Gender & History ISSN 0953-5233
Jacqueline-Bethel Tchouta Mougoué, 'Housewives at Husbands' Throats: Recalcitrant Wives and Gender Norms in a West African Nation, 1961–72'
Gender & History, Vol.29 No.2 August 2017, pp. 405–422.

Housewives at Husbands' Throats: Recalcitrant Wives and Gender Norms in a West African Nation, 1961–72

Jacqueline-Bethel Tchouta Mougoué

'House-wives have, in down-right cold blood, inflicted inhuman tortures to their husbands … have a look around our hospitals and the stories would tell themselves', decries Ruff Wanzie in her December 1965 women's advice column for the *Cameroon Times*.[1] For evidence, she cites the death of a man bitten by a snake while sleeping at a neighbour's after his angry wife barred him from the house. 'These cases become a sort of show-case', she claims, saying people flocked to his hospital bed 'to see and know how wicked wives could be to their husbands'.[2] Comments such as Wanzie's reflected concerns among some urban Anglophone (English-speaking) Cameroonian elites that married women increasingly subverted responsibilities associated with predominant notions about womanhood during the 1960s and early 1970s. Within this context, Wanzie denounced wicked wives' attempts to evade prevailing ideas about gender relations and patriarchal authority in urban Anglophone Cameroon.

Located in West Africa, Cameroon borders Nigeria, Chad and the Central African Republic. Today, Cameroon, predominately a French-speaking country, encompasses a minority of English-speaking towns, reflecting former British administrative legacies.[3] The *Cameroon Times* was one of many English-language newspapers that circulated in Anglophone towns in the 1960s, following independence.[4] Most had a 'women's corner', such as Wanzie's column, which featured writings like hers and readers' letters asking about courtship and social norms. Cameroon resembled countries in colonial and postcolonial Africa in that the educated urban elite – including journalists like Wanzie – saw themselves as defining cultural customs. Through advice columns, female journalists and letter writers tried to protect African cultural identity and authority by regulating women's domestic, economic, social and political activities.[5] This article addresses these privileged elites' debates about educated married women's (and men's) normative social conduct in Cameroon's Anglophone regions.

This article focuses on examples of Anglophone elites mostly from the modern-day Southwest Region of Cameroon and on their cultural practices regarding marriage that were prevalent through much of urban and rural West Africa since the late nineteenth century.[6] Most precolonial West African societies recognised polygynous

marriage, though Christianisation during the colonial period significantly lessened the practice among the wealthy elite.[7] In these Cameroonian elite circles, wives and dependents generally deferred to men, who wielded broad, unilateral authority in their households. Though women's social conduct was more tightly regulated, men operated with relative freedom and controlled their dependents, socially and economically.[8] Cultural custom recognised men as societal leaders obligated to house and provide financial support for their wives and children; a man's failure to embrace those gender-based norms might result in shaming by family or community members. Unlike married women, men might drink in bars, speak their minds and pursue extramarital liaisons.[9] Most women in pre-independence Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon served their fathers, husbands or some form of male jurisdiction. Married women might endeavour to control the behaviour of co-wives or their children, but not of their husbands.[10]

In the process of Christianisation, Protestant groups like the British Basel Mission and the American Presbyterian Mission taught married women to observe Christian morals regarding sexuality. Although men generally enjoyed unrestrained sexual freedom, they too were supposed to be sexually virtuous. However, Cameroonians judged women more harshly for their sexual misconduct unlike their male counterparts. Such practices aligned with women's continued marital subservience throughout Britain's provisional rule.[11] Women's fertility, chastity, childcare, respect for elders, endurance, effective household management and respect for their husbands' authority defined their marriages.[12] Moreover, middle-class Anglophone women accessed formal education, employment and political participation earlier and in greater numbers than Francophone women; Christian missions had long formally educated Anglophone Cameroon's wealthiest women during British rule.[13] In the late 1950s, Anglophone women began to serve in government in the British Southern Cameroons. The Southern Cameroons' legislative assembly wrote new electoral regulations in 1954. Effective in December 1957, the regulations granted women both the right to vote and stand as candidates for elective office and as parliamentary representatives.[14] In the 1960s and 1970s, formal primary and secondary education spread in Cameroon generally. Anglophone women gained jobs as corporate administrators, teachers, bankers and nurses, changing women's access to money, status and political positions, both domestic and sexual.[15] Many urban elites applauded women's formal education, but worried, given those cultural changes, that women might resist prevalent thinking about gender. Women's entry into the workforce continued to grow in the 1960s. The increase, though small, particularly among middle-class women, furthered a sense of threatened cultural mores regarding gender behaviour and influence, irrespective of educational achievements.[16]

I argue that changes in education, economics and politics between the late 1950s and 1970s created new concerns about gender behaviour and marriage in urban Anglophone Cameroon. The newspaper articles on which I focus here offer one entry point into a larger debate among educated, middle-class, urban Anglophones in Cameroon who shared perspectives on how formally educated married women and men should act, and what a modern, urban marriage and family should look like during the 1960s and early 1970s. Anglophone Cameroonian elites – often formally affiliated politically as civil servants and educated in Cameroonian Christian missions, or in Nigeria, or in the West – believed that collective African progress required accepting Christian morals, even while selectively rejecting inappropriate foreign influences and

thus creating authentic, recognisably indigenous modern cultural forms that incorporated some 'modern' beliefs about gender and culture.[17] Therefore, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, urban elite discourses linked formal education to dominant opinions on gender norms, stressing that educated women should model higher behavioural standards and attitudes for other women by preserving culturally expected norms. Educated married women's behaviour had become suspect because some of them manifested attitudes of superiority and authoritarianism; moreover, critics believed that financial empowerment disturbed marital stability.

Many political elites believed that a marriage-centred family strengthened both society and the West Cameroonian nation.[18] For instance, in 1964, Wanzie wrote that a modern family based on a marriage in which the wife is the 'undisputed boss, is never happy', warning that 'children from such a family never grow up properly to be good citizens in every way'.[19] Hence, educated married women who challenged perceptions of suitable marital relations thereby threatened the family's strength and stability, and, ultimately, the nation. According to Wanzie and others, some elite women also used their educated status and their un-African interpretations of gender to publicly thwart gender hierarchies on the streets of Anglophone Cameroon. For instance, they castigated women who – especially when in public – criticised their husbands or husbands' mistresses, saying they betrayed the importance of adhering to gender-specific cultural mores. Although dominant Christian morals held men to sexual virtue, patriarchal attitudes entitled them to more liberal sexual attitudes while the sexual misconduct of their female counterparts were more harshly condemned. Thus, female journalists saw subversions of gender hierarchies, including men's liberty to have extramarital sex, as threatening Anglophone Cameroon's patriarchal authority and Anglophone morality generally.

