Politics of Security: Democracy, Governance and National Security in Cameroon 2014-2021

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Abstract

This paper examines how elected governments use national security to sway good governance and democracy for political gains. The study focuses on the case of Cameroon between 2014 and 2021. To demonstrate this view, the paper employs the content analysis technique to analyze 40 selected government communication documents. Through this, the paper contributes to the method and understanding of ways in which national security policies affect democracy and governance. Drawing from classical realism and security theories, the paper concludes that national security is detrimental to the practice of good governance and democracy unless a balance is created between these elements. This balance can be achieved by lessening the power of the executive and attributing proper independence to the judiciary, legislative and election bodies among others.

Keywords: National Security, Democracy, Governance, Cameroon, Anglophone Crisis.

1. Introduction

The question of balancing national security and democracy remains complex as it affects both advanced and growing democracies. Security scholars have attempted explanations to how each affects the other but fall short of defining the place of governance in times of insecurity. Thus, can governance be effective if security is chosen over citizen's rights or vice versa? Democracy offers certain rights and freedoms to individuals, but when these rights are infringed in the name of national security, the effectiveness of democracy is questioned. According to some security critics, various governments argue that limiting citizens' rights in times of insecurity is necessary for their sake and that of democracy (Kaldor, 2011; Neocleous, 2008). While some governments can be understood, the problem arises when the security measures start targeting individuals or groups, or when the measures are seen to be benefitting the ruling party or government in place. This paper examines how governments in a democracy use national security to deviate democracy and good governance for political gains. It seeks to contribute to the literature on the various ways governments use national security for political gains to the detriment of democracy and good governance. This is done by breaking down the case of Cameroon between 2014 and 2021 using the content analysis technique. The paper examines and analyses government communication in this period. The case of Cameroon was chosen because the security challenges and government solutions give a good premise to demonstrate this view. Since 2013, Cameroon has witnessed

multiple crises that have threatened its national security. The Nigerian Islamic group Boko Haram launched numerous deadly attacks on the northern part of the country in 2013 and the military has since been combatting the group. While the assaults were slowed down by 2015, an Anglophone uprising broke out in 2016 and remains a major national security challenge to the country to date. The 2018 post Presidential election protests launched by the Cameroon Renaissance Movement (MRC) added to the list as another threat. Since then, the party has been protesting over different issues, often through street protests. More so, there have been threats on the eastern border with the Central African Republic from rebels who cross into the country to launch attacks on security forces and the population. These threats forced the government to take several security measures to secure the country. However, these security concerns coincided with the different major elections in the country starting with the Senatorial and Presidential elections in 2018, and the Legislative, Municipal and Regional elections in 2020. The security solutions taken by the government are seen to have largely hampered the opposition in these elections especially in conflict zones. Besides, the losses of the opposition, these solutions also tempered with the basic rights of the people and stripped them of most of their freedoms.

The paper will attempt answer to the questions (i) how do governments manipulate national security to make political gains at the expense of good governance and democracy? (ii) how does national security affect democracy and good governance? The analyses are based on Schumpeter's definition of democracy, which sees democracy as the "institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Schumpeter, 1942). The paper will also lean towards the World Bank's definition of governance, which describes governance as the "traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good. This includes (i) the process by which those in authority are selected, monitored and replaced, (ii) the capacity of the government to effectively manage its resources and implement sound policies, and (iii) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them" (World Bank, 2004). Furthermore, the analysis will be derived from classical political realism, notably the Hobbesian and Machiavellian views. The Hobbesian views are those that center on the legitimacy over justice, security over all other things and the centralization of power, as expressed in *Leviathan* (Hobbes, 1651). The Machiavellian view will be angled on ethics in politics, summarized as "means justify the end" as expressed in *The Prince* (Machiavelli, 2003). To ease understanding, the paper will first look at how the Anglophone crisis and the MRC crisis became national security threats in Cameroon. Secondly the paper will explore what others have said about Cameroon's national security approach, democracy, and governance, to situate the argument and contribution of this paper.

1.1   Background to the Anglophone and MRC Crises

In 2016, a group of Anglophone lawyers marched in the streets to protest the incessant appointment of French-speaking judges to courts in the English-speaking regions despite complaints. They said most of the judges had civil law backgrounds

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but were appointed to serve in courts that practice common law. Cameroon has a dual legal system inherited from the British and French that administered the country from 1916 to 1960/61. The lawyers were also protesting the use of French in these courts by these judges who could not speak nor understand English. However, these protests were met with a brutal response from the security forces. The protests were later joined by Anglophone teachers, who had similar concerns. They were protesting the appointment of French-speaking teachers to English speaking schools. According to them, these teachers could barely speak English nor did the students understand French. These are however some of the many grievances both the teachers and lawyers raised.

After weeks of protests and a brutal military response, Anglophone lawyers and teachers formed the Cameroon Anglophone Civil society Consortium (here after Consortium) to advocate for their sectoral problems. The Anglophone population then joined their protests in various areas across the two English-speaking regions. The population complained that the Anglophone minority has been marginalized and dominated by the successive governments mainly of Francophone extraction. The creation of the Consortium, coupled with the public unrest and a school boycott called by teachers, forced the government to enter talks with the coalition for several weeks. The Consortium that became the mouthpiece of a growing Anglophone movement however demanded for a return to the 1961 federal form of state as a final solution to the Anglophone Problem.[iv] This demand ended the dialogue, and the government ordered the arrest of the leaders. Those arrested were charged by a military court with *hostility against the government, secession, civil war, propagation of false information, collective resistance, incitement to take up arms* (Amnesty International 2017, p. 12). This arrest led to massive protests and boycotts in the Anglophone regions. Like before, the protests were handled with extreme force from security forces. The arrest of the consortium members opened avenues for the formation of various secessionist groups, some of which later took up arms. On November 30, 2017, Cameroon's President Paul Biya declared war on the secessionists (The Sun, 2017), and the war has been on since then. The Consortium's demand for a return to federalism was based on the agreement between the British Southern Cameroonians and French Cameroonians to unite under a federal system.

After the First World War (WWI), the Germans were defeated, and the territory was shared between the British and French as protectorates of the League of Nations and later United Nations trust-territories (Konings, 2002; Atangana, 2010; Fanso, 1989). The French took about 80% of the territory and the British attached the rest to its nearby territory of Nigeria. The British further divided their share into the British Northern Cameroon and the British Southern Cameroon and attached them to the Northern and Eastern regions of Nigeria respectively. British Southern Cameroon that was administered separately from its northern equivalent voted to join French Cameroon in 1961 (Fonchingong, 2005; Eyoh, 1998; Welch, 1966). The federal structure that was agreed upon by both parties was scrapped in 1972 by the majority French-speaking government and since then a series of actions were taken by the successive governments that eroded the Anglophone autonomy and to an extent identity. A cumulation of these things became known as the Anglophone problem, hence the discontent

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expressed in 2016 and the ongoing war.

While the war was in progress in the Anglophone regions, presidential elections were held in 2018 including these regions. After the October elections, one of the candidates Maurice Kamto of the MRC declared himself the winner. However, the constitutional council (all appointed by President Biya) declared Biya of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) winner with 71.25% of the total votes (Elections Cameroon, 2019). The MRC alongside other opposition parties contested the elections in court, but their claims were rejected. In 2019, Maurice Kamto called for protests across the nation to claim his victory. The government declared these protests illegal even before they could be staged and refused the party authorization to protest. The protests were nevertheless held, and many were arrested including Maurice Kamto, who was jailed for eight months alongside some top members of his party. Since his release later that year, he has continued to call for protest on several issues, notably, the Anglophone crisis and the reform of the electoral code. The government on its part has branded these protests as security threats and have brutally suppressed them.

