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# The Interplay of Peace, Justice, and Logic: Bali-Bawock as a Case Study for Inter-Ethnic Land Disputes

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*SIT Study Abroad*

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# **The Interplay of Peace, Justice, and Logic**

## **Bali-Bawock as a Case Study for Inter-Ethnic Land Disputes**

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## **Abstract:**

This paper seeks to explore the conflict existing between two ethnic groups, the Bali-Nyonga and the Bawock, as a case study for inter-ethnic land dispute. Through the process of this study the researcher tried to look past arguments of logic in order to uncover the struggle for autonomy, the struggle for respect, and how damaging the muddy relationship between tradition and modernity can be. She found that ultimately models of mediation and dialogue were the most constructive in helping the conflict's actors heal among themselves, and to develop the tools for interacting with a globalized society.

*I dedicate this paper to the pursuit of truth, peace and justice, and all those who strive to let them guide their lives.*

## **Acknowledgements:**

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Earnest, who let me perform interviews at his workplace, and was a great Pidgin interpreter

## Introduction

We saw the butchered plantain and banana stems in their thousands. We saw the cadavers of slaughtered animals. We saw the uprooted cocoyams. The fruit trees were down. We saw heaps of schoolbooks, which had been partly reduced to ashes. Of course, we saw the burnt houses as well as those reduced to rubble. We saw, we saw, we saw, and we saw...<sup>1</sup>

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007, one of Bali's most important ju-ju,<sup>2</sup> called VOMA attempted to complete its annual libations and appeasements to initiate the coming of the planting season. In the process, it was obstructed from passing through Bawock village. This act, which equated the severity of capturing the Fon in the minds of the Bali, became the prelude to the mass invasion and destruction of Bawock village. In the early morning of March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007, the developing hamlet of Bawock was transformed into a wasteland of ashes. Compounds were destroyed, Banana, cocoyam, and maize farms were cleared, animals were slaughtered, and electricity and water infrastructure was ruined.<sup>3</sup> While culpability is still being contested, it is undeniable that the destruction of March 2007 was only a tip of the iceberg of the conflict between two ethnic groups, the Bali and the Bawock. Academic Parker Shipton writes, "Nothing excites deeper passions or gives rise to more bloodshed than do disagreements about territory, boundaries, or access to land resources."<sup>4</sup> Nowhere in Cameroon is this more true than the Northwest Region where the fertility of the soil, population growth, traditional ties to the land, and the complex history of ethnic diasporas have placed a high value on the local land.

When put simply, the conflict between the Bali and the Bawock is merely a land dispute. Yet like any conflict, the problems are far from simple. The case of Bali-Bawock reflects the frustrations of a minority group trying to find its place in an institution still taking shape in the post-colonial era. As such, the study portrays how damaging the muddy relationship between tradition and modernity can be. It is about the struggle for autonomy,

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from Chi, Simon, An Open Letter to the Fon of Bawock Village, Mankon: National Organization of Human Rights, 23 March 2007

<sup>2</sup> A ju-ju is a symbolic object often used in spiritual and traditional masquerades.

<sup>3</sup> Nkematabong, Martin, "Bawock—Hope in the Horizon" Cameroon Tribune, 15 September 2008

<sup>4</sup> Shipton, Parker. "Land and Culture in Tropical Africa: Soils, Symbols, and the Metaphysics of the Mundane" Parker Shipton Source: Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol. 23 (1994), pp. 347-377 Annual Reviews <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2156018> Accessed: 20/11/2008 07:38 p. 347

and most importantly, the struggle for respect.

When the Germans came into Cameroon in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, it imposed on the formerly autonomous Fondoms a new European form of government. As a result, much inter-ethnic tension ensued. In particular, the Germans gave certain Fons authority and military power to rule over other Fons, creating tension and a rupture to formerly decided ethnic dynamics. This new hierarchy among Fons was reinforced by the French government which designated classes to the different Fons. Hundreds of years later, the Fons of the subverted communities are still struggling to maintain their autonomy despite little or no support from the political systems that are now in place. The struggle for autonomy has elicited negative and even violent responses from the ethnic groups which had gained power through the colonial and western political systems. This can be seen specifically in the case of the Bali and the Bawock of Cameroon's Northwest Region.

The Bawock is a small group with a population between 2,000 and 6,000<sup>5</sup> that has been struggling to assert its autonomy, whereas the Bali with a population of around 50,000<sup>6</sup>, is an ethnic group empowered by the Germans during the protectorate to reign over many groups in the area. The Bawock have been trying to assert their autonomy by asking for boundary demarcations from the government and protesting against the Bali's passage through their land in order to perform traditional rituals. After almost a century of mounting tension, the relationship between the Bali and the Bawock reached its nadir during the reign of the most recent Bawock Fon, Nana Wanda III. This study seeks to understand the different elements influencing the relationship between the Bali and the Bawock in order to explore options for pursuing future peace.

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## **Methodology**

While conducting this study, it became incredibly clear to the researcher that the magnitude and complexity of the study far outweighed a four week ISP project. While talking to actors in the conflict, the researcher received many different variations of every

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<sup>5</sup> Population numbers vary greatly depending on the source.

<sup>6</sup> This estimate is from 2002, cited in Ndi, Richard Tanto "Bali v. Bawock", Ecumenical Services for Peace, Bamenda, March 2007

story, and details that seemed insignificant one day often turned out to be crucial the next. The main source of information for this research was oral interviews. The formal interviews are listed at the back of the paper, but the researcher conducted many informal interviews as well. Since this is the case, when she mentions, "an anonymous interviewee" this may or may not be an interviewee she has listed. This is because several of the people she spoke with agreed to be given credit for their interviews, but did not want their names associated with their comments. Others did not want their names in the paper at all, and the researcher wishes to respect their privacy.

A positive and negative aspect to the study was how much all the people involved wanted to share their point of view. It was clear that the conflict was strongly in the consciousness' of the actors, and no matter how difficult the process of peace was for them, they were interested in trying to figure out the best way of pursuing it. The talkativeness of the actors proved to be a challenge to the researcher who had to manage the limited time to conduct the survey. In one case the researcher stepped into an office for what she anticipated to be a 30 minutes interview, only to emerge three hours later.

The researcher also got a lot of her information from official documents provided to her by the representatives of each party, as well as by the local government. These documents were crucial to her understanding of the matter. She was also able to speak with several academics who had written on the conflict. Through her interactions with them, she was able to obtain more secondary sources. She also followed the newspaper coverage of the issue as closely as she could. For theoretical background, she read articles published in academic peer-reviewed journals.

From preliminary information, it became clear that the history of the two groups was a large factor in the study, and that a thorough investigation into the histories of the two groups' was necessary for understanding why so much tension existed. The investigation into the history was a true testament to the researcher of its subjective nature. Stories were spun in so many ways, that it was clear that emotions had greatly augmented and diminished certain details. At times, it seemed that what was being shared with the

researcher was just plain false, yet she wasn't sure if she was being presented the information as a lie, or that was how her interviewees really viewed the history. The researcher was nonetheless extremely grateful for what they had to share, for the details people chose to share and chose to omit were extremely telling as to their position in the matter.

Another challenge the researcher faced was with the traditional protocol and formality of talking about controversial issues. When she reached Bali, many people did not want to talk with her until she had spoken with the Fon, yet she could not speak directly with the Fon without being scheduled and formally introduced to him. After a month of trying to reach him, all three of her contacts to the Fon fell through. When she was finally able to reach him over the phone, he refused an interview in that medium. Similarly, when visiting Mantum, none of the residents felt comfortable speaking with her until after she spoke with the quarter-head who was not in his home.

The biggest challenge the researcher faced was the time constraint. There were many voices that needed to be heard in order for the study to be more comprehensive and she could not give ear to all of them. While she spoke to around the same number of Bali and Bawock citizens, she saw the greatest variation in the responses of the Bali and wished she had had more time to understand all the different perspectives. Additionally, if she had interviewed more people from the surrounding areas, she could have had an easier time synthesizing the information she received about the respective histories and current politics of each group. She also wished she had the time to talk to the residents of Mantum, the most contested area. The testimonies provided about the area were so vast and contradictory that she was unable to establish a confident understanding of the situation. If she had been granted more interviews with the Mantum natives, many of her questions would have been answered.

Lastly, the researcher found that her own emotions provided a challenge in conducting objective research. She found herself becoming frustrated when speaking with almost every party involved, seeing how people continued to perpetuate ethnic stereotypes



and were reluctant to place themselves in the process of making peace. Nonetheless, the process was also extremely gratifying and through all the frustration she encountered, she also felt a lot of encouragement.

In light of the relatively recent crisis between the Bali and the Bawock, the Bali have often been framed as the "bad guys." The researcher tried as hard as she could to be objective in her approach to the study recognizing that all parties have a role in conflict.

While trying to analyze the case of Bali and Bawock as a case study for inter-ethnic land dispute resolution, she recognized some key components that hindered the peacemaking process. These were primarily the lack of respect each party had for the other, the reluctance of each party to take responsibility for their role in the conflict, poor communication from multiple directions, and people trying to approach the conflict using logic. In order to best assess conflict resolution, there is a strong necessity to see just how peace, justice, and logic interact.

