

Research article

Paradigm Shift in a Multilingual Context: Constructing National Identity and Socio-Religious Harmony in Cameroon Urban Music

Gilbert Tarka Fai^{1*} & Lawir Blessing Vernyuy²

¹² Department of English, University of Maroua, Cameroon;

* tarkafai@gmail.com

Abstract

Cameroon, often described as "Africa in miniature," possesses a complex social fabric defined by over 250 ethnic groups and a dual colonial heritage of English and French. In this fragmented landscape, constructing a unified national identity has historically been challenged by linguistic and religious cleavages. This research explores the paradigm shift in Cameroon urban music, where the emergence of Franc-Anglais (Camfranglais) serves as a vehicle for national integration and socio-religious harmony. Using a qualitative sociolinguistic approach and the lens of multiculturalism, this study analyzes the lyrics of prominent urban artists such as Stanley Enow, Jovi, and Locko. The results indicate that while traditional genres like Makossa and Bikutsi are rooted in specific ethnic and religious identities, contemporary urban music transcends these boundaries. By blending official languages, indigenous dialects, and religious symbolism, urban music constructs a hybrid identity that resonates with the "vivre ensemble" (living together) national policy. The study concludes that urban music acts as a "secular liturgy" that facilitates inter-ethnic dialogue and promotes a collective sense of belonging amidst the ongoing Anglophone-Francophone crisis.

Keywords

Cameroon Urban Music; Franc-Anglais; National Identity; Paradigm Shift; Unity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cameroon presents a unique case of cultural and religious diversity, hosting approximately 260 to 284 ethnic groups (Lausanne Movement, 2023; Quinn, 2013). This "mosaic of population" is further complicated by a dual colonial legacy that left the country officially bilingual in English and French since the 1961 reunification (Anchimbe, 2005; Echu, 2004). However, this linguistic division often mirrors religious and geographic fault lines—the northern regions are predominantly Muslim, while the south is majority Christian (Lang, 2014; Ndi, 2005). In such a pluralistic society, the quest for national integration is paramount for stability and social order (Achang & E., 2024).

Music has always been a critical marker of identity in Cameroon. Traditional genres such as Makossa, Bikutsi, and Njang were historically used in sacred rituals, royal courts, and community celebrations (Mbaegbu, 2015; Ojetayo, 2013). Yet, because these genres are primarily articulated in specific indigenous languages like Duala or Ewondo, they often reinforced "parochial loyalties" rather than a broader national patriotism (Anchimbe, 2005; Austen, 2018). Furthermore, the history of missionary education in Cameroon initially viewed local musical instruments as "pagan," leading to a tension between authentic cultural expression and religious identity (Muchimba, 2008; Ntankeh, 2021).

The turn of the 21st century has witnessed a significant paradigm shift. Rapid urbanization in cosmopolitan centers like Yaoundé and Douala has created a space where youth from diverse backgrounds interact (Abongdia, 2009; Hodieb, 2020). This interaction birthed a new linguistic and musical phenomenon: Cameroon Urban Music, expressed through Camfranglais—a hybrid sociolect of French, English, and Pidgin (Féral, 2006; Kiessling, 2004).

This study is approached from a multiculturalist perspective. Multiculturalism theory, in brief, seeks to include the views and contributions of diverse members of society while maintaining respect for their differences and avoiding the demand for their assimilation into the dominant culture (Sue et al., 1996). Considering so, music is a powerful means of communication, providing a way for people to share emotions, intentions, and meanings even when their spoken languages are mutually incomprehensible. Wigram & Elefant (2009: 442) also state that, "Music is a universal human form of communication that has the capacity to overcome linguistic, physical, mental and cognitive barriers to understanding with others". Music, among other things, therefore entails melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, form and expression.

Music consists of sounds that can be pleasing to one person and sometimes unpleasant to another, depending on what each person defines as pleasure and their cultural heritage. Music, as earlier stated, is part of culture and occupies an essential place in many ceremonies. Music is universal and can be performed during ceremonies to set an atmosphere that best describes the occasion. It can make people relax, just as it can help direct their thoughts towards a particular subject matter. Johansson & Bell (2009: 1) state that, “music is an integral part of the human experience”. In Cameroon, music is a tool for unity as well as an identity marker. Identity is constructed and reconstructed by musicians through language and the musical instruments they use. Cameroon is made up of about 283 tribes speaking different languages, even if many of them are intelligible. A rich cultural diversity also characterizes this linguistic diversity. This makes it challenging to consider a particular musical genre as constituting an identity for Cameroon or a national genre. Moreover, Cameroon’s diverse musical genres transcend its national boundaries. In this kind of setup, it would be wrong to choose a musical genre from one part of the country and proclaim it a national genre or identity.

