

CHAPTER II

POLITICAL COMPLEXITY OF CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

In this chapter, the writer will provide the information about the political complexity of Central African Republic that will be related in answering the analysis of this research. Previously, the writer will provide general overviews of the Central African Republic such as geographical, socio-cultural and also economical overview that somehow influence the political complexity in the country.

A. General Description of Central African Republic

1. Geography of Central African Republic

As its name, geographically Central African Republic (C.A.R) is located in the center of Africa continent with 3,512,751 people as its population. It is bordered by several neighboring countries like Chad in the north area of the country, Sudan in the northeast area, South Sudan in the east area, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Republic of Congo in the south area and also Cameroon in the West area of the country (Central African Republic - CAR - Country Profile).

The capital city of this country is Bangui which is located in the southern area. The country occupies the area of 622,984km² which consists of flat to rolling plateau 600 meters-700 meters above sea levels with geographic

coordinate 7 00 N, 21 00 E, scattered hills in northeast and southwest, mainly savannas, the Sahel covers the north, forest and savanna eco-region in the south (Central African Republic - CAR - Country Profile).



Picture1. Central African Republic Map

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ct.html>

Since C.A.R is located in the middle of Africa continent, it does not have direct access and claim to the sea. However, there are several rivers located in the country like Oubangui River that is formed by Mbomou River and Ulele River which also forms the southern border and flows through capital Bangui and then south to the Congo basin. It is an important transport route in the country. Other

river which flow in the western regions of the country is The [Sangha River](#), while Nile River also flows in the eastern border of C.A.R.

The Central African Republic is also located near from the equator. It makes the climate of this country typically tropical hot, followed with dry winters and also wet summers. The country also has several mount which rise in the northeast to the Bongos Massif area, extending to an elevation of 1,330 meters at Mount Toussoro, and to the Tondou Massif in the east. In the west of the country there is Karre Mountains, reaching nearly 1,410 meters at Mount Ngaoui, the country's highest point, before declining eastward into sandstone plateaus. In the north, the most significant mountains are those of the Dar Challa range, which rise to 1,326 meters at Mount Ngaya near the border with Sudan. In the southeast is a plain cut by a number of rivers (Thomas E. O'Toole, Lynn Giles-Vernick, & van Hoogstrate, 2016).

2. Socio-culture of Central African Republic

Central African Republic has an official name which is the *République Centrafricaine* (C.A.R). Before achieving its' independence, indigenous people of the country did not have any sense of belonging the same culture. They only thought or considered themselves as members of lineages and clans, and as villagers. Trading and intermarriage to war and enslavement were the only

reason they interact with people who had different languages (Thomas E. O'Toole, Lynn Giles-Vernick, & van Hoogstrate, 2016).

Since Central African Republic (C.A.R) was colonized by France, France was the one who did promote and introduce the ethnic and regional differences among the indigenous people. Under its colonization era, France also helped the indigenous people in creating an elite group. This group became the ruling group for the whole country and became the first introduction of political positions in the country.

Since then, regional affiliations started to emerge and increased the complexity of politic among these people. However, the non-riverine of the country preferred to resent this situation and chose to take their own leadership. Although people living in the country's northern regions have gained more political power since independence, southern peoples still remain an important presence in national politics (Thomas E. O'Toole, Lynn Giles-Vernick, & van Hoogstrate, 2016).

The majority of the people religions of C.A.R are Protestant and Roman Catholic while the others are indigenous beliefs and Muslims. There are many languages used in this country like French, Sangho, Arabic, Hunsa and also Swahili. However, since C.A.R was colonized by France, the official language

used by the people in the country is French (The World Fact Book, Africa : Central Africa Republic).

Social class in Central African Republic is distinguished by place where they live and do their jobs which also characterized the region into rural and urban. Power differentiated the bureaucrats from the governed. Those who are considered as the intellectuals and positioned in the upper class are the people with power, economic security, and high education. While people consider people in commerce and business, most of Muslims are positioned in the middle class of society (Culture of Central African Republic : history, people, clothing, women, beliefs, food, family, social, dress).

