

Political Nomadism, Fractionalisation and Instability within Political Parties in Cameroon Since 1990

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Abstract

The 1990s marked the reintroduction of political pluralism in Cameroon and like elsewhere in Africa, its main characteristic was instability within political parties, carpet-crossing, defections and party switching. This paper explores and analyses the reasons for these instability, defections and nomadism that have marred the democratic experience in Cameroon. The study relied largely on secondary data. The analysis of the data was descriptive. The study reveals that the carpet-crossings were many, varied and varying just like the causes identified. So far these defections greatly prevented the opposition alliances or parties to unseat the incumbent. It can therefore be concluded that one of the greatest drawbacks in Cameroon's democracy has been the instability within political parties, political prostitutions and political nomadism. This contribution adds to the existing literature that blames the power of incumbency, corruption, election malpractices and the absence of a credible electoral law/system for the failure of democracy in Cameroon

Key Words: *Cameroon, Democracy, Instability, Opposition, Party, Politics, Nomadism*

Introduction

Nomadism is traditionally the movement of cattle under herdsmen from one area to another in search of pasture. This was typical of the Fulani cattle herders (Bororo) in West and Central Africa. In politics such movements are called floor crossing, party defection or deflection, party decamping, party switching, carpet-crossing or party prostitution. None of these terms are popular in Cameroon not because the phenomenon was not common but because the drama, most often televised, that characterised political transhumance in Cameroon from 1990 made it banal and theatrical. The term Nomadism is preferred here because of its better reflection of the cases in Cameroon where politicians generally moved from the "barren" to the "fertile" parties or camps. From the parties without opportunities to parties with opportunities and prospects.

Political Nomadism, party defection, party switching or party prostitution according to Hoeane (2008:70) "is believed to have taken place when an elected political party representative within a legislative structure such as a parliament, embraces a different political or policy perspective that is incompatible with

that of the party or parties he or she represents". It is a change in the political party affiliation of a partisan public figure, usually one currently holding elected office. This is very common in countries without firmly established political parties. The concept as used in this paper is not limited to elected officials, it includes all the movements of individual public figures, grassroots militants and supporters of political parties or political alliances or groups from one camp to the rival or opposing camp and party fractionalisation. In Cameroon there were scenarios where villages or families declared their collective resignation from one party in favour of another. This political transhumance and the instability that reigned within parties following the resignation or dismissal of militants will also feature in this paper.

Cameroon politics since 1990 was characterised by intra-party and inter-party conflicts, political party defections and political prostitution. Many observers wondered whether these defections were dictated by national interest or self-interest. At the heart of the matter was the inability or reluctance of the Cameroonian politicians to serve the genuine interest of their people. Carpet-crossing was often prompted by discontent with the party, power tussles, divergent views on the functioning of a party or party philosophy, ethnic reasons, corruption, the creation of new party and even the desire for a prostitute-type adventure. Many defections were therefore done to protect or consolidate political power or economic resources.

1. Theoretical Framework

This study leans on the framework of the Marxist theory of the post-colonial state. This theory insists that the post-colonial states are dependent on the alien forces that colonised them. The state is also both the source of economic power and an instrument of accumulation of economic power as the state is the major means of production. It is a renter state parcelled out to the persons that use the state power for selfish ends. Consequently, the post-colonial state is purely an instrument of class domination.

The Cameroon state as a post-colonial polity or a periphery nation is a good example of a state engineered economy made up of about 250 different ethnic groups and a triple colonial heritage. The ethnic configuration is further complicated by the Anglophone-Francophone divide. The state was unable to moderate the struggle and competition between these ethnic groups and between the Anglophones and Francophones with various and varied indigenous and colonial identities. This resulted in political and economic imbalances amongst the ethnic groups and regions of Cameroon. These imbalances existed in almost all the sectors of the economy. This was responsible for feelings of marginalisation, rise of sub nationalism, ethnically based conflicts, political prostitution and the Anglophone-Francophone divide. This theoretical framework therefore explains the ramifications of socio-economic cum political relations in Cameroon.

