

## **Investigating the Outcomes of the Military Wing of The Civil Society in Enforcing Democracy or Cessation. Case Study: Burkina Faso and Cameroon**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In Hobbes' Leviathan, he portrays man as a rationally angry and dangerous creature capable of hurting another in order to remain alive. He says human interpersonal relations are mostly characterized by brutality in what he called "Man against man" in other words man is another man's wolf. According to him human interpersonal relations are substantiated by the fear of bad or sudden death and so, every human seeks for ways to either remain alive or to maintain his status quo. Anger, resentments, protests and violence are clearly part of the human life and one of the reasons every human must be careful to gather his human arsenal in order to deter another from killing him. Man cannot in any way deal with the other without these ingredients ever present in interpersonal human relations. Though pejorative with many negative defects as Hobbes sees it, they have also brought some common good to societies and countries whose governments are experts in crisis management. However, the same is not the case for countries with haughty governments ruled by mostly dictatorships, which underrate their citizens and use the military to deter them from fighting for their rights. This article shall seek to firstly understand the conceptual background of civil society by examining different definitions of what it means. Secondly, it shall look at two fundamental factors that make civil societies very important and powerful for state development as well as destruction, however, will discuss them separately as one will be deeply discussed in the later parts of the study. Thirdly, it shall shallowly review the relationship between the civil society and democracy in Nigeria which will serve as a preview to understand the foreseen projection that the civil society and democracy in tandem engenders development. Secondly, at the core lies the tireless and selfless service of a powerful civil society vis-à-vis to maintain social order, unity, and social cohesion as well as keep the spirit of nationalism aflame. Lastly, this article shall concentrate on the most vital part of the study which is the military wing of civil societies. This study will show that when the civil society organization is pushed to its limits, it has the power to bring no small trouble to their host governments and domestic affairs sometimes crossing international boundaries and leading to serious international security issues and humanitarian crises. To fully understand this part, the study shall stroll through political exclusion,

**isolation, opportunity, greed and violence as possible incentives to arouse the devastating military wing of the civil society. Furthermore, the most comprehensive and elaborate study to use to explain this will be the analysis of Collier and Hoeffler's account of civil war studies but this will be mentioned in passing. To avoid auto repetition, an article earlier published by me titled "Investigating the causes of civil wars in Sub-Saharan Africa, Case study: South Sudan and the Central African Republic" shall be cited. More so, this study shall look at carefully localized independent and dependent variables which shall be used in the comparative method to review the verifiable effects of the military wing of the civil society in Cameroon and Burkina Faso. "When the enabling factor fails to a haughty government, then civilian enacted military action is the only solution. However, the effects of this civilian enacted military action differs from place to place and there is no assurance of how positively democratic or devastating they could be" The independent variables shall be political isolation, political exclusion and polarization. And the dependent variable shall be the democracy and secession.**

**Key words:** Civil society organizations

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The concept of civil society**

Before discussing what the civil society does, it's important to state in clear terms what makes up the civil society. Habermas (Flyvbjerg, 1998, cited Habermas, 1992a: 453) believes that the civil society "consists of churches, cultural associations, sports clubs, independent media, academics, debating societies, groups of concerned citizens, grass-roots initiatives and organizations of gender, race and sexuality all the way to occupational associations, political parties and labour unions". Following this long list of what the civil society entails provokes the summary that the civil society is one set on forming a pluralist atmosphere where all and sundry are equal and must benefit equality. More so, as seen in Habermas' discussion of the civil society political pluralism is an essential ingredient in building a strong democracy in a heterogeneous society such as those of many African states with the exception of Somalia.

Amid different regime types and the conditions under which many civil societies find themselves, the argument about the role of the civil society in promoting human rights and democracy cannot be denied. However, the continuous worry if the civil society should be free from government rule or be a tool used by the government to achieve its objectives rages. According to Habermas "the radical political Left of Europe see the civil society as a location for radical political action" and a formal base of criticizing the operations of the state (Fleming, 2010 cited Duresh, et al. 1999). However, whether independent or under government control, the influence of the civil society cannot be underestimated or disregarded. Furthermore, the many gains it has made in the West and in some African countries like Togo, Tunisia, Egypt, Angola and Ivory Coast cannot be underrated, as such; picking Burkina Faso and Cameroon make the fundamental piece of this study an exuberant. Three crucial components of the civil society are that

1. "the cultural and symbolic dimension of civil society, its role in the formation of values, action orienting norms, meanings and identifications" and

2. Civil societies are also dynamic that is they have the creative side which operates through informal networks, initiatives and social movements which are distinct from more formal voluntary association and institutions (Fleming, 2000).

Talking about networks it's important to note that the networks built here are very elastic as every time, new identities, projects for society and mankind are made sometimes with old ideas relegated to the rear for whatsoever reason, then reactivated and re-introduced on the table for deliberation. In short, there could be an alternation of pertinent subjects to handle depending on their levels of importance perceived by policy makers. Similarly, experts in security studies may say such patterns of important subjects for discussion depends on the securitizing actor who in clear terms defines the objects that need to be securitized (Taureck, 2006, p. 3). More so, there exists a form of pluralistic and collective identities that are formulated such that everyone within and without the civil movement benefits something. Collier and Hoeffler (2009) believe that for a rebel movement, or civil movement to succeed such things as race, ethnicity and tribe must be eliminated within the ranks of the movement so that it can easily recruit sympathizers who will promulgate and promote the agenda of the movement. Furthermore, the movement turns to earn more support from without when it shows to be non tribalistic and very culturally tolerant. Alas, failure to do this might result to members leaving the group, recruits abandoning the course and consequently, cases of riots or civil war funds promised could be in-hesitantly cut off.

The constant changing order of political affairs both domestically and internationally favours the change that follows the *modus operandi* of civil societies. As Habermas witnessed civil societies have grown bigger and more complex in their operations such that they can now meet anywhere to discuss. Habermas sees it as the "communicative, deliberative conception of the 'public sphere'". He witnessed that coffee and tea houses in Europe constitute an important meeting and discursive arenas of the civil society. Similarly, Palm Wine, Cha-Cha parlors in Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana and most other African countries are very important places for the discussion of matters of absolute pertinence. Tarla (2010) adds that these palm wine parlors have "a social binding effect and the palm wine sold there are generally consumed in the presence of others". Some endorsements to local elections are usually forged here. In addition, deep discussions about tribal issues which most times culminate to policy decisions at the macro level of the central government are begotten from serious contemplations in these parlours.

Therefore, the civil society regardless of what level it operates has a strategic role in designing local norms, values and adding value to the cultural identity of the society. Habermas (Fleming, 2000) adds that these public spheres as they typically were in the ancient Greek society regardless of the location are examples of "inclusive literacy because of their equality, critique, accessibility, reflexivity and problematizing the unquestioned".

So coming back to the palm wine parlours mentioned above, which are also popularly known as "Matango houses" it must be added that they are tribally and ethnically inclusive. In these parlours people speak freely and get the chance to be listened to without the fear of coercion. At least freedom of speech exists to an extent in these parlours though in repressive regimes such as those of Cameroon and Burkina Faso under ousted Blaise Compaore, military snitches dispatched everywhere could reign trouble when the central government is criticized or questioned. This summarizes a popular saying in Cameroon that "you are free to say whatever you want but you are

you not free from the consequences of what you say” which directly mean that freedom of speech is actually not free per se and there is a heavy price to pay by those who speak freely. Another very important thing about these Matango houses is that people are free to exchange their views and get the chance to test their ideas one against another in a friendly and harmonious way without having to fear repression from the police or the army.

It's also important to note that political opinions generated in these milieus are always very powerful and very particular to political parties. These public spheres cannot be underestimated in anyway because they serve as opportunities for public training and capacity building. Individual capacity building and autonomy of ideas are forged and tested in these milieus before they eventually go public as speeches for political campaign. These public spheres over the years have greatly served as the center for “public reason” (Scambler, 2013) where people more or less meet to discuss government legislation and criticize policy measures freely. Scambler (2013) adds that these public reasoning led to a “greater accessibility and scrutiny of parliament and constitutional extension of rights of freedom of speech and repression”. A very good example to support this would be the North African Arab Spring which led to the collapse of Ben Ali of Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and most recently the fall of eternal Omar El Bashir of Sudan (Abdezaziz, Georgy, and El Dahan, 2019). This study believes that decades of accumulated hurt, cries and complaints of locals which must have been discussed numerous times in these spheres, finally found their resolute opening when a few members of the civil society bravely took to the streets with the decisive move to decry the collective injustices they were enduring.

