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# The Diaspora and the Process of Economic Development in Cameroon

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## Abstract

The greener pasture syndrome erupts on the African continent in 1980s, two decades after attainment of independence for most former colonies from the colonial powers. Today in 2020, some forty years after, the syndrome continues to register more disciples from the continent due to economic hardships that threaten a greater portion of her population. Consequently, the movement of people towards the promise land from poor to rich countries across the world amplifies to the extent that some industrialised countries find themselves invaded by emigrants of all types. In Cameroon for example, this type of migration concerns the intellectuals who are not employed or those who are underemployed in the country. Cameroonian of this category often cross the national boundaries to Europe, Canada, United States [US] and as of 1990 South Africa [SA] to pick up jobs that can fetch them better salary package than what is offered at home. This paper employs the simple descriptive method of data analysis to capture the objectives of the inquiry using simple percentages, tables and diagrams to interpret the data. Besides, the paper generates its data from personal observations and structured interviews with community members and from secondary sources. And generally on arrival to destination, the Diaspora people team up in form of social ethnic groups or village associations to reflect on the problems besetting their relations and give a helping hand towards alleviating the living conditions of their people back home. Results of the paper reveal that these Diaspora alliances have rendered immense services to their respective communities as regards poverty mitigation in families, construction of private houses, and provision of social infrastructures such as first aid centres, school equipments and water supply points, on one hand. On the other hand, they have also inflicted severe harms to their communities back home. Thus, the paper recommends that the Government of Cameroon [GoC] recognises and incorporates the Diaspora potentials into the country's development strategies so as to accelerate its participation to the economic development equation and process of the economy.

**Keywords:** Community, Development, Employment, Migration, Poverty, Remittance

**JEL:** H31, O10, E24, F22, P36, F24

## 1. Introduction

Migration occurs in various forms and people migrate under different circumstances. African migrants are generally involved in intra country migrations between rural areas or from rural areas to urban centres, inter country migrations within the continent and overseas migrations between continents of the world. The economic

motive is mainly perceived as the common denominator to such movements even though isolated cases of political prosecution exist in some countries. In the past, the displacements of Africans were unplanned and mainly influenced by the slave trade. History retains that in the 17th century, this trade played a major role in relocating the Sub Saharan Africa [SSA] population to the large scale plantations of Americas. At that time, the folks who departed Africa under this form of trade for Americas were expected to serve economic interests of their masters or exploiters only.

Nowadays, most African migrations are calculated in advance with a specific target. This implies that migration in search of the promise land continues to remain a reality on the African continent. However, the nature of the current exodus is mixed rather than unique compared to what it was in the slave trade era. The global estimate for contemporary migration between countries is estimated at some 125 million people per annum (De Montclos, 2003). In 2007, worldwide international migration number stood at 258 million or 3.4% of the world population (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA], 2017). For the period 2000-2007, the number of international migration to Africa augmented from 15 million to 25 million (*Nations Unies* [NU], 2018:43), while migration to most industrialised countries [MICs] inflicts to Africa an annual average loss of 70 thousand skilled personnel (Commission for Africa [CA], 2005:27). The destination countries for the African Diaspora [AD] in general and Cameroonian in particular are Europe, Canada, US and recently from 1990 SA where there seems to exist greener pastures for the adventurers. The explorers of these new horizons hope to secure jobs that can fetch them better salary package than what is offered back home.

The type of migration involving Africans these days is especially tailored towards home benefit migration [HBM] as opposed to home cost migration [HCM]. HBM system consists of emigrants who are in permanent contact with their native soil and play a part in its development from various angles. On the contrary, HCM scheme encompasses emigrants who have lost contact with their origin and cannot directly participate in the advancement of their forefathers' land. HBM scheme pulls together the unemployed or underemployed intellectuals from the country of origin who, generally on arrival to destination, unite in form of social ethnic groups or village associations to reflect on the problems besetting their communities back home in order to proffer lasting solutions. From time to time, these Diaspora alliances render economic, political and social services to their home communities.

Even so, many less industrialised countries [LICs] seem to ignore the contributions of these emigrants and misunderstand the advantages of having them in other countries. The case of government neglect towards the migrants living abroad becomes fascinating, especially when the emigrants are critical of the government's policies at home. This has been denounced by most AD living abroad, including the Cameroonian Diaspora [CD]. On flimsy excuses fostered by the fear of loss of power, leaders in the countries of departure treat such vocal critics as enemies and a permanent threat to their administration. Among these critics, some have been prosecuted and assassinated abroad by mercenaries of their countries of origin. *Radio France Internationale* [RFI] (2019) reports the assassination on 16 May 1998 of Rwanda former Minister of Internal Affairs, Seth Sendashonga in Nairobi, Kenya, while Bornman (2018) mentions the assassination on 1 January 2014 of Rwandan dissident and former Chief of Intelligence, Colonel Patrick Karegeya in his room at the Michelangelo Hotel in Sandton, Johannesburg [JHB], SA and the survival of a number of assassination attempts of former Rwanda Chief of Army, General Faustin Kayumba Nyamwasa in JHB, SA by the Rwandan regime of President Paul Kagame. Also, Rolley (2019) of RFI reminds that on 15 November 2019 in an address to the nation, President Paul Kagame openly warned vocal critics of his administration considered by him as the enemies of Rwanda and solemnly reiterated over RFI his determination to deal with them summarily wherever they may be.

In 2003, worldwide gross inflows of remittances amounted to US\$200 billion, of which US\$58 billion went to MICs and US\$142 billion to LICs (Ghosh, 2006:14). In 2005, worldwide remittances were estimated at over US\$232.3 billion (World Bank [WB], 2006:88). In 2004 and 2005, LICs received US\$160 billion and US\$167 billion remittances inflows, respectively (WB, 2006:85). Remittances to LICs have increased substantially during 1990 to reach US\$325 billion in 2010 (WB, 2011 in Mohapatra & Ratha, s.a). Recorded remittances sent back home by LICs' migrants reached US\$240 billion in 2007 up from US\$221 billion in 2006 and more than double the level in 2002. The true amount of remittances were more than twofold the level of official

development assistance [ODA] flows to LICs in 2007 (Ratha & Mohapatra, 2007:1). In Europe; some 700 thousand emigrants from Albania remitted about US\$650 million per year, thereby providing 60% of the country's national income. In Latin America and the Caribbean Islands, migrants sent back home US\$30 billion in 2002 and US\$38 billion in 2003. This was more than the sums produced by foreign investment and public aid for development in the region (De Montclos, 2005: 14). More so, the European Investment Bank [EIB] (2006:33) showed that in 2003, remittances from migrants of some Mediterranean countries constituted 9% of gross domestic product [GDP] in Morocco, 5% in Tunisia and 4% in Egypt, 15% in Lebanon, and 22% in Jordan.

