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Electoral Governance and the Consolidation of Democracy in Cameroon: Trajectories and Patterns

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Abstract:

Electoral governance often goes hand in hand with expectations of democratic health improvements. The effectiveness of electoral governance as the cornerstone of democratic consolidation in Cameroon depends largely, but not exclusively, on three interrelated developments: the establishment of an independent electoral body, setting of a unique electoral Code and the establishment of the Constitutional Council. The paper reviews Cameroon's electoral governance framework from the perspective of their impacts on the consolidation of the country's democracy. Patterns of electoral governance in Cameroon are based on the rules that institutionalise elections, the quality of electoral management body, and the settlement of electoral disputes. The results of the study indicate that electoral governance in Cameroon is in accordance with the principles of democratic performance as it is implemented in all three major stages of electoral arrangements: pre-election, election proper and post-election. Amongst other things, it finds that electoral governance in Cameroon is inclusive in nature as it engages many categories of actors and stages (political parties, election observers, a multi-stage electoral process together with administrative and judicial stakeholders) in a general framework of functional interdependence rather than interference.

Keywords: Cameroon, democratic consolidation, elecman, election management, electoral governance

1. Introduction

In response to the tide of democratic change that swept across Africa in the early 1990s, and as part of their commitment to democratic principles and its consolidation, African countries later in 2007, signed the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. Amongst other things, African countries pledged to strengthen and consolidate democracy and governance on the continent. The covenant on democratic consolidation allowed Cameroon to commit itself to create conditions under which, free and credible elections can take place. It is in this light that the government of Cameroon has put forward a normative and institutional electoral framework useful as a point of departure for discussion concerning the development of a democratic environment in a 'contested political context' (FONCHINGANG, 2004). This framework includes the establishment of an independent election management body (Elections Cameroon in 2006), that includes the insertion of non-partisan civil society election monitoring groups, and independent media, political parties to monitor the electoral process, security services to ensure that political candidates and their supporters freely conduct campaign activities and vote in accordance with their constitutional rights; the establishment of a single electoral code in 2012; and the Constitutional Council in 2018. This reform affects naturally, and in the first place, the transformation in the field of rules enactment (legislation), their application (institution) and, dispute resolution (judicial) and, more specifically, in the field of 'electoral governance' (MOZAFAR, Shaheen & SCHELDLER, Andreas, 2002). It generates and maintains an institutional framework in which electoral contest take place, identifying the process and provisions that consolidate democracy (MOZARFFAR & SCHELDLER 2002). It is thus, and according to TORRES & DIAZ (2014:35), 'a complex process involving a wide range of actions, norms and authorities'. Electoral governance is thus regarded as the relationship between rules, actions and procedures that are performed during the organization, functioning of the electoral process, as well as electoral dispute resolution.

Although a study of the particular democratic governance can be conducted and viewed from various perspectives of the political system in Cameroon, the country's electoral process seems to be an excellent field of observation for several reasons: (a) the creation of an independent body to conduct and manage elections that reveals not only the extent of the divergence of actors in electoral process, but more broadly still, the political will to make the electoral system more inclusive and meaningful and eventually, or at least hopefully, reject claims that Cameroon is a 'cosmetic democracy' (NYAMNJOH, N.D); (b) the codification of the electoral legislation; and (c) the creation of an internal electoral justice (the Constitutional Council (CC) put in place on 7th February 2018). Although electoral governance lays down the rules, their application, and implications as well as dispute regulation of the electoral game, it is important to determine the electoral governance model in Cameroon, based on the 'quantity, nature of electoral rules, government orders, electoral bodies and political actors', as categorized by TORRES & DIAZ (2014), who distinguished four lines of analyses, structured around the system of rules; their implementation; the electoral bodies; and the political actors. They precise that 'electoral governance is a cycle rooted in legislative design, passing through administration and internal electoral justice, with the possibility that it

will conclude in the regional system of human right revision', as proposed by the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

