

A Critical Assessment Of The Impact Of Corruption On The Economic And Social Development Of Cameroon: A Positivism Perspective

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to critically assess the impact of corruption on the economic and social development of Cameroon. The study was guided by the epistemology of positivism and followed the causal research design in quantitative method of analysis. A sample size of 200 individuals constituted of Parliamentarians, Senators, Company Managers, individual entrepreneurs, students and the public in general was drawn from the capital city of Yaoundé, Cameroon, using simple random probability sampling. Three causal relationships were hypothesized to produce law-like generalisations in this study and hypotheses 1 and 2 (see table 3) were found to be statistically significant. The findings of this study revealed that high level embezzlement of public funds and illicit financial flows have a statistically significant negative impact on the economic and social development of Cameroon. However, the study is limited in that its research scope was centred only on participants in Yaoundé, and other major cities like Douala, the economic capital of Cameroon were not covered in this study. It is therefore recommended that further studies should cover a sizeable portion of the country. The practical implication of this study is that it will contribute to the level of awareness of the negative and disastrous consequences corruption has on the economic and social progress of the Cameroon economy. It will also help in guiding government overall policy towards the fight against corruption in Cameroon. The originality and value contribution of this study is ascertained by the validity and reliability tests that were conducted here-in.

Keywords: Grand Corruption, Economic Development, Social Development, Kleptocracy

I. INTRODUCTION

‘Corruption’ originates from the Latin word—*corrumpere*, which means ‘bribe, mar or destroy’ (Crouch T, 2012). Much evidence suggests that corruption has been an aged old practice from time immemorial, and, in recent times, it has occupied a front seat in global discussions (Tanzi V, 1998). According to the World Bank, corruption can generally be defined or described as the abuse of public power or corporate office for private benefit (World Bank, 2005). Types of corruption include grand corruption, which involves corruption that pervades the highest level of national

Government, to petty corruption, the exchange of very small amounts of money or the granting of minor favours by those in minor positions. Regardless of the scope of corruption, such acts undermine the development of civil society and exacerbate poverty, especially when public resources that would have been used to finance people’s aspirations for a better life are mismanaged or abused by public officials (John Sullivan and Aleksander Shkolnikov, 2006).

Corruption manifests itself in many ways: as bribery, financial leakage, conflict of interest, embezzlement, false accounting, fraud, influence peddling, nepotism, grand corruption, and illicit financial flows (UNPAN, 2002 as cited

in African Union, 2018). In principle, corruption is a scourge and a cankerworm which has existed since human beings started organising themselves into communities, indicating that corruption exists in countries in the World over. What generally differs from country to country is its dimensions, its intensity and most important, the way the Government and the Society at large deal with the problem so as to reduce or eliminate it. (GERDDES-Cameroon, 1999). While corruption is mostly described as the abuse of public power for private gain (a definition used by the World Bank as seen above), moralists describe corruption as “an immoral and unethical phenomenon that contains a set of moral aberrations from moral standards of society, causing loss of respect for and confidence in duly constituted authority” (Bechem, 2018).

Corruption is a canker worm that has invaded the Cameroonian society. It cuts across all sectors in Cameroon, be they the Public or Private sector and, not even the church is free of corruption. It is an age-old phenomenon that has plagued the Cameroonian society notably in the Health, Educational, Judicial, Financial, Military, and in the Law and Order departments (Bechem, 2018). Cameroon has twice topped the chart of the most corrupt country in the world in 1998 and 1999 according to the corruption perception index by Transparency International indices (Transparency International, 1998 & 1999).

Despite the fact that the Cameroon government has intensified its efforts in the fight against corruption by putting in place a number of institutions such as the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC), popularly known by its French acronym – CONAC in 2006, and the Supreme State Audit to combat corruption in the public sector, there still exist very high levels of corruption reported in the country. Others, such as the Inter-Employer Grouping of Cameroon (GICAM) and the Business Coalition against Corruption (BCAC) are examples of institutions which combat the practice in the private sector (Bechem, 2018).

