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# Assessing the Senate: Political Opinion Among Cameroonian Youth

Rebecca Rendall

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# Assessing the Senate

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## Political Opinion Among Cameroonian Youth

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**Abstract:**

This paper seeks to examine the political opinions of Cameroon youth in regards to the newly-introduced Senate. Research was conducted with students at the University of Yaoundé I and the University of Yaoundé II over the course of a four-week period. This paper discusses the potential and stated purposes of the Senate within the Cameroonian context. It will also discuss the various particular reasons that the Senate was implemented in 2013. Finally, it will convey the opinions of and the hopes for the Senate as stated by university students. First, I conclude that the Senate's main role is to be the upper chamber of the legislating body, but there are many potential purposes based on individual thoughts and opinions. I conclude also that the only verifiable reasons that the Senate was instituted in 2013 are that it was stipulated in the Constitution and that the Head of State wanted to implement it. I finally conclude that most students have positive hopes for the Senate, but their opinions are often determined by other circumstances such as gender, language and other opinions.

**Resumé:**

Cette rédaction va examiner des opinions politiques de la jeunesse camerounaise par rapport au Senat qui était nouvellement introduit. La recherche était menée avec des étudiants de l'Université de Yaoundé I et de l'Université de Yaoundé II au cours d'une période de temps de quatre semaines. Cette rédaction discute des intentions potentielles et déclarées du Senat dans le contexte camerounais. Elle va encore discuter des raisons particulières variées pour lesquelles le Senat était mis en œuvre en 2013. Finalement, elle va transmettre des opinions de et des espoirs pour le Senat qui étaient déclaré par des étudiants. D'abord, je conclue que le rôle principe du Senat est d'être la chambre haute du corps législatif, mais il y a beaucoup d'intentions potentielles basé sur des pensées et des opinions individuelles. Je conclue aussi que les seules raisons vérifiables que le Senat était institué en 2013 sont qu'il était stipulé dans la Constitution et que le chef d'état le voulait implémenter. Je conclue en fin que la plupart des étudiants a des espoirs positifs pour le Senat, mais leurs opinons sont souvent déterminés par d'autres circonstances telles que le genre, la langue et d'autres opinions.

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## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

ANICHRA: Africa Network against Illiteracy, Conflicts and Human Rights Abuses

CDU: Cameroon Democratic Union

CPDM: Cameroon People's Democratic Movement

FSNC: Front pour le Salut du Cameroun

MDR: Mouvement démocratique pour la defense de la République

MINATD: Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization

RDPC: Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais

SDF: Social Democratic Front

UNDP: Union Nationale pour la Democratie et le Progrès

UPC: Union de Populations du Cameroun

University of Yaoundé I: Yaoundé I

University of Yaoundé II: Yaoundé II

WHO: World Health Organization

## **Introduction and Background**

There is a common adage which states that the only constant in life is change. While there are certain facts or realities that appear to never change such as the presence of gravity, the elements that influence the world also seem to be in constant flux on both a macro and micro scale. This can clearly be seen in the domain of global politics in general and in Cameroon in particular. In a similar manner to the constant of gravity, since its independence in 1960 and reunification in 1961, Cameroon has had two presidents—AhmaduAhidjo (1958-1982) and Paul Biya (1982-present).<sup>1</sup> During their presidencies, however, frequent changes occurred in Cameroonian politics (from federalism to republicanism, multipartyism to single-partyism to multipartyism, ministerial additions and subtractions, etc.).<sup>2</sup> One of the various and most recent introductions to the Cameroonian national government is the Senate. After learning more about the Cameroonian political reality, it became increasingly intriguing to examine the context surrounding institutional implementation. As a result, this researcher embarked on a short-term research project in an effort to better understand the Senate and how it works in Cameroon.

There are many potential facets of research within the context of the Cameroonian Senate. The research questions evolved as the research process unfolded. Originally, the researcher was interested in political opinion of the general population. We believed that each individual has a right to his or her opinion and should also be given the opportunity to be heard; however, we could not determine the political opinion of Cameroon in its entirety or even of one city in Cameroon during the research period. It became necessary to narrow our focus. Due to my current status as a university student, I was most interested in other university students' political opinions. Thus, my research focused on what the educated youth in Yaoundé, Cameroon, think about the introduction of the Senate. In order to fully comprehend this legislative body I also needed to understand why it existed and why it was only implemented in

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<sup>1</sup> AhmaduAhidjo was the prime minister from 1958 until reunification of the Cameroon in 1961 when he became the president. (Gros, Jean-Germain. *Cameroon: Politics and Society in Critical Perspectives; University press of America, 2003*, Chapter 1; *Cameroon in Synopsis Pp 1-29*.)

<sup>2</sup> These changes will be discussed in the following sections with the exception of ministerial additions and subtractions. This simply means that ministries have been added or taken away frequently (Njoya Moussa, Personal Interview, 19 Nov 2013).



2013. This inspired me to conduct research on “Assessing the senate: Political Opinion among Cameroonian Youth.”

This paper seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) What are the purposes of the Senate in Cameroon? (2) What reasons exist for the implementation of the Senate in 2013? (3) What are educated youths’ opinions and hopes of and for the Senate? (For the purpose of this research, educated youth simply means youth, which will be discussed in more detail in the following section, who are currently at the university level or above.) The research collected in the process of writing this paper sought to prove or disprove the following hypotheses: (1) That the Senate exists mainly to pass laws. (2) That the Senate was instituted in 2013 because the national government wanted to show its citizens that it keeps its promises. (3) That the youth are skeptical of the Senate, but they have hopes for a positive future for the legislative body.

### **Definition of Terms**

There are three important terms that are necessary to define: senate, political opinion and youth. First, the researcher will operationalize the terms senate and political opinion because they are less ambiguous and, therefore, easier to define than the term youth. According to Leslie Ngwa, “[a] Senate is an Assembly or a House which has the highest deliberative and legislative functions in government.”<sup>3</sup> In the Cameroonian government, the Senate is the upper chamber or house of a bicameral legislature (The National Assembly is the lower chamber or house).<sup>4</sup> Understanding political opinion requires first understanding the term politics. This paper will utilize the following definition: “coining policies to gain power and govern people.”<sup>5</sup> Hence, political opinion is any thoughts concerning the bodies, individuals or other actors participating in such activities. Political opinion in this paper will be explored through thoughts concerning the Cameroonian Senate.

It is equally important to operationalize the term youth. There is a certain level of ambiguity in the term because it is defined subjectively in some cases and defined differently in others. In his article on youth and politics in Cameroon, Dr. Willibroad Dze-Ngwa discusses this issue. He points out that the *Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary* uses relative and

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<sup>3</sup>Ngwa, Leslie. "What Cameroonians Should Know About A Senate." *The Post* 11 March 2013: 4. Print.

<sup>4</sup>Tande, Dubussi. "An (Anti) Democratic Anachronism." *The Post* 11 March 2013: 4. Print.

<sup>5</sup>Dze-Ngwa, Willibroad. "Youth and Politics in Cameroon from Colonial to Post-Colonial Periods: A Historical Perspective." *Espasa Moto* 3.1 (2008): 26-47. Print., 28.

subjective terms such as old, young, child, adult, etc. to define youth. In an international context, the World Health Organisation (WHO) defines youth as people aged fifteen to twenty-five.<sup>6</sup> The African Union defines youth as people aged fifteen to thirty-five.<sup>7</sup> Within the specifically Cameroonian political context, the definition of youth still varies. The Cameroon National Union defined youth as people aged ten to thirty while the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) used the age range of fifteen to twenty-five.<sup>8</sup> For the purpose of this study, youth will be defined in the broadest sense of the term, taking into accounts all the above definitions, as people aged ten to thirty five. Due to ethical limitations in using minors (defined as all those under that age of eighteen) in research, all those who participated in this study were eighteen years old or older.

In addition to defining who youth are, it is also imperative to defend the importance of studying youth particularly in the Cameroonian context. First, youth (defined in this study as between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four) comprise 17% of the world population, making youth a sizeable portion of the world population.<sup>9</sup> In Cameroon, as of 2009, 40% of the population is below the age of fifteen and two-thirds of the population is under the age of thirty.<sup>10</sup> This means that a significant portion of Cameroon's population falls within the confines of this paper's definition of youth. Furthermore, as a youth myself, I wanted to be able to give youth a voice from youth rather than from a researcher outside the demographic group. One aim of this paper, therefore, is to accurately portray youth from another youth's perspective.

## Constitutional Evolution in Cameroon

Over the course of its history, Cameroon has had four constitutions. The first constitution was promulgated by the then-Prime Minister and later president AhmaduAhidjo on March 4, 1960 in the newly independent *République de Cameroun* (Today, this is the eight Francophone

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<sup>6</sup>Dze-Ngwa, 27.

<sup>7</sup>African Union. "Africa Youth Charter." n.d. Web. 3 December 2013. <[http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/AFRICAN\\_YOUTH\\_CHARTER.pdf](http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/AFRICAN_YOUTH_CHARTER.pdf)>.

