁷³ Likewise, they stressed a unitary African culture and criticized individuals for hindering the sociopolitical progress of the group by not engaging in nationalist projects. Wanzie notes the need for further

progress: “There are very few women in the press and radio. . . . We lack women pathologists, dietitians, lawyers, librarians, accountants, architects, taxi drivers. . . . If women are found in all these fields, then, the political, economic, social, educational, [and] vocational aspects of our women will compare favourably with those of men and contribute to the total advancement of the Cameroon nation.”⁷⁴ She urges educated housewives to join the effort, emphasizing that “in the western countries the educated non-working class woman plays an active part . . . as a member of women’s organizations . . . sitting on the hospital board, city council or library committee.”⁷⁵ Like Manga, she uses her knowledge about women’s political activities in other countries to shame West Cameroonian women into participating in nationalist activities. They, too, should be like their counterparts in other countries and “prove” the progressive nature of the nation by “fighting” for their rights and thus improving their social progress. She concludes, “We women still have to fight for our rights and assert ourselves in the face of masculine opposition. . . . Some men forbid their wives from attending club meetings. It would be expected that women who are already conscious of this great need . . . set an example and encouragement for others to follow.”⁷⁶ Although it is anachronistic to call female journalists like Wanzie and Manga feminists, they rejected patriarchy as an absolute. They questioned male privilege by suggesting that women subvert traditional gender hierarchies by urging women to “fight” for their rights and attend women’s organization meetings regardless of male opposition at home, a deviation from Cameroonian societal beliefs that women be subject to male authority because men were central to decision-making processes at family, community, and national levels.⁷⁷ Thus, Wanzie and Manga hold women responsible for their social, economic, and political progress. They criticized women who failed to engage in nationalist activities for women’s organizations as impeding not only women’s political and social unity, but convincing the patriarchal state to treat women’s nationalist activities as significant. Women needed to show men, including their husbands, that they were up to the task of leading the nation. Participation in women’s organizations and “fighting” for social and political equality was the only way to be taken seriously.

But female journalists did not advocate for the complete disruption of traditional gender hierarchies. Although Wanzie acknowledges that some men oppose improvement in women’s social status, Manga cautions women that they must not threaten male authority within domestic spaces if they want to improve their social and political status. In February 1962, “Auntie Clara” notes that “women [should] build up the social life of politics all [the] time. Men want to relax after the header debates in the House [of Assembly].” She speaks directly to the wives of political elites: “Wives of the Party in Government or Opposition must forget their husbands’ differences and [try] to make life light for their husbands in the

evenings. . . . It is very foolish and immature for women to allow the social life of a country to flop because of political differences. . . . In doing this you will be doing a lot to help the ordinary women and their husbands and the entire community will appreciate the usefulness of your learning.”⁷⁸ Manga’s language here is careful: women simply “helped” men in their nation-building endeavors and did not meddle with “real” political affairs, which were only for men. Thus, educated women needed to “fight” for their rights without threatening male authority. This approach is similar to female politicians and other female political elites who termed their official campaign tours as “family visits.”⁷⁹ By such measures, elite women might garner sociopolitical authority without threatening male political authority—or other women who espoused patriarchy.

Journalists like Wanzie and Manga lauded the accomplishments of male-led political parties to emphasize the nonthreatening nature of women’s political activities and to openly bow to the prevalent idea that men should own the political sphere. In a December 1964 article, “Women can now be Proud,” Wanzie applauds the KNDP for recognizing women’s nationalist activities and efforts to “fight” to be recognized as leaders of the nation by improving their social and political status. It begins by detailing the high-society dance of the year, then provides a short, exultant blurb announcing that the KNDP government has proved that “women have equal rights, amenities and facilitates as the men” by unanimously voting to instate the position of Woman Secretary in the central working committee of the KNDP-led West Cameroon government.⁸⁰ The details of the society dance blunt the subversive nature of Wanzie’s announcement. She notes, of the convention in Kumba that adopted the measure, that “women’s suggestions were wholeheartedly accepted in the convention.”⁸¹ She proudly states, “We thank the KNDP government for this big honor given to women.”⁸² Wanzie implies that the government rewards women when they strive to participate in nationalist activities. By proving that they are useful and respectable citizens, they “earn” equality with men and come to lead them in nation-building. Ultimately, female journalists aimed to make educated West Cameroonian women worthy of respect in the eyes of their own people and the patriarchal West Cameroon government. Evidence of West Cameroonian women’s efforts to preserve prevailing ideas about African cultural identity and to participate in nationalist activities was an important way that they could prove women’s political importance within an Anglophone nation.