The electoral governance analysed here is understood in a broad sense that incorporates the electoral process within the institutional and normative design. It is within this context that this research is designed. This paper attempts to examine the level of democratic consolidation in Cameroon through the prism of electoral governance. How is the nature of electoral governance in Cameroon? How can democratic consolidation be reflected in electoral governance? How significant is this design to Cameroon's democratic consolidation? What are the major factors in the electoral process that affect the nature of electoral credibility in Cameroon? This paper critically examines the electoral governance framework in Cameroon, and its impact on democratic performance. It thus argues herein that Cameroon's electoral governance framework has undergone a series of reforms in view of improving the quality of democratic performance and eventually democratic consolidation. Electoral governance has become a major determinant of democratic performance in the country. To justify the above claim, the paper provides an overview of the trajectories of electoral governance in Cameroon structured around the system of electoral rule design and implementation, the actors responsible to implement them; and the model of electoral institutional structure, as well as the role of the courts in reviewing electoral laws and adjudicating election related complaints and disputes. It also considers electoral accountability, especially the free and transparent management of elections as a fundamental indicator of democratic consolidation.

2. Trajectories of Electoral Governance in Cameroon

According to MOZAFFER and SCHEDLER (2002:7) there three are three elements and dimensions of electoral governance: 'rulemaking, application and adjudication'. Analyzing the trajectories of electoral governance in Cameroon allows us to identify the changes and evolutions that occurred in the preparation and monitoring of elections within the framework of electoral rulemaking, application and adjudication.

2.1. Electoral Rulemaking in Cameroon

The making of rules is important to identify the dimension of power in a given society (JAMES, 2014). Rulemaking is one of the fundamental functions of political systems (ALMOND and COLEMAN, 1960). It is the process by which specialised structures make regulations that are binding on society (IBID). Literature in political science has widely focused on the way electoral laws have impacts on candidates and political parties, or influence the voting turnout (RAE, 1967; RENWICK, 2010). TOBY S. JAMES (2014:5) argues that the definition of laws should be neutral and objective, and not according to the interests of politicians. To understand the process of electoral rulemaking in Cameroon, we ought to consider a main aspect of Article 25 of the constitution. This article states that the initiatives to make laws is concurrently 'either by the President of the Republic or by members of parliament'. The constitution states that '*rules governing election of the President of the Republic and elections into the National Assembly, the Senate, Regional and Local Bodies and referendum operations*' shall be passed by the Parliament (Article 26, C (1)). Therefore, from the standpoint of the Cameroon's constitution of 1996, the parliament is the most authoritative body when it comes to rules governing the electoral framework although the executive through the president of the Republic is seen to have a say too. Nevertheless, parliament can only be successful when 2/3 of its members vote in favour of any rule.

However, the rulemaking benchmark for electoral management in the country is from Law no 2006/011 of 19 December 2006 establishing ELECAM. This Law that provides for the composition, mandate, powers, administrative structure, funding and the terms and conditions of office of the members of ELECAM, is supplemented by presidential Decree no 2008/463 of 30 December 2008, that provides for the effective putting in place of ELECAM through an appointment of its members, the Chairperson and Vice (Decree No 2008/464 of 30 December 2008), as well as the Director General and his Deputy (Decree no 2008/470 of 31 December 2008). These laws however, can be amended by parliament following the regular procedure for the amendment of laws in Cameroon. In 2012, the parliament adopted Law No. 2012/001 of 19 April 2012 creating and establishing the Electoral Code, as amended and supplemented by Law No. 2012/017 of 21 December 2012. This code is an indicator of the transition from the existence of different separate laws laying down the conditions governing the elections (MENANG, 2006), to a unique and transparent electoral code.