<sup>8</sup>Dze-Ngwa

<sup>9</sup>Global Agenda Councils. "The Challenge of Youth Unemployment." *Youth Unemployment Visualization 2013*. World Economic Forum, n.d. Web. 3 December 2013. <<http://www.weforum.org/community/global-agenda-councils/youth-unemployment-visualization-2013>>.

<sup>10</sup>Ekane, Duone. "The Context of an Urban Social Problem in Cameroon: Case study of Youth Unemployment." Master's Thesis. Stockholm University, n.d. Web. 3 December 2013. <<http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:398311/FULLTEXT01.pdf>>.

regions of Cameroon).<sup>11</sup> After the plebiscite election on February 11, 1961, in British Cameroons, British North Cameroons became a part of Nigeria, and British Southern Cameroons joined *La République de Cameroun*.<sup>12</sup> The two Cameroons officially became the Federal Republic of Cameroon on October 1, 1961, creating two federal states of East Cameroon (formerly La République de Cameroun) and West Cameroon (formerly Southern Cameroons).<sup>13</sup> This particular constitution laid the foundation for a federalist system under which both West and East Cameroon had its own prime minister. In addition, the 1961 Constitution created the post of president who had jurisdiction over the entire country.

Each law or amendment passed by the Federal National Assembly could, at the request of the president or either prime minister, undergo a second reading. In order to pass the second reading, the law or amendment must garner “*a majority of the votes of the members from each Federated State.*”<sup>14</sup> In other words, a law could not be passed and the constitution could not be amended unless both East and West Cameroon agreed. This legislative measure was put in place to ensure the equal representation of Francophone and Anglophone interests (East and West Cameroon respectively). During this first constitutional period, political opposition parties were abolished, and the single party of Ahmadu Ahidjo (president of Cameroon from 1961 to 1982)—the Cameroon National Union or the Union Camerounaise in 1966.<sup>15</sup> In 1972, Ahidjo abolished the 1961 Constitution, effectively ending the first constitutional period; eliminating the name of the Federal Republic of Cameroon; and creating a “centralized, unitary state.”<sup>16</sup>

The 1972 Constitution was adopted on May 20, 1972, and promulgated on June 2, 1972.<sup>17</sup> Under the 1972 Constitution, the state was renamed the United Republic of

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<sup>11</sup> Awasom, Nicodemus Fru. "Politics and Constitution-Making in Francophone Cameroon, 1959-1960." *Africa Today* (2003): 1-30. Web. 18 October 2013.

<sup>12</sup> Dicklitch, Susan. "Failed Democratic Transition in Cameroon: A Human Rights Explanation." *Human Rights Quarterly* 24.1 (2002): 152-176. Web. 15 October 2013., 13

<sup>13</sup> *1961 Cameroon Constitution*, Art.1, Sec. 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, Art. 18.

<sup>15</sup> Orook, Rebecca Eposi Ngeve and Rogers Tabe Egbe. "In the name of 'development': ethnic politicians and multicultural public policy in Cameroon." *The International Journal of Sociology and social Policy* 32.3/4 (2012): 214-232. Web. 2013 Dec 3.

<<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.butler.edu/docview/1000281514?accountid=9807>>. and Njoya Moussa, Personal Interview, 19 Nov 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Dicklitch, 164

<sup>17</sup> *1972 Constitution Cameroon*

Cameroon.<sup>18</sup> The name of the country was changed in a constitutional amendment to Republic of Cameroon, the name of Francophone Cameroon before reunification, on February 4, 1984.<sup>19</sup> This constitution retained certain basic aspects of the previous constitution. For example, it retained the state motto of “Peace—Work—Fatherland.”<sup>20</sup> The basic system of government, however, changed from a federalist system to a republican system. Since 1972, Cameroon has operated under a presidential system with the head of state, the president, “à sa tête.”<sup>21</sup> The president, according to the powers given him by the constitution, played a part in every part of the government. From a judicial aspect, it was the responsibility of the president to “ensure the independence of the judiciary, and shall appoint to the Bench and to the legal service.”<sup>22</sup>

From a legislative perspective, the President of the Republic could introduce bills or propose amendments.<sup>23</sup> The president can also, similarly to the federal system, request a second reading of any bill.<sup>24</sup> The major difference between a second reading under the 1961 Constitution and the 1972 Constitution is that the former had a legislative body for both East and West Cameroon while the latter had a legislative body (the National Assembly) for the entire state. This inherently meant that the ability to protect the desires of the Anglophone West Cameroon was no longer present due to the fact that the deputies of the former East Cameroon held the majority in the National Assembly.

During this second constitutional period, there were some important changes in the national government. In 1985, President Paul Biya (the second president of Cameroon) created the Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement (CPDM) or *Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais* (RDPC) in French<sup>25</sup> to replace the Ahmadu Ahidjo’s Cameroon National Union.<sup>26</sup> The single-party system that began in 1966 eventually came to an end in 1990 when multipartyism was legalized, creating three main opposition parties which still exist today—the Social Democratic Front (SDF), the *Union Nationale pour la Démocratie et le Progrès* (UNDP),

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<sup>18</sup>Hayatou, El Hadj. "Explanatory Note on the February 1984 Amendment of the Constitution of Cameroon." *Constitutional and Parliamentary Information* (1985): 100. Web. 17 November 2013.

<sup>19</sup>1996 Cameroon Constitution, Art.1, Sec. 1.

<sup>20</sup>1972 Constitution Cameroon, Art. 1.

<sup>21</sup>“At its head.” Employee A, Personal Interview, 15 Nov 2013.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid, Art. 31.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid, Art. 19 and Ibid Art. 33.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid, Art. 14.

<sup>25</sup>Azu'u, Fonkam Samuel. "Elecam rejette 23 listes." *Cameroon Tribune* 23 March 2013: 5. Print.

<sup>26</sup>"Assessing CPDM 21 Years of Existence." *Africa News Service* 30 March 2006. Web. 4 Dec 2013.

and the *Union de Populations du Cameroun*(UPC).<sup>27</sup> Since the legalization of multipartyism, more than 200 political parties have been created in Cameroon.<sup>28</sup> After the so-called Ghost Town campaigns which attempted to “immobilize the economy”,<sup>29</sup> the first multiparty presidential election took place in 1992.<sup>30</sup> This second constitutional period came to a close on January 18, 1996, with the adoption of a new constitution.<sup>31</sup>

While the 1996 Constitution retained the same republican system of government, there were many changes and additions to the constitution. This is clearly evident in the number of articles in the 1972 and 1996 constitutions—39 and 69, respectively. The purpose of this new constitution was for Cameroon to “*be a decentralized unitary State.*”<sup>32</sup> While the 1972 Constitution did call for a unitary state, the 1996 Constitution emphasized decentralization. The basic idea behind decentralization in Cameroon is to give at least minimal power to local and regional authorities rather than concentrating all the power in the national government. In order to create a more decentralized state, there were major changes to the governmental structure prescribed by the Constitution.

In an interview with Professor AtangchoNjiAkonumbo and Dr. Emmanuel Moubitang, the two men identified eight major changes present in the 1996 Constitution.<sup>33</sup> First, provinces were changed to be called to regions.<sup>34</sup> The names of the regions remained the same, but the President of the Republic has the right to change the geographic boundaries of existing regions or create new regions.<sup>35</sup> The second change was, as stated above, a policy of decentralization. This policy was to be accomplished through various modifications to the political system. One of these changes was the creation of regions rather than provinces, as stated above. Another important facet of the policy was the creation of regional councils (which still do not exist to date). According to the Constitution, the regional councils were given “jurisdiction in areas

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<sup>27</sup>Dicklitch, 165

<sup>28</sup>“Another president who won't go; Cameroon.” *The Economist* 50 (2008). Web. 15 October 2013

<sup>29</sup>Dicklitch, 158. For more information on Ghost Town campaigns, see “Opposition and Social-Democratic Change in Africa: The Social Democratic Front in Cameroon” by Piet Konings.

<sup>30</sup>Njoya Moussa, Personal Interview, 19 Nov 2013.

<sup>31</sup> Student B, Personal Interview, 23 Nov 2013. It is important to note that the 1972 Constitution is technically still in effect because all of the changes to the 1996 Constitution have not yet been implemented. While a third constitutional period has in fact begun, the second constitution is still seen as valid in terms of Cameroonian law.

<sup>32</sup>*1996 Constitution Cameroon*, Art.1, Sec. 2.

<sup>33</sup>NjiAkonumbo, Atangcho and Emmanuel Moubitang, Personal Interview, 21 Nov 2013.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, Art. 61.

<sup>35</sup>*1996 Constitution Cameroon*, Art.61, Sec. 2.

necessary for their economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sports development.”<sup>36</sup> The other institution put in place by the Constitution in order to effect decentralization was the Senate. This will be discussed in the next section in more detail.