The economic contribution of the Diaspora alliances ranges from enhancing the living condition of individual families and construction of private houses to boosting the national income of migrants' country of origin. Between 2000 and 2003, African emigrants to overseas sent some US\$17 billion back home – an amount which exceeds foreign direct investment [FDI] flows for the same period by US\$2 billion (United Nations [UN], 2005 in AllAfrica, 2019). In 2010, official remittances to Africa stretched to US\$40 billion doubling the amount received in 2005 and more than quadrupling the US\$9.1 billion received in 1990 (Ratha *et al.*, 2011:50-51). Furthermore, Somali surveys anticipate that total remittances received from migrants before the 1996 war exceeded US\$800 million per year if commercial transactions and private financial transfers to other Somali communities in the Horn of Africa are taken into account and that out of this amount US\$360 million were private donations to family members. These family donations provided more than 22% of households' resources in the country (WB, 2003:109). In The Comoros, migrants officially send home roughly US\$20 million per year and this sum is equivalent to the state's resources (Guebourg, 1995). In Cape Verde, the number of people living abroad is by far superior to the number of home residents and the remittances from Cape Verdeans in the West remained a major asset to the country's economy, totaling US\$67 million in 2000, US\$72 million in 2001, US\$68 million in 2002 and US\$64 million in 2003. In Lesotho, remittances by migrants attain 50% of the gross national product [GNP], 90% of the value of imports, nearly 1400% of exports in the 1980s (De Montclos, 2005:16, 44). These financial transfers provide 80% of the income of rural households in the country (Sembajwe, 1993: 160).

The emigrants' community abroad also plays a political role both in their countries of origin and destination. The Somali Diaspora [SD] plays a significant role in her war ravaged country, and is involved in various aspects of the peace process. Similarly, Cape Verdeans abroad pave the way for the demise of the one party system in 1991 and also sustain the fight for the country's independence from Portugal. Albeit these honours, ADs have also endorsed troublesome activities to their countries of origin. Some have overtly supported armed conflict and illegal businesses. With regard to armed conflicts for example (De Montclos, 2005: 28, 43), the Eritrean embassies in MICs received financial support from their emigrants to sustain the country's border hostilities with Ethiopia in 1999 (Koser, 2002). Conversely, ADs have used unofficial remittance networks to introduce fake currencies, elude exchange controls and finance illicit activities such as prostitution, selling of drugs, smuggling of people and contracting deals in armaments across boundaries. For instance, only 16% of the Senegalese *Modou-modou* remittances pass through Western Union (De Montclos, 2005:44). Likewise; close to 67% of Nigerian emigrants in US remit money home through family members or associates who are travelling back home (Egbe & Ndubisi, 1998), while in Cameroon 87% of migrants participate in the *Njangi* [Self Help Credit Associations: SHCAs] as the most effective way to remit money home (Weiss, 1998). Sum up, it was for instance observed that in SSA, official financial aid movements oscillate significantly over years, whereas remittances remain steadier than both ODA and FDI from year to year. Therefore, there is the need to appreciate the effects of remittances on recipient countries.

However, the literature on remittances offers little evidence about the contribution of the Diaspora in the area of social infrastructures such as first aid centres, school equipments and water supply in Africa. This article seeks to fill this vacuum at a time where governments across the world are instructed by the Bretton Woods's institutions to align their policies with the globalisation agenda and are alongside cut in the cobweb of the international financial crisis. Consequently, the globalisation agenda requirements and the 2008 international financial and economic crisis constitute two major challenges for the developing world. The first test emerges as a result of a collective fear for the outbreak of a potential disaster around the globe if adequate measures are not taken in

advance to enhance the condition of people living on the planet given the demographic explosion of the world population that feeds on fast depleting natural resources. The globalisation agenda identifies 11 millennium development goals [MDGs] as major areas of concern in the 21st century for man's development on earth. Goal 7 of the agenda in its target 10 undertakes to offer access to improved water and sanitation services to people by halving the proportion of people without access to clean water and sanitation services by 2015 based on the 1990 thresholds. As a result, CA (2005) reports that Africa received assistance worth US\$25 billion, only 0.1% of high income countries GDP from donor countries to enforce the globalisation agenda. Yet the progress report on the agenda shows that Africa requires double that amount by 2010 in order to meet MDGs. On the other hand, the second test relating to the financial and economic crisis is unplanned and has also affected donor countries. The fundamental question that arises now is to know what strategies governments have designed and how far have they gone to attaining the golden objective of making basic social amenities accessible to the vast majority of mankind. The case of Cameroon retains the attention in this paper.

This study stands to benefit many groups. First, the study anticipates creating awareness on the process of social infrastructures provision and distribution to the public. Second, the study exposes the dynamism of CD in the nation building process. Third, it underscores the challenges of CD towards achieving this process. Therefore, the main objective of the paper is to examine the contribution of the Diaspora to the process of economic development in Cameroon. This objective is achieved through the following specific aims by:

- Appraising the Diaspora developmental projects realised,
- Scrutinising the problems and concerns of the Diaspora, and
- Counselling on better ways of encouraging economic development process in Cameroon.

The paper is hooked on 5 sections. Following the introduction which focuses on the background and objectives in Section 1, the theoretical framework on economic development is discussed in Section 2. The methodology of the study is explained in Section 3. Section 4 trails with the data analysis and discussion of results of the study. The conclusion, recommendations and shortcomings of the paper are presented in Section 5.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

Some time ago, economic development was used to mean economic growth and development. After witnessing situations of significant economic growth rate and physical expansion in some economies across the globe, enameled with miserable living conditions of people, a distinction between economic development and the other two rival concepts became obvious as follows. Economic development occurs when the society enjoys an economic condition of significant reduction in income distribution inequality, the rates of unemployment and poverty or in at least two of the three social vices. Economic growth is an economic state of simple annual rise of at least 5% in the national income of an economy, which may not automatically filter down to the ordinary people in the economy. Development describes an expansionary phenomenon taking place in a person, family, an institution or an area as a result of imperceptible or discernible actions. Consequently, Pieterse (2010:7) argues that economic development is a comprehensive cure for advancement and triumph of mankind prosperity that takes into account wealth increase, resources control, industrialisation, economic growth, social and political modernisation, human opulence, broadening of people's choices, and globalisation through deregulation, liberalisation, and organisational rebirths. Nevertheless, economic growth is essential for the attainment of economic development.

### **2.1. Theories of Economic Development: 1500s-1940s**

The trade restriction model or mercantilist school of thought [MST] was the first model of economic development conceived to understand mankind progress on earth. It influenced the activities of man from 1550 to 1775 and viewed economic affluence of an economy as the attainment of steady balance of trade of the economy through trade monopolies, implementation of protectionism via tariffs and egoistic laws, undertaking of exchange in gold and silver, and conquest of colonies to control industrial raw materials. Overall, the running of these activities stimulated the European industrial revolution which freed Europe from the yoke of feudal society. De Monchrétien (1891), Steuart (1767), and Mun (1664, 1621) are the pioneer mercantilist authors.