Discussions of gender and marital relations were part of a larger political project. From 1961 to 1972, marginalised Anglophone Cameroonian elites cited differing European administrative legacies, cultures and geographical boundaries as reasons for the political and cultural autonomy of their region. Anglophone Cameroonian women's moral virtues, which they held superior to their Francophone counterparts, supported this claim. My research illustrates that they believed Francophone women to be more likely to engage in illicit sexual activities, frequent bars and wear short skirts, all actions associated with sexually loose and immoral women during the period of focus.[20] Consequently, urbanite elites regulated married women's behaviours, hoping to demarcate the boundaries of Anglophone Cameroonian women's acceptable conduct in a hegemonic Francophone republic.

Anglophone Cameroonian elites have long been part of a larger West African Anglophone political and social culture. Cameroon's Anglophone regions were first under German colonial rule until the First World War, then under the League of Nations Mandate. On 6 December 1946, the United Nations approved the Trusteeship Agreements for Britain to govern the British Southern Cameroons as trust territories.[21] Anglophone Cameroon amalgamated the British Southern Cameroons with the Eastern Region of Nigeria between 1922 and 1954. British Southern Cameroonians elected representatives for the Eastern House of Assembly and the Federal House of Assembly in Nigeria until the early 1950s, connecting them to constitutional, socioeconomic and political changes originating in Nigeria.[22]

Although the Southern Cameroons split off from Nigeria in 1954, the 1950s and 1960s found a hybrid Anglophone Cameroonian culture, influenced by the local, cultural and political values as well as others originating in both Nigeria and Britain. For instance, Anglophone Cameroonian journalists gained experience working for Nigerian nationalist newspapers; this experience emboldened them to establish private presses to champion Anglophone Cameroonian political priorities and articulate patriotic aspirations, reflecting the rise of a variety of nationalist identities throughout West Africa in the 1950s and 1960s.[23] Moreover, elite families sent their daughters to the best available Cameroonian schools, after which they often travelled to Nigeria or the UK for further studies given the few institutes of higher learning for women then in Anglophone regions of Cameroon.[24]

In 1961, the Southern Cameroons became part of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, which consisted of two sociopolitically autonomous states – the West (Anglophone) Cameroon State (the modern-day Southwest and Northwest Regions of Cameroon) and the East (Francophone) Cameroon State. Each state had an executive, and a bicameral legislature. West Cameroon had an independent (though heavily government-influenced) press, which East Cameroon mostly lacked. Although the cultures and histories of the two regions differed, some cultural identities crossed the Anglo-French border, such as in the region of the Bamenda Grassfields. However, the hegemonic East Cameroon State's exercise of French policies inherited under the French Mandate contributed to growing perceptions by the Anglophone urban elite that the Francophone state threatened their political and cultural identity. Some scholars assert that the federal republic *was* really a decentralised unitary state pervaded by policies inherited from French rule.[25] For instance, in 1962, the hegemonic Francophone government required West Cameroonians to drive on the right-hand side of the road in conformity with established practice in East Cameroon.[26]

Anglophone Cameroonian elites endeavoured to delay their unwilling incorporation into the Francophone regime after independence in the 1960s. The Anglophone elite's expectations that married women abide by culturally preferred gender norms was seen as a bulwark in preserving their cultural identity. Such elites imagined Anglophone regions as a nation distinct from their Francophone counterparts. In other words, they envisioned an 'imagined community', as Benedict Anderson puts it, in which Anglophone Cameroonians were one people under a distinct geographic region based on shared British administrative legacies, as well as common ancestry and traditions.[27] Many urban elites, including female journalists, perceived women's adherence to specific gender norms as key to creating and shaping a distinct Anglophone Cameroonian culture that unified the Anglophone community countrywide. Hence, women's 'proper' behaviour and actions held symbolic implications for nation building and evidenced a strong West Cameroonian unity and cultural identity.

Emerging African studies scholarship cites varied debates over normative gender behaviour, illuminating in a number of African regions the public condemnation of women who defied dominant ideas of marriage. In her work *Crossing the Color Line*, Carina Ray contends that, in newspapers, Gold Coast elites openly criticised African women who married European men.[28] Such women defied cultural expectations about African marriages by having sexual relationships with European men and marrying 'across the color line'. Dorothy Hodgson and Sheryl McCurdy assert in their

path-breaking book, *Wicked Women*, that many postcolonial African married women were labelled 'wicked' because they disrupted the web of social relationships that defined and depended on them as wives and mothers.[29] These women directly or indirectly challenged cultural expectations of gender roles. I apply a similar rationale to analyse 1960s urban West Cameroonian married women who female journalists or male authors of letters to newspapers also labelled 'wicked' or 'extreme'.[30] The unique case of West Cameroon is also useful in broader conversation about how gender and education issues shape cultural identities in minority or separatist movements involving sentiments rooted in linguistic or cultural differences, such as the Quebec sovereignty movement in Canada.[31] Furthermore, my analysis not only adds to our understanding of the role of gender in West African contexts, but also illuminates how dual European administrative legacies distinctively shaped the creation of new cultural identities in the early postcolonial era.

This article draws largely from newspapers to document the opinions of educated, middle-class, urban elites although these sources raise complications for researchers. Unlike newspapers in East Cameroon, most West Cameroonian newspapers were privately owned. State propaganda nonetheless permeated them, and political parties intruded into their content.[32] The Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) ran the *Cameroon Times*, Wanzie's employer. Other parties controlled the other newspapers.[33] However, regarding gender and education, the various women's columns differ little, suggesting that political intervention spared my sources. Although female journalists' ethnicities differed, ethnicity politics seem to have mattered little in managing women's roles in West Cameroonian (or Anglophone) nationalism and cultural identity. While individual renowned men sometimes allowed ethnicity to influence elite competition for power and resources, elite women generally sought to nurture a collective national cultural identity. By doing so, women political elites, including female journalists, garnered sociopolitical authority over upper-class and lower-class women in urban settings while defining and shaping elite women's ideal domestic and national duties. As a further caveat, although, as I discuss below, I could identify the various columnists, unfortunately, information about the letter writers appearing in women's columns does not survive: newspapers listed only the letter's town of origin.

Most female columnists wrote under pseudonyms, such as Wanzie, wife of the secretary of state for primary education and a government employee. Based on oral testimony, I identify 'Auntie Clara' in the *Cameroon Champion* as Clara Manga, 'Cousin Lizzy' as Wanzie writing for the *Cameroon Times* after the one-party state eliminated the KNDP in 1966 and both 'Sister Dolly' and 'Aunty Lizzy' as Nkuku Nwigwe, writing in the *Cameroon Outlook* and the *Cameroon Post* respectively.[34] All three women columnists worked as civil servants for the British Southern Cameroon's government and/or the West Cameroon government and were formally educated. These women positioned themselves as trusted authorities by embracing maternal and familial names in their columns. Their columns and letters present perspectives on debates among educated, middle-class, urban West Cameroonian elites – mostly from the modern-day Southwest and NorthWest Regions – over how married women and men should act and what modern marriage should look like in the early postcolonial period, debates that addressed concerns that women follow appropriate gender behaviour.