The Cameroon electoral system has often been defined as a 'form of electoral authoritarianism' whereby the 'regime fills executive and legislative offices by elections' (GWAIBI, 2018). The laws governing elections in Cameroon can be amended by parliament, as it does not have any constitutional foundation. The government can also pass legislation with little control on its power. This can have far-reaching consequences for electoral governance in that, the political elites with executive powers can determine electoral laws as they are able to define them according to their own political interests. Demands for electoral reforms were formulated by opposition parties, and, in the beginning, the ruling government was unwilling or not ready to respond to the demands. However, upon insistence, and with request for the international community, the government introduced electoral reforms by creating ELECAM, although, the opposition still does not find total satisfaction with this reform. ELECAM thus was created as the body responsible for the organization, management and supervision of all elections and referendum operations. (CAMEROON TRIBUNE, 2018).

2.2. Electoral Rule Application and Adjudication

The application of electoral rules in Cameroon is entrusted to a single independent body (ELECAM), although at every stage in the process, other actors, through electoral commissions appear substantial with specific tasks (Section 49 of the Electoral Code).

2.2.1. Application of Electoral Rules

Before the establishment of ELECAM in 2006, the implementation of electoral rules was assigned to about four (4) different bodies, though at every stage of the electoral process the spectrum of the government, through the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation (MINATD) appeared dominant over other bodies (MENANG, 2006:67). This situation, and according to FOBAT and EWANG (2008:2) has led to, not only the exclusion of a considerable segment of electoral governance proceedings from democratic performance, but has also limited the evaluation of the electoral process simply to the outcome of elections. According to them, particular attention was to be paid on the organs responsible for the organisation of elections, and on the 'structures and processes put in place for doing this'. By putting extensive powers and functions on organs, the Cameroonian State clearly intended to enhance ELECAM's capacity to conduct free and fair elections (MBUH, 2010) and implement electoral rules. This body which is involved in the implementation of electoral rules falls under the category of independent electoral bodies, although it collaborates with organs like the MINAT and political parties. Indeed, the Constitutional Council has not been left out in the process as it is in charge of electoral dispute resolution.

ELECAM was established as the main institution responsible for the management of the entire electoral process in Cameroon. It officially went operational in January 2010, following the transfer of the electoral competence from the MINADT through to the National Elections Observatory to ELECAM. The role of ELECAM within the electoral governance architecture is to oversee the application of electoral norms. As an independent model of Elections Management Bodies (EMB), it is composed of two main entities: an independent board known as the Electoral Board (EB), and an executive department known as the General Directorate of Elections (GDE) (Section 5 of Law N° 2006/011 of 29 December, 2006). The EB however, is considered as the legislative and supervisory organ of ELECAM and the main policy making structure of the institution. It ensures compliance with the electoral law by all stakeholders, for the purpose of guaranteeing regular, impartial, free, fair and transparent electoral polls. In this respect, stipulates the law, the EB is expected to carry out any verifications and control including scrutinizing candidacy papers and publishing the final list or list of candidates contesting presidential, legislative, senatorial, regional and municipal elections. It also forwards election reports to the Constitutional Council and ensures the timely notification and publication of the list of members of local polling commission to representatives of lists of candidates and candidates. Although the EB is entrusted with the powers to hear pre-electoral claims, including those regarding pre-election petitions, it is limited in its ability to rule out on post-election petitions, a function, reserved for the Constitutional Council. However, it can order corrections warranted following consideration of claims or petitions filed in respect of elections. These functions, it should be noted was initially entrusted with the MINAT, and it aroused criticism from a faction of the public. As a matter of fact, the EB does not work alone. It works in collaboration with the administration, the judiciary, political parties, and where necessary, the civil society. That is why during meetings of the EB these parties are present and this is a mark of democratic performance, given that acceptance of their (physical) presence represents the inclusive and transparent character of the electoral reform process. In fact, the participation of other political actors in EB meetings is more or less an indicator of Cameroon's intention to consolidate its democracy, no matter how symbolic such participation may be interpreted.