2. Background and Pre-1990 Defections and Instability in Cameroon Politics

Political party instability and defections are as old as politics in Cameroon. It should be recalled here that Cameroon became a German Protectorate in July 1884 and by February 1916, Anglo-French Forces that defeated Germany in Cameroon during the First World War partitioned the territory. France was given four-fifths of Cameroon which was referred to as French Cameroon while Britain obtained one-fifth. British Cameroons was further divided into British Northern Cameroons and British Southern Cameroons and administered from Nigeria. French Cameroons gained independence in January 1960 as the Republic of Cameroon and in October 1961, the Southern Cameroons gained independence by joining the independent Republic of Cameroon after a UN organised plebiscite on February 11, 1961 (Nfi, 2014:279). From October 1961, the two Cameroons therefore reunified to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon with two states; West and East Cameroon. In 1972 and following a constitutional reform, the federation was abolished and a unitary state styled the United Republic of Cameroon was adopted. All these political transitions were characterised by party politicking and party switching.

To begin, the first significant party defection occurred in the British Southern Cameroons in 1955 as the nationalists within the territory struggled to liberate their homeland from British rule and from Nigerian domination that resulted from the British decision to annex the territory to Nigeria. In 1955, the ruling Kamerun National Congress (KNC) of E M L Endeley suffered a major defection when J N Foncha and A N Jua both members of the Southern Cameroon House of Assembly broke away from the KNC and founded the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) (Mbile, 2000:86). The conflict here was mainly ideological. While the founder of the KNC wanted the Southern Cameroons to gain independence with Nigeria, Foncha worked for secession from Nigeria and the reunification of the Southern Cameroons and the French administered Cameroon (Ngoh, 1996:208). However, Foncha who led the defection, was also interested in protecting the interest of the Grassfields and the image of its chiefs purported to have been neglected by the Government of Endeley.

Ideological differences were also at the origin of the 1958 defections of S T Muna, member of the Southern Cameroon Government of 1954-1958, and Chief Galega of Bali in the Bamenda Province from the KNC to the KNDP. S T Muna an influential protestant school teacher who was member of the Eastern Nigerian House of Assembly in 1951-1953 and who was minister in the first Endeley Government of the Southern Cameroon in 1954 left the KNC for the KNDP in 1958 because he wanted secession from Nigeria. Muna who was also deputy leader of the KNC before 1958 lost this position when his party entered into an alliance with the Kamerun Peoples Party (KPP) of Mbile and this could have contributed to his decamping into the KNDP (Chem-Langhëë, 1976:105). The Bali people led by their chief Galega, described as "a giant of a man

magnificently built, highly respected by the British Government and admired by all who met him, stampeded into the KNDP from the KNC because they were against independence with Nigeria (Mbile, 2000:108). While some rumours documented by Johnson (1970:162) had indicated that the Galega-Endeley divorce or the decamping of Chief Galega from the KNC to the KNDP was because Endeley used the Chief "like a house boy" during the London 1957 Constitutional Conference, Mbile who was an eyewitness argue that Galega was coerced by Bamenda Grassfields students in London to leave the KNC. Many of these students had "seen the launching of the KNDP by Foncha and Jua as the beginning of their "empire" and were eager to see the KNDP topple Endeley" (Mbile, 2000:109). However National Union of Kamerun Students (NUKS) acted as a pro-reunification pressure group and the students from the Bamenda Grassfields could not tolerate Galega's militancy within the pro-Nigerian KNC.