The 1996 Constitution also explicitly stated the separation of powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. For example, “what is now judicial power used to be just an authority.”<sup>37</sup> In the executive branch, the stated purpose of the president omitted the title of “Head of Government” (which was to be given to the prime minister<sup>38</sup>) and contained only the title of “Head of State.”<sup>39</sup> The presidential mandate was, however, extended from five years to seven years with the option of running for reelection once.<sup>40</sup> Beginning before the 2004 presidential elections<sup>41</sup> in Douala, the CPDM (President Biya’s political party) began to hold protests for “Biya to remain in power till death.”<sup>42</sup> In 2008, the Constitution was amended to remove the stipulation of only being able to run for reelection once, allowing the president to run for office indefinitely. This amendment also gave the president “blanket immunity.”<sup>43</sup> In the judicial branch, the 1996 called for the creation a Constitutional Council to “have jurisdiction in matters pertaining to the Constitution...rule on the constitutionality of laws...be the organ regulating the functioning of the institutions.”<sup>44</sup> At the time of this writing, the Constitutional Council was not yet put in place. In all branches of government, the 1996 Constitution stated that each member of government “shall declare their assets and property at the beginning and at the end of their tenure of office.”<sup>45</sup> This article aimed to fight corruption, but it has yet to be implemented. In fact, “the only reform that was immediately effective [after promulgation of the 1996 Constitution] was the presidential mandate.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, Art. 56, Sec 1.

<sup>37</sup> NjiAkonumbo, Atangcho. NjiAkonumbo, Atangcho and Emmanuel Moubitang, Personal Interview, 21 Nov 2013.

<sup>38</sup> *1996 Constitution Cameroon*, Art.12, Sec. 1.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, Art. 5, Sec. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, Art. 6, Sec. 2.

<sup>41</sup> The 2004 presidential elections was President Paul Biya’s second time running for president since the institution of the 1996 Constitution. He could legally run for reelection in 2004, but he would not be able to run for reelection in 2011 unless the Constitution was amended.

<sup>42</sup> Nsom, Kini. "CPDM Wants Biya for Life." *Africa News Service* 6 June 2005. Web. 27 October 2013.

<sup>43</sup> NjiAkonumbo, Atangcho and Emmanuel Moubitang, Personal Interview, 21 Nov 2013.

<sup>44</sup> *1996 Constitution 1996*, Art. 44.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, Art. 66

<sup>46</sup> NjiAkonumbo, Atangcho. NjiAkonumbo, Atangcho and Emmanuel Moubitang, Personal Interview, 21 Nov 2013.

## The Senate in Cameroon

As stated above, the Senate was called for by the 1996 Constitution in order to carry out the policy of decentralization. The institution of the Senate created a bicameral legislative arm of the national government. It was formed in order to be the upper chamber or house of the legislature while the National Assembly would then become the lower chamber or house.<sup>47</sup> It was intended to represent local authorities rather than the entire populace, which is represented by the National Assembly.<sup>48</sup> According to the Constitution, “bills shall be passed by Parliament [the Senate and the National Assembly].”<sup>49</sup> The legislation also guarantees rights of citizens, handles issues regarding “persons and property management,” manages “political, administrative and judicial organization,” controls “financial and patrimonial matters,” and runs the education system.<sup>50</sup> The National Assembly also has the power to dissolve the government (e.g. remove the prime minister and his subordinates).<sup>51</sup> In addition to the shared legislative powers, the President of the Senate becomes the interim president in order to prepare the state for elections in the event of incapacitation of the President of the Republic.<sup>52</sup>

The Senate is composed of one hundred members—seventy are elected by indirect universal suffrage and thirty are nominated by the president.<sup>53</sup> Each region of the country is represented in total by ten senators (seven elected and three nominated). Electors in senatorial elections are members of regional and municipal councils, which comprise the Electoral College.<sup>54</sup> “Senatorial elections shall be by lists system, with no changing of the serial order of candidate’s names or vote splitting.”<sup>55</sup> In other words, each political party submits lists to regional election boards. When councilors vote, they choose an entire list, not individual senators. In the event of an absolute majority (51%) in a given region, all seven elected senators

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<sup>47</sup>Ngolle, Elvis Ngolle. *The Senate Is A Moderating Chamber Of Bicameral Legislature* Yerima Kim Nsom. The Post, 4 March 2013. 6. Print.

<sup>48</sup>Kendemeh, Emmanuel. "Two Houses Constitute Legislative Power." *Cameroon Tribune* 11 March 2013: 10. Print.

<sup>49</sup>*1996 Constitution Cameroon*, Art.26, Sec. 1.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid, Art. 26, Sec. 2. For a complete and detailed list of all the legislative duties, see Article 26, section 2.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid, Art. 34.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid, Art. 6, Sex 4.

<sup>53</sup>Employee A, Personal Interview, 15 Nov 2013.

<sup>54</sup>Tande, 4. According to Law No 2006/005, electoral colleges are comprised of only municipal councilors in the absence of the regional councils.

<sup>55</sup>Bawe, Tamfu Harrison. "CPDM candidates to be imposed from Y'de." *The Guardian Post* 7 February 2013: 2. Print.

will be from the list of the winning political party. When there is a relative majority, the number of senators from each party represents their relative number of votes.<sup>56</sup> The oldest member of the Senate becomes the chairman of the first session, and the youngest becomes the secretary until the president of the Senate can be voted by a majority of the Senate.<sup>57</sup>

The first Senate in Cameroon was elected on April 14, 2013 after President Biya “signed a decree convening the Electoral College” on February 27, 2013.<sup>58</sup> This was in fulfillment of the president’s promise in his inaugural speech before the National Assembly on November 3, 2011, when he stated that “the National Assembly [would] soon be backed by a Senate.”<sup>59</sup> Four political parties participated in the election: CPDM, SDF, UNDP, and CDU (Cameroon Democratic Union).<sup>60</sup> The SDF won all seven seats in the Adamawa and West regions. The CPDM won the rest of the elected seats. Twenty-seven appointed senators came from the CPDM, while one senator was appointed from the MDR (*Mouvement démocratique pour la défense de la République*), one from the UNDP and one from the FSNC (*Front pour le Salut du Cameroun*).<sup>61</sup> The Senate, therefore, is comprised of 83 CPDM senators, 14 SDF senators, 1 MDR senator, 1 UNDP senator, and 1 FSNC senator. The president of the Senate is Marcel NiatNjifenji, an appointed CPDM senator.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Moubitang, Emmanuel. NjiAkonumbo, Atangcho and Emmanuel Moubitang, Personal Interview, 21 Nov 2013.

<sup>57</sup> Student B, Personal Interview, 23 Nov 2013 and NjiAkonumbo, Atangcho and Emmanuel Moubitang, Personal Interview, 21 Nov 2013.

<sup>58</sup>Biy, Victorine. "First Ever Senate Elections Hold In April." *Cameroon Tribune* 28 February 2013: 3. Print.

<sup>59</sup>Biya, Paul. "Inaugural Speech at Swearing-In Ceremony." National Assembly, Yaoundé, Cameroon. 3 Nov 2011. Inaugural speech.

<sup>60</sup>Sumelong, Ernest. "ELECAM Rejects Four CPDM Lists Of Senatorial Candidates." *The Post* 22 March 2013: 1. Print. Four other political parties—the UPC, ANDP, FSNC, and MDR—submitted lists of candidates, but they were rejected by Elections Cameroon (ELECAM). They were, therefore, unable to participate in the elections.

The CPDM participated in all regions except Adamawa and the West . They participated in the eight regions that the party won. The SDF participated in all regions except the East, the Far North, and Littoral. The UNDP participated in Adamawa, the Far North, Littoral, and the North. The CDU participated in the West. (Source: Cameroon Polls. *Cameroon Senatorial Election Results*. 2013. Web. 2 December 2013.

<[http://www.cameroonpolls.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=115:senatorial-results&catid=1:latest-news&Itemid=50](http://www.cameroonpolls.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=115:senatorial-results&catid=1:latest-news&Itemid=50)>.)

<sup>61</sup>"Complete List Of Pioneer Elected And Appointed Substantive Senators." *The Post* 13 May 2013: 6. Print. and Pefok, Joe Dinga. "Bits And Pieces On Appointment Of Senators." *The Post* 13 May 2013: 3. Print.

<sup>62</sup>Employee A, Personal Interview, 15 Nov 2013 and NjiAkonumbo, Atangcho and Emmanuel Moubitang, Personal Interview, 21 Nov 2013.



## **Methodology**

### **Site, Sample, and Target Selection**

In order to effectively and efficiently answer the research questions during a four week period, it was necessary to narrow my focus. First, I needed to determine where to carry out my research. Because I was ultimately interested in the issues surrounding the Senate, it seemed most advantageous to research in the same city which the Senate actually meets—in the administrative capital city of Yaoundé. Additionally, Yaoundé had many universities at which I could carry out research on the opinions of youth. I further narrowed my site by choosing two universities—the University of Yaoundé I-Ngoa-Ekelle (Yaoundé I) and the University of Yaoundé II-Soa (Yaoundé II). There were three main reasons for choosing these particular universities. First, they were both located in Yaoundé. Second, they both offered majors that would presumably lead to a more informed political opinion. Yaoundé I offered political history and the history of international relations. Yaoundé II offered political science, law, and international relations. Third, both universities were relatively easy to access because they had open campuses. Therefore, I did not need to obtain permission to enter their respective campuses.