Marriage, household economy and 'proper' conduct

In October 1963, the *Cameroon Observer* published three letters to the editor about whether an illiterate or a literate wife is more useful to her husband. Many readers praised illiterate wives. One letter, from Macnus Mbonya from Tiko commended his sister-in-law, 'an illiterate woman who cannot pronounce John correctly', nonetheless the best wife he had ever seen 'in action':

> Through thick and thin has she stood by my brother … To contrast, I know of a gentleman who married a literate girl but when he was involved in a case [i.e., suffering financial difficulties], it became impossible for the girl to continue as a wife, and [she] once had the guts to address the gentleman as a thief. Added to that, she occasionally came to dances in the company of other boyfriends while the husband was at home mourning his sorrows.[35]

A second letter, by E. Njoh from Limbe, declares that 'the literate wife is only proud of the husband when he is in the high income earning group and that when the tide is low, love diminishes considerably'. He claims, 'Many literate wives have deserted their husbands because they were involved in cases'.[36]

Drawing from a then-common stereotype, the above two letters describe literate women who were likelier to suffer from a superiority complex and thus question male authority and betray cultural mores on gender relations. Wanzie observed similarly that overly Westernised women who had travelled abroad could not preserve West Cameroonian cultural identity.[37] In a lengthy 5 March 1966 column, she accuses such women of violating West Cameroonian 'indigenous culture'. She asserts that men who travel abroad return 'with just the bare knowledge that took them away from their motherland and … should they bring back any strange cultural practices, they usually fit securely into our own practice', whereas women endeavour to 'revolutionize our customs overnight'.[38] She censures their haughtiness, saying a woman of this type:

> … shuns the company of certain people on whom lies the foundation of her life in society; talks the grammar … to those who find it difficult to understand; snobs certain classes of people especially those who wish to interview her for friendship, [stating] 'He or she is not suitable' … adding ironically, 'This is not what we do over there.' Over there where? … Some of these girls believe too that any girl or woman who has not been abroad cannot speak or write sense, be a good social mixer or dancer … Simply because these girls spent six months in Europe, perhaps for a typing course or so, they claim to know all that pertains to education, politics, and journalism, nursing, in short, all fields of mental and social endeavour.[39]

From Wanzie's viewpoint, some educated women use their experiences studying abroad to promote unsuitable Western cultural values that challenge African cultural standards and expectations. Her criticisms betray gendered assumptions about the educated elite's behaviour, overtly alleging that men are not susceptible to such behaviour while some educated women pushed too far against standards of behaviour. Within this framework, some elite men, like Mbonya and Njoh, similarly agreed that education gave women too much independence and too great a sense of entitlement.

Some readers defended educated women. A woman signing herself Elli Ngolli in a letter to the *Cameroon Outlook* in September 1970 wrote, 'Most men who object [to] having educated wives do so in fear that an educated wife will check

his weaknesses ... In these days of excessive drinking which too many a man [uses to] portray his wealth, only the sound advice of an educated wife will count better'.[40] Ngolli contends that educated wives help keep men moral by discerning their faults and weaknesses. She attributes moral supremacy to women, claiming educated women confer an air of morality on their men. Thus, an educated wife checking her husband's bad behaviour posed no problem but rather encouraged good conduct.

The *Cameroon Outlook's* editor and founder, Patrick Tataw Obenson, also added to the debate; he frequently depicted educated married women as guilty of various practices that undermined their husbands. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, Obenson's satirical column 'Ako-Aya' offered supposedly first-hand accounts of unscrupulous behaviours: a woman having an affair with her husband's friend who aborted her baby upon learning that her husband was returning from a long stay in Britain, wives who shed 'crocodile tears' when their husbands died and women who left husbands who were having financial difficulties.[41] Obenson even complained in a September 1970 column that working married women became haughty and stingy, refusing to share their earnings with their husbands.[42] He claimed that educated women who grew accustomed to modern amenities such as cars and refrigerators were greedy. His diatribe ended by declaring that he would never marry an educated woman.[43]

In the same month that Obenson vowed never to marry an educated woman, the *Cameroon Outlook* published a cartoon titled 'The working housewife – for better or for worse'. The image shows a married couple leaving a bank. The woman holds a large bag of money. The caption above her reads, 'Thank heavens I have banked my own pay'.[44] Readers would understand the cartoon as accusing working wives of selfishness. By treating their pay as their own, instead of a collective wage, and seeking economic independence, women fractured expectations of shared property with the husband as the chief household budget manager. Wives' using economic autonomy to evade the grasp of male control meant subverting normative gender ideals and practices. If husbands no longer controlled financial resources, women might exert inappropriate authority within domestic and community spaces. The cartoon reflected Obenson's opinion that educated married women deviated from what he deemed proper comportment.

However, leading ideas in the 1960s that assumed urbanite men generally controlled the household finances nevertheless diverged from the practices of some Cameroonian rural societies. Scholars have documented the traditional division of households in the Bamenda Grassfields in the Northwest Region of Cameroon. Miriam Goheen's work, *Men Own the Fields, Women Own the Crops*, describes women's labour as the linchpin of male status and power. Addressing the Nso chiefdom, a people of the Bamenda Grassfields, from the nineteenth century to the 1990s, she shows the importance of women producing both crops and children. Goheen examines power struggles between the chiefdom and the state and between men and women, as women increasingly reject long-practiced Grassfields marriage customs. Although Nso men dominate their society, women have their own power. As Goheen's title suggests, men own the land, but women's labour controls the crops. Historically, women kept the profits of the crops they sold after feeding their families.[45]

Stella Nana-Fabu asserts, by contrast, the vulnerability of uneducated urban wives of highly educated men. Often such women did not engage in petty trading or raise and sell crops because land available for subsistence farming is scarce in urban regions. However, a more poignant reason is that husbands thought it would detract from their own status to have their wives trading.[46] Men believed such activities threatened their status by saying to the world that they earned too little to feed their families. Such men constructed new idealised urban masculinities that diverged from long-standing traditions in which women garnered economic autonomy from controlling crops. Urban uneducated women thus often depended completely on their husbands for social status and economic security.[47] However, dual-income couples in urban 1960s West Cameroon, like their counterparts elsewhere in West Africa, such as Ghanaians, considered it standard practice to have split accounts, which empowered educated urban wives.[48] Both female journalists and readers who wrote to newspapers cautioned wives might use this money on cosmetics, to attract immoral sexual attention and diverge from normative expectations of gender roles.[49] Their assertions that men should mostly control finances may not have reflected practices, but they certainly fought women's claims to absolute financial autonomy.

