

The Recruitment Mechanisms of Political Leaders: The Bases of Women's Poor Visibility in the Cameroon's Political Decision Making Structures.

Dr TAOYANG WARAI Michael

Assistant Lecturer in Political Science

(Department of Political Science, Faculty of Law and Political Science/ University of Ngaoundéré, Cameroon)

**Corresponding Author: Dr TAOYANG WARAI Michael*

ABSTRACT: - The recruitment of women in political parties as political leaders and also their appointment in high rank political and administrative functions is hindered by a number of obstacles linked to the mechanisms applied to recruit aspirants. Generally, political parties invest charismatic leaders who will surely and certainly guarantee their success during a given election, this is unfortunate for women because most of them are not drilled to decision making functions in Cameroon due to the dominant practice of patriarchy in politics. Men decide to invest a man and the consequence is the poor presence of women in elected political functions. The same situation is felt as far as the appointment of influential political and administrative authorities is concerned. This time around, the educational background of women disfavor most of them since non-certificated individuals are excluded from administrative and ministerial functions. The recruitment mechanisms of political leaders and some executive's limits women's access to decision making bodies of the Cameroon's government.

Key words: Women, Recruitment, Appointment, Education, Cameroon.

I. INTRODUCTION

The recruitment of political leaders in most democracies is guided by rules governing the appointment of potential candidate. The dictionary defines recruitment as *the process of finding people to work for a company or become a new member of an organization*¹, as we are specifically concerned here with political organisation, in the same manner, mechanism implies *a way of doing something that is planned or part of a system*². Political recruitment is referred to as *“the process that selects from among the millions of people socially and politically motivated that shape the political stratum, the thousands which reaching positions with national significant influence”*³. However, many theories have been advanced to explain how individuals move into the positions of political authority and leadership. In the Cameroon context like in many other democracies in the world, political leaders are selected according Robert on the basis of *“biological reproduction; cooptation and appointment; Selection by Rote and lot; Purchase of office; Forcible appropriation; Apprenticeship and examination; and last but not least through Election”*⁴. The privileged strata of the society are likely to benefit from this political distinction which is comprised of the elites, the wealthy, the working class and other privileged social groups. It is therefore clear that man's occupation, wealth and education influences his chances of standing as a member of government positively, because men are the politically active stratum and are likely to hold a political office efficiently. This criterion leads to meagre chances of women to ascend to political leadership because they are not so much integrated in public activities related to decision making. We therefore interrogate on the following question, why are reasons of women's' poor presence in decision making bodies in the Cameroon's government? For better understanding, we will first of all study the

¹ Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary - 4th Edition, © Cambridge University Press 2013. P 1285

² *Ibid.* P 959

³ Putnam, Robert D. (1976). *The Comparative Study of Political Elites*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. P 46

⁴ Suzanne Keller 1963 quoted by Prewitt, Kenneth. 1970. *The recruitment of political Leaders: A study of Citizen Politicians*. New York, University of Chicago. P 5

supply and the demand model of candidates' selection in elected offices (II) and also, the reasons of their low presence in appointment in high rank political and administrative functions (III).

II. THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND REQUIREMENTS OF CANDIDATES IN ELECTED POLITICAL FUNCTIONS

The selection of potential candidates is a process through which political parties decide on who will represent their party during an electoral competition. The selection mechanisms are determined by the internal rules and procedures of political parties. Legally, every citizen has the right to run for a given political function since independence, be it a man or a woman, in the Cameroon's constitution, men and women are equal before the law, but in practice the recruitment of political leaders is most often done under a socio-political context which propels women top leadership political positions in Cameroon. The dominant sense of the gender-related political leadership position focuses on the concept of socially constructed gender barriers within a particularly gendered environment in which women politicians need to prove themselves. For a better clarification of this subsection, we will borrow the economic model of supply and demand to illustrate the availability of female political leaders and also their demand in the political market. As a matter of fact, we will look at the supply side model of candidate selection (1) and also the demand side of candidate selection (2).

1. The supply side of candidate selection

In general, recruitment refers to all activities and procedures to be carried out in the organizations to select new staff in the ownership of their jobs. The reason for the low levels of female representation in elected offices, and more particularly, in elected parliaments, councils, city mayors (*city mayors replace government delegates*), calls for a close examination. This line of reflection considers the structural and cultural conditions that makes it difficult for women to be nominated as candidates and to win political office as well as the behaviour of female elected once in office. The supply-side explanations emphasize factors that tell us why women decide to run or not. A close examination by Norris' examines "*the forces which affect women to run for political office*"⁵. According to Norris and Lovenduski, the two key factors that shape the supply of aspirants are: "*(1) resources, such as time, money and experience; and (2) motivational factors, such as drive, ambition and interest*"⁶, determines the aptitudes of those willing to grab a political leadership function. This explanation thus focuses largely on the strategic calculations of potential candidates, in terms of whether or not they feel equipped to run for office. Most often, hindrance linked to "*the supply factors holding individuals back from applying for a position, ('I'm not interested', 'I don't have the right experience', 'I can't afford to move', 'couldn't win')*"⁷. This state of the situation is related to the personal willingness of women who feel, they lack the required resources, knowledge and motivation to supply their political services. Whether defined formally or informally, parties typically consider factors such as: the individual's history of involvement in the party; political skills (e.g. communication and campaign skills); issues related to ethics; and public appeal. In some cases, the ability to raise funds is also one of the most important requirements. These factors are discussed in greater detail below, beginning with the supply side which requires the willingness, competence and financial status of the candidate (1.1), and also, the previous experience of the future political leaders (1.2).

1.1. Willingness of women attached with their Competence and financial status

The supply side of candidate selection has a number of requirements. The first stage consists of a person deciding to stand for elected office. However, it becomes difficult to have a good number of women vying for political functions in Cameroon. A talk with Mme KOSGA revealed that "*the first obstacles linked to the recruitment mechanism of female leaders in elected office is linked to the supply of female candidates because most of them are unwilling to present themselves, unless, they are mentored by men*"⁸. The decision to run for office is influenced by women's personal ambition, resources and opportunities to stand, unfortunately, women in this country lack the basic requirement. The low level of women's education generally portrays an actor who is not rational, with limited abilities to predict outcomes and estimate the possible benefits and costs of specific actions taken. Such a bounded rational woman's personal ambition is tempered by an assessment of the resources they can generate to help them in the campaign, this is an estimation of how unfriendly the socio-political environment will be to the female candidacy, and calculations concerning the opportunities to stand for office. Already at this first stage of the supply model, there are more men than women. Men, across virtually all cultures, are socialized to see politics as a legitimate sphere for them to act in. This leads to men having a

⁵ Pippa Norris & Lovenduski (eds.), 1993, *Gender and Party Politics*. London : Sage Publications. P 310

⁶ Pippa Norris, Joni Lovenduski. *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge University Press. 1995. P 15

⁷ *Ibid*. P 15

⁸ Interview with Mme KOSGA, in Ngong on the 22nd of January 2020

greater knowledge of and interest in politics, and greater political ambition, since they also have access to more resources. In our country, though women stand out as more than 50 percent of the voting mass, but just at the early stages, that is the first step of candidate selection, the system starts to become skewed towards men. Once she makes up her own mind, then she has to prepare her husband, and her children, and her family. Once she has overcome all these obstacles and applies for the ticket, then the male aspirants against whom she is applying make up all sorts of stories about her. And after all this, when her name goes to the party bosses, they do not select her name because they fear losing that seat since we live in a chauvinistic world especially in the northern regions (*Far North; North and the Adamawa region*, constitute the Northern regions). Women's participation in politics in this country gives a strong message globally not only in terms of equality and freedom of liberty but also in the space provided for women in the democratic framework of electoral politics. Cameroon therefore has one of the strongest laws that provide women a life with full honour and dignity. But the customs, patriarchal set ups and societal norms mostly in the Northern region have always treated them as subordinate to men. They are always taught to be submissive. Because of unequal distribution of resources, women do not have adequate resources, be it economic, material or human. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that women's under-representation in Cameroon politics raises grave concerns regarding the supply side of female candidates since it is evident that a very minute number will present themselves as candidates for recruitment. The problem of women's motivation is therefore used as an excuse by party leaders in this region often justify their recruitment patterns with reference to motivation, claiming that they would personally like to select more women, but too few women come forward, as Jennifer declares that, "*entering the electoral arena involves the courageous step of putting oneself before the public, often only to face intense examination, loss of privacy, possible rejection, and disruption from regular routines and pursuits. This decision, even for experienced politicians, requires character traits such as confidence, competitiveness, and risk-taking characteristics that men have traditionally been encouraged to embrace and women to eschew*"⁹. The motivational factor is therefore a great problem for women as far as the supply side of political candidates is concerned. Women are less motivated to run for office for several reasons beginning with the absences, or low girl child political socialisation, lack of support from their families and others, this greatly contributes to low self-esteem which consequently leads to a low supply of women to be recruited as political leaders by political parties found in this region. In this context, the book of Jennifer L. Lawless and Richard L. Fox, *It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office* (2005), is a striking new contribution to these debates. Plainly put, they argue that women are merely less politically motivated than men to run for elective functions. Social psychologists have proven that, in general, men are more likely than women to express confidence in skills they do not possess and overconfidence in skills they do possess. Men tend to be more self-congratulatory, whereas women tend to be more modest about their achievements. Naturally, men always boost to be intelligent, while women have the tendency to underestimate theirs. Men regularly fail to integrate criticism into their self-evaluations, whereas women tend to be strongly influenced by negative appraisals of their skills. The developed hypothesis is that, gender gap is as a result of a long-standing patterns of traditional socialisation which associate men with the public realm and women with the private. This divide manifests itself in at least three ways: "(1) *gender-specific family roles and expectations, related to tasks like housework and childcare; (2) ideas of masculinity that permeate existing political institutions, like elected bodies, fund-raising networks and the media; and (3) the 'gendered psyche', a 'deeply embedded imprint that propels men into politics, but relegates women to the electoral arena's periphery*"¹⁰. These three lead to differences among women and men in terms of their levels of confidence, desire for achievement and inclination to self-promote. Since, the political ambition of candidates is a great supply indicator, "*Although many people have resources, only a few choose a political career. The combination of resources plus motivation produces the necessary and sufficient conditions for candidacies. Motivational factors are defined as psychological predispositions to become involved in politics*"¹¹, therefore, the low supply side of female candidates in this country can be the combination of cultural practices such as gender division of labour which discourage women since they are socialised as good wives and not politicians.