Another political earthquake came up in March 1960 when Hon. Boja of the KNDP party from the Wum Constituency in the British Southern Cameroons crossed the carpet in the Southern Cameroon House of Assembly and joined the CPNC, a new party formed as a result of a merger between the KNC of Endeley and the Kamerun Peoples Party (KPP) of N N Mbile. The crossing of the carpet by Boja caused not a little stir in the political balance in the House of Assembly as the numbers of deputies in that assembly moved from 14 for the ruling KNDP and 12 for the opposition CPNC to 13:13 (Chem-Langhëë, 1976:106). This was an earthquake because the CPNC and the KNDP had very opposing stance on the eve of the plebiscite. It also resulted in the "Frambo affair" which was the purported carpet crossing of another KNDP deputy. Frambo, a member of parliament from the Mamfe Constituency was paid by the CPNC to decamp from the KNDP but on second thought he resisted and saved the image of the ruling party (Mbile, 2000:148). It was therefore the KNDP that obtained independence for the Southern Cameroons by reuniting with the Republic of Cameroon in 1961. The above examples of party defections indicate clearly that most often the issues at stake in the British Southern Cameroons, were ideological and not the desire to preserve or conquer political power and/or economic opportunities. This could be confirmed by the fact that almost all the defections were from the ruling parties to the opposition.

In the French administered Cameroun, the political parties were many but rigidly divided. There were pro-French political parties and the radical nationalist parties. With this, defections were hard to come by. However when Amadou Ahidjo leader of *Union Camerounaise* (UC) succeeded to become the President of the Republic of Cameroon at independence in 1960 and President of the Federal Republic of Cameroon in 1961 following the reunification of Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon, his greatest desire was to suppress all other political parties in Cameroon and establish a single party regime.

The struggle for the eradication of multiparty politics started in East Cameroon when Ahidjo announced at the Maroua UC Congress the eventual creation of a "united national front". Many politicians were intimidated, coerced or corrupted to accept the project. This was how Victor Kanga and Pierre Kandem-Ninyim from *Action Nationale* and *Front Populaire pour L'unité et la Paix* respectively decamped to join the UC by 1961 (Joseph, 1978:59). Mayi Matip, Andre Marie Mbida, Charles Okala and Bebey Eyidi created a front against the unified party and Ahidjo accused them of subversion and jailed them for thirty months from July 1962. This high-handed action resulted in the carpet crossing of influential parliamentarians of the UPC, DC and *Parti-Socialiste Camerounaise* (PSC) to the UC in the East Cameroun House of Assembly (Ngoh, 1996:237). The action of these parliamentarians was followed by some traditional organisations such as the *Ngondo* and the *Union Tribale de Ntem et Kribi*. These defections were purely effected out of fear given the reign of terror in the territory.

The UPC, the principal opponent to Ahidjo also suffered internal division and fragmentation due to ethnic rivalry between the Bassa and the Bamileke. This led to the existence of two UPC wings in the 1960s; the Bassa and Bamileke wings (Takougang and Amin, 2018:24)

In 1966 President Ahidjo turned to West Cameroon where he used shrewd diplomacy to convince Foncha, Muna and Endeley to dissolve their political parties and accompany his *Union Camerounaise* (UC) to form a Grand National Party, the Cameroon National Union (CNU) (Ngoh, 1996:240). Political defections therefore preceded the birth of the CNU which in 1985 was replaced with the Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement (CPDM) following Biya's rise to power in 1982. During the monolithic era, from the CNU (1966 to 1985) to the CPDM (1985 to 1990) there were no pronounced or public defections as such given that any opposition to the party was seen as subversion and treated accordingly.

3. Accounting for Political Nomadism/ Instability within Political Parties since 1990

In the 1980s, there was internal and external pressure on the Biya regime to democratise the political landscape in Cameroon. On February 19, 1990, Barrister Yondo Black and nine of his aides were arrested for "subversive activities" and he was later detained for attempting to create a political party (Sobseh, 2012:149). On the 26 of May, 1990, John Fru Ndi left the CPDM and launched the Social Democratic Front (SDF). By December 1990, Biya could no longer resist the pressure as he promulgated a series of liberty laws passed by parliament paving the way for the creation of opposition political parties. These laws favoured the proliferation of political parties and today Cameroon has more than 350 registered political parties even if less than 20 are regularly participating in political competitions. The main political parties that suffered from militants nomadism, resignations and sackings were; the Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement (CPDM), Social Democratic Front (SDF), the