These two cases seem like they could be solved initially, but the solutions provided only prolonged the conflicts. The government had earlier dismissed the lawyers' and teachers' grievances as unfounded and only made concessions when the situation had deteriorated. This raises the question of why the government will delay solution until the problem becomes a national security threat. This paper argues here that the motive lies in the sharing of power or losing power. The constitution of Cameroon describes the country as a decentralized state but in practice the country remains very centralized. Thus, granting federalism as in the Anglophone case will mean sharing power with a federated state. According to Biya (2016), all ideas to resolve the Anglophone crisis were welcome except that which touches on the form of state; in his words, *"We should remain open to constructive ideas, to the exclusion, however, of those that would affect the form of our State"*. This statement summarizes Yaoundé's fear of sharing power and clearly demonstrates why they avoided practical solutions. In the MRC case, reforming the electoral code to fit the aspirations of the opposition will translate to equality and fair competition between both parties. Therefore, in order to weaken the opposition and take advantage of the state's coercive apparatus, the government decided to grow solvable issues into national security concerns. Section four (4.) below will expand on the how and throw more light on the why. However, the next section (2.) will look at what others have said about Cameroon's handling of security issues and how they might have used these situations for political gains. It also explores how the regime in place has maintained itself in power this far. These views will help to establish the argument of this paper in the literature.

2. Literature Review

This section looks at what others have said about national security in general and Cameroon in particular. It also touches on what others have said about democracy and governance in Cameroon.

2.1 Critique of Security

Critical security scholars examine and throw light on some security justifications that governments use to mislead the public. According to Newman (2010), governments often give the impression that national security is meant to safeguard citizens but nonetheless use violence on the often peaceful and unarmed protesters. In an age where liberal ideas of democracy and human rights are popular than ever, governments seem to use security to suppress the expression of these rights under the pretext of protection. To do this, they often claim that they need to limit the liberties of citizens to save democracy especially in cases where people are protesting for the democratic rights. Still in this line of argument, governments claim that they need to strike the right balance between liberties and security (Neocleous, 2008, p. 12). This argument only ends up in the curbing of citizen's liberties and most times little protection or anything that is in the interest of citizens. Kaldor (2011, p. 444) gives the example of the United States (US) war on terror in Afghanistan and Iraq and argues that the war only provided "new justifications for increasing military budgets again, a new lease of life for intelligence services, and new arguments for cracking down on civil liberties". This assessment reflects many wars on terror around the world and the case of Cameroon in particular.

In critiquing liberalism, Neocleous (2008, p. 9), writes that security expressed by the so-called democratic societies only "reveal the potential for the rehabilitation of fascism; thriving in the crises of liberalism, the fascist potential within liberal democracy has always been more dangerous than the fascist tendency against democracy". He does not end at critiquing liberalism but also comment on realists like Machiavelli and Hobbes, arguing that their security centered ideas have influenced the drive of security today. He worries here about their state centered approach that wields power mainly for the maintenance of the state and not for good will and morality of those power is given to. This state centered doctrine seems to satisfy governments the most as it gives them much power over individuals. Neocleous (2008, p. 18) explains that the state centered doctrine started as a means to resolve power struggle between princes, then developed into defending borders (international confrontations), then to defending the interest and security of the state and finally to national security. This evolution ultimately made security the topmost political concern and interest over all other interests across the various state interests in his view. This elevation has made it possible for government intervention in any other societal aspect under the pretext of security. This argument by critical security scholars portrays the happenings in Cameroon and gives a good foundation to analyze the state centered security approach in the country.

2.2 National Security Approach and Democracy in Cameroon

Cameroon since its independence in 1960 has always responded to major national security threats with force. Takougang (2003) sees this pattern as a colonial legacy inherited from the French. The first major threat to the country was the war of independence waged against the government and the French by the *L'Union des populations du Cameroun* (**UPC**) (**Stark**, 1976; DeLancey, 1987; Ngoh, 1987; Fanso, 1989). The rebellion was only wiped out in the 1970s after prominent leaders like Reuben Um Nyobe

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and Roland Moumie were executed. Ardener (1962) and Atangana (2010) notes that the government of Ahidjo and the French responded to this rebellion with heavy militarization. A state of emergency was declared in the Bamileke, the Wouri, Nyong-et-Sanaga and the Sanaga Maritime areas where the rebels were active (Atangana, 2010, p. 109). Special criminal courts were also set up in these areas. According to Atangana, the state of emergency allowed the government to arrest indiscriminately, torture and execute people. It is estimated that thousands died in the raids against the *marquizads* as they were known. France 24 (2016), reports that lethal force was used against the groups, and anyone considered a supporter was not spared. The report adds that men and women alike were killed, and their heads were cut off and hung on sticks to send a signal to others. Ardener (1962, p. 347) adds that the founder of the movement Dr Roland Moumie was poisoned in Switzerland under "mysterious circumstances" while others like Ernest Ouandie were publicly executed.

Furthermore, since the extinction of the UPC rebel wing, Cameroon experienced relative peace until 1990 when there were uprisings in demand for democracy. Like the 1990 riots, the 1992 post-elections crisis and the 2008 fuel price hike protest were met with heavy military responses (Amin, 2012; Ngwane, 2014). Until 2014, Cameroon was considered a peaceful country notwithstanding the protests and military repressions. According to Diclitch (2002), the peace and political stability considered by some has been artificially based on the suppression of political participation (Diclitch, 2002, p. 152). The high point was in 2017 when Yaoundé formally declared war on the Anglophone secessionists. Many saw this as a civil war that the country had avoided for several years. This was so because Boko Haram was viewed as an external threat though it had bases in Cameroon. Some sources argue that Biya was defeated in the 1992 presidential elections and only had to use force and the institutions in place to keep himself in power (Yanou, 2013; Takoukang, 2002; Ngwane, 2014). A similar assumption is made of the 2008 fuel hike riots since it coincided with the change of constitution that removed the presidential term limit and allowed Biya to run indefinitely (Amin, 2012). He had to resort to force to end the protests that were taking place in almost every part of the country. The Biya regime prides itself to be the catalyst of democracy in Cameroon but still uses a similar security approach as the French and the Ahidjo regimes that were dictatorship.

The use of force by the Biya regime to combat security threats gives credit to those who say insecurity and democracy does not go together (Abubakar, 2013; Abubakar and Gorondutse, 2013; Offner, 2005). This school of thought believes that in a situation of insecurity, those with authority will take measures that can be considered undemocratic. Offner (2005) goes further claiming that authorities can even take advantage of the security threat to make political gains. He asserts that George Bush took advantage of the Iraqi war to win another term in office in 2004. Furthermore, Abubakar and Gorondutse (2013) and Abubakar (2013) on their part argue that insecurity affects the practice of democracy and good governance. They look at national security from the angle of elections in Nigeria and argue that "where elections are characterized by violence, thuggery, intimidation, rigging, ballot box snatching and stuffing and other forms of electoral malpractices, they bring to question the very essence of democracy and compromise the nation's security" (Abubakar, 2013, p. 3).