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### **Causes of the Conflict**

The heart of the problem between the Bali and the Bawock seems to lie in the subjective nature perpetuated through the tradition of oral history. Both groups have tried to manipulate their past in order to support their relationship to their land and claims of authenticity. With the current preferences placed on autochthony, it is often those who have stayed on their land the longest who get the most respect. It is for this reason that the Bali are quick to share their history and make the claim that "we were here first".<sup>7</sup>

It is generally accepted that of the two groups, the Bali-Nyonga were the first to arrive at the Bamenda grassfields. They arrived as a part of the Chamba clan, an ethnic group which migrated from the Adamaowa region near today's northern Cameroon and Nigeria. Historian Richard Fardon writes, "A stereotype of the Chamba as ferocious and military people has been accepted"<sup>8</sup> because they were able to get the majority of their lands through conquest. Among the Chamba, the Bali-Nyonga were especially well known for their

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<sup>7</sup> Interview, Nyamsenkwen, Christopher Kunbuma, Mayor of Bali-Nyonga Council (2002- 2007), November 28, 2008, Bali-Nyonga

<sup>8</sup> Fardon, Richard Osborne, The Chamba: A Comparative History of Tribal Politics, London: University College, 1980 P. 11

military prowess. In 1830,<sup>9</sup> they arrived in the Bamenda grassfields and quickly became a prevailing political power as they conquered all the surrounding Widikum, groups. By the time the Bawock arrived, the Bali-Nyonga had already conquered, and taken the majority of the neighboring villages as refugees.

The arrival of the Bawock is less concrete, and has many different interpretations. The average Bamenda citizen holds the view that the Bali invited the Bawock to live among them, whereas most Bawock people say that they were never invited by the Bali. They attribute their invitation to the Bati claiming that they only became neighbors with the Bali once the Bati were forced to move out.<sup>10</sup> Since transcribed history is a relatively recent phenomenon, determining the actual events has been quite a challenge<sup>11</sup>. Nonetheless, Bali historian, Nyamndi writes that in 1904 the Bali invited the Bati group, Ti-Mbundam to take refuge in their Chiefdom and placed them South West of Bali. While staying with the Bali, the Ti-Mbundam invited the Bawock who had marital relations to them. At the time, the Bawock were a nomadic group looking for refuge. Because the Bali believed that the groups staying with them for refuge were supposed to be incorporated and assimilated into their Chiefdom as Bali, they considered the Bati invitation as one of their own.<sup>12</sup> The Bawock claim that it was the Bati, alone who extended the invitation makes sense in the context of the later interactions between the Ti-Mbundam and Bali. As Nyamndi writes, "Not that the Ti-Mbundam chief had always been the most humble of guests. In fact, no sooner had he arrived in Bali then he began to think of creating his own independent sphere of influence."<sup>13</sup> Because of their insistence of asserting their autonomy, the Ti-Mbundam were eventually forced out of the area, both by the Bali people and by the German colonial government. As they left, they took Fon Nana of Bawock with them as a hostage due to his supposed loyalty to the Bali. When he returned in 1912, Nyamndi writes that the Fon of Bali

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<sup>9</sup> Interview, Nyamsenkwen, Christopher Kunbuma, Mayor of Bali-Nyonga Council (2002- 2007), November 28, 2008, Bali-Nyonga

<sup>10</sup> Interview, Saboh, Ivo Peter, Bawock historian, November 18, 2008, Bamenda

<sup>11</sup> In fact, the Bali pride themselves in the fact that "the white man" has recorded their history long before he has recorded the history of other groups. Archived ethnographies and information about the Bali can still be found in Germany.

<sup>12</sup> Interview, Nyamsenkwen, Christopher Kunbuma, Mayor of Bali-Nyonga Council (2002- 2007), November 28, 2008, Bali-Nyonga

<sup>13</sup> Nyamndi, NdiFontah B. The Bali Chamba of Cameroon: A Political History, Paris: Edition Cape, 1988. P. 84

awarded him the old Bati land as a reward for his loyalty. The year, 1912, is also the most commonly cited year for the arrival of the Bawock, even though it is the year of their return.

The Bawock, on the other hand, claim to have come into the area around 1860 and “lived in harmony with the Batis”<sup>14</sup> until the Batis moved away to Ngwandum. When the Batis moved out, the Bawock settled on their old land. It was not until they settled on the old Bati land, that they became neighbors to the Bali. In this version, the Bali and Bawock did not even interact until after the departure of the Bati.

### **Assimilation vs. Autonomy**

While critics of the Bali point to its Nigerian origins, the Bali often bring attention to their remarkably heterogeneous make-up. As the clan migrated through Cameroon, it often incorporated the people of the villages it encountered. This incorporation can help explain why the Bali now speak Mungaka rather than the original language of the Chamba. The incorporated groups were grateful to be a part of the Bali because its intimidating reputation provided a shield and shelter from the outside threatening groups. In 2005, the Bali Council conducted a monographic study to identify all the different ethnicities within its jurisdiction. They were able to identify 17, and since ethno-linguistic groups (described by some as “tribes”) traditionally live together, each group was given its own village status. One of these villages was Bawock. Almost every other ethnic group in the Bali-Sub Division except for the Bawock now identifies itself as Bali.

This phenomenon can also be linked to ways in which it was encouraged by the colonial governments. Vubo and Ngawa write,

...ethnicity was created by the colonial situation (Amin 1998: 56; Kuklick 1978). Amin (ibid.) has associated this process with the reorganization of colonial territories and the search for intermediary chief in the need ‘to gain control of vast areas, often disorganized following the decline of the slave trade’ in the ‘absence of states, or of a dependent or feudal class.’ What we

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<sup>14</sup> Saboh, Ivo Peter, *The Ethnography of the Bawock Feu Gafa People*, Bamenda: Rapid Reading Series, 2008 p. 26

see here is an attempt by the 'administrators and the military, poor amateur anthropologists' trying to invent a tribe (ibid.)<sup>15</sup>

When the German protectorate gave the Bali the authority to preside over the other groups in the area, it was in essence fabricating an ethnic conglomeration.

The Bawock have made deliberate efforts to maintain their identity as a separate group of Bamileke origin. During the reign of Bawock founder, Fon Mfeu Nonghub, the practice of endogamy was strictly enforced and everyone in the village were strongly encouraged speak their home dialect. Also, because the Bawock came from the Francophone west province, many of them can still speak, and in some cases are more comfortable speaking, French.<sup>16</sup> The Bawock state in their memorandum,

despite the cultural, traditional, linguistic and administrative autonomy of Bawock Village in the Bali Sub-Division, we have never had any regards from indigenes of Bali Nyonga and their successive leaders and we have always been victims of hegemony and assimilatory policies of our neighbor, Bali Nyonga.(4)

In order to assert their autonomy, the Bawock have made efforts to get their boundaries distinguished.<sup>17</sup> They hope that this will legitimize their claims to autonomy, validate their territorial claims, and distinguish Bawock as a second class chiefdom. While Bawock's status as a second class chiefdom attaches it to Bali, it also supports their pursuit to stand alone. The First Assistant Senior Divisional Officer (Premier Adjoint Prefectoral) for Mezam, Simon Sombe,<sup>18</sup> recognizes this contradictory push and pull created by the second degree status and admits, "C'est un problème que l'état, lui meme, a créé parce que l'état devrait ne pas rattacher la chefferie de deuxième degré de bawock au chefferie de première degré de Bali... Comment soumettre à la culture de l'autre ma propre culture?"<sup>19</sup> He goes on to suggest, "L'état doit corriger les textes qui ont créé un problème. Déjà les textes créé

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<sup>15</sup> Vubo, Emmanuel Yenshu and George A. Ngawa. "Changing Intercommunity Relations and the Politics of Identity in the Northern Mezam Area, Cameroon (La dynamique des relations intercommunautaires et la politique identitaire dans la partie nord du département de la Mezam, Cameroun)" Cahiers d'Études Africaines, Vol. 41, Cahier 161 (2001), pp. 163-190 EHESS <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4393110> Accessed: 20/11/2008 07:33 p. 185

<sup>16</sup> In fact the Fon of Bawock gave his interview in French.

<sup>17</sup> This has been a formal effort since 1975 as written in the Bawock memorandum

<sup>18</sup> Directly after being interviewed, Sombe was congratulated for being promoted to a post in Limbe. This is a typical problem in the government where some of its most knowledgeable employees will be transferred outside of the situation while problems are still happening. This makes the situation difficult because the new administrator who comes to take his place will have to start the research and investigation process almost completely anew.

<sup>19</sup> "This is a problem that the state, itself, has created because the state should not attach the second degree Fondom of Bawock to the first degree chefferie of Bali...How can I submit my own culture to one that is different?"

Bawock va supprimer le rattachement de Bawock à Bali.<sup>20</sup>

The Bali, who have had negative experiences in the past with groups trying to assert their autonomy are uncomfortable with Bawock's assertion. In a letter to the SDO of Mezam, the Bali wrote,

The attitude of the Bawocks towards the Bali people today is a replica of the behavior of the Batis towards the Bali people in 1911. Administrative decisions from then to date, whether it concerned the Batis or the Bawocks have shown that history has always been used as a guiding principle of judgment<sup>21</sup>

This seems to allude to the Ti-Mbundam effort to assert their authority, and their subsequent eviction by the government. Additionally, many of the neighboring Widikum groups, in an event described as "The Widikum Wars" of 1952 Widikum fought to assert their independence from the Bali while keeping the land that they occupied. The wars were incredibly destructive, and despite the adversity they faced, the Bali were able to come out less damaged than the Widikum.<sup>22</sup> Because of the destruction they caused, the Widikum were made to award the Bali a water pump to help in its development. These experiences would leave the Bali with a bad taste in their mouth when it comes to ascertaining autonomy.<sup>23</sup>

## **Mantum**

One of the major points of contention is a small region which the Bali have named, "Mantum". It is a very fertile and small quarter located on the edge of Bali sub-division bordering Santa sub-division's villages of Mbu and Pinyin. Currently, Mantum is almost completely comprised of Bali residents.<sup>24</sup> Because of this, most people will not hesitate to say that Mantum is Bali territory. As with all land issues in the area, the true story is not as simple.

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<sup>20</sup> "The state should rectify the texts that have created the problem. The texts that created Bawock should be used to cancel the attachment from Bawock to Bali"

<sup>21</sup> Bali-Nyonga traditional council, *The Expansionist Policy of the Bawocks in Bali*, Bali Subdivision, 10 February 2001

<sup>22</sup> Nyamndi, NdiFontah B. *The Bali Chamba of Cameroon: A Political History*, Paris: Edition Cape, 1988.