Besides, other requirements according to empirical results are competence and financial resources. In his study, Hansen "*argued that for women to have an impact in politics, they need to be 'competitive, qualified candidates and not simply nominal candidates'*"¹². This is evident because the supply side requires specific qualifications for the simple reason that candidates are in a situation of competition. As in most organisations, the supply and selection of candidates depends on their abilities to fulfil the functions assigned to them by the

⁹Jennifer L. Lawless & Richard L. Fox. 2012. "Men Rule the Continued Under-Representation of Women in U.S. Politics". Washington, DC Women & Politics Institute. P 10

¹⁰Jennifer L. Lawless and Richard L. Fox, .2005. "It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office". P 11

¹¹Pippa Norris; Joni Lovenduski. 1993. "If Only More Candidates Came Forward!: Supply-Side Explanations of Candidate Selection in Britain". *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 23, No. 3. (Jul., 1993), pp. 402-403

¹²Hansen, S. B. 1997. "Talking about Politics: Gender and Contextual Effects on Political Proselytizing". *Journal of Politics*, vol. 59, no. 1, pp. 73-103. P 75

organisation. Therefore, political Skills such as Good public speaking, political judgment, strategic planning and organizational skills are among the most desirable qualities in a candidate. In the case of individuals who have held party positions, their performance in such positions may be able to provide some indication of their political skills. However, most women in this country, particularly in some regions (Far North, North, Adamawa and East) lack such skill. This implication is that the supply of competent female is narrowed because experienced women are very few in this competitive political leadership milieu. Also, still linked to the supply side, political parties in this country are consequently faced with the difficulty of having available and experienced women capable and even willing to supply their expertise to these political parties. For this reason, Norris and Lovenduski sustain that, it is *“arguably, both the way in which the role of the candidate is defined and the candidate qualities sought tend to penalise women. The system has been designed to select standard model candidate who is articulate, well educated, and typically employed in a professional career”*¹³. Talking of competence, we realise that there are less competent women, the reasons are low literacy rate, unemployment, informal employment. In developed countries, *“Socio-structural and cultural studies demonstrate that increases in the supply of female politicians usually follow growth in women’s participation in the workforce, and point to specific careers or ‘pipeline professions’, notably legal, civil service and education, from which candidates are most likely to emerge”*¹⁴. In our context, societal factors impact the number of women in all high-status occupations, this has as consequence the restriction of the pool of women available as candidates for all elective offices, but especially as candidates for the political party leadership races. Women lacking administrative experiences are less likely to be competent in the course of recruitment to represent a given political party as party leader. As a matter of fact, we realise that more women can be engaged in political leadership if they already possess the competence and experiences to take on the role of political leaders. In this country, men are the one engaged in all the aspect of public life, women actively engaged in political activities are scarce because politics is considered as “men’s world and a dirty job”. The recruitment of women as political leaders in political parties therefore becomes difficult right from the supply side of candidates in the political landscape of Cameroon.

Furthermore, apart from competence, the recruitment of political leaders by their political parties partly depends on their economic and Educational Background. Financial contributions of potential political candidates contribute greatly to their recruitment within political parties as political leaders. For instance, Kay & al, argues that *“Those who make political contributions are, on average, more affluent than those who do not. Because those who ask others for political contributions target potential givers with large bank accounts”*¹⁵. This statement confirms the reality of the influence of financial status in the recruitment of political leaders. But the economic reality of most women in this country limit them from aspiring for elected political functions because they lack the economic powers to run for office because of the cultural reasons and the feminisation of poverty since women are mostly engaged in household activities related to children rearing and informal economic activities. The economic status as one of the rules of recruitment in political parties therefore puts an endeavour on specific qualities of candidates, one with extensive connections and one who is able to raise large sums of money to finance the extensive campaign activities that are so important for the success of the party. Thus, the strongest political candidates are local politicians, hereditary politicians, or retired bureaucrats. This therefore constitute a barrier because in this country particularly in some regions (Far North, North and Adamawa), according to the culture of some communities, girls cannot inherit their fathers well on equal basis as boys, as far as retired workers are concerned, women are not so much represented because they are less employed. This constitute a supply barrier for female political candidates. Apart from the economic weakness of women hindering their supply side as party candidates, their level of education has been identified as the primary culprit conditioning their supply side.

The level of education is identified as one of the most important causes of the problem that prevents women’s voices from being heard in the Cameroon government and in elective functions in particular. Girls being forced to stay at home to do domestic work, and missing out on schooling, will have lower self-esteem, and consequently, they will be lowly represented in political leadership functions mostly in regions dominated by cultural norms like the north regions which limit women to households’ responsibilities. Furthermore, it is the male-dominated nature of politics in most countries that puts a glass ceiling barrier against women trying to run for political offices. More women need to be empowered to speak up in the public sphere. It creates a vicious cycle that is, the fewer women are in politics, the more their needs are being unmet; and the more

¹³ Lovenduski & Pippa Norris. 1989. “selecting women candidates: obstacles to the feminisation of the House of Common”. *European Journal of political research*. 17. 533-562. P 559

¹⁴ Brennan, F. and Buckley, F. (2017) “The Irish legislative gender quota: The first election”. *Administration*, 65 (2), pp.15-35. doi:10.1515/admin-2017-0013. P 6

¹⁵ Kay Lehman Schlozman, Sidney Verba, Henry E. Brady. 2012. *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy*. Princeton University Press. P 457

unconfident they are, the less likely they can voice out their opinion in political leadership and decision making structures. The imbalanced gender ratio in political participation is therefore one of the indicators of gender inequality in the Cameroon's society: it obscures a more balanced view on policy and development. If women are entitled the same right to education as men, they will have higher self-esteem and trust that will help them gain back their voice. In Cameroon, the high level of illiteracy has become a catalyst that drops the levels in the political participation among girls and women leaving them at the mercy of harmful patriarchy laws made by the men who dominate the policy-making arm of the government. Specific educational requirements potentially discriminate against large segments of the population that may otherwise have important contributions to make to the political process. A sound educational background is necessary for a potential candidate to fully and effectively perform the full range of duties of a publicly elected official. Referring to Prewitt & al., "*leaders are atypical in their social origins in their educational attainment and in the occupations they held before reaching political office*"¹⁶. Some studies suggest that in general, and perhaps subconsciously, political parties tend to choose legislative or councils candidates whose incomes, educational levels and occupations are generally much higher than those of the general population. This could be explained by a number of factors. For instance, individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to have acquired the skills (public speaking, writing, understanding of economics, foreign policy etc.) that are most useful in winning the selection as well as the election campaign. In addition, professionals typically have more flexibility with their work hours and income than manual labourers, making it easier for them to devote the time necessary to secure the nomination and fight the campaign. Nevertheless, women in this country lack these qualifications to properly and efficiently postulate for political functions. Although there is no definite indication that a formal education is a prerequisite for an increased political consciousness, an example is late Françoise Fonong, mayor of Douala 5, it is also a known fact that increased level of formal education, especially among women, creates a healthy background for the development of democracy as it is the case in developed democracies, which is visible in increased political participation among women. As a matter of fact, the level of education of the girl child constitute one of the important supply requirements for political leaders.