After choosing a site, I also needed to choose a target population. For the purpose of this study, I had two target populations. First, I wanted to talk to experts in the field of politics. This would help determine the reasons for the implementation of the Senate this year (2013) as well as the purposes of the Senate from an academic perspective. My second target population was, as mentioned above, students majoring in political history, political science, international relations (or the history of international relations) or law. This target population allowed me to quickly identify youth because most university students in Cameroon are in the youth age bracket. Choosing these particular majors also ensured that respondents to questionnaires would be at least informed about the Senate.

After determining my target population, I then selected my samples. Within the target population of experts in the field, I conducted five interviews (one with an employee from the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization or MINATD, one political analyst and three professors). I choose to interview an employee of MINATD because this was the ministerial body in charge of instituting decentralization in Cameroon. As a result, they worked

with the institution of the Senate. The other four experts were chosen because they studied either the Senate, law, or politics in Cameroon. For the second target population, I distributed questionnaires to an Anglophone tutorial, level two law class at the Yaoundé II. Ideally, I would have also distributed questionnaires to a masters or doctorate level class, but these classes were unfortunately not being offered this semester. The tutorial class also allowed me to be more personal with the students because it was smaller than the general class. At Yaoundé I, I distributed surveys to a bilingual level three political history class. I had previously attended the class and been introduced by the professor, so I already knew some students. In total, I distributed 120 questionnaires (forty at Yaoundé II and eighty at Yaoundé I). I received ninety-five back (thirty-four at Yaoundé II and sixty-one at Yaoundé I).

### **Entering the Field and Establishing Rapport**

When beginning research, I had a general idea of who I wanted to talk to based on my target populations. In order to conduct research within this population, I had the incredible fortune of being introduced by a third party to each group or individual with the exception of the employee from the ministry. This helped immediately establish my validity and legitimacy with my questionnaire respondents and interviewees. Additionally, I met with each interviewee with the exception of the employee at the ministry and one student at Yaoundé I before I interviewed them. This allowed me to explain my project in advance as well as establish a friendly relationship with the interviewees.

### **Settings of the Study**

This study was carried out over a four-week period from November 10 to December 8, 2013 in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Research was carried out at the University of Yaoundé I and the University of Yaoundé II. Background research (Constitution, newspaper, and article reading) was also carried out at the Africa Network against Illiteracy, Conflicts and Human Rights Abuses (ANICHRA) research center in Obili-Yaoundé.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The two data collection procedures employed for this study were questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were used to gain the most opinions possible in a short amount of time. This method was also effective because the general topic of politics is discussed openly in

the Cameroonian context, so the information would not be too sensitive to discuss in a survey. Interviews were used to follow up with some respondents in order to gain further insight into their opinions. Follow up interviewees were chosen based on their interest in the topic or their willingness to be interviewed. Interviews with experts in the field were conducted to create a firmer foundation for the study as well as gaining a broader and more diverse perspective on the Senate.

### **Storing and Sorting of Data**

All data was stored on the computer in either Microsoft Excel or Microsoft Word. With the exception of interviewees who explicitly stated that their names could be used in this study, the names of respondents or interviewees were never stored on the computer. All raw material such as the survey responses or business cards were kept with me until they could be destroyed properly. After storing the data, it was then sorted based on general categories such as the 2035 emergence, the age of senators, youth unemployment, etc. This was done mostly using Excel in order to create easier comparisons.

### **Ethical Concerns and Human Subject Considerations**

The three ethical concerns of this study were coercion, anonymity, and confidentiality. In order to lessen coercion, questionnaires were only distributed before classes or tutorials, and they were distributed by me. This method sought to ensure that students did not feel obligated to fill out the questionnaires because a professor or instructor asked them to do so. To protect anonymity and confidentiality, names were optional on the questionnaires, and I did not store any names on my computer. Additionally, items such as ethnicity, age, gender, and hometown will only be shared in aggregate form in this paper so as to limit the potential of identifying a respondent.

### **Strategies Deployed to Ensure Reliability of Data Presented**

The main strategy to ensure reliability was using cross-checking questions in the questionnaire. For example, after asking a respondent to identify his or her opinion of the Senate, the next question asked them to explain. If the two answers were conflicting, this showed that the respondent may not have answered truthfully. In addition, if a respondent mentioned a fact or a specific document, I either asked one of the experts in the field about it or found verification in

articles or other documents. Moreover, I had ninety-five questionnaire responses. This number allowed me to cross-check responses with each other. For example, if a particular response was recurrent, then it appeared to have more validity.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

For the purpose of this study, timing was both a strength and a limitation. Due to the recent introduction of the Senate, the topic was timely. All level two and level three students (the respondents to my questionnaire) were already at university when the senatorial elections took place in April of 2013, thus rendering respondents at least minimally informed. Timing, however, was also a limitation. The research period, limited by my study abroad program, was only four weeks. This meant that I was unable to wait to attend classes. For example, the doctorate and masters courses in political science and law at Yaoundé II were not being held during my research period. Due to the large number of students in a level one or level two class at Yaoundé II, it became necessary to go to a tutorial class. With more time, I could have distributed more questionnaires and conducted more interviews.

The questionnaires had both strengths and limitations as well. Distributing them en masse allowed me to obtain as many responses as possible. The male-to-female ratio was almost one-to-one, creating an even gender representation. The Francophone-to-Anglophone ratio (approximately one-to-two), however, was not as positive. This was a result of the fact that the tutorial class at which I distributed surveys was Anglophone. As stated above, with more time or with a different course schedule at Yaoundé II, I would have attended more tutorial classes or attended a lecture. Ideally, I would have distributed my questionnaire to political history majors; history majors, however, have not yet chosen their concentration, which meant that I could not determine if a history major was necessarily interested in history. This was ameliorated by distributing my survey in a political history course rather than an international relations course for example.

A clear strength of this study was the resources available. I was able to use the ANICHRA research center, which has a library of newspapers as well as access to all the Constitutions. Furthermore, the assistant at the research center aided me in finding resources and discussing my research. I also had a resource in my advisor, Dr. Dze-Ngwa. He not only helped formulate the initial stages of my study, but he additionally introduced me to his level three

history class and allowed me to distribute questionnaires before his class. There was also a professor at Yaoundé II who introduced me to the student who taught tutorial classes. Both written and human resources aided me in building a solid network during the research process.

A clear limitation of this study was my personal language ability. When talking with Anglophones, I was able to extract more information and ask better follow-up questions because I understood what they were saying better. When conducting interviews with Francophones or explaining my questionnaire in French, I did not understand as easily. I was able to understand enough to follow, but it would have been advantageous to be able to understand more clearly.

## **Presentation of Results**

### **Purposes of the Senate**

In determining the purposes of the Senate, it is necessary to present the results of research in a threefold manner. First, there are results of questionnaires and follow-up interviews. Secondly, there are interviews with experts. Finally, there are newspaper articles which give yet another or perhaps supplementary perspective. This same method of presentation will be used in the following as well.

From questionnaire responses, there were sixteen categories of responses to the question, “In your opinion, what is the purpose of the Senate?”<sup>63</sup> The overwhelming response was that the Senate’s purpose is to create, pass or scrutinize laws (thirty-seven respondents out of the eighty-seven who responded or 42.5% of responses to this particular question). This idea was summed up by one respondent: “*The purpose of the senate is to vote for or against a law and participate in regional development.*” The next response in terms of frequency to this question (nine respondents or 10.3%) was that the Senate was put in place to control the government. One interviewee who had studied that Senate for a previous class expressed the two most frequent purposes clearly when he said of the Senate, “*They’re out to legislate laws to control government action in the Cameroon economy.*”<sup>64</sup> The categories that had five or six responses were as follows: The Senate is meant to represent the citizens of each senator’s respective region; they are in place to better the lives of Cameroonians; the Senate is there to represent the president

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<sup>63</sup> In the French version of the questionnaire, this question read, “A votre avis, quelles sont les intentions du Senat ?”