<sup>23</sup> In each of these cases, the Bali mention the ungraciousness of each group to come into a land as a guest yet not respect and follow the custom of its hosts. It is interesting to note that the name, "Bawock" means "visitor", while, "Bali" means "let's sleep here."<sup>23</sup> Although the meanings of the names have lost their function, they seem to highlight the complex relationship between the two groups.

<sup>24</sup> Interview, Nyongeh, Ignatious, Pastor in Bawock in 2007, Baba

According to the Bawock, Mantum was originally Mbu territory (belonging to the Baforchu village) but was eventually inhabited by the Bawock when they came to join the Bati. The land was then employed to house the Fon's wives and for farming.

The Bawock now assert that Mantum "is an imaginary village, illegally created to undermine the territorial sovereignty of the Bawock vis-à-vis its neighbors."<sup>25</sup> The Bawock claim to have left the area in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the Bawock Fon, Wandah I, refused to report the uncircumcised men in his village to the German government to facilitate tax collection. He was fined for tax evasion. His brother,<sup>26</sup> Myhead Tainkeu, advised him to go to jail rather than pay the fine, so he acted accordingly. When he came out of jail, he found that his brother had taken his place as the Fon with the blessings of the Bali. Having had his throne taken from him, he decided to leave the area with the Bawock residents who were loyal to him. These residents, Bawock historians claim, lived in the area called Mantum. When the loyal citizens left, their vacant compounds were occupied by the Bali, who live there today.

While this may be the case for some of the compounds in Mantum, there are also many Mantum residents who will cite a different story. In this version, the majority of the residents of Mantum actually came from the Western province's Banten-Lolo group. The group, like the many other groups that identify as Bali-Nyonga decided to join forces with the Bali and migrate with them across the nation. Because of this, the group claims to have arrived in Mantum in the 1830.<sup>27</sup> The Bali use Mantum as evidence that they had strategically placed Bawock inside its auspices in order to ensure its submission. This argument only works if the Bali had inhabited Mantum from the beginning, and that it really was the Bali who gave their land to the Bawock.

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<sup>25</sup> Chaiman Bawock Traditional Council, A memorandum presented by the Bawock People against the Bali Nyonga for invasions of the second class Fandom of Bawock, destructions of over 400 houses by fire, non respect of administrative decisions threat to lives. Bawock Village, 19 March, 2007 p. 6

<sup>26</sup> Called by historian Ivo Peter Saboh "the usurper"

<sup>27</sup> Bali native, Nyamsenkwen claims that Mantum has also been mentioned in documents such as the 1938 and 1968 gazettes. This has yet to be confirmed by the author.

Mantum is an area strongly coveted by both the Bali and the Bawock because not only does it contain some of the region's most fruitful farmland, it also carries with it strong political power. If owned by the Bawock, it gives them a necessary step towards autonomy. The access to borders with Mbu and Pinyin allow the Bawock to engage with and travel to the outside villages without having to pass through Bali territory. Bawock also has a much more conciliatory relationship with the two villages, even creating a governmentally recognized alliance called Mbu-Pin-Wock. There is talk that Bawock wants to leave Bali Sub-division for that of Santa<sup>28</sup> which could only happen if Bawock shared a boundary with the area. The Bali, on the other hand cling strongly to Mantum because of its Bali population and its ability to bolster Bali's arguments against Bawock's autonomy.

The state has sided with Bawock on the issue for what some people consider to be conspiracy-related reasons. In 2006, the Fon of Bawock started discussing with the Fons of Mbu and Pinyin about putting up "amicable" boundary sign-boards to show their boundaries with each other. These discussions were done without the participation of the Bali Fon, but indulged by the government. On December 5, 2006, the Fon of Bali received notice that the sign boards would be placed by the government the following day in Mantum. Angered, he went to the Bamenda government headquarters to inquire about the matter and was assured by the government that the placing of the sign boards would be delayed.<sup>29</sup> This seemed to have been a trick as the government went ahead the next day to place signboards signifying the boundary between Bawock, Mbu, and Pinyin and thus indirectly recognizing Mantum as part of Bawock. Outraged by the action and by their lack of voice in the matter, the Bali citizens of Mantum violently attacked the government officials involved in the demarcation efforts, tore down the signs, and burned two cars. This event marked the beginning of the most recent tensions between the two groups.

Since the event, the elites of Mantum have mobilized to make their voice heard about the situation. In a document titled, "Reaction of the People of Mantum Village After

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<sup>28</sup> Suggested by Bawock in its submitted memorandum

<sup>29</sup> Bali-Nyonga traditional council, An Attempt by "Bawock Village" in Bali Sub-Division to Fraudulently Alter the Administrative Boundaries of Bali and Santa Sub-Divisions, Bali Subdivision, 8 December 2006

Listening to the Result of the Meeting in Your Office Today 11/01/2007", the Mantum residents went as far as to state "we are ready to reimburse all Bawock people who bought land from Mantum village since we now know their intention" and "we are from today more determined than ever to all die or be in prison if the administration continue[s] to force on us any issue about the exploitation of Mantum land especially by Bawock people." This shows the high level of opposition by the population of Mantum to the attempt to make their land a part of Bawock.

To add to the complexity of the region, Mantum also hosts the Bali Shrine at a stream called, Ntsi Su'Fu. It is in this area where the Bali's Ju-ju, called VOMA comes to do its appeasement. In Bali folklore, when the Bali-Nyonga first reached the grassfields, the village elders drank from the water at that spot and became empowered to rule their Fondom.<sup>30</sup> This spot thus has spiritual, sentimental, and historical significance to the Bali. Additionally, the Bali claim that in order to build a shrine, they need to use human sacrifices. Since that is now illegal, moving their shrine from Ntsi Su'Fu is no longer a possibility. According to the Bawock, the original shrine was located in Bali where there is now a large water pump. The Bawock claim that the Bali used the former site for their rituals until Widikum wars. After the wars, the awarded Widikum water pump was furnished in the location of the Bali's old shrine. The Bali then moved their new shrine site to Bawock. Although the Bali claims that the past Bawock Fons did not complain as much as the new one, the Bawock have registered numerous petitions against the Bali's use of their land for the shrine since 1975. The issue of the shrine has also been addressed in past peace resolutions between the Bali and the Bawock.

The Bawock have claimed that the government placed an injunction on the site of the shrine, but when asked about it, Sombe insisted that it did not exist. What does exist is

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<sup>30</sup> Interview, Nthali, Benson, Bali-Nyonga, November 27, 2008, Bamenda



numerous peace agreements and government decisions saying that the site be used for rituals on the condition that both parties consent.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Crisis in March 2007**

The destruction of March follows the trend of the stories between the Bali and the Bawock by having many differing details. With all the stories, eye witness accounts, and government documents, several key elements have become evident. The first is that the conflict was provoked by the already articulated issues having to do with Bali's traditional ritual worship. Bali's ju-ju, VOMA, is one of its most important ju-jus, which is non-violent, and highly venerated. It commemorates the planting season and ensures a fruitful harvest. The prevention of VOMA is a large offense to the entire community on par with the capture of the Fon himself. When the VOMA comes out, the entire Bali community stays indoors and suspends work in reverence. While the VOMA participates in its rituals at what the Bali consider being the edges of its jurisdiction, guns are shot and loud noises are made.

March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007 was Bawock's "country Sunday" where everyone was supposed to be silent and reverent as well. The appearance of the VOMA angered the Bawock because it showed both the irreverence of the Bali towards their "country Sunday" and the Bali's lack of respect for the Bawock's jurisdictional autonomy. When the VOMA came back from its libations at Ntsi Su'Fu, they took what the Bawock described as being a new route through the Bawock palace. Bawock notable, Peter Limen, stopped the VOMA from passing on the road, and according to the Bali, seized and destroyed the VOMA. "Seizing the VOMA is like taking away all of our identities"<sup>32</sup> explained a Bali native. The Bali, outraged and offended by the act, set fire to Peter Limen's house and fought with Peter Limen and a local pastor who tried to intervene in the confrontation.<sup>33</sup> That night, the Bawock's palace was burnt down.

This outburst of violence upset many Bawock residents who resolved to leave the village for their safety. Chris Nyamsenkwen, Social Democratic Front (SDF) mayor of Bali at

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<sup>31</sup> These documents are located in index p. viii to p. xiv See the section on past efforts to make peace to see how each side has manipulated this decision.

<sup>32</sup> Interview, Maurine, Bali-Nyonga, October 22, 2008, Yaoundé

<sup>33</sup> Interview, Nyongeh, Ignatious, Pastor in Bawock in 2007, Baba

the time, visited the escaping residents and ensured them that the fighting was over so they would not need to leave. Many Bawock natives, especially those in the quarter of Nited, felt betrayed by his action because however well intentioned it was, it proved to be disastrously inaccurate of the events to follow.

For two days, an uneasy calm presided over the village. Early in the morning of March 6<sup>th</sup>, a traditional and important thatch hut of the Bali was burnt down. The Bali blamed the Bawock for this act of arson. With their traditional hut turned into ashes, the Bali banged a war rhythm<sup>34</sup> on their drums. Over the course of the next few hours, flames engulfed entire village of Bawock until it turned into eerily abandoned and immolated abyss. The few houses that remained were ones that bore the traditional peace plant and housed intermarried (Bali and Bawock) couples. This presupposes that the invasion of Bawock by the Bali was premeditated as signs were given to some families in Bawock to put the peace plants in front of their houses to prevent their destruction.

While there are many eye-witness accounts and evidence submitted to the courts, no one has been found guilty for the acts of arson and destruction. Cases of probable intent could point towards the Bali, yet the Bali also have an abundance of conspiracy theories pointing to why the Bawock would burn down their own property. Many say it is to get sympathy for their cause.