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According to Abubakar (2013), elections maneuvering is a huge threat to national security and the existence of the state. In Cameroon for instance, the MRC protests were due to perceived election malpractices. Nevertheless, the government took advantage of it to weaken the ability of the party to win in subsequent elections. This example amplifies Offner's view that insecurity and democracy can hardly work together as one is bound to give way for the other leaving the governments in charge to gain. The arrest of the major opposition leader in the 2018 presidential election raised the question of the respect of human rights which is a major part of democracy. In this regard, Dicklitch (2002, p. 152) argues that the "respect for human rights in Africa is more often the exception than the rule". In the name of national security, the law on terrorism in Cameroon allows for arbitrary arrest and detention and in some cases torture (Forkum, 2018).

2.3 Cameroons Law on Terrorism

According to Mueller (2006, p. 1), the world's reaction to terrorism has caused more harm than good in terms of civil liberties, human lives, and economic prosperity. This assertion may seem overblown but the reaction of the government of Cameroon towards the Boko Haram insurgency may give the statement some credit. With the threat of Boko Haram that engulfed five countries including Cameroon, the government of Cameroon in 2014 passed Law No. 2014/028 to combat terrorism from this group. This law was put under the military court with a maximum penalty of death. According to Kingah (2018), the country's Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) had provisions that could be applied to Boko Haram fighters, but the country decided to enact new anti-terrorism laws because some relevant articles of the code pertained only to citizens and most Boko Haram fighters were foreigners. The problem arises when this law that was put in place for "foreigners" per se, is applied on citizens in circumstances quite different from the Boko Haram case. According to Forkum (2018), this law in essence does not go against international conventions, but the content and usage of the law is problematic. Forkum, like Quintal (2017), argues that this law has been used by the government of Cameroon to target those it sees as a threat to its power. This thought echoes the argument of this paper and puts it into perspective. Quintal (2017) demonstrates how this law has been detrimental to journalists who report on Boko Haram issues and the Anglophone crisis, as well as those critical of the regime. He (2017) quotes an English language newspaper editor argues that *"the government conflates news coverage of militants or demonstrators with praise, and journalists do not know what they can and cannot report safely, so they err on the side of caution… We are not told what the difference is about reporting the facts or acclaiming what is happening and we therefore run the risk of contravening the anti-terrorism law"*.

Quintal sees this law as a "powerful tool of fear" against opposition parties, civil society, media, and rights groups. She like Forkum (2018) agree that this law gives room for government manipulation. According to Missoffe (2016) and Forkum (2018), most of the terms and articles in this law are not explicitly defined thus making it open for anyone to be termed a terrorist. Forkum (2018) compares the law in Cameroon with those in Niger and Nigeria noting that although the three countries have similar laws on terrorism, those in the latter countries are well defined. In Niger and Nigeria, the

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offences are listed under each law, unlike in Cameroon, which leaves it open to vast interpretations. Under the Niger and Nigerian laws "offences already punishable under common law are referred to and become terrorist offences if committed for a specific purpose, under special circumstances" (Forkum, 2018). In Cameroon, this law incriminates even public manifestations thus violating freedom of assembly that is a basic human right.

2.4 State of Democracy and Governance in Cameroon
The Economist (2020) ranked Cameroon amongst the worst performing democracies (142) and as a dictatorship. On its part, Freedom House (2021) scored the country 16/100 on political rights and civil liberties. In 2020, Transparency International ranked the country 149th out of 180 in governance. According to The Economist (2020), Cameroon failed in all four parameters that they measured which include the electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. Though the agency ranked Cameroon amongst authoritarian regimes, it acknowledged in its 2019 report that Cameroon has been able to put the needed institutions in place, but the problem remains at the level of execution (The Economist 2019). Morse (2019) also agrees that the problem in Cameroon is not the lack of institutions but argues that the regime only create them to validate or legitimize its power. In Morse's view, 'authoritarian' regimes rely more on institution especially political parties to validate elections. He notes that in the case of Cameroon, the Biya regime has been able to give elites comfortable positions in the administration, thus motivating them to gather support for the ruling CPDM. Besides political parties, Cameroon has an election body (ELECAM), a Constitutional Council and a National Human Rights Commission that is supposed to ensure the respect of rights including democratic rights. However, these organs are only there to fulfill international requirements and legitimize the regime's power (Morse, 2019; Nyamnjoh, 2005; Yanou, 2013). According to Yanou (2013, p. 304), these institutions and laws are just superficial and deceptive because the actual application on ground tells a different story from the impression given by their existence.
Cheeseman (2015) on his part sees Cameroon as a "stable democracy" that has established strong control over its political system and has no fear of organizing elections. This ties with Nyamnjoh (2005) and Takougang (2003) claims that opposition in the country has been weakened by government's suppression and by the electoral system that is largely influenced by the state. Freedom House (2018) parodies this assertion noting that the elections body ELECAM is highly dominated by CPDM sympathizers who help the party benefit from "electoral gerrymandering". O'Donnell and Gramer (2018) adds that Biya's stay in power has been by "co-opting elites who could potentially challenge him, undermining a fragmented opposition, and bending state institutions, including those overseeing the election, toward his own interests". Like Morse (2019), O'Donnell and Gramer sees the October 7, 2018, presidential elections as a sham. In their opinion, the election was marked by "apathy" and "outright fear". In this election, some areas had as low as 1% voter turnout especially in the troubled Anglophone regions, but Biya was said to have had a huge win there. According to O'Donnell and Gramer (2018), only a few heavily militarized polling stations were

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opened in most of Anglophone Cameroon. Nevertheless, Dicklitch (2002) says Cameroon is formally considered a multiparty democracy though the present dispensation is dangerous for the country as it can only attract violence and chaos. Unlike in other democracies where candidates seek for votes through campaigns, Biya seldom campaigns for himself but always wins by a huge margin. Campaigns are done on his behalf by his party and elites. He only visits one or two towns or none during campaign season and does so more as an official visit than as a campaign rally. This enforces Cheeseman's (2015) argument that Biya is in total control of the political system.

2.5 Manipulating Situations for political gains

The first multiparty elections were organized in Cameroon in 1992 and Paul Biya was declared winner. He has won every Presidential election since then while his party the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) has also won almost every seat in both the Senate and Parliament since 2002. Many scholars believe that Biya and his party have won these elections through coercion and rigging. Takougang (2003) argues that the 2002 municipal and legislative elections were tailored to favour Biya and his party the CPDM. In the elections, the CPDM won 149 seats out of 180. Takougang claims that even the government was embarrassed with the results and instructed the state media and other media organs loyal to the government to insist on the fairness of the elections in their reports (Takougang, 2003, p. 424). In favour of this assertion, Kah Wallah, the first woman to run for Presidential elections in Cameroon in an interview with Foreign Policy (FP) news outlet said that "in electoral dictatorships, the opposition is running against the incumbent, his party, the civil service, the state media, and even most of the private media, which tend to be run by party cadres, as well as the armed forces" (O'Donnell and Gramer, 2018). By electoral dictatorship, she was referring to the Biya regime according to the Newspaper. This shows the method of operation that has kept this regime in power for 39 years and counting. Though the regime supporters constantly claim that every election has been fair and transparent, there is always considerable disapproval from the opposition and civil society.