Some commentary, however, supported wives controlling finances in some circumstances. In a 1964 article, for example, Wanzie writes: 'Some husbands have written asking my view on why wives always quarrel with their husbands when husbands refuse giving them extra allowance apart from food money ... Husbands fail to know that wives whether they work or not have to be given ... a little amount every month as pocket allowance for them to use as they like'.[50] She recommends that 'in homes where the husbands are squanders and think not of their financial stand in the next day, ill health emergencies and education of their children, it will be justified if the wives take charge of the family's savings'. [51] Two years later, she reiterates, 'in homes where the husbands are squander maniacs ... it will be justifiable if the wives take charge of the family's savings'.[52] Wanzie advises separate bank accounts in such situations to prevent marital discord. Averring that times have changed, she remarks:

> In Africa in days gone by, our grandmothers after selling their farm produce, gave the money to their husbands who kept it together with theirs. This meant that husband and wife had one common purse from which the husband spent money for the up-keep of his wives, children and relatives. Whenever the wife demanded money ... the husband readily gave her such money without complaining.[53]

Wanzie compared West Cameroonian practices with those of Europeans:

> In Europe it is generally the custom for husband and wife to have a common family bank account with both husband and wife having a right over it ... Today, Africans even though married by Western standards have not dropped the custom of extended family system. Now that monogamy is slowly but surely taking over polygamy, the wife does not enjoy the right of inheritance ... because the husband's relatives claim his money and property [after death] leaving both wife and children stranded.[54]

Wanzie shared her knowledge of European cultural norms by differentiating between how 'modern' Cameroonian spouses and their European counterparts manage their financial affairs. She contends that West Cameroonian widows who were in monogamous marriages lost their inheritance because of avaricious family members who

claimed it instead. Consequently, she ultimately embraces greater equality in wives' control of finances.[55]

Writing as Sister Dolly in July 1970, Nwigwe's view is bleaker than Wanzie's. She accused her readers of both sexes of improperly managing family finances. She censures both husbands and wives, claiming:

> We are now faced with one of the most intriguing affair which pollutes sometimes the orderliness of our married homes. Who should keep the family purse, the woman or the man? There is the belief that women are lovers of luxury and extravagance ... Most women, even housewives have tended to use money intended for food and other house requirements for cosmetics and other trivialities ... The man who should be the head of the family is so engaged in other affairs that one often wonders if a man can be responsible for the family finances. Most men spend long hours with girlfriends, calling for exorbitant drinks ... forgetting their suffering wives and children at home, who depend wholly on them.[56]

'With this behaviour', Nwigwe writes, 'at times you hear men accusing their wives of extravagance while the women in return lay the blame on husbands. But one wonders who should be relied on ... Since all are, extravagant, who should then keep the purse?'[57] The journalist still conveys prevailing expectations about attributes and behaviour appropriate to women, though she condemns both sexes for mishandling household finances. She concludes that despite a woman's education and changing attitudes about marriage, men were still the natural leaders of households and should thus manage the finances. However, from Sister Dolly's perspective, such men comport themselves improperly if they fail to curb their wives' spending or provide for the women and children who naturally 'depend wholly on them'.

The above discussions show that newspaper columnists' prescriptions for women's roles betray a selective embrace of African authenticity. As Marc Epprecht argues, colonial rule and postcolonial political and cultural nationalism transformed discourses about 'Africanness' and 'un-Africanness'.[58] Perceptions about African authenticity often regurgitate colonial stereotypes about Africans. Yet these outlooks are neither stagnant nor uncontested. Male letter writers suggested that formally educated and empowered women were un-African even when they accepted changes in household financial control. For example, they asserted that men should completely control household finances, even though this was contrary to precolonial and colonial practices in which women had a say and oftentimes an independent income.

Even while raising the alarm about these changes, female journalists still believed that modern women might work for pay, endangering neither their marriages nor their conduct as long as they followed appropriate interpretations of gender relations. However, unlike male letter writers to newspapers, female journalists generally rejected an absolute patriarchy. They also questioned male privilege by suggesting that women might subvert gender hierarchies if their husbands failed as heads of households. They often cited European marriage customs to exemplify how modern African marriages should operate. However, female journalists stopped short of disrupting gender hierarchies completely, even in extreme circumstances. They implied that motherhood held primacy in situations where a woman was married to a profligate husband, encouraging such women to prioritise their roles as mothers to ensure the well-being of their children. Similarly, an educated wife should bow to male authority by letting her husband control household finances, though only if he provided for her and the

children. Although both female journalists and male letter writers endeavoured to reorder gender hierarchies along indigenous lines, contrasting their views suggests differing conceptions of appropriate gender hierarchies and differing ways of drawing upon local and international concepts of gender normalisations.

'My husband stopped maintaining me so I beat up his girl': educated wives and physical violence

Discussions of physical violence and criticisms of the overbearing attitudes of educated wives within marriage likewise reflected anxiety over changing gender expectations. Many letter authors thought a man's physical prowess expressed both his manhood and status within his marriage and community.[59] In an August 1964 editorial entitled 'Which is your Perfect Wife?' Wanzie encourages educated wives to be 'quiet or murmur some words of apology' to angry, harshly speaking husbands.[60] 'Never attack or fight your husband publicly. Women must apologize even if they are not guilty'. Wanzie connects her defence of reverence for male authority to the emerging roles and authoritarian tendencies of some educated wives, in a December 1965 column. She warns, 'Nowadays, men are saying that it's useless educating girls ... Some women even show a domineering attitude if they are more educated and earn more than their husbands. These men will dare not say so if they live in sweet and peaceful homes'.[61] She proclaims that the home 'should be a woman's first attention' and advises wives to prepare good meals. Educated women with office jobs who fail at 'making the home well disciplined, well organized and very sweet' face consequences: 'When we become disrespectful to our husbands and also neglect our home duties our husbands have the right to stop us from working. Educated wives of Cameroon must prove to the men the worth of education'.[62] An educated woman must still bow to her husband's desire that she stop working if she failed in her duties or stopped being submissive. Women's education must pose no threat to men – social, cultural, economic, or physical.

John Mbabiti's October 1964 letter from Bamenda to Wanzie suggests the source of her concern about physical threats. He asks, 'Is it right for a woman to slap her husband first?' saying he congratulated himself for remaining unmarried after he saw his sister-in-law slap his brother.[63] He condemns the display as a public challenge to his brother's authority within his marriage. Mbabiti's letter asks, 'Does it mean African literate wives are being taught to slap their husbands first, Ruff?' Wanzie responds, 'African literate wives are never taught to slap husbands first', noting that African husbands see that as 'disrespect and provocation'.[64] Although asserting that educated women are taught to be non-violent, Wanzie recognises the threat women's violence poses. She notes that women's violence against their husbands generally drew crowds, suggesting 'that the men become curious to see their counterparts who have fallen victim to the woman folk. [While] women might be wanting to know who it is that has fallen prey to their counterpart and henceforth to jubilate that the woman too can be stronger than the man or to blame the woman for doing so ... The men may think that the women are becoming wild or are power drunk and want to be free or wear the trousers'.[65] For Wanzie, some wives' violent conduct tarnished the image of *all* women as protectors of West Cameroonian cultural values, especially if women applaud each other's

transgressions. Women supportive of other women's unruly behaviour exacerbate anxieties that women cannot follow 'proper' normative behaviour within their homes and communities. From Wanzie's perspective, successful marriages required strong patriarchal authority; a wife's 'resounding victory over a man' deepened fears of disarrayed male authority.