This research argues that this urban music is not merely entertainment but a tool for constructing a "Civic-multicultural" national identity (Simpson, 2008). By analyzing the linguistic and thematic content of contemporary songs, this paper examines how urban music navigates the politics of identity to promote social cohesion and religious tolerance. Approached principally from a multiculturalist perspective, this research collects and analyses diverse songs from Cameroon to illustrate that language as a vehicle of expression and communication can be manipulated in music to construct a national identity, especially in a multilingual and multicultural setup where unity or living together is threatened. The core research problem addressed is: *Which musical genre, in Cameroon’s complex, multi-lingual environment, can be considered a unique and unifying national musical identity?*

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design centered on sociolinguistic analysis and phenomenological interpretation (Hodieb, 2020). The primary data consists of the lyrics and visual representations from purposively selected popular Cameroon urban songs released between 2010 and 2024. Key artists including Stanley Enow, Lady Ponce, and Koppo were selected for their prominence in utilizing hybrid languages and religious themes.

Data was analyzed in two phases. First, an ethnographic contextualization was performed to understand the regional and religious roots of traditional musical genres. Second, a thematic and linguistic analysis was applied to urban lyrics to identify patterns of code-mixing (Camfranglais) and religious symbolism. The study utilizes "Social Reconstructionism" as a theoretical framework, viewing music as a socially responsive phenomenon that helps rebuild societal order in post-colonial settings (African Rhythm, 2024). This approach allows for a deep understanding of how music facilitates "vivre ensemble"—the national ethos of harmonious cohabitation (UNESCO, 2019).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Multiculturalism and the Dilemma of a National Musical Identity

Multiculturalism refers to a phenomenon of multiple groups of cultures existing within one society, for diverse reasons, including the arrival of migrant communities or the acceptance and advocacy of this phenomenon. A multicultural society, therefore, entails, among other things, the co-existence of a plethora of different musical genres. This is the case with Cameroon. Makossa, a musical genre from the Littoral region of Cameroon, is the first form of music to have projected Cameroon in the International scene. It is a genre that is recognized all over the world as originating from Cameroon. Yet it has been transported and played in many parts of the world.

Cameroon's religious landscape is characterized by a "multi-religious setup" comprising Catholics (38.4%), Protestants (26.3%), Muslims (20.9%), and followers of traditional religions (5.6%) (Lang, 2014; Ntankeh, 2021). Historically, musical expression was tied to these identities. For instance, the *Sahelian beat* of the North is deeply influenced by Islamic praise-singing and stringed instruments like the *garaya* (Mbaegbu, 2015). Conversely, the forest regions of the South developed *Bikutsi*, a genre traditionally used for healing and spiritual communication among the Beti people (Che, 1998; Ojetayo, 2013).

Makossa and *Bikutsi*, originating from the Sawa and Beti clans, respectively, in Cameroon, are considered the oldest indigenous forms of music, which gained prominence even before the colonial era. Manu Dibango, a prominent Makossa musician from the 1960s, succeeded in exporting this music genre to other parts of the world. He succeeded in selling Makossa to the international community through his song "Soul Makossa" in the 1970s, which attracted other musicians from Cameroon.

Other popular Makossa singers include Sale John, Nkoti Francois, Moni Bile, Guy Lobe, Dina Bell, Ndedi Eyango, Ben Decca, Petit Pays, Douleur, Bebe Manga and a host of others. During the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, Shakira, a Colombian pop star, sang a remix of a makossa song by a group of Cameroonians known as 'Zangelewa' as the opening anthem for the 2010 World Cup. Another artist who incorporated makossa in his art was Michel Jackson in his song "Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'". This made makossa a world genre and no longer attributed only to Cameroon. Table 1 describes the genres further.