Some African politicians of this modern era have learnt by experience to never underestimate the power of these public drinking parlours. Although these parlours are mostly dominated by men, women also have theirs which in some communities, is mostly directed towards fishing groups and they equally play an important role in affecting the dynamics of the society. A good example would be the fisherwomen of Nyakakuma, North Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of Congo who make up a small, but phenomenally powerful group capable of shaping policies directed at marine life. The deliberations of these women, their unanimous acceptance or rejection or a nominee for the position of Chief, Member of Parliament or Senator are very consequential and cannot be under rated.

It's also important to note that though the King makers of the Nyakakuma hold the traditional executive right to veto a nominee to power, they however, rely on popular support otherwise the nominee might never be enthroned to power or granted popular political support. Furthermore, without the total acceptance of the women, who provide the basic necessities of their nutrition, designating a new heir in case the incumbent king or chief dies without an heir is null and void. This is because the discussions of these women in their fishing outings and indoor meetings called “Njangi” directly affect the day to day affairs of the Chieftdom. This shows that the idea of “one man lead all” in this Chieftdom just like in other Chieftdoms and Kingdoms in Africa is very impossible all because these groups though little in size hold phenomenal power that can disrupt the smooth flow of energy in the society. It's also important to note that local politicians always solicit the support of these groups during elections for either parliamentary or senatorial positions. Without their endorsements the future of the politicians are oblique and very empty. African politics is such that those who lack the support of their tribe's men or clans will surely not achieve a lot in their political careers. The lack of endorsement of one from their grassroots is eloquent testimony to the entire

nation that such a one doesn't have the qualities to rule an entire nation or direct the affairs of a department in the government. For if their own tribe's men don't trust them, why should others? In light of this argument this study would like to introduce what it considers the most inclusive definition of the CSO (civil society organization) and the definition pertains to Diamond (1994) who believes that the CSO is "the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, self-supporting, autonomous from the State, and bound by the legal order or set of shared rules.. .. It involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests, passions and ideas, exchange ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the State, and hold State officials accountable. It is an intermediary entity, standing between the private sphere and the State" (Songonuga, 2016 p. 9 cited Diamond, 1994).

The definition above is impressive and suffices to add that the powers that the aforementioned civil society groups have and exert in their societies are important because they directly affect the social transformation, ramification and modifications of their societies for what they consider "their betterment".

Furthermore, it suffices for the purpose of this paper to perceive the civil society as "a sphere of interaction between economy in the state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of association (especially voluntary organizations), social movements and forms of public administration (Fleming, 2000 cited Cohen and Arato, 1992, p. ix). It should also be remembered that as heterogeneous as many African countries are, the civil society regardless of what clan or tribe is in power fights to limit the powers of the state. To achieve this CSOs work through a sophisticated network of institutions what work to keep the check and balance mechanisms of the state.

In a nutshell, the core of the civil society comprises a "network of associations that institutionalizes problem-solving discourses on questions of general interest inside the framework of organized public sphere" (Fleming, 2010 cited Habermas, 1996, p. 367). The civil society also acts as the space that promotes political participation to citizens in order for democracy to be achieved, apparently a fundamental baseline for civil society's intent for participatory democracy (Fleming, 2010 cited Cunningham, 1992b; p. 12).

Foucault believes that a strong society is a crucial condition for strong democracy (Flyvbjerg, 1998 cited Havel, 1993:3). This helps the civil society to work with direct government interferences against corruption in a deliberate move to empower the solidification of democracy and the creation of a very strong state with credible and unimpeachable institutions. Defining civil society is difficult and bringing clarity to the definitional controversies is worrisome (Flyvbjerg, 1998, p.210).

Arendt (1971, p. 52) doesn't dispute the role of civil societies but prefers to address an angle very strategic to the roles of civil societies in provoking drastic and sometimes dramatic changes in the society and in the country at large. She believes that civil societies are very powerful to bringing about civil disobedience which at some point could bring in changes much faster than following the organogram of discussions and consultations. She adds that civil disobedience could be very "effective in bringing the desirable changes in the law" (Arendt, 1970) and this is very possible in countries where the abuse of law is rampant. However, though civil disobedience is very predominant in the West, there remains a considerate argument about its legality and illegality and

many scholars continue to ponder on how to address this dilemma. Dictatorial regimes that have no intentions whatsoever to change the so called “form of the state” and empower their citizens economically and politically might always see something wrong with the civil society. Seeing that the civil society cannot be directly extinguished regardless of stringent totalitarian policies, the last option might just be holding it hostage either through coercion or bribes.

The civil society might even be regarded as an enemy of the state because it has the power to garner public support which could eventually lead to popular uprising and civil disobedience. Zuger (2013) in particular recognizes that “civil disobedience is a familiar and well established phenomenon in Western societies” which has helped to shape laws and policies that provide better liberal practices to citizens. In some Third World countries, civil disobedience and riots are seen by the dictatorial oligarchy as acts of terrorism that directly target their interests to stay in power for ever. Secondly, they see it to equally threaten their quest to keep the entire nation in a state of belligerent poverty, confusion, fear, oppression and repression, and the staggering lack of basic amenities. Taking Snowden and Manning as examples Zuger (2013) starts that the society worries if civil disobedience now turned digital could be legitimate following the enormous pressure it exerts on governments. Zuger adds that the concept catches the gaze of society and raises many confrontational issues which could be easily explained and settled in advanced societies that respect human rights at least to an extent. However, for Third World countries, these must be seriously dealt with so that the dictator surrounded by his sheep military regime can stay in power forever and ever.

Not all civil disobediences are bad though power mongers might use them to rain serious destruction in a particular country or place. Nevertheless, they also appear to test the crisis management capacities of governments and show to what extent governments will go to negotiate peace and a return to stability once in motion. In ruthless regimes such as those in Nicaragua, it's most certain that the use of brute force won't and can't escape the first policy measure on the regime's table. In short, the discourse on civil disobedience and the many civil society organizations and groups that are directly concerned catches Arendt's (1971) endorsement and she adds “the oddity has given rise to a strange and, not all together happy theoretical marriage of morality and legality, conscience and the lay of the land” (Arendt, 1971 p.52).

### **ENABLING FACTORS OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY**

It was mentioned above that the civil society has both the enabling and the protest factors. These two organs have helped to shape the civil society both as a pacifier between the majority poor and vulnerable and also as a disciplinarian to hostile and aggressive regimes and governments. For the sake of avoiding repetition this section shall briefly discuss the enabling factor of the civil society leaving behind the protest factor which shall be subsequently discussed in depth.

So this study understands “*Enabling factors*” to be those things, moves and gestures that permit the civil society organization to better understand its terrain, apply a proper definition to its modus operandi and choose the best possible outcome that will provide it with the most positive results. Secondly, the enabling factor should be whatever helps the civil society organization to create a pacific relationship between itself and the government, between itself and other similar or sister organizations on the field as well as with the human principalities first in its domestic enclave as well as at the international level. So the fundamental elements in the relationships to be forged by the civil society as this study sees it are:

1. The state and the civil society organization  
State ↔ Civil Society Organization
2. The civil society organization and the civil society organization  
Civil Society Organizations ↔ Civil Society Organizations
3. Humans / Citizens and the Civil Society Organizations  
Humans / Citizens ↔ Civil Society Organizations
4. The Civil Society Organization and the international community  
Civil society organization ↔ international community

For Court and Weyrauch (2006) Enablers could be best understood in terms of;

1. Research- In order for the CSOs to provide complementary policy shaping on any subject they must be careful to only state what they know and can prove with substantial evidence gotten from research.
2. CSOs must also have an adequate knowledge of the terrain in which they operate and must understand the political landscape of their niche in order to formulate policies. This understanding will aid in their interaction with the government and thus reduce ambiguity.
3. They must have a clear understanding of the policy making process and should have some level of mastery in the art.
4. The strategies to communicate their thoughts and those of the masses they represent must be clearly spelt out and these should include a radical approach to using local and international media.
5. Some of the delimitations of CSOs are not having the resources needed to achieve their objectives. Therefore, they should have at least an average of the required resources and these may include human and financial resources. Sometimes the resources may include real estate and credible title deeds.
6. If there is anything that can kill a good dream it's the lack of credibility. Therefore, CSOs must be credible in every aspect of what they do and they must be legitimate in their organogram.
7. They must also be impactful and very impartial in their selection criteria as this will help to avoid sentiments of xenophobia, nationalism, racism, tribalism and ethnocentrism.

Stating this list of enablers might sound or appear very easy to achieve especially for Western Scholars who look at it from their already advanced societies. But for other scholars who have a four square view of the challenges some CSOs face in the Middle East, Asia and the Caucasus, Africa and South America the difference might be very clear.