Again, those holding a strong root in elected offices are elites of a given political circumscription. Considered as those with the highest scores in their domain of activity, elites are likely to fulfil the supply side of political candidates in the campaign race. Unfortunately for women in this country, just a little possess the economic power to stand as an elite, this leads to their low representations in elective functions. "*Among the constant facts and tendencies of the life of a state, one is so obvious that it is apparent to the most casual eye. In all societies from societies that are very meagrely developed and have barely attained the dawnings of civilization, down to the most advanced and powerful societies two classes of people appear a class that rules and a class that is ruled*"¹⁷. From this quote, we may consider that there are therefore two classes, the ruled who are many in number (women), and the rulers who are few in numbers who are the males. This situation is therefore a reality in Cameroon since women are considered as the marginalised portion of the society by customs and traditions as far as politics is concerned. Still, it is considered that elites circulate that is, those actually ruling will one-day leave and cede their powers to others. The concept of circulation of elite was developed by Pareto. "*Pareto quite generally defines elite as a class of people recruited from those who attain the highest levels of achievement in their own field of activity. The kind of activity involved is immaterial for him*"¹⁸. It is at this point that Pareto first speaks of the "*circulation of elites,*" in which either individual persons or, as the case may be, elements of the ruling elite are replaced by upcoming elements from the lower classes, or in which the entire ruling elite is overthrown by a new elite"¹⁹. Here it is therefore evident that the new class of elites are young boys who are prepared by their parents to take over them since girls are disfavoured from inheritance and also from taking over their fathers' legacy. The circulation here will therefore be passed from father to son. The result is the continuous supply of male candidates and a very low supply of female candidates in most regions of Cameroon.

Moreover, women will continue to be poorly supply as political candidates because, on the one hand, the resources at women's disposal in this country are unlikely to expand dramatically, given current patterns of women's integration into the top levels of professions like law, business, higher education, ministerial functions and elected functions. On the other hand, the effects of traditional gender role socialisation are likely to endure, even though women's roles in society continue to evolve and expand. For the northern region of the country, as a Muslim dominated regions, "*Muslim women feel held back, and this is less because of incompetence or lack of experience than through the common conviction that politics is rather the prerogative of men, who rarely trust*

¹⁶ Prewitt, K and Verba, S.1975.Principles of American Government. Harper and Row Publishers, New York. P 13

¹⁷ Mosca, G. (1896) Elementi di Scienza Politica, Turin: Bocca (erweiterte Auflage 1923); Engl. The Ruling Class. Elementi de Scienza Politica, New York: McGrawHill 1939. P 50, Quoted by Hartmann. 2006. The Sociology of Elites. Routledge. P 9

¹⁸ Hartmann. 2006. The Sociology of Elites. Routledge. P 12

¹⁹ Ibid. P 13

women when they hold the reins of power”²⁰. This can elucidate the quite insignificant number of women in elective responsibilities of the government such as the parliament both upper and lower chambers, and local councils in this country. For this reason, it is argued that, the prospects for change are relatively bleak, even though some women are able to succeed in breaking the “political glass ceiling” to become viable political leaders in this country.

1.2. Women’s ability to balance family life

Besides, women possess little time to balance with family life and public life linked to politics. This is because the dual burden on women influence their supply as potential political candidates. Due to the conventional division of labour in the family, segregation in the labour market and traditional patterns of socialization, which are purely constructivist, we would expect many women to have lower time, to balance between their familial responsibilities and political leadership duties. The result is that on the supply side of political candidates, we will have a very low number of women presenting themselves as candidates. Bochel and Denver stress supply-side factors for the dearth of women politicians, that “*if more women came forward to pursue a parliamentary career, the study suggests, more would be nominated*”²¹, this demonstrates the fact that few women are nominated because a small number, came forward. But this is normal because, most women will prefer to preserve their familial cohesion rather than losing their home in the name of politics. As far as the country and particularly the northern regions are concerned, if women were to choose between their marital home and a political career, 99 per cent will choose to preserve their familial cohesion. Based on studies of local councillors, Bristow attributed women's reluctance to a “*lack of volition*”²², this is say that women are faced with the difficulties linked to taking decisions either to enter politics or to remain behind (*present but not visible*)²³, this is to say women participate in votes, and all other activities related to campaigns, but they are not visible as elected officials, because they prefer taking care of their home. These difficulties women face in deciding whether to choose a political career or not produce a little supply effect of female political leaders. The weight of domestic responsibilities draws women back in this region to present themselves on the supply market of political leaders. in the same optic, Hills stressed that there exist a “*life-style constraints, where politics have to be juggled with the dual demands of employment and family*”²⁴, this dual demand of employment and family is a great obstacle to women especially in this country, where culture and traditions has produce a disproportionate division of labour in household responsibilities with women doing most of the house work. In the same way, supply obstacle is the effects of marital status and children. Married women are most often occupied in bringing up and educating their offspring’s. Since, “*Women have been socialized to attend to and nourish the family and have been discouraged from engaging in activities that might detract from the performance of these tasks*”²⁵, they will certainly be absent in the supply of female political candidates since their preferential choice will be their concentration in the education of their children and taking care of their spouses. As an author opined it that, “*women dual burden of household and public responsibilities really hold women back in the race for a political position because they cannot contribute on the same basis to the political success of their political party. As a result, men those given the advantage because they dispose of adequate time to undertake political activities*”²⁶. Women therefore lack the administrative experience and time period necessary for the supply side political candidates to be recruited for the representation of political parties during elections, for the simple reason that they were socialised to be good mothers and wives and not politicians.

2. Demand side or institutional process of candidate selection

The recruitment of candidates within political parties for the purpose of representation, calls for a specific process linked to the demand factor. As it is used in economic sciences, “*it is the primary mechanism by which a political party decides whether an individual has the qualities needed to become an elected representative and perform the role well*”²⁷, the demand side therefore calls for a specific qualification for eligibility of potential political candidates. This implies that those who do not fulfil these requirements are automatically disfavoured as potential candidates. The demand side therefore include the basic qualification required to be selected, but

²⁰ Mino Vianello, Mary Hawkesworth (eds.). 2016. *Gender and Power: Towards Equality and Democratic Governance*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. 44

²¹ Bochel and Denver. “Candidate Selection in the Labour Party”. Quoted by Pippa Norris; Joni Lovenduski. 1993. “If Only More Candidates Came Forward’: Supply-Side Explanations of Candidate Selection in Britain”. *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 23, No. 3.P 390

²² *Ibid.* P 390

²³ A phrase used by Pr Hamadou Adama (Department of History, University of Ngaoundere).

²⁴ *Ibid.* P 390

²⁵ Jane S. Jensen (auth.). 2008. *Women Political Leaders: Breaking the Highest Glass Ceiling*. Palgrave Macmillan US. P 7

²⁶ Interview Mme Fatime Abdou on the 6th of September in Rey Boubou

²⁷ Silvester, J. 2012. “Recruiting politicians: Designing competency based selection for UK Parliamentary candidates”. In: A. Weinberg (Ed.). *The Psychology of Politicians*. (pp. 21-38). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0521113725. P 2

however, those selected are usually individuals that distinguished themselves with their sense of motivation, organisational skills, professional experiences, personal engagement in a given political party and so on. For purpose of precision, we will first study the candidate required qualifications (2.1); and the degree of women engagement in political parties (2.2).

2.1. Required qualifications

The demand of a particular good is usually done by the consumers of that product which are political parties. The users most often (political parties), seek for the best that will satisfy his needs. The same requirement is witnessed in the demand of political candidates recruited to represent a specific political party. Thus, a minimum qualification is demanded for people aspiring to run for political leadership and decision making. Parties have generally supported women as candidates based on expectations that it gives them an advantage in their competition against other parties, and in light of policy issues rooted in social change and shifting voter preferences. The professional qualifications, the level of education and the political socialisation of aspiring candidates are most often required for aspiring candidates. Women in this country faces some difficulties in the demand side of candidate selection. An author confirms this situation by the following statement which says, *“The influence of gender on recruitment can be treated as a product of demand, if the selectors employ direct or indirect prejudice against women...that parties have been reluctant to nominate women in winnable seats because selectors are directly prejudiced against women candidates. Or because. Indirectly. They fear women may lose votes.”*²⁸ Recruitment goals in some political parties in Cameroon in general, highlight the qualities or merits of those who rule or govern. For storm, *“to win the prize of government, entrepreneurial politicians need extra parliamentary party organizations. Successful political parties require extensive organizational capabilities. Such organizations are designed to meet the different needs faced by aspiring politicians under competitive circumstances”*²⁹. This is just to express the fact that an aspiring politician need extra organisational capacities which women in this country do not possess unfortunately in abundance to challenge men. The selection criterion for some political parties is to choose people with abilities to govern. Still in the same vein, according to Pippa Norris, *“On the demand-side the model assumes selectors choose candidates depending upon judgements about applicants. There are a wide range of factors which may enter these evaluations, including assessment of personal character, formal qualifications, and political experience”*³⁰. From empirical evidences, it is a reality that most women in this country lack the personal character which is one of requirements of candidate’s demand criterion simply because they are not so much interested in political matters and as consequence, they lack this demanded quality.

