

Cameroon: The Tribulations Of A Democratic Transition, *Ameli Valentine*

To quote Georg SORENSEN, “there is no royal road to democracy”. This statement truly vindicates the experiences of many an African country since the democratic wind of change began in the 1990s.

Cameroon is a typical example in this light. The story of how Cameroonians woke up in the early 1990s with great democratic expectations but wound up a decade later totally frustrated, and today, have finally given up the democratic struggle is one that merits a lot of scholastic attention. Indeed many citizens are at a loss understanding why a country and continent that a decade ago was boiling with political tension and unrest advocating democratic reforms has suddenly gone dead.

In this paper, we contend that Cameroon’s transition to democracy is currently undergoing an impasse, call it stalemate, deadlock or whatever (KAMTO 1992, MOUKOKO 1993, BANOCK 1993) . This state of affairs is traceable to the paucity of two major democratic desiderata namely, a modus vivendi and a modus operandi. In other words, the journey towards democracy starts with the arrangement of and agreement by the principal groups on the major political structures and institution of the country (SCHUMPETER,1987) which is then immediately followed by the fixing of the rules of the democratic game.

It is our submission that Cameroon has failed woefully on both counts, thus the present malaise that characterizes her democratic transition. Like an Ibo proverb goes, a dance begun with the wrong leg ends up badly. Cameroon’s democratic dance took off poorly and consequently the country has today been plunged into an eternal democratization process. The question is where do we go from here?