

The Impact of Public Policy to the Development Plan of Cameroon

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How to cite this paper: Mbah Enjei, L., & Chi Valery, C. (2025). The Impact of Public Policy to the Development Plan of Cameroon. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 13, 334-355. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2025.134020>

Received: March 4, 2025

Accepted: April 25, 2025

Published: April 28, 2025

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Abstract

Public policy plays a vital role in the formulation and implementation of development plans in Cameroon, shaping the country's efforts toward economic growth, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. As Cameroon aims to achieve its Vision 2035, the formulation of public policies that address key sectors such as infrastructure, education, health, and governance is crucial for ensuring long-term national prosperity. This paper examines the role of public policy in Cameroon's development strategy, focusing on the alignment between policy objectives and the broader goals of social and economic development. Through a critical analysis of national policy documents, government strategies, and case studies, the paper identifies both successes and challenges in the execution of public policies, such as insufficient inter-sectorial coordination, limited public-private partnerships, and the need for enhanced policy evaluation mechanisms. The paper also highlights the impact of international frameworks, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), on Cameroon's public policy agenda. Ultimately, the study underscores the importance of coherent, evidence-based public policies and effective governance structures to support Cameroon's development vision.

Keywords

Public, Policy, Development Plan, Impact, Cameroon

1. Introduction

Public policy is the framework of laws, regulations, and actions governments implement to achieve social and economic goals. It's a statement of the government's intent and commitment to address a particular issue or problem. Public policy shapes the decisions of government officials and agencies, and it affects society,

the economy, and politics (Jindal, 2023).

Public policy is very important in shaping societies and enforcing law and order in societies. It touches all social areas including; healthcare, education, environment and politics all in an attempt to strengthen societal values.

2. Background of the Study

Public Policy is as old as Political Science and Public Administration. But the concept of Public Policy as an academic pursuit emerged in the late half of the twentieth century and since then it has been acquiring new dimensions. Since the beginning, the studies on public policies were dominated by researchers and students of both Public Administration and Political Science. Public administration was to some extent preoccupied with the activities of administrative machinery, their structures and their success in achieving their targets goals. It hardly recognized the role of organizations that played towards the formulation of policies as one of its main concerns. Yet the policy is an important element of the administrative process. Policy implies a decision as to what should be done and how, when it should be done. In the words of Paul Apple by “the essence of public administration is policy making”. Public Policy is concerned with the pattern of actions directed at social problems or goals and considerable progress has been in understanding policy content and processes.

Cameroon is a medium size African country located in central Africa which has undergone Major public policy changes over the years that have had both negative and positive impacts on its economic growth. The post-independence economic planning came up after its independence from France in 1960. This was Cameroon’s first development plan of 1962-1966 which focused on infrastructural development agriculture and education. Also the structural adjustment programs of 1980s and 1990s, this was implemented under the guidance of international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. This program was brought about to address macroeconomic imbalances and promote market-oriented reforms. Again, Cameroon adopted the poverty reduction strategy papers in the late 1990s as an approach to address policy formulations. This came about with the aim to reduce poverty and foster sustainable development through said strategies that involved multiple stakeholders. This strategy guided the country through its development plans and helped prioritize poverty reduction.

Furthermore, 2009 came up with the launch of vision 2035. This plan includes the country’s long-term development plans we hope to become an emerging economy by 2035. It lays emphasis on economic diversification, private sector development, Human capital development and infrastructural investment to promote sustainable growth and reduce poverty in the country. Special economic zones were created as part of Cameroon’s plan to foster foreign investment and promote industrialization. In order to boost economic growth, create jobs and enhance technology, these special economic zones provided infrastructure and incentives to private sector investors (Mark Dike Delancey, 2010).

3. Cameroon's Current Development Plans

3.1. Vision 2035 Goals and Objective

This vision has as its main objective, to make Cameroon an emerging country by 2035, with specific objectives being to;

1) Eradicate poverty by reducing it to less than 10% thanks to accelerated and job generating growth, as well as a bold policy on income redistribution by increasing, extending and improving social services including health, education, training, water, electricity, roads, etc., Equal access to such services.

2) Become a middle-income country in order to increase the average income by consolidating over a long period, growth rate which should reach 10% between 2015 and 2020. Thanks to increased diversification of economic activities.

3) Become a newly industrialized country, which is a phase when Cameroon will transform from a primary phase to a secondary import substitution phase with the manufacturing industry accounting for more than 23% of the GDP.

4) Become an emerging country, which is the face when its economy will be mainstreamed into the global economy in terms of trade (Substantial exports) and finance (Opening of local financial markets to foreign investments) (Minepat, 2009).