Besides, the lack of quality education at a high level is a factor identified in this country that has limited both women’s involvement and their ability to speak effectively once elected. However, this is changing as a result of an emphasis on equal opportunities in education and more women having access to tertiary education. Family responsibilities and the practical difficulties of balancing family commitments act as barriers to participation and to furthering their careers. Those appointed in local political leadership functions, had a previous record of work as a party worker at the grassroots level and at senior levels within the women’s wing of the party at the sub-division, division, and even at national levels before being considered for appointment. This climb to the top is not an easy one, their struggle often not being rewarded until they are between 40 and 60 years of age. Academic achievement is also a prerequisite for entry into local government (councils’ management, the parliament and the senate) as it is the necessity to perform well at the selection interview. Even within the various women’s wings training is not provided on leadership or local government. The level of education and accumulated social capital contributes to the reproduction of the ruling class in most political parties. Here, the recruitment of party leaders is done by replacing the existing leaders by their off springs. This *“Cultural capital can be accumulated from earliest childhood on, without any loss of time or substance, only where the entire time invested in family upbringing is at the same time a period of accumulation”*³¹. The more educated a potential candidate is, the most likely that candidate will be demanded as a potential candidate to run

²⁸ See Elizabeth Vallance. 'Women Candidates in the 1983 General Election'. *Parliamentary Affairs*. 37 (1984). 301-9; Jorgen Rasmussen. 'The Electoral Costs of Being a Woman in the 1979 British General Election'. *Comparative Politics*. 15 (1983). 461-75; C. Martlew. C. Forester and G. Buchanan. 'Activism and Office: Women and Local Government in Scotland'. *Local Government Studies*. 11 (March/April 1985). 47-65. Quoted by Pippa Norris; Joni Lovenduski. 1993. "If Only More Candidates Came Forward": Supply-Side Explanations of Candidate Selection in Britain". *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 23, No. 3. (Jul., 1993), pp. 373-408. 390

²⁹ Kaare Strom, 1990, "A Behavioral Theory of Competitive Political Parties". *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (May, 1990), pp. 565-598. Published by: Midwest Political Science Association. P 575

³⁰ Pippa Norris, Joni Lovenduski, 1995, *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge University Press. P 107

³¹ Bourdieu P. 1983. "Ökonomisches Kapital, kulturelles Kapital, soziales Kapital," in R. Kreckel (ed.) *Soziale Ungleichheiten*. *Soziale Welt, Sonderband 2*. Göttingen: Otto Schwartz & Co.: 183-98; Engl. "The (three) forms of capital," in J.G. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research in the Sociology of Education*, New York & London: Greenwood Press 1986, pp. 241-58 (Reprint in A.H. Halsey, P. Brown and W.A. Stuart (eds), *Education, Culture, Economy, and Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997, pp. 46-58). P 49

for an election for a political party. This prestige is most often reserved to the boy child in this country and particularly in the northern regions dominated by patriarchy, because their fathers prepare them as their future heir at the detriment of the girls. The boys are therefore well trained for working life, this gives them an advantage over the girls. The consequence is a small number of women available fit for the demand of female candidates to stand for an election in a given political party.

In addition, most political parties especially those well-structured such as the CPDM has a considerable number of women selected to political leadership positions. This is because, most civil servants are members of this political parties since it is the governing party. The consequence is that, most of the women with formal qualifications easily get their way into this political party. The reverse is true for the other political parties because the few qualified women are not readily available to offer their services for other political parties. The analysis of this situation however demonstrates the difficulties of women in the demand side of political leaders because they lack the necessary formal qualification that interest most political parties in this country. In the case of Vilfredo Pareto (1980), the concept of recruitment is similar to circulation. First, the ruling class is not homogeneous. It has its own government and a more restricted class, a boss or a committee that dominate effectively and practically, which is the selected class of government. This will explain the condition of social reproduction that will propels mostly boys in replacement of their fathers because they possess the formal qualifications to run political parties' activities. For elected political offices such the parliament, Sociocultural hindrance on the *"demand-side explanations suggest the social bias in parliament reflects the direct and imputed discrimination of party selectors, the key gatekeepers in gaining access to good seats"*³². The scarcity of women in parliament can however be the resultant of the discrimination of political candidates especially women, by party selectors who are great gatekeepers for their political ascension.

Also, the previous experience of a candidate constitutes an advantage on the demand side of candidate's selections. The candidate's previous experience is a vital resource for recruiters of political leaders within political parties. Potential political leadership aspirants are required to have at least a minimum job experience in order to be competitive on the supply market for recruiters. Unfortunately, women from the country in general and particularly those in the northern regions, especially from the rural areas totally lack experience because of their low level of literacy which cannot enable to afford for an administrative job. One of the structural theories deals with the "political pipeline". Women have not been active in the traditional professions that lead to political office. The argument presented is that the careers of law or business give candidates access to resources, skills, and a social network to help them mount a successful campaign. In our societies, women really lack the necessary experience to be as competent as men when it comes to political experience, that is why, an observer argued that, *"women's prior experience at the periphery of political and professional networks may reveal to them that although political elites do expend extra social and political capital on some recruits' behalf, those fortunate recruits tend to be men"*³³. Men tend to be favourites as far as the demand side of political candidates is concerned. The fact that women are not well represented in administrative career due to low level of education may influence their motivation to present themselves as potential candidates like men do in this country. The demand of female candidates to run for political functions may be high, but the supply will be limited due to the absence of the managerial skills they could acquire as civil servants which constitute the demand side requirements, if they were actually employed in civil services or they were engaged in economic businesses, they could have been competent as men. It is therefore a clear evidence that the candidate's previous experience in public or private offices are expected to have developed some political expertise such as communication skills, practical knowledge of government and social contacts, which will be very useful in gaining a seat and to hold a political responsibility as a political leader. A professional career is therefore usually required, even though, not all political leaders pass through these criteria to hold a political office. With a particular reference to the northern regions of the country, most women do not possess these previous, experiences because of reasons mentioned earlier related to cultures that favour the education of young boys at the detriment of young girls. The situation is even worse in the rural areas because, women in rural areas may not run, because they do not have access to certain resources (social, financial and intellectual. Often there are few challengers in the general election and women receive little support when attempting to run against challengers. The fact that few women have access to skilled jobs, their reduced number do not satisfy the demand side of female political candidates. An interview with Aziza and her mates clearly demonstrates the influence of candidate's previous experience is very important for the demand of female political leaders as she revealed that in their area, *"women face difficulties to gain access to professional jobs in town as well as in rural areas because only boys have the privilege to further their education and this give them*

³² *Op cit.* P 54

³³ Daniel M. Butler & Jessica Robinson Preece. SD. "Recruitment and perceptions of gender bias in party leader support". Washington University in St. Louis. P 8

access to professional jobs”³⁴. The difficulties women face in achieving a professional career is a barrier to their political leadership because previous experiences are an advantage for the demand side of political candidate recruitment. Experiences being a quality demand side for aspiring political leaders in a given political party, authors like Mino even claimed “*that historically, women have rarely been leaders. Traditionally, with some notable exceptions, leadership has been synonymous with masculinity. One explanation offered is that women lack the personal and experiential qualities of leaders...*”³⁵, this situation is therefore existent in most democracies as we noticed it in our research field. Evidences in most democracies worldwide has proven that, elected politicians especially in legislative functions are people who possesses a certain degree of intellectual level and also a job experience as Norris observed that, “*legislatures worldwide include more of the affluent than the less well-off, more men than women, more middle-aged than young, and more white-collar professionals than blue-collar workers*”³⁶. This demonstrates the fact that these categories of people possessed the necessary experience from their previous occupation to run political leadership offices. In the same manner, “*previous experience in political office is a common measure of a politician’s quality, in particular in studies of U.S. politics*”³⁷, this is to say that previous experience as an elected political officials is also one of the most important demand side requirements as those experienced in political leadership are more likely to produce expected results during elections. Therefore, previous political experience is an advantage as it reduces the demand’s side hindrances linked to “*the demand factors which mean that, if they apply, they are not accepted by selectors ('He’s not locally known', 'She’s not got the right speaking skills', 'He would not prove popular with voters')*”³⁸, are a sort of sceptic voting behaviour of some voters. The knowledge of a politicians as a result of his or her previous political experience especially for popular politicians, their demand is high within political parties for candidacy recruitment. Empirical evidences from field work demonstrated the fact that there was a kind of party transhumance amongst some political party members. This is because experienced politicians are likely to bring about innovations in demanding political party. During our interview with Mr ZABE TIRAKOU, who declared that they were, “*recruiting new members, but that they were demanding in priority those possessing an acceptable experience in the domain of politics be it for men or women*”³⁹, we realise here that past experience is an advantage for candidates.

Still in the same direction linked to the demand of candidates to represent political parties for elections, the “*demand-side explanations may be equally plausible, if party selectors are most strongly attracted to applicants with considerable time and energy to invest in the constituency campaign, plus relevant experience, financial sponsorship, useful political skills, and a good network of contacts*”⁴⁰, the advantages linked to experience are beneficial to recruiter since experienced candidates possess the necessary political network, skills, financial resources and even time, things that women do not possess in great quantities. The result is that less women are demanded by political recruiters.