<sup>64</sup> Student B, Personal Interview, 23 Nov 2013.

when he is out of the country or when he becomes incapacitated; it is in place to assist the National Assembly; the Senate had no purpose; and, finally, the respondent did not know the purpose of the Senate. In regards to regional development at the senatorial level, the student interviewed at Yaoundé II explained that when you “*come from a particular area when you are in government, it is expected that you develop the area you came from.*”<sup>65</sup> Other reasons stated less frequently than the previous reasons were that the Senate is there to embezzle money, manage the budget, reorganize the Constitution, ensure peace, create international links, maintain the CPDM’s power, make Cameroon more democratic and follow the Constitution. In addition to the reasons listed above, one interviewee stated that the Senate “*is only there for the boast of the country’s senatorial moral.*”<sup>66</sup>

During my interviews with an employee at the ministry, a political analyst, and professors, some purposes were reinforced while others were stated for the Senate. All of the respondents mentioned fulfilling the Constitution as a reason for the Senate to exist. One professor mentioned that adhering to the Constitution shows that “*we don’t function like people who don’t care.*”<sup>67</sup> The Senate, therefore, serves the purpose of giving legitimacy to the Constitution simply through its existence. The employee at the minister further highlighted that the Senate “*...est pour améliorer le fonctionnement de la collectivité territoriale décentralisée.*”<sup>68</sup> Hence, the Senate is a tool to implement the decentralized policy present in the Constitution. Professor AtangchaNjiAkonumbo and Dr. Emmanuel Moubitang also pointed to the constitutional function of checking or scrutinizing the laws passed by the National Assembly.<sup>69</sup> In this way, the Senate functions to ensure that all laws passed are passed for the betterment of the citizens of Cameroon. Njoya Moussa, comparing the Cameroonian senatorial system to that created by de Gaulle in France, stated that “*Le Senat...est pour récompenserses [du president] amispolitiques.*”<sup>70</sup> In his opinion, the Senate is a way to reward the loyalty of individuals to the president or his party.

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<sup>65</sup>Student A, Personal Interview, 19 Nov 2013.

<sup>66</sup> Student C. Student C and Student D, Personal Interview, 26 Nov 2013.

<sup>67</sup>Konou, Michel, Personal Interview, 21 Nov 2013.

<sup>68</sup>Employee A, Personal Interview, 15 Nov 2013....*is in order to ameliorate the function of the decentralized territorial collectivity.*

<sup>69</sup>NjijAkonumbo, Atangcho and Emmanuel Moubitang, Personal Interview, 21 Nov 2013.

<sup>70</sup>Njoya Moussa, Personal Interview, 19 Nov 2013. *The Senate... is to reward his [the president’s] political friends.*

Newspaper articles expressed similar purposes for the Senate, ranging from extremely positive to incredibly negative views. Similar to the views expressed by the respondents to the questionnaire, Richard KwangKometa highlighted that the house will “*have a final say on the examination of draft laws and...take major decisions on the management of events in the country.*”<sup>71</sup> Professor Elvis NgolleNgolle told *The Post* that the upper chamber such as the Senate examine laws and manage in an “*enlightened*” manner.<sup>72</sup> Hon MbahNdam, the National Assembly Deputy Speaker and Legal Adviser of the SDF, warned that without the Senate, the constitutional void could lead to military rule, rendering the Senate necessary to the continuing peace of Cameroon.<sup>73</sup> Similar to Njoya Moussa, Leslie Ngwa stated that the purpose of the Senate was “*to enlarge avenues for political clientelism and waste.*”<sup>74</sup> The idea is basically that the Senate is there to channel money to people who support a particular party or ideal. Furthermore, DubussiTande argued that the structure of the choice of senators (seventy elected and thirty nominated) allowed the president to guarantee power for his party in the legislature due to the fact that the president appoints thirty senators and has a stronghold in the Center, South and East regions.<sup>75</sup> Together, these two groups of senators compose 51% of the Senate, thus guaranteeing an absolute majority. Therefore, the purpose of the Senate was to create a legislative body that would adhere to the ruling party’s agenda at least for the foreseeable future.

### **Reasons for Implementation**

In order to acquire the university students’ opinion on the implementation of the Senate, questionnaire respondents were asked “Why do you believe the Senate was instituted this year?”<sup>76</sup> Of the ninety-five respondents, eighty-five answered this question. After categorizing responses, there were nineteen general responses gathered from the questionnaires. The most frequent response (eighteen respondents out of eighty-five or 21%) was that President Biya and his government wanted to introduce the Senate. There were some sub-reasons within this category. One respondent highlighted that “*Comme le président sent sa fin proche, il met en place un certain*

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<sup>71</sup>Kometa, Richard Kwang. "Scramble For Senate." *Cameroon Tribune* 8 March 2013: 5. Print.

<sup>72</sup>Ngolle, 6.

<sup>73</sup>Ndam, Hon Mbah. *SDF Is Going For Senatorial Election In Interest Of Nation* Yerima Kini Nsom. *The Post*, 11 March 2013. 5. Print.

<sup>74</sup>Ngwa, 4.

<sup>75</sup>Tande, 4.

<sup>76</sup>In the French version of the questionnaire, this question read, “ A votre avis, pourquoi est-ce que le Senat a été introduit cette année ?”

*nombre d'institution pour que tout ce que la loi prévoit soit appliqué et mis en place.*"<sup>77</sup> Another common sentiment within this category was also reflected in a student interview when the student, speaking of Paul Biya, stated that "*he decided that this year should be the year.*"<sup>78</sup> Moreover, one student pointed out the fact that the president promised to implement the Senate this year during his address to the Cameroonian people.<sup>79</sup>

Fourteen respondents or 16.5% of respondents identified the fulfillment of the Constitution as the reason for the implementation of the Senate in 2013. The next most common response was that the Senate was introduced in order to complete the parliament and assist the National Assembly. Eleven respondents or 12.9% gave this reason. Nine respondents or 10.5% occupied the next most frequent category with the response of "I don't know." The rest of the responses were as follows: to help improve Cameroon's international image; to pass laws and run the government; for political reasons; in order to move toward 2035 emergence;<sup>80</sup> to take the appropriate amount for time and preparation to implement; to fight corruption; to increase the number in parliament; to counteract unfavorable decisions made by the National Assembly; to take a step towards democracy; to institute the post of the President of the Senate in order for him to be the interim president; to enact decentralization; to help development; to pay the elites; in response to pressure to change; and to help Africans. (The first four items in the previous list had four to six respondents.) One of the sub-responses given in the category of improving Cameroon's international image was that the Senate was a French idea and, therefore, a "*form of new colonialism.*"<sup>81</sup> One interviewee also stated that "*it [was] instituted by the government just to stay credible.*"<sup>82</sup>

The idea that the desires and interests of Paul Biya and his government was a reason for implementation of the Senate was present in every interview with an expert. Njoya Moussa

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<sup>77</sup> Respondent #68. "*As the president feels his close end, he puts in place a certain number of institutions for which all that which the planed law was put in place.*"

<sup>78</sup> Student D, Student C and Student D, Personal Interview, 26 Nov 2013.

<sup>79</sup> Student A, Personal Interview, 23 Nov 2013.

<sup>80</sup> The 2035 emergence or Vision 2035 is the government policy that states that Cameroon will become an emerging economy by the year 2035. In addition, it has other stated goals. Of particular importance to the Senate, Vision 2035 calls for "an economy based on sub-regional, regional and global integration." Because the Senate is meant to represent local and regional authorities, this particular goal could potentially be their responsibility. For a complete list, see page 2 of Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development. "Cameroon Vision 2035." Working Paper. 2009. Web. 1 December 2013.

<sup>81</sup> Respondent #93.

<sup>82</sup> Student A, Personal Interview, 23 Nov 2013.



pointed out that “*dans le système camerounais, tout dépend de chef de l'état.*”<sup>83</sup> He also solidifies this idea with the fact that the president determines the dates of elections.<sup>84</sup> The employee at the ministry alluded to this reality as well when he stated that the implementation of the Senate was a part of the “*calendrier politique*” determined by the head of state.<sup>85</sup> Michel Konou also underlined the growing opposition, stating that the increased pressure necessitated a response from the president.<sup>86</sup> Professor Atangcha NjiAkonumbo and Dr. Emmanuel Moubitang also pointed out the timing of the elections as an important factor in implementing the Senate this year. President Biya had extended the municipal council mandate two years. New municipal councils were elected in a double election along with members of the National Assembly in September of 2013. This meant that the senatorial elections in April of 2013 were carried out by the old municipal councilors, of which the ruling CPDM had a majority in most regions. This would essentially guarantee a large margin of victory for the ruling party. These two professors also mentioned that “*the president is finding...a door out of power.*”<sup>87</sup> This would be a further incentive to ensure that the ruling party won the majority of seats.

Similar to stated purposes, the newspapers had a range of responses. The Minister of Communications stated that “*if the Head of State did not put in place the structure, it was because of economic problems and not political will.*”<sup>88</sup> This idea proposed that the president waited to implement the Senate until the State had the economic means to do so, which is part of implementing new institutions “*progressively.*”<sup>89</sup> Concerning the president’s influence in instituting the Senate, Victorine Biy reported the presidential decree which ultimately began the elections to implement the Senate in February of 2013.<sup>90</sup> Dubussi Tande shared a Cameroonian adage that “*the president alone understands the ‘intricacies and imperatives’ of the country’s political and electoral calendar.*” Lead opposition leader and chairman of the SDF, Fru Ndi also highlighted the delayed municipal elections as a reason for “*hastily called*” senatorial elections.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Njoya Moussa, Personal Interview, 19 Nov 2013. *In the Cameroonian system, everything depends on the head of state.*”

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Employee A, Personal Interview, 15 Nov 2013. *Political calendar.*

<sup>86</sup>Konou, Michel, Personal Interview, 21 Nov 2013.