“Madam Foncha is not a Politician”: Women’s Columns as “Nonpolitical” Stages for the Political Elite

Besides encouraging educated women to preserve cultural norms and to participate in women’s organizations, journalists used their women’s columns as political platforms to applaud the agendas of political elite women and the few female politicians. The journalists, as well as the women whose guest editorials they featured, often referenced maternal and familial roles as part of their support for political parties and their activities. They frequently assured women that their intentions were not political and that they simply sought to improve women’s social status and educate them on domestic and nationalist duties.

In July 1962, Manga’s column featured a lengthy letter from Gwendoline Burnley, the first woman parliamentarian to be elected to the West Cameroon House of Assembly and the cofounder of the CWI. Burnley writes,

Dear Auntie Clara, I hope you will allow me this opportunity to appeal to your readers . . . that they should hurry up and register as members of the Federation of West Cameroon Women’s Social Clubs [brought under the CWI umbrella in 1964]. This is very important because unless you register the Federation merely exists in name and not in fact. . . . Sisters, you may disagree with the way things are running but your criticisms outside the Federation will be very ineffective. Come in and affect change for the better . . . you can only do this as a member. Women in other countries are suddenly ahead in all fields. We must not lag behind . . . everyone is asking “why are the women so silent?”⁸³

Like Wanzie and Manga, Burnley invokes the advancement of women outside of Cameroon, exhorting Manga’s readers to participate in women’s organizations rather than “lag[ging] behind.” She informs women that they cannot make real changes unless they are members of the federation; until then their complaints fall upon deaf ears. She calls the readers “sisters,” suggesting women should be united in improving their social status, as equals.

Wanzie likewise supports the political endeavors of Burnley’s cofounder of the CWI, Anna Foncha, by featuring her lengthy guest editorial, “My Life as the P.M.’s Wife,” on February 8, 1964. Foncha was the wife of John Ngu Foncha, an Anglophone Cameroonian politician who concurrently served as the first prime minister of the West Cameroon State and vice president of the Federal Republic of Cameroon from 1961 to 1970. She herself was a political force. In addition to the CWI, she participated in several international women’s organizations, and founded the Catholic Women’s Association (CWA), which today has strong membership both in Cameroon and the United States. She presided over the leading

women's organizations in West Cameroon, the West Cameroon Federation of Women Social Clubs and Associations (WSCA) and the CWI.

Foncha's letter offers Wanzie's reader a long narrative about her duties as the wife of the first prime minister of West Cameroon and provides details about her new home, a "schloss"—using a German term for a building similar to a palace or manor house—that German colonial officials had once owned. She notes that her husband's rise to prime minister gave her "a comparatively bigger house to look after although my duties as a mother of seven have not changed much."⁸⁴ The first half of the article details the furnishing and design of her new home, including the "indigenous vegetables" she grows in her garden.⁸⁵ In the second part of the editorial she outlines her activities with the WSCA, such as touring throughout West Cameroon to meet various women. She is similar to Wanzie in that she provides details of her home in the first part of the article so as to soften the subversive political tone. She shares, "During these tours I get to know the difficulties facing women, and together we discuss their solutions. . . . Although I am not a Minister, these complaints occupy my thoughts . . . and something should be done to ameliorate them." She adds, "I often find time to speak to the Prime Minister and other secretaries of state about these complaints and requests."⁸⁶ In such statements, Foncha relates to her readers by highlighting her domestic duties and paints herself as a maternal figure with political authority who calls upon her counterparts to join women's organizations. She suggests that they, too, can prioritize nationalist duties in their lives even if they are busy mothers. But Foncha's overtly political concerns for women's welfare in the country suggest her political power. Her editorial is ultimately a serious political piece that addresses concerns about women's political role in West Cameroon disguised as a domestic piece. Her statements about the role of women's organizations and her direct appeals to her husband to address these concerns suggest sincere interest in improving the lot of women.