It was feared that bringing the MINAT in the electoral process will tantamount to government's intention to influence the election outcome. The opposition has expressed this fear on several occasions though. However, the role of MINAT in the ELECAM framework is to assist it indirectly as possible. MINAT is responsible, for instance, to make provisions for the accreditation of national and international observers in view of their participation too in the electoral framework and so that they can also be able to attend board meetings. The observation of elections is ruled by section 266(1) of the Electoral code which states that in supervising elections and referendums, Elections Cameroon may collaborate with accredited national and international observers. The MINAT works on the accreditation modalities of national observers but collaborate with the Ministry of External Relations for the accreditation of international observers as provided for by paragraph 2 and 3 of Section 296(1) of the Electoral code. This is an indication that MINAT is not also alone but must have to work in collaboration with the Ministry of External Relations (elsewhere Foreign Affairs) at least for the accreditation of international election observers. The functional interdependent character of the actors of the electoral framework is a mark of inclusiveness that cannot be overemphasized when it comes to the consolidation of democracy in countries worldwide, and in Cameroon in particular.

Political parties and electoral candidates also participate in the implementation of rules, and this participation makes them key actors of the election process (LEHOUQ, 2002). Electoral commissions, being responsible for the preparation of electoral activities, organizing and supervising election and polling operations, and the final counting of votes (section 49 of the electoral Code), offer political parties the possibility to contribute closely to the electoral process. It is therefore, an appropriate mechanism to ease participation and monitoring, as well as control of all the electoral processes, from voter registration to the proclamation of the results. When political parties are allowed to be present in all stages of the electoral process, it is somewhat hard to talk of an exclusive system of electoral governance, hence, partiality, fraud and irregularities. In spite of these efforts at electoral inclusiveness, some political parties still accuse ELECAM of electoral irregularities and fraud, though, in most, cases, they fail to provide evidence of such claims. In any case, and beyond the debate on whether or not electoral governance is independent, the inclusive nature of electoral commissions tends to guarantee to the citizen, the right and opportunity to participate in public affairs. According to the CARTER CENTER manual on electoral standards and obligations, 'candidates and their teams must be able to monitor all aspects of the electoral process, including voter registration. (...)', and that is what ELECAM has been striving to do with some degree of success. Seen in this way, the Political parties could thus become one of the surest guarantees of electoral governance in

Cameroon. Nevertheless, the challenge of opposition parties, in particular, minor parties, is how to ensure that they are represented in all polling stations and election commissions to minimize potential of fraud.

Beyond the incompatible nature of the duties of the DG, he/she is responsible for drawing-up, managing, updating and keeping the national voter's register, as well as election documents and materials; procuring and distributing election materials and documents; drawing up electoral registers, in conjunction with the relevant joint commissions; publishing electoral registers; issuing voter cards; distributing voter cards, in conjunction with the relevant joint commissions; organizing or supervising the training of electoral personnel; preparing the annual draft budget of Elections Cameroon; preparing draft budgets of elections; executing the budget of Elections Cameroon and the budget of elections; managing sundry resources and equipment placed at his disposal; receiving and forwarding to the Electoral Board candidacy papers for presidential, legislative, senatorial, regional and municipal elections, receiving and forwarding to the EB applications to participate in referendum campaigns, distributing within the statutory time-limit ballot papers to candidates or political parties taking part in the polls for election or referendum campaign purposes; coordinating the work of observers accredited by the appropriate national authorities; organizing polling stations; and coordinating all bodies responsible for election operations.

The GD performs almost the same duties as the EB; however, it works under the supervision of the later. It is considered as the executive unit of ELECAM given that it is responsible for the preparation and material organization of election and referendum operations. It is also important to note that the absence of clarity in the duties of the EB and GD has led to clashes between the heads of these two organs over who really does what, when and how. The pioneer board chair of ELECAM Fonkam Azu'u was regularly accusing the director general of ELECAM of insubordination and disrespect of hierarchy. However, it seems very probable that beyond the claim of insubordination lies a clash of duties and expectations owing to the absence of functional clarity in the rules governing ELECAM or better still, conflicting interpretations of such rules.