<sup>87</sup>NjiAkonumbo, Atangcho. NjiAkonumbo, Atangcho and Emmanuel Moubitang, Personal Interview, 21 Nov 2013.

<sup>88</sup>Bainkong, Godlove. "MINCOM Answers Frequently Asked Questions." *Cameroon Tribune* 11 March 2013: 4. Print.

<sup>89</sup>1996 *Cameroon Constitution*, Art.67, Sec. 1.

<sup>90</sup>Biy, 3.

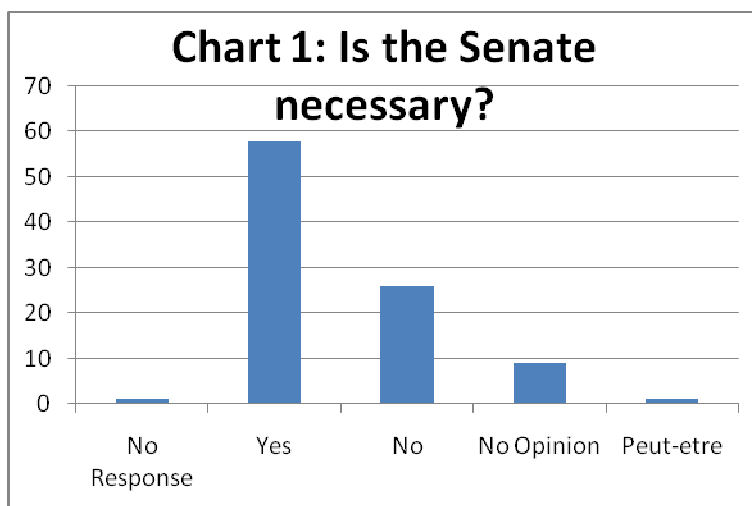
<sup>91</sup>Mbunwe, Chris. "I Won't Accept Appointment As Senator-Fru Ndi." *The Post* 29 April 2013: 1. Print.

Finally, Elhadi Lawan Bako, the Chairman of the United Democratic Party (UDP) pointed out that the Constitutional Council must be preceded by the Senate.<sup>92</sup> According to the 1996 Constitution, three of the eleven members of the Constitutional Council are nominated by the President of the Senate.<sup>93</sup> Therefore, the Senate must be put in place in order to continue implementing the constitutional changes.

## Opinions and Hopes

In presenting results, this particular section will only utilize questionnaire respondents and follow-up interviews because this particular research question focuses on youth opinion and hopes. The questions which pertain to opinions and hopes of respondents are “What are your feelings about the Senate?” and the subsequent explanation, “What do you hope the Senate will do in the future?” and “In your opinion, is the Senate important to Cameroon?”<sup>94</sup> The first and third questions will be used to evaluate the opinions of respondents. The second question will be used to evaluate the hopes of the respondents for the Senate.

When asked if the Senate was important, fifty-eight respondents chose “yes,” twenty-six chose “no,” nine chose “no opinion,” one wrote “*peut-être*”<sup>95</sup> and one did not respond. This



means that of those who responded, 61.7% thought that the Senate was important in Cameroon (see Chart 1). When looking at just Anglophone responses, 68.8% stated that the Senate was important, compared to 46.7% of Francophone responses. When comparing the responses from Yaoundé I and Yaoundé II, respondents answered “yes” 54.1%

and 73.5% respectively. Males answered in the affirmative 68.1% of the time while females

<sup>92</sup>Bako, Elhadi Lawan. “Biya Acted Within The Law.” *The Post* 4 March 2013: 7. Print.

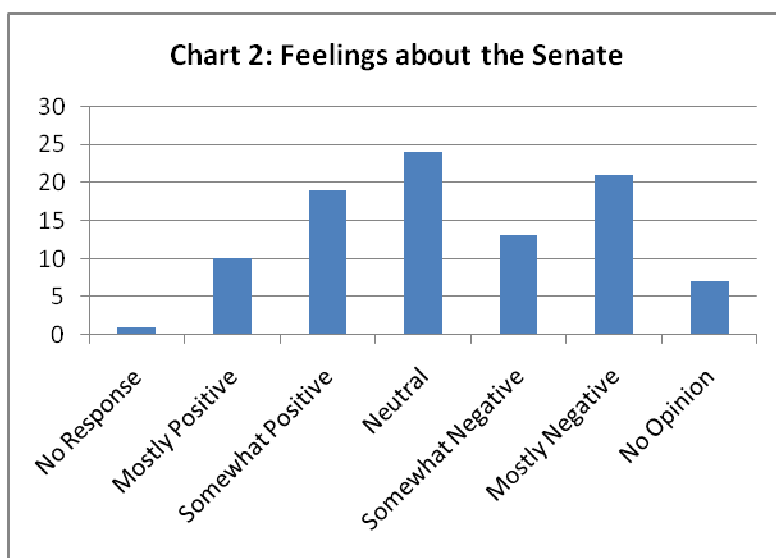
<sup>93</sup>1996 *Cameroon Constitution*, Art.51, Sec. 2.

<sup>94</sup> In the French version of the questionnaire, these questions read respectively “Quels sont vos sentiments vis-à-vis du Sénat ?” “Que voulez-vous que le Sénat fasse à l’avenir ?” and “ A votre avis, le Sénat est-il important au Cameroun ?”

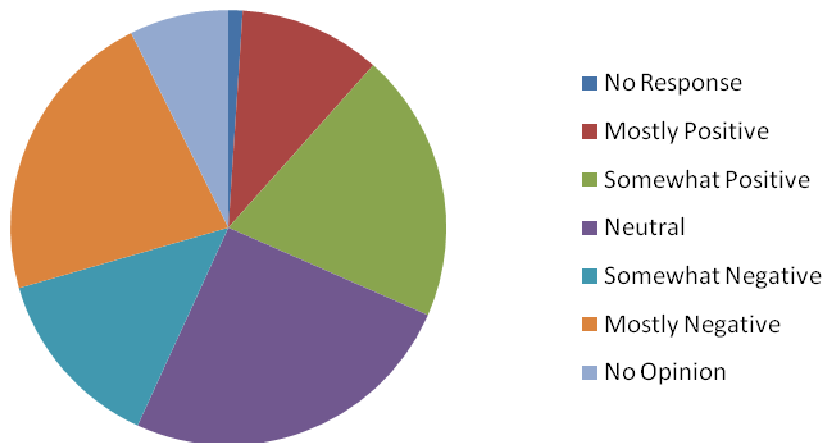
<sup>95</sup>maybe

answered in the affirmative 53.3% of the time. Of the respondents who voted, 58.8% said that the Senate was important while 62.3% of those who did not vote said it was important.

When asked about feelings about the Senate, respondents were given the choices of mostly positive, somewhat positive, neutral, somewhat negative, mostly negative, and no opinion. Ten respondents chose mostly positive; nineteen chose somewhat positive, twenty-four chose neutral; thirteen chose somewhat negative; twenty-one chose mostly negative; seven chose no opinion; and one did not respond (respective percentages of those who responded are 10.65, 20.25, 25.5%, 13.8%, 22.3%, and 7.4%)(See Charts 2 and 3). When all the responses are averaged excluding the no opinions, opinion leans extremely slightly to the negative side of neutral. When comparing the Anglophone and Francophone responses, the percentages are relatively comparable (within 1% of each other) for the response of mostly positive. The percentages for the other



responses are as follows (the first percentage is the Anglophone percentage in each grouping): somewhat positive—18.8%,23.3%, neutral—21.9%, 33.3%, somewhat negative—17.2%, 6.7%, and mostly negative—26.6%, 13.3%, and no opinion—4.7%, 13.3%. When averaged, Anglophones lean slightly to the negative side of neutral, and Francophones lean slightly to the positive side of neutral. When averaged, the respondents at Yaoundé I lean slightly to the negative side of neutral while the respondents at Yaoundé II lean slightly to the positive side of neutral. Both male and female respondents as a whole lean slightly to the negative side of neutral, but the female respondents lean slightly more towards the negative. Among those who voted, they lean slightly less negative than those who did not vote. An important fact to note, however, is that all of the respondents who said the Senate was mostly positive did not vote.

**Chart 3: Feelings about the Senate**

When asked to explain why they had their chosen feelings for the Senate, respondents had nineteen basic responses. The most common response was that the respondents'

feelings were a

result of the cost of the Senate (seventeen out of ninety-one respondents or 18.7%). Respondents felt that the money used to pay for other, more important activities. With thirteen responses for each category, the next most frequent reasons for opinions are because the respondents believe that the Senate is helping the country progress and that it is hard to have an opinion. This latter response was also stated in an interview when the student said, "*I'm still trying to see what they [the Senate] realize first.*"<sup>96</sup> The next most common response (12 responses or 13.2%) was that the Senate helps to complete the legislature and create laws. Following this response is the fact that the Senators are old (9 responses or 9.9%). Next, respondents said that the Senate was not important or not necessary (7 responses or 7.7%). In an interview, a student said that the Senate was unnecessary "*because we have been living for more than twenty years without it.*"<sup>97</sup> Another student added that the Senate "*perform[s] similar functions to the parliament,*"<sup>98</sup> so the Senate is not necessary.