Whether CSOs are able to promote or effectuate democracy and instill the elements and tools of democratization remains a serious scholarly argument. Secondly, how this affects the security policy of the African Union and its member states remains strongly a factor of great concern. Many African states from independence have undergone multiplicities of military rule, dictatorships and some mad civil wars that have taken humanity by storm. It may not be too much if Rwanda is mentioned as the worst of all records for all civil wars that Africa has experienced in times past and in recent years. However, drawing valuable lessons from that past and comparing how much has been achieved by these states especially those that are plying the highways of international praise for being democratic like Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Ivory Coast and South Africa remains very questionable.

Nigeria is Africa's largest economy and in 2014 the "Economist confirmed that it had the largest gross domestic product in the continent" (Songonuga, 2015). However, despite the many political gains achieved since it abandoned military rule in the late 1990s and heavy weight exerted on civil society there seems as if there is a glitch somewhere. The civil society more or less, was expected to lead Nigeria through the path of an effective and efficient democracy at the end of military rule as the country transitioned to civilian democratic rule in the beginning 2000s (Neji, 2011, p.113). Nevertheless, Neji (2011, p.113) believes that despite what is being said about Nigeria currently seen as Africa's largest democracy (Akoto, 2015) the many failures in its political practice which currently appears to be in a despicable sociopolitical mayhem, the country is in effect what he qualifies as a "civilian Kakistocracy what the bourgeoisie misnamed democracy". He continues that following the negative changes and hardened living conditions of Nigerians despite the many political ramifications that prevent one man from ever seizing power again, democracy is currently a sham and it remains a sincere failure. According to him none other but the civil society must be blamed and he believes the failure of the civil society stems from the fact that it remains "unresponsive and lacks the capacity to sustain the gains of democracy". He concludes that though the CSO is expected to hold elected democratic civilians accountable and on check, the situation in the country promises no bright future and continues to worsen such that it necessitates an instructive X-ray analysis of what and who is to blame. His interpretation of the X-ray analysis suggests that the civil society must have aberated on its assignment.

He forwards two insightful questions on this premise with the attempt to find a loyal culprit on whom to apportion the blame. He asks if the CSO is unable to sustain democracy or if the lack of proper tools for democratization impedes the CSO from a viable and credible action. In a paraphrase, he finds the CSO guilty and "subscribes to the position that democratic governance is difficult to sustain because amongst other restraining factors, the civil society in Nigeria is weak". A credible question would be to ask what weakened the civil society and should immediately follow the hypothesis of Neji (2011, p. 113) who provides the answer. He explains that a possible cause for the weakness could be that the civil society formulates unrealistic goals and objectives that might be too erratic to achieve.

Arguing in support Songonuga (2015) agrees that the civil society has the responsibility to facilitate representative democracy which remains a fundamental expectation among others in Nigeria. However, following the increase in corruption, ritual crimes, joblessness and hopelessness among Nigerian youths, many of whom have resorted to the dream of travelling abroad for greener pastures due to the landlocked sociopolitical system which thrives through tribalism and nepotism, pertinent security challenges involving the Boko Haram thorn to the flesh and the endless ethnic wars between Christians and Muslim Fulanis, he gives the civil society a failed mark for failing to do its responsibility.

Moreover, this paper noticed and holds as its own opinion that power seems to revolve among a selective minority who in the yesteryears were military men and who had seized power through a military coup, but today wear civilian robes of righteousness and are back to power. These include firstly, President Olusegun Obasanjo who is the 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> president of Nigeria. Before democratically elected president in 1999 he had been given power in 1976 through a coup that saw General Murtala Muhammed's assassination. General Murtala Muhammed himself had seized power in 1975 through a coup but could only serve for a year. General Olusegun Obasanjo served as

president from 1976 until 1979 then handed power back to civilian rule following the democratic election of Shehu Shagari to power. Nevertheless, a few decades later General Olusegun Obasanjo will simply change his military garments to civilian ones and come back to power in 1999 following the peaceful exchange of power from General Abdulsalami Abubakar who had taken over following the death of General Sani Abacha. The later had ruled the country from 1990 with a rod and without mercy. The demise of military rule in the late 1990s paved way again for Nigeria to attempt a strong hand in instituting democracy as well as the lasting elements of democratization such that no military man should ever seize power again through a coup. Secondly, Nigeria's incumbent president Muhammadu Buhari in the yesteryears had seized power from Shehu Shagari in 1983 before emulating the likes of president Obasanjo by changing his garments as well.

In 2015 Muhammadu Buhari was elected 15<sup>th</sup> president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and in 2019 he was reelected for a second term. So, as it stands from the democratic inception of the country after more than sixty years of military rule, two former military generals and military heads of state are back to power wearing civilian masks. Did the civil society see this coming and did it do anything to stop it from happening is a serious question this paper asks. Just maybe this is one of the reasons among many others why Songonuga (2015) believes that there are many loops and lapses in Nigeria's plight for democratization. Oladipo (2016, pp.2) believes that Nigeria's democratic machinery suffers from a serious malfunction due to the nature of politics in Nigeria which in itself is an enemy of democratization and which hampers the civil society from fulfilling its objectives.

In a nutshell, the following can be summarised as the pertinent baseline reasons for the failures of the civil society in Nigeria:

1. Weakened traditional institution
2. Lack of social capital and trust between the masses and
3. The detrimental-impact of a primarily oil-and mineral-based economic model (Songonuga, 2015).

This short exposition of the troubles faced by the civil society in Nigeria in view of the expectations to fostering democracy and democratization sets the pace for this paper to discuss the independent and dependent variables of this subject matter. This is in line to observe the synthetic differences and maybe similarities that engender the comparative analysis between Cameroon and Burkina Faso. As discussed above this paper heartily seeks to understand the different outcomes when the military wing of the civil society sets in motion. As this paper hopes the propensities of actions of the civil societies of both countries would either produce similar or different outcomes related to both instituting democracy and paving way for strong institutions for democratization or will lead inadvertently to secession.

## **DISCUSSING THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**

### **Political Isolation and exclusion**

The discussion in this section shall touch the root causes of political isolation and exclusion in both Cameroon and Burkina Faso and is aimed to show the constant change in domestic events that make up the current sociopolitical landscape of both countries. Saying domestic events doesn't only limit them to the practice of poor governance that shall not be discussed in depth here as they are apparently intertwined or one is begotten of the other. In short, political isolation and exclusion are

the offspring of bad governance. However, the domestic troubles to be discussed seem to have risen from one common source which most African countries have suffered just like some continue to suffer due to the left overs of colonialism and Western imperialism. Alas, the spill overs of these domestic troubles seem to be more apparent in Cameroon and for many decades happen to be reason for the current sociopolitical eruption that the country is facing right now.

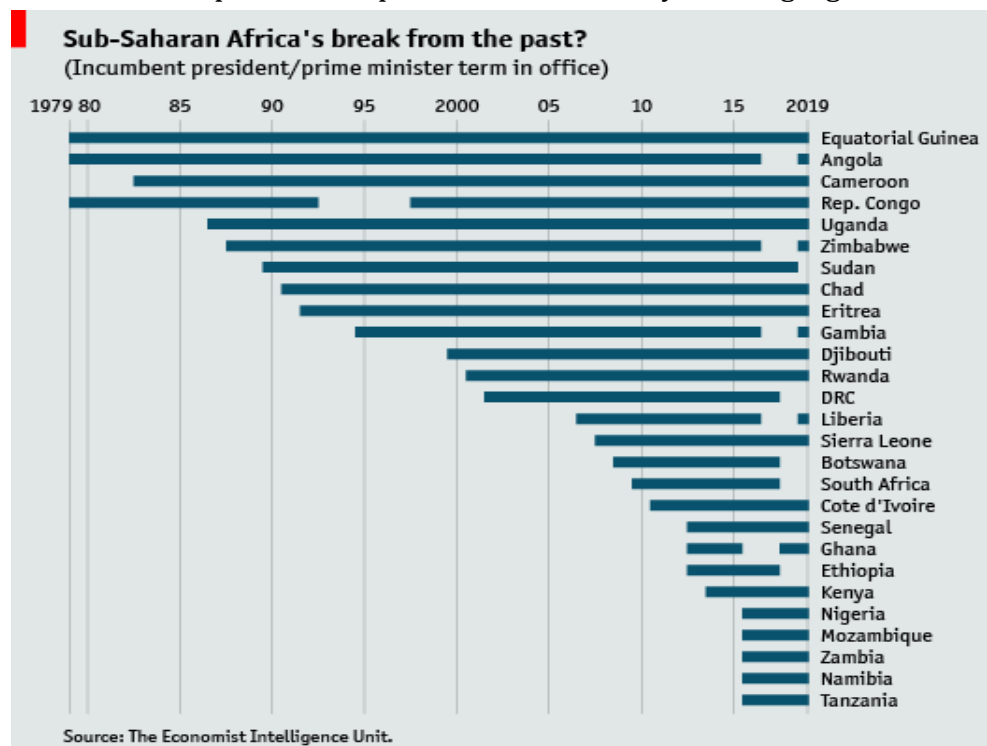


**Figure 1: Political alternation/rotation in Sub-Saharan Africa.**

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2019

Before this paper discusses Cameroon's and Burkina Faso's histories of constitutional coups that fertilize both political isolation and exclusion, it's important to discuss the chart above which shows the outstanding political tribulations that warrant today's sociopolitical unrest in many African countries.