National Union for Democracy and Progress (NUDP), *Union des Population du Cameroun* (UPC), Cameroon Democratic Union (CDU), Movement for the Defence of the Republic (MDR), Progressive Movement (PM), National Alliance for Democracy and Progress (NADP)

The proliferation of political parties favoured political nomadism, party fractionalisation and party defections. In early 1991 many people defected from the ruling party the CPDM to join the new parties. From 1992, the new parties began to suffer from similar decamping. These party switching were often prompted by discontent with parties, power tussles, divergent views on the functioning of parties or party philosophy, ethnic issues, the emergence of new parties and the feeling of marginalisation amongst the Anglophones.

3.1 The Anglophone Problem

One of the major political problems in Cameroon has been the Anglophone Problem which in 2017 escalated into an armed conflict. Konings and Nyamnjoh (1997) hold that the Anglophone problem is the self-perception of the former Southern Cameroon as a distinctive community defined by differences in official language and inherited colonial traditions of education, law and public administration. It is therefore the problem of a people in search of their identity—an identity blurred by constitutional and political reforms that departed from the spirit of the 1961 federal constitution. In other words, the Anglophone problem can be defined as a struggle by the ethnic Anglophones (former Southern Cameroonians) to rescue their cultural identity threatened by the demographically and politically dominant Francophones in Cameroon since 1961. It was therefore the marginalisation, exploitation and denigration Anglophones by the regimes of Ahmadou Ahidjo and Paul Biya. In this case, an Anglophone in Cameroon was defined as anyone whose ethnic base/ ethnic origin was in the former British Southern Cameroon whether he spoke English or not (Nfi, 2014:112). It was for this reason that John Ngu Foncha, Vice President of the CPDM resigned on June 9, 1990, a few days after the launching of the SDF which was initially conceived as an "Anglophone Party". In his resignation letter, Foncha complained of;

Manipulation of the constitution, hatred, discrimination and harassment of Anglophones, mismanagement and neglect for former West Cameroon projects like Cameroon Bank, West Cameroon Marketing Board, Wum Area Development Authority etc¹

Foncha's resignation weakened the CPDM in Anglophone Cameroon because many who were against the marginalisation of their homeland wanted secession from the Republic of Cameroon.

It was this Anglophone marginalisation that pushed Albert Mukong and others to join Fru Ndi in creating the SDF in 1990. Albert Mukong wanted the SDF to work for secession and the restoration of the independent State of the Southern

¹ Foncha's Resignation Letter, copy with author

Cameroon (Mbah, 2018:16). When the SDF became a national party or much more than an Anglophone Pressure Group, Mukong resigned and founded the Southern Cameroon National Council (SCNC) to continue the struggle for secession (Mbah, 2018: 18). The SDF later opted for the return to the two states federation in an attempt to win the sympathy of disgruntled Anglophones but the extremists remained adamant on the need for secession. In 2017, when the struggle for secession became violent with Ambazonia Freedom Fighters organising sporadic attacks on the republican army, the separatist leaders called on the SDF to boycott parliament and state institutions. This was never done causing many defections from the party. The CPDM suffered similar resignations even if such resignations were never publicised.

3.2 Ethnic Differences

The ethnic map of Cameroon in 1990, presented more than 250 ethnic groups with different languages. However these 250 ethnic groups could be regrouped into four ecological, cultural, sociological entities. The Western Grassfields representing the people of the North West, and West Provinces and those of the Lebialem Division in the South West Province now called Regions. The second group was the coastal or forest Sawa people in the South West and Littoral Provinces. The third and fourth groups were the Beti-Bulu of the Center, South and East Provinces and the Sudano-Sahelian group in the Adamawa, North and Far North Provinces. Like elsewhere in Africa South of the Sahara, most political parties had the ethnic groups or regions of the founders as their bases. This accounted for many defections and fractionalisations when militants of the other ethnic groups felt marginalised.