Table 1. Description of Cameroon traditional music genres

| Traditional Genre | Ethnic/Regional Root | Primary Language | Religious/Social Context |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Makossa | Sawa (Littoral) | Duala | Coastal rituals & urban commentary |
| Bikutsi | Beti (Center/South) | Ewondo | Healing & female expression |
| Njang | Grassfields (Northwest) | Lamnso/Nso | Royal courts & sacred dances |
| Sahelian Beat | Fulani (North) | Ffulde | Islamic praise & oral history |

Source: (Austen, 2018; Mbaegbu, 2015; Ojetayo, 2013)

Due to the cultural ties that Cameroon shares with some neighboring countries, it is common to hear some of Cameroon's prolific music genres performed and enjoyed in other African countries. In the 1980s, Bikutsi gained popularity, becoming a rival to Makossa. Bikutsi, originating from the Beti clans in the Centre and South regions, gained prominence in the 1980s through artists like Messi Martin and Anne-Marie Ndzie. Its emergence as a rival to Makossa was mainly due to its distinct, fast-paced dance rhythm and its deep roots in the populous central regions, offering an alternative cultural identity marker to the coastal Makossa. The Bikutsi ambassadors included Sala Bekono, Atebass, Zanzibar, Nkodo Sitony, Sally Nyolo, Messi Martin, Ange Eogo, K-Tino, Lady Ponce, Coco Argente and many others. Anne-Marie Ndzie is considered as 'Queen Mother' of Cameroonian music because she popularized Bikutsi as well as her vocal prowess.

Bend-skin, a kind of popular music from Bangante in the West Region of Cameroon, is equally performed and listened to in other parts of Africa. Andre-Marie Tala is considered the most prominent ambassador of this music genre in Cameroon. Others include Kouchouam Mbada, Marole Tchamba, Keng Godefroy, Michael

Kiessou, Featurist and so forth. There is also the Sahelian beat in the northern part of Cameroon mostly done in the Ffulde language, sometimes mixed with French. Some Cameroonian artists from the North who sing in Ffulde include Babba Sadu and Rougaya who do not only have fans in Cameroon but also in Northern Nigeria and Chad because of their similar cultural traits.

Njang is another popular genre of music in Cameroon, particularly from the Grassfield area. Some prominent and popular artists in this field include Prince Afoakom, John Minang, Ateh Basoh, Richard Kings, Chili, Vernyuy Tina, Witty Ministrel, and Shey Lahntum, amongst others. A lot of Njang music is done in Lamnso, a popular language in the Bui Division of the North West Region. Interestingly, this language is also common in Taraba state in Nigeria and is called Panso. The similarity of languages has facilitated the migration of the Njang musical genre to other parts of Africa. In the South West Region of Cameroon, we not only have cultural aspects such as clothing, food, and farming methods that transcend tribes and extend to neighboring countries, but also music. The South West Region shares many cultural traits with its neighboring country, Nigeria, including music. Pigmy music by the Baka people of the Bantu ethnic group in Cameroon can be heard in other African countries like the Central African Republic and the Congo.

An evaluation of musical genres in Cameroon, therefore, reveals that they share similar beats, rhythms, and languages with those from other parts of Africa. For the reader's geographical context, traditional genres are closely linked to specific regions: Makossa is primarily associated with the Littoral region (Sawa people), Bikutsi with the Centre and South regions (Beti clans), Bend-skin with the West Region (Bangante), and Njang with the grassfield area of the North West Region.

Amongst the countries with music similar to that in Cameroon, we have Nigeria, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic, and Chad. While Makossa is played almost all over the world now, Bekutsi is found in Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and the Central African Republic. Music from the northern regions of Cameroon is played in the entire African Sahel region. Afrobeat, enjoyed in Urban centers across the globe, is often attributed to Nigeria, but it also has its roots in Makossa. Some Cameroonian artists in this genre include Salatiel and Magasco.

Other Cameroonian artists specialize in different musical genres, such as hip hop and reggae, which are music genres that transcend the African continental boundaries. Rap music, a genre considered to have originated in America, is sung and enjoyed in Cameroon by many artists. Askia, a prominent rap goddess in Cameroon, is regarded

as one of the best female rappers in the music industry. Cameroon, as a multicultural country, therefore enjoys different musical genres, but the unanswered question is the genre that can be considered a national musical identity for Cameroon.