While in the scope of religious beliefs, people of Central African Republic have the low number in practicing their traditional religion in the country due to the spread of Christianity in the 1950s. The first missionaries of the religion established Saint Paul des Rapides as the first church in the capital city, Bangui, while Protestant missionaries who dominated by the American, arrived in the early 1920s (Culture of Central African Republic : history, people, clothing, women, beliefs, food, family, social, dress). However, Protestant Central African churches had divided into several factions as a result of competition for leadership. There are also syncretistic movements with traits from Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam. Islam is growing through immigration and conversion; boys sometimes convert to gain employment

(Culture of Central African Republic : history, people, clothing, women, beliefs, food, family, social, dress).

3. Economy of Central African Republic

Central African Republic could be indicated as one of the countries that has strong economic seen by unemployment and Inflation in C.A.R is in the position of lower ranks (Central African Republic : Economy).

Central African Republic is also a country in Africa continent that has rich natural resources like diamond, timber, forestry and fishing products. Agriculture is also one of resource that could be dependable as one of the economic sources. It plays the largest sector and the basis of the Central African economy, contributing more than half of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country followed by services, industry and manufacturing sectors (Central African Republic : Economy).

The government of Central African Republic also has been encouraging the people in developing agricultural diversification aiming to increase export products. Not only to the neighboring countries, another exports' destinations of C.A.R are of Tiongkok, Indonesia, Morocco and even France (OEC - Central Africa Republic Exports, Imports and Trade Partners).

However, C.A.R also has several weaknesses in its economy like the vulnerability of the economy to external shocks. Besides that, the location of

C.A.R in the center of Africa makes C.A.R faced geographic isolation which also influences to the weak transport infrastructures. Unstable political and security situation in C.A.R also became one of the factors that influenced the economic grow of the country which is resulting the withdrawal of donors and investors (Central African Republic / Economic Studies - Coface).

B. History of Central African Republic

1. Colonization Era

The colonization era of France toward Central African Republic (C.A.R) was started in 1880's. C.A.R was divided into 17 parts by France and offered to European companies in exchange for a fixed annual payment plus 15% of agricultural profit (History of Central African Republic - Lonely Planet Travel Information). At that time, France colonial administration began to force Central Africans to pay taxes and to provide the state with free labor for their own benefits.

During the first decade of France colonial rule (1900-1910), the rulers of African states in the Ubangi-Shari region increased their slave raiding activities and also their sale of local products to European companies and colonial state. They took advantage of their treaties with the France to get

more weapons, which were used to capture more slaves (Central African Republic - New World Encyclopedia).

During the second decade of colonial rule (1910-1920), armed employees of private companies and the colonial state continued to use brutal methods to deal with local populations who resisted forced labor, but the power of local African rulers was destroyed and so slave raiding was greatly diminished. While in the third decade of colonial rule (1920-1930) was a transition period during which a network of roads was built, cash crops were promoted, mobile health services were created to combat sleeping sickness, and Protestant missions established stations in different parts of the country. New forms of forced labor were also introduced, however, as the France conscripted large numbers of Ubangians to work on the Congo-Ocean Railway (Central African Republic - New World Encyclopedia).

During the fourth decade of colonial rule (1930-1940), cotton, tea, and coffee emerged as important cash crops in Ubangi-Shari and the mining of diamonds and gold began in earnest. The fifth decade of colonial rule (1940-1950) was shaped by World War II and the political reforms that followed in its wake. In 1946, the inhabitants of France-Africa were given the status of citizens and France government gave the territory representation in the France

parliament and allows local assemblies to be created (Central African Republic Profile – Timeline , 2016).

2. After Independence

In 1960, Central African Republic declared independence with David Dacko as the president. As the first president, he became repressive and dictatorial. Dacko turned the Central African Republic into a one-party state with Mouvement d'Évolution Sociale de l'Afrique Noire (MESAN) as the sole party (Central African Republic Profile – Timeline , 2016).