Also, previous experience of party candidates in no profit making organisation is also an advantage because, the “*involvement in 'civil society' activities is also common among political leaders, especially in top positions in non-profit organisations. This is true for all groups of countries considered, and there are no significant gender differences*”⁴¹, non-lucrative experiences in civil societies give candidates important connections which are needed by recruiters for campaign purposes. The demand for political candidate’s requests that, their managerial experiences are important for political party leaders even though most women in this country are not in possession of these required qualities, only male candidates possess these qualities. Therefore, if we consider candidates’ previous experiences as an important factor for candidate recruitment in political leadership within political parties, women in this country are disfavoured because just a small number possess these qualification, to be eligible for the demand side of political candidates by recruiters (Political parties).

The last but not the least, we also have female elitism as a source of demand for political candidates. Elite theory’s origins lie most clearly in the writings of Gaetano Mosca (1858- 1941), Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), and Robert Michels (1876-1936). Mosca emphasized the ways in which tiny minorities out-organize and outwit large majorities, adding that “*political classes*” Mosca’s term for political elites usually have “*a certain*

³⁴ An interview with Aziza on the 2nd of August 2017 in Poli

³⁵ Mino Vianello, Gwen Moore (eds.), 2000, *Gendering Elites: Economic and Political Leadership in 27 Industrialised Societies*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. P 6

³⁶ Pippa Norris. (ed.). 1997. *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies*. New York: Cambridge University Press. P 6

³⁷ Olle Folke and Johanna Rickne, 2014, “*The Glass Ceiling in Politics: Formalization and Empirical Tests*”. IFN Working Paper No. 1034. P 14

³⁸ Pippa Norris, Joni Lovenduski, 1995, *Op cit*. P 15

³⁹ Interview with Mr. Zabe Tirakou on the 14th august 2018 in Beka

⁴⁰ Pippa Norris, Joni Lovenduski, 1995, *Op cit*. P 143

⁴¹ Mino Vianello, Gwen Moore (Eds.). 2000. P 68

*material, intellectual, or even moral superiority” over those they govern*⁴², this is true when we experience the situation of women in the northern regions, because they do not possess the material, intellectual and even moral superiority to fulfil the demand requirements of a political leader. We realise from empirical evidences that there are not many women elites in this country due to cultural consideration that do not enable them achieve the material, intellectual skill through formal education, technical training and political socialisation to assume a political function. Pareto also postulates that in a society with truly unrestricted social mobility, “*elites would consist of the most talented and deserving individuals; but in actual societies elites are those most adept at using the two modes of political rule, force and persuasion, and who usually enjoy important advantages such as inherited wealth and family connections*”⁴³. From experience in this country, women are deprived from these economic resource since they do not inherit (the case of the northern regions), they lack the necessary managerial skills and the required political qualities to aspire running for a political leadership responsibility. A satisfactory profile of the position covered by a good curriculum vitae of the political candidate gives more chances to men than their subordinate women colleagues that they shadow by their intellectual talent.

2.2. The degree of women’s engagement in political parties

The degree of an individual’s engagement in a political party reinforces his or her attachment and confidence within the party and favour his or her demand as potential candidate who can be recruited to represent the party during a given election for a political function. From daily observation, we realise that the most active members in different political parties are those who possess time to run the different activities linked to party operations. In practice, we realise that, men are those mostly engaged in the management of political parties. This is obvious because they have time to take care of the daily activities of their parties whereas women have limited time to devote to political parties because they are most often occupied with domestic activities. This dual burden of domestic and public activities disadvantage women who cannot give full time occupation to their political parties. This burden is accentuated with the prominence of sex division of labour in the country in general and more particularly in the three northern regions, where there are constant comparisons between men and women duties in our societies, “*to understand objectively the division of labour it is not enough to develop the substance of the conception we have of it. We should rather treat it as an objective fact, to be observed and comparisons made*”⁴⁴. This natural distribution of social functions leaves just a small time to women to take care of public activities. The little women time engagement in most political parties is a factor that hinders their selection as top leaders in political parties. This is because the demand requirement for candidate recruitment to represent political parties during elections requires that an individual will have to devote enough time for the wellbeing of the party, but unfortunately women face difficulties to give full time to party activities due to the dual burden linked to domestic responsibilities and public activities.

Besides, the longevity of an individual as a member of a given political party constitute a critical demand requirement for candidate recruitment. The criteria tied to individuals’ history of involvement in the party is most often rewarded by the recruitment of this individual as a candidate for a given political party. Hence, the “*Lengthy political and party engagement is a characteristic of political leaders (both elected and appointed)...Men have spent more time than women in both general political activities and party activities*”⁴⁵, this give them more advantage on women especially in the northern regions particularly in some regions (Far North, North, Adamawa) because the history of women in politics is very recent. Women from these regions, do not have long history in the different political parties existing in this region, the consequence is that they are disfavoured during party recruitment of political candidates since they lack the necessary experience due to their recent history as members of political parties. The time spent by most women in political parties is as a result very short. This situation can be explained by the timid integration of women in most political parties and also because for a long time, politics was considered as a “*dirty job*” and even a man’s job, due to these considerations, women were less likely to gain interest in politics. As consequence, we have just a small number of women who have spent a long time in most political parties present in this country. This criterion disfavors most women wishing to run for political leadership, since in most cases, the time spent in a particular political party is designed to give priority to those who are most committed to and familiar with the party views and values. This criterion also serves as a safeguard against those who may simply want to use the party as a vehicle to secure a position in an elected office. Typically, the required potential candidate must have one or more of the following: *a minimum length of service or membership in the party; all membership dues paid to date; and to have made contributions to the party as an officeholder or through other types of activism*. Unfortunately, most women in Cameroon do not possess these recommendations, and consequently the recruitment mechanisms

⁴² Mosca, G. 1923/1939, *The ruling class*. New York: McGraw-Hill. P 51

⁴³ Pareto, V. (1915/1935). *The mind and society. A treatise on general sociology*. New York: Dover. P 2051

⁴⁴ Emile Durkheim. 1984. *The Division of Labour in Society*. Palgrave Macmillan. P 7

⁴⁵ Mino Vianello, Gwen Moore (eds.). 2000. *Op cit*. P 68

linked to a member’s history in a given political party disfavours them as far as the demand side of candidate recruitment is concerned.

III. WOMEN RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT IN POSITION OF AUTHORITY

The appointment of citizens of a country in general and women in particular in prestigious governmental political functions demonstrates the wellbeing of democracy and power sharing between the different people who makes up the country. From our observation of the members of government in Cameroon, we realise that women are poorly represented in position of power. Traditionally, women in positions of power are women who hold an occupation that gives them great authority, influence, and/or responsibility. From the experience of most democracies, *“historically, power has been distributed among the sexes disparately. Power and powerful positions have most often been associated with men as opposed to women”*⁴⁶. This demonstrates the discriminatory recruitment mechanisms due to the gender of an individual. In this sub-section, we are going to study the recruitment mechanisms of women in top administrative functions of the Cameroon government. To better elucidate this state of the situation, we will study the fictionalization of political function (1), and also, Women nominated in territorial administration (2).

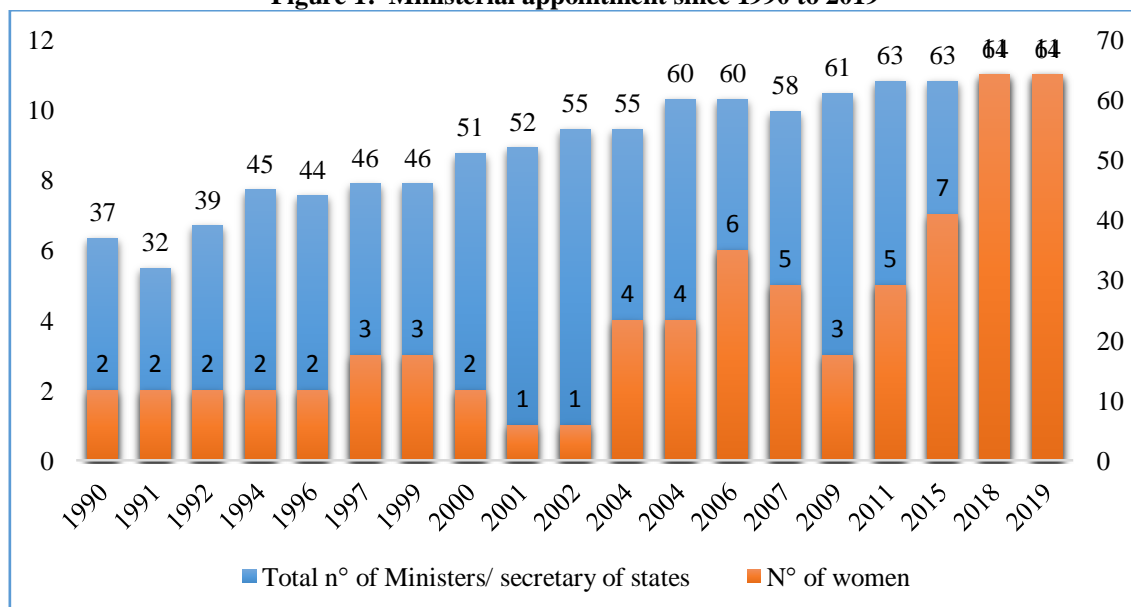
1. The fictionalization of political leadership

The political ascension of women in some political functions is done by their appointment by the head of government that is the president of the republic as concerning Cameroon. Since independence, the members of the government are generally recruited amongst high status civil servants and most often those working in government public services, those of the private sector are hardly chosen. Women are not left out of this political leadership function, considered as a discretionary power reserved to a small portion of the population. Empirical evidence from our country demonstrates that non-certificated women are excluded from this function (1.1), and also, those appointed are selected according to their political performance in the government (1.2).