3.2. National Development Strategy NDS30

This is said to be an extension of the vision 35 goals. The overall objectives pursued here are:

1) To establish favorable conditions for economic growth and the accumulation of national wealth and to ensure that the structural change is essential for the industrialization of the country.

2) Improve the living conditions of the population and their access to basic social services by ensuring a significant reduction in poverty and underemployment.

3) Strengthen climate change adaptation and mitigation measures and environmental management to ensure sustainable and inclusive economic growth and social development.

4) Improve governance to strengthen the performance of public action with a view to achieving development objectives (Institute, N.D.).

3.3. Progress and Achievements Made Under Vision 2035 and NDS30

3.3.1. Economic Growth

Growth rate experienced a slight increase from 3.6% in 2021 to 3.8% in 2022.

Cameroon's economic recovery slowed down in 2023, with real GDP expanding by only 3.3%, down from 3.6% in 2022. Until the beginning of 2024, all estimates of real GDP growth in 2023 were around 4.0% but the latest national accounts of the last two quarters of 2023 showed a marked deceleration in growth. The weaker growth performance was witnessed across the primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors in a context of ongoing fiscal consolidation, higher domestic inflation and

multiple sources of fragilities including internal conflicts (World Bank, 2023a).

A strategic crossroads between West and Central Africa, Cameroon is at odds with a separatist movement in the English-speaking regions bordering Nigeria. Fighting, punctuated by atrocities on both sides, drags on while proposals for negotiation invariably fail. In addition, attacks by terrorist groups (Boko Haram or Islamic State) are increasing security pressure in the north of the country. On the political front, 91-year-old President Paul Biya has clung to power since 1982. His possible candidacy for the 2025 presidential election would only serve to postpone questions about his succession, which are still unresolved and a major source of political risk. Faced with him, the muzzled opposition struggles to exist and public discontent rumbles on, all the more so as MPs have agreed to postpone by a year the next from which it has been excluded since 2019 and which enabled it to benefit from preferential access to the American market legislative elections, blocked by fraud, due to be held in March 2025. More watchful of human rights, the US is refusing, for the time being, to reinstate Cameroon in the AGOA (African Growth Opportunity Act) from which it has been excluded since 2019 and which enabled it to benefit from preferential access to the American market (Coface, 2024).

3.3.2. Poverty Alleviation

Poverty reduction in Cameroon has stagnated over the past 20 years, with approximately 4 in 10 Cameroonians living below the national poverty line. The household survey data from 2021-2022 suggests that 23.0% of the population lives below the extreme international poverty line with only \$2.15 per person per day, adjusted for purchasing power parity (PPP) (World Bank, 2023c).

3.3.3. Policies that Failed to Address Poverty and Why

Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) (2003-2010): set to Improve economic growth, governance, and social services. Promote rural development and job creation.

Why It Failed:

- Corruption and mismanagement: Funds meant for poverty reduction were embezzled (Transparency International, 2021).
- Unequal economic growth: Growth was concentrated in urban areas, while rural communities remained underdeveloped.
- Weak job creation: The policy failed to generate enough employment, with over 70% of workers still in the informal sector (World Bank, 2022a).

3.3.4. Infrastructural Development

Electricity production capacity was moved to 1720 MW. Drinking water production capacity is 656,089 m³ and road projects resulted in a total of 121489.67 km nationally and 98.5 km of highway.

3.3.5. Social Development

Access to basic social services has been improved, thanks to investment in infrastructure, direct and indirect subsidies granted by the state. The densification of

the health map, the remarkable increase in technical facilities and the introduction of universal health coverage are undeniable achievements. The densification of the teaching of and use of digital tools is equally to be commended. The share of people having access to drinking water increase from 61% in 2014 to 68.9% in 2021.

3.3.6. Governance

Governance efforts constituted the acceleration of the decentralization process notably through the adoption of regional councils and the modernization of public finance management to strengthen the fight against corruption and promote bilingualism as an instrument of integration and social cohesion. In summary, Cameroon has experienced a remarkable growth rate in diverse areas despite the challenges faced over the years. From Boko haram attacks, the Anglophone crisis, COVID-19, Ukraine and Russia crisis which led to a global recession.

Regardless of the progress level so far, it still requires further progress in all aspects especially poverty alleviation, infrastructural and economic transformation. *Alamine Ousmane Mey*, during his opening remark at the Second working session of the 2020-2030 national development strategy follow up and evaluation committee on 14 February 2023, made it clear that Cameroon shall safeguard its achievements and remove all obstacles to the implementation of the NDS30, as well as pursuing its march towards achieving emergence in 2035 (Minepat, 2023).