Nonetheless, the freedom MST secured for communities restricted production, productivity, growth and the overall wellbeing of the society for only few individuals benefited from the trade gains at the detriment of the masses.

The criticisms waged against MST led to the proposal of an alternative model of economic development by Smith (1776)–the free trade model [FTM], which conquered the economic life of the world from 1776 to 1780s. FTM encouraged trade with no restrictions, division of labour, specialisation, limited government interference, and rivalry to boost up the creation of goods and amenities for the enhancement of people's living standards in the society. Yet the ambitious plan of the model for humanity confronted a major human challenge, a discrepancy between the natural resources at disposal and the number of people to feed on them, which preoccupied everybody in the society. Upon meditation on this worry, Malthus (1798) developed the resources constraint model [RCM] of economic development, underlining that human posterity is endangered by desires and extravagances for the world population is increasing in geometric progression, whereas food production is growing in arithmetic order.

The teachings of RCM gained currency from 1780s to 1790s before conceding to Ricardo (1817)'s comparative advantage model [CAM] of economic development and the *laissez-faire* model [LFM] of economic development of Menger (1976), Walras (1899), Marshall (1890), and Jevons (1871) who consider market mechanisms and marginal state interference in the economy as the paramount alternative for effective and efficient distribution of wealth among rival productive economic actors. LFM bases its argument on the assumptions that markets are perfect, prices adjust automatically through the forces of demand and supply, consumers are sovereign and economic agents are selfishness when making decision. The argument of LFM earned universal respect across the globe till 1929 when the world economy got asphyxiated by the great depression before admitting the limits of the market forces to adjust spontaneously in the long run. The Keynesian economics model [KEM] of economic development proposed by Keynes (1936) argues that these limits reveal the key role of state intervention through the implementation of fiscal or monetary policies in stabilising the economy against undesirable and uncertain economic situations that can take the economy hostage at any moment.

## **2.2. Theories of Economic Development: 1940s-1980s**

The period 1940s–1980s was dominated by the linear stages models [LSM] of economic growth such as the Harrod-Domar model [HDM] developed autonomously by Harrod (1939) and Domar (1947) and Rostow's stages model [RSM] designed by Rostow (1960), as well as the structural change models [SCM] of economic growth such as the Lewis's theory of economic development [LTD] of Lewis (1954) later on extended by Ranis & Fei (1961), Jorgenson (1961) and Fei & Ranis (1964), and the patterns of development empirical analysis [PDA] of Chenery & Syrquin (1975), Chenery & Taylor (1968), and Chenery (1960). Being an expansion of HDM, the Solow growth model [SGM] put forward by Solow (1956) adds technology and labour input to the growth function. Consistent with SGM, economic growth of an economy depends on either increase in the stock of capital (Savings and investments), increase in quantity and quality of labour (Population growth and education) or technological improvements (Labour saving, capital saving, labour augmenting, capital augmenting). The model explains that in the short run economies with higher rates of savings (MICs) grow faster and tend to converge to higher per capita income levels as opposed to economies with lower savings rates (LICs).

These models perceived economic growth as a sequence of successive stages through which all economies must pass in order to grow. The main assumption of the theories is that the accumulation of the right amount and combination of savings, investments, foreign aids and the appropriate polices were the necessary components to trigger economic development. By joining the available human and physical resources with right domestic and international policies, the desired structural changes towards economic development were experienced in contemporary MICs. This can also be achieved in LICs if their internal advantages and the external constraints mirrored to them by MICs as development opportunities in the form of transfer of technology, development assistance or financial aids are handled with caution for most domestic and international decisions inducing economic development are marginally controlled by LICs.

The period 1960s-1980s steered international dependence revolution models [IDRMs] of economic development as alternative to LSMs. Scholars like Rodrik (2008), Stiglitz (2002), Easterly (2001), Wallerstein (1980), Cardoso (1977), Amin (1976, 1974), Galeano (1973), Dos Santos (1973, 1969), Rodney (1972), Franck (1967), Sunkel (1966), Baran (1957), Higgins (1956) and Boeke (1953) fervently defend the ideals of IDRMs in their works. The models were a more radical and political movement that blamed the state of underdevelopment in LICs on the unfair dealings between MICs and LICs in the form of bossy and needy relations through institutional, political and economic rigidities at both the domestic and international levels, presence of dual economies and dual societies in the world. The growing number of independent countries and rise of a class of elites inspired by a sense of collective fate in LICs in 1960s conditioned the rebirth of the theory of economic development across the globe. The false paradigm model (FPM), neocolonial dependence model [NDM], and dualistic development model [DDM] are perceptible in this group.

Whether radical or moderate, the main argument of IDRMs of economic development is that external and internal institutional as well as political constraints are the main factors hindering economic development in LICs, hence the need for new policies such as diversification of employment opportunities, bridging income inequality gaps, eradication of poverty that conform to the realities of LICs rather than the application of sophisticated and imported models from MICs to LICs, revolutionary campaigns of industrial nationalisation and an inward orientation in LICs to get rid of the international and domestic economic control of oppressors, rejection of inappropriate or irrelevant concepts and models of capital-output ratios, savings, investment ratios and growth rates of GDP of MICs to adopt concepts and models applicable to LICs' realities, the elements of superiority to pull up the elements of inferiority from their conditions.

In response to IDRMs supporters, Lipton (1977) proposed the urban bias model [UBM] of economic development arguing that countries experience underdevelopment due to the premeditated discrimination between rural areas and urban centres. Usually, more developmental projects and investments are by design undertaken in urban centres contrary to rural areas. This gives urban residents the opportunity to be more organised and politically powerful than rural dwellers, thus prompting villagers to migrate to towns in search of better job opportunities, crowd out of the informal sector employment and contribute towards the increase of social vices in cities. To remedy this situation, Streeten (1979) suggested the basic needs approach [BNA] to economic development as a critique of the macro level of economic growth theories in addressing the problem of economic development. Consequently, BNA postulates that for a country to witness economic development, it must abate mass deprivation, give everybody the opportunity to live a decent life by accessing human vital needs: food, education, clothing, shelter, and medication; albeit the threshold for mass deprivation reduction is undefined.