From the chart above, four countries champion the list of those with uninterrupted governments and they are Equatorial Guinea led by Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbassogo who took power through a bloody coup from his uncle in 1979. He has since been in power the reason the chart has no space or gap. Angola follows but has a gap somewhere between 2016 – 2018 indicating that democratic elections brought about a change in government and this is also thanks to the help of negotiations between the central government and separatist forces that have engaged the country in a civil war for more than four decades. Consequently, Angola has had three civil wars (Agberndifor, 2019) and the stepping down of former president Jose Eduardo dos Santos in 2017 was a step-down transformer against any future civil rife. Thirdly, Cameroon's trace starts from 1982 as mentioned above when its incumbent president Paul Biya inherited power from late El Hadj Amadou Ahidjo. He has since enjoyed an uninterrupted monarchy characterized by rigging elections and maiming political opponents in order to maintain his status quo (Freedom in the World Report, 2019). And to achieve this he has very well managed the sedentary tools of political exclusion and isolation of

the two English speaking regions in Cameroon making sure they never gain access to the good and spoils of the land while at the same time, attempting to keep them in a debilitated second class position.

However, Paul Biya is not the origin of this political isolation and exclusion policy which in their respects have generated a terrible polarization which holds the country at the peak of a civil war escalation. His predecessor, El Hadj Amadou Ahidjo through a series of constitutional coups abused his political powers and set forth the machinery that ensured that never should an Anglophone Cameroonian hold any significant position in the country. Though Anglophones have had many prime ministers, the position remains very cosmetic as the prime minister himself is appointed and doesn't have any real powers. He is called the Head of Government but in effect he is just a cosmetic head of government who can himself be fired and jailed anytime Paul Biya decides or feels like it. Examples include Inoni Ephraim the former Prime Minister who is in jail with accusations of bribery and embezzlement.

Burkina Faso doesn't appear on the chart but its political history suggest that its blue strip would have started in 1987 when Blaise Compaore took power through a coup following the death of his best friend, Thomas Sankara, Africa's best Pan African president. The blue stripe should stop in 2014 following the mass protest that ousted him from power and sent him packing on a self-imposed exile. The change of power led to a transition government that led to the democratic election of a new president. The first three countries in the chart discussed above reveal that they have had eternal presidents who have no plans on leaving power any time soon while the last five countries at the very bottom that is Kenya, Nigeria, Mozambique, Zambia, Namibia and Tanzania currently seem to enjoy some glorious alternations of power though they might be said to be struggling with some vital elements of effective and efficient democratization.

That said it should be clear that for countries such as Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, and Angola that have had the longest serving presidents according to the chart, tribalism, nepotism and ethnic strife characterize the political cultures of those countries. As a matter of fact, corruption, embezzlement and other forms of misappropriation of state funds are enshrined in the political cultures of these countries. It should be good to know that two countries in that chart that is Cameroon and Nigeria have battled each other for the first position of the most corrupt countries on earth for more than three decades and each holds at least two world trophies in their respective domains.

Unable to effectuate political pluralism to its best and unable to ensure regionalization and effective decentralization so that all the citizens enjoy the national cake, the ruling tribes of these countries claim the spoils while the masses continue to suffer in anguish. Furthermore, any attempt to oust any of the presidents from power meets the strong and repressive arm of the government which is in itself a military styled government in civilian loins and surrounded by what this paper calls a "sheep military". This "sheep military" is known to find plenty of gratification in repressing and maiming its citizens. In Equatorial Guinea for example, the Fang tribe of its president Teodoro Obiang Nguema has been in power for over forty years and most government positions are occupied by them. This leads to a serious issue as other tribes are excluded or isolated from the practice of politics and from unleashing their full potential whose gains might led to national development and foster a stronger spirit of nationalism.

The case is very similar to that of Burkina Faso under Blaise Compaore who as discussed above led a coup against his best and very close friend, Thomas Sankara in 1987 killing him in the act. Upon having taken power, he made sure that his two most trusted and close allies that is Captain Zongo and Captain Lingani, who had helped him in his two successful coups that is in 1983 and 1987 were arbitrarily executed in 1989 with trumped up charges. Coming from the Mossi ethnic group which is the dominant ethnic group in Burkina Faso, it's clear that power rested in their hands from 1987 until his demise in 2014. Not only did he also practice fervent political exclusion and isolation of other tribes, and didn't mind much to listen to the cries and anguishes of his fellow countrymen. Instead, he pursued after his own agenda not minding anyone's opinion to do in the likes of what El Hadj Amadou Ahidjo of Cameroon had done to not only stay in power but to make sure that power falls in the hands of his calculated puppet successor, Paul Biya. The latter had enacted many political and constitutional coups that badly abused the laws and constitution of Cameroon which directly limited, excluded and isolated Anglophone Cameroonians from significant positions in government, making sure that only a Francophone Cameroonian should perpetually be powerful and significant in the country. Compaore did the same thing by abusing the constitution of his country and on his 27<sup>th</sup> year in office, he dared to do the unthinkable, he attempted modify the constitution so that he remains president for life (McKenna, 2020) like Paul Biya of Cameroon did in 2008 and got away with it. These organized crimes and collective violence perpetrated by the oligarchies of these two nations, Cameroon and Burkina Faso, at the detriment and the welfare of their nations resulted to violent protests whose outcomes make the focus of this paper.

In connection to this, Paul Biya's Beti clan has been in "business" since he came to power in 1982 and no Anglophone the fundamental reason for the current civil war in Cameroon has ever occupied any position of authority or power. In their own words Nkwi and Nyamnjoh (2011, pp. 163) give a clear explanation of the political isolation and exclusion that Anglophone Cameroonians have suffered since 1961 and the reason why tensions have escalated to the current polarization in the country and proceeded by the current civil war. They explain thus:

*"The other factors which work in favour for the political disintegration in Cameroon include the issue of appointments to the civil cabinet in the civil service. Anglophones are not usually placed at the head of very important, sensitive or lucrative positions in the cabinet or civil service, in which they are for the most parts assistants. For example, none of them has ever been President of Cameroon, and none of them has ever been Minister of Defense, of External Relations, of Interior, or of National Education. They are usually placed at the head of least sensitive or lucrative ministries that have long been stigmatized as "Anglophone ministries" to underscore their inferior status. When one of them was, in 1992, made Prime Minister for the very first time, he was hemmed in with two Francophone Vice-Prime Ministers and a Secretary-General who deals directly with the Presidency. His functions were (and are) so circumscribed that he is virtually powerless, the first time a Prime Minister has been so treated. Since the situation prevailed through the Ahidjo Administration and has persisted with clearer evidence throughout the Biya administration, many Anglophones have come to regard themselves as untrusted, seen as inferior or second-class citizens, a perception which works in favour of political disintegration in Cameroon".*

In the same vein Agbaw-Ebai (Agberndifor, 2018 cite Agbaw-Ebai, 2016) adds another staggering collective violence of the regime against the Anglophones. She

*revealed sad news about the collective and systemic planned demise of the Anglophones by the regime. This collective violence, organized crime and state sponsored political terrorism against a tenth of its population revealed that as of 2004, only 2 Anglophones with portfolio out of 32 were ministers, 3 Secretary Generals in ministries out of 32, 6 General Managers of public corporations out of 60, 2 Army Generals out of 25, 4 Ambassadors out of 35, 6 Senior Divisional Officers out of 58, 9 Divisional Officers out of 268. More so, she reiterates no Anglophone has ever occupied the strategic position as minister of defense, territorial administration, economy, national security, national education, finance and foreign affairs. She continued that this Anglophone region which makes up only 20% of the population accounts for over 60% of the GDP, yet, has nothing and no infrastructural projects”.*

Thus, the citation above reveals the origin and the modus operandi of the machinery responsible for political isolation, exclusion and a new word which it introduces, political disintegration of Cameroon which was also the case in Burkina Faso. As a matter of fact both regimes made sure that the spoils of the land were used to maintain the lavished life styles of the regime at the detriment of the nation. On these grounds this paper sees in clear terms the proper application and hence, the unfruitful actions of regime security vs. state security where the nation is allowed to fade if it must but the regime must continue to thrive and grow fat regardless of the cries of the masses. The segregation of the masses in both countries led to serious polarization which in recent times has led to a series of unrests, protests and sometimes has pushed the repressive regimes to deploy military action to disperse angry protestors. The most virulent was in 2014 whose outcomes shall be discussed below as McKenna (2020) reports that Burkina Faso witnessed a series of protests beginning from 1998 to 2014 with each getting stronger as the momentum of bad governance increased.