It is in this regard that this study aimed at assessing the impact of notably grand corruption on the economic and social development of Cameroon, as well as proposing ways through which corruption can be eradicated, if not, reduced to a bearable minimum in Cameroon.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Corruption (in commission or omission) is punishable under sections 134 and 134 (a) of the Penal code of Cameroon: « Any public servant or government employee who for himself or for a third party solicits, accepts or receives any offer, promise, gift or present in order to perform, refrain from performing or postpone any act of his office» or who receives any reward «as remuneration for having already performed or refrained from any such act» shall be punished. The corrupter who is also punishable under section 134 (a) is any person who illakes promises, offers, gifts and presents in order to obtain either the performance, postponement or abstention from an act. Corruption is the violation of the obligations of probity, fidelity and impartiality in the exercise of a public service, to the detriment of the user .Corruption is said to have taken place when an individual is paid to perform

or refrain from performing his duty either with gifts, promises or presents; corruption is also deemed to have occurred when an individual pays a compliant Professional to do his work or to refrain from doing so. (GERDDES-Cameroon, 1999).

A. GRAND CORRUPTION

Corruption can occur in different forms, in different types of organizations, and at different levels within organizations. Several types of corruption exists among which are: Grand corruption, political corruption, corporate corruption, administrative corruption, petty corruption and systemic corruption. However, the type of corruption of interest in this study is Grand Corruption which is defined as corruption that involves heads of state, ministers, or other senior government officials and serves the interests of a narrow group of business people and politicians, or criminal elements. (World Bank, 2005).

Large scale corruption by high-level public officials – kleptocracy – is a particular threat for democracy and the rule of law in developing countries. Such corruption undermines financial accountability, discourages foreign investment, stifles economic performance, and diminishes trust in legal and judicial systems (John Sullivan and Aleksander Shkolnikov, 2006).

According to the World Bank, \$1 trillion is paid every year in bribes, and according to the United Nations, more than \$400 billion has been looted from Africa alone and stashed away in foreign countries. Kleptocracy is a development issue, because high – level corruption undermines economic development and renders important issues, such as the fight against poverty, ineffective. In many parts of the world, kleptocrats have lined their own pockets instead of funding development, such as new roads, schools, and hospitals (World Bank, 2005).

During the 1990s, corruption cost African countries an estimated sum of US\$148 billion per year on average, or 25 per cent of total output (Wickberg, 2013 cited by African Union, 2018). It is estimated that paying for bribes accounts for 2-3 per cent of poor households’ income on average (Kimenyi, M, and J. Mbaku , 2011). More recent estimates suggest that approximately seven per cent of the continent’s gross domestic product (GDP) is lost through illicit flows, and this significantly reduced public spending (Astorga et al., 2012). The High-Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa (The Mbeki Report) indicated that Africa loses US\$50 billion every year through illicit financial flows. This amounts to US\$1 trillion lost in the last 50 years. Projections indicate that the overall economic cost of corruption in some African countries could become much worse: rising from US\$1,000 per person per year to US\$2,000 per person per year by 2030 (Price Water House, 2016).

African countries have continued to fare poorly in international rankings which measure perceptions of corruption, such as the annual Corruption Perception Index by Transparency International. For example, Cameroon topped the list of most corrupt countries in the world in 1998 & 1999. Even where measures are being taken to tackle corruption, perceptions of corruption continue to affect people’s trust in public services and justice systems. Many Africans, including

children, feel that their governments are not doing enough to tackle corruption. The majority of Africans surveyed for the 2013 Afrobarometer survey perceived that corruption is getting worse, and public efforts to deter corruption were not working. Specifically, 56 per cent of the surveyed citizens felt that African governments are doing a poor job at curbing corruption – an increase of more than eight percentage points compared to 2002 (Afrobarometer, 2013).