4. Challenges Faced in the Development Plan of Cameroon

• Corruption

The National Anti-Corruption Commission of Cameroon, CONAC, has reported the State of Cameroon lost over FCFA 114 billion to corruption in 2023. (CONAC, 2024). Ranked 140 out of 180 countries in the 2023 Transparency International corruption perceptions index, Cameroon suffers from weak governance hindering its development and ability to attract investors (Transparency International, 2024).

Case study: In 2020, several top officials, including the former Minister of Defense Edgar Alain Mebe Ngo'o, were arrested for embezzling state funds meant for military equipment procurement (BBC, 2020).

• Governance challenges

The system faces lapses in monitoring evaluation which prevents it from adapting to the requirements of modern management and to permanent global changes. On the administrative front, shortcomings can be seen through the recruitment method and devolution of positions, carelessness of state employees, indifference vis a vis public property, corruption and misappropriation of skills, mix up of rules, inertia, cumbersome procedures, multiplication and compartmentalization of institutions, irrational choices in public resource allocation. Economically governance issues negatively contribute to making Cameroon a country where invest-

ment risk is high. The country is even less attractive due to its poor rating at the international level, lack of incentive frameworks, compounded with inadequate technology. In the private sector, governance problems can be seen through wrong investment choices, problems of inheritance, mistrust of the state, poor transparency in publication of accounts balance sheet of activities, dominance of the principle of remote affinity in recruitment and cooperation methods, lack of the capacity to join in view of the realization of substantial investments.

Case study: Slow Decentralization Reforms. Despite promises of decentralization since the 1996 Constitution, local governments still lack the financial and administrative autonomy needed for effective service delivery. The failure to fully implement decentralization has contributed to regional inequalities, particularly in the northern and Anglophone regions ([World Bank, 2023b](#)).

- **Demographic challenge**

It is true that a large population is a key factor in development. But in the context of low productivity, the increase of population particularly increased number of dependent people (youths, the elderly, and the needy including refugees) exerts heavy pressure on social services like education, health, Physical infrastructure and environment. Reducing such pressure requires significant levies on the production sector which limits its expansion ([MINEPAT, n.d.](#)).

Case Study: Rising Youth Unemployment. Over 60% of Cameroon's population is under 25, but the economy has struggled to create enough formal jobs. In urban areas like Douala and Yaoundé, youth unemployment exceeds 30%, leading to increased informal sector employment and illegal migration ([International Labour Organization, 2022a](#)).

Case Study: Urbanization and Housing Crisis. Rapid urbanization has led to the growth of informal settlements in cities. In Yaoundé and Douala, more than 50% of residents live in slums with poor access to water, sanitation, and electricity ([UN Habitat, 2021](#)).

- **Conflicts**

The Anglophone crisis in the northwest and southwest (NOSO) regions of Cameroon, and the Boko Haram attacks in the far north leading to millions of internally displaced persons. These conflicts played a vital role in hindering growth in these areas of Cameroon as they led to the loss and destruction of major state properties, slowing down economic activities ([International Organisation for Migration, 2022](#)).

Case Study: The Anglophone Crisis (2016-Present). In 2016, protests by teachers and lawyers in the English-speaking Northwest and Southwest regions escalated into an armed separatist conflict. The conflict has displaced over 700,000 people, disrupted education for hundreds of thousands of children, and led to economic stagnation in these regions ([International Crisis Group, 2023](#)). The government's military response has led to human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings and mass arrests ([Amnesty International, 2022](#)).

Case Study: Boko Haram Attacks in the Far North. The Boko Haram insurgency

has resulted in thousands of deaths and widespread displacement in Cameroon's Far North region. In 2021 alone, over 400 attacks were reported, forcing many farmers to abandon their fields, worsening food insecurity (UNHCR, *Boko Haram Displacement Crisis in Cameroon*, 2022a).

5. Key Public Policies and Their Impact on Development

Public policy has a broad scope and can cover many different areas such as:

5.1. Economic Policies

This entails the regulation of money supply through the monetary policy, Control government spending and taxation strategies through the fiscal policy and regulates trade.

- **Trade policy:** Grants for small countries products (Subject to its rules of origin) Adapted to its Common external tariffs (CET) in 1993, with a maximum tariff of 30% (World Bank).
- **Fiscal policy:** Cameroon's fiscal policy is focused on increasing Tax revenues to finance public investment and social spending thereby improving on public financial management and transparency, and reducing the fiscal deficit and public debt (*Cameroon's Economy Policy Institute*, n.d.).
- **Monetary Policy:** Monetary policy in Cameroon is conducted by the BEAC, and aims to maintain the external and internal value of the currency. Foreign reserves function as an intermediary monetary target, while the operational target consists of a series of BEAC refinancing limits for each country of the union (*International Monetary Fund*, n.d., *Monetary policy and the role of BEAC in Cameroon*).