### **Polarization**

The polarization in Burkina Faso had been initially engendered by the opposition which boycotted the 1991, 1998 and 2005 presidential elections (McKenna, 2020). And though Blaise Compaore had won the elections with a landslide victory little did he know that he was actually initiating a volcano that will subsequently, wash through the entire nation and subsequently, decide his fate. The attempt to change the constitution thus, eliminating presidential terms limits was the last straw to break the Carmel's back and this was the ultimate provocation amongst all. The opposition had had enough and without thinking, they took over the National Assembly and with the help of the masses rained fire on public buildings. The country at this stage had already been thrown into chaos. The political and social divisions that followed were reasonably so deep and beyond any rectification at that material time and though Compaore attempted his last shimmy card by immediately calling for a Transition Government which he hoped to lead, all efforts directed to this wards were futile.



**Figure 2: Violent protests in Burkina Faso as demonstrators take to the streets to oppose the president's proposal to modify the constitution.**

Smoke billowed from Burkina Faso's Parliament building on Thursday. President Blaise Compaoré angered people with his plans to further extend his 27-year rule, inciting the uprising. [Credit...](#)Issouf Sanogo/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images. Source: Taoko, Cowell and Callimachi (2014)



**Figure 3: Protesters take over the National Assembly.**

Antigovernment protesters in the Parliament building in Ouagadougou, the capital. [Credit...](#)Joe Penney/Reuters. Source: Taoko, Cowell and Callimachi (2014)

Supporters of Blaise Compaore could argue that he had attempted the constitutional amendment to install democracy which is a sarcastic song in the mouths of most Francophone African presidents. They preach democracy and invest billions of Francs CFA (Chattered Financial Assistance) in the so called democratization process but they have been in power for more than two decades and have no intentions whatsoever to leave. So, a reasonable question to ask would be what kind of democracy was he trying to install after ruling the country for 27 years like a private estate? Very suspicious of his agenda Kojoun, Etowa and Kilwein (2017) argue that “amendments to the constitution become suspicious when they occur too often, particularly in countries newly engaged in the democratic process”. Our dissertation argues that recent constitutional amendments in democratizing Francophone West African countries (Burkina Faso as case study) are not necessarily made to advance democracy or the rule of law. Instead, they are designed to reinforce the political agenda of incumbent power-holders”.

It behooves this paper to add that modern democracies and advanced countries give power to the people to decide the course of any law to be implemented. A good example was the law on abortion in Ireland where the entire country through a referendum in 2018 decided whether to keep or drop the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment. The Irish example challenges those of Cameroon and Burkina Faso whereby the National Assemblies of both countries usually dominated by puppet parliamentarians serving the dictator, wholesomely decide the path of the nation, most to the distress of the masses and for the benefit of the regime. In 2008 Cameroon’s National Assembly voted unanimously to modify the constitution allowing incumbent president, Paul Biya, 87 years old and 38 years in power, to run for another office though the initial 1996 constitution forbade him to do so. Consequently, he will be president for life. If presidential term limits must be removed allowing incumbent presidents to rule for life, then a logical reasoning warrants that the decision must be collectively decided by the entire country through a referendum and the unanimous decision by a universal suffrage either allowing or disallowing the bill. Furthermore, using National Assemblies and Senates held hostage by the regime and working for its good pleasure is none other but organized crime and collective violence against the nation. For this paper that should be likened to treason and the perpetrators brought before the law in a military tribunal as it’s the case in Cameroon following the 2015 Anti-terrorism bill.

*“Popular sovereignty requires that a constitution under such circumstances be written by a popular selected convention and ratified through a process that elicited popular consent, ideally a referendum” (Kohoun, Kojoun, Etowa and Kilwein, 2017 cited Lutz, 1998).*

In this line of reasoning, Sturm (Kohoun, Kojoun, Etowa and Kilwein, 2017 cited Sturm, 1970) distinguishes between major and minor constitutional alterations. The minor ones he calls revisions and the major ones such as eliminating presidential terms limits he calls Amendments”. However, since most African dictators know that they can never win a free and fair election except if they are rigged, they won’t dare take this proposal to the masses through a referendum. That would mean digging their own graves and burying themselves alive. Of course it would also mean the end of the regime and the commencement of judicial proceedings against the erstwhile government. Instead, the regimes will use their puppet National Assemblies to get the dirty job done and anyone who dares to protest in the streets should and must face the military whose orders to execute stand unchallenged. In conjunction to this the antigovernment protests in Burkina Faso claimed three

lives (BBC, 2014) while in Cameroon over 24.000 are reported to have been killed by the regime of Paul Biya and over a million internally and externally displaced since 2016.



**Figure 4: Cameroonian soldiers burn down over three hundred villages in Southern Cameroon to prove a point as the country enters four years of civil war and the quest for independence of Ambazonia.**

This has become a regular tradition of the Cameroon Army which has resorted to burn down villages as its unable to disarm angry Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) who enjoy the support of the locals and the international community. Source: BBC News (2018)

Similar to Burkina Faso is Cameroon that has been at cross roads with its self and seating on the magma of polarization until the volcanic eruption of its current civil war burst out in 2016 following a peaceful strike turned bloody that was organized by teachers and lawyers. If the regime had known that violence would not solve the peaceful uprising but only revive old wounds and create a reroute to the Anglophone identity, which was unforeseen to them, they would have chosen concessions and negotiations. The mobilization of lawyers, teachers and students in mid-2016, called for reforms in education, infrastructural development and the modernization of the economy. They were ignored and approached by the repressive arm of the government thinking perhaps that anti-government feelings will die a natural death like other times. Instead, it helped revive Southern Cameroon identity-based movements which date back to the 1970s (International Crisis Group, 2017). Just like Burkina Faso Cameroon has had violent protests which have claimed countless lives and this seems to please the regime that prefers to send the military to beat, maim, arbitrarily arrest and summarily kill protesters instead of listening to their grievances. Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner (2009) make it clear that one of the enzymes for civil wars is unattended or minimized grievances whose debilitating effervescence is very consequential to the rupturing of the society. Some examples of bloody protests in Cameroon are the 1990 protests in Bamenda, North West Province (Nyanmjoh and Konings, 1997) which called for multiparty in Cameroon, the February 2008

nationwide protests (Amin, 2013) and the Anglophone Spring (Achangkeng, 2012) which heightened in 2016 thus creating a deeper sociopolitical division and polarization in Cameroon. As of 2018 the nation was already largely divided with Paul Biya unable to travel to the two restive English speaking regions of the country to campaign for his 2018 presidential elections. In fact, participation in the 2018 presidential elections in the two English speaking regions was recorded as very impossible and almost at a zero percentage.

The results of the division in the country are in part from the violent and inhuman response of the government which remains a shameful political culture, and the last stroke the break the Carmel's back. Seeing the government's resilience to dialogue immediately inspired Anglophone Cameroonians to pick up Dane guns by which they have engaged the government in a bloody battle ever since. Since 2017 it's been a blood bath in Cameroon between the English speaking Cameroon separatist fighters many of whom are university students who should have graduated by now against the central majority French speaking government. Furthermore, the painful reality with regards to the lack of development in the two English speaking regions of Cameroon that is the North West and South West Regions aggravates anti Cameroon sentiments. These regions are known to provide over 60% of the nation's GDP (Agberndifor, 2018 cited Agbaw-Ebai, 2016) but can boast of nothing in terms of infrastructural development. In part, this is another eloquent testimony that Southern Cameroonians are not regarded as bonafide members of the country but as wood lumps to be treated anyway and anyhow while the proceeds of their natural resources are used to maintain the lavish lifestyle of the Francophone oligarchy and Beti clan.