Furthermore, Takougang's claim that the government instructed the media to report fairness in an election that was widely condemned by the opposition and other observers may seem farfetched in a democracy, but others think it is for the purpose of satisfying the international community, especially the west. O'Donnell and Gramer (2018) writes that the Biya regime has not only been doing this but has been paying what they call 'zombie observers' to stand in for international observers and report on the credibility of elections held in the country. In the 2018 presidential elections, Transparency International – an international anti-corruption organization disclaimed a group of foreign men and women who posed as representatives of this group in Cameroon (O'Donnell and Gramer, 2018). These individuals claimed that the elections were perfect contrary to allegations from the opposition and other groups that mass irregularities marred the elections. The evaluation from these individuals only confirmed the accusations that the government operates with these 'zombie observers' to deter international pressure on good governance and freedom.

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Besides the zombie observers, O'Donnell and Gramer (2018) insinuate that the Biya regime has been paying "powerful lobbying and public relations firms" to 'fix' its image in the International Community. O'Donnell and Gramer call it "buying outside prestige". They claim that the Yaoundé government has been paying up to $184,000 a month to these firms. According to them, Squire Patton Boggs, a public relations firm, in 2018 was receiving $100,000 every four months from the government of Cameroon. Another one, Glover Park Group which was doing a similar job for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, was receiving $51,000 every month for assist the Cameroonian Embassy in Washington with public affairs and communication in the same year, 2018. Still in the same year, Mercury Public Affairs, another media relations company received $100,000 every month for a similar job (O'Donnell and Gramer, 2018). Part of their job they say was "keeping in contact with US lawmakers". These elected officials in return had the duty to dissuade the US government in case of any negative action that may be taken against Cameroon for whatever reason. Since the Anglophone crisis started in 2016, the US has been making statements but has taken very cosmetic action.

Furthermore, according to Takougang, Biya and his party have been able to win over the military by "protecting their social and economic privileges, especially those of high-ranking officers, and also by according them a highly visible role in national politics" (Takougang, 2003, p. 429). The only attempted military coup in the Biya era was in 1984 which nevertheless was smashed, and dozens were arrested. Since then, he has won the military to his side and they have remained loyal to him, thus helping him to retain power for over three decades (Gros, 1995; DeLancey, 1989). Fonchingong (1998) writes that in return for favours granted by the regime, the military has ensured that the opposition be suppressed by continuously harassing and intimidating them (Fonchingong, 1998, p. 120). This treatment has also been meted on rights groups as well as individuals who stand against the government. Gros (1995) goes a step further, arguing that the military has been responsible for the slow pace of democratization in the country (Gros, 1995, p. 121).

2.6 Gaps in the Literature
The literature explored has shown that Cameroon has had a brutal approach to national security and often resist the implementation of democracy. It has also shown that the Biya regime has been rigging elections to retain power and using the law on terrorism on critics and opponents. In addition, the literature has touched on some of the reasons governments advance for limiting citizen's rights in times of insecurity. Besides, the literature has looked at the relation between democracy, governance and national security but has looked at it from the angle of how bad democratic practices lead to insecurity. The leaves a gap that this paper intends to fill by examining how the manipulation of national security can negatively affect democracy and governance. The literature has also failed to demonstrate how governments that manipulate democracy make political gains. This paper aims to breakdown the various ways and show how governments sustain this process. Though the literature has shown the various coercive and manipulative ways that the Biya regime has been using to keep power, it has not looked at it from the angle of manipulating security. The pe-

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riod 2014 to 2021 is one of the most challenging to Cameroon in terms of security and coincided with all the major elections in the country. This makes it a good case to examine the manipulation of security. This paper intends to exploit and explore. More so, none of the works in the literature has used the content analysis technique to explain the relation between national security, democracy, and governance in Cameroon. None has also surveyed government communication in this direction. This paper aims to fill this gap.

3. Methodology

The qualitative research method, specifically the case study method was used for this research. Besides, the qualitative content analysis technique was applied in the analysis. Forty government communication documents were selected from the Presidency, the Ministry of Territorial Administration, the Ministry of Communication, the Ministry of External Relations, and the Ministry of Defense. The selected resources were those considered most relevant to the topic and those available to the public. These are the documents directly linked to the Anglophone crisis and the MRC protests/crisis. The selected documents were studied closely to identify and select themes. The themes could be words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole document. The selection was based on frequency of words, phrases, and concepts. The resulting themes appear in more than half of the documents selected. The themes were then grouped into units based on their similarities. The outcome was the topics analyzed below.

4. Politics of Security in Cameroon

This section breaks down the themes derived from the study of the selected government communications answers the question: how do governments manipulate national security to make political gains at the expense of good governance and democracy? (ii) how does national security affect democracy and good governance? Each sub-topic in this section represents a summary of the various themes that were derived from the study of the selected documents. Themes that appeared the most include republican values, terrorism, hidden agenda, military professionalism, security of the people, unity of the country, head of state, democracy, destabilization, denial and threat. These and other words, phrases and concepts that appeared frequently were summarized into the units below.

4.1 Application of law on Terrorism
In December 2014, the government of Cameroon passed a law on terrorism – law No. 2014/028, to guide court proceeding on those arrested within the framework of Boko Haram activities. The law has a maximum penalty of a death sentence, and allows authorities to detain indefinitely those accused of terrorism. It also provides for prosecution in military courts though it breaches Article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This article guarantees individuals a fair, independent, and public hearing of any criminal charges against them. The law also contravenes the

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African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which Cameroon ratified in 1989. According to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, section G:a and G:c:*"The only purpose of Military Courts shall be to determine offences of a purely military nature committed by military personnel" (G:a)*

"Military courts should not in any circumstances whatsoever have jurisdiction over civilians. Similarly, Special Tribunals should not try offences which fall within the jurisdiction of regular courts." (G:c). Though Cameroon ratified these international binders, it still placed the law on terrorism under the military courts. Biya himself was sensitive to criticisms on these laws and insisted that the law was meant for those desecrating the borders and not for citizens exercising their civil rights. In his words: *"The growing threats on our borders have prompted us to take measures to safeguard against their effects on our internal security. Such is the purport of the law on the suppression of terrorism which Parliament recently passed by a large majority. It is far from serving as a pretext for restricting civil liberties, as claimed by some ill-intentioned people"* (Biya 2014). His defense of the law came after critics pointed out that the law was too broad and could be used in suppressing human rights. With the outbreak of new security challenges, Biya's defense seemingly became questionable. From 2016, many Anglophone and MRC detainees became the target of this law. Amongst the critics of this law was Amnesty International that described the law as "deeply flawed" (Amnesty International, 2018). This law has been extensively applied in the Anglophone crisis and the post electoral/ MRC crisis. In order words, this law has become the basis of dealing with security in the country. Contrary to Biya's declaration, this law has been used on unarmed civilians, including those with minor offenses as described by the government itself. Under this law, the MRC leader and many of his followers were detained for eight months thus killing their protest motive and holding them back from preparing for subsequent elections.