In April 1970, writing as Sister Dolly, Nwigwe informs wives that 'Married men have suffered humiliations at the hands of over vigilant married women'. She argues wives should accept extramarital affairs:

> The madam in the house is secured ... She is married and therefore she enjoys protection ... but poor surplus women have nowhere to lay their heads! The mere fact that a man has chosen one woman to be mistress in the home should give that woman an over-all victory over the numerous girlfriends her man may have outside. This alone is sufficient to make a married woman relax her vigilance over her man ... It is when you in the house are bossy and forcy [*sic*] about the woman outside and you will not give your man a breathing space by nagging and swearing that your man gets fed up with the home and drifts farther from you and enjoys a relaxed state of mind in the home of the other woman ... Stop bothering your man![66]

A man, she proposes, is entitled to 'manly freedom'. Women should be 'blind to the petty things' he does outside the marriage. Being the 'mistress of the house', she maintains, is a 'crown of conquest'.[67] Excessive nagging only encourages men to seek comfort elsewhere. Vigilant wives violate their duty and imperil expected norms facilitating that behaviour. They should enjoy the social and economic protections of marriage without seeking more equality.

A month later, Nwigwe further denounces 'women extremists' – disruptive wives. She accuses women of becoming 'traffic police' on 'the country's highways just to track down their husbands'.[68] She reminds married women:

> No matter how good they are to their husbands, their husbands may still have a roving eye on that other woman somewhere. Fighting men in public spaces with cudgels or bottles all for the sake of the other woman has become very rampant ... Why fight your man in public? Why stand wildly and shamelessly in corners of the road to way lay your husband in order to disgrace him? Who bears the disgrace at the end? The woman of course because the man has the license by right to love a second or a third woman if he so desires.[69]

Nwigwe calls conflicts with a husband's mistress 'exposing your nakedness' and 'invit[ing] a crowd ... to witness your shaken position in the home'. The 'seal of public disgrace', she warns, will 'seal your marriage failures'. Many West Cameroonians believed that domestic problems should stay between couples or within the family.[70] Public disclosures pollute the streets with immorality and fracture domestic tranquillity. Equating physical violence with nakedness was no accident: confrontation stripped a woman's dignity. Certainly neither Wanzie nor Nwigwe were feminists in any usual sense of the word, but their statements illustrate that they perceived the limits of patriarchy and perhaps were strategising about how to protect the position of educated women in the new conditions by warning them against being too haughty. Stephanie Newell observes that many female writers of this era shied away from association with feminism because of suspicion toward 'women libbers' and conflation of them with sexually promiscuous, unmarried women.[71] Nonetheless, these Cameroonian writers instructed women to become autonomous even while adhering to predominant gender roles and reacting unemotionally to a man's extramarital conduct. They implicitly

recognised a woman's right to object to infidelity in appropriate ways, suggesting that patriarchy could encompass a woman's critical response to her husband's extramarital liaisons.

Accounts in columns and letters may have been real or fictional. Although journalists' descriptions of wives becoming 'traffic police' were clearly humorous, those same journalists respected the seriousness of intimate partner violence and called attention to it.[72] Cameroonians had long considered violence within marriages a private affair. Humour created a space for addressing violence, helping readers access critical issues in educated married women's lives. Although the journalists and newspaper readers' decrials of violence by women may have reflected real incidents, the suggestion that women's violence outstripped men's was likely not grounded in evidence. Rhetoric about 'violent women' in columns such as Wanzie's reflected, rather, a greater cultural tolerance of men's violence against women, which evidence suggests is more common than women's abuse of men.[73] A 2005 UN committee on torture reports that Cameroonian men have long used physical violence to force their female partners to submit to the patriarchal society's norms and that women underreport such violence.[74] Women's changing economic power in the 1960s and early 70s may have increased violence against women. The idea that financially independent African women sought sexual freedom and frivolous pursuits betrays an abusive postcolonial misogyny. Educated working women may have faced backlash from husbands trying to reassert dominance, which helps to explain the prominence of the debates I have uncovered in newspaper columns and letters. Commentary on domestic violence may have reflected anxiety over women entering the workforce and other changes West Cameroon faced in the federal republic.

Acceptable public shaming and violence

In 1960s urban West Cameroon, despite the critique of unruly wives as 'Un-African', scenes of housewives publicly humiliating their husbands continued a longstanding West African practice. In precolonial Anglophone Cameroonian societies, women joined to condemn and prevent men's abuses. Among the Bakweri, an ethnic group from the Southwest Region of Cameroon, women mobilized against male offenders in a movement known as *titi ikoli* (*titi* means 'a thousand' while *ikoli* is a playful word for 'vulva').[75] They used public shaming to address offences throughout the period of British rule and the postcolonial period. Similarly, the Kom, a principal ethnic group of Cameroon's Northwest Region, practice Anlu, which entails women gathering and, through extreme behaviour, shaming and ostracising men who break community morals, for example, a husband who physically abuses his pregnant wife.[76]

Women have publicly shamed men in other West African countries as well. Judith Van Allen writes that Igbo women publicly shamed men to bring about the resolution of individual and collective grievances during British rule in Nigeria. Tactics included boycotts, strikes and 'sitting on' individuals. To 'sit on' a man, also called 'making war' on him, involved gathering at his compound, dancing, singing about the grievances against him, often questioning his manhood, banging on his hut with pestles used for pounding yams, perhaps demolishing his hut or plastering it with mud and hurting him physically. A man might be thus sanctioned for mistreating his wife or violating the women's market rules.[77]

By opposing public humiliation of men who ducked their responsibilities, journalists like Nwigwe and some male readers actually *broke* with predominant West African traditions that allowed for justified instances of women publically shaming men. They seem to propose publicly humiliating single women as an alternative to humiliating husbands. Robert Alah's April 1967 letter to the *Cameroon Times* editor, for example, suggests, 'married women should form unions to deal with single girls who prefer married men to bachelors'.[78] Further, 'our women should resolve to make it impossible for any married man to befriend unmarried girls and also forbid unmarried girls from befriending married men'. In a June 1970 *Cameroon Outlook* column, Nwigwe provides a letter from a group of wives in Buea who did as Alah proposed. The letter suggests that publicly chastising a class of women offered an alternative to directly confronting and reproaching men. The letter reads in part:

> Until you will learn to go to a bachelor you will hardly find a husband … You are being used to satisfy the animalistic instinct in men – spare motor tyres or bicycle wheels … The title 'Mrs.' supersedes any doctorate degree a woman can achieve in her life … Be grateful for married women for allowing their husbands to uplift you from your strait of depression to achieve a husband.[79]

Single women, in turn, collectively responded to Buea housewives two years later in Wanzie's advice column. Writing as Cousin Lizzy in February 1972, Wanzie outlines the letter:

> These young unmarried women have asked me to convey to housewives this message: That they spinsters do not vie for relief positions [temporary relationships]. If they love a man and wish to live with him they'll do so as wives and not as reliefs, be the man married or single. When it is their turn for marriage they'll be properly wedded and not disguise their intentions.[80]

Married women censured their single counterparts for flouting sexual morals and evading gender expectations by remaining unmarried. From the single women's perspective, fostering marriage-like relationships served as an alternative method of maintaining gender role expectations. The letter makes apparent their hope to marry eventually, thereby further upholding standards of desirable gender-role behaviour. Neither letter questions the behaviour of married men who have extramarital relationships; instead, they uphold the authority of men and discuss how women might preserve or defy behavioural expectations for women.