## **DISCUSSING THE MILITARY WING OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY**

### **Dependent Variables**

#### ***Democracy***

The frequency with which democracy as a rhetorical word is mentioned in the mouths of African leaders especially those clinched to power makes one wonder at the hysterical hypocrisy of their lectures. How democracy is defined and viewed by regimes, governments, citizens, states, and the international community may vary considerably. According to this paper, a typical definition of democracy by African dictators should simply be

*"Democracy is the process whereby the dictator stays in power for ever, organizes cosmetic elections whose results are pre-known much long before Election Day, the results traditionally rigged, and the nation once again hijacked for another five or seven years wholly for the welfare of the regime and it's Western Godfathers".*

However, following the definition above this paper believes that the results and outcomes of whatever actions back the definitions of democracy chosen by states is what qualifies one to be regarded as democratic, dictatorial, and totalitarian. As at this time, this paper reiterates that only a handful of maybe four or five African countries cited above that is Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Ghana and Ivory Coast appear to be democratic and have some forms of democratization going on within them. Burkina Faso would have to prove its point and new found path in this upcoming 2020 presidential elections. Similarly, The Democratic Republic of Congo would have been added to this list except for the fact that it witnessed its first ever peaceful exchange of power and power transition in 2019 after more than fifty decades of coups and civil wars. For now, The Democratic Republic of Congo and Burkina Faso have been quarantined until their next presidential elections.

If the outcomes are the same as now with a peaceful democratic transition of power, then they shall be taken seriously and considered free from the belligerent appendages of totalitarianism.

So, this paper hopes that in five years if there is another peaceful transition of power resulting from democratic elections, then the Democratic Republic of Congo, might be praised to have successfully planted and watered some rudiments of democracy. As for many other African nations they are either full dictatorships or have some traits of semi dictatorships and semi totalitarianism. Cameroon would be best fit for either of these criteria except for the fact that it has currently joined the league of failed states following the civil war in its territory. Other members in this league include The Central African Republic, South Sudan, and Somalia.

Before this paper discusses in depth how the military wing of the civil society affected democracy and its organs of democratization it's better to reiterate that the military wing mentioned here refers to the second factor of the civil society which as mentioned in section 2 above as protests. However, in this case this article would not like to just mention it as protests because a review of different protests in the two countries under study reveals different propensities such that this paper qualifies it as violent protests which brought about the radical changes and outcomes in the two respective countries under review. Therefore, the Military Wing here is simply Violent Protests! And this section will look at the effects these violent protests have had vis-à-vis democracy and secession in both Cameroon and Burkina Faso.

The Webster New Encyclopedic Dictionary (Nwogu, 2015, pp. 131 cited Encyclopaedic Dictionary, 1995) defines democracy as "a government in which supreme power is invested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through representation". According to Lindell, and Scott (Nwogu, 2015, pp. 131 cited Scott, 1999), the term originates from the Greek word (demokratia) "rule of the people" which was coined from (demos) "people" and (kratos) "power" or "rule" in the 5th century B.C. (Nwogu, 2015, pp. 131). In this definition democracy is seen in terms of citizen power and governments practicing it on these terms could be practicing liberalism. The only problem is many African governments claim to practice this kind of democracy in speech but in act are either dictatorships or totalitarian.

A rather short definition would be "democracy, which derives from the Greek word demos, or people, is defined, basically, as government in which the supreme power is vested in the people" (US Embassy in Seoul, 2017, pp. 2). In this definition the Mission expounds that the democratic decision could either be by the people themselves who take their destinies in their own hands and decide the legal apparatus to entrust power for their human and state security or they could as well do it through elected leaders who acting on the behalf of the people, decide the course of the nation's history.

A third definition adds that "Democracy, as a State form, is to be distinguished from monarchy, aristocracy and dictatorship. You may have already heard about the most common definition of democracy: 'the government of the people, by the people and for the people' (Abraham Lincoln)? To put it another way we can say that a government comes from the people; it is exercised by the people and for the purpose of the people's own interests" (Becker and Raveloson, 2008, pp. 4).

While reviewing the conceptual controversies that might differentiate one definition from another (not the focus of this paper), Munck (2014) warns that democracy goes beyond elections. As a matter of fact, other scholars accept that it covers broad concepts such as freedom, rule of law, human rights, democratization, etc. Nonetheless, the US Embassy in Seoul (2017, pp. 2) makes a sharp difference between democracy and freedom insisting that effective organs of democracy accentuate freedom but decry that most times, this comes after hundreds of years of the country's history which is mostly filled with periods of abuse and torture.

In all three definitions it's repeatedly mentioned that power is given to the people who decide their fate and are not dictated upon. Well, in modern democracies such as those in advanced countries it is largely the case but in most Third World Countries, the rights are given to the people to go to the polls but the outcome of the polls and the results of the elections, however, is not theirs to decide. The dictator decides for them regardless of their votes and in extreme totalitarian abuses the deceased even vote. Such has been recorded in Cameroon in two successive municipal and presidential elections where dead people have been said to have voting cards and even voted. Of course the results were apparent, Paul Biya benefiting from the trust and confidences of the people from the other world won the elections. How he travelled to them and campaigned for his re-election remains a strong question to reckon with.

This section shall look at the outcome of the Military Wing of the civil society in Burkina Faso and Cameroon but will begin with Burkina Faso where the civil society was powerful enough to engage the sudden political transition that brought about an end to dictatorship and the birth of what one would hastily call "an embryonic democracy". As discussed above the attempt to modify the constitution by erasing presidential term limits, brought Blaise Compaore face to face first with the Opposition which just maybe was waiting for this moment to free the bird from its cage. The decisive move of the Opposition to physically challenge other members of Parliament, oppose the president's proposal which was clearly an attempt to hold the country hostage under one man for another thirty years, emboldened the youths. McKenna (2020) adds "Burkinabés took to the streets en masse to demonstrate against the proposed amendment. On October 30 the protests became more violent, with demonstrators setting fire to public buildings, including that which housed the National Assembly".

It was time for citizen outright power and no military or presidential decree could reverse or undo that. The outraged citizens had had enough and would not be calmed by Compaore's so call declaration of "a state of emergency" which was followed by a Transitional Government". Unable to calm angry protestors, the military is said to have opened fire resulting to the death of three valiant Burkinabe's. Furthermore, unable to remain as head of the newly created Transitional Government begot the long awaited fall of Compaore who was also forced to flee the country.

The fall of Compaore brought an end to 27 years of slavery and military dictatorship and promised a new dawn for Burkinabe's, one that brings hope to their children and generations to come. Uprooting this Compaore who stood still like a Boma Tree couldn't have been possible without the help or the joined collaboration of the military and the civil society. BBC (2014) reported that at the end of the hostilities "both soldiers and civilians agreed on a civilian transition and hence the institutions of the transition will be led by civilians." Furthermore, the new Transitional Government which at the time was led by a Lt. Colonel Zida, the Head of the Presidential Guards,

would be handed back to civilians. A very important point to consider here is that the military head of state insisted that “under the charter agreed, an interim president will be chosen by a special college composed of religious, military, political, civil and traditional leaders (BBC, 2014). Following the definition and the components that make up the civil society discussed at the beginning of this article, it’s seen that the military hands over power, the decision and the fate of the nation back to the hands of the civil society. This must have been the golden era and rebirth of the Burkinabe civil society which saw itself enthroned and back in charge of its duties to lead the nation to stability and development. With much praise and admiration, the goods were delivered in record time and the Interim Transitional Government led by Michel Kafando went ahead to organize presidential elections in 2015. Roch Marc Christian Kaboré was declared winner of the elections and has been the president of the republic since then.

So in a paraphrase the military wing of the civil society brought about the downfall of Blaise Compaore who had ruled the country with an unshared power from 1987 – 2014, ended dictatorship and opened up the country to a new era of democracy.

The outcome of the Military Wing of the civil society in Cameroon was rather different and the difference will be discussed under the subject of secession.

### **Secession**

Cameroon had for many years enjoyed the cosmetic praise of being the most peaceful country in Africa. Well that praise lasted for as long as its sociopolitical magna continued to be cooked. When it finally erupted in 2016 the realities lying under the canopy of the so-called “unity in diversity” were exposed. A popular African proverb says *“the Hen hates the wind because when it blows, it exposes its anus”*. Well, the wind of the military wing of the civil society didn’t leave Cameroon indifferent because its blowing exposed some deep truths not only about Cameroon’s anus but about its entire nakedness thus, furthering Cameroon’s isolation on the international scene.

Before discussing the outcome of the military wing of the civil society in Cameroon, it’s necessary to provide a short conceptual definition of the word secession in order to ease the understanding of those who might be coming across it for the first time.

When defining secession it’s important to have the following in mind-

1. “That secession was designed to foster the decolonization process,
2. Secession begets self-determination and both are sometimes used interchangeably. As such all peoples regardless of gender, age, ethnic origin, financial status and race, have the right to enjoy the elements of self-determination,
3. All peoples are the holders of this right to secede,
4. The fundamental objective of secession is the right to establish a sovereign and independent state in addition to the other choices.
5. Thus, the right to secession constitutes a necessary component of the right of self-determination. A people may secede from a group, town, city, organization, country in order to join another legal geographic entity. They could also decide to be sovereign whatever the case; it’s their right to stay or to leave” (Kohen, 2006, pp.23). This is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 2015).