1.1. The exclusion of non-certificated women from the function of minister

Existing figures on the number of women assuming ministerial functions in the Cameroon’s government demonstrates a very presence and in the same manner a poor visibility of women in appointed political functions. From the advent of democracy since 1990, the number of women though on an increasing scale, remain low in comparisons to their male counter parts. The table below best explain the situation.

Figure 1: Ministerial appointment since 1990 to 2019



Source MINATD archive 2019

A look at the configuration of the ministerial personnel in the Cameroon’s government demonstrates the scarcity of women in ministerial function. This is to say that the level of education seems to be a key requirement for ministerial recruitment. *“Education influences the social mobility of women. Formal education*

⁴⁶ Hartsock, N. 1990. Foucault on power: a theory for women?. *Feminism/postmodernism*. P 162.

such as provided at educational institutions created opportunities for leadership, and imparted leadership essential skills"⁴⁷. This is an evidence when we look at the personal profile (professional career) of women appointed minister from 1970 to the last cabinet appointment (04 January 2019)⁴⁸. This can therefore be analysed as an exclusion of women in Cameroon in general and those in the Northern regions particularly in some regions (Far North, North, Adamawa) in particular who were deprived of education in the past, did not benefit from a quality training which could have propelled them to high political functions. The quasi absence of women in ministerial functions in some regions of the country is consequently, a result of their past poor educational background since the appointment of an approximately trained individual as minister will really be scandalous because of his/her poor managerial abilities will surely affect work and relations with collaborators who are most often university graduate or the product of prestigious administration schools like ENAM. According to Michels the political recruitment of individuals in leadership function appears purely as co-optation, which he calls, "*conciliatory methods*"⁴⁹. This implies that those recruited are firstly civil servants, and secondly, they need to distinguish themselves by their professional and managerial skills, coupled with a good political connection to attract the attention of the head of state who is charged of appointing ministers after their recruitment in government's public service. Unfortunately, from present experience women are not appointed in great numbers especially from the northern and East regions (Far North, North, Adamawa and East) because as far as the demand and supply theory is concerned, the north region supply less women with the required academic qualification and previous experience in government service. To address world wide variations some scholars observed that, "*The first concerns the structure of political institutions, which influence the degree to which nominators may feel pressured to include and place women in less conventional portfolios. The second focuses on a gender equality ethos created by both women's status in society and government commitments. The third argues that women's presence among political elites shapes both the supply of, and demand for, more and non-traditional female cabinet appointments*"⁵⁰. This is to say that women who distinguish themselves in their administrative or political domain may likely attract the attention of the government officials who may propose them for ministerial functions. The reality from empirical evidence demonstrates that women from the northern regions of Cameroon possess less social capital to be considered as political elites. Worldwide experience has proven that the majority of ministers have been to university or to a college of higher education and that both female and male minister's look rather similar in their educational levels. This is to say that it is a competitive political function that do not give way to favouritism but rather competence. Since women due to the social construct of female inferiority in our societies are not appointed in large numbers in this political functions due to the demand requirements. Besides, with regards to educational level, minister's degree(certificates) is considered to matter in the type of portfolio which they are appointed, since education may shape the individual's skills, knowledge, and his/her performance in cabinet. Worldwide evidence demonstrated that for, "*all cabinet ministers between 1991 and 2012 have had at least some university education. Political elites are predictably better educated than the general population*"⁵¹, this demonstrates the influence the level of education has on the demand and supply of candidate appointed in cabinet function. From the experience of Cameroon, we realised that some particular portfolios were headed by ministers trained in that domain, for instance the ministers of finance is an economic graduate, the minister of Livestock's, fisheries and Animal industry is a veterinary doctor, this is to say specific qualifications are required for a particular position in the cabinet, unfortunately, women from this country were not so much trained in technical domains in the past. So, one may expect that in relevant portfolios due to their high profile or their high technicism, President or Prime Ministers will appoint ministers with higher education. More precisely, one could think that particular field of study are more influent than others, since some relevant portfolios may need a specific knowledge, mostly in finance, or economic background. Ministers with this field of education are more likely to be appointed in relevant portfolios.

Besides, previous occupation follows the same logic, members who are recruited from outside politics are often viewed as specialist with little attention for the party political dimension. This is to say that an individual's experience even out of the government service may attract government attention for an eventual appointment as member of cabinet. A clear example is Alamine Ousmane Mey, the former General Manager of Afriland First Bank, appointed as minister of finance in the Cameroon government. Women from this country

⁴⁷ Renuka Choudhary. 2018. "Issues and challenges of women participation in politics". *National Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development, India. Volume 3; Issue 1. P 345*

⁴⁸ The different women appointed ministers from 1970 to the last cabinet appointment 04 January 2019, all the women were high rank civil servants.

⁴⁹ Michels, Robert (1969). *Los partidos políticos. Buenos Aires: Amorrortu. (Original title: Zur Sociologie des Parteiwesens in der modernen Demokratie, 1911). P 204*

⁵⁰ Mona Lena Krook & Diana Z. O'Brien, 2012, "All the President's Men? The Appointment of Female Cabinet Ministers Worldwide". *The Journal of Politics, Vol. 74, No. 3, July 2012, Pp. 840-855. P 842*

⁵¹ Keith Dowding, Patrick Dumont. 2014. *The Selection of Ministers around the World. Routledge. P 144*

and particularly those in the northern regions do not possess the expert skills that can propel them. For instance, *“in countries where women have made substantial inroads into politics, there may be a greater supply of potential female appointees. At the same time, women’s presence may contribute to a breakdown of traditional gender norms”*⁵². This therefore implies that women who are active in the political milieu with a good managerial skill stand a greater chance to be nominated in a ministerial cabinet. This disadvantage woman because very few are engaged in political activities, and also most of them lack technical skills due to cultural hindrances which limit their level of instruction and consequently their supply for appointment in ministerial functions.

Furthermore, the competence of individuals in their administrative domain positively influence the demand side, for their appointment in ministerial functions. Those who distinguish themselves in their area of competence, mostly known as elites are likely to be appointed as minister. That is why an observer mentioned that, *“in terms of eligibility, the social differentiation of political elites is a good indicator of social mobility and openness in access to elite positions”*⁵³. From daily experience, we realise that ministers who are not active politicians, are selected based on their expertise in a particular policy area rather than on their past political experience, and the most specialized portfolios are also a relevant one (such as finance, economy...). Thus, it is therefore evident that the elitism of an individual in a profession stance a greater chance to be appointed as a cabinet minister. However, women are hardly political elites in this country because they are not given the necessary condition to become an elite due to the feminisation of poverty. For the European experiences, *“Not only do they recruit part of their cabinets according to criteria of personal loyalty or involvement in the presidential campaign; they can also rely on their networks to assess the executive experience of regional political or administrative elites”*⁵⁴, but from the experience of Cameroon, it is difficult for most women, since they lack the experience due to unemployment as a result of poor education and also because they do not possess a network on which they can rely. From empirical evidences and when we look at the actual ministerial configuration of Cameroon, we realise that *“the configuration of ministerial background can be a good indicator of some important features of elite recruitment”*⁵⁵, with reference to the experience of Cameroon, this statement is true because most of the ministers in Cameroon are political elites in their regions or villages. However, the construction of women’s inability to run important political functions have influence women’s representation in cabinet appointment in the Cameroon government, leading to a low demand of female appointment in ministerial functions.

1.2. Women’s political performance

Politics is a very demanding job. It is difficult for most women to have achieved high laurels in their respective fields and also be a full time politician. It is therefore logical to say that ministers should have experienced a professional career as a civil servant or an independent self-employed, since it would be very difficult to find professionals from all fields. The selection of political leaders is also a consequence of the political performance of some individuals. In most literatures, scholars have considered that, the political background is important regarding ministerial positions since the skills and abilities acquired within a previous political career might be transferred into the cabinet. Political background can be divided into three different blocs: experience in political office, seniority and experience in party office.