Like the women journalists in Mexico Cristina Devereaux Ramírez studies, who frequently served as philosophers, poets, historians, and mouthpieces for politicians who were shaping Mexican national identity, journalists like Wanzie and Manga at times pushed politicians' agendas.⁸⁷ Lilian Lem Atanga and Alexandre Djimeli show in their work on contemporary Cameroon that female journalists and female politicians continue to join forces to deploy women's political prospects.⁸⁸ Appearing in the media, such as in women's columns, gave female politicians and political activists the opportunity to propagate discourse of change and female inclusion in politics and decision-making positions.⁸⁹ Atanga and Djimeli further assert that Cameroonian female journalists and politicians pursue their actions and objectives together by creating associations and networks. These associations and networks are working frameworks for exchange of experiences

and recreation; their objective is to reinforce the power of their actions through the creation of continued training on leadership, development, and personal growth.⁹⁰ These insights apply to women in urban West Cameroon in the 1960s. Besides offering their columns as a platform for female political elites, journalists like Wanzie and Manga frequently devoted their columns to outlining the varied social and political activities of these women, often encouraging their readers to support their endeavors, but careful not to emphasize the political nature of their support.⁹¹

Wanzie in fact specifically denied the political nature of the actions of Anna Foncha. In March 1964 she conceded that although the presence of key female politicians shows that “women can be depended on in the political field,” she asserts that “a woman’s role as a mother is the most supreme thing in any nation,” and further, “When it is suggested that a nation takes after its womanhood I take it to mean that effective motherhood has a lot to do in maintaining and shaping the culture of the people.”⁹² Seven months later she writes that male politicians who suggested that Anna Foncha’s tour of West Cameroon was political, “must not interfere with women’s affairs or encourage political discriminations among them,” insisting, “Madam Foncha is not a politician. . . . Madam Foncha [was] elected President General of Women’s Groups for the council known as the West Cameroon Council of Women’s Institutes. As President General of all [the] Women’s Club[s], her duty is to take interest in all women’s affairs. That is why she tours Cameroon—not for political reasons.”⁹³ By underplaying the political nature of women’s political activities, Wanzie wraps women’s social and political activities in maternal language, thus seeming not to threaten the male-dominated government or the male-dominated opposing political parties. Thus, by presenting themselves and women like Foncha and Burnley as housewives who focus on domestic issues, female journalists pushed for women’s political unity in the most effective way they knew.

Wanzie’s and Manga’s efforts to push women to participate in women’s organizations, as well as to support the agendas of political elites, accurately mirrored larger anxieties among the elites about the annexationist agendas of the Francophone East Cameroon government. After the East Cameroon government established a single-party state under the Cameroon National Union (CNU) and dissolved all West Cameroonian political parties and privately owned papers in 1966, it declared its intention to dissolve women’s organizations in West Cameroon, despite leading women’s assertions that the CWI and the WSCA were non-political. Nonetheless, by the end of the 1960s, the CWI and other prominent West Cameroonian women’s organizations were integrated in the women’s wing of the Francophone-led CNU party. The enforcement of press censorship and the activity of the secret police combined to ensure the effective denial of freedom of

speech, expression, opinion, and information after 1966. The editor and publisher of every West Cameroonian newspaper were required, under pain of punishment, to submit drafts of their papers to the state's representative in a department or region (known as the *préfet*) for censorship before publication.⁹⁴ The "Cousin Lizzie" pseudonym allowed Wanzie to continue penning her columns from 1966 to 1973. But a number of Anglophone Cameroonian papers shut down because of financial struggles or press censorship after 1972, leaving fewer dedicated women's advice columns in the country. The political unity and participation in Anglophone separatism and nationalism female journalists had sought to support no longer had these sites in which to grow.