Secession occurs when persons in a country or state declare their independence from the ruling government. When a dissatisfied group secedes, it creates its own [form](#) of government in place of the former ruling government. Secessions are serious maneuvers that lead to, or arise from, military conflict (West's Dictionary, 2008). Following this definition it's clear as seen in the cases of Catalonia and Spain, Western Sahara, West Papua, South Sudan and Southern Cameroon (Ambazonia) that no secession ever comes easy and sometimes necessitates the use of force and military action by the central government. The counter response of the secessionists most times leads straight up to civil war. Most are preceded with decades of fighting and blood shed until a consensus is reached through a foreign mediator. South Sudan fought a bloody civil war against Northern Sudan for more than four decades before finally becoming an independent nation in 2011. Cameroon has since 1961 had to deal with the enabling factors of the Anglophone civil society which has repeatedly reminded it of its fundamental human rights which declares that "all men are born free and equal" and as such doesn't deserve the second class position it has been subjected to. The unrepentant attitude of the Ahidjo and Biya Administrations in their collective violence against the Southern Cameroonians and unwilling to engage its leaders in dialogue, inspired the founding fathers of today's Southern Cameroons revolution, and encouraged them to seek for help from without. Following the path of dialogue and searching for international partners to help call the Cameroonian majority French speaking government to order, the Southern Cameroonian activists in the 70s resorted to find help in Britain and the United Nations. Following his experience as a statesman and experienced politician who negotiated the 1961 Fomuban agreements (copies have never been seen) the late Dr. John Ngu Foncha, former vice president of the United Republic of Cameroon took the lead as the foremost advocate for the liberation of Southern Cameroons (Anyangwe, 2010). Unable to get anything then the Southern Cameroon activists kept pushing for the respect of the 1961 Federal constitution of Cameroon that had suffered a deadly coup under the late El Hadj Amadou Ahidjo. As a matter of fact, as things moved from bad to worse and the majority francophone government stood tenaciously in its plight to enslave 20% of its Anglophone population, Fon Gorji Dinka went ahead to coin the word "Ambazonia" for the territory thus defying its colonial name of Southern Cameroon (Wikizero, 2020).

History holds that when the two Cameroon's that is La Republic du Cameroon colonized by France and The British Southern Cameroon's decided to form a federation following the 1961 Plebiscite, they both agreed to do so under conditions of equality where citizens of both Cameroons shall be equal and subject to the same propensities of the law and the good of the land. The rights of the two Cameroon's were supposed to be upheld by the Federal government with English and French being the two official languages. Alas, that was and it not the case. Ngo (2009) mentioned that the discovery of oil in Southern Cameroon's prompted El Hadj Amadou Ahidjo to violate the Federal constitution by pushing for what has been constantly regarded to as a scammed referendum. Taking advantage of his populous French Cameroon part, he violated the Federal constitution by modifying it for the welfare of his majority francophone side thus, changing the form and name of the state from the Federal Republic of Cameroon to the United Republic of Cameroon. This was the beginning of the cracks on the national structure that started the the Anglophone identity.

Although the Cameroonian government on many instances denies the existence of the Anglophone problem insisting that Cameroonians all have the same problem, US Ambassador to Cameroon Harriet Isom reported *"the dichotomy between the former British colonial part of Cameroon and the larger, dominant, former French colonial Cameroon still exists"*, (Achankeng, 2012, pp. 1-2 cited

Harriet Isom, 2010). As a matter of fact keen observers predicted that an explosion of anger from the British Southern Cameroonians could lead to a terrible crack in the national security structure, thus leading straight up to a national security crisis and maybe generating an international crisis as well. Before hand, it had been mentioned by Elad that any conflict between the two sides is *“potentially explosive and capable of threatening the maintenance of international peace and security”* (Achankeng, 2012, pp. 2 cited Elad, 1995, p. 9). These predictions had found their right time to manifest and they came true not just creating serious cracks to Cameroon’s so-called peaceful state, but went further than that.

Unable to reason with the government which demonstrated to be very haughty and continued its reliance on its repressive and very corrupt military and police force, the Anglophone civil society decided in 2016 in a come together to take the Bull by the horns. Unknown to them, their actions would be the very pin that finally broke the bubble enclosing the hot magna that would test the slogan of “Unity in Diversity” and that would also unleash the anger of Southern Cameroonians accumulated over many decades. Lawyers, teachers and other members of the civil society gathered in Bamenda, North West Region of Cameroon in 2016 to present a memo to the government warning of a civil disobedience that would follow if the government doesn’t stop its strong marginalization against the Anglophones in all sectors of the political economy. Though peaceful in their gathering and approach to state authorities, they were met with a violent response of the military that badly brutalized, beat, maimed and got them arrested.



**Figure 4: Armless protesters in Southern Cameroons take to the streets to protest against marginalization.**

Angry Southern Cameroonians take to the streets not only protesting against the organized crime of the government against them but to ask for a return to the 1961 Federal Constitution. Source: BBC News (2018)



**Figure 5: Life bullets used by the government to quell angry Southern Cameroonian protestors.**

This villager shows life bullets and other ammunitions used by the military to kill armless protestors.

Source: BBC News (2017)

Furthermore, students of the University of Buea who protested many injustices in the academic sector were badly beaten by the police and gendarmes. Some were arbitrarily arrested and cannot be accounted for until this day. These humiliations sent angry Anglophones to the streets who called on the government to consider dialogue instead of violence; nonetheless, they too were met by the same repressive arm of the government. These mistreatments and humiliations encouraged the rise of anti-government feelings which opened doors for the redemption of the Anglophone identity. The timing was right and it opened doors for the Southern Cameroon Ambazonia Consortium United Front (SCACUF). For several years this organization had operated as a nonviolent movement seeking nothing else but the total and unconditional independence of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia. It was at the same time a unifying and umbrella organization, consisting of several separatist movements (Wikipedia, 2019). With the help of the social media, Southern Cameroonian activists sensitized the masses about “Resolution 1608” of the United Nation’s Decision on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1961 which through a universal suffrage in the United Nation’s General Assembly had officially granted the independence of the British Southern Cameroon’s. 64 countries had voted in favour for the independence of this territory but Britain supposedly in complicity with France had thwarted this vote and imposed on the Southern Cameroonians to achieve this independence by either joining French Cameroon or Nigeria. As a matter of fact, France and French Cameroon had voted against the independence of British Southern Cameroon. More so, The British Southern Cameroons then was forced to achieve independence either by joining Nigeria or French Cameroon and the decision to join French Cameroon preceded the Foumban Conference of July 1961.

The power of the social media was phenomenal in promoting these lectures which were and are known by most Southern Cameroonians because they are taught as part of Cameroon History in Secondary School. However, this time they were received differently as if they were some kind of prophetic revelations. Thus, they spread like wild fire and supporting artifacts posted by activists of the United Nation’s decisions following this declaration of independence emboldened the

Southern Cameroonians the more. By this time the Southern Cameroonian / Ambazonian spirit of nationalism had found its true hosts and nothing could stop the Southern Cameroon Ambazonia Consortium United Front (SCACUF) from taking the bold and decisive move to declare the independence of Southern Cameroon on the iconic October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 (Wikipedia, 2019).

The declaration was met with much praise and found popular support aiding SCACUF which had operated as a separatist organization to automatically become the Interim Government of Ambazonia with Dr. Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe becoming its Interim President. This was the very moment when Cameroon was admitted to the league of failed states because all eight million Southern Cameroonians from that moment turned their attention and fixed their expectations on this Interim Government which continues to enjoy popular support until this day. Unfortunately, October 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 was a blood feast as soldiers killed many dozens of protestors and injured hundreds (International Crisis Group, 2020). Amazingly, the death of some protesters was the seed for the creation of many armed groups whose agenda was solemnly solidified on their resolute; war or total independence. Crisis Group (2020) noticed that *“due to such murderous repression, secessionist ranks have grown by the day, and some are more firmly evoking the idea of an armed struggle or “self-defence” which has become the case.*

With a powerful diaspora behind the armed groups and financing their operations, the government acknowledged that the armed conflict had not only become a military and national security threats, but the war of independence had equally taken a different turn. In a radio interview granted by TV5 World to Brigadier General Donatien Melingui Nouma, Commander of la Republique du Cameroun’s (LRC) , 2<sup>nd</sup> Motorized Infantry Brigade (21st BRIM) who doubled as Commander-in-Chief of the War Front Military Region fighting against the Ambazonian troops in Mamfe, he revealed that *“the separatist forces used supernatural powers in their attacks”*. Moreover, he continued that *“several Cameroonian soldiers (as from 2017 when the government initiated the blood bath), have deserted the army to join English-speaking secessionists. We know that they are trained by foreigners including some mercenaries and there are also some Cameroonian soldiers who have deserted the army to join those (Ambazonia troops) and are now training them”*, he added (Agberndifor, 2018 pp. 80-81 cited The Guardian Post, 2018).