### **2.3. Theories of Economic Development: 1980s-1990s**

The market fundamentalism model or neoclassical counterrevolution [MFM] dominated the period 1980s-1990s. Lal (1985), Bauer (1984), Little (1982), Balassa (1982, 1971), Krueger (1978), Bhagwati (1978), and Johnson (1971) are prominent writers who have broadly debated the free market approach [FMA], public choice approach [PCA] or new political economy approach [NPEA], and market friendly approach [MFA] of MFM in their works. FMA challenges the model of public ownership, planning and control of economic activities by the state through erroneous pricing policies, misallocation of resources, corruption, and emphasises the important role of free markets, open economies and privatisation of inefficient public enterprises to stimulate growth and economic development in LICs.

Conversely, PCA or new political economy approach [NPEA] credits the government of doing nothing right and argues that the intervention of the government in the economy only leads to misallocation of resources and confiscation of private property, which in turn culminates in reduction in individual freedoms. PCA recommends minimal involvement of the government in economic activities of the economy as the best option that can facilitate economic development. Midway, MFA denounces the presence of markets imperfections in LICs, mainly in the areas of research and development, environmental outcomes, investment coordination, and

acknowledges the role the state could play in facilitating the operation of markets through market friendly interventions: creation of a suitable atmosphere for private enterprise and investment in social amenities (Roads, schools, health facilities...). Citing the success stories of countries like Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea as specimen, these theories argue that market fundamentalism is the key to economic development for LICs. The significance of these three missing components paved way to the development of the endogenous growth model [EGM] and the coordination failure model [CFM] of economic development.

#### **2.4. Theories of Economic Development: 1990s-2015**

The early years of 1990s to 2015 correspond to the period of contemporary models of economic development and underdevelopment [CFM, Big push model, O-Ring model, Hausmann-Rodrik-Velasco decision tree model]. These new theories draw on the arguments expressed by the classic theories of economic growth and economic development showing that development is possible but harder to achieve in LICs for today there are more obstacles than ever before on the path of economic development of LICs. The main argument of the new theories is that for a successful development to occur there must be an effective and efficient coordination or complementarities among the various stakeholders of the development process.

MDGs agenda stresses on eight universal values that affect humanity and threaten its existence due to the multiplier effects of the globalisation process of the world. Having perceived the dangers looming their economies in terms of unwanted migration, financial pressures on the state budget to cover social insurance benefits of migrants' children, unemployment grants to jobless people, and persistent needs for assistance in domestic affairs of LICs as a result of poor living conditions of people in these economies, MICs put in place MDGs agenda to reverse the trend of events; while giving the impression that they are concerned with the economic progress of the entire humanity on earth. The agenda proposes (i) to halve the rate of extreme poverty and hunger by providing full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people between 1990 and 2015, (ii) to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, have completed at least a full course of primary education, (iii) to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and in all levels of education by 2015, (iv) to reduce child mortality rate by 67% between 1990 and 2015. The other four remaining points of the agenda focus on (v) reducing the maternal mortality ratio by 75% between 1990 and 2015 and offering universal access to reproductive health by 2015, (vi) combating and reversing the incidence of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases by 2015, (vii) ensuring environmental sustainability through reduction of loss of environmental resources, biodiversity loss, and 50% reduction of the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015, and (viii) developing a global partnership for development through predictable, nondiscriminatory trading and financial system with a commitment to good governance both nationally and internationally, holistic appreciation of debt problems to make debts of LICs bearable in the long term, provision of essential drugs at affordable rates to LICs, making available the benefits of information and communication technologies to LICs (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2014). Successes have been recorded around the globe with respect to the goals of the agenda but in general the targets are far from being achieved for LICs, hence the passage as of 2016 to the 2030 agenda of sustainable development goals [SDGs].

#### **2.5. Theories of Economic Development: 2016-2030**

The passage from the 2015 MDGs to the 2030 SDGs is a testimony that the millennium development targets set for humanity against 2015 have not been achieved to expectations for MDGs achievements were unevenly distributed across the globe both thematically and regionally. Furthermore, it is observed that MDGs only applied to LICs, but the scope for SDGs is universal taking all United Nations [UN] member countries into account with a more detailed plan of action for the universe. The new posture with the 2030 agenda for SDGs is to draw a plan for collective prosperity in a sustainable ecosphere where mankind can live fruitful, exciting and pacific lives on earth (Woodbridge, 2015).

SDGs agenda is a universal 5Ps action plan focused on people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership, set to overcome human misery and generate prospects for all by the year 2030. The 17 SDGs can be grouped with

respect to each of the 5Ps of the action blueprint as follows. The goals for people's concerns are: goal 1 on ending all forms of poverty everywhere; goal 2 on ending hunger, attaining food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture; goal 3 on ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all generations; goal 4 on guaranteeing inclusive and impartial quality education and encouraging lifetime learning prospects for all; and goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Others goals in that series include: goal 6 on warranting the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; goal 7 on safeguarding the access to cheap, dependable, bearable and modern energy for all; and goal 8 on promoting sustained and inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all (UN, s.a).

The goals addressing planet concerns range from goal 13 on taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; goal 14 on protecting and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development to goal 15 on guarding, restoring and encouraging sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably managing forests, fighting desertification, ending and reversing land degradation, and stopping biodiversity loss. The goals alluding to prosperity fears are accommodated in goal 9 on edifying resistant infrastructure, supporting inclusive and viable industrialisation and fostering innovation; goal 10 on narrowing inequality within and among countries; goal 11 on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; and goal 12 on ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns (UNDP, s.a). The goal referring to peace anxieties is goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, offering access to justice for all and fashioning effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; whilst goal 17 on reinforcing the means of implementation and renewing the global partnership for sustainable development captures the partnership torments of the agenda (UN, 2019).

In 2020, just four years away from 2016, considerable efforts have been observed in the implementation of SDGs. A wide array of actors including the scientific community, civil society, local authorities, international organisations, and businesses are committed to SDGs agenda in a *modus operandi* that breeds optimism in the scheme for the forthcoming 10 years. Still in line with this hope, at least 150 countries have developed national policies to address the challenges of rapid urbanisation. Besides this, the European Union [EU] and other 71 countries have put in place at least 300 policies and instruments in support of sustainable consumption and production. Furthermore, countries are making concrete arrangements to protect the planet as marine secured zones have doubled since 2010; working openly to dampen unlawful fishing. Also, 186 countries have endorsed the Paris Agreement on climate change, and almost all of them have disclosed their first national resolute donations for the pact. From the human perspective, the under-5 mortality rate dropped by 49% between 2000 and 2017, immunisations saved millions of lives, extreme poverty waned drastically, and majority of the people on earth now has access to electricity (Guterres, 2019 in UN, 2019: 2). Yet these efforts need to be collectively upheld in order to realise the 17 SDGs in totality.