5.2. Impacts of Economic Policies

1) Price stability:

Price stability is one of the key economic objectives that every nation must accomplish. Price stability is a word used in economics to describe a scenario where the general level of prices for consumer products is either fixed or changes just slowly enough not to have a substantial impact on the economy.

Price variations, which rely on supply and demand for products and services, are typical in a market economy. A stable price environment is uncommon in an economy. Price variations, which rely on supply and demand for products and services, are typical in a market economy. A stable price environment is uncommon in an economy.

2) Economic Growth Faster than Population Growth:

The level of life is determined by the ratio of economic growth to population growth, and economic growth is required to improve people's motivation and standard of living. The Standard of life is typically assessed using benchmarks. Population growth is the evolution of a population through time. It is measured as the change in the proportion of any species' individuals in a population using

the unit “per unit time.”

Living standards will fall, and various social and economic issues, such as inflation, will result if a nation’s population increase outpaces its economic growth. A nation’s economy must grow together with its population if the population is to remain stable.

3) Minimal Resource Unemployment:

Low resource unemployment is essential to a nation’s ability to utilize its resources efficiently and generate more products and services. When a worker is able and eager to accept a job yet unable to do so, they are said to be unemployed.

The resources used to generate products and services are known as productive inputs or elements of production. They make manufacturing easier but do not considerably alter the final product as raw materials do or undergo a considerable transformation during production like fuel for machines does. Capital, land, labor, and entrepreneurship are the key producers of low unemployment in the resource sector.

4) Equitable Wealth and Income Distribution:

In economics, distribution describes how the entire output or revenue is divided among the four components of production or the general population. A fair distribution of wealth and income among the population is crucial to achieving these economic goals in any nation. In a country, there isn’t always a significant or wide disparity between the affluent and the poor. Every country’s administration must implement a fair mechanism for allocating resources ([study.com](#), n.d.).

5.3. Social Policies

These policies have as objective to regulate social welfare, provide health care accessibility, give access to quality education.

- **Healthcare:** This policy in alignment with the national development strategy prioritizes health development in Cameroon. This has to do with investing in a healthy workforce, which can increase economic productivity.
- **Poverty reduction:** This policy targets rural areas by investing in agriculture, job creation and providing support to foster their inclusion in economic activities.
- **Education:** This area is already well emphasized in the national development strategy of Cameroon. The major focus here is on skill development and quality improvement in the education sector.
- **Social protection:** This policy has invulnerable population at heart which includes women children and the elderly people. This is to ensure they have equal access to social services, resources and opportunities ([Nkafu, 2022](#)).

5.4. Impacts of Social Policies

Democracy: The goal achieving equality is at the heart of liberal policy. In order to achieve equality resources must be allocated equally. Fair results, equal access and equal justice are all examples of equality.

Equal opportunity: It refers to the treatment of classes of people. People should be granted equal opportunities regardless of their gender or group. Furthermore, everybody should have the same benefits in schools and the job market.

Freedom and rights: Civil rights imply not only the lack of unjust imprisonment and incarceration but also the freedom to express any viewpoints. Democratic rights include things like social welfare and social security as well as the right to education. Voting and entering political parties are examples of political rights as it's the freedom to express oneself democratically.

Need: Caring and accommodations are basic needs. There are no limits to needs although its unclear which needs should be protected by the government (Karunarathne, 2021).

5.5. Environmental Policies

It provides regulations to protect natural resources, reduce pollution, and address climate changes. Green Cameroon, a non-governmental organization (NGO), founded in 2003 dedicated to conserving Cameroon's rich biodiversity, and promoting sustainable development.

This vision is a Cameroon where people and nature thrive in harmony. Mission is to protect Cameroon's natural heritage and build a prosperous future for all through sustainable development. Green Cameroon is committed to safeguarding Cameroon's environment and empowering communities to thrive sustainably. Their areas of work include;

- Environmental Education and Sensitization.
- Natural resource management and Conservation.
- Community Development and Environmental Rehabilitation.
- Water and sanitation.
- Advocacy and policy work at both national and international levels.
- Consultancy/Research (GREEN Cameroon, 2024).

5.6. Impacts of Environmental Policy

- helping you to stay within the law.
- keeping employees informed about their environmental roles and responsibilities.
- improving cost control.
- reducing incidents that result in liability.
- conserving raw materials and energy.
- improving your monitoring of environmental impacts.
- improving the efficiency of your processes (nibusinessinfo, n.d.).

5.7. Labour Policies

Labor regulations are designed to protect the rights and well-being of workers by setting employment standards, ensuring fair labor practices, and preventing ex-

ploitation. These policies encompass:

Minimum Wage Laws: Establishing a minimum wage to guarantee fair compensation for workers.