Conclusion

Scholarship has generally considered the women's columns that were popular in 1960s and 1970s Africa as being confined to addressing "soft" issues related to changing gender norms, domesticity, and cultural values. Indeed, female journalists in urban West Cameroon addressed these topics. But they also used their columns to promote women's political unity and participation and to stress Anglophone separatism and nationalism. They presented themselves as housewives addressing domestic issues, insisting they were not overtly political, and therefore no threat to the patriarchal state or to women comfortable in the patriarchal system. In this manner, they urged formally educated women to follow predominant ideas about African cultural values and to join "nonpolitical" women's organizations so as to build the nation's wealth and success.⁹⁵ They directly advocated for West Cameroonian political identity and autonomy by using their columns to applaud the activities of the few female politicians or the wives of political heavyweights; they occasionally featured guest editorials written by such women. Although female journalists did not halt the annexationist agenda of the Francophone East Cameroon state, their experiences reframe conversations about the rhetorical and intellectual role women play in shaping political identity and culture in postcolonial Africa. Future research might build on this article's insights to further interrogate how female journalists used issues related to domesticity and gender norms to buffer the political undertones of their columns, thus complicating understandings of the varied strategies of urban female elites in postcolonial Anglophone Africa.

NOTES

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1. Ruff Wanzie, "Ill Effects of Gossiping," *Cameroon Times*, May 2, 1964, 5.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Previous work on women's advice columns outside of Africa, such as the following, inspired me: Shira Klein, "An Army of Housewives: Women's Wartime Columns in Two Mainstream Israeli Newspapers," *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies and Gender Issues* 15, no. 1 (2008): 88–107, A. Holly Shissler, "'If You Ask Me': Sabiha Sertel's Advice Column, Gender Equity, and Social Engineering in the Early Turkish Republic," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 3, no. 2 (2007): 12–30.
4. Elite families often sent their daughters to Nigeria for postprimary education in the 1950s and 1960s because Anglophone Cameroon had so few options for young women's education. Victor E. Mukete, *My Odyssey: The Story of Cameroon Reunification* (Yaoundé, Cameroon: Eagle Publishing, 2013).
5. Wanzie, "Misinterpreting Mutual Understanding," *Cameroon Times*, April 11, 1964, 4.
6. The British Cameroons was administered as two areas, Northern Cameroons and Southern Cameroons. Eric Ebolo Elong, "The Anglophone Cameroon Problem and the Secession Option in Cameroon," in *Bondage of Boundaries and Identity Politics in Postcolonial Africa: The "Northern Problem" and Ethno-Futures*, eds. Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Brilliant Mhlanga (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2013), 148–9.
7. After 1922, Cameroon was a mandate territory of the League of Nations, then a United Nations trust territory that Great Britain and France jointly administered. The British Mandate territory of Cameroon included the Southern and Northern Cameroons. In February 1961, the UN held a plebiscite for citizens of the British Cameroons, giving them the option to join the Federal Republic of Nigeria or the Republic of Cameroon (former French Cameroon). The Northern Cameroons joined Nigeria and the Southern Cameroons joined former French Cameroon to establish a federal republic where some cultural identifications crossed the