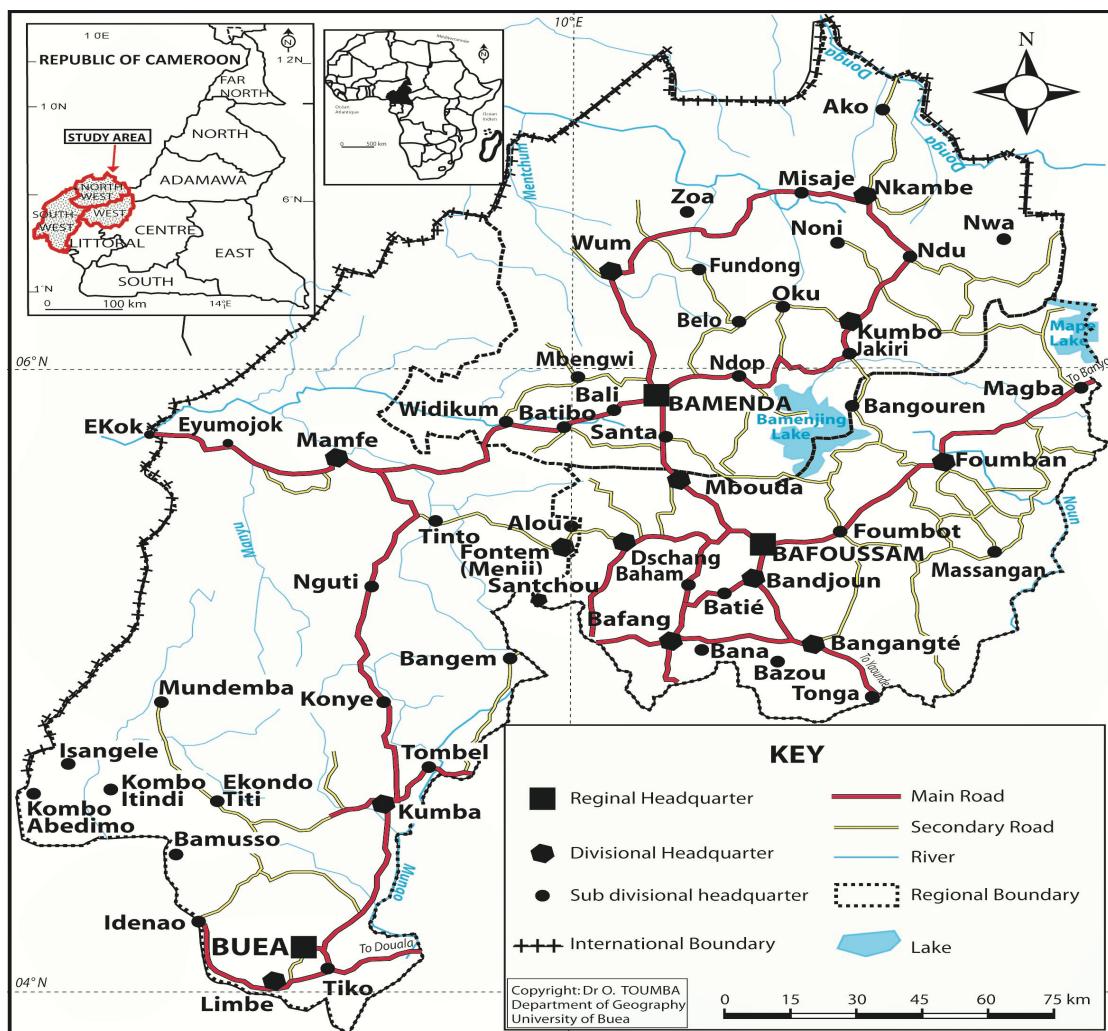
## 2.6. Synthesis of Economic Development Theories

A perusal of the classic theories of economic growth and economic development reveals two opposite views of the state of underdevelopment in LICs. On one hand, the underdevelopment is perceived as an externally induced phenomenon owing to oppression of the international capitalist system and MICs. On the other hand, it is regarded as an internally induced episode mainly associated with poor policies and excessive government interventions of LICs. Also, given the pertinence of issues exposed by IDRMs and MFM, one can infer that these theories are very much aware of the ideological views, economic conditions, and problems of LICs contrarily to the posture presented by SCMs and LSMs of economic growth as regards LICs' realities. Yet no single model of economic development can be proclaimed as universal and suitable in all situations because every LIC has different realities in spite of their common characteristics. In the end, one can argue that the theories so far examined seem to be contradictory. All the theories reviewed are significant and provide in one way or the other insights for the understanding of the dynamic process of economic development for each possesses weaknesses and strengths.

In summary, IDRMs reject the claims of previous models of economic development so far studied to lay more emphasis on international power imbalances and the need for fundamental economic, political and institutional reforms at both the domestic and international levels. In extreme cases, these call for outright industrial nationalisation hoping that the public ownership and control of assets may be a more effective strategy for poverty eradication, creation of employment opportunities, income inequalities reduction and improvement of the standard of living of the masses. In spite of the steps taken in denouncing and apportioning blames to suspected causes of underdevelopment of LICs, these theories give no insight on how economic development can be initiated and sustained. Also, the application of the models in some LICs such as China and India did not yield the expected results of economic development until they renounced protectionism strategy and subscribed to market economy approach by reopening their frontiers to the rest of the world in 1978 and after 1990, respectively. Besides, the 2015 MDGs agenda did not yield the expected results by the target dates. Many people in LICs are still living with the problems of feeding, shelter, education, medication, accessing safe drinking water and sanitation services. In the same vein, the rates of poverty and unemployment are still high, whilst the income inequality gap between socioeconomic groups is widening daily. Finally, the 2030 SDGs agenda raises hope after highlighting significant progress achieved in some areas concerning the universal 5Ps action plan, especially in the area of access to electricity. However, isolated achievements are not sufficient to drive progress across all the 17 SDGs. Therefore, there is the need to lend a particular attention to the behaviour of stakeholders of SDGs programme over the remaining 10 years of the scheme until 2030 before taking a definite stand.

### **3. Methodology**

Cameroon is situated in central Africa. The country is governed through 10 administrative regions: Adamaua [AD], Centre [CE], East [ES], Far North [FN], Littoral [LT], North [NO], Northwest [NW], South [SU], Southwest [SW] and West [OU] (*Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et de la Décentralisation* [MINATD], 2013). For this paper, the area of concern comprises NW, SW, and OU regions of the country. The study area lays between latitude 3° 80' and 8° North and between longitude 8° and 12° East of the globe [Figure 1]. It covers a total land mass of 56602 Km<sup>2</sup> (PopulationData.net, 2019) and is bordered on the North and the West by Federal Republic of Nigeria, on the South by LT Region, and on the East by AD and CE regions (Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development [MINEPRD], 2012:13). The estimated population of the study area stood at 5443488 inhabitants (PopulationData.net, 2019).