First of all, the experience of an individual in elected office, as De Winter (1991) points, *“positions in local, regional government and parliamentary positions or previous ministerial experiences help toward a ministerial career”*, this is to say, some previous experience and also work performance influence the choice of the head of government in appointing ministers. Some authors have defined the parliament as *“the most socialisation agent to ministers”*. Thus, in most countries the parliament is a training school where politicians acquire knowledge and skills and are often made to specialise in specific fields. So, one could expect that experience in political office offer skills and connections in order to be appointed into a relevant portfolio. Probably, experience in parliament is more important than other electoral areas as regional or local, however, these two also are routes towards a ministerial appointment in some democracies. Admittedly, there are large variations across different countries. As far as our country is concerned, from the list of actual member of government, we realise from empirical evidence that administrative performance of some women like Minette Libon Likeng, was the source of her promotion as minister of telecommunication due to her successful management of the customs service as General Manager, being trained as a magistrate from ENAM (*National School of Administration and Magistracy*). Unfortunately, from some regions, women really lack the

⁵² Mona Lena Krook & Diana Z. O’Brien, 2012, *“All the President’s Men? The Appointment of Female Cabinet Ministers Worldwide”*. *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 74, No. 3, July 2012, Pp. 840–855. P 843

⁵³ Keith Dowding, Patrick Dumont, 2014, *Op cit*. P 144

⁵⁴ *Ibid*. P 17

⁵⁵ Keith Dowding, Patrick Dumont, 2014, *Op cit*. P 89

administrative and the political experience to perform ministerial functions for the social reasons. Male education is preferred to female education and the consequence is that less women are qualified since they lack the necessary experience as civil servants and also parliamentarians.

Besides, a long experience in a given domain of public life otherwise called seniority, defined as the number of years in political office is an important demand requirement for ministerial appointment but the supply is rather low. Those experienced in public services or elected in office for many years could arguably be regarded as being in a sense more “accomplished” in politics than those who had been in the position for short periods. As De Winter (1991) argues that, it may also be that a long parliamentary tenure before reaching the government is sign of relative failure, but it is also an indicator that the politician concerned is a “true” parliamentarian and is first and foremost a parliamentarian. The same logic of experience in political office is applied to seniority, that is, non-seniority ministers may be regarded as not being experienced, and probably they have no institutional power (especially if they do not belong to the leadership circles of their party) to be in relevant portfolios.

Furthermore, activism related to party office is another demand requirement for eligibility in a ministerial appointment, cabinet government is also considered as party government, since one could find a fair number of “party representatives” in cabinets. Therefore, the holding of a position in the national party hierarchy may constitute a determining factor in order to obtain a ministerial post. Thus, not surprisingly, party leadership positions may be an important factor for ministers to achieve relevant portfolios, since they are the parties’ decision-holder, and also can influence in the allocation of ministers in portfolios. However, one could expect that this variable is not equally across gender, since most party leaders and top-level cadres are men, the result is that female could find it difficult to access to the relevant portfolios by party office.

Above all, there is a strong link between previous background and political background to fill the requirements of being appointed as a minister. It is interesting to see whether ministers who had previously acquired some skills in education, job or political office are likely to return to that of their specialisation. One could expect that those who have had such a specialisation career or an appointment before may obtain a relevant portfolio. President or Prime minister can see relevant portfolios as crucial portfolios in their government, so they will tend to appoint specialized ministers in order to guarantee a higher quality of policies. From empirical evidence, the present Cameroon government demonstrates that the experience of an individual is somehow a significant predictor of ministerial appointment. For instance, in Cameroon, all the ministers are experienced civil servants, technicians or politicians.

2. Women nominated in territorial administration

The presence of women in territorial command is also another call for concern, when we look at the small number of women in charge of regions, divisions, etc. In recent years, the inclusion of women in these (functions) of administrative political institutions is also recognized to encourage civic engagement among citizens. However, in exploring this effect of representation, we focus here on women’s presence in these territorial command functions, although descriptive representation could be important in many places in the polity. We will however focus our attention to study the different requirement necessary for women or any other citizen in the appointment mechanisms in the posts of senior divisional officers and divisional officers (2.1), and also, the lack of gender equality in political leadership remains a fundamental problem, as women continue to be largely absent in the prestigious functions of governors and government delegates (2.2).

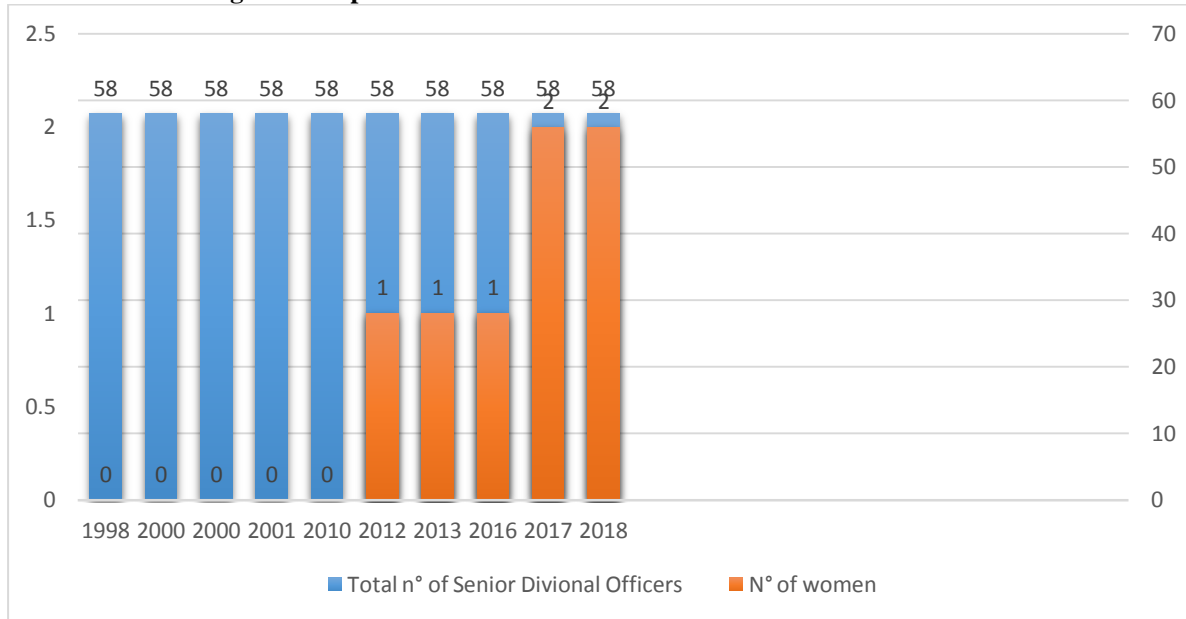
2.1. Senior Divisional Officers(SDO), and Divisional Officers (DO)

The actual configuration of territorial command in Cameroon demonstrates that women are not so much integrated in these posts of responsibilities. Many reasons explain the low representation of women in these administrative leadership functions. The most important reason is the educational background of women, because getting access to these functions can only be fulfilled by the individual’s level of education. This function is achieved through official recruitment. The recruitment mechanism here goes through a whole administrative procedure that open access to a limited number of individuals. In the public administration in Cameroon especially the territorial command, non-certificated individuals are totally excluded from the race to these functions. Women happen to be more concerned in some regions of Cameroon because of different reasons mentioned earlier beginning from early marriages, school dropout and so on. We can explain the limited number of women in these functions as a result of low parental investment in the young girls’ education, which is the sine qua non requirement to assume these administrative functions. Right now, available statistics on the number of women trained in the Cameroon national school of administration and magistracy is still very low. This partly justifies the quasi absence of women of some regions in these administrative functions.

For Senior Divisional officers, the number is really insignificant from statistics of people appointed. Right from independence, the first woman was appointed Senior Divisional officer in 2012 and second in 2017

for a total number of 58. The first woman appointed to that function was Mme Nzongo, née Nyambone Antoinette, and the second female SDO is Mme Rachel Nga Zang. The figure below tells us more.

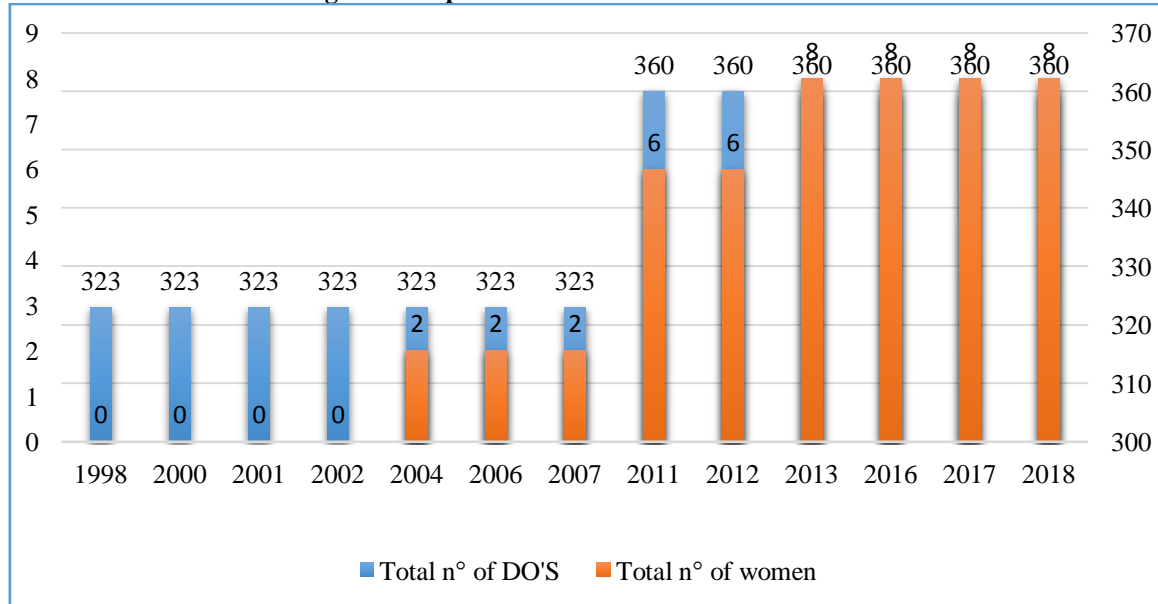
Figure 2 Proportion of females Senior Divisional Officers 1998 to 2018



Source: MINATD 2019

The same situation is witnessed for women Divisional Officers women are still not visible. For a total number of 360 Divisional Officers, the number of women has not yet exceeded 08. The figure below also tells us more about this women’s deplorable situation as far as territorial command is concerned.