- Anglo–French border, such as the Bamenda Grassfields. Anthony Ndi, *Southern West Cameroon Revisited (1950–1972)*, Vol. I: *Unveiling Inescapable Traps* (Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa RPCIG, 2014), 2–3
8. Nicodemus Fru Awasom “Towards Historicizing the Ossification of Colonial Identities in Africa: The Anglophone/Francophone Divide in Postcolonial Cameroon,” in *Society, State, and Identity in African History*, ed. Bahru Zewde (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Forum for Social Studies, 2008), 47–72.
 9. Piet Konings and Francis Njamnjoh, *Negotiating an Anglophone Identity: A Study of the Politics of Recognition and Representation in Cameroon* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2003), 95.
 10. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 25–28.
 11. Examples include: Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption, and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996); Isabel Hofmeyr, *Gandhi’s Printing Press: Experiments in Slow Reading* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
 12. Ephraim Ngwafor, *Ako-Aya: A Cameroonian Pioneer in Daring Journalism and Social Commentary* (Oxford: African Books Collective, 2010); Emmanuel Doh, *Anglophone-Cameroon Literature: An Introduction* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015).
 13. Audrey Gadzekpo, “Public but Private: A Transformational Reading of the Memoirs and Newspaper Writings of Mercy Ffoulkes-Crabbe” in *Africa’s Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self*, ed. Karin Barber (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).
 14. Stephanie Newell, *The Power to Name: A History of Anonymity in Colonial West Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013), 156.
 15. Originally published in South Africa for black readers, *Drum* expanded in the early 1960s to produce separate monthly issues in Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya, and sold as many as 300,000 copies a month in English-speaking Africa. The magazine became popular among Africans in western and eastern-central Africa because it vividly documented the independence movements that were happening in those areas. Kenda Mutongi, “Dear Dolly’s Advice on Love and Courtship,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33, no. 1 (2000): 2; Iris Berger, *Women in Twentieth-Century Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 134.
 16. Wanzie, “More for You” *Cameroon Times*, February 4, 1964, 5.
 17. Anthony Yana Zumafor, interviewed by author, July 30, 2015.
 18. The KNDP was active in the Southern Cameroons during the period of British Mandate rule. Led by John Foncha, the party advocated for political reunification with French Cameroon pre-independence. Later, the KNDP dominated the West Cameroon government from 1961 to 1966.
 19. William Jong-Ebot, “The Mass Media in Cameroon: An Analysis of Their Post-Colonial Status” (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison,

- WI, 1989), 178; Roland Stanbridge and Maria Ljunggren, *African Media and ICT4D: Documentary Evidence: A Baseline Study on the State of Media Reporting on ICT and Information Society Issues in Africa* (Hampshire: United Nations, 2003); Doh, *Anglophone-Cameroon Literature*.
20. E. M. L. Endeley, the first premier of the British Cameroons, formed the CPNC in 1960 and he advocated for integration with Nigeria before 1961. Jong-Ebot, "The Mass Media in Cameroon," 178. Festus Eribo and Enoch Tanjong, eds. *Journalism and Mass Communication in Africa: Cameroon* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 5.
 21. The women's column "Milady's Bower" in Nnamdi Azikiwe's *West African Pilot* was published from 1937 to the 1950s. "Miss Silva," the pseudonymous editor of the column, authored several articles on various aspects of relationships and offered advice to lovers. Saheed Aderinto, "Modernizing Love: Gender, Romantic Passion and Youth Literary Culture in Colonial Nigeria," *Africa* 85, no. 3 (2015): 480; Saheed Aderinto, *When Sex Threatened the State: Illicit Sexuality, Nationalism, and Politics in Colonial Nigeria, 1900–1958* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 8.
 22. Zumafor, interviewed by author.
 23. Derek Peterson and Emma Hunter, "Print Cultures in Colonial Africa," in *African Print Cultures: Newspapers and Their Publics in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Derek Peterson, Emma Hunter, and Stephanie Newell (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 13.
 24. Rosaline Tiku, "Give us a Women's Page." *Cameroon Express*, November 28, 1968, 2.
 25. Vicky Queenta, "Give us a Women's Column," *Cameroon Telegraph*, December 13, 1968, 2.
 26. Mathias Ndifor, "Create Women's Column," *New Cameroon*, September 25, 1970, 2.
 27. Marilyn J. Coleman and Lawrence H. Ganong, eds., *The Social History of the American Family: An Encyclopedia* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014).
 28. Gadzekpo, "Public but Private," 328.
 29. Jan Whitt, *Women in American Journalism: A New History* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2008).
 30. *Ibid.*
 31. *Ibid.*
 32. For an example, see Yuxin Ma, *Women Journalists and Feminism in China, 1898–1937* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2010).
 33. Cristina Devereaux Ramirez, *Occupying Our Space: The Mestiza Rhetorics of Mexican Women Journalists and Activists, 1875–1942* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2015).
 34. Francis B. Nyamnjoh, *Africa's Media, Democracy, and the Politics of Belonging* (London: Zed Books, 2005).