The first of such conflicts was suffered by NUDP created in 1991 by Samuel Eboua on behalf of Bello Bouba Maigari who was in exile. When Maigari returned and was elected chairman of the NUDP by the Fulbe (Fulani) or *Nordiste* majority in the party, Eboua resigned and founded the Movement for Democracy and Progress (MDP) (Takougang and Amin, 2018:24). This defection was purely provoked by the fulbenisation of the NUDP and Eboua's desire for self-projection. The NUDP suffered another defection in 1997 when its Secretary General and parliamentarian, Issa Tchiroma Bakary resigned together with the Vice President, Hamadou Mustapha and founded the National Alliance for Democracy and Progress (NADP) in 1997 (Takougang and Amin, 2018:27). Hamadou Mustapha who was from Maroua (Far North Province) felt that Maigari Bello Bouba from the North Province was not promoting the interest of the Far North within the NUDP.

The SDF suffered fragmentation, defections and resignations because of ethnic issues. The Bamileke majority in the SDF also became a problem for the party. In fact in 1993, the second Convention in the history of the party held in Bafoussam. The Bamileke militants expressed the desire to occupy the post of party scribe because of their numerical and financial strength but unfortunately John Fru Ndi openly declared that "it was unacceptable that a Bamileke would ever become Secretary General of the SDF" (Konings, 2004:9). This was a

blunder and it could be attributed to Fru Ndi's ignorance on the importance of ethnic balancing within a political party. The outcome of this neglect for Bamileke aspirations was the resignation of Basil Kamdem from the party in 1995. He was followed by many other grassroots militants and they founded the Social Democratic Party (SDP). Pierre Kwemo, a Bimileke and one time Vice President of the National Assembly also left the SDF on account that the SDF was not protecting Bamileke interest.

The Sawa people of the Littoral and Southwest Provinces also effected resignations from the SDF and this resulted in a drop in the party's electoral results in the Sawa areas especially in the legislative elections of 2002 and 2007. The major or highly publicised departures included that of Lydia Efimba Belle who resigned from the party on January 11, 2006. She was a member of the SDF National Executive Council (NEC) from Kumba. She accused the SDF of "favouritism and tribalism" (Kendem, 2006:2). She probably was interested in the job of party scribe but when Tazoacha Asonganyi resigned from the post in 2005, John Fru Ndi appointed another Grasslander from the Lebialem Division of the Southwest, Michael Ndobegang to replace him. Even when Ndobegang turned down the post in order not to betray his "brother" Asonganyi, another Southwest Grassfields militant, Elizabeth Tamanjong was given the post in 2006. This did not please many Sawa people especially those of the Southwest who wanted a more senior post in the party. Paul Biya pulled them further away from the SDF when in September 1997 he dropped Simon Achidi Achu a North westerner from the post of Prime Minister and appointed Peter Mafany Musonge a Bakweri from Buea to the post. From this date the SDF lost significant following in the Southwest and Buea in particular. SDF was defeated in the municipal elections in Buea in 2002, 2007 and 2013.

In October 2016, the Sawa of the Littoral Region felt insulted again by the SDF hierarchy when a Bamileke Grasslander Jean Michel Nintcheu was elected Littoral Chairman of the party instead of Albert Elimbi Lobe "son of the soil". Machelo Tientcheu (lebleparle.com.2016) puts it clearly as he writes *"la goutte d'eau qui a fait déborder le vase et suscité la démission de Abel Elimbi Lobe est la réélection de Jean Michel Nintcheu au post de président du bureau régional du littoral"*. The Sawa people once again complained of Grassfields domination of the party. It was purely for this ethnic discord that Elimbi Lobe, First Secretary for Communication since October 2012, resigned from the SDF on November 5, 2016.