4.2 Agenda Setting

Wu and Coleman (2009, p. 776) define Agenda setting as "the phenomenon of the mass media selecting certain issues and portraying them frequently and prominently, which leads people to perceive those issues as more important than others". This phenomenon is not only limited to the media but extends to politics. The samples selected for this study indicate that since the start of the Anglophone crisis in 2016, the Biya government embarked on an agenda to present the protests and protesters as a negative force. This image continued with the MRC post-electoral protests in 2018. The language in the documents is framed in a way that it either degrades the protests and protesters or gives the impression that government's actions are for the good of the people. In describing the protesters and their protests, the government uses words and phrases like terrorists, hidden agenda, destabilizing the country, unpatriotic, and others. But while talking about their actions on the other hand, the government uses words like republican, territorial integrity, law and order, security of the people and others. This usage aims at instilling an image of good in the government and bad in the protesters and their protests. A good example of government agenda setting is seen in the use of the word "federalism". After the Anglophone Consortium demanded for a return to a federal system, the government in its communication

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immediately interpreted the word to mean "secession". The Minister of Communication at the time, Issa Tchiroma, followed up by banning discussions on the topic over public platforms. This approach was aimed to discourage the idea of federalism and instill fear in the advocates as they could face the law on secession.

Furthermore, the Minister of Territorial Administration (Paul, 2020) referred to a "hidden agenda" while informing the public of a planned MRC protest in 2020, in his words, *"I want to send a stern warning to unscrupulous politicians, looking for cheap popularity, with a hidden agenda aimed at disrupting the electoral process, that they will face the law"*. The use of the phrase "hidden agenda" removes the attention from the issues raised by the party in questions. The MRC (2020) had earlier announced that it will stage these protests if the electoral code was not reviewed before the legislative and municipal elections in 2020. According to the party, their protests were aimed at pressuring the government to consider the matter before the said elections. Framing it as an agenda to disrupt the election gives the government a chance to qualify it as a security problem and thus use force to suppress the protest and ignore the problem. The government's focus in most of its communication is to discredit the protesters in any way possible by presenting them as a danger to the public.

Closely related to government's use of the words "hidden agenda" is the use of the word "terrorists". This description is typical with the portrayal of the military against protesters or secessionists. Since 2014, the government have been presenting soldier as heroes of the nation while demonizing others. In 2015, the government launched a campaign to support the troops against Boko Haram and the country responded positively and massively. Many supported financially, vocally, and materially. However, government did not get the same response in their crusade in the NW/SW. Unlike Boko Haram that was an invading party, many saw the Anglophone case as an internal problem that needed to be solved through dialogue. With this backlash, the government embarked on the praising the military, with a constant reminder of their victory against Boko Haram. In one of the Minister of Communication's press conferences, Sadi (2020a) regretted that the military does not have the same support as it did in the case of Boko Haram, in his words, *"The Army that is being mobbed today by some is the same Army whose prowess in fighting Boko Haram terrorist sect was celebrated yesterday"*. In his view, any allegations against the military should be overlooked and they should rather be praised. His choice of words to describe the military presents them as harmless and professional soldiers who are just doing their job and who are under false accusation. According to him, *"Beyond the ungrounded stigmatization and slander directed against our defense and security forces, we should underscore and magnify the remarkable virtues that characterize our army, an elite army that is strong, credible, professional and mature, and whose daily activities builds on the sacrosanct principles of respect for republican institution and the defense of the nation with honour and loyalty"* (Sadi, 2020b). On the other hand, protesters or separatists are termed terrorists, automatically labeling them as enemies of the state. While he uses these flamboyant uplifting terms to describe the military, he describes the separatists on the other hand as: *"… unrepentant and totally dehumanized armed gangs, assassins, looters, and rapists…"* (Sadi, 2020c). This contrasting view of the other against the government shows how the government valued the choice of force. Thus, presenting the military as patriots and

republican and the others as terrorists justified this choice and why they needed to continue on this path.

In many instances, the military has been accused of human rights abuses, but the government fiercely defended them each time it comes up. In the military's defense, government presents them as "disciplined republican soldiers" who are saving the nation from "terrorists". In one of Biya's speeches in 2020 he said that *I would also like to commend here the bravery of our Defence and Security Forces that have not failed in their duty to protect the integrity of the national territory, the people and property. They deserve the respect and consideration of everyone. I encourage them to keep it up and to remain a republican force that respects human rights"* (Biya, 2020a). The military in every country has the duty to protect the integrity of the territory, the people, and their property. However, in the case of Cameroon, the constant reminder of this duty seemingly points to an agenda to justify their presence in the field. Labelling the others as terrorist therefore explained what the military was chasing and thus the continuation of the war.

Furthermore, while the government strongly defended and praised the military, it also did not spare any instance to condemn the others. Form the documents studied, government always took a while to address allegations of military abuses, and each time they did they were on the defensive. However, in the case of the separatists, MRC members or Anglophone protesters, government's reaction was usually very swift and demonizing. The government took four days to react to the Ngarbu massacre[v] and the first reaction was to accuse Human Rights Watch of trying to destabilize the country. However, in the case of the Kumba massacre[vi] the government reacted the very day and blamed the separatists for the act though separatists also accused government soldiers. According to the Minister of Communication, *"The Government of Cameroon strongly condemns these heinous and unsustainable acts committed by secessionist gangs who, for absurd, illegitimate and unacceptable motives, continue to kill honest and innocent citizens all around"* (Sadi, 2020d). The government does not only accuse the separatists here but also water-down their cause as "absurd, illegitimate and unacceptable motives". This was one of government's tactics used throughout the period under study here. Between 2016/2017, the government insisted that there was no Anglophone Problem until Biya recognized some aspects of the grievances. The government also dismissed all the MRC grievances as unfounded. However, in 2021 it recognized the MRC complaints about the electoral code after holding three major elections and making huge political gains without the party. Government understood that demeaning the grievances of the other took away the power of the complaint notwithstanding how strong it was. As such, it applied this strategy frequently and to every major protest in this period. This strategy was often followed by accusing the other of atrocities and tagging them as a threat, hence the use of force.

Additionally, while the government evaded the protesters' grievances by demeaning them, they centered on the adverse outcomes of the protests. The insistence on the outcomes like the death of a soldier further amplified the image of terrorists and shifted the focus from the real issues raised by the protesters. In another instance regarding the Anglophone crisis, the government dispatched delegations abroad to "explain" its version to the Cameroonian diaspora that seemingly was mobilized be-

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hind the Anglophone cause. "Explain" was the term used in the official communique, denoting that the government had its own agenda to spread which focused on not solving the crisis but rather explaining its choice of force. They also blamed the MRC for the actions of anti-Biya protests abroad.