Workplace Safety Standards: Implementing safety regulations to prevent workplace accidents and injuries.

Anti-Discrimination Laws: Enforcing laws that prohibit discrimination based on factors such as race, gender, or disability. (policy, n.d.).

Labour laws, by requiring employers to treat workers fairly, prevent firms from pursuing strategies based on exploitation and intensification of labour, in favour of those which mobilize the skills and knowledge of workers. In a well-regulated economy, competition between firms to attract skilled and committed workers can lead to a “race to the top” in labour standards (Deakin & Pourkermani, 2024).

5.8. Impacts of Labour Policies

1) Adequate Earnings

In a world where each person is after an adequate income at the very least, one must protect oneself. Understanding labor laws allows you to know what your minimum wage should be as an employee. Moreover, you learn the importance of timely and regular payment, especially when it comes to wages.

No employer is allowed to exploit their workers. Therefore, if you are made to work overtime, you should be aware of your employer’s obligation to pay appropriate compensation. Moreover, employers are also usually obligated to pay more when employees are required to work on holidays, weekends, and at night.

2) Working Hours

Most labor laws stress the importance of reasonable working hours to ensure that each employee has a work-life balance. Workers are given paid annual leave, along with a limit of daily or weekly maximum working hours. This ensures employers do not take advantage of their workers by making them do unnecessary overtime work.

If workers are called into work on a national holiday, they are usually given a compensatory holiday on a different regular working day.

3) Protection

As an employee, your workplace may be responsible for certain aspects of your life. This includes family responsibilities, such as paternity leave, parental leave, and flex-time options. Your workplace should be willing to provide you with paid leave during periods of personal obligations so that you may establish a work-life balance.

Moreover, one of the most important features of universally accepted labor laws is to ensure child protection. Children under the age of 14 are not allowed to work in most places. Strict regulations and rules are enforced to ensure that children only work a few hours a day, if needed. This is essential in order to avoid exploitation of children.

Labor laws also ensure that employees are not made to work in unsafe condi-

tions. In case of health hazards, employers must inform their employees immediately. No information should be concealed. Labor laws ensure that workers are protected, and no laws are violated. Otherwise, there could be grave consequences for the employer in terms of fines or imprisonment.

4) Discrimination

Labor laws ensure that workers can operate free of discrimination in the workplace. They monitor the employer-employee relationship so that no discrimination can be inflicted on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or disability.

Many companies do not pay female employees the same amount for the same work that their male employees do. However, with the presence of labor laws, employees can hold the company liable and ensure that they are given their due rights (Global People Strategist, 2024).

6. Policy Implementation Strategies

Implementing policies effectively requires a constructive and proactive approach that considers the unique context of each policy and fosters collaboration among stakeholders. Here are some constructive policy implementation strategies:

- **Comprehensive Planning:** Develop detailed implementation plans that outline specific actions, responsibilities, and timelines. Involve relevant stakeholders in the planning process to ensure buy-in and commitment (Nigeria Economic Summit Group, n.d.).
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage with all stakeholders, including affected communities, advocacy groups, and experts, early in the process. Listen to their feedback and concerns and incorporate their insights into the implementation strategy (Sedmak, 2021).
- **Capacity Building:** Invest in training and capacity-building programs for implementers to enhance their skills and knowledge. Empowered implementers are better equipped to execute policies successfully (Hope, 2011).
- **Gradual Implementation:** Consider piloting policies on a smaller scale before full-scale implementation. Pilots allow for testing, learning, and refining strategies before wider adoption (Government Commercial Function, 2021).
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Remain open to feedback and be willing to adapt the implementation strategy based on new information or changing circumstances. Flexibility allows for responsive policymaking (Svemzo, 2022).
- **Communication and Transparency:** Communicate the policy's objectives, rationale, and expected outcomes clearly to stakeholders and the public. Transparent communication builds trust and understanding (Minois, 2023).
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress and assess the policy's impact. Data-driven insights can inform policy adjustments and course corrections (Inisha, 2022).
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Recognize and celebrate successes during implementation to motivate stakeholders and reinforce their commitment to the policy's objectives (Haroon Khan, 2023).

- **Coordinated Efforts:** Foster collaboration and coordination among different agencies and departments involved in implementation. Encourage interdepartmental cooperation to address potential challenges more effectively (Conquest, 2024).
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Raise public awareness about the policy and its benefits through informative campaigns. Engaging the public fosters support and ownership of the policy (SDG Accountability, n.d.).
- **Learn from Past Experiences:** Learn from previous policy implementations, both successful and unsuccessful, to inform the current approach. Identify lessons and best practices to improve future policymaking (Wilson, 2023).
- **Continuous Improvement:** Emphasize a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Encourage feedback loops and iterative processes that enable ongoing refinements to policy implementation strategies (Carreno, 2024).