Directly following the burning, the Bawock were transported to the Bamenda Congress Hall where they stayed for around two months with the help of several civil society and local development organizations. There, they benefitted from donations, but suffered from insufficient sanitary conditions, lack of privacy, and malaria epidemics. As soon as they could, the Bawock who had the means, moved back into their home village—many staying in the building of the local High School. Now, much of the village population is still displaced, and those who have returned are living in much worse conditions. Many people tell stories of how they lost entire collections of books, cars, appliances etc. It is now their jobs to recover that which was lost. One and a half years later, the village still bears marks from its

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<sup>34</sup> Interview, Limen, Elizabeth Ngasso, Bawock, November 21, 2008, Bawock Village

earlier destruction.<sup>35</sup> Many of the houses are still in disrepair, or in the process of being reconstructed. The ruins of the palace look almost untouched. Similarly, the Bali thatch hut has yet to be rebuilt.

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### **Attempts to Resolve the Conflict**

It seems that the majority of recorded efforts to make peace between the Bali and the Bawock were taken by the government, specifically the senior divisional officer for Mezam. Nonetheless, both groups also claim that there were other moments outside of the government when they tried to make peace. The earliest motion the two groups made to make peace has no documentation, thus the actual details have many discrepancies.

This first attempt was made relatively early in their relationship, and has been referred to as the "Pact of Non-Aggression." The Bawock refer to this treaty very frequently. In this treaty, the Bali and the Bawock agreed not to be violent towards each other, and as the Bawock claim, they dug trenches and built walls to determine their boundaries. This pact was also consecrated with the burying of two black dogs. This treaty is so important to the Bawocks because they believe that it legitimizes their claims to areas such as Mantum, and shows that the creation of boundaries can be an amicable action. For these same reasons, the Bali have very different ideas of its existence and nature.

When asked about the treaty of non-aggression, and the digging of trenches to delimit boundaries, the former Mayor of Bali Chris Nyamsenkwen simply responded that Bali created pacts with all their constituents and that the trenches in the area were dug for the protection of buffalo, not to signify any boundaries.

The first treaty of which there is written evidence was in 1975.<sup>36</sup> It was titled, "Communique of peaceful co-existence between the peoples of Bali and Bawock communities". At this time, the two Fons decided to make a treaty to "acknowledge the fact that their peoples have been divided by long outstanding petty feuds" and to come to agreement about their relationship with each other and with the administration. In spite of the frequency with which it is cited, its verbiage is actually quite vague. Mostly, it

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<sup>35</sup> See pictures in the appendix p.xiv

<sup>36</sup> Included in the index p. viii

emphasizes how important it is that unity is respected between the two parties, that each party respects each other, and that both Fons make efforts to “ensure that persons under them do not introduce attitudes which will, from henceforth, revive the past misunderstandings” (2). This last statement can have different interpretations depending on which perspective the reader takes. The Bawock could focus on the “revive past misunderstandings” part to blame the Bali for insisting on using the libation area and for promoting a different history than what they believe. The Bali, on the other hand, could look at the “attitudes” part to express their grievances with the more antagonistic new Fon.

In 2005, the two Fons came together to make another agreement entitled, the “Gwan Summit Resolutions.”<sup>37</sup> In this treaty, which was twice as long as the communique, more specific issues were directly addressed. In the resolution, each party present expressed their specific problems, then after taking their grievances into consideration, the Senior Divisional Officer (SDO) wrote his conclusions. Here, both Fons inter alia, articulated their feelings of lack of respect, problems with the boundary definitions, participation in development efforts, and the use of the shrine. Three of the resolutions the SDO came up with were especially pertinent to the conflict. The first of his resolutions was that “the creation of New Villages by the Bali Council and Bali Nynga Fondom can not be officially admitted until homologated by the competent authority of the state” most likely referring to the area of Mantum. The fourth resolution of the SDO regarded the shrine and stated that it would “be open for traditional ritual but any such action must be accompanied by information and invitation to the other party as of old.”(4) The Bali see this to mean that they are allowed to use the shrine for their rituals, whereas the Bawock focus on the conditionality of the statement. Lastly, the fifth resolution asks that the Fons, “concert regularly and seek to resolve any misunderstanding among the communities amicably.”(5) Both Fons use this statement to find fault with the other.

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## **Basic Problems as Applied to Bali and Bawock**

### **Respect**

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<sup>37</sup> Included in the index p. ix

In the conflict, both sides feel like they have suffered a great loss of respect from the other party. The Fon of Bali feels like his status as paramount chief is not being respected by the Fon of Bawock, and the Fon of Bawock feels like he has not been given enough respect as a second class Fon. This issue has been repeated in various forms through the past petitions and peace treaties.<sup>38</sup> Many of the citizens reiterate this frustration with the lack of mutual respect—citing even actions that could seem small to the Western eye.<sup>39</sup>

The issue of mutual respect becomes expanded to the respect of each other's Fondom status. The Fon of Bawock believes that as a second class Fondom, Bawock deserves to have a recognized autonomy. The Fon of Bali, however tries to focus on the submissive aspect of the second class Fondom to the first class Fondom. The Bali's reluctance to recognize autonomy also makes sense in the context of the Widikum wars where other groups within Bali decided to declare their autonomy. They were able to do so, but only after much bloodshed and destruction. The separation and declaration of independence is interpreted by the Bali as a slap in the face since they argue that they gave land to the Bawock to settle. It is this Bali argument specifically, which irritates the Bawock who still insist that they never received any land from the Bali in the first place. The Bawock also seem to have a frustration with trying to figure out what they actually are as a second class Fondom. It seems that they are reluctantly attached to the Bali without any substantial benefits. In their submitted memorandum, the Bawock complain of their decreased representation in the council as well as the lack of development projects in their area. "In an envisaged development Projects in the Sudivision, the council has carried out none in Bawock, since they took office in 2001" (7).

The creation of the Mbu-Pin-Wock alliance<sup>40</sup> seems to be a strong statement by the Bawock of both their autonomy, and their jurisdiction over Mantum. This alliance is

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<sup>38</sup> A few examples are both peace treaties, "Re: Conspiracy, attempts to partition the Bali Fondom, annex its people and provoke disorder" 15 January 2007, where the Bali state specifically, "[The decree creating Bawock as a second class Fondom] therefore admonishes the loyalty, respect, gratitude, and allegiance the chief of Bawock owes to the Fon of Bali" (3), Memorandum Presented by the Bawock people..., The Chief of Bawock, "The Bawock people's petitions against the recognition of the Bali Nyonga's libation area in Bawock village by the administration", and the Death celebration letters

<sup>39</sup> Examples include how the Fon of Bawock has not referred to the Fon of Bali as "big brother" or his use of an umbrella during formal ceremonies.

<sup>40</sup> Referenced in the demarcation of boundaries

particularly threatening to the Bali because it compromises its omnipresence, and brings back memories of the widikum wars. People view this as an attempt to fragment and disintegrate Bali Subdivision. When Bawock was attacked in March, Pinyin, Mbu, and Bafurchu offered to go to war with Bali in support of Bawock<sup>41</sup> but the Fon turned down their offer deciding to respond non-violently. When talking about this exchange, the Fon of Bawock referred to the other villages as "allies"<sup>42</sup> which many Bali people interpreted to mean that he was already conniving to other villages in Santo Sub Division against Bali.

Ultimately the issues have come down to the non respect of each other's cultures. The Bali feel disrespected when they are prevented from performing their VOMA rituals, whereas the Bawock feel disrespected when the Bali enter their village and act against the customs of their "country Sundays". Additionally, the Bawock argue that the Bali, who live in Bawock insist on following their own Bali customs rather than respecting those of the Bawock.

### **Taking Responsibility for Actions**

Perhaps the most negative elements of the crisis is the reluctance of both sides to take responsibility for their part in creating conflict and to acknowledge the hardships of the other side. The most striking denial is that of the Bali. In interviews, rather than condemning the incredible violence that took place in the immolation of Bawock, many interview respondents tried to find conspiracy theories pointing to why the Bawock would burn their own village. A Bali notable, when asked what he thought of March's immolation, responded that it was a "foolish" story.<sup>43</sup> The summons submitted by the Bali calls the burning of Bawock as "pre-planned self-destruction and auto-exclusion" then condemns the Bawock for their bad reception by the press. In an interview with the Chronicle, the Fon of Bali states,

How could it have happened that Bali people attacked some parts of Bali [meaning Bawock] with Gendarmes, Police and all the authorities and even the Bawock people themselves and nobody saw anybody?...By all indications, the Bawock people had something in mind. I think they wanted to do something, so that the Bali people will be made to pay horrendous sums of money for whatever reason. But nobody has been able to tell me, he saw

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<sup>41</sup> Interview, Tchakounte, Samuel, Bawock, November 30, 2008

<sup>42</sup> Interview, Foncham, Nelvien Dingsala, Bali-Nyonga, November 28, 2008, Bali-Nyonga

<sup>43</sup> Interview, Kapa Clemant, Bali-Nyonga notable, December 2, 2008, phone interview

this or that person doing anything. It's like a little mystery<sup>44</sup>

To the outside eye, the main reason the Bali have not apologized for the burning is their reputation for being proud. A journalist who had been covering the issue states, "In hiding, the Bali man will say he did it, but he will never be able to say he did it in public"<sup>45</sup> Even if the Bali were proven as guilty, many interviewees believed that they still would be incredibly reluctant to admit their guilt. Instead, Mbuswe feels that the Bali have their own way of apologizing. "What their Fon did was enough to say 'I'm sorry'. He regretted what happened, and gave what little he had as a token to feed the Bawock children." In this way, some say that by donating 100,000 CFA to the Bawock's efforts to rebuild their village, the Bali had already indirectly apologized.