Anglophone and Francophone women: comparing gender expectations

Oral evidence suggests that Anglophone Cameroonians' concern for their distinct cultural identity revolved around not only their ideas of their own country's behavioural norms but also their negative opinion of Francophone women. In several 1971 columns, Obenson called East Cameroon women 'easy' compared to their demanding West Cameroonian counterparts.[81] He writes:

> I like these Douala [a Francophone city] beauties … Provided you are anxious to spend the money the goods [sex] are delivered to you. Contrast these with our West Cameroon beauties, with their lack of husbands where you must bribe them [with] *Especial* and *Beck* [beers] and suya [spicy shish kebab] … And the setting must be at the Atlantic beach and you must go home around three.[82]

Obenson implied that West Cameroonian women withheld sexual favours more fastidiously than their Eastern counterparts.

Anthony Yana Zumafor, a former civil servant for the West Cameroon government, commented that in the 1960s Anglophone Cameroonians believed themselves more moral than their Francophone counterparts.[83] In contrast to Obenson's claims, Zumafor argued that women and men alike believed West Cameroonian women more modest, thriftier and better housekeepers than Francophone wives:

> I'm very sorry about it but the worst housekeepers I have ever met are French Cameroonian women ... As Southern Cameroonians [Anglophone Cameroonians] we are English speakers [and] we were brought up the Anglo-Saxon way ... French Cameroonian women like to just be gorgeously dressed but do not generally know how to take care of things ... they're expensive, where as [*sic*] our women and our men were brought up in thrift ... We were modest in our demands. Modest in our needs; we had very few wants.[84]

Buea residents Asong Martha Ebey and Vanessa Yonkeu made similar observations about the perceived cultural differences between Anglophone and Francophone women in my 2011 interviews with them. They reported that Anglophone women were likelier than their Francophone counterparts to wear African clothing such as wrappers and loins.[85] Ebey explained that the 'Wrapper was ... to identify. Even [a] Francophone would identify, and they would call you Biafra, meaning you are like women from Nigeria. Whenever they see you, they would just know that you are from this area [Southwest and Northwest Regions of Cameroon]'.[86] The word 'Biafra' used here is significant. It is a slur that Francophones have applied to Anglophones since reunification in 1961.[87] The Republic of Biafra, a secessionist state in southeastern Nigeria, existed from 1967 to 1970. While the Republic of Biafra claimed no part of either West Cameroon or the part that once constituted British South Cameroon, Francophone Cameroonians have been calling Anglophone Cameroonians 'Biafrans' to implicitly accuse all Anglophones of ingratitude and bad faith due to an interest in secession.[88] The experiences of women from Ebey's generation made them feel that Anglophone and Francophone regions of Cameroon were socially, culturally and politically different.[89] Those opinions demonstrate how ideas of women's adherence to gender expectations shaped perceptions of elite Anglophone Cameroonian cultural identity. Such women were proper Protestants, more modest and more diligent domestic managers than their Eastern counterparts were. Postcolonial newspaper columns demonstrate, and these recent interviews support, the claim that by comparing their virtues to their neighbours' turpitude, urban elites assured that representations of women's behaviour, including even the clothing they wore, drove an Anglophone nationalist self-awareness.

Conclusion

This essay has described early postcolonial changes in education, economics and politics that created new arenas for debates about gender during the 1960s and early 1970s in urban Anglophone Cameroon. Because elite women earned more than in the past, and because Anglophones defined themselves in contradistinction to Francophones, educated, middle-class, urban elites (both men and women) debated how the modern Cameroonian family and married woman ought to behave.

Participants hailed women's educational and professional achievements, but feared that educated wives considered themselves exempt from dominant notions of appropriate gendered conduct. For instance, both sexes condemned recalcitrant educated wives for undermining male authority if they publicly confronted husbands about their extramarital liaisons. However, female journalists avowed that if women carefully adhered to cultural mores about gender, formal education could define the modern African woman.

Men more frequently blamed women's formal education for their perceived loss of status; they alleged that educated women had a superiority complex and became too domineering in marriages. Those discussions occurred within a larger context of concern about West Cameroonian cultural identity and autonomy within a Francophone-dominated federal republic. Recognising the Francophone government's hegemonic, annexationist agenda in East Cameroon, some urban elites were anxious to preserve their cultural identity and distinguish West Cameroonian culture from its Francophone counterpart. In other words, enforcing gender roles, particularly regarding educated married women, helped maintain masculine authority while at the same time clinging to a directly threatened regional autonomy.

Anglophone power waned during the federal republic. President Ahidjo, a Francophone, banned the multiparty system countrywide, in 1966. East Cameroon subsequently censored, shut down or co-opted Anglophone newspapers. The Anglophone debate about wives' behaviour and the rhetoric denouncing the unsuitable behaviour of educated, married, English-speaking women on which this article focuses was among the casualties.[90] Nevertheless, issues of education and expected gender norms remain interconnected and continue to inform perceptions about the perseverance of Cameroonian Anglophone nationalism into the present. That is particularly so for urban elite Anglophones, both in the contemporary Southwest and Northwest Regions of Cameroon, who continue to seek separatism or formal secession from modern-day Cameroon.[91] How gender and formal education have shaped perspectives on postcolonial Anglophone nationalism into the present day is an important topic for comparative study that might build on this essay's insights.

Notes

As part of a broader study of gender and political identity in Anglophone Cameroon, the Baylor University Summer Sabbaticals, Purdue University Research Foundation Grant and the Bernadotte E. Schmitt Grant (American Historical Association) supported research for this paper. I gratefully acknowledge this support and the generous assistance of Primus Forgwe, the chief archivist of the National Archives of Cameroon in Buea, and the staff of the National Archives in the UK. I wish to thank Mary Jo Maynes, other members of the editorial committee, and the two anonymous *Gender & History* reviewers for their comments. I also thank Alicia Catharine Decker, Kim Kellison, Kate Epstein, Stephen Daniel Allen, Leslie Roy Ballard and members of my writing group at Baylor University for their invaluable suggestions for revision.

1. Ruff Wanzie, 'House Wife at Husbands' Throats', *Cameroon Times*, 16 December 1965, p. 2.
2. Wanzie, 'House Wife'.
3. In the 1960s, 22 per cent of Cameroonians were Anglophone. 'Anglophone' is an increasingly ambiguous term in Cameroon, though far less so in the period this work scrutinises. Thus I use the meaning most scholars have used – Anglophone Cameroonians' ancestors originate west of the Mungo River, the natural border between British and French-controlled Cameroon under the League of Nations mandate. Piet Konings and Francis Njamnjoh, *Negotiating an Anglophone Identity: A Study of the Politics of Recognition and Representation in Cameroon* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 95.