Source: Road Map of Cameroon, NIC, 1975 and GPS data 2018

Realized by: Dr Oumarou TOUMBA, December 2019

Figure 1: Geographical Map of Northwest, Southwest and West Regions of Cameroon

This study employs simple descriptive method of data analysis to attain the objectives of the inquiry. This involves the use of percentages, ratios, tables and diagrams in the interpretation of collected data. More so, the paper generates data with the help of personal observations and structured interviews beside 300 respondents from NW, SW, and OU regions of Cameroon among whom 270 (90%) are community members randomly selected and 30 (10%) are members of the Diaspora purposively chosen. NW, SW, and OU regions receive particular attention in this study due to the sociopolitical crisis shaking NW and SW regions since 21 November 2016 and the glaring spillover effects of this crisis on OU Region owing to its proximity to these two regions. Data related to community infrastructures development and social crisis have also been derived from secondary sources.

#### 4. Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

This section offers a review of the processes of social infrastructures provision and distribution in Cameroon across time. Social infrastructures such as hospitals, schools, roads, houses, electricity and drinking water are the major ones retaining the attention in this study. Also, it captures the extent of the Diaspora involvement in the economic development process of communities in Cameroon, and examines the problems of the Diaspora in the economic development process in Cameroon.

Before addressing its specific objectives, the study presents the sample population that helped in assessing the phenomenon under investigation in Table 1. The elements of the sample are discussed accordingly in the following lines. Out of the 270 members drawn from the selected communities, 78 (28.88%) are from OU

Region, 94 (34.81%) come from SW Region, and 98 (36.29%) originate from NW Region. A proportion of 192 (71.11%) of the community members comes from NW and SW regions because these two regions are the playground of the 21 November 2016 sociopolitical crisis that heavily affected the progress of local communities in Cameroon.

Table 1: Distribution of Sample Elements from the Selected Communities

Community	Frequency	Percentage [%]
Northwest	98	36.29
Southwest	94	34.81
West	78	28.88
Total	270	100

Source: Authors (2019).

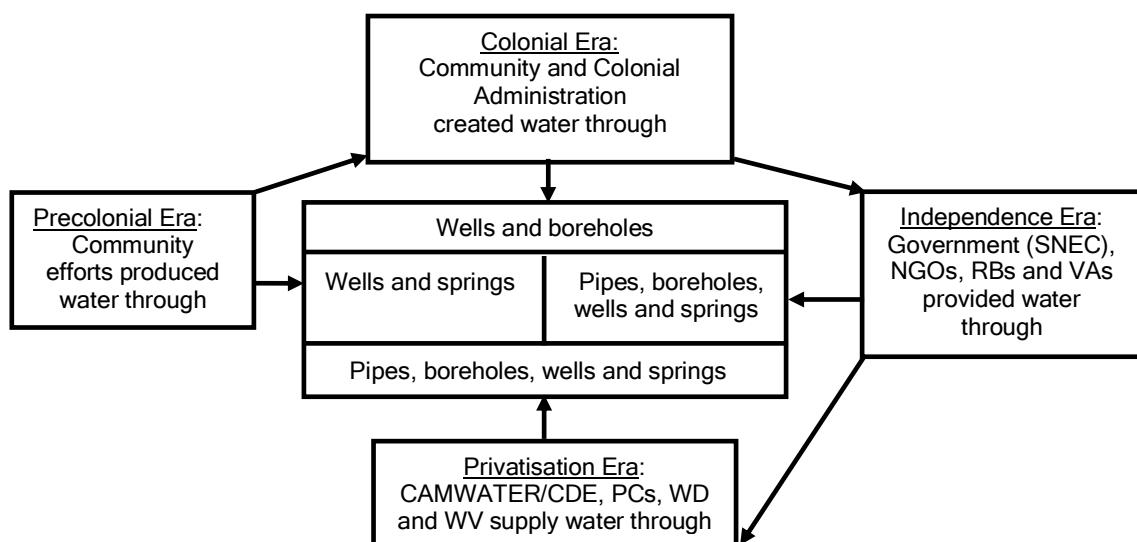
#### 4.1. Process of Social Infrastructures Provision and Distribution

The provision of hospitals, schools, roads, and electricity at affordable rates in Cameroon for the population is the sole prerogative of the State. However, drinking water provision and distribution receives a specific treatment due to two fundamental reasons. One, drinking water is a prerequisite of life for all living things. Two, the creation of drinking water does not require colossal financial investments compared to provision of the other social amenities mentioned earlier on. Furthermore, drinking water can be provided either by individuals or communities as well as the State does.

The anxiety for better access to potable drinking water in Cameroon has a relatively long history of existence. Before privatisation in 1900, the customary laws described the manners in which water is to be provided to the community. The village head mandates the delegate for social and economic matters to realise the creation of wells and layout of springs for the village. When the need for such a venture arises; members of the community deploy physical, material or financial efforts to create the communal water supply project. Once the drinking water is produced, accessing it becomes a right to the general public in the village. Nevertheless, the traditional authority restricts the use of water from public wells for farming activities. In 1900, the colonial administration arrived in Cameroon, seized the control of all natural resources and subsequently started putting in place a network for water resources development and management in the country. Water supply points were created across the country on formal request from the community to the colonial administrator – the Resident. Upon the Resident's approval of the water project, the Public Works Department [PWD] engineer of the colonial administration and the community join hands to create the water supply point.

Following Cameroon's independence in 1960, the new administration leaned on the colonial water management policy but introduced gradual changes that reflect its image of the country. The authority charged with the responsibility to handle natural resources in general and water in particular changes from one institution to another. The Rural Development Secretariat [RDS] that dealt with forest, agriculture and water resources was transformed into three different ministries via the Ministry of Water and Forestry [MoWF], Ministry of Agriculture [MoA] and Ministry of Water, Mines and Energy [MoWME]; respectively. However, in the process of water management policy, the government continued to design the water sector policy of the country and involved three key ministries in the policy enforcement. The Ministry of Energy and Water Resources [MoEWR] took care of drinking water supply and sanitation matters by entrusting the then Cameroon National Water Corporation [CNWC] the task of exploitation, treatment, distribution and sale of potable water to urban centres. On the other hand, the Ministry of Health [MoH] intervened to guarantee sanitation services where and when necessary, while the then ministry of agriculture enforced government agricultural hydraulics policy to provide drinking water to rural areas. Besides these three ministries, nongovernmental organisations and religious bodies constructed boreholes and wells to serve the urban and rural population's needs in drinking water. But in extreme cases of drinking water needs, village associations gather resources to create water supply for the community.