7. Challenges in Policy Implementation

Policy implementation is a critical stage in the policymaking process, but it is not without its challenges. Recognizing and understanding these challenges constructively allows policymakers to develop effective solutions. Some of the key policy implementation challenges are:

- **Resource Constraints:** Policymakers often face limited resources, including financial, human, and technological resources, which can impede the smooth implementation of policies. Adopting resource-efficient strategies and seeking partnerships can help address this challenge (Akang, 2024).

Example: Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Cameroon aims to provide affordable healthcare to all citizens. However, limited financial resources and shortages of medical personnel have hindered its implementation. As of 2023, only 10% of the population had health insurance, and rural healthcare facilities remain underfunded and understaffed (World Health Organisation, 2023).

- **Bureaucratic Complexity:** Complex administrative procedures and bureaucratic hurdles can slow down policy implementation. Streamlining administrative processes, reducing red tape, and promoting interdepartmental cooperation can improve efficiency.

Example: Cameroon's Tax Policy and complex tax procedures is discouraging investment and hindering private sector growth. The World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Report ranked Cameroon 167th out of 190 countries, citing excessive bureaucracy in tax administration (World Bank, 2022b).

- **Resistance to Change:** Policy changes may encounter resistance from various stakeholders, such as affected communities, interest groups, or government officials. Engaging in open dialogues, addressing concerns, and building consensus can help overcome resistance.

Example: The government's efforts to harmonize the bilingual education system met resistance from teachers and students in Anglophone regions, who feared marginalization. This led to the Anglophone Crisis (2016-present), dis-

rupting school attendance and learning outcomes (Kouega, 2018).

- **Lack of Capacity:** Insufficient expertise or knowledge among implementers can hinder effective execution. Investing in capacity building, training programs, and knowledge sharing can enhance implementers' skills and capabilities.

Example: Decentralization Policy. Cameroon's 1996 Constitution introduced decentralization to empower local governments, but poor technical expertise and administrative capacity have limited its success. Local councils struggle with budget execution, and funds meant for local development often go unspent or misappropriated due to a lack of trained personnel (International Monetary Fund, Cameroon: Public sector management and fiscal decentralization, 2023).

- **Coordination Issues:** Coordination challenges between multiple agencies and stakeholders can lead to fragmented efforts and inefficiencies. Encouraging collaboration, establishing clear communication channels, and defining roles and responsibilities can enhance coordination.

Example: The NDS30 aims for economic transformation, but poor inter-ministerial coordination has caused delays in major projects. For example, the Douala-Yaoundé highway project has been repeatedly delayed due to conflicts between the Ministry of Public Works and local authorities (African Development Bank, Cameroon's infrastructure development and policy challenges, 2023b).

- **Policy Ambiguity:** Unclear or vague policy language may lead to confusion during implementation. Ensuring policies are well-defined, specific, and actionable can mitigate ambiguity.

Example: Cameroon's land tenure laws are often unclear, leading to land disputes between communities, private investors, and the government. The Herakles Farms land dispute (2012-2019) saw local communities protesting against unclear land allocations for palm oil plantations (Gaworecki, 2016).

- **Opposition and Lobbying:** Policymakers may face opposition from powerful interest groups or lobbyists. Constructively engaging with stakeholders, being transparent about policy objectives, and prioritizing the public interest can address concerns.

Example: Logging companies and mining firms have lobbied against stricter environmental regulations, weakening enforcement. Despite laws against illegal logging, 30% of timber exports remain illegal due to corporate lobbying (Pescott, 2010).

- **Public Perception:** Negative public perceptions or lack of public awareness about the policy's benefits can create challenges. Engaging in effective communication and public outreach can build public support and understanding. Example: COVID-19 Response Plan. Public distrust in the government led to low compliance with COVID-19 restrictions, affecting the effectiveness of containment measures. Misinformation and skepticism about vaccines further

slowed vaccination campaigns, with only 15% of the population fully vaccinated by 2022 (Sinuraya, 2024).

- **Monitoring and Evaluation Challenges:** Inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms may hinder policymakers' ability to assess the policy's effectiveness and make necessary adjustments. Strengthening monitoring systems and conducting rigorous evaluations can improve policy outcomes.

Example: Social Safety Net Program. The cash transfer program aimed at supporting vulnerable households has faced inefficiencies and corruption due to weak monitoring mechanisms. Reports indicate that only 5% of targeted beneficiaries actually received funds, as fraudulent practices diverted resources (World Bank, 2022b).