Claude Ndam, for example, is an artist from the Noun Division in the West Region of Cameroon. He is very popular and well known for his song "Mona La Veve" (Source: kamerlyrics.net), which is played across the country. He sings in Bamoun (one of the local languages), but is enjoyed by all Cameroonians. One of the stanzas from his popular song, "Mona La Veve" (Source: kamerlyrics.net), goes: *Mon ni pou jouen ni na | ka peni yum shi | Yum ka peh lah tien mut | vemcha lein i nume | Vem sha ku num num, puen dié me tin cou chou tite.* (The child you see here | I was pregnant with her | When I was five months along | I had stomach aches all the time | I always had stomach aches; while people were sleeping, I was always up.) The stanza is in the Bamoun language, and the full English translation of the sentiment is that the message focuses on deep, personal reflection and life's journey, which, despite the melody's enjoyment, remains inaccessible to non-Bamoun speakers.

The melody of this song is great, but the message would only get to people who understand his native language. Some Cameroonian artists have produced songs in their indigenous languages, often incorporating a mixture of French and English, but this form of music does not adequately represent Cameroon.

A good example is Lady Ponce, a popular Bikutsi artist. She sings in Ewondo and French. Her song 'Témoignage' is done in French and the Ewondo language:

*Ah chéri Wam mé dje ben w Bo me nna oo
Yi nne me kar wo ya asu yi nna o woke me Mben
Si c'est les preuves tu le sais bien chéri é
Que mon parfum c'est la sueur de ton corps
Ma soif je l'étanche avec ta salive
Ma démarche, je la change quand je te vois Mama oh wo*

English Translation:

Ah my darling, what are you doing to me?
If it's proof, you know it well darling
That my perfume is the sweat of your body
I quench my thirst with your saliva
My gait, I change it when I see you Mama oh wo

Despite the wonderful melody and rhythm of this song, one needs to understand Ewondo to get Lady Ponce's message. This shortcoming would disqualify these kinds of songs from becoming a national genre or identity. Many other popular Cameroon musicians like Manu Dibango, Ben Deca, Ndedi Eyango, Longue Longue, Sergio Polo, Ngea La Route, Charlotte Dipanda, and so forth have used French and Douala in most of their songs, just as many musicians from the North of Cameroon have used French and Ffulde to compose their songs.

In like manner, musicians from the English-speaking section of Cameroon have used English together with their indigenous languages to compose songs, but these would not be considered an identity for Cameroon because they do not represent all Cameroonians. From the above discussion, it is clear that the multicultural and complex linguistic composition of Cameroon makes it difficult to proclaim either any indigenous musical genre or a mixture with French or English as a national identity for Cameroon in that domain.

The dilemma of traditional music as a national identity lies in its linguistic exclusivity. As noted in the analysis of Claude Ndam's "Mona La Veve," the message—though culturally rich—remains inaccessible to those outside the Bamoun linguistic group (Simpson, 2008). Similarly, while Makossa achieved global fame through Manu Dibango, its roots in the Duala language meant it could not serve as a universal linguistic bridge within Cameroon's internally divided "Anglophone" and "Francophone" regions (Echu, 2004; Simpson, 2008).

The evolution of music in Cameroon was profoundly shaped by the "ecclesiastical colonial mould" (Ndi, 2005). Early missionaries often imposed Western hymns through education, leading many Africans to internalize Western scales as the "norm" for sacred music (Muchimba, 2008; Weman, 1960). This created a dichotomy where traditional rhythms were seen as secular or even "hostile to the Bible" (Muchimba, 2008).

However, post-1995, following the Ecclesia in Africa synod, there has been a push for "cultural integration" within the church (Ntankeh, 2021). Catholic pioneers like Father Pie-Claude and Father Hubert Minkoulou introduced polyphonic singing that incorporated local instruments like the balafon (Ignatowski, 2006). This movement, known as "acculturation," demonstrates that religious institutions have become sites where the "sacred" and "local" are negotiated, paving the way for the hybrid identities seen in urban music today (Muchimba, 2008).

3.2. Towards a National Musical Identity

A. The Afro-Gospel Influence and Secular Liturgy in Urban Music for National Integration

Contemporary Cameroon urban music frequently integrates religious imagery to provide "positive direction" to the otherwise rebellious nature of hip-hop (Clark, 2016; Sosibo, 2014). In his music videos, the rapper Jovi is often seen entering a church, bridging the gap between urban "street" culture and spiritual devotion (Clark, 2016). This reflects a broader trend where the "sacred and secular are not mutually exclusive" in African music (Lauritsen, 2011; Sosibo, 2014).