Northerners who had militated in the SDF in the early 1990s also abandoned the party for purely ethnic or regional interest. During the October 1992 presidential elections, Fru Ndi of the SDF was voted by an average of 20 to 25 percent of the electorates of the three northern regions because Mahamat Souleymane was the Vice President of the Party (Youda, 2015). Souleymane resigned in 1996 and Saidou Yaya Maidadi still from the North took over and in 2002 he resigned because according to him the SDF was not giving his region a fair share of its posts (Youda, 2015). When he and his followers resigned in

2016 they all joined the NUDP and the ADD all parties led by northerners (Cameroon Tribune, 2002).

3.3 Self Interest and Political Prostitution

Many defections and party splits were caused by political nomads who did not really have convincing reasons for their migrations. Most of them were eager to create personal parties and fight for their popularity. This was the case with Jean Jacques Ekindi who left the CPDM in May 1991 and founded the Progressive Movement on 23 August 1991. He was a member of the National Coordination of Opposition Parties against Paul Biya during the 1991 presidential elections, challenged Paul Biya in the 1997 presidential elections and later change camps to campaign for Paul Biya in the 2018 presidential elections. This was nothing but political prostitution. Albert Dzongang who served the CPDM as parliamentarian and mayor of one of the Douala municipalities from 1992 to 1997 left his party because of personal ambitions and founded the *Parti la Dynamique*. He participated in the 2011 presidential elections obtaining only 0.55 percent of the votes (Sobseh, 2012:147)

Ben Muna created his faction of the SDF after the Yaounde Convention of 2005 when he failed to coerce John Fru Ndi to hand over the party to him. In 2007 his SDF faction was dissolved into the Alliance of Progressive Forces (APF), a fusion of about five parties headed by Ben Muna himself. It was this APF that permitted Muna to run for presidential elections in 2011². He was interested in becoming President and could not realise this dream within the SDF. On the 23 October 2010, Kah Walla Edith left the SDF and on the 30 April 2011 she was elected Chairlady of the Cameroon People's Party (CPP) a political movement that had similar opposition objectives like the SDF. This resignation was purely for self-interest as Kah Walla rightly declared in an interview with Dinga Pefok that "I told Fru Ndi I wanted to be SDF presidential candidate" (Pefok, 2013:3). She therefore left her SDF political family in order to compete for the October 2011 presidential elections³

In 2002 Tchiroma again abandoned the NADP for the NUDP and in 2007 he defected from the NUDP to form the National Salvation Front of Cameroon (NSFC) (Takougang and Amin, 2018:27). Tchiroma appears in Cameroon politics as a good example of a political prostitute who placed self-interest against national interest. In 2004 he supported the opposition coalition against the incumbent Paul Biya in the October elections of that year and in 2007 he decamped into the Presidential Majority and was appointed Minister of Transport. His political paradigm was based on 'Biya must share' (Ngwane, 2014:110) at a time when the majority of the opposition parties had as slogan 'Biya must go'.

Nomadism was sometimes staged during great political rallies or during

² In these elections, he occupied the 10th position with 0.38 percents of the votes

³ In the elections, she came at the 6th position with 0.72 percent of the votes.

election campaigns. In this case militants of one party crossed the carpet and joined the rival part in a well mediated event. This was the case in Lebialem on March 9, 2006 when Martin Nkemngu the Assistant National Communication Secretary of the SDF led some 300 SDF militants crossing the carpet to join the CPDM during a CPDM rally organised by Nganu, a CPDM baron and Assistant Secretary General at the Prime Minister's Office (Takaw, 2006:4). Two other SDF barons in Lebialem, Sylvester Ngemasong and Stephen Fomin also left their party for the CPDM during that event.