35. Poubom Lamy Ney is a former civil servant for the West Cameroonian government and the Republic of Cameroon. Poubom Lamy Ney, interviewed by author, April 18, 2016.
36. "'Times' Girl Detained; Docked for Contempt," *Cameroon Times*, October 12, 1967.
37. Emmanuel Konde, *African Women and Politics: Knowledge, Gender, and Power in Male-Dominated Cameroon* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), 35.
38. Christine Saidi, *Women's Authority and Society in Early East-Central Africa* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2010), 75–88.
39. John Mukum Mbaku and Joseph Takougang, *The Leadership Challenge in Africa: Cameroon under Paul Biya* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2004), 256.
40. Fiona Bowie, "The Elusive Christian Family: Missionary Attempts to Define Women's Roles. Case Studies from Cameroon," in *Women and Missions: Past and Present: Anthropological and Historical Perceptions*, eds. F. Bowie, D. Kirkwood, and S. Ardener (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1993), 145; Melinda Adams, "Colonial Policies and Women's Participation in Public Life: The Case of British Southern Cameroons," *African Studies Quarterly*, 8, no. 3 (2006): 1; Nessie Ndivi-Hill, "Retrospective Investigation of Women's Education in the South West Province of Cameroon with a Look Towards the Future" (PhD diss., Union Institute and University, 2007), 28.
41. Konde, *African Women and Politics*, 94, 115, 143
42. Berger, *Women in Twentieth-Century Africa*, 51, 184
43. Stella Nana-Fabu, "An Analysis of the Economic Status of Women in Cameroon," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 8, no. 1 (2006): 158.
44. For instance, in a February 1964 column in the *Cameroon Times*, Wanzie cautions women not to "interpret the word modern to mean unnecessary boldness, *pata-pata* [a sexually suggestive dance style], loud laughter, arrogance, short skirts, too much makeup. . . . A woman should be very proud to hear men, both young and old, even women admire her and say, 'that's a well dressed and nice dame, isn't she?'" Wanzie, "Fashion Parade," *Cameroon Times*, February 22, 1964, 3–4; Jacqueline-Bethel Mougoué, "African Women Do not Look Good in Wigs: Gender, Beauty Rituals and Cultural Identity in Anglophone Cameroon, 1961–1972," *Feminist Africa*, issue 21 (2016), 14.
45. Auntie Clara, "Our Native Dishes," *Cameroon Champion*, September 1, 1961, 3.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Auntie Clara, "Continuing our Native Dishes," *Cameroon Champion*, September 22, 1961, 3–4.
48. Examples include: Igor Cusak, "African Cuisines: Recipes for Nation-Building?" *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 13, no. 2 (2000): 209; Cusak, "Pots, Pens and 'Eating out the Body': Cuisine and the Gendering of African Nations," *Nations and Nationalism* 9, no. 2 (2003): 277–96.