- **External Factors:** External events or changes in the political or economic landscape may disrupt policy implementation. Being adaptable and responsive to changing circumstances can help policymakers navigate unexpected challenges. (Nigeria Economic Summit Group, n.d.)

Example: Impact of the Russia-Ukraine War on Cameroon's Economy. Rising fuel and food prices due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict (2022) disrupted Cameroon's economic policies aimed at reducing inflation. The government had to increase fuel subsidies, which placed a strain on public finances, limiting funds available for infrastructure projects (International Monetary Fund, Cameroon: Public sector management and fiscal decentralization, 2023).

8. The Role of Public Policy in Private Sector Development

1) Public policy matters! The performance of the private sector and its role as either a catalyst or an obstacle to economic growth is closely connected to how well or badly government policies are designed and implemented.

2) The public officials responsible for enhancing private sector participation must acquire a range of analytical skills to be effective. But policy reform is not like engineering or other technical fields where there is a clear optimal solution to a problem. Designing and implementing meaningful policy reform requires a broader, more interdisciplinary knowledge of economics, politics, local history and culture, combined with a sense of how to set priorities, sequence actions and build coalitions.

3) Successful policy outcomes that encourage and strengthen private sector participation are contingent upon the capacity of government officials and business leaders to understand and appreciate the interests, motivations and objectives of their counterparts (Stanford, n.d.).

8.1. Policies That Support Private Sector Development in Cameroon

- National Development Strategy 2020-2030 (NDS30): This strategy aims for structural transformation of the Cameroonian economy, promoting endogenous and inclusive development (African Development Bank, Cameroon Eco-

conomic Outlook, 2023a, 2023b).

- IFC (International Finance Corporation) Private Sector Day: This event highlights strategies for boosting private sector development, focusing on IFC's investment and advisory services projects in Cameroon (IFC, 2023).
- World Bank Group (WBG) Country Partnership Framework (CPF): The WBG's CPF for Cameroon (FY25-29) focuses on supporting the country's Vision 2035, aiming to become an emerging, democratic, and united nation (World Bank, World Bank Group Country Partnership Framework for Cameroon (FY25-29), 2023c).
- PLP (Production Landscape Program) Cameroon: The development of this guide is part of the set of activities that the PLP is deploying to facilitate synergy of actions between state services, civil society organization and the private sector for the promotion of deforestation free commodities in Cameroon. These activity focus on awareness raising for the actors involved (Defo, 2020).
- Infrastructure Development: Improving connectivity of major corridors and upgrading infrastructure are crucial for boosting productivity and service delivery (World Bank, 2023c).
- Industrial policy (IP): this is targeted government interventions to support domestic firms, industries and economic activities to achieve national objectives. The economic objectives of IP includes promoting growth, diversification, employment and technological catchup (International Monetary Fund, Industrial policy in Cameroon, 2024).
- Financial Inclusion: Expanding access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is a key priority (World Economic Forum, 2023).
- Tax Incentives and Facilitations: Tax and other incentives are used to attract investments in targeted economic activities, and a package of incentives and facilitations is also key for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) and promoting exports (OECD, 2024).

8.2. Outcomes of These Policies

- Job Creation: Private sector development is expected to lead to increased job opportunities, particularly in the informal sector (International Labour Organization, 2022b).
- Economic Growth: A vibrant private sector can drive economic growth by increasing productivity, innovation, and investment (World Bank, 2023a).
- Improved Service Delivery: Private sector involvement can lead to better access to goods and services, particularly in areas like healthcare, education, and infrastructure (World Bank, 2022a).
- Increased Foreign Direct Investment (FDI): A conducive business environment can attract more foreign investment, which can further boost economic growth and development (Transparency International, 2021).
- Sustainable Development: Focusing on green growth and sustainable practices can help ensure that economic development is environmentally sound and so-

cially equitable (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2023).

9. The Role of International Organizations and Foreign Aid to the Development Plan

Some international organizations, such as the UN as a whole, are focused on overarching global issues such as poverty reduction and environmental degradation, while other international organizations are more specialized in nature, such as the World Health Organization or the International Monetary Fund. Regardless of their size or scope, international organizations play a key role in fostering collective action and in effort to address often complex issues that transcend national boundaries (Ursu, 2024).

These organizations have boosted the educational sector by improving the quality of education especially for the girl child. Their contribution to the healthcare sector of Cameroon cannot be overemphasized. Backdating to 2015 when Cameroon adopted the United Nations sustainable development goals in alignment with vision 2035 and NDS30 to enhance her long term development strategy. The 17 SDG's are;

- 1) No poverty
- 2) Zero hunger
- 3) Good health and wellbeing
- 4) Quality education
- 5) Gender equality
- 6) Clean water and sanitation
- 7) Affordable and clean energy
- 8) Decent work and economic growth
- 9) Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- 10) Reduced inequalities
- 11) Sustainable cities and communities
- 12) Responsible consumption and production
- 13) Climate Action
- 14) Life below water
- 15) Life on land
- 16) Peace, justice and strong institutions
- 17) Partnerships for the goals (UN Program, n.d.)