Other responses from the questionnaires were as follows: The Senate has or will have corruption. It assists the president; the Senate maintains peace. There is no real change in the government. There is skepticism about the election process. The political party in power controls the Senate as well. Youth unemployment and lack of job creation is concerning. There are too many senators. The Senate is neither too good nor bad. There are uneducated senators. The

<sup>96</sup>Student A, Personal Interview, 19 Nov 2013.

<sup>97</sup> Student D. Student C and Student D, Personal Interview, 26 Nov 2013.

<sup>98</sup>Student C. Ibid.

Senate will help make citizens' voices and concerns heard. The respondents do not know or have no opinion. Finally, the Senate was imposed by the Free Masons. During interviews, the issue of youth unemployment seemed much more pressing than during surveys. One interviewee stated that she is unable to be employed in Cameroon.<sup>99</sup> Another student discussed the issue of non-professional schools to prepare students to actually enter the workforce as a downfall of the government.<sup>100</sup> It is also important to note that youth unemployment was the number one reason for respondents' opinions about the national government. An interviewed student additionally pointed out that there are countries that are more economically advanced than Cameroon (Senegal, South Africa, Germany) that have dissolved their senates.<sup>101</sup> If those countries do not need a senate, then why does Cameroon?

After assessing respondents opinions, their hopes for the future were also obtained. In responding to the question, there were twenty-two categories of answers. The most common response was that the Senate will improve laws in the future (sixteen responses out of eighty-eight or 18.2%). The next most frequent response (ten responses or 11.4%) was that the Senate will do no good or will not add to the existing legislature. After this response, the next one was that the Senate will help Cameroon achieve emergence by 2035 (nine responses or 10.2%). Seven respondents stated that they did not know (8.0%). Six respondents wanted the Senate to control government action in the future (6.8%) Five respondents said that the government as a whole needs to change in order to ensure a better future (5.7%). Other responses were the hope that the Senate will create employment, fight corruption, represent local citizens, promote peace, end favoritism and personalization of politics, play its proper role, swear in a new president, modify the Constitution, control presidential powers, organize elections, help development, elect younger members, change the education system, and promote justice. One respondent said that the Senate will increase the level of corruption. Another stated that it was not possible to determine yet.

The students interviewed added other goals to this list. One student, notably the only respondent in questionnaires or interviews that argued this point, wants the Senate to be larger in order to represent minorities better. As it is now, the Senate only represents dominant ethnic

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<sup>99</sup>Student D. Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Student E, Personal Interview, 26 Nov 2013.

<sup>101</sup> Student B, Personal Interview, 23 Nov 2013.

groups.<sup>102</sup> Another student wants a wider age range in senators. The idea is to have both young and old senators in order to gain both the youth perspective and the more experienced perspective.<sup>103</sup> Another student responded with the importance of youth issues, stating that it is necessary to reorient the education system to make it more professional as well as valorizing the youth rather than dismissing them as the current government seems to do.<sup>104</sup> Finally, another student expressed that “*if by God’s grace*” the Senate will make the legislature more effective in “*voting or legislating*” laws.<sup>105</sup>

## **Analysis**

### **Purpose of the Senate**

The stated purpose of the Senate in the Constitution is to represent local and regional authorities while being the upper chamber of a bicameral legislature. Respondents clearly agreed with the legislating power of the Senate as more than 40% believed that it was put in place to handle laws. The second most frequent response does not, however, necessarily reflect the Constitution. While the Senate shares most legislative powers with the National Assembly, it is the National Assembly that can actually dissolve the government.<sup>106</sup> In this way, the National Assembly has more control over the government than the Senate. The area where the Senate has more control than the National Assembly is in the status of its president. As accurately stated by some questionnaire responses, the President of the Senate does assume the role of interim president in the event of incapacitation of the president. The interim president cannot, however, amend the Constitution or sign laws. He is in office simply to prepare the election of the new president in which the interim cannot run.<sup>107</sup> One theme that was present in all three levels of the results was this idea of constitutionality. The Senate filled the constitutional void, thus making Cameroon more legitimate in terms of the implementation of its own laws.

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<sup>102</sup> Student A, Personal Interview, 19 Nov 2013.

<sup>103</sup> Student C. Student C and Student D, Personal Interview, 26 Nov 2013. It is important to note that according to Article 20, Section 3 of the 1996 Constitution that senators must be at least forty years old.

<sup>104</sup> Student E, Personal Interview, 26 Nov 2013.

<sup>105</sup> Student B, Personal Interview, 23 Nov 2013.

<sup>106</sup> *1996 Constitution Cameroon*, Art. 34.

<sup>107</sup> NjiAkonumbo, Atangcho and Emmanuel Moubitang, Personal Interview, 21 Nov 2013.

The purposes of the Senate became extra-Constitutional when respondents, interviewees and authors began to analyze the circumstances or began inputting their own political opinion into their response. For example, Njoya Moussa pointed out that the Senate can reward the president's friends. This is obviously not stated in the Constitution, but it may be a legitimate purpose of the Senate. It is entirely plausible that the Senate was introduced into the Constitution in order to practice clientelism, as Leslie Ngwa states. In order to definitively say that this is a purpose, however, one must know the intentions of the Head of State both at the time of the drafting of the Constitution as well as at the declaration of the implementation of the Senate. It does appear, as Tande points out, that the Senate will always personally benefit the Head of State. The fact that thirty senators are appointed means that only twenty-one out of the remaining seventy need to come from the ruling party in order to obtain a majority. This is only thirty percent of the elected senators.

While it is not possible to verify the thoughts of the president, the extra-Constitutional purposes given for the Senate seem to reflect the political views of the respondents. In interviews, the students who gave negative purposes for the Senate also had negative views of the Senate. In contrast, all respondents who listed that the Senate is there to better the lives of Cameroonians had mostly positive, somewhat positive or neutral feelings about the Senate. In a similar vein, Professor Elvis NgolleNgolle, a member of the CPDM, expressed an extremely positive view of the Senate, calling it "*enlightened*." His political party appears to influence the way in which he views the Senate. There appears to be a correlation between the political lens that a person uses and their beliefs about the purpose of the Senate.

### **Reasons for Implementation**

In a similar manner to the purpose of the Senate, it is incredibly difficult to ascertain the thoughts of the government or the president when it or he makes decisions. One of those decisions was the implementation of the Senate. This is why the most frequent answer on the questionnaires was that Paul Biya wanted to implement the Senate. This shows that the students surveyed understand the power and importance of the Head of State in Cameroon, but they do not know why he makes his decisions. Some respondents speculated that he will be leaving office soon, but even that is not determinable due to the fact that he can run for office indefinitely. Due to the political realities within the country and the inability to know exact

thoughts, it is not possible to necessarily determine the cause of the implementation of this legislative body, but the responses gave many viable possibilities for potential correlations.

The fulfillment of the Constitution is the response that it appears everybody can agree on at some level. It is the only response, with the possible exception of completing the legislature (which is arguably the same response because the legislature would not be incomplete without the Constitutional call of an upper house), that can be verified. Other responses may in fact be valid, but they are not verifiable. The other convincing argument that is fairly verifiable is that the government wanted to hold senatorial elections before municipal elections. The evidence for particular reason is very strong because the president postponed the municipal elections twice, and they took place just months after the senatorial elections. While this is most likely not the ultimate cause of the implementation of the Senate, it does certainly have an influence on why the Senate was implemented in 2013 specifically.

In a similar vein to the responses to the purpose of the Senate, the reasons for implementation appear to be influenced by political opinion as well. For example, the respondent who stated that the Senate was instituted this year to pay political elites thought that the Senate was not necessary and had mostly negative feelings about the institution. On the other hand, both respondents who said that the Senate was introduced to help with the development of Cameroon thought that the Senate was necessary. It tended to be people from a non-CPDM aligned political leaning or people with a negative view of the government, the Senate or both who pointed out the seemingly negative reasons for the implementation of the Senate. For example, FruNdi, the main opposition leader, pointed out the extended municipal council mandate. The way that people perceive the events leading up to the implementation of the Senate, therefore, is influenced by personal political opinion at least in part. This study did not ask about political parties or political leanings, so it is necessary to determine if there is a stronger bond between political opinion and the way that Cameroonians perceive the Senate's implementation as well as purpose.

## **Opinions and Hopes**

It is impossible to represent the opinions and hopes of any population in aggregate form because each individual opinion has particular nuances and specificities. In looking at the opinions and hopes of the questionnaire respondents and interviewees, codifying the responses



into specific categories showed the general trends in what people believed. There was not an absolute majority in any category for any question response besides the necessity of the Senate. In general, the youth surveyed averaged to a relatively neutral standpoint on the Senate. In every demographic category (Francophone/Anglophone, Male/Female, Yaoundé I/Yaoundé II), the average feelings about the government tended closer to neutral than any other response. The presence of responses such as mostly positive or mostly negative in the data show that there is a wide spectrum of responses.