A large reason for Bali's reluctance to apologize, acknowledge guilt, or even remorse for the burning of Bawock is their apprehension of having to pay for compensation. A Bali interviewee who wished to remain anonymous admitted the probability that the Bali were responsible for the act, yet did not want to be forced to pay for an act that he did not personally take part in. "An apology is an admission of guilt" he stated. In this case, an apology does not function in the same way as an "asha". Rather than acknowledge the hardships of the Bawock, many Bali sought to list their own grievances with the Bawocks and why the Bawocks were such an ungrateful group. Additionally, since the Bawocks were smoked out of their village, the Bali started to take over their farms. So far there have been no efforts to ensure that the Bawock get their land back. This is rather unfortunate because many of the Bawock citizens interviewed say that all they need from the Bali is an apology.

Many Bawock, on the other hand only want to bring attention to their victimization in the situation and not on their role in the tension that lead to the crisis. Their analysis of the situation does not seem to take into account the voicelessness of the residents of Mantum. Also, even if they may not have been guilty for the burning of Bali's thatch hut, they do not mention remorse for the damage that happened to the hut.

## **Communication**

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<sup>44</sup>"The Untold Story! Why Bali-Nyonga May Not Compensate Bawock" Motomu, Eric. Chronicle. September 9, 2008

<sup>45</sup> Mbuswe, Chris, Journalist Post Newspaper, November 19, 2008, Bamenda

Issues of poor communication also abound in this conflict. In all the official documents I received, there was an abundance of correspondence between the Fons and the government, but none at all between the two. It can be assumed that the two would have other means of communication, but it also is quite clear that due to their current dislike of each other, neither have been making great efforts to stay in contact. In addition to the poor communication between the two Fons, there is poor communication to the citizens of the area. Many of the Bawock residents still do not know the status of their area and those who are displaced are having difficulties knowing when they will be able to move back. The government argues that it is the responsibility of the traditional authorities to communicate with the people, while the traditional authorities claim that it is the government which should be communicating with the residents.<sup>46</sup>

A clear example of where the lack of solid communication was especially deleterious to the conflict was in the boundary demarcation of December 2006. Although Mantum supposedly doesn't belong to Bali, it still is within the Bali Subdivision which would qualify the Fon of Bali to participate in the dialogue concerning the demarcation. Additionally, the actual residents of the area in question were never given a voice in the decision making process. When asked about their involvement in the matter, the Premier Adjoint Prefectoral replied "L'administaion n'a pas besoin de parler avec les gens de Mantum... Mantum n'est même pas un chefferie de troisième degré."<sup>47</sup>

### **Logic over Justice**

A common, but faulty approach to solving the problems between the Bali and Bawock is to try to assess the situation in terms of Logic. This shows up especially when people talk about the histories of the two groups. "This is Bawock in the middle [of Bali]! How could a bunch of men come and settle in the middle here? Do you see the logic?"<sup>48</sup> "Of course Mantum belongs to the Bawock; you cannot leave Bali, enter Bawock, then cross

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<sup>46</sup> Interview, Limen, Peter Njamchep, Bawock Notable, November 21, 2008, Bawock Village

<sup>47</sup> "The administration doesn't need to talk with the people of Mantum. Mantum isn't even a third degree chefferie" Interview, Sombe, Simon, Administrateur Civil Mezam, November 19, 2008, Bamenda

<sup>48</sup> Interview, Mbunwe, Chris, journalist Post Newspaper, November 19, 2008, Bamenda



through Bali again before going into Mbu!<sup>49</sup> As the analysis of the migration histories show, logic does not do justice to the complexity, nuance, and vagueness of the true stories.

Even more dangerous is people's propensity to try to solve the problem using logic. Logic cannot begin to address the issues created by over a century of building tension. When asked about the residents of Mantum, many government officials and Bawock residents assume that the government will be able to solve the problem just by merit of their supposed might. This again turns to logic rather than assessing the problems of the citizens of Mantum. In December 2006 when the government came to make demarcations, the Mantum residents reacted violently, but in what they described as, "controlled civil defense" Mantum native, Nyamsenkwen says, "violence isn't always bad" when in the context of "controlled civil defense." While the researcher believes that violence in any context cannot be condoned, it also needs to be acknowledged that people turn to violence when they feel that they have not been listened to. Academic Parker Shipton asks, "Will axioms of inequality only flourish in new forms if ritually or rhetorically denied?"<sup>50</sup> Pure government intervention and enforcement of the boundary demarcation does nothing to take the issues of the residents of Mantum in mind and does nothing to avoid further discontent and violence.

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### **Other Issues Pertaining to This Case Specifically**

"If you judge Bali-Bawock in terms of the political situation in the Mezam division and the political interests surrounding it, then you will [really] understand the problem."<sup>51</sup>

This conflict, like many in the North West, also has strong connections to politics. Bawock has many reasons to want the region of Mantum considering its population size and historical claims. More interestingly, the linking of Mantum to Bawock, and Bawock's alliance with villages in Santa, sub-division, Mbu-Pin-Wock could likely lead in the direction of new administrative units. Santa sub-division is the home to many of the nation's prominent

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<sup>49</sup> Interview, Tchakounte, Samuel, Bawock, November 30, 2008

<sup>50</sup> Shipton, Parker, "Land and Culture in Tropical Africa: Soils, Symbols, and the Metaphysics of the Mundane", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 23 (1994), pp. 347-377 *Annual Reviews*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2156018> Accessed: 20/11/2008 07:38 p. 368

<sup>51</sup> Interview, Nthali, Benson, Bali-Nyonga, November 27, 2008, Bamenda

political leaders including Achidi Achu, a former Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) prime-minister, and John Fru Ndi, the leader of the oppositional party. Currently, Santa is advocating to transition from a sub-division into a division. In order to meet the size requirements of becoming a division, it needs to expand by a landmass about the same size as Bawock. In Bawock's Memorandum against the Bali, they directly suggest that a way to solve the problem between Bali and Bawock is to attach it to Santa Subdivision.<sup>52</sup> The Fon of Bawock explained in an interview, that he would rather be a part of the division that wanted him there than one that burned down the houses of all his constituents.<sup>53</sup>

The CPDM government has incentive to humor these requests in light of its recent actions in favor of Bawock, who could improve its electoral support. The Northwest region is known as being the hub of support to the nation's leading oppositional party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF). Mezam division, which currently houses both Bali Sub-Division, and Santa Sub-Division historically has supported the SDF. Whereas an SDF center like Mezam would be expected to always support SDF, Santa Sub-Division has been making strong efforts to become CPDM. Some speculate that if Bawock was added to Santa, Bawock would provide enough votes to help its transition from an SDF fief to a CPDM fief. Many Bali residents believe that the underlying cause of all the tension between Bali and Bawock has been provoked by Santa's self interest "Let Bali and Bawock solve their problems on their own without any other hands in the pot"<sup>54</sup> pleaded a Bali citizen.

In light of the demarcation, it is easy to say that the government is biased towards the Bawock, yet it also has worked in favor of the Bali. Despite all the mass destruction, violence, and wealth of eye-witness accounts available to prove the culpability of the Bali not one person has been found guilty.<sup>55</sup> The Bawock point to the large number of Bali

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<sup>52</sup> Chaiman Bawock Traditional Council, A memorandum presented by the Bawock People against the Bali Nyonga for invasions of the second class Fandom of Bawock, destructions of over 400 houses by fire, non respect of administrative decisions threat to lives. Bawock Village, 19 March, 2007

<sup>53</sup> Nana Wanda III, Fon of Bawock, November 26, 2008, Bamenda

<sup>54</sup> Interview, Nthali, Benson, Bali-Nyonga, November 27, 2008, Bamenda

<sup>55</sup> In May of 2007, eleven Bali youth were taken to court, but Bali lawyer Sama Francis was able to successfully get the case dismissed due to lack of substantial evidence.

members in the government who can help delay the criminal cases.<sup>56</sup> Whereas the direct government action taken to make boundary demarcations pointed towards Bawock preference, the significant inaction of the government points towards support for the Bali.

Government officials' response to critiques of their inaction is to point fingers in different directions within the administration. When asked if anyone had been found guilty for the crimes, the Administrateur Civil merely stated that it was not his responsibility to take care of that part of the conflict.<sup>57</sup> Yet, in defense of the administration, they are also claiming to be inactive in terms of boundary demarcation because they are busy engaging in mediation between the Fons to avoid any further violent conflict in the future. Yet, while governmental inaction can seem benign on the surface, it actually can encourage increased conflict and tension. "The government has to act; it has to be proactive...By being inactive, the government is supporting instability because these people are still traumatized."<sup>58</sup> Says human rights activist, Chi Simon. In the Widikum wars, violence erupted when the Widikum grew impatient with the government's stalling and decided to take their conflict into their own hands. Again, this indirect support of instability leads to a support of the fissure of Bali Sub-Division, and the linking of Bawock with Santa—a more peaceful alternative.

### **Transition from Tradition to Modernity**

The confusion and ostensible disorganization in the government's approach to the Bawock problem can be traced to the transition from the traditional political structure of Fondoms into a democracy inspired institution. Njeuma writes,

This situation caused the Europeans to realize that by establishing two administrative systems—one local or native and the other central or colonial—they had created a problem, if not for themselves, then for the Africans who would have to decide, upon independence, how to integrate native administration with central or national administration.<sup>59</sup>

When Bawock was first recognized as a village, the distinction was made mostly to recognize the striking cultural differences between the Bali and Bawock and to validate its

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<sup>56</sup> The Fon of Bawock stated that the Bawocks submitted two cases two years ago and still nothing has happened, yet when the Bali submitted a summons against the Bawock, they were taken to court almost immediately. He thinks this is connected to the Bali magistrate in the court system.