In Cameroon, empirical studies show that more than 4700 billion FCFA (approx. US\$8 billion) accounting for about 20% of Cameroon's current GDP have been embezzled in the last decade. Grand corruption which is corruption involving head of states, ministers and senior ranking civil servants has so badly weakened the economy of Cameroon and plunge millions into abject poverty, misery and unemployment. Aside CONAC, the office of Supreme State Audit is also a leading body in the fight against corruption in Cameroon today. In 2011, a Special Criminal Court was created to prosecute State officials who misappropriated funds valued equal to or above fifty million francs CFA. Since then, several top state officials including a former Prime Minister, Minister of State in charge of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, Minister of Finance and numerous General Managers of public enterprises and parastatals have been convicted by this court for embezzlement of funds (Nguemegne JP, 2011). These are clear indicators that the advent of the 21st century brought about a drastic change in the government's fight against corruption in Cameroon. The "*Operation Sparrow Hawk*" was launched by the President of the Republic and placed under the coordination of the Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Justice, and Keeper of the Seals, to track down and expose public servants who misappropriate state funds (Monde Afrique, 2015). These institutions were created to jointly and severally uproot corruption which hinders development as it accounts directly and indirectly for loss of revenue by the government. It is also important to highlight that the fight against corruption in Cameroon does not exist only in the public sector, but also in the private sector. The results of a survey carried out in 2008 showed that 49% of the 1052 companies interrogated affirmed to have bribed taxation officers (Afrique L, 2011). Another 76% of those companies agreed that corruption had negatively affected their businesses. This is the double tragedy of corruption in Cameroon – killing of businesses and severe weakening of the economy.

B. CORRUPTION AND ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN CAMEROON

While economic growth is simply an increase in aggregate output, economic development is concerned with quality improvements, the introduction of new goods and services, risk mitigation and the dynamics of innovation and entrepreneurship (Beine, M., F. Docquier, & H. Rapoport, 2001). Economic development is about positioning the economy on a higher growth trajectory. Material prosperity and higher quality of life and standards of living are important end needs of economic development (Maryann Feldman et al., 2014). "We have identified corruption as the single greatest

obstacle to economic and social development" (World Bank, 2005).

Despite experiencing sustained economic growth in the last decade, Cameroon still suffers from chronic underdevelopment. The average life expectancy is 55.5 years, and the country has a Human Development Index score of .512. In 2007, approximately 39.9 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line (World Bank, 2005) and, in 2013, 4 per cent of the working population was unemployed (United Nations Development Programme, 2005). Inequality is significant in Cameroon, as shown by the country's 2013 Gini Index Score of 38.9. Corruption in Cameroon takes several forms ranging from bribery and extortion, bureaucratic corruption, private sector corruption and tax evasion, judicial corruption, electoral financing as well as corruption in the budget process, procurement and public contracts (Transparency International, 2016). According to Freedom House (2015), "Bribery is commonplace in all sectors, from gaining school admission to fixing traffic infractions." (Freedom House, 2015) Bribery in Cameroon assumes the street names of "gumbo", "beer", "taxi", "fuel", "tchoko", "motivation" (Atangana, 2012), and is common practice at all levels of the Cameroon state and business sector.

International diagnostic surveys show that corruption in Cameroon is widespread, affecting a variety of sectors. Cameroon ranks 130 out of 168 countries on the 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index, with a score of 27, below the global and slightly below the Sub-Saharan African average score of 33 (Transparency International, 2016).

The Ibrahim Index of African Governance tells a similar story with its indicator on accountability, giving Cameroon a score of 31.2 over 100, slightly below the African average for the same indicator (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2015). Finally, the World Governance Indicators, specifically the indicator on control of corruption, place Cameroon in the lowest 10 percentile, while performing in the low (in the 25 percentile or lower) for the remaining indicators (Kaufmann, D., & Kraay, A, 2015).

These perceptions tend to correlate to national opinion surveys on corruption. In the 2013 Global Corruption Barometer (GCB), at least 69 per cent of respondents in Cameroon stated that they had paid a bribe in some form, and 46 per cent of respondents thought the corruption situation had worsened (Transparency International, 2013). In the Afrobarometer survey, 45 per cent of respondents from Cameroon believe all or most government officials to be corrupt (Afrobarometer, 2015).