The demographic groupings in response to the necessity of the Senate show some possible correlations. For example, a person is more likely to think that the Senate is important if he is Anglophone, attends Yaoundé II, is male, and did not vote in the last election. Some of these correlations may be influenced by other extenuating factors such education level which correlates directly in this study with university attended. It is not possible without further research among various levels at both universities to determine if the positive correlation between an affirmative answer and attending Yaoundé II is actually because of the university. Due to the sample size and limited diversity in some of these demographic categories, it is not possible to definitively state an actual correlation at this point in time.

In regard to the hopes that youth have for the Senate, the answers appeared to all be positive with the exception of the responses that the government needs to change; the Senate will increase the level of corruption; the Senate will not do good; and the respondent did not know. All these responses in total accounted for twenty of the eighty-eight responses to that particular question. That means that sixty-eight of the eighty-eight (77.3%) were positive in some sense. Considering that only 61.7% responded affirmatively that the Senate was necessary, this is a fairly high number. It appears that the educated Cameroonian youth who participated in this study at least have hope for the future of the Senate.

## **Conclusion**

At the beginning of research, this study sought to prove or disprove the following hypotheses: (1) The Senate exists mainly to pass laws. (2) The Senate was instituted in 2013 because the national government wanted to show its citizens that it keeps its promises. (3) The youth are skeptical of the Senate, but they have hopes for a positive future for the legislative

body. In general, the hypotheses were too narrow to encompass the complexities of the Cameroonian senatorial system and the opinions thereof. The assumption was made that educated youth were a relatively homogenous group within Cameroon in terms of their political beliefs, but that assumption was decisively disproved over the course of this research. The responses to questionnaires and interview questions demonstrated a wide range of political opinion, which manifested itself as a broad spectrum of contradictions and confirmations of the hypotheses.

In response to the first hypothesis, the Senate exists to do more than make laws. Even when looking strictly at the Constitution, the Senate exists to represent regions and act as provide the interim president as well as share legislative powers with the National Assembly. Moreover, the Senate has different purposes depending on people's personal political views. These views tend to create more positive views when it benefits a person's particular political leanings and vice versa.

In response to the second hypothesis, the reasons for the implementation of the Senate in 2013 are as varied as the political parties in Cameroon. The only truly verifiable reason is that the Senate was implemented to fill the constitutional void. Another convincing argument was that the implementation was timed to precede the municipal council elections in order to maintain a high percentage of seats for the ruling party. In a similar manner to the purpose of the Senate, people's responses depended greatly on their personal opinions of politics in general.

In response to the third hypothesis, it is true that there are skeptical youth in regards to the Senate, but more youth thought that it was necessary than did not. Most of the hopes for the future of the Senate, however, were positive. In the same way that it is impossible to determine one exact answer in response to the previous two hypotheses, it is impossible to gain one lone opinion and one lone hope for the entirety of the educated youth that were surveyed and interviewed. Their opinions and hopes are diverse just as they themselves are diverse.

As the Senate finishes its inaugural year, it is the hope of this researcher that more studies will be done on the legislative body and the opinions of it. It is not possible to determine the effectiveness of the institution until it has had the chance to prove itself. Furthermore, opinions are constantly changing and constantly being influenced by the various realities of life. As the Senate continues to function, opinions will continue to be formed. Assessing opinions over the

course of time would be able to the most useful review of what the people actually think. It would allow researchers and government personnel alike to see if the implementation of policy is effective in representing the citizenry of the country. After all, if a government does not represent its citizens, then is it really a government?

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## Appendices

### Appendix I: Questionnaire (English)

#### Introduction

Thank you for your participation. I am an American student studying in Cameroon with SIT (School for International Training), a study abroad program where we take courses on development and social pluralism in Cameroon. This survey is for my study on university student's opinion of the Senate. Your responses are very important for this study, and they will remain anonymous and confidential. If you have any questions, you can contact me at [rendall@butler.edu](mailto:rendall@butler.edu).

Name (*optional*): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail (*optional*): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (*optional*): \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Your hometown: \_\_\_\_\_

Your ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

Your university: \_\_\_\_\_

Your major: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you politically active? (circle one)

Yes    No

Did you vote in the last elections? (circle one)

Yes    No

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are your feelings about the national government? (circle one)

Mostly positive

Somewhat Positive

Neutral

Somewhat Negative

Mostly Negative

No opinion

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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What are your feelings about the Senate? (circle one)

|                   |                   |            |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Mostly positive   | Somewhat Positive | Neutral    |
| Somewhat Negative | Mostly Negative   | No opinion |

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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In your opinion, what is the purpose of the Senate? \_\_\_\_\_

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What do you hope the Senate will do in the future? \_\_\_\_\_

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What do you think the Senate will actually do in the future? \_\_\_\_\_

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In your opinion, is the Senate important to Cameroon?

Yes            No            No opinion

Why do you believe the Senate was instituted this year? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix II: Questionnaire (French)

### Introduction

Merci pour votre participation. Je suis une étudiante américaine qui étudie au Cameroun avec SIT (School for International Training) un programme d'étude à l'étranger où nous suivons les cours du développement et du pluralisme social camerounais. Ce questionnaire est pour mon devoir sur des opinions des étudiants du Senat. Vos réponses sont très importantes pour ce devoir, et elles resteront confidentielles et anonymes. Si vous avez des questions, vous pourrez me contacter à [rrendall@butler.edu](mailto:rrendall@butler.edu).

Nom (*optionnel*): \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre de téléphone (*optionnel*): \_\_\_\_\_

Adresse de e-mail (*optionnel*): \_\_\_\_\_

Genre : \_\_\_\_\_

Age : \_\_\_\_\_

Votre ville natale : \_\_\_\_\_

Votre ethnie : \_\_\_\_\_

Votre université : \_\_\_\_\_

Votre filière : \_\_\_\_\_

Est-ce que vous êtes actif en politique ? (encerclez une réponse)

Oui            Non

Est-ce que vous avez participé à la dernière élection ? (encerclez une réponse)

Oui            Non

Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas ? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Quels sont vos sentiments vis-à-vis du gouvernement national ? (encerclez une réponse)

Très positifs            Assez positifs            Neutres

Assez négatifs            Très négatifs            Pas d'opinion

Pourquoi ? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Quels sont vos sentiments vis-à-vis du Sénat ? (encerclez une réponse)

Très positifs            Assez positifs            Neutres

Assez négatifs            Très négatifs            Pas d'opinion

Pourquoi ? \_\_\_\_\_



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A votre avis, quelles sont les intentions du Senat ? \_\_\_\_\_

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Que voulez-vous que le Senat fasse à l'avenir ? \_\_\_\_\_

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Pensez-vous que le Senat a de l'avenir ? \_\_\_\_\_

---

A votre avis, le Senat est-il important au Cameroun ? (encerclez une réponse)

Oui            Non            Pas d'opinion

A votre avis, pourquoi est-ce que le Senat a été introduit cette année ? \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Appendix III: Interview Question Guide (Students)**

- 1) What is your university, major and level? (*Quel est ton université, ton filière et ton niveau?*)
- 2) What is your general impression of the Cameroonian national government? (*Quel est ton impression générale du gouvernement national camerounais?*)
- 3) What is your general impression of the Senate? (*Quel est ton impression générale du Senat?*)
- 4) What are the positive aspects of the Senate? (*Quels sont des aspects positifs du Senat?*)
- 5) What are the negative aspects of the Senate? (*Quels sont des aspects négatifs du Senat?*)
- 6) What do you hope the Senate will do in the future? (*Qu'est que vous souhaitez que le Senat fait à l'avenir?*)
- 7) Why do you think the Senate was instituted this year? (*A votre avis, pourquoi est-ce que le Senat était institué cette année?*)
- 8) Is there anything that you would like to add that we haven't discussed? (*Avez-vous quelques choses à ajouter au sujet du Senat?*)

### **Appendix IV: Interview Question Guide (Professors, Political Analyst and Ministry Employee)**

- 1) What are the most important political changes during Paul Biya's presidency? (*Quelles sont les changements les plus importants pendant la présidence de Paul Biya ?*)

- 2) What are the most important changes to the Constitution during Paul Biya's presidency? (*Quelles sont les changements les plus importants aux Constitutions pendant la présidence de Paul Biya ?*)
- 3) What events led to the introduction of the Senate? (*Quels évènements précédaient l'introduction du Sénat camerounais ?*)
- 4) In your opinion, why was the Senate introduced this year? (*A votre avis, pourquoi était-il introduit cette année ?*)
- 5) In your opinion, what are the purposes of the Senate? (*A votre avis, quelles sont les intentions du Sénat ?*)
- 6) What are the positive aspects of the Senate? (*Quels sont les aspects positifs du Sénat ?*)
- 7) What are the negative aspects of the Senate? (*Quels sont les aspects négatifs du Sénat ?*)
- 8) What do you hope the Senate will do in the future? (*Espérez-vous que le Sénat fait à l'avenir?*)
- 9) Is there anything that you would like to add that we haven't discussed? (*Avez-vous quelques choses à ajouter au sujet du Sénat?*)

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