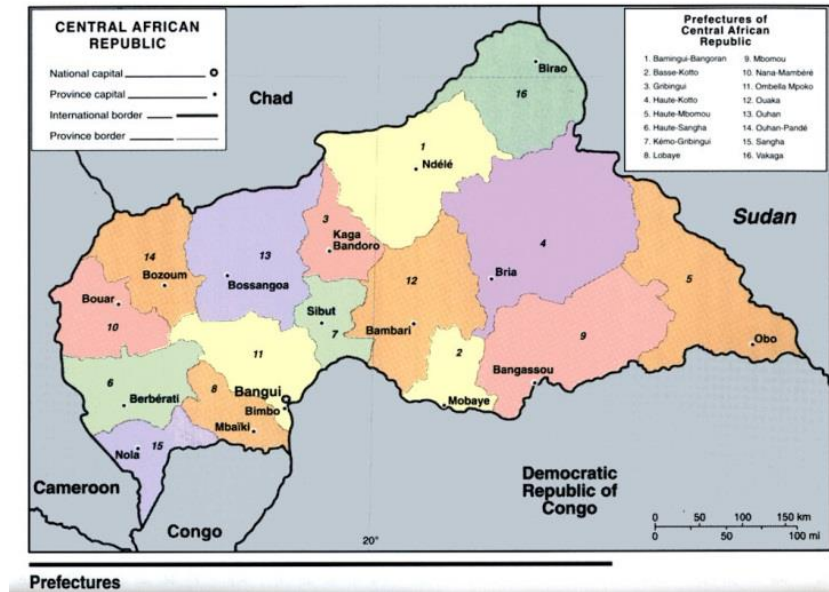
In 1965, Dacko was toppled down by an army commander, Jean-Bédél Bokassa. Under Bokassa's new administration, C.A.R faced 13 years of one of the most brutal and notorious regimes. He declared himself as president for life and proclaimed himself as emperor and renamed the country into Central African Emperor (Central African Republic Profile – Timeline , 2016).

However, 'unhealthy' political competition in C.A.R kept running. In 1979, Bokassa was ousted by a coup led by David Dacko. He gained his support from France and allowed its troops to enter the country. Under his administration, amnesty for all political party leaders declared and in 1986 Bokassa returned to the C.A.R from exile in France.

In 1991, political parties were permitted to be formed. In the end of 1992, multiparty presidential and parliamentary first elections was held by C.A.R resulting Ange-Felix Patasse as the new president after beating Kolingba and Dacko as the other candidates. The choosing of Patasse as the president was the ending of 12 years of military rule. France began to withdraw its forces from the republic. He even re-elected in 1999.

However, in 2000, oppositions group started to emerge and accuse Patasse of mismanagement and corruption deteriorates into riots (Central African Republic Profile – Timeline , 2016). Since then, the ‘unhealthy’ competitions of getting power started again and caused many rebels group emerged. It made C.A.R had been facing unstable political conditions (Central African Republic Profile – Timeline , 2016).

C. Complexity of Politic and Government of Central African Republic



Picture 2. C.A.R Prefectures Map

Source : <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/images/map-C.A.R-prefecture.jpg>

Central African Republic (C.A.R) is governed by a president as the head of state and a prime minister as the head of government (Central African Republic : Government). It is divided into fourteen *prefectures*, two *prefecture-economic*, and one commune. Each prefecture is governed by a local assembly called General Council (*Conseil Général*), presided by a Prefect (*Préfet*).

Like the other democratic states, C.A.R has three subsidiaries that are executive and legislative which is elected every six years and judicial which is

elected every seven years. While in the context of political party's participation, C.A.R has multi-party system which consist of several parties like Action Party for Development (PAD), Alliance for Democracy and Progress (ADP), Central African Democratic Rally (RDC), Movement for Democracy and Development (MDD), Movement for the Liberation of the Central African People (MLPC), National Convergence (also known as Kwa Na Kwa) or KNK, National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP), New Alliance for Progress (NAP), Social Democratic Party (PSD), Union for Central African Renewal (URCA) and other political parties (The World Factbook – Central Intelligence Agency).

In the executive branch, C.A.R was led by President Faustin Archange Touadera as the head of state and Prime Minister Simplicie Sarandji as the head of government. Based on its constitution, the president itself would be elected every 5 years. Toudera was elected on the beginning of 2016 after passing two rounds of presidential elections. The first round of the election was held on the end of 2015 placing him as independent candidate on the second position after Anicet-Georges Dologuele from URCA political party followed by other 28 candidates. While the second round that was held on February 2016 resulting him as the first position of presidential candidate (The Worldfact book – Central Intelligence Agency).