The 1980s economic downturn effects became manifest in Cameroon in 1990s and this handicapped CNWC's ability to meet anticipated results in the distribution of potable water to users in the country. For customers failed to pay their water bills regularly, the corporation finds it extremely difficult to cover its full cost of operation. The persistence of this state of affairs paved the way to the privatisation of CNWC in 2006. Despite the transfer of responsibility in drinking water provision from state owned to private managed company, the government retained the monopoly of defining the global water policy of the country. With the privatisation of CNWC, the water company splits into Cameroon Water Utilities Corporation [CAMWATER] and *La Camerounaise des Eaux* [CDE]. In this new dispensation, CAMWATER handles the management, maintenance and networking aspects of the corporation's infrastructures; while CDE takes on the exploitation, treatment, distribution, and commercialisation of water to users in urban and peri urban centres across the country. Water dealers also play a role in the supply of water in the country. Such dealers are in two categories – namely water traders who retail water at 25 FCFA to 50 FCFA a jerry can of 20 litres, and vendors who collect water from companies' water supply points or buy it from water traders to resell at 100 FCFA to 500 FCFA per jerry can of 20 litres depending on where water is acquired and where it is to be supplied. Figure 2 illustrates the process of drinking water creation for the satisfaction of users' demand for the resource in Cameroon across time.



CNWC: Cameroon National Water Corporation

CAMWATER: Cameroon Water Utilities Corporation

CDE : *Camerounaise des Eaux*

NGOs: Nongovernmental Organisations

VA: Village Associations

WD: Water Dealers

RBS : Religious Bodies

PCs: Private Companies

Source: Authors (2019).

Figure 2: Process of Drinking Water Creation across Time in Cameroon

#### 4.2. Inventory of Diaspora Developmental Projects

The participation of CD in the nation building process can be measured from various angles. Some of these perspectives include the provision of financial support to family members to run business, sponsor of family members' education, construction of family residence, renovation of schools and hospitals in the community, renovation and creation of community water supply points. A summary of CD developmental ventures realised in selected communities in the country, based on the views of the 270 (90%) community members, is presented in Table 2. In Table 2, it is observed that the participation of CD in the nation building process is more focused on solving individual than communal problems. About 85% of CD investments across NW, SW and OU regions of Cameroon are tailored towards family projects such as the construction of family residences (40.59%), sponsor of family members' education (34%), and provision of financial support to family members to run business (10.31%). The remaining 15% of CD investments in the study area cover community projects such as the equipment of schools (4.76%), renovation of schools (2.62%), equipment of hospitals (2.50%), renovation of

hospitals (2.19%), renovation of water supply points (1.77%), and creation of community water supply points (1.22%). Yet in a total of 1638 projects realised by CD in the study area, NW accounted for 48.11%, against 28.26% for SW, and 23.62% for OU. These statistics reveal that members of CD from NW Region are more projects-driven than their NW and OU counterparts, perhaps due to the high level of survival competition among NW Region populations and communities.

Table 2: Projects Realisation of CD to Beneficiaries in Selected Communities

Project	Community	North west	Percent- age [%]	South west	Percent- age [%]	West	Percent- age [%]	Grand Total	Percent- age [%]	Rank
Financial Support for Business		64	8.12	20	4.31	85	21.96	169	10.31	3
Sponsor for Education		223	28.29	113	24.40	221	57.10	557	34.00	2
Construction of Family Residence		348	44.16	281	60.69	36	9.30	665	40.59	1
Hospital Renovation		21	2.66	6	1.29	9	2.32	36	2.19	7
School Renovation		27	3.42	4	0.86	12	3.10	43	2.62	5
Creation of Water Supply Points		14	1.77	2	0.43	4	1.03	20	1.22	9
Renovation of Water Supply Points		21	2.66	3	0.64	5	1.29	29	1.77	8
School Equipment		44	5.58	26	5.61	8	2.06	78	4.76	4
Hospital Equipment		26	3.29	8	1.72	7	1.80	41	2.50	6
Total of Realised Projects		788	100	463	100	387	100	1638	100	-
Projects Percentage [%] of Community in Projects Grand Total		48.11	-	28.26	-	23.62	-	100	-	-
		<b>C2</b>	<b>C3</b>	<b>C4</b>	<b>C5</b>	<b>C6</b>	<b>C7</b>	<b>C8</b>	<b>C9</b>	<b>C10</b>

Source: Authors (2019).

**Note:** Relative values in column **C3** are percentages associated with each project in NW. Relative values in column **C5** are percentages associated with each project in SW. Relative values in column **C7** are percentages associated with each project in OU. Relative values in column **C9** are percentages associated with each project Grand Total for NW, SW, and OU regions. Relative values in last row represent percentages associated with the share of each region total of realised projects in the Grand Total for the three regions. Values in column **C10** indicate the ranking of the projects realised by CD in NW, SW, and OU regions of Cameroon.

#### 4.3. Problems and Concerns of the Diaspora

In spite of the role the Diaspora plays in stimulating economic development of communities and the country at large, there are instances in which it has caused untold havocs. In one way or the other, the Diaspora has sponsored refractory behaviours aimed at destabilising countries. In the same vein, it has succeeded in establishing international drug trafficking networks, and international violence networks that are threatening peace and security in the whole world today. The problems of CD are summarised in Table 3, while the concerns of CD are presented in Table 4. A perusal of Table 3 reveals several undesirable effects of CD actions on NW, SW, and OU regions of Cameroon, ranging from spread of fake news, attack of state symbols, closure of businesses, civil disobedience to conduct of illegal meetings, education deprivation of children, threat of people's peace and extortion of monies from the population.

Table 3: The Undesirable Effects of CD Activities

Activity	Repercussion on Northwest and Southwest	West
Spread of Fake News	Creation of Ambazonia State from abroad (Mbodiam, 2019a:8), entertainment of fear in the society (International Crisis Group [ICG], 2017)	Fear of debating success or failure of creation of Ambazonia State due to repression
Attack of State Symbols	Burning of hospitals and schools (Mbodiam 2019a:8). At least 235 military and police officers killed (ICG, 2019:13), humiliation of	Sense of humiliation for government supporters and state of pleasure for government detractors