A similar event occurred in the North Region in 2017 when about 480 militants of the CPDM and FSNC of Tchiroma resigned and joined the NUDP of Bello Bouba Maigari. The reception ceremony of the defectors was chaired by Iya Boro Ahmadou, a NUDP baron. The defectors led by Alhaji Oumarou Mouhamadou said "we realised that the CPDM was using us and our interests were not their concern. Our villages lack drinking water..." (Cameroon Concord, 2017:7). These movements were largely dictated by the selfish or egoistic motives of the leaders and the general desire to change camps on the eve of elections with the hope of joining the winning team.

3.4. Ideological Differences

Many of the political parties created in Cameroon in the 1990s had no ideologies. What united the militants and the political alliances of the 1990s was either ethnic affinities or the slogan "Biya Must Go". Many break-ups or defections occurred because of lack of rallying ideologies or differences over party objectives. This was true of Jean Jacques Ekindi's departure from the CPDM which had remained conservative at the time Ekindi wanted a progressive party. Pirre Mila Assoute like Ayah Paul Abine who left the CPDM and founded People's Action Party (PAP) also complained of conservatism at the time they expected the party to be modernised (Ngwane, 2014:110). Recently in May 2020, Jean Jacques Ekindi announced his return to the CPDM pushing many observers to conclude that he was just a political adventurer and prostitute.

Albert Mukong and other secessionists and federalists also left the SDF and founded the SCNC in 1994 because the SDF had relegated the Anglophone problem to the back of its objectives. Some intellectuals led by Siga Asanga, Charly Gabriel Mbock and Dorothy Kom left the SDF in 1995 and created the Forum for Social Democrats because John Fru Ndi of the SDF was not respecting the socialists objectives of his party.

3.5 Absence of Internal Democracy

Political parties in Cameroon also suffered from fragmentations, defections and instability because the absence of transparency, clarity and democracy in the management of party affairs. Founding fathers were reluctant to share powers with the youths and women and the procedures for designating party candidates for elective posts were very opaque. For nearly a quarter of a century since the reintroduction of multiparty democracy most political parties such as the

CPDM, SDF, NUDP, and CDU are still led by the founders (Takougang and Amin, 2018:27). In the case of the SDF all those who challenged the leadership of John Fru Ndi were expelled (Krieger, 2008). This was the case with Ben Muna, Jua and Kah Walla.

The SDF became unpopular because of the famous or infamous article 8.2 of its constitution which stated that a member of the party could leave the party "by resignation, that is to say, withdrawal from the party or belonging to another political party and/or engaging in political and/or such other activities which are likely to injure the reputation, interest and/or otherwise discredit the party and/or its effectiveness"(Constitution and Basic Texts of the SDF, 25,). This article 8.2 was used by the party hierarchy abusively most often against those who attempted to contradict the party chairman and his henchmen. This was the case with all those who attempted to challenge the chairman during the various party primaries in the 1990s and early 2000s. Ben Muna, Kah Walla and Pierre Kwemo left the SDF following the abusive use of 8.2.

Internal democracy of political parties, also known as intra-party democracy advocated for on the rationale that it could strengthen the practices of democracy at the national level and aid a nation's drive towards democratic maturity is therefore absent in most parties in Cameroon. This largely because the founders of most of the parties were not democrats. Almost all of those who founded parties in the 1990s are still at the helm of the parties today. This is true of the ruling CPDM, and the leading opposition SDF party.

Conclusion

Political nomadism, carpet crossing and resignations from political parties have characterised political life in Cameroon since the reintroduction of multiparty democracy in 1990. Although the ruling party suffered from carpet crossings and the resignation of its militants in the early 1990s, the phenomenon later became more common with the opposition political parties. The SDF, NUDP, CDU, UPC and even the recently created National Renaissance Movement of Kamto have all suffered from political nomadism. This has destabilised and fragmented the opposition parties and contributed to the CPDM supremacy in Cameroon politics since 1985. There is therefore the need for political education in favour of ideologies, the detribalisation of political parties and the practice of internal democracy within parties. If these are not done, democracy may not lead to regime change as expected by many Cameroonians.

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