In the legislative branch, National Assembly of the country is positioned by 131 members directly elected in single-seat constituencies by absolute majority vote with a second round if needed and have 5 years for their serving period. In parliament, the seats was divided into 13 seats for UNDP, 13 for URCA, 10 for RDC, 9 for MLPC, 7 for KNK, 56 for independents 56, and 23 by other parties (The World Factbook – Central Intelligence Agency).

While in the judicial branch, the constitutional court of C.A.R consists of judges appointed for nine-year terms; it assists the Supreme Court and the [High Court of Justice](#). There are also courts of appeal, criminal courts, several lower tribunals, and a military tribunal. The judicial system is loosely based on that of France, with some traditional courts still operating on the local (sub-prefecture) level (Central African Republic – Constitutional Framework).

Getting independence after being colonized by France does mean Central African Republic had a stable government. Since its' independence, the people of Central African Republic (C.A.R) had experienced political instability for a long time. Following periods after its independence was the civil strife, dictatorial and monarchy government. Central African Republic's post-colonial history shows how the use of force has been the most effective

strategy to follow for those who want to occupy the country's highest office (Weyns, Hoex, Hilgert, & Spittaels, 2014)

Between its' independence and early 2013, five men have led the country as the president and transitional government always chosen to fulfill the vacuum of power caused by coups. However, most of them were overthrown in coups, sometimes with external involvement. Even when International pressure resulted a chosen president through an election of a civilian government in 1993, but like previous governments, the president became a misrule leader. Corruption by those in power has impeded the realization of the social and economic rights for Central African Republic's impoverished residents (Central African Republic : Legacy of Misrule , 2014).

'Unhealthy' political competition kept being continued in the country and could not be avoided. After David Dacko as the first president was ousted by the next presidents, C.A.R government was dominated by political competitions including military coup d'etat. The next presidents after Dacko was overthrown also faced the same coup when they were changed. Even when political party was legal in the beginning of 1991 and elections firstly conducted in 1993 resulting Patasse as the president, the eagerness to rule in the country could not be avoided which made 'unhealthy' political competitions continued (Central African Republic : Legacy of Misrule , 2014). The first [democratically-elected](#) president, Patasse had been staying in

power for a decade, until he was [ousted](#) by former army chief of staff Francois Bozize in March 2003 (Central African Republic).

Several rebel groups emerged like Forces for Unity (UFDR) and the largely unknown Patriotic Convention for Saving the Country (CPSK) doing political violence toward the citizens. Those groups also were the coalitions of recent conflicting parties (ACLED, COUNTRY REPORT: CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, 2015). The UFDR and the FDPC had signed peace agreements with the government in 2007 and 2008, under which the rebels would reintegrate into the army in ex-change for, in particular, payment to those who disarmed, and the release of political prisoners (Herbert, Dukhan, & Debos, 2013).

Under a new constitution made in late 2004 of Central African Republic, the president is head of state and limited to two consecutive five-year terms. The constitution also provided for a prime minister, a council of ministers, and a 105-member National Assembly. Assembly members are elected by universal suffrage for five-year terms. An economic and regional council and a state council advise the assembly (Central African Republic – Constitutional Framework).

Since in January 2013 rebels seized power and the president fled the country, the 2004 constitution was subsequently suspended, and government institutions were dissolved. An interim administration was created and

charged with restoring order to the country and organizing elections (Central African Republic – Constitutional Framework).

By using republic presidential as the form of government, the new constitution reformed in 2015. It provides for the creation of a senate and a national elections authority, as well as requiring decisions made by the president as the head of state and prime minister as the head of government to be approved by ministers, and for the government to inform the national assembly when a contract relating to mineral resources is signed (Central African Republic – Constitutional Framework).

In conducting international relations, there are nineteen countries have resident diplomatic representatives in Bangui, and the C.A.R. maintains approximately the same number of missions abroad (Central African Republic - New World Encyclopedia). Central African Republic also takes part in several organizations and bilateral relations. It is an active member in several Central African organizations, like Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC), and the Central Bank of Central African States (BEAC). C.A.R is also the participant of Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) and African Union. Outside of Africa, the C.A.R maintains its close relation with France as well (Central African Republic : Government). C.A.R also has bilateral relations with its neighboring countries like Cameroon, Chad,

Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo in terms of trading and even South Korea and United States of America in diplomatic relations.