Conduct of Illegal Gatherings	Head of State on official visits by Cameroonian abroad, ransacking of Cameroon diplomatic representation abroad by CD Clandestine power defying republican order and creation of State dualism, loss of State trust and control in rural areas (ICG, 2017)	Propagation of hatred message in villages and cities
Civil Disobedience	Instauration of ghost town operations every Monday (Mbodiam, 2019a:8) and any State commemoration day (ICG, 2017:13)	Distortion of plans due to uncertainty
Closure of Businesses	Average of 70% of agribusinesses inaccessible, loss of 40 million FCFA turnover to beverage industry, material loss of 500 million FCFA to vandalism and theft, shortfall of 4.9 billion FCFA to beverage sector, burning of delivery trucks with an average of 22.5% delivery decline to customers, total job cuts of 15% in the sector (Andzongo, 2019b:12), 16 employees of Cameroon Development Corporation [CDC] killed and at least 98 seriously wounded (Mbodiam, 2019c:10), ransacking of 206 Mobile Telephone Network [MTN] sites since April 2018 (Bongang, 2018 in Mbodiam, 2019b:9), cut of internet access for 92 days costing 2 billion FCFA loss to commercial and industrial sectors (ICG, 2017: 13, 22)	Fall in business turnovers of businessmen as a result of closure and decimation of business outlets caused by recurrent ghost towns and shutdowns
Shutdown of Schools	At least 4400 schools closed (Andzongo, 2019a:11), attack of students by separatists, abduction of 19 teachers and 58 students at universities of Bamenda and Buea between January 2019 and August 27, 2019 (Sadi, 2019 in Business in Cameroon [BC], 2019: 20), extra childcare demands to women, rise in juvenile delinquency, teenage pregnancies and school dropout (ICG, 2017:23), loss of years of schooling by children of poor people who cannot relocate their siblings to places where school activities run hitch free	Overcrowding of schools by children of internally displaced people running away from atrocities caused by secessionists in NW and SW regions,
Call for Secession	At least 1000 suspected secessionists killed (ICG, 2019:13)	Temptation for independence tendencies by misled individuals
Violence for Money	Ransom paid by workers to escape robberies and killing (Andzongo, 2019b:12)	Fear and suspicion of people who fled from NW and SW regions
Attack on Population	Flee of 21291 people to Nigeria (Andzongo, 2019a:11), brutalisation of students going to school, threat and assault of people ignoring secessionists boycott order (Mbodiam, 2019a:8), killing of 1850 people and internal displacement of 530000 persons with 35000 others fled to Nigeria (ICG, 2019:13), strike notices and threats against residents (Sadi, 2019 in BC, 2019:20).	Fear of travelling to NW and SW regions in spite of the proximity, relocation of many people from OU Region back home or to other horizons
Settlement of Scores	Hunting of Professor T Alexis, murder of Professor MK Paul, kidnapping of Dr. VW Andrew, abduction of Professor Catherine LF	Relocation of some lecturers to Mbouda, Bafoussam, Dschang

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and Dr. S Martin, attack of Drs. MT Samuel and DF Cletus, threat of Dr. JU Eléazar, attack of Professors ML Cornelius and NF Godfrey residences in Bamenda and Buea leading to declaration of strike from 4 to 5 December 2019 by Lecturers of The University of Bamenda as protest against the kidnaping of colleagues on their way to or return from work place

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Source: Authors (2019).

The concerns raised by the 30 (10%) members of CD interviewed are presented in Table 4 and discussed accordingly thereafter. The complaints of CD members span the feeling of neglect and non recognition of CD by the Government of Cameroon, lack of economic security and freedom that could encourage local and self development initiatives of intellectuals, poor investment network, hostile business environment, excessive government political influence in economic activities, bureaucratic bottlenecks to Government pride among others. A reversal of these impediments stands as the appropriate path to the economic development journey of the country, according to the members of CD.

Table 4: Obstacles to the Participation of CD in Economic Development Process

Concern	Expectation
Neglect and Lack of Recognition	Recognition and integration of Diaspora potentials into the country's development strategies
High Government Taxes	Reduction of government taxes
Lack of Economic Security and Freedom	More economic security and freedom in the country
Poor Business Environment	Considerable improvement of the business environment
Poor Investment Network	Improvement of the investment network
Inadequate Tax Policies	Implementation of adequate tax policies
Misinformation	Fight against misinformation
Subjugation to Customs and Beliefs	Adaption and implementation of a compulsory school law for every child up to the class where philosophy is taught
Excessive Government Influence	Curtail of government influence
Disconnection with Local Realities	Frequent seminars on local realities to Diaspora audience
Mystical Attack Owing to Jealousy	Fight against witchcraft and devilish behaviours through adoption and execution of anti progress laws
Selfishness	Introduction and teaching of religious studies, moral and ethics courses from primary school to the university
Administrative and Bureaucratic Bottlenecks	Fight against corruption through computarisation and digitalisation of the whole administrative system
Government Pride	Seminars on humility for all civil servants and members of the government

Source: Authors (2019).

## 5. Conclusion, Recommendations and Shortcomings of the Paper

In the precolonial epoch everybody in the community participates in the creation of the communal water supply point. In the colonial era, a whole network for water resources development and management involving indigenous people is put in place to satisfy the water needs of the community. During independence time, the government takes up the responsibility of designing the water sector policy of the country and uses three key ministries for its implementation. Drinking water supply and sanitation is handled by MoEWR who entrusts CNWC the task of exploitation, treatment, distribution and sale of potable water to private households and councils in cities. MoH intervenes within the framework of government policy to guarantee sanitation services where and when necessary, while MoA provides drinking water to rural areas. Furthermore, CNWC and village

associations regulate users' misconduct in water use through payment of fines and in extreme cases supply cuts. After the takeover of water supply by the private sector, the water company breaks into CAMWATER and CDE, where the former handles the management, maintenance and networking system of infrastructures of the corporation and the later undertakes the exploitation, treatment, distribution and commercialisation of water to private households and few public taps to councils in favour of the general public in urban centres. Besides, households with limited access to private supply and public taps purchase drinking water from dealers at 25 FCFA to 50 FCFA a jerry cane of 20 litres or 100 FCFA to 500 FCFA per jerry cane of 20 litres depending on the distance where water is acquired and to be delivered. In cases of nonpayment of water bills, the private water corporation disconnects users from the water supply network and fines them accordingly.

For effective support and efficient participation to the economic development process of Cameroon, the following recommendations need to be taken into consideration. On one hand, the Government of Cameroon should (a) admit and integrate the potentials of CD into the country's development strategies, (b) reduce government taxes and government influence as well as adopt and implement adequate tax policies, (c) improve business environment and business network, (d) computerise and digitalise the whole administrative system, and (e) lay more emphasis on SDGs theory of development to solve the problems of people misery in the country. Conversely, CD should (i) increase the budget allocated to the creation and renovation of water supply points, (ii) adopt a more community driven economic contribution than a family oriented economic support, and (iii) learn to portray a good image of their country wherever they find themselves.

Despite the merits of the enquiry, some of its shortcomings can be outlined as follows. This study highlights the positive and negative contributions of CD to the process of economic development of Cameroon in only three regions of the country. The investigation is mute on AD, ES, FN, and LT regions of the country that are also witnessing sociopolitical turmoil and socioeconomic disorders. Besides, the paper pays little attention to inferential tools of data analysis that can enable forecasts of the consequences of the phenomenon under study into the future of Cameroon with high predictive power. Furthermore, the influence of international diplomacy in the sociopolitical commotion rocking the country has not been underscored in the study. Finally, statistics provided in this study are mere assessments of the quantitative aspects of the inquiry. As a result, they are to be treated with great caution.

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