Figure 3 Proportion of females Divisional Officers



Source: MINATD 2019

Besides, even though the recruitment is open, without any discrimination, to any Cameroonian, however, a numbers of conditions are laid down by current legislation. The conditions of access to the Civil Service in general are different according to whether civil servants or "contracted workers" are involved. The main method of recruiting civil servants is either by title or by competition, based on the principle of equal rights of access to public employment. Public sector employees subject to the employment laws are recruited under contract after a successful entry in a training school. Most women in this country have a low literacy rate, this consequently contributes to their low representation. Civil servants occupying these functions are product of the only school in charge of training administrators (ENAM) in Cameroon. The access to this school is achieved

after the candidate has been successful in the “Baccalauréat” or the General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level (GCE A/L), for the B category and the “Licence” or Bachelor, and being successful in the competitive entry examination. This selection process is so selective that girls who have not attained a certain level of education cannot gain access to these prestigious administrative functions in the government. The consequence is that we have few women in Cameroon in general in these functions and particularly those of the northern regions, who are particularly affected by school dropout at early ages.

Furthermore, after training in this school, only those who distinguish themselves by their organisational skills and managerial talents found themselves appointed at the head of divisions and subdivisions. Several empirical studies suggest that the appointment of individuals in territorial command in Cameroon, is based on meritocracy. Another plausible explanation for this appointment pattern, proposes a simple theory in which the complementarity arises because connections foster loyalty of junior officials to senior ones, allowing incumbent top administrative leaders to select competent administrators to divisional and sub-divisional officers. Enhancing an increasing number of women from this country in this administrative political function can only be possible through a good academic background that will guarantee their success during the competitive examinations. Although the 21st century has seen unprecedented career advances for women, they still remain underrepresented at high management levels in the public administration as a whole and as Divisional Officers in particular. The other lens is one that stresses the lived experience of women in public administration. These biases include barriers that arise from cultural beliefs about gender and workplace practices that unintentionally favour men. The dearth of women's political leadership representation therefore raises the concern about how such a deficiency affects citizens.

Above all, from empirical evidence without getting in the heart of the government's secret in appointing citizens in these particular functions, we realise that the male model of politics linked to the masculine domination of the state management, women are not given the necessary confidence by the government to rule in these functions of political leadership. Up till date, only a few received this confidence from the state and the number is even worse in some regions of the country, since we notice that there are only two women S.D. O nationwide, and eight women D. Os.

2.2. Governors and Government Delegates

The presence of women as regional heads and government delegates is still a dream, till date (2020), nationwide. This is because, up till now, no woman has ever been appointed as governor nor government delegate (before 2020, since government delegates are now elected as city mayors). As far as the function of governors are concerned, the selection and appointment criteria is not different from that of divisional and sub-divisional officers, that is after a successful entry to ENAM, the national school of administration. This is to say, only 10 out of many are chosen to run the 10 regions of Cameroon. We therefore realise that it is a competitive administrative political function reserved to those with a great managerial skill and a good political connection. Once more, as it was said earlier, non-certificated women are totally excluded from this administrative political function. The recruitment of regional governors in Cameroon begins with a competitive examination, that is the same examination for D. O's, in the national school of administration, with a minimum of a bachelor degree obtained in a recognised university. After training from this national school of administration, some are appointed as D. O's, and later promoted to S.D. O's and only a minute amongst the rest are appointed regional governors, probably for their competence and administrative experience. Given that most women in this country are not given the adequate opportunity to further their education due to cultural considerations limiting the women's influence at home and not in public administration, the consequence is that very few women gain access to the training school and right now no woman has ever been appointed governor in the history of Cameroon, due to the fact that they are culturally disfavoured due to the construction of female inferiority, advised to work in services linked to the socials that is teaching and health.

Besides, this function demands a charismatic leader with a good mastery of political management to be able to govern a whole region. Also, a good governor is someone who has a good social network due to their active presence in public coupled with the appropriate competence to withstand pressure from the population. From empirical evidence, not everybody has the required qualification to assume the function of governor in Cameroon since only ten citizens are appointed for the ten regions. This therefore implies that it is a tough administrative political leadership function which is not open to everybody and women are not yet thrust by the Cameroon government as far as regional management is concerned, since a governor represents the power of the state and the head of state in the region under his responsibility. Politics and administrative functions being a battle ground for democracy, the race is open for women to battle in order to attain this function through their administrative and political experience. Unfortunately, women in this country are not yet given the administrative thrust to run a region for the moment demonstrated by their total absence in this administrative political function.

Furthermore, the same situation is observed for the post of government delegates in the ten regions of Cameroon which is not only an administrative function but a very important political leadership functions since they are the one working with the different councils of the region. Up till date (2020), no woman has ever been appointed to this political function for different reasons ranging from education which is specific to the northern regions and also political notoriety, engagement and competence. In the same way, the government delegates of Cameroon are people who have attain an acceptable educational standard. Therefore, this implies that non certificated individuals are not granted access to this prestigious administrative and political functions. Since government delegates are those in charge of leading mayors who were exclusively men recently, the appointment of a woman to lead men was really farfetched. Even though women are gradually getting access to the function of mayors, no woman in the history of Cameroon has ever been appointed government as delegate nationwide. This function is also reserved to well drilled political leaders with a great political experience, know-how and managerial competence and also a good social connection with the population of their respective regions of origin. Social connection, competence and political experience are considered as those important demand requirements for government delegates appointment for the ten regions of Cameroon, unfortunately, we however realise from field work that, women from this country are not well integrated in activities related to politics. The few capable of taking on this particular political function are men, simply because women from this country lack the necessary experience in the administration and in elected political functions for the demand side of government delegates recruitment leading to a poor supply side of women, due to the weak necessary social connection and network to assume this political function. **From 2020, government delegates are henceforth voted and not appointed and they are called City Mayors.** This slight change in designation of government delegates still do not favour women since they are voted amongst mayors, where the majority are men. The fact that women find it difficult to be appointed as mayors still worsen the situation as it will be difficult for women to stand for competition against men who have monopolised the political landscape to get this function.

Above all, to the above mentioned reasons, the total absence of women in these functions is also due to the social construction. The biological distinction of task naturally attributed to men and women, that is, the sexual division of labour, with gender role even in public service is specific to the African culture in general and Cameroon in particular. Specific functions are reserved to men (political and administrative functions) and others to women (household responsibilities, teaching, secretary and health for those recruitment in the government). Women are not allowed to get involve in public activities outside their home for long hours, this constitute a great hindrance for them and even discourage the government to appoint them for this particular political leadership function. Men are the only one in charge of protecting their societies, and those who dispose of power and resources, while women are mostly in charge of taking care of their households. We can therefore automatically confirm with the least doubt that women are excluded from administrative and public power, but specialised in social activities and functions. The almost nonexistence of women in the territorial command in Cameroon, can be attributed to the African culture that prohibit women from exercising power over men in the society in general and also in public administration since men are dominant in these functions, this is the fruit of social construction.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper has as aim to shed light on the under representation of women in political leadership functions and also their presence in the appointment of high rank political and administrative executives. Specifically, the study seeks to disentangle the factors that led to this low presence. From our analysis, we realized that the recruitment mechanisms applied disfavour women who do not possess the necessary requirements to be competitive. From empirical evidence, we realized that regarding supply factors, the analysis shows that the higher the admission of women in higher education, the higher will the number of competitive women in elected political functions (mayors, parliamentarians, senators etc) and in the same manner there will be in cabinets as ministers and also in top administrative functions. As party organization matters for the appointment of women to cabinets and elective functions, as it is the case in Cameroon, a voluntary quota will correlate positively with women's representation in the executive. Though there is a limited number of women in decision making bodies in the Cameroon's political landscape, a slight change is being witnessed as the number of women attaining high political functions as ministers is on a steady rise. Moreover, the most striking problem women face in entering politics is culture, a change in mentality in favour of women may ameliorate their situation as far as political leadership is concerned.

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**Corresponding Author: Dr TAOYANG WARAI Michael
Assistant Lecturer in Political Science (Department of Political Science, Faculty of Law and
Political Science/ University of Ngaoundéré, Cameroon)*