The emergence of "Afro-Gospel"—a hybrid of hip-hop, R&B, and biblical lyrics—allows youth to connect with their "Africanness" while maintaining their faith (Lauritsen, 2011). Songs like Mr. Leo's "Pray" (2017) utilized religious appeals and Pidgin English to call for divine intervention during the height of the Anglophone hostilities (Ntankeh, 2021). By using a "voice full of emotions," urban artists transform music into a site of "musical activism," advocating for "vivre ensemble" and the eradication of tribalism.

Furthermore, the "Civic-multicultural model" of nation-building suggests that national integration requires symbols and milestones that shift attachments from ethnic groups to the nation (Simpson, 2008). Cameroon urban music functions as a "unique Cameroonian liturgy" (Ignatowski, 2006). It facilitates "cordial interactivity" between the "self" and the "other," allowing diverse ethnic groups to share a common cultural product (Mbaegbu, 2015).

According to the theory of "Aesthetic Functionalism," the value of music is rooted in its role in the lives of those who make it (Akuno, 2005). In Cameroon, the function of urban music is to cement friendships and promote social trust. By "linguaging ethnicity," urban artists decolonize standard language ideologies, asserting that being a "genuine Cameroonian" involves embracing linguistic plurality (Simpson, 2008; Tabe, 2023).

B. The Camfranglais Paradigm Shift: Linguaging Urban Music

The second half of the 21st century saw a remarkable shift in the music produced and enjoyed by the Cameroonian population, particularly in urban centers. The rapid development of some cities in Cameroon has led to a gradual increase in rural-urban migration, which has had an impact on the music

produced. The presence of people from diverse cultural backgrounds in some cities in Cameroon led to the birth of another musical genre –Cameroon urban music.

Urban centers serve as "veritable sites" for the birth of hybrid identities (Hodieb, 2020). Camfranglais (or Franc-Anglais) emerged as a "resistance identity" among youth who felt excluded from the formal national discourse (Castells, 1997; Kiessling, 2004). Unlike official bilingualism, which often reinforces the Anglophone-Francophone divide, Camfranglais is a "linguistic melting-pot" that ignores colonial boundaries (Bilola, 2003; Kiessling, 2004).

Music in Cameroon has undergone a significant transformation over the years, with a gradual shift from the production of indigenous music in indigenous languages to a blend of diverse musical genres and languages, both indigenous and foreign. These changes directly led to the construction of new identities. In other words, the second half of the 21st century brought about a paradigm shift in the Cameroon music world. A paradigm shift is an important change that happens when the usual way of thinking about or doing something is replaced by a new and different way. It affects how we look at ourselves as well as our perception of reality.

In an effort to reach a larger audience, Cameroonian artists of French extraction have begun to compose songs incorporating English or Pidgin English, in addition to French and their indigenous languages. In like manner, English-speaking artists use French and English or Pidgin English as raw material for their music, sometimes mixing it with indigenous languages. The use of a mixture of English and French for communication, according to linguists, is called Franc-Anglais. According to Niba (2007: 12), one of the earliest musicians to use Franc-Anglais in his music was Lapiro de Mbanga. This usage later resonated in the works of other artists like Koppo in one of his songs titled "Si Tu Vois Ma Go". The reason for the use of Franc-Anglais by these urban musicians is to meet a larger audience, as earlier stated.

Franc-Anglais, a mixture of French, English, and Pidgin English, is becoming the norm in urban music in Cameroon and can be considered an identity marker, as Cameroon is the only country in Africa with French and English as its official languages. Popular Cameroon Urban musicians who excel in the use of Franc-Anglais include: Locko, Minks, Daphne, Koppo, Charlotte Dipanda, Salatiel, Blaise B, Mr Leo, X-Maleya, Jovi, Rinyu, Shura, Reniss, Magasco, Ko-c, Balance Bailly, Kameni, Tenor, Richard Kings, Tzy Panchak, and Stanley Enow, amongst others.

A look at Stanley Enow's "My Way", featuring Locko, Tzy Panchak will reveal that these urban music artists use Franc-Anglais to pass across their message. The three artists who have collaborated in this song come from three different linguistic backgrounds; Stanley Enow, born in Bamenda of the Northwest Region, is a native of the South West Region, Tzy Panchak is also from the South West, while Locko is from the Litoral Region. The three artists sing in English, French, and Pidgin English. Consider the verses below:

Me I di find my way (I am finding my way)
My brother find your way too (My brother find your way too)
Life na turn by turn (Life is turn by turn/one by one)
Demain pour toi va sortir (Tomorrow is your day)
Me I di find my way (I am finding my way)
My sister find your way too (My sister find your way too)
Life na turn by turn (Life is turn by turn/one by one)
Demain pour toi va sortir (Tomorrow is your day)