4. Founded in 1960, the *Cameroon Times* was published tri-weekly, with about 8,000 copies printed per issue at its peak in the mid-1960s. The paper temporarily closed in 1968, then permanently in 1982. William Jong-Ebot, 'The Mass Media in Cameroon: An Analysis of Their Post-Colonial Status', (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1989), pp. 177–81; Emmanuel Fru Doh, *Anglophone-Cameroon Literature: An Introduction* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), p. 184.
5. For examples in West Africa, see Saheed Aderinto, *When Sex Threatened the State: Illicit Sexuality, Nationalism, and Politics in Colonial Nigeria, 1900–1958* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015) and Abosede George, *Making Modern Girls: A History of Girlhood, Labor, and Social Development in Colonial Lagos* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014). For examples in other African regions, see Emily Callaci, 'Dancehall Politics: Mobility, Sexuality, and Spectacles of Racial Respectability in Late Colonial Tanganyika, 1930s–1961', *The Journal of African History* 52 (2011), pp. 365–84 and Rachel Jean-Baptiste, *Conjugal Rights: Marriage, Sexuality, and Urban Life in Colonial Libreville, Gabon* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014).
6. The Southwest Region of Cameroon, along with the Northwest Region, comprise the two Anglophone regions of modern-day Cameroon.
7. Emmanuel Konde, *African Women and Politics: Knowledge, Gender, and Power in Male-Dominated Cameroon* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), p. 35; Emily Burrill, *States of Marriage: Gender, Justice, and Rights in Colonial Mali* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015), p. 32.
8. Piet Konings, *Gender and Class in the Tea Estates of Cameroon* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), pp. 7, 28–30; Emmanuel Yenshu, *Gender Relations in Cameroon: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Bamenda: Langaa RPCIG, 2012), pp. 77, 83.
9. Lilian Lem Atanga, *Gender, Discourse and Power in the Cameroonian Parliament* (Bamenda: Langaa RPCIG, 2009), p. 97.
10. Konde, *African Women*, p. 35.
11. Julius Atemkeng Amin, *The Peace Corps in Cameroon* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1992), p. 59.
12. Christine Saidi, *Women's Authority and Society in Early East-Central Africa* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2010), pp. 75–88.
13. The first all-female secondary school in Cameroon, Queen of the Rosary Catholic College, was established in West Cameroon, in Mamfe in 1956. Konde, *African Women*, pp. 71–2.
14. Konde, *African Women*, pp. 94, 115, 122–3, 143.
15. Iris Berger, *Women in Twentieth-Century Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 51, 184.
16. Women of lower economic positioning always found ways to contribute to their family's finances, often in informal employment. Middle-class women were formally employed, but statistics specific to 1960s or 1970s Anglophone Cameroon are hard to find although it seems likely that, as in other countries such as Tanzania where 9 per cent of women held formal jobs in 1974, there were West Cameroonian women with formal jobs in the 1960s or 1970s. Robert J. Berg and Jennifer Seymour Whitaker, *Strategies for African Development: A Study for the Committee on African Development Strategies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 397.
17. See the following for examples of how elites of both sexes frequently used Christianity and biblical figures to condemn women who defied cultural expectations of gendered behaviour: Jacqueline-Bethel Mougoué, 'African Women do not Look Good in Wigs: Gender, Beauty Rituals and Cultural Identity in Anglophone Cameroon, 1961–1972', *Feminist Africa* 21 (2016), pp. 7–22.
18. Michael Schatzberg contends that the comparison between the nation and a family writ large appears virtually everywhere in middle Africa. Michael Schatzberg, *Political Legitimacy in Middle Africa: Father, Family, Food* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), p. 13.
19. Ruff Wanzie, 'Bringing up Children', *Cameroon Times,* 19 September 1964, p. 3.
20. Asong Martha Ebey, interview by author on 8 November 2011.
21. The British Cameroons was administered as two areas, Northern Cameroons and Southern Cameroons. Anthony Ndi, *Southern West Cameroon Revisited (1950–1972)* (Bamenda: Langaa RPCIG, 2014), vol. 1: Unveiling Inescapable Traps, pp. 2–3.
22. Ndi, *Southern West Cameroon.*
23. Jong-Ebot, 'The Mass Media', p. 140.
24. Nessie Ndive-Hill, 'Retrospective Investigation of Women's Education in the South West Province of Cameroon with a Look towards the Future' (unpublished PhD Thesis, Union Institute & University, 2007), p. 28; Melinda Adams, 'Colonial Policies and Women's Participation in Public Life: The Case of British Southern Cameroons', *African Studies Quarterly* 8 (2006), pp. 1–22, here p. 6.