<sup>57</sup> Interview, Sombe, Simon, Administrateur Civil Mezam, November 19, 2008, Bamenda

<sup>58</sup> Interview, Chi, Simon Ndeh, President National Organization of Human Rights, Cameroon, November 20, 2008, Bamenda

<sup>59</sup> Njeuma, Martin, Introduction to the History of Cameroon in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Hong Kong: Macmillan, 1989 P. 191

authenticity as an independent group. At the time the decree was made, it did not have any jurisdictional requirements. In 1978, a new decree was made that then required that traditional groupings have territorial distinctions. These apparent contradictions have made government's approach to the problem very controversial.

### **The Politicization of Traditional Institutions**

The problems involving the muddy relationship between traditional and modern institutions become even clearer when one inserts the power dynamics of the elites. "Fons aren't evil people, they are just sitting on an evil system" says Chi Simon. When trying to incorporate the traditional institution into the modern political structure, politicians turn to ethnic and ethno-linguistic allegiances communicated through the elites and carried out through the Fons in order to maintain their power. The Fons through this politicization, hold enormous power and can determine which political party wins an election in their community. This political power is used as a bargaining tool to elicit favors from the government. This, in turn, encourages election fraud. In the case of the Bawock demarcation, one could speculate that the power of the elites in the government had a strong role in bringing Bawock closer to Santa Sub-Division. An anonymous Bali interviewee stated, "The question only came from the external elites who need land here, who are deceiving the people because the people here are village people." On the side of the Fon, his power to mobilize his entire constituency regardless of their own political leanings could be demonstrated in the remarkable transition made by both Bali and Bawock from being strongly SDF to strongly CPDM in only one election season. One of the Fons made his intentions for the change very clear "I will be honest, probably 90% of my constituents are SDF, but we needed to vote for the party we thought would support us the most." This demonstrates the strong influence of the Fon on the electorate.

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### **The Way forward—Suggestions for Peace**

"You have to have peace at all costs because you're sacrificing a future generation of mixed blood"<sup>60</sup>

In spite of all the disagreements and elements of conflict between the villages, there

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<sup>60</sup> Ngwa, Laura Naddin, Coordinator Justice and Peace Commission, December 1, 2008, Bamenda

still remains the undeniable truth that the two groups are living together and are bound<sup>61</sup> to live together. The 1975 communique of peaceful co-existence writes,

Having regard to the voluntary choice of our ancestors to live together in one geographical environment which shares common political, social and economic interests, we pledge ourselves to work together not only to sustain the efforts of our forefathers but also to build a strong and united district in which our future generations shall be glorified. (1)

Perhaps the most extreme measure one group can take to displace the other would be to burn down their entire village. Here, almost the entire Bawock village was reduced to ashes, yet its citizens are determined to stay and have been returning despite the challenges and adversity. In the same line, the residents of Mantum will always identify with their Bali counterparts no matter which way the political administration draws its lines. In order to ensure sustainable peace between all parties, answers might not come from the courts where outcomes are determined as victories and losses. Answers will need to be found by the people themselves and steps will be needed to ensure that it isn't only the petty feuds that are addressed, but the underlying dynamics that lead to these feuds.

### **Communication and Mediation**

Almost all of the people interviewed, regardless of village identity, agreed that the most effective way to deal with the situation would be through constructive dialogue. The major grievance both Fons had with each other was that in addition to their disagreements about history, autonomy, etc., they both believed it to be extremely difficult to communicate with each other. This could be seen in the packet of documents each group submitted to the government when filing complaints about each other. Each packet was full of correspondence between each Fon and government officials, and no correspondences directly between the Fons, themselves. The Fon of Bawock said that before the incident of December, 2006, the two were much more open with each other and would even attend each other's social events. He listed the feast the two of them organised after signing the Gwan Summit peace treaty of 2005. Nonetheless, since the violence erupted between the

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<sup>61</sup> Or "condemned" as many interviewees have insisted.

two villages, neither Fon has talked to the other without an official reason or an intermediary.

If the government finally decides to give the area of Mantum to the Bawock, the Fon of Bawock has to deal with the realities of the discontent of the people of Mantum. In order to avoid problems in the future similar to the violence in December 2006, the Fon has voiced his desire to hold a forum on the regions between the Fons of Pinyin, Bararchu, and Bali. The inclusion of Bali in the conversation will improve the dynamics and facilitate the development of strategies to ensure a more sustained peace in the area.

Additionally, the new Senior Divisional Officer, Joseph Bertrand Mache, has initiated a mediation process between the two Fons. In his approach, he has brought the two Fons together to dialogue on the way forward. They have decided on the issues that they need to discuss. They have also agreed on a mediator and after each discussion, reports are forwarded to the Senior Divisional Officer. Any decisions arrived at by the two parties will be affirmed by the administration. The Fon of Bawock, though a little worried that the majority of the people taking part in the mediation process are Bali, is happy to be participating. When asked if he had confidence in the new senior divisional officer to mediate, he said "C'est quelqu'un qui veut gérer et qui veut résoudre un problème équitablement. Parce que dans la négociation, on ne peut pas tous gagner. Pour moi, c'est notre préfet...c'est quelqu'un qui est capable de gérer la situation dans le Nordouest. Je le fais confiance."<sup>62</sup> Similarly, Bali notable, Kapa Clement also expressed his faith in the SDO to have a positive influence on the peace process

### **Moving from Positions to Interests**

In the mediation process, the Fons will have to identify what exactly their goals and priorities are for their communities. While it is clear where the two parties disagree, it would be constructive for them to translate their grievances and problems into feasible solutions. It

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<sup>62</sup> He is someone who wants to manage and solve a problem equitably. Because in negotiation, you cannot win everything. For me, he is our SDO...He is someone who can manage the situation in the Northwest. I trust him"

seems that both communities are afraid of losing their culture. Instead of trying to attack the culture of the other communities, it would be a better idea to channel the energy into educating the next generation about its culture. Similarly, history has proved to be extremely important and relevant to the present. So that the future generations will be able to understand their backgrounds with less difficulty, constant publication of well researched written history will be of great help to immortalize each party's stories.

## **Mantum**

The region of Mantum still continues to be a problem considering that there is no way to deal with the region and appease all the populations involved. Although the administration has officially taken the stance that Mantum belongs to Bawock<sup>63</sup>, the challenge is for the two Fons to agree. When asked if he had any questions for the Fon of Bali, the Fon of Bawock responded, "Es-ce qu'il est prêt pour qu'il y est un forum entre le chef Pinyin, le chef Bafurchu, le chef Bawock, et lui au sujet de la situation de Mantum?"<sup>64</sup>

In order to avoid future violence, all pertinent voices will need to be brought to the table. Additionally, if Mantum becomes officially awarded to Bawock (which looks extremely possible), Bawock will have to recognize it as more than just a piece of historically Bawock land; it has a very vibrant and potentially volatile constituency. It is necessary that if the Fon of Bawock wants to consider Mantum as part of its constituency, he and his people take time to learn about the culture, history, and identity of its people in order to best serve them. Just as Bali cannot merely assume that Bawock will happily oblige to integrate into its customs merely because it comprises part of its jurisdiction, Bawock cannot merely expect the residents of Mantum to assimilate in response to administrative decisions.

## **Compensation**

Compensation is also a major component, if not the pivotal factor for creating peace. Peacemaker Laura Naddin Ngwa, coordinator of the Justice and Peace of the Arch Diocese

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<sup>63</sup> Interview, Sombe, Simon, Administrateur Civil Mezam, November 19, 2008, Bamenda

<sup>64</sup> "Is he ready to participate in a forum with the Fon of Pinyin, the Fon of Bafurchu, and me about the situation in Mantum?"

of Bamenda asks, "How can you ask people to make peace when they don't even have a roof over their heads?"<sup>65</sup> Interview respondents had a variety of ideas of where compensation for the damages should be come from, but most believed that they should come from Bali and from the government. The past SDO, Jules Marcelin Ndjaga, when conducting his study on the damages done in March, concluded that at least 300 houses were razed in the crisis.<sup>66</sup> Faith Based Organisations, Civil Society Organisations, and personal donations have gone far in helping the Bawock population, but there is still much to be done. The majority of the Bawock are still displaced, many have lost their farms to the Bali who moved in after they were smoked out, and many Bawock students lost all their books in the fires and do not have the finances to afford a hitch free education. Compensation should be decided upon as a strategy to rehabilitate the victims and heal the trauma of the conflict.

### **Hope for Person to Person Healing**

Examining all the factors leading to the tension between Bali and Bawock can become overwhelming, yet hope seems to lie in the realities of interaction between individuals. Almost all people interviewed for the study spontaneously mentioned the high rate of intermarriage between the two villages, and the current principal of Bali's Government High School is a Bawock citizen. This seems to show that while the two groups may have some very large, and even irresolvable issues, the individuals that compose the groups are able to look past their problems and see each other as people. After the burning of Bawock, people mobilized on an online Bali yahoo group to start fund raising to help the Bawock.<sup>67</sup> There were countless stories of Bali individuals who personally came to aid their Bawock friends and to speak against the burning. Currently there is a motion among Bali citizens to change existing land laws to allow Bawock citizens to purchase Bali land.<sup>68</sup>

All of this shows that there is a very strong foundation in place to facilitate group healing and to bring out peace between the two groups. What needs to happen, then, is

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<sup>65</sup> Ngwa, Laura Naddin, Coordinator Justice and Peace Commission, December 1, 2008, Bamenda

<sup>66</sup> Mbulwe, Chris. "SDO Says Bali People Burnt 300 Houses" The Post, 13 March 2007

<sup>67</sup> Interview, Maurine, Bali-Nyonga, October 22, 2008, Yaoundé

<sup>68</sup> Interview, Nthali, Benson, Bali-Nyonga, November 27, 2008, Bamenda



that the Bali and Bawock citizens take advantage of the foundation that exists to facilitate a dialogue to address the issues that exist between them. Bawock interviewees recounted numerous stories of interacting where they would have to interact with former Bali friends whom they recognized to have taken part in the burning. There were also stories of the Bali residents making fun of the tragedy the Bawock citizens faced. In return, many of the Bawock are continuing to sustain the stereotypes placed on the Bali as being violent, domineering, and proud and not seeing the Bali as individuals capable of making peace. These types of interactions are not constructive. Worst still, the silence each group is observing about their issues. Almost all Bali and Bawock interviewees said that they were friends with people from the other group. Friendships where neither party can be honest about their feelings are incredibly delicate. It seems that this kind of friendship is more like walking on egg shells than celebrating true harmony.