The song "My Way," which is said to encourage youths to work hard, just like musicians, required a language that would break through linguistic boundaries in Cameroon and beyond. Though the beat and rhythm might be similar to those played in other neighboring countries like Nigeria, it is unique in the sense that it is transmitted in Franc-Anglais, which is peculiar to Cameroon. The above stanza is composed of Pidgin English in the first, third, fifth, and seventh lines, while English is seen in lines two and six, and French is in lines four and eight. The next verses continue in the same light:

Mollah tu me wandawanda (Guy you amaze me)
Nous on sort au chap, (We go out to the street)
on fait que fallafalla (we just wander around/chat)
Toi tu sais au kwat, (You know in the neighborhood,)
tu fais que hallahalla (you just shout)
You dey hallahalla, man you dey hallahalla (You are shouting, man you are shouting)
Hey!

A look at the syntactic structures of the sentences above reveals that they do not follow the grammatical structures of English, French, or even Cameroon Pidgin English, but are composed of vocabulary from all three languages.

In Boy Tag's "Far Away" Featuring Daphné, one would realize that these artists make use of French, English, Pidgin English, and one of the indigenous

languages (Yemba) spoken in the West Region of Cameroon in their lyrics. These two artists are from different Regions with different linguistic backgrounds. Some of the lines in this song show that the artists not only mix the official languages besides Pidgin English, but also use their indigenous language, Yemba, in this case: *Me le njack money meu le ngbe (na dassé afayam)* (I am going to get money, I am going to have it (I will achieve it/It will be good).

Koppo is also one of Cameroon's urban music artists, noted for his incredible use of Franc-Anglais in his music. His first album released in 2003 "Si Tu Vois Ma Go" made him very popular. In 2017, he released another single 'Gromologie'. In this song, there's a lot of code mixing, unlike other artists who use code switching. The first stanza of the song reads :

Mollah je wanda, je m'étonne (Guy I wander/am surprised, I am astonished)
Que dans nos ways de francophones Consto les gens raisonnent better le french que l'Eton
(That in our Francophone regions, people speak better French than Eton)
Ils speak avec des mots, comme des bigs dicos
(They speak with words, like big dictionaries)
Pour flasher bindi gos, tout ça pour chou comment il know
(To show off for young girls, all that to show how he knows)
On chat que c'est trop, today na today (We chat that it's too much, today is today)
Alors, cela veut dire quoi (So, what does that mean)
Cela veut dire qu'hein (That means what, huh)
Si tu ya mo les gos des mots (If you are with the girls of words)
C'est comme des mots pour un chameau (It's like words for a camel)
Alors gars, dès que tu speak (So guy, as soon as you speak)
Tu joues les chics, c'est la panique (You play stylish/the fancy one, it's panic)

In the above verses, there is code mixing of English, French, and Pidgin English. This mixture is unique in the world of urban music for now in Africa, and so has become a kind of identity marker for Cameroon. This medium of communication is becoming so popular that it has become the language of communication for urban youth in Cameroon. As Jacques Towe, Head of the English Department of the Linguistic Centre in Douala, said in an interview (Niba, 2007: 14), only time will tell what would "happen to Franc-Anglais. It might help bring national unity in a country divided along strong linguistic lines." The use of Franc-Anglais by urban artists in Cameroon can therefore be said to be a tool for constructing a kind of national identity.

4. CONCLUSION

This study has examined different musical genres that are articulated in different parts of Cameroon. This study demonstrates that Cameroon urban music has affected a paradigm shift in the construction of national identity. In a context where "Anglophone" and "Francophone" labels are often legacies of exclusion, the hybridity of Camfranglais and the integration of religious themes offer a new model for national integration. Urban music serves as a tool for "Social Reconstructionism," transforming the fragmented cultural landscape into a cohesive, pluralistic society.

While traditional music remains a vital reservoir of ethnic heritage, urban music provides the "unifying and identifying genre" that Cameroon previously lacked. By appealing to shared religious values and using a language born from the urban struggle, artists like Stanley Enow and Mr. Leo promote the "vivre ensemble" necessary to navigate contemporary socio-political crises. For scholars of culture and religion, this phenomenon highlights the power of popular arts to facilitate inter-faith dialogue and construct a resilient national character in the face of modern challenges.

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