C. CAUSES AND COSTS OF CORRUPTION IN CAMEROON

In many economies, corruption is institutional and dealing with it on a daily basis seems more convenient than combatting it. Looking at corruption as an economic issue means that corruption, while benefiting a few individuals, is costly to society, the private sector, and governments in the long run.

a. CAUSES OF CORRUPTION IN CAMEROON

Corruption belongs to the category of phenomena which Durkheim (1960: 47-75 as cited in GERDDES-Cameroon, 1999) described as «Pathological» which should not be confused with those considered as «normal». According to the findings of a national survey carried out by GERDDES-Cameroon in 1999, the main causes of Corruption in Cameroon include among others; low salaries, impunity, desire to get rich at all cost and ignorance of rights. Impunity and Low Salaries being the major causes of corruption in Cameroon (GERDDES-Cameroon, 1999).

For most Cameroonians, the anti-corruption campaign had been merely a wasted effort since government had not taken any measures against the corrupted and the corrupters. The general public is of the opinion that the State machinery protects corrupters and the corrupted, and that because of this impunity, «corruption is a sea serpent neither the head nor the tail of which we can see» (GERDDES-Cameroon, 1999). There is a general feeling that corruption and in particular grand corruption has been institutionalized. As concerns the problem of salaries, Cameroonians feel that given a minimum level of well-being, corruption would reduce on its own. For them, « people don't actually need to be Rockfellers, rather, they need to be able to assert themselves just a little more in society». That is why, if we want to fight corruption, it would be a good idea to provide each Cameroonian with «the main pillars of life: a house, a car, access to healthcare, education, and the possibility to get married» (GERDDES-Cameroon, 1999).

In the early 1990s, Garga Haman Adjii the then Minister in charge of Supreme State Audit and Public Service waged a war against embezzlers of state funds. He went as far as submitting names of corrupt officials to the Presidency, requiring that they be punished. The sum of funds embezzled totalled 357 million francs CFA. The response he got was rather discouraging as his Ministerial portfolio was modified, limiting his competence to civil service and administrative reforms. He thus lost his authority over the Supreme State Audit. He resigned from government believing that the modification was due to his hard-line stance against corruption (Fonchingong, TN, Gemandze JB, 2009).

The salary slash, the economic crisis and the devaluation in the early 1990's have succeeded in turning Cameroonians into «beggars» who have all the difficulties in the world in making ends meet. Several respondents in this study pointed out that corruption existed before the economic crisis, but that the crisis only aggravated it, so that the only way for a civil servant to survive is by swindling others. «Before the 1970s one's salary enabled one to have the vital minimum. Today, one needs to be a man of integrity to process a file worth a million francs when one's salary is so pathetic». For several years now, State employees who are married and have children, no longer receive family allowances: they cannot say no to corruption.

b. COST OF CORRUPTION IN CAMEROON

According to the National-Anti Corruption Commissions (CONAC) status report on the fight against corruption in

Cameroon in 2017, more than 14.7 billion FCFA was lost by the state as a result of mismanagement and corruption (CONAC, 2017). According to this same report, the most corrupt public services in Cameroon are the ministry of public contracts, the ministry of Finance and the ministry of defence and public security (CONAC, 2017). In 2018, the three most reported sectors through the CONAC hotline where corruption is most prevalent are the forces of law and order (during roadside checks, establishment of National Identity Cards, Police custody etc), Finance (treasury, taxes, customs, central and decentralised services etc) and Justice (corruption of magistrates and slowness in rendering justice) (CONAC, 2018).

Corruption is very costly and weighs heavily on the economy and the working of justice and is a serious handicap to the harmonious functioning of the economy. Corruption has destroyed and damaged the fabric of Cameroonian society as even children now practice corruption. It has severely affected the spiritual, moral, ethical, intellectual, emotional and social upbringing and development of the child in Cameroon.