25. Nicodemus Fru Awasom, 'Towards Historicizing the Ossification of Colonial Identities in Africa: The Anglophone/Francophone Divide in Postcolonial Cameroon', in Bahru Zewde (ed), *Society, State, and Identity in African History* (Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies, 2008), pp. 47–72.
26. Piet Konings and Francis Njamnjoh, *Negotiating an Anglophone Identity: A Study of the Politics of Recognition and Representation in Cameroon* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 95.
27. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 25–8.
28. Carina Ray, *Crossing the Color Line: Race, Sex, and the Contested Politics of Colonialism in Ghana* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015).
29. Dorothy Hodgson and Sheryl McCurdy, 'Introduction' in Dorothy Hodgson and Sheryl McCurdy (eds), *'Wicked' Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2001), p. 6.
30. Hodgson and Sheryl McCurdy, eds. 'Introduction'.
31. Jane Jacobs, *The Question of Separatism: Quebec and the Struggle Over Sovereignty* (Montreal: Baraka Books, 2011).
32. Jong-Ebot, 'The Mass Media', p. 156.
33. Jong-Ebot, 'The Mass Media', p. 141.
34. Zumafor, interview by author. Interview with Simon Nunka Dikuba, interview with author on 18 June 2016. Dikuba was the editor of the *Cameroon Times* throughout the 1960s.
35. Stella, 'Women's World', *Cameroon Observer*, October 1963, p. 3.
36. Stella, 'Women's World'.
37. Please see the following for a similar argument by the author: Jacqueline-Bethel Tchouta Mougoué, 'Intellectual Housewives, Journalism, and Anglophone Nationalism in Cameroon, 1961–1972', *Journal of West African History* 3 forthcoming (October 2017).
38. Ruff Wanzie, 'Exemplary or Misleading', *Cameroon Times*, 5 March 1966, p. 3.
39. Wanzie, 'Exemplary or Misleading'.
40. 'The Working Housewife', *Cameroon Outlook*, 11 September 1970, p. 6.
41. Ako-Aya, 'Who is Madam?' *Cameroon Outlo10ok,* 26 February 1971; Ako-Aya, 'My Friend's Wife', *Cameroon Outlook*, 23 April 1971; Ako-Aya, 'Yawinde Sister', *Cameroon Outlook*, 12 November 1971.
42. Ako-Aya, 'Those Wives Who Work', *Cameroon Outlook*, 4 September 1970, p. 4.
43. Ako-Aya, 'Those Wives Who Work'.
44. 'The Working Housewife'.
45. Miriam Goheen, *Men Own the Fields, Women Own the Crops: Gender and Power in the Cameroon Grassfields* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996).
46. Stella Nana-Fabu, 'An Analysis of the Economic Status of Women in Cameroon', *Journal of International Women's Studies* 8 (2006), pp. 148–62, here p. 154.
47. Nana-Fabu, 'An Analysis'.
48. Patience Mutopo, *Women, Mobility and Rural Livelihoods in Zimbabwe: Experiences of Fast Track Land Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), p. 209.
49. For examples see Ruff Wanzie, 'Fashion Scramble', *Cameroon Times,* 5 September 1964, p. 3; Michael Eyango, 'Sister Dolly, You are Wrong, Women are not Stronger', *Cameroon Outlook*, 29 December 1969, pp. 3–4; Martin Ngum, 'Do Wigs Add Beauty?', *Cameroon Express*, 19 September 1968, p. 2; John Court, 'Life with Women is Full of Surprises', *Daily Life*, 31 January 1970, p. 2.
50. Ruff Wanzie, 'House Wife's Pocket Allowance', *Cameroon Times*, 12 December 1964, p. 3.
51. Wanzie, 'House Wife's Pocket Allowance'.
52. Ruff Wanzie, 'Employed Married Women's Pay-Packets', *Cameroon Times*, 19 February 1966, p. 5.
53. Wanzie, 'Employed Married Women's Pay-Packets'.
54. Wanzie, 'Employed Married Women's Pay-Packets'.
55. Wanzie, 'Employed Married Women's Pay-Packets'.
56. Sister Dolly, 'Who Should Keep the Purse?' *Cameroon Outlook*, 10 July 1970, p. 3.
57. Sister Dolly, 'Who Should Keep the Purse? '
58. Marc Epprecht, *Heterosexual Africa?: The History of an Idea from the Age of Exploration to the Age of AIDS* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008), pp. 19, 86, 90, 97.
59. Lisa Lindsey and Stephen Miescher, 'Introduction', in Lisa Lindsey and Stephen Miescher (eds), *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003), pp. 1–19, here pp. 5–6.
60. Ruff Wanzie, 'Which is your Perfect Wife?', *Cameroon Times*, 22 August 1964, p. 3.
61. Ruff Wanzie, 'A Sweet Home', *Cameroon Times*, 23 December 1965, p. 9.
62. Wanzie, 'A Sweet Home'.
63. John Mbabit, 'Should Wife Slap First?', *Cameroon Times*, 31 October 1964, p. 4.

64. Mbabit, 'Should Wife Slap First?'
65. Wanzie, 'House Wife at Husbands' Throats'.
66. Sister Dolly, 'Housewives Reduce your Vigilance', *Cameroon Outlook*, 11 April 1970, p. 3.
67. Sister Dolly, 'Housewives Reduce your Vigilance'.
68. Sister Dolly, 'I Frown at Women Extremists', *Cameroon Outlook*, 29 May 1970, p. 3.
69. Sister Dolly, 'I Frown', p. 3.
70. Annie Kamani, interview by author on 1 August 2015.
71. Stephanie Newell, *West African Literatures: Ways of Reading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 134, 149–50.
72. Joseph Oduro-Frimpong argues similarly in his work on political cartoons and public debates in contemporary Ghana. Joseph Oduro-Frimpong, "'Better Ghana [Agenda]?" Akosua's Political Cartoons and Critical Public Debates in Contemporary Ghana', in Stephanie Newell and Okome Onookome (eds), *Popular Culture in Africa: The Episteme of the Everyday* (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 131–153, here p. 148.
73. The World Bank suggests that rapidly changing gender roles may contribute to increasing gender violence in low-income households. Women's increasing economic power has caused some men to feel humiliated and emasculated by a sense of loss of control within their households. Men's frustrations and anger at their inability to fulfil their traditional roles as breadwinners often leads to increased tensions and violence. Sarah Coll-Black and Elizabeth Lindsey, *Integrating Poverty and Gender into Health Programmes: A Sourcebook for Health Professionals* (Manila: World Health Organization, Western Pacific Region, 2008), p. 13.
74. United Nations, 'Violence against Women in Cameroon', in *Report of the Committee against Torture: 31st Session, 32nd Session* (General Assembly UN Publications, 2005), pp. 23–8.
75. Catherine Blackledge, *The Story of V: A Natural History of Female Sexuality* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004), p. 17; Konde, *African Women and Politics*, pp. 50–1.
76. Henry Kam Kah, 'Women's Resistance in Cameroon's Western Grassfields: The Power of Symbols, Organization, and Leadership, 1957–1961', *African Studies Quarterly* 12 (2011), pp. 67–91, here pp. 104–5.
77. Judith Van Allen, 'Sitting on a Man: Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 6 (1972), pp. 165–81.
78. Robert Alah, 'Married Women Should Form Unions', *Cameroon Times*, 18 April 1967, p. 2.
79. Sister Dolly, 'These Spare Tyres', *Cameroon Outlook*, 12 June 1970, pp. 3–4.
80. Cousin Lizzy, 'Relief Husbands for Faithful Wives?', *Cameroon Times*, 3 February 1972, p. 3.
81. Ako-Aya, 'Na War-O', *Cameroon Outlook*, 24 February 1971; Ako-Aya, 'No Man Di Lose', *Cameroon Outlook*, 2 March 1971.
82. Ako-Aya, 'Na War-O'.
83. Anthony Yana Zumafor, interview with author on 30 July 2015. Buea, Cameroon.
84. Anthony Yana Zumafor, interview with author.
85. Vanessa Yonkeu (pseud.), interview by author, 24 September 2011; Asong Martha Ebey, interview by author on 8 November 2011.
86. Ebey, interview by author.
87. Awasom, 'Towards Historicizing', p. 58.
88. Eric Anchimbe, 'The English Language and the Construction of a Cameroon Anglophone Identity', in Eric Anchimbe and Stephen Mforteh (eds), *Postcolonial Linguistic Voices: Identity Choices and Representations* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), pp. 77–98, here p. 87.
89. For examples, see Fidelia Ngum (pseud.) interview by author, 4 November 2011 and Bekene Eyambe (pseud.) interview by author, 8 November 2011.
90. Carlson Anyangwe, *Imperialistic Politics in Cameroun: Resistance and the Inception of the Restoration of the Statehood of Southern Cameroons* (Bamenda: Langaa RPCIG, 2008), pp. 11, 15–16.
91. For example, the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC), the main secessionist movement in Cameroon, has called for the independence of the two English-speaking provinces. Ndi Eugene Ndi, 'Linguistic Divide Threatens to Tear Cameroon Apart', *Africa Review* 6 February 2017, http://www.africareview.com/special-reports/Linguistic-divide-threatens-to-tear-Cameroon-apart/979182-3801706-1036l2g; Adrian Blomfield, 'A Nation Divided: Tensions Mount in Cameroon as English Speakers Marginalised by Francophone Majority', *Telegraph,* 18 March 2017.