2.2.2. Rule Adjudication

In every political system, rule adjudication is a well-recognized function (ALMOND and COLEMAN). It is the process by which legal claims are settled through specialized structures that perform this function. One of such specialized structures, and which is to be found in all political systems is what we can call the court system of justice. The political system in Cameroon is no exception as it performs the function of rule adjudication through its various courts. However, the function of electoral complaints or disputes adjudication is performed by the Constitutional Council. This implies that it is through formal proceedings that election results can be contested in Cameroon and this is an important dimension of electoral governance. This electoral dispute framework is also recognised and endorsed by the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance according to which, State parties 'establish and strengthen national mechanisms that redress election related disputes in a timely manner' (Art. 17). Still within the same framework, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights report recognises that election related disputes are a fundamental part of the electoral process and the credibility of that process is determined to a large degree by the State capacity to effective disputes resolution (PETIT, 2000:5).

The Constitutional Council, one of the main bodies of the electoral process in Cameroon, is responsible for all the electoral disputes and petitions, as provided by Section 131 of the Electoral code. It rules on disputes on elections of Senators, the President of the Republic, members of the Parliament and ensure the regularity of Referendums (Section 132). Article 48 (1) of Cameroon's Constitution of 1996 also states that 'The Constitutional Council shall ensure the regularity of presidential elections, parliamentary elections and referendum operations' and shall claim the results thereof. Initially, the Supreme Court used to perform this function but the Constitutional Council took over when it was created.

Three categories of complainants are recognised by the law: political parties, candidates and governmental official linked to elections. In Article 48 (2), any challenges in respect of the regularity of the elections may be brought to the Constitutional Council by any candidate, political party that participated in the election in the constituency concerned or any person acting as government agent. The dominant category of complainants is the political party and the candidate. According to the law, complainants can request the total or partial cancellation of election operations (SECTION 132 (2)). However, electoral disputes arising from election of Regional councillors fall within the competence of Courts within their jurisdiction, meanwhile administrative courts have adjudicative authority on election of Municipal councillors. The role played by election judges is critical as they have the authority not only to review elections but also invalidate election results.

3. The Mode of Electoral Governance in Cameroon and Democratic Consolidation

In determining electoral governance, three elements are generally considered: the legislative design, the management of elections and the system of electoral adjudication. These three elements are expected to act interdependently in order to ensure electoral efficacy. The Cameroon model is inclusive in nature given that it is founded on the quality, quantity and nature of electoral rules, electoral bodies and political stakeholders and actors. These measures determine the mode of electoral governance as they are of crucial importance to the democratic change (MOUELE KOMBI, 2015).

3.1. Horizontality in Election Management

Trying to understand the mode of electoral governance in Cameroon becomes a vital exercise as it has important implications for future efforts to promote democracy (MENANG, 2006). From a brief review of the patterns of electoral

management transition and reversal that have occurred in Cameroon since 2006, it becomes clear that the presence of a legally-independent administrative agency, with chief executive made up of experts operating at arm's length from the executive, determines the way that bureaucratic accountability within election management links actors. Changes of electoral rules, harmonization of procedures, the clarification of functions, technological improvement and election funding as well as effective constitutional control are all interrelated factors that allow the electoral process to obtain a democratic performance.