In this sense, it seems constructive if there was some sort of forum set up to allow the citizens to share with each other their perspectives on the matter, then the surface level harmony that exists could start to take root. When asked if they had played any role in creating peace, many people accredited their already peaceful nature, or their ability to greet their neighbours without harbouring any ostensible resentment. This is a commendable step, but can be taken further. In the case of a different inter-ethnic conflict in the Northwest Region, the peace making process actually started with the people before their Fons followed suit to pursue peace making. This was seen in the conflict between the Bagam, Bamendjing, and Bamenyam. With the help of Ecumenical Services for Peace (SeP), the individual villages after going through trainings in Non violent conflict resolution, established peace committees to explore reasons for their problems and options for pursuing peace. Once the citizens started to make progress with each other, the Fons joined with their own enthusiasm for the peacemaking efforts. This was done in conjunction with facilitated mediation between the Fons. The benefit of this model to peacemaking is that it ensures that peace is not just dependent on the two Fons, even if they are the root cause

for the tensions in the group. Currently the Commission for Justice and peace is trying to start a similar grass movement type of activism among Bali and Bawock women.

The largest factor making the current peace between Bali and Bawock so delicate is that there has been no dialogue about the burning that happened in 2007. As an anonymous Bawock citizen has stated, "I can forgive, but I can never forget". So far, it seems that people have been trying to forget the problem without acknowledging that there is something to forgive. "Forgive what?!" One anonymous Bali citizen retorted. Because of the direct connection between apology and guilt, there is a large reluctance by any party to express sorrow or even remorse for the other side's losses. The researcher suggests that some sort of safe space is created for each party to acknowledge each other's losses and express remorse for what has happened without having to be implicated for anything they are not responsible/ not ready to take responsibility for.

Of course, the issues of criminality need to be addressed. If the court system continues to be inactive in its convictions of the arsonists, other methods of justice could also be used. Many African countries have started to incorporate elements of restorative justice into their criminal justice practices. Daniel van Ness of the United Nations describes restorative justice as, "a theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused or revealed by criminal behaviour. It is best accomplished through inclusive and cooperative process."<sup>69</sup> Often the process includes victim-offender mediation where in the end, the two parties decide together what can be done to compensate the victim for damages done. This process would allow for those who are guilty to listen to the stories of those who have experienced great loss through the process, and for the arson victims to develop a feeling of sympathy for their offenders. Van Ness attests that restorative programs, which have been used in countries such as South Africa, and New Zealand, "meet a number of important criteria, such as victim and offender satisfaction, fear reduction for victims, development of empathy in offenders, increased completion of agreements, and lowered recidivism." (14)

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<sup>69</sup> Van Ness, Daniel. "An Overview of Restorative Justice Around the World". Bangkok: Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, April 2005 P. 3

The use of a restorative process between Bali and Bawock (if Bali is proven guilty) would be more proactive in preventing future violence.

The vast majority of the interviewees also strongly believed that if the Fons of Bali and Bawock were able to make peace, then their citizens would be quick to get along as well. While their problems are grave, it also needs to be noted that the two Fons are also individuals willing to mediate with each other. The majority of the interview respondents expressed an amazing amount of loyalty to their Fons saying that no matter what their Fon asked of them, they trusted them to act in the ways of peace.<sup>70</sup>

### **The Role of the Government**

Once the Fons have made their agreements, it is the responsibility of the government to step in and validate their claims. Stark distinguishes between power and authority as follows, "Power is seen as control, direct or indirect, of the attitudes and behaviors of numbers of people against their will or without their informed commitment or understanding. Authority is characterized by the 'direction and control of... behaviors but with the informed and committed 'consent' or consensus of those directed.'" <sup>71</sup> While the Fons seem to have earned authority over their citizens, the government has the power to enforce its decisions. If authority and power can work in agreement, then the decisions they make are more likely to be sustainable. Moreover, the government also has the power in this situation to call together the stake-holders necessary in order to have a successful mediation session.

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### **Conclusion**

The case of Bali and Bawock echoes many of the problems involved in minority-majority politics. Mantum (if so decided) faces issues in Bawock, just like those Bawock faces in Bali, just like those Anglophone Cameroon faces in a Francophone nation. There

<sup>70</sup> Wunhjah, Veronica, Bawock, November 21, 2008, Bawock Village

<sup>71</sup> Persuasion and Power in Cameroon Author(s): Frank M. Stark Source: Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1980), pp. 273-293 Published by: Canadian Association of African Studies p. 273

never is a clear way to distinguish the terms that must be met in order for all parties to be satisfied. Nonetheless, it is undeniable that these issues exist because the parties were placed in positions where they did not get to negotiate their own terms. As a post-colonial state, Cameroon had to figure out how to fabricate a future with tools shoved into its hands by its protectorates.

The common thread in the proposed suggestions is that of listening, respect, and participation. Communication, mediation, the incorporation of a minority population, and inter-personal interaction, mandate the sensitivity of participants and their willingness to engage with each other. Compensation is necessary for the offended party to have the resources necessary to let it focus on peacemaking rather than just on survival, and necessary for the offender party because it engages them in the process of healing. Governmental recognition is also essential because it displays respect from an authority to the parties involved and communicates its faith in their own power to take their future in their own hands.

Through the process of mediation and dialogue, the parties involved have a direct role in the shaping of their futures. While solving their own problems may be daunting, the process has the power of being empowering. This is an opportunity for the people involved to develop their own terms and tools to advocate for their rights. The process of mediation also depends completely on the willingness of the individuals to collaborate with and listen to each other. Parties need to understand each other's histories, traditions, and grievances in order to cohabitate in a way that is mutually beneficial, rather than hostile.

While logic has an important role to play in other arenas, its implementation in conflict resolution seems to cause more problems than solutions. When people used logic to try to assess the situation, they closed their minds to the nuances and complexities of the situation. Additionally, the focus on logic ignores all the emotions that come together in the conflict. In the Bali-Bawock situation, both parties harbour feelings of pride, loss, anger, neglect, frustration, and betrayal. By silencing these emotions, justice cannot be given ear,

and peace cannot be pursued. Countless interviewees used logic to deduce that peace had already come to Bali and Bawock because there had not been any large-scale violence since March 2007.

An anonymous Mantum resident, when asked about his feelings on the situation responded, "Well, today I am feeling fine. I mean there are things boiling underneath, but you see there are no problems right now..." as he spoke, the agitation of the Mantum residents in the background became more and more noticeable until the researcher had to leave the conversation early. Peace will only be a façade until people take the time to tackle all the issues involved in the conflict. The Fon of Bawock stated, "Si on veut la paix, commencer avec la justice."<sup>72</sup> This seems true on all accounts. True peace will only come with justice, and justice will only come with sensitivity.

While this paper cannot, and does not seek to solve the problems between Bali and Bawock, the researcher hopes that this study will provide a helpful guide for future peace activists. No matter what steps are taken by outsiders, the truth is that any real progressive change will have to come from the individuals.

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<sup>72</sup> "If you want peace, start with justice"

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# Appendix

## COMMUNIQUE OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN THE PEOPLES OF BALI AND BAWOCK COMMUNITIES

We the undersigned, on behalf of the peoples of Bali and Bawock gathered here today, the 15th day of January, 1975, do acknowledge the fact that our peoples have been divided by long outstanding petty feuds which have necessitated the intervention of the Administration;

We are further aware of the fact that if the Administration is to bring about any panacea to our present conflicts, we, as the leaders of our respective communities have to co-operate with, and show understanding in, the actions of the Administration;

We admit that traditional institutions, if they have to assert themselves as auxiliary institutions to the Administration, attitudes geared towards peaceful co-existence and development of our communities must be manifested in all works of life;

We are knowledgeable of the fact that, if National Unity is to be concretised, the knitting of families and ethnic groups together must be the responsibility of all well-meaning Cameroonians;

We particularly understand that if the Bali District is to be maintained as one and indivisible administrative unit among the established institutions of the State, divisive tendencies, whether they relate to land or chieftaincy matters, have to be nipped in the bud and that an attitude of rapprochement has to be adopted within our traditional ranks and files;

Having regard to the Constitution of the State, we hereby affirm that respect to the liberties of all citizens and rights over their properties are necessary conditions for good neighbourliness and that Cameroonians of whatever origin have a right to live anywhere in Cameroon and own properties;

Having regard to the voluntary choice of our ancestors to live together in one geographical environment which shares common political, social and economic interests, we pledge ourselves to work together not only to sustain the efforts of our forefathers but also to build a strong and united District in which our future

2/.....

generations shall be identified;


Considering the above, the Fon of Bali hereby undertakes to recognise the Chief of Bawock as the traditional leader of the Bawock people, second only to the Fon of Bali in the traditional hierarchy of the Bali District as from henceforth;

The Chief of Bawock shall in the same wise accept his position as one of the principal collaborators of the Paramount Fon of Bali and shall ensure that cordial relationship is maintained between him and the Fon of Bali;

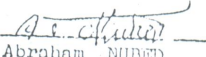
That both the Fon of Bali and the Chief of Bawock shall in their respective capacities ensure that persons under them do not introduce attitudes which will, as from henceforth, revive the past misunderstandings which introduced cut-throat disagreements within the two communities;

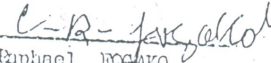
Finally, we pray the Administration to take such measures as may be necessary to deal with individuals who, and situations which, in any manner attempt to militate against the efforts so far made in resolving our various conflicts.