4.2.1 The Unity Narrative
Since 2016, national unity became a major theme in Biya's communication likewise his collaborators. When the Anglophone teachers' and lawyers' strike morphed into an Anglophone movement, the government immediately interpreted it as a move for secession. In this regard, the claim to national unity became a major rhetoric of the government and members of the CPDM party. Not only did they start calling for national unity, but they insisted that the country was one and indivisible. From thence, phrases like "national unity", "living together", "territorial integrity", "one and indivisible" became very popular in their discourses. In one of the speeches for example, Biya said: *"We are willing to move in the footsteps and spirit of the architects of Reunification and put in place a national entity which will be tasked with proposing solutions aimed at maintaining peace, consolidating our country's unity and strengthening our resolve, and our day-to-day experiences of LIVING TOGETHER"* (Biya, 2016). Saying "we are willing" leaves the impression that the will was not there prior to 2016. This only gives reason to the Anglophone grievances that he and his government dismissed at the time. Despite the denial, they were so conscious of the idea of unity and made sure that they were heard. In the above sentence alone, Biya uses four words and phrases that denote unity: reunification, national entity, country's unity and living together. This insistence was aimed at influencing public view on this.
Furthermore, despite the Anglophone complaint on marginalization and an ongoing secessionist war, government presented the idea of unity as the people's project. This narrative was not only directed to Anglophones for obvious reasons, but also referred to the MRC protesters who had showed no interest in separating the country. The Minister of Communication in one of his press conferences said that *"THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, HIS EXCELLENCY PAUL BIYA hails the commitment of the Cameroonian people that is ever dedicated to promoting a united, democratic and prosperous Cameroon, where the values of tolerance and living together prevail"* (Sadi, 2018). This narrative points to three effects: 1) To discourage Anglophone Cameroonians from aligning with the separatists, and others from copying the idea of secession. 2) To distinguish separatist from "Cameroonians". 3) To force government's idea of unity on the people. Point (2) suggests that those who oppose government's idea of a united Cameroon as mentioned in point (3) will immediately be considered separatists and dealt with as such. This could be done either by coercing them or by using the law on terrorism on them or both. By government's idea of unity, the researcher refers to 1) government's interpretation of federalism as secession and 2) government's position on MRC protests. The Anglophone Consortium members were charged with secession even though their demand was for a return to federalism. Thus, federalism to the government suggested that the country would be divided. According to Biya (2016), *"Cameroon's unity is therefore a precious legacy with which no one should take liberties. Any claim, no matter how relevant, loses its legitimacy once it jeopardizes, even slightly, the build-*

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ing of national unity". In his view, the building of national unity remains government's design and the citizens have no choice than to accompany this idea notwithstanding their views and feelings. More so, government's continuous mention of unity in addressing the MRC protests signaled that unity meant allying with government's position even if the MRC had valid reasons. This can be seen from the threats issued to the party protesters and anyone joining them.

4.2.2 Security of the People
Closely linked to the unity narrative is the narrative of "security of the people". This is largely used by the government as a justification for the choice of force. Recurrent in the communiques and speeches studied is the idea of securing the people and their property. This theme is often accompanied by the defense of military actions and a lecture on unity and territorial integrity. According to the Minister of Communication Rene Sadi (2020e), *"With regard to our defense and security forces, which clearly constitute the main target of the slayers of our Nation, we must ask ourselves what are the underlying reasons for the persecution to which they are subjected, even though they are engaged in a mission that is both civic and republican, to preserve territorial integrity and to secure the population and their property"*. Prior to the change in language, the rhetoric was more of maintaining law and order. The shift came with the evolution of the Anglophone crisis and the persistent protests from the MRC. When some Anglophones picked up arms, the government immediately crafted the language into "the people" against "terrorists", thus, security of the people and their property became the subject. Through this, government emphasized on eradicating the "enemy" and insisted that terrorists had no place in dialogue, thus pushing for more force. While addressing heads of diplomatic missions in 2019, the Minister of External Relations said: *"… the Cameroonian army is on the ground to protect the people and their property against secessionist terrorists and carry out its republican mission of safeguarding the territorial integrity of our country"* (Lejeune, 2019). This address came after international pressure on the country for the release of the MRC leader and the resolution of the Anglophone crisis. This statement was a response to the various allegations against the military and the minister ensured to reinforce the narrative of securing the people and their property, thus justifying their stay in the field.

4.3 Praise for the Head of State
Part of the objectives of this research was to shine light on the type of democracy practiced in Cameroon. Some authors like Morse (2017) and Hansen (2010) have described it as an electoral authoritarian regime. Others have even argued that it is not a democracy at all. This paper will side with the description of an "electoral authoritarian regime". One of the indicators of this form of "democracy" is the concentration of power in the hands of the President. According to Morse (2017, p. 2), the survival of such regimes depends "on leveraging the state's coercive capacities and the indomitable power of the Presidency". This statement aptly describes the Biya regime especially within the period 2014-2021. This is seen in the documents examined through the constant praise for the head of state. The praise demonstrates the power that he wields. Paul Biya is unlike most head of states that engage with their citizens through

frequent speeches, addressing issues affecting the nation or through visits. He addresses the country twice a year; on the 11th of February that is Youth Day, and on the 31st of December in a New Year statement. Besides, he is seldom seen in public except on occasions like the national day celebrated every May 20th or once in seven years when he goes for one or two campaign outings, or at special state ceremonies. This has made him omnipresent in the communication of the government and of his party. This theme features in all the documents selected from the ministries and other administrative sectors. In one document from the ministry of communication, the President is mentioned nine times in the short press briefing. This mention gives him all the attributes of a problem solver. The briefing in question was addressing the killing of 22 people by government forces in the North-West region, including men, women, and children. The minister in an earlier press conference had denied military involvement in the killings but an inquiry committee assigned by the President attributed it to the military. To address the new findings, the Minister of Communication (Sadi, 2020f) showered the president with all the praises possible: *"Furthermore, the most important thing is undoubtedly the decision of the President of the Republic to give credence to the findings of the independent inquiry that he ordered… Yes, we are saying that the most important thing is to hail, exalt and magnify the act of the PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, who is without doubt an example of political courage, that of the PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, faithful to his principles and commitments, concerned to build and preserve the image of a strong, responsible and exemplary Cameroonian Army"*. Here, the head of state is presented as Hobbes's "Leviathan". The only one capable of bringing the needed peace and progress. The rhetoric gives Biya a god-like image that plays in the way the public views him. This image distances him from any responsibility that could result or resulted from not addressing the problem initially. In the 40 government documents studied, the president is mentioned over 20 times in a manner of praise. For the most part, he is presented as the guarantor of democracy. The Minister of Territorial Administration (Paul, 2020) in one of the documents describe Biya as *"Great Architect of peaceful democracy in Cameroon"*.

This praise singing was necessary in this period because elections were near and the CPDM needed continuity. The praise in other words was a soft campaign, presenting their candidate and party in the best possible way. Portraying Biya as the "Leviathan" meant voters will see him and his party as the choice for peace and security. Meanwhile, the government had rejected calls for an inclusive dialogue proposed by the opposition and the civil society to end the crises. Rather, government designed a dialogue that excluded separatist and other major Anglophone activists. Nevertheless, Biya was brandished by his collaborators as an embodiment of peace. This constant praise for the Head of State prompted a mockery song titled: "We thank the head of state" authored by a Cameroonian artist, Kobo. The lyrics recite some of the rhetoric reiterated by the government since 2016. This demonstrates how extensive and frequent this praise was in this period.

4.4 Acting Above the Law
This research has demonstrated above how the government uses the law on terrorism on its opponents and civilians. As indicated, most MRC protests were banned

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even before the competent authorities could issue a refusal letter as demanded by the law. Between 2017 and 2021, no opposition party was allowed to protest even when they had followed the law. Meanwhile, the CPDM was allowed to stage anti-protest marches and hold meetings in area where public gatherings were banned by the authorities. The key reason given for the refusal of authorization and bans on opposition and civil society protests was usually "national security". Moreover, the Minister of Territorial Administration (Paul, 2019) instructed local authorities to ensure that MRC protests do not take place all over the country, in his words, *"The Minister of Territorial Administration wishes to emphasize that all public manifestations organized by the CRM party from the 6 and 13 of April 2019, have been prohibited all over the national territory. Administrative authorities precisely: Regional Governors, Senior Divisional Officers and Divisional Officers shall each in their sphere of influence ensure the strict implementation of these directives"*. These directives seem to have been implemented indefinitely as the party did not get any authorization to protest within this period. Hence, government acting above the law.