This era marked the leap of the Southern Cameroonian nationalism which unknown to the government, had taken a drastic turn, a one they never saw coming. Finally getting to understand the power of the social media in fueling the secessionist spirit of nationalism and wanting to hide their gross human right violations, the French Cameroon government cut the internet for a period of ninety days. Nevertheless, they were outsmarted by the Southern Cameroonian activists who used VPN to communicate back home, trade videos and pictures of arbitrary arrests and mass killings that were and are still being orchestrated by the regime.

The conflict has entered its fourth year and there is no sign of ever stopping, instead, the Southern Cameroonian diaspora continued to grow stronger and more united on their resolve for an unconditional independence of the Former British Southern Cameroons. The country is divided with two presidents who command respect and discharge orders in their respective territories.

As it stands in this material year of 2020 Paul Biya, president of French Cameroon and most members of his government can’t set foot in Southern Cameroon or risk getting killed. This threat

was made real when he and members of his ruling Cameroon People Democratic Movement (CPDM) couldn't enter the region to campaign for his 2018 reelection. Thus, Cameroon is divided and the comfort of secession found salvation when the military wing of the Anglophone civil society decided to violently respond to the excesses of the government's brutality and haughtiness. Unable to bear the humiliations, violent protests led to secessionist ideas and armed groups forged in blood protect the current territory known as The Federal Republic of Ambazonia / Southern Cameroons.

## **EMPIRICAL SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CAMEROON AND BURKINA FASO**

### **To Conclude The Study**

#### ***Similarities***

1. Both are African countries
2. Both are former French colonies.
3. Both have had presidents who came to power through undemocratic means.
4. Predecessor presidents died shortly after allowing the incumbents a leeway to actualize their power hungry agendas. Ahidjo died in 1985 after he was allegedly betrayed by his trusted Prime Minister to whom he handed power, Paul Biya, who in return accused him of attempting a coup and Thomas Sankara was killed in a coup in 1987 staged by his best friend, ousted Blaise Compaore.
5. Presidents from both countries abused the constitution, their power and disrespected presidential term limits.
6. The presidents from both countries held power for more than 26 years with no significant economic, political and social improvements. Unemployment remains high and economic development continues to depreciate.
7. Presidents from both countries attempted to change the constitution with the intent of abolishing presidential term limits. Paul Biya made the move in 2008 and Blaise Compaore made his in 2014.

## Differences

| Cameroon                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Burkina Faso                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Constitutional coups enacted by Ahidjo prepared incumbent Paul Biya for the presidency and when the time came on November 6 <sup>th</sup> , 1982 he enjoyed a smooth and peaceful transition.                                                                                                             | The constitutional coups in Burkina Faso were meant to bring and keep Blaise Compaore in power.                                                                                                                                                      |
| The constitutional coups initiated by the Ahidjo Administration and continued by the Biya Administration were intended predominantly to undermine Southern Cameroonians and keep them in a beggarly second class position. This paper thinks that according to him it was for the welfare of the country. | The constitutional coups of Blaise Compaore meant the welfare of regime.                                                                                                                                                                             |
| The military kills unarmed protesters indiscriminately.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | The military didn't kill indiscriminately.                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Military Wing protests led to the death of many dozens of civilians.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Military Wing protests led to the death of three protesters.                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Military brutality and the provocations of the government revived anti-government sentiments, the Anglophone identity and the quest for self-determination.                                                                                                                                               | The attempt to change the constitution revived the nationalist sentiments of Thomas Sankara.                                                                                                                                                         |
| The media was a tool for mass sensitization and a reminder of the famous Resolution 1608 of April 21 <sup>st</sup> , 1961 of the United Nation's General Assembly that was geared to encourage secession.                                                                                                 | The media became a rallying factor for change and the birth of democracy.                                                                                                                                                                            |
| The military listened to the government and opened fire killing many regardless of their position that is whether Federalist, moderate or outright separatist.                                                                                                                                            | The military listened to the citizens and rallied with them to oust the regime.                                                                                                                                                                      |
| The military escalated the tension by man-handling members of the civil society thereby pushing secessionist groups to pick up arms.                                                                                                                                                                      | The military rallied with the civil society, the angry protestors and pushed for a peaceful coup.                                                                                                                                                    |
| The brutality of the government and its military granted the opportunity for the country to fall into more chaos. Secessionist groups saw an opportunity (Collier, Hoeffler and Rhoner, 2008) and exploited it.                                                                                           | The trust in the military and its coalition with the civil society was the gateway for a new Transitional Government which oversaw the fall of Compaore, his self-imposed exile, later organized presidential elections and elected a new president. |
| Citizens distrust their military more and scare away from its presence. Citizens feel safer with secessionist groups than a military that enjoys arson.                                                                                                                                                   | Citizens trust their military and stood by it in its short military rule before handing power to a Transitional Government under Michell Kafando.                                                                                                    |
| Military has burnt over four hundred villages.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | The military burnt nothing. Instead angry protesters burnt down government buildings.                                                                                                                                                                |
| Instability and insecurity continues to grow.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Country has returned to normal and security has improved.                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| More military spending by the government to fight the war with no hopes of winning.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | More economic spending to develop the nation.                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Cameroon continues to be isolated by its international friends and partners.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Burkina Faso continues to enjoy a new era of political development and continues to make new friends who believe in its fight for democracy.                                                                                                         |
| Failed state                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Not a failed state                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Crisis has gotten into its fourth year.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Crisis lasted only a few months.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Secession deepens and civil war ensues.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Country is united.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Regime oriented                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Citizen oriented                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Excellent crisis escalation skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Excellent crisis management skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Organ of oppression and terror                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Unifying organ and promoter of national solidarity and unity                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Harasses the civil society or holds it hostage for the wellbeing of the regime                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Worked with the civil society to return the country to calm and normalcy.                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Works for the regime                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Works for the state                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Not peaceful and dangerous to visit                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Peaceful and nice to visit.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

## CONCLUSION

As seen above the military wing of the civil society produces different outcomes in different places and some of the reasons for this could be attributed to colonial past, regime type, political culture, nature of politics in the country, nature of ethnic and tribal groups in the country, population and populism. In Cameroon the military wing of the civil society led to secession while in Burkina Faso it led the country straight to democracy. These two antagonistic outcomes reveal in much greater detail what could happen in a country if the civil society is minimized, marginalized, or taken for granted. As seen in both cases when the civil societies of both countries had the slightest opportunity, they used it to maximum and this brought no small change to the power and security belt of the countries. Secondly, it also helped to shape the country's image at the international level. One enjoys international praise for taking the bold step towards the boisterous waves of democracy while the other is scorned at for happily committing genocide against 20% of its citizens in a senseless civil war that could be avoided. Finally, no government, country, people learning from the Burkinabe and Cameroonian examples should ever take the civil society organization especially its Military Wing for granted because many surprises could easily await them.

The return to normalcy in Burkina Faso should be thanked to the advanced and better management skills of the Burkinabe military, the civil society and other viable actors. In the battle between the regime and the state, the state won and didn't prefer to fall into political turmoil following the power vacuum that ensued. Instead, new organs for democratization were precipitated and a new Transitional government put in place, under the direct auspices of the civil society that held it in check to make sure that it respected its powers and didn't fall short to organize presidential elections. However, it's sad to note that Cameroon failed greatly on its part because the poor management of the military of the protests has begotten unthinkable spill overs that now cause an international crisis with over 500.000 refugees in Nigeria. Compared to the Burkinabe military, the Cameroon military is very unprofessional and should learn crisis management strategies from its Burkinabe counterparts. Being the "devil's axe of repression" it has helped to sink the country into darker realms of military, economic, political, environmental, human and social insecurities. The battle between the Biya regime and two elements of the state (French Cameroonian supporters of Maurice Kamto, the unfortunate runner up and auto declared winner of the 2018 presidential elections) and the Southern Cameroonian state rages. Cameroon according to definitions of a failed state rightly falls in this category and if the supporters of Maurice Kamto's Cameroon Renaissance Movement (MRC) decide to pick up arms to make a strong point, then Cameroon directly falls into the league of collapsed states.

I understand that my conclusion might not be generally agreed upon so I encourage the reader and critics to formulate their own judgments and conclusions based on their understanding and interpretations of this paper.

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