After defining a sense of direction and ratifying international conventions related to democratic election operations, the government launched significant legal and institutional reforms to build public confidence in the electoral process. The observation of the relationship between these two dimensions with emphasis on the first variable, we analyze the mode of electoral governance in Cameroon. The electoral process has been subjected to the democratic performance of the country (ANYANGWE, 2018). The reforms which followed in the creation of ELECAM in 2006, the Electoral Code in 2012 and the Constitutional Council in 2018 are significant elements of the process, as they define and emphasize the multiple stages of electoral governance and the relations between the different bodies that constitute the electoral system (LAWYER, 2017). These reforms had different purposes: it sought to establish an independent electoral body, to create conditions of equality in electoral processes, and aimed at constitutionalising the electoral process. The independent electoral body, and according to LOPEZ-PINTOR (2000) is the most prevalent among EMB types in the world today as it represents 53% of EMBs. Elections in Cameroon are managed by an 'autonomous' electoral management body, which is referred to be independent (Section 4(1)). This model involves a 'legal personality and management autonomy'. Apart from these characteristics (Figure 1) it is an electoral community that enjoys financial autonomy and accountability as well as implementation of electoral activities according to MBUH (2010:9). For him, this mode of electoral governance is 'not held responsible by the government but rather accountable to the legislature, judiciary or head of state'.

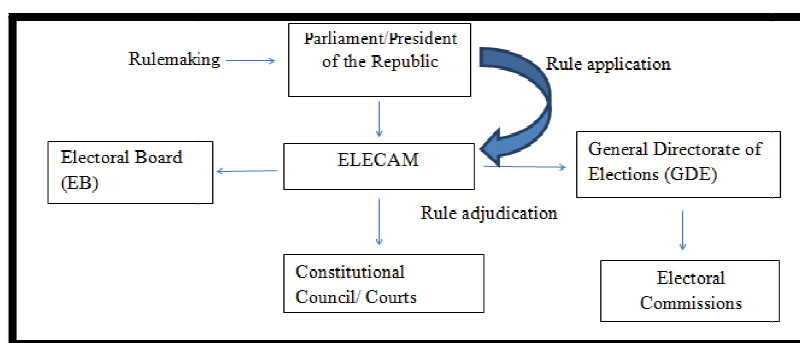


Figure 1: A Model of Cameroon's Electoral Governance

The model of electoral governance in Cameroon is based on the categories and nature of electoral rules, electoral bodies and actors. Consideration is made hereof a comprehensive model linking the different dimensions of elections and the actors in the various stages of the electoral process. However, functional interdependence should not be seen here as interference—it is a major characteristic of EMBs. The guarantee of the independence of these actors in the process is based on the total absence of hierarchical relationships. The only thing that remains between them is a horizontal collaborative relationship. In this way, we consider a diachronic analysis of the Cameroonian case from 2006, when the electoral body turned independent until the most recent electoral reform of 2018 establishing the Constitutional Council, and the 2012 reform that implemented the Electoral Code. These reforms had different objectives: to establish an independent electoral body; to pave the way for equality in the electoral process; and to establish the constitutionality of the electoral process there by creating conditions for the impartial settlement of electoral disputes.

These three dimensions that constitute the mode of electoral governance in Cameroon strengthen the assertion that: the state does not only play an important role in a democratic society, but also introduces and institutes democracy as a process (ONANA, 2011). For LAWYER (2017:48), 'one of the main constitutional responsibilities of the state of Cameroon is to guarantee the democratic process'. However, this promising era of democratic consolidation, with the rise of a new electoral constitutionalism, is threatened by an unprecedented determination of political leaders who struggle against the alternation of power at all cost including by resorting to electoral domination to ensure they stay in power (MOYE BONGYU, 2008).

3.2. Electoral Governance as a Democratic Instrument

Over the last decade, the process of democratization in Cameroon has proceeded at a relatively speedy manner, characterized by several discontinuities and changes. This, in a nutshell, legal instrument that governs elections in Cameroon is one of the significant events that marked the Cameroon's political landscape since the emergence of the democratization process in the 1990s. Evidence of this is the actual application of the rules in the ground since the April 14, 2013 Senatorial and the twin September 30, Legislative and Municipal elections, after the apparent criticism of the existence of many laws, which sitting as legal regimes, endured the legal changes that characterize an important part of Cameroon's democratic performance (YANOU, 2013). Critics have been made on the existence of many laws, each governing a specific election, and creating overlapping and confusing provisions that favored disagreement over their interpretation and implementation (ABANGMA, 2004). Political stakeholders have called for these laws to be restructured

and gathered into a unique inclusive electoral code. The reason for the calls for Cameroon's legal reforms, and according to ABANGMA (2004:136) is the fact that the constitutional reforms were subverted by an incumbent political elite unwilling to commit to opening up the political space to genuine electoral competition.