Another glaring instance of the regime acting above the law was a CPDM meeting held in Bamenda in December 2016. This meeting was in complete defiance of the security threat it posed. After the party held a similar meeting in Buea (another major Anglophone town) earlier that month and announced one for Bamenda, Anglophone activists and sympathizers warned that the meeting will be disrupted if held. This was a serious security threat, but the party insisted on holding the meeting. On the 8th of December 2016 protesters stormed the streets and targeted the party hall resulting in the suspension of the meeting and the evacuation of government ministers including the Prime Minister. At least four people were killed according to Reuters (2016). Several others were wounded, property destroyed and many arrested. This meeting was aimed at showing "Anglophone" solidarity with the party leader Paul Biya, amidst Anglophone claims of marginalization. Going by government's logic in banning other meetings, this meeting could have been a good case of "threat to national security" but government rather demonstrated that security was only an issue when its interest or that of the CPDM was at risk. By endangering the lives of many to hold this meeting, government acted above its own logic and thus above its own law.

4.5 Praise for Country's Democracy
The constitution of Cameroon describes the country as a democratic and decentralized state. According to article 1.2, *"The Republic of Cameroon shall be a decentralized unitary State. It shall be one and indivisible, secular, democratic and dedicated to social service. It shall recognize and protect traditional values that conform to democratic principles, human rights, and the law. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law"* (Constitution of Cameroon 1.2). In this regard, the country holds presidential elections every seven years, and holds senatorial, legislative, municipal, and regionals every five years. All these elections were held in the country between 2018 and 2020. In this period, one of the key approaches used in government communication was to present democracy in the country as incredibly active and effective. This theme appeared in almost all the government documents studied. At every given opportunity, the government praised the strides made in democracy and presented the country as an ideal democracy. As

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such, government trivialize every grievance that emanated from the non or partial application of democratic rules, thus justifying their choice of force. In one of Biya's speeches in 2020, he stated that *"Democracy is effective in Cameroon and is advancing in giant strides"* (Biya, 2020b). Insisting on the effectiveness of democracy in the country rather raises questions as to its effectiveness. Since the 1990's, there have been many criticisms to the practice of democracy in the country, especially from the opposition. The MRC protests have been centered on a balanced platform for all parties in elections. Amongst other things, the party has for years been asking for:

- *Introduction of the single ballot,*
- *Two round electoral system for the presidency,*
- *Limiting presidential terms to two,*
- *Conditions for a strict application of Article 96 (4) which prohibits the opening of polling stations in places closed to the public,*
- *Establishment of the voting age to 18 (20 as of now),*
- *Equal access of political parties and qualified candidates to public media during the election campaign* (MRC, 2016).

These points seem like basic things that would exist in an "effective democracy", but the MRC and other political parties have been demanding for years to no avail. Even the country's election body ELECAM in its 2019 report stated that the electoral code needed some adjustments. In turn, the government took on the defensive and rather insisted on the strength of democracy in the country as seen above.

More so, as the government celebrated democratic "advancement" in their speeches, they blamed others for not respecting democratic rules. In 2019, when the MRC protested the presidential election results, Biya in a speech pointed out that they were against democratic rules, in his words, *"Unfortunately, a minority, in Cameroon and abroad, seem to have forgotten the rules that govern life in a democracy. Needless to recall that the sole arbiter in a democracy is the sovereign people. When the sovereign people make a choice through free and fair elections and the results are proclaimed after review of petitions, such results must be recognized and accepted by all"* (Biya, 2019a). He describes the elections as "free and fair" contrasting reports from the two Anglophone Regions. Election results from these regions showed that thousands were denied a chance to vote due to the absence of a ceasefire. The people did not have the freedom to vote nor had the fairness to serenity as in other regions.

4.6 Reluctance to Address Major Concerns
The Anglophone crisis clearly demonstrates how the Biya government turns simple issues into security concerns. The crisis started as a teachers and lawyers strike but ended up as a war that killed thousands. The government's response at the start was to forcefully suppress these protests. Lawyers and students were brutalized in the SW town of Buea and some were arrested. This led to more protest and finally into a war. Government dismissed teachers' and lawyers' complaints and insisted on forging ahead with the "harmonization" plan which was aimed at merging the education and judicial systems of the French and English extractions practiced in the country. According to the lawyers and teachers, the harmonization plan was detrimental to Anglophones as Civil-Law French-speaking judges were appointed to Common-Law

English-speaking courts and French speaking teachers sent to teach Anglophone kids that understood zero French. Typically, the government ignored these grievances and only granted some of the demands when pressure was high. At this point, the protests had moved from a sectoral problem to a general Anglophone protest. The government offered to recruit bilingual teachers, create a common law section in the school of magistracy and offer subventions to private schools amongst other things. These grants went unnoticed because the demand had moved to federalism. Most of these offers however did not address the problems posed by the teachers and lawyers because the French-speaking teachers and judges were maintained. This prolonged the protests until separatists picked up arms.

Furthermore, in most cases between 2014 and 2021, government only provided "solutions" after it had made political gains. For instance, Biya only called for a national dialogue to discuss the Anglophone problem after his victory in the Presidential elections in 2018. Opposition parties, Civil Society and the International Community had clamoured for dialogue since the beginning of the crisis, but he ignored the calls. In Biya's words, *"I have decided to convene, from the end of this month, a major national dialogue to allow us... to examine the ways and means to respond to the deeply-held aspirations of the populations in the Northwest and Southwest, but also in all the other component parts of our great nation,"* (Biya, 2019b). The dialogue unfortunately did not address the "deeply-held aspirations" of the people as he claimed, and the conflict continued. In 2017, Anglophones came out in huge numbers to show support for the Consortium's demand for a return to federalism. However, in the National Dialogue, the government excluded this from the agenda basically offering decentralization that was provided by the constitution since 1996 but was never implemented by the regime. Besides, separatists were not invited to the dialogue and fighting continued while the dialogue was ongoing. Discussion topics were designed by the government and only included issues that it was comfortable with. This shows that government had no intention of ending the crisis. Moreover, some of the solutions provided to the crisis were simply inscribed in the constitution. For instance, the creation of a Bilingual Commission that Biya and his ministers referred to in most of their communications. This commission is supposed to ensure the equality of the two national languages – French and English. To this, article 1.1 of the constitution states that the two languages are equal, indicating that the government has not been respecting the constitution for the past 39 years. More so, the regional elections were also presented as a solution to the crisis. This as well was inscribed in the constitution since 1996 but it was never implemented. By holding back or providing redundant solutions to the various crisis, the Biya regime demonstrated that it was benefiting from the insecurity that persisted as an outcome. This and the effects of all the other themes examined above will be demonstrated in the next chapter that shows the election results in the affected zones.