49. For examples, see Auntie Clara, "Serviceable Measures," *Cameroon Champion*, November 27, 1962, 2–3; Auntie Clara, "Invalid Cookery," *Cameroon Champion*, January 4, 1963, 3
50. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.
51. Averring that it is the Western custom to also serve appetizers before the main meal, she recommended that hostesses offer salads, tomato soup, roast meat, or banana pudding. Auntie Clara, "Christmas is Here Again," *Cameroon Champion*, December 21, 1962, 3.
52. Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, Republic of Ghana, "Ghanaian Female Achievers: Mrs. Mercy Ffoulkes-Crabbe" (Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, August 2016). DOI: http://femaleachievers.org/dir_profile_details.cfm?dowdirID=594&prof_categoryid=66
53. Gadzekpo, "Public but Private," 317, 328–34.
54. Wanzie, "Exemplary or Misleading" *Cameroon Times*, March 5, 1966, 3.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Ibid.*
58. For examples, see Wanzie, "Causes of Divorce," *Cameroon Times*, March 21, 1964, 5; Wanzie, "When Women Look at Men," *Cameroon Times*, May 23, 1964, 3; Wanzie, "Is Engagement Ring Reality or Formality?" *Cameroon Times*, November 7, 1964, 3.
59. For example: Andrew Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s Dar Es Salaam* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).
60. Nana-Fabu, "An Analysis."
61. Abosede George, *Making Modern Girls: A History of Girlhood, Labor, and Social Development in Colonial Lagos* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014); Rachel Jean-Baptiste, *Conjugal Rights: Marriage, Sexuality, and Urban Life in Colonial Libreville, Gabon* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014).
62. Emily Callaci, "Dancehall Politics: Mobility, Sexuality, and Spectacles of Racial Respectability in Late Colonial Tanganyika, 1930s–1961," *Journal of African History* 52, no. 3 (2011), 366–367.
63. Audrey Gadzekpo, "Public but Private," 328.
64. Alicia C. Decker, *In Idi Amin's Shadow: Women, Gender, and Militarism in Uganda* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014).
65. "The Role of Women in our Modern Society," *Cameroon Champion*, November 27, 1962, 3. For additional examples, see Wanzie, "Women's International League for Peace and Freedom," *Cameroon Times*, March 7, 1964, 3; Wanzie, "Women Step Forward," *Cameroon Times*, July 18, 1964, 3; Wanzie, "Women in Voluntary Organisations," *Cameroon Times*, August 8, 1964, 3.
66. Auntie Clara, "A Woman Once Asked," *Cameroon Champion*, February 6, 1962, 3–4.
67. *Ibid.*
68. Gadzekpo, "Public but Private."

69. Wanzie, "Our Women in the Home and Office," *Cameroon Times*, October 16, 1966, 3.
70. Derek Peterson and Giacomo Macola, eds., *Recasting the Past: History Writing and Political Work in Modern Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009).
71. Wanzie, "Our Women in the Home and Office."
72. *Ibid.*
73. *Ibid.*
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid.*
77. Ajaga Nji, "Socio-Cultural Determinants of the Status of the Cameroonian Woman: Implications for the Family in the 21st Century," in *The Anthropology of Africa: Challenges for the 21st Century*, ed. Paul Nchoji Nkwi (Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa RPCIG, 2015), 323.
78. Auntie Clara. "A Woman Once Asked," 3–4.
79. In April 1966, Anna Foncha, the wife of the vice president of the federal republic, explained that her visit to women in Bamenda was a "family visit." She urged women to "organize social clubs for the growth of the nation" during her visit. "Madam Foncha Meets Bamenda Women," Press Release no. 5031, May 12, 1966, *West Cameroon Press Releases* (West Cameroon Archives, January–June, 1966).
80. Wanzie, "Women can now be Proud," *Cameroon Times*, December 5, 1964, 3.
81. *Ibid.*
82. *Ibid.*
83. Auntie Clara, "Untitled Column," *Cameroon Champion*, July 27, 1962, 3.
84. Anna Foncha, "My Life as the P.M.'s Wife," *Cameroon Times*, February 8, 1964, 3–4.
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Ibid.*
87. Ramírez, *Occupying Our Space*.
88. Lilian Lem Atanga and Alexandre T. Djimeli, "Women in Politics and the Media: The Discursive Construction of Collaboration for Female leadership in Cameroon," in *Discourse, Politics and Women as Global Leaders*, eds. John Wilson and Diana Boxer (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins, 2015), 169–94.
89. *Ibid.*
90. *Ibid.*
91. For an example, see "Do not Make Me Dumb in Parliament," *Cameroon Times*, May 1, 1968, 7.
92. Wanzie, "Protectors of Culture," *Cameroon Times*, March 14, 1964, 4.
93. Wanzie, "Madam Foncha's Place Among Women," *Cameroon Times*, October 24, 1964, 3.

94. Carlson Anyangwe, *Imperialistic Politics in Cameroun: Resistance and the Inception of the Restoration of the Statehood of Southern Cameroons* (Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa RPCIG, 2008), 15.
95. Wanzie, "Misinterpreting Mutual Understanding," 4.

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