Indeed, the reforms that govern the electoral process in Cameroon have been acknowledged by political stakeholders as a step forward to improve the democratic performance expected. Projected legislative reforms will focus primarily on updating existing electoral laws with a view to clarifying certain provisions which have been subject to conflicting interpretations and introducing new provisions to make room for the modernization of the management of elections. Once updated and enriched the various electoral laws will be merged into an Electoral Code that will govern the conduct of future polls. In addition, a new law is awaited that will set up a body responsible for the conduct of all elections, thereby assuming the election management duties hitherto variously performed by MINATD, the numerous joint commissions described above, and the NEO

On the institutional level, three aspects seem to have to be evoked as a structuring element of electoral governance in its current state with regards to the good practices recommended at the international level. The first point concerns the organization, the management and supervision of the elections by ELECAM, an independent body. The second aspect is the involvement of political parties in the supervision of the electoral processes at all phases through electoral commissions. The third dimension that can be identified is not put forward by the actors of the system but which is, with all reservations and to an extent that it will be important to specify, in line with international principles and standards in electoral matters: the existence of effective rule adjudication organ (Constitutional Council), allowing a possible settlement of electoral disputes. The Cameroon's electoral apparatus has evolved through three main phases over time: the Joint Electoral Commissions (created by section 26 of Law N° 91/020 of 1991 and charged with preparing electoral activities, organization and supervising of polling and returning operations); National Electoral Observation (NEO) (under Law N° 2000/016 of 19th December, 2000 and designed as a response to the discredited commissions); and Elections Cameroon (ELECAM) created in 2008, became operational in 2008 by Law N°2008/005 of 29 June 2008, as amended and supplementing certain dispositions of Law N° 2006/011 of December 29, 2006. Different from NEO however, ELECAM has been conferred with the mandate to organize, manage and supervise the entire elections operations in the country (Sections 1(2) and (4) the 2006 Law).

While implementation of these commitments varies over time, the trajectories of electoral governance shows that the way forward to a vertical management of elections is political will to promote and organize credible elections, and to consolidate democracy.

4. Conclusion

This paper wanted to demonstrate that Cameroon's electoral governance is a guarantee to democratic consolidation. It argued that the model of electoral governance in the country encourages genuine political competition, as it commits electoral activities to an autonomous electoral body (ELECAM), the creation of a single electoral code and the judicial control of ELECAM's activities by the constitutional council. According to some authors, although important reforms have been undertaken, the reforms have remained 'cosmetic' (NYAMNJOH, nd) with the ruling elite not committed to changing the rules that enable them perpetuate themselves in power (MBUH, 2010). The paper shows that the mode of governance is rooted in the institutional reforms and stages of electoral process out of government. Notwithstanding the improvements garnered by the institutional reforms, various opinions indicate that the electoral governance still faces major challenges for democratic performance in organizing fully credible elections in Cameroon. One of these challenges, which represent one of the current weaknesses of the Cameroonian electoral governance, is the rulemaking process which is generally dominated by the executive. The relative absence of separation of powers coupled with a weak parliament and the strong influence that the executive exerts in rulemaking means that there is a possibility that laws can be initiated and changed for its own interests.

There are also some limitations of rule application in Cameroon. There are elements of concern about the quality of the appointment of members of ELECAM electoral board (POUT & ATEBA EYONG, 2017). The type of actors involved in the organisation may contribute towards the limits. However, in recent years, elections are carried out in a proficient manner and the problems with democratic performance in Cameroon are common in Africa (MOUICHE, 2015). Notwithstanding, there are some important elements for democratic performance, such as the establishment of the Constitutional Council for electoral disputes and constitutional control.

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