10. Contributions of International Aid to the Development Plan of Cameroon

1) Infrastructure Development

International aid has supported Cameroon's infrastructure, particularly in transportation and energy. The World Bank has funded road and electricity projects, such as the Cameroon Transport Sector Development Project, which aimed to improve road networks and trade facilitation (World Bank, Cameroon transport sector development project, 2017). Similarly, the African Development Bank

(AfDB) has financed the Lom Pangar Hydropower Project, improving access to electricity and boosting industrial productivity ([African Development Bank, 2019](#)).

2) Health Sector Support

Global health initiatives have played a crucial role in addressing diseases. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria has provided over \$900 million to Cameroon, significantly reducing malaria-related deaths and improving access to HIV treatment ([Becker, 2024](#)). The Gavi Alliance has also helped increase vaccination rates against diseases such as measles and polio ([Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, 2021](#)).

3) Education and Human Capital Development

Organizations like UNICEF and UNESCO have supported Cameroon's education sector, particularly in rural areas. For instance, UNICEF's Education Cannot Wait program has provided schooling for children displaced by conflict in the Anglophone regions ([UNICEF, 2021](#)). Additionally, the World Bank's Cameroon Secondary Education and Skills Development Project has helped expand access to vocational training ([World Bank, Cameroon Secondary Education and Skills Development Project, 2020](#)).

4) Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Response

Cameroon has faced multiple humanitarian crises, including the Boko Haram insurgency in the Far North and the Anglophone conflict in the Northwest and Southwest. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the European Union's Humanitarian Aid Office have provided funding for refugee camps and internally displaced persons ([UNHCR, Cameroon; Refugee and IDP response overview, 2022b](#)). For example, in 2021, the EU allocated over €17 million in humanitarian aid to Cameroon ([European Union, 2021](#)).

11. Recommendations to Enhance Development in Cameroon

- Ensure development projects success in Cameroon through full involvement and participation during all the phases of the process;
- Improve on procurement procedure by reducing bureaucracy delay at all levels, and unfair practices like corruption and favoritism;
- Improve on communication to make sure that all the stakeholders are kept abreast of the progress of the project and the challenges faced such that concerted solutions can be provided;
- Practice good leadership that makes sure the objectives are met while mitigating corruption and embezzlement of funds.
- Also, community members should sacrifice personal interest to general interest by ensuring the sustainability of the project like the requested token contribution;
- To formalize the project management committee, capacitate and empower them to monitor and contribute in ensuring the sustainability of the project;
- To ensure transparency and fair practices by the project management commit-

tee;

- To develop a comprehensive schedule for the implementation of the project with the participation and monitoring of all the stakeholders;
- To maintain an updated project trouble-shooting mechanism with the involvement of all the stakeholders;
- To employ competent staff, to use adequate and standard materials, to have an independent auditing and evaluation of the project with the participation of the community or beneficiary people;
- To use modern digital work platform or project management software because while minimizing failure helps to concentrate on the successful execution of the projects;
- To improve on procurement procedure by reducing bureaucracy delay at all levels and unfair practices like corruption and favoritism (Merlin Mfondo, 2024).

12. Conclusion

In conclusion, the impact of public policy on the development plan of Cameroon is significant, as policies play a crucial role in shaping the economic, social, and political trajectory of the nation. Public policies are central to addressing critical issues such as infrastructure development, education, healthcare, poverty alleviation, and economic diversification. When effectively formulated and implemented, these policies can accelerate the country's development and improve the standard of living for its citizens.

However, the effectiveness of public policies in Cameroon has often been hindered by challenges such as political instability, poor governance, insufficient resources, and inadequate coordination between various sectors. Despite these challenges, there have been notable successes, such as advancements in infrastructure, improvements in education, and economic growth in certain sectors (Nyonbadmia, 2024).

For Cameroon to achieve its long-term development goals, it is imperative that public policies be designed with a focus on sustainability, inclusivity, and accountability. Strengthening institutional capacities, improving policy coordination, and ensuring the active participation of all stakeholders are critical steps toward maximizing the impact of public policies on the nation's development plans. Additionally, regular monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation of policies to changing circumstances are essential to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness.

In summary, while public policy has a transformative potential for Cameroon's development, its success relies on addressing existing governance challenges, promoting a more inclusive approach, and aligning policies with the actual needs of the population to ensure sustainable and equitable development for the future (World Urban Forum, 2024).

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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