5. Election Results

Cameroon held all its major elections between 2018 and 2020, and the CPDM emerged victorious in all. This victory greatly changed the power structure in the country

though the CPDM has always had the majority. The change in power structure essentially affected the opposition that lost the lone parliamentary group held by the SDF. The SDF also lost seven seats in the Senate reducing its members from 14 to only seven out of a hundred. Since 2016, the SDF had been very vocal on the Anglophone issue in both the Senate and Parliament. The party in 2017 disrupted sessions demanding for the inclusion of the Anglophone crisis on the agenda. This was partly because the war was affecting their political base. Nevertheless, this disruption proved to be working for the SDF as the voice of the people and this posed a threat for the government. Predictably, the SDF lost nearly all its seats in the two regions owing to government's refusal to discuss the Anglophone problem in parliament and to find solutions to it prior to the elections.

The results included here focus on the CPDM and the SDF parties. This is because these are the major parties affected negatively or positively by the various security concerns in question. The choice of the two parties is to demonstrate how security has affected power and for the most part how Biya's party – the CPDM has benefitted from the security issues in the country. The MRC could have been included as it played a major role in the Presidential elections, but the party boycotted the legislative, municipal, and regional elections. Though their absence gave the CPDM an easy win in MRC dominated areas in other parts of the country, this paper will focus on the results that had direct links to security.

According to the state-run newspaper Cameroon Tribune (2020), "History in the CPDM victory is that it has almost dislodged the Social Democratic Front (SDF) from the North-West (NW) Region". The NW has always been the SDF stronghold, but this completely changed with the crisis/war. The party registered its worst results in the Region since its first elections in 1992. On the other hand, the CPDM made huge strides taking over all the councils and most of the parliamentary seats in the region. This victory was owed to the low turnout of voters in both the North-West and the South-West Regions due to the conflict. In the presidential election, turnout was so low that some Divisions recorded less than 4% of the total number of registered voters (Elections Cameroon, 2018). Divisions are the next administrative units after regions that follow the central administration. In Meme Division in the SW Region for instance, only 3,190 votes were cast out of 89,284 voters registered, according to Elections Cameroon. Boyo Division in the NW Region recorded only 363 votes out of 57,945 registered voters, scoring 0,63% in the election. Out of these votes, the CPDM had 70,52%. Menchum Division still in the NW Region recorded a 1,47% turn-out with just 765 votes out of 52,095 registered voters for the entire Division (Elections Cameroon, 2018). These low figures were recorded across the two regions with the most votes recorded in Fako Division of the SW Region, showing 22,800 votes out of 143,743 registered voters with a 15,86% turnout rate (Elections Cameroon, 2018).

Even as low as these figures were, the opposition argued that the numbers were lesser than what Elecam presented. Separatists had announced a boycott of the various elections and threatened voters with death. Besides, the government turned down calls from the opposition for a ceasefire that could allow massive participation. The absence of a ceasefire thus favoured the few who could get military protection, most of whom were CPDM supporters. The low turnout in the two Regions indicate that

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less than five people voted in some polling stations. Moreover, most polling stations were moved from their assigned positions to other areas mainly in military occupied areas. According to the government, this was for the safety of voters though the opposition argued that this move was against the law and in favour of the ruling party. Opposition efforts to have the results annulled were rejected by the courts except for a few cases in the legislative and municipal elections.

Notwithstanding the re-run in the two regions, the CPDM still won most of the contested seats (10 in the North-West and 01 in the South-West) because the conditions were nonetheless the same. The intriguing thing about the re-runs is that the same reasons that were accepted for the cancellation of some results of the legislative and municipal elections in the NW and SW, were similar reasons that were dismissed in the Presidential elections. As a result of the rebuff of appeals in the Presidential elections, Biya scored 81.74% in the NW and 77.69% in the SW (Elections Cameroon, 2018). In all, his party won 18 out of the 20 seats in the NW region, up from 7 in the 2013 legislative elections. In the SW region, the party also took the lone SDF seat, thus winning all parliamentary seats in the region (Cameroon Tribune, 2020). For the first time since 1997, the SDF came out of the legislative elections without a parliamentary group. More so, the CPDM took over all the municipal councils but one in the waring regions and eventually the regional councils since the voters in the regionals were municipal councilors (Cameroon Tribune, 2020). According to The Guardian Post (2020), critics described the CPDM crushing victory as a "mockery to Cameroon's democracy". Like others also, it reported that the CPDM was "in a fix" with the sweeping victory and was in negotiations with the SDF to offer the party some seats in parliament and some councils. This according to the Newspaper was because the CPDM was concerned that the SDF may join forces with the separatists following the "shameful" defeat. The CPDM refuted reports of negotiations with the SDF and said their victory was earned. This, however, was not the first time this allegation was raised by the media or academics. Such an allegation was made in 2002 as described in section two (2.) above.

6. Conclusion

This paper aimed to demonstrate how governments in a democracy use national security to bend democratic and good governance rules for political gains. The qualitative content analysis technique was used to generate themes that were used for analysis. The paper found that governments use national security by prolonging a security situation either through the delay of solutions to the problem or by magnifying the problem in their communication to make it seem serious than it is. This is done by setting an agenda that presents others as terrorists and dangerous to the state and justifying military actions in the field as a mission to safeguard the people and their property. This is also done by using the law in government's favour when its interest is involved and by denying others a chance to express themselves. More so, governments use a national security situation to create an image of the Head of State that presents him as the Hobbesian Leviathan - the only one capable of bringing peace and progress. His actions are praised and shown to the public as acts of generosity

even if the actions are of no benefit to the people, or even if the government aided the problem to grow. In the same way, democracy in the country is presented as effective even though citizens are not given a chance to exercise their rights.

The analysis was guided by theories of security and classical realism. The various themes show that the government of Cameroon use a Machiavellian and a Hobbesian approach both in their communication and actions. The goal is to maintain power and as such they use the security situation as the means. Security is made the prime concern and thus the head of state is presented as the only one capable of saving the people. Critical security theories point out that in moments of security concerns, power is concentrated in the hands of the president, and this is what happened in the case of Cameroon. In the literature review, it was seen that others looked at the relationship between national security, democracy, and governance from the effects of bad electoral practices and how they lead to insecurity. However, this paper has examined the reverse which is how national security affects democracy and governance.

The paper thus found a chain reaction between national security, democracy, and governance. In a case where there is a security crisis, it is highly probable that governments will try to use the situation for political gains. According to Keping (2017), the higher the degree of legitimacy of a government, the more effective good governance will be. When a country that has a democratic system fails to implement democracy correctly, the quality of governance is reduced or greatly affected. When rules and laws are twisted, it gives room for corruption and slows down the application of policies. The election results shown above puts to doubt the legitimacy of the regime in place. Thus, going by Keping's logic, it will be difficult for the regime to implement good governance. This effect can be seen in the various democracy and governance indexes. Freedom House (2021) gave the country 16/100 on political rights and civil liberties. Transparency International (2020) on its part ranked the country 149th out of 180 in governance. The Economist (2020) classified the country as a dictatorship and ranked it 142nd in democracy application. Hence this paper concludes that National security can be detrimental to democracy and governance if not applied properly. To create a balance Cameroon must:

- Revisit the electoral code and give every political party a chance to compete fairly
- Amend the constitution and give the president less powers than he has now
- Revisit the Constitution and make the Constitutional Council and Election Cameroon's positions elective rather than through presidential appointments.
- Give proper independence to the judiciary, legislative, Constitutional Council and Elections Cameroon
- Minimize party discipline and prioritize community representation
- Limit military recruitment to high school diplomas and educate them on law and order in national security.

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