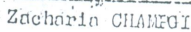
  
THE FOM OF BALI

  
THE CHIEF OF BAWOCK

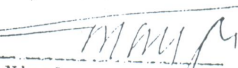
  
Andrew Che Tita

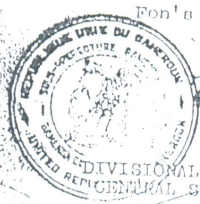
  
Abraham NUBED

  
Raphael

  
Zacharia CHAMEGIA

  
Kbusso GWABBA

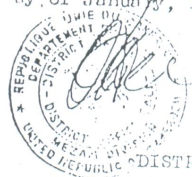
  
Nicodemus Wanda



Fon's Palace Bali, this 15th Day of January, 1975.

BEFORE US:





DIVISIONAL OFFICER - BAMBENDA  
GENERAL SUPERVISOR - DIVISION

DISTRICT HEAD, BALI

15th January, 1975.

MINISTRY OF TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION  
AND DECENTRALISATION  
NORTH WEST PROVINCE  
MEZAM DIVISION  
BALI SUB-DIVISION  
SUB-DIVISION OFFICER, BALI

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON  
PEACE – WORK – FATHERLAND

### GWAN SUMMIT RESOLUTIONS

On the 7<sup>th</sup> Day of November, of the year Two Thousand and Five, the Divisional Officer for Bali, MBINGLO Francis WANNSO presided at a tripartite meeting involving Delegations of the Bali-Nyonga and Bawock Fondoms and the Administration in the Preccincts of the Bali Public Security Police Post at Gwan with a view to find a lasting solution to the Bali/Bawock feud.

Initially scheduled for the Divisional Office, the venue of the meeting was moved for strategic reasons to offer an undisturbed atmosphere for the talks.

Taking part in talks were: Mr. AWURO Joseph Anchie, Assistant Divisional Officer; Mr. NYAMSENKWEN Christopher KUNBUMA, Mayor, Bali Council; CE. MVONDO Kane, Company Commander, Gendarmerie, Bali; Mr. MBESSEH Joseph ENONGENE, Chief of Special Branch, Bali; A/Chef NTOMB-NTOMB Joseph, Bridgade Commander Gendarmerie Terre. Bali; Adjudant/Chef WEUBAGUELA Emile, Brigade Commander Gendarmerie Research, Bali; Mr. Doh Bangu Fotih of Tih Nep I. Quarter, Bali; Ba Tita Nukuna Fonyonga of Njenka-Kundu, Bali; Inspector of Police, AKOH Daniel of Special Branch, Bali; Mr. SABOH Ivo Peter of Bawock; Mr. FEUKWAI Limen Peter of Bawock; His Majesty Fon Ganyonga III Fon of Bali Nyonga and H.R.H. QUOIMON NANA WANDA Theodore, Fon of Bawock.

After a prayer imploring the Almighty to bless and guide the discussions by the Chief of Post, O/P Maniankeh Joseph, the Divisional Officer welcomed all present and attributed this to their commitment to the peaceful resolution of the matter. He further indicated that he had received both delegations separately and together on other occasions and had initiated constructive summit talks between the two traditional leaders on March

th 2005. Prior to these and over the years, Administrative authorities at various forums and even to the provincial level have addressed this issue with far-reaching decisions taken.

The Divisional Officer then summed up the claims of the parties as follows:

**BAWOCK:**

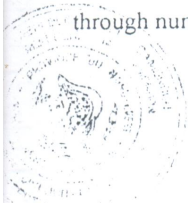
- Request for territorial boundary delimitation with Bali Nyonga
- Complaint of annexation and integration of some of their quarters into Bali-Nyonga.
- Want an end to use of area called "shrine" by Bali-Nyonga for Lela rituals.
- Want Recognition and respect of Fon of Bawock by Fon of Bali-Nyonga.
- Complaint of marginalization in social amenities and representation in key institutions.
- Incorporation of Bawock into Land Consultative Board and Agro Pastoral Commission.
- Respect of host traditional authority by non-indigenes.

**BALI-NYONGA:**

- Deprivation of their right to "Lela" shrine.
- Absence of loyalty and subordination of Fon of Bawock to the Fon of Bali-Nyonga.
- Non-recognition of the traditional village set-up of Sub-Division by the Bawocks.
- Unjustified territorial claims by the Bawocks.
- Non-participation in key development projects by the BAWOCKS.

With this presentation confirmed by both parties, the Divisional Officer called on them to make positive proposals for their resolutions.

**The Fon of Bali Nyonga:** Appreciated the timely intervention of the Administrative authority to bring peace among their communities but noted that it is the Bawocks who have always turned down their overtures for peace since the passing away of Chief Nana Fengafe Jacob and the enthronement of Quoimon Nana Theodore Wanda III. in 1999. He recalled that the Lela rituals have been performed on the disputed site for over the years even with the participation of the Bawocks. He condemned the claims of the Bawocks through numerous petitions when their differences could be examined 'in-House'. The Fon



Bali revealed that he had at one time preempted a planned attack on Bawock by some neighbouring clan and though he had never boasted of it, this can testify to his commitment to peace and concern for the Bawocks. While regretting that this issue has been submitted to many similar meetings in the past with the resolutions never implemented or respected, he promised to abide by the decisions arrived at.

The Fon of Bawock: equally appreciated the initiative of the Divisional Officer to ensure peace and justice between Bawock and Bali Nyonga. He condemned the creation of New Villages by the Fon of Bali Nyonga and the Bali Council, some of which absurd areas under Bawock like Mantum. He resisted the appellation of Paramount Fon of Bali as not being in conformity with the text of appointment and complaint that the Fon of Bali had treated him spitefully on many occasions like the Fon's Meetings and never recognizes him as 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Chief. He also said decisions taken by the Administration on their problems have been violated by the Balis as the case of the ban on the shrine while the demarcation of their boundaries was necessary. He stated that attempts by the Balis to negotiate with Pinyins and Baforchus while ignoring the Bawocks have been resisted by those villages. He concluded by committing himself and his people to their adherence to the resolutions arrived at by this forum.

The Mayor of Bali Council: said this meeting was crucial and timely. He explained that Mantum and many other villages existed and were recognized at the creation of the Sub-Division. He said the naming or renaming of streets is a Municipal Council right while the present structuring of the Sub-Division in the monographic studies is meant to bring recognition and development to all communities and is yet to be approved by the competent authorities. He attributed his misunderstanding with the Fon of Bawock to the absence of objective information by the Councillors of Bawock after Council Sessions to which he solicits the personal attendance of the Fon.

Ba Tita Nukuna Fonyonga: ascertaining his age at 88 and therefore, a privileged witness to the historical links between the two communities, said the relationship between the past traditional rulers had always been cordial with the Lela rituals carried out peacefully.

Doh Bangu: accused the Bawock traditional council of interference with the names of some places in Bali such as Gola to erase their belonging.



Mr. Feukwai Limen Peter and Mr. Saboh Ivo Peter, Notables of Bawock, both lauded the decision of the Divisional Officer for truth, peace and equity and promised to abide by the decisions taken.

Though, acknowledging the freshness of his acquaintance with this long-standing problem, the Company Commander, Gendarmerie, hoped that the decision taken will be pragmatic in reconciling the present context and history for its effective implementation and respect by all.

The Divisional Officer assuring the audience that he had carefully examined all petitions on the problems raised, consulted other documents and personalities for advice and even undertaken field trips to ascertain some significant historical facts and landmarks, assured them that some of the claims have been taken care of by existing texts while others have been resolved at previous meetings.

He then made the following indications based on the Bawock petition of 17/02/2003:

- a) That the second class chiefdom of Bawock is a legal entity recognized by Ministerial Order N<sup>o</sup> 36/A/MINAT/DOT of 15/7/1977 organising traditional chieftaincy.
- b) That the issue of representation in local statutory commissions like the Land Consultative Board has been resolved by the Divisional Officer.
- c) That representation of communities in institutions such as local council, parliament etc. is reflected through demographic consideration and effected through political associations with consideration to minority rights.
- d) The Bawock like other communities do enjoy social amenities such as water, health institution, electricity, schools, roads etc. their extension being only a matter of budgetary and financial constraints.

In consideration and recognition of the above, the meeting also resolved as follows:

- \* 1) That the creation of New Villages by the Bali Council and Bali Nyonga Fondom can not be officially admitted until homologated by the competent authority of state.
- 2) That Bali Nyonga is a 1<sup>st</sup> class Fondom with jurisdiction on the entire Sub-Division and Bawock a 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Fondom attached to the above 1<sup>st</sup> class Fondom with jurisdiction on territory of old Bawock Fondom.



Tita NKUNA Fonyonga  
(Bali Nyonga)

FEUKWAI Limen Peter  
(Bawock)

**ANCHIE Joseph AWORO**  
A.D.O. Bali  
(Secretary)

**CE. MVONDO Kane Felix**  
Company Commander,  
Gendarmerie - Bali.

**A/C NTOMB NTOMB Joseph**  
Commander, Brigade Terre  
Bali

**A/C WEUBAGUELA Emile**  
Commander, Brigade  
Research, Bali.

**O.P. MANIAKEH Joseph**  
Chief of Post, Public  
Security, Bali.

**O.P. MBESSEH Joseph BNONGENE**  
Chief of Special Branch.

**I.P. AKOH Daniel MBEKWA**  
Special Branch.

**NYAMSENKWEN Christopher K.**  
Mayor, Bali Council.

**THE DIVISIONAL OFFICER  
(SOUS-PREFET)  
BALI SUB-DIVISION.**



*M. J. M. M. M.*  
M. J. M. M. M.  
ADMINISTRATEUR CIVIL PRINCIPAL

07 NOV 2005



The remains of a Bawock house (November 2008)



Nsi Su'Fu, the Bali site of worship(November 2008)



The remains of the Bawock Chefferie (November 2008)