On Justice: Corruption simply annihilates the value of justice and its men. Justice becomes diluted, partial and unjust. Judgement rendered is no longer equal for equal causes. Researchers into law have discovered that corruption diminishes the law (J. Marc Ela, 1994). The corrupt judge pronounces judgement decisions in which the offences have no bearing on the sentences. Interpretation of instruments becomes incorrect, hence the lack of development in legal science. In the absence of confidence in justice, people resource to other means to obtain satisfaction. It is because of this that certain practices such as mob justice have developed. Summary execution through lynching of robbers, direct settling of scores between individuals in conflict, etc (GERDDES-Cameroon, 1999). Corrupt justice promotes ostracism and actual exclusion of honest magistrates who end up being marginalised by the system. Society thus loses competence and upright magistrates. Legal insecurity then gradually becomes part of the society (Robert Klitgaard, 1995).

On the Economy: «The State loses a lot because of this corruption. Contracts awarded, either to nationals or expatriates, always come about as a result of envelopes left in the various contract award, payment and control channels. All what is thus paid into the pockets of officials have repercussions on the global cost of the contract. Thus a project that should have cost one billion, is billed at two billion or two and a half billion « (Cameroon Tribune, 1998).

Billions of FCFA have been embezzled in Cameroon and stashed in foreign banks by a large number of high ranking members of government and State officials. Most of them are ex-ministers and general managers who are in prison while others are still in service. There has been no quantitative studies that has been carried out to determine an estimated total net monetary amount that has been embezzled in Cameroon's economy since independence 60 years ago. However, some sources suggest that more than 4700 billion FCFA (approx. US\$8 billion) accounting for about 20% of Cameroon's current GDP have been embezzled in the last decade. This has severely retarded economic and social development in Cameroon.

On the Social Structure: Corruption does not only kill the nation economically. It also has a 'sociocidal' effect because it prevents the building of a solid society, founded on the valorisation of the individual. Individuals are born with equal rights in a society where social functions are distinct and complementary and where society offers each of its members, through training equal chances of acceding to roles and titles through personal effort; it makes a mockery of the social principle of equal opportunities; it also makes a mockery of the role assigned to the training structure (Sikounm, 1992). It cares very little for the fundamental capital that the individual personality constitutes, an asset that is consolidated and enriched as it is moulded. Corruption opens to anyone, the door to any position, with the faint hope that the necessary skills will be acquired «on-the-job». Unfortunately, the miraculous acquisition of these skills never occurs. Schools lose their value. Those of young people who value work become discouraged. Children, the most vulnerable members of society, adopt as a way of life, and as the only way to succeed, the practice of intrigues, cheating, corruption of teachers etc (GERDDES-Cameroon, 1999). A teacher who, as a student, corrupted his teachers to pass from one class to the other, sees nothing abnormal in the solicitations of his students. The school thus hatches a society of incompetence, ill-prepared to face the international intellectual competition of the third millennium (Nana-Sinkan, 1999).

Impunity, a most serious crime against the nation : The absence of punishment for a crime undermines national solidarity more than the crime itself. This is a verifiable fact in Cameroon today. Because of the widespread corruption and the impunity enjoyed by those guilty of it, Cameroonians do not agree on anything that can unite them as a single people: acceding to positions of power, exploitation and distribution of the country's wealth, education of youths (GERDDES-Cameroon, 1999). It is not a matter of the acceptance or not of political liberalism, the differing perception of ideologies and economic systems (capitalism, socialism, communism), nor a matter of debating whether to give our children lay or religious education (Robert Klitgaard, 1995). There is a general disagreement among Cameroonians on the electoral code, the organisation and conduct of elections, the influence of foreign corporations on the national economy, the common good and the obligation for everyone to work for it, the love for hard work or the desire for intrigues and easy gain that the youth today has acquired. If there is disagreement on all of these points, then there is no national conscience. The national conscience has been stifled by the impunity enjoyed by corrupters and the corrupted (Okola, 1996).

c. