

# DEMOCRACY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: The Case of Cameroon

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**Abstract:** This research lampoons on the inquisition of democracy and economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is subjected to a single case study-Cameroon. The study uses empirical analysis to manifest inconsistency on the relationship between democracy and economic growth. The key purpose of this study therefore centers within three main interests. First, to establish whether or not Cameroon is a democratic country second, investigating if there is a correlation between democracy and economic growth in Cameroon and what the nature of such this correlation if any is. The main outcome drawn from this empirical study rests on the fact that there is a very weak relationship between democracy and economic growth in Cameroon, an outcome which leaves much to be desired as the country seems to be one of the few Sub Saharan African countries that has enjoyed an over flow of political stability and abundant natural resources.

**Keywords:** Gender equality, HDI, GDP, Democracy, Economic growth.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The fact that the connection between democracy and economic growth has drawn the attention of so many theoretical and empirical studies is a given. This has greatly contributed to the manifestation of the impetus of democracy and economic growth within the discipline of political economy or development economics and has sparked several arguments and academic discussions. However, there has been a lot of unwarranted generalisation in a number of empirical or theoretical studies associating democracy to economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa. This portrayal of Africa in the West is accurate. A continent that is viewed and handled like a country. According to George Alagiah, a former BBC journalist for Africa, this perception issue is justified by Western television portrayals of Africa as a country where decent people suffer from hunger and wicked people hold power. This unjustified view, however, cannot continue given that this continent is home to more than 52 sovereign nations. A continent having a wide range of political variety, including nations that exhibit some degree of political stability as well as autocracy and democracy, liberal constitutions, and multi-party systems. Thus, it is clear that the political and institutional variety of Africa sparks a surge of case studies that are investigative in nature.

Over the past few decades, civil conflict and political unrest have held Sub-Saharan Africa prisoner, severely impeding the expansion and consolidation of democracy in the area. As a result, the image of a fragile and unconsolidated democracy has been strongly connected to the region's overall poor economic progress. One of the few nations in Sub-Saharan Africa that have experienced political stability and stayed out of civil strife over the previous many decades is Cameroon. However, despite the nation's abundance of natural and people resources, this political stability has not significantly sparked economic progress. In light of this, the researcher seeks to examine the link between and consequences of democracy on economic growth in Cameroon.

Thereby the following hypothesis has been in order to check the democracy and economic growth in Cameroon:

**H1: Greater Equity has a significant impact on democracy and economic growth in Cameroon**

**H2: Fiscal Decentralization has a significant impact on democracy and economic growth in Cameroon**

**H3: Poverty Reduction Strategy has a significant impact on democracy and economic growth in Cameroon**

**H4: Millennium Development Goals has a significant impact on democracy and economic growth in Cameroon**

**H5: GDP and Real Growth has a significant impact on democracy and economic growth in Cameroon**

**H6: Human Development Index (HDI) has a significant impact on democracy and economic growth in Cameroon**

This study uses Cameroon as a case study to examine the connection between democracy and economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa. The goal is to compare Cameroon to the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa on a scale board as a tiny entity. If a link exists between democracy and economic growth in Cameroon, what type of relationship does it have, and what are some probable results? Here, the goal is to demonstrate an empirical reason for the ongoing deterioration of the link between democracy and economic growth in Cameroon. The study will go a long way to submit possible findings and make recommendation that could make significant impact of democracy on the economic growth of Cameroon.

It is my primary responsibility to dispel this misconception because I am an African who comes from a continent that has experienced significant political instability, civil wars, and has frequently been treated by Westerners and even some researchers as a single country or case study in their research. Also a Cameroonian, the researcher chooses to use Cameroon as a case study in order to make the rest of the world aware that the country's economic growth rates have not significantly increased over the past ten years despite its political stability and purportedly democratic institutions. Additionally, a significant number of studies have concentrated more on Cameroon's consolidation and transition to democracy. Few studies specifically relate democracy to economic growth. In order to better understand the connection between democracy and economic growth in Cameroon, and to pave the way for future research in this area, this study will act as a springboard.

Research questions:

- Is there a causation between democracy and economic growth in Cameroon?
- What is the nature of this causation?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing research literature is reviewed in this chapter. A theoretical argument pertaining to the example of Cameroon will be presented after reviewing the works of other academics on democracy and economic growth. Additionally, the research will make use of modernization theories of development and the international system to defend the tenuous link between democracy and economic progress in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the gap between the affluent and the poor is widening..

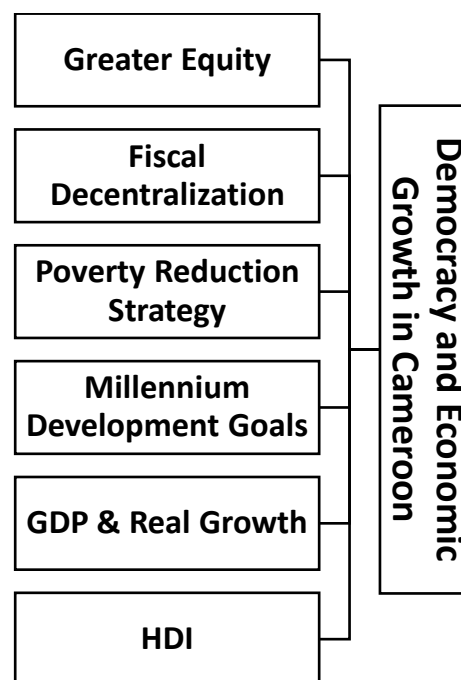
Despite the above views, Przeworski and Limongi find no conclusive effect of democracy on economic growth as they stated that "...the impact of political regimes on growth is wide open for reflection and research" (Przeworski & Limongi , 1997). Finally, Rodrik argues that there is no systematic relationship between democracy and economic growth while Heo U postulated that factors like institutional maturity and the coordination of government entities play a more significant role in economic performance than the presence or absence of democracy (Heo , 2010). In summation, it is a truism that democracy just like development aid to Sub Saharan Africa has always failed to justify the positive postulations linking them towards economic advancement. The researcher worry here is why has this always been so? Even when theoretical considerations have always seen a strong correlation between democracy and foreign aid, the case of Sub Saharan Africa has not been able to positively manifest and justify this panacea.

The fact that many African states adopted more liberal policies after pursuing socialist paths for political and economic development is another significant aspect of this parody, even though liberalism found in these economies hardly permeated their countries' political systems. This is supported by the fact that the self-interested political elite did not any less control state capitalism. In conclusion, we can observe that the legacy of colonialism has had a significant negative impact on Africa's weak liberal democratic institutions within a framework of historical moorings, which has justified a return to authoritarian and bureaucratic states in the colonial pattern. However, despite the presence of tolerant private capital and small scale capitalism, states still maintain the largest production and distributions units within the countries (Ake, 1996).

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund initiated the Structural Adjustment Programme in Africa (SAP). The SAPs initiatives placed load factors and conditional loans on recipient African nations, who were ultimately compelled to alter their economic policies. The implications of the African debt crisis left African governments with little options other than to adopt the structural adjustment initiatives (World Bank, Cameroon Economic Updates: Revisiting the sources of

Growth, 2014). As a result, although though Kenya, Malawi, and Mauritius were the first to implement the SAP reforms in the early 1980s, by the middle of the 1990s, nearly all African countries, including Cameroon, had done the same. Although reducing government expenditure and administrative budgets was a major goal of the SAPS reforms, no country was able to sustain any notable progress or degeneration as a result of the SAP reforms, which led to extensive effects throughout the African continent. It is impossible to understate the political significance of the SAPs reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa. First, it is clear that the majority of African governments struggled greatly to create constituencies among their citizens that support the SAP changes (Cameroon , 2009). Thus, justifying a number of political instabilities across Sub Saharan Africa during the 1990s. Thus, we see that in Sudan and Liberia for example, the military or armed rebel groups were encouraged to topple the struggling incumbent governments

#### A. Framework



**Figure 1: Framework**

We can see from the aforementioned talks that both theories make solid presumptions, and that Sub-Saharan Africa is a good place to test and conceptually research the relationship between democracy and economic growth. By using Cameroon as a case study to examine the link between democracy and economic growth, it will be easier to demonstrate how corruption, political oligarchy, and democratic façade, in combination with inconsistencies in international trade regulations, have significantly impacted the relationship between democracy and economic growth in Cameroon (Cameroon , 2009). Therefore, it is clear from the above that descriptive statistics and a qualitative approach of analysis will be used in this case. Data, graphs, and tables will be utilised, together with an empirical analysis, to show whether or not democracy and economic growth in Cameroon are correlated. We shall thus attempt to analyse how the institutional reforms suggested in the 2009 Cameroon Vision 2035 Paper and the Cameroon Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper might be related to an improvement in the nation's economic and social situation. So, have things changed? What sort of improvement is this, exactly?

In light of the debate above, it is obvious that Cameroon's political institutions have made only modest advancements in the areas reviewed above. Institutional reforms and modifications haven't been able to accelerate much thus far. Sustainable development has been severely hampered by the lack of a powerful democratic leadership. Even though the multiparty system was implemented by President Biya's administration in the 1990s, there hasn't been a shift in power yet. As a result, it is clear that the existence and evolution of shaky democratic institutions have a detrimental impact on the nation's economic performance and make it extremely challenging to implement a socially acceptable and robust market democracy. Strong economic development therefore cannot be realised without obvious institutional reforms, despite the fact that PRSP and the Vision 2035 procedures make the Cameroon government more involved. This might be explained by the fact that microeconomic goals cannot be stable in the absence of significant political reforms.

### III. DEMOCRACY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN CAMEROON: IS THERE A CORRELATION?

Since its independence in 1960 and the implementation of a multiparty system in 1990, Cameroon is one of the few nations in Sub-Saharan Africa that has not been subject to civil war or a military rule. As a result, the nation enjoys political stability even if her efforts to transition into a democratic nation still appear to be on a downward trajectory. This may be explained by the fact that the nation has consistently suffered from corruption, violations of human rights, severe deficits in political involvement, and a weakening of the rule of law, placing it among the Sub-Saharan African nations with the least amount of democratic advancement.

Therefore, economic development and transformation become difficult to satisfy the requirements for a socially sustainable market democracy in the absence of stable democratic institutions. As a result, it is challenging for the government of Cameroon to estimate economic growth and evaluate economic success. Therefore, why is Cameroon in the same region as Botswana split by riches, bad health, and poverty while Botswana has become one of the fastest growing states in Sub-Saharan Africa? It is basic and artificial because it is based on the idea that successful economies are supported by political and economic institutions. Therefore, the politics that shaped these institutional trajectories are what determines the distinctions between Botswana and Cameroon (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).

In conclusion, it is clear that political liberalisation and economic growth are related in Cameroon, but that this relationship is not strong enough to encourage economic progress and fight poverty. Therefore, despite the fact that Cameroon is an authoritarian state that attempts to liberalise its political institutions, democracy has not fully resulted from Cameroon's political liberalisation. Therefore, Cameroon's political institutions are well-positioned to uphold a substantial level of neo-patrimonial control without having a considerable capacity to support and foster frameworks for economic growth that would significantly lower poverty. It has become common knowledge that the triple sins of bad governance, excessive government, and non-governance have kept Cameroon prisoner. This is evident in Cameroon's government's bureaucracy, inefficiency, corruption, and disjointed character.

### IV. CONCLUSION

Therefore, it is clear that Cameroon's political liberalisation has not resulted in democracy and that the country lacks the flexibility to properly accept robust economic growth that reflects the country's full economic potential and that would significantly contribute to the reduction of poverty and the sparking of economic progress.

We can see that bad leadership and political immobility have held the nation's political system captive. This is demonstrated by the fact that neither the Constitutional Council nor the need that public officials declare their assets as laid forth in the constitution of 1996 have been constituted or put into effect. Therefore, it goes without saying that Cameroon is one of the Sub-Saharan African nations with the least amount of democratic advancement. Fighting corruption and enhancing public welfare and healthcare are crucial in order to build a robust process that can lead the nation towards democracy and create prospects for great economic performance. Also, the civil society must also play a key role in mobilization and participation processes to ensure that the country's political system accommodates transparency and accountability principles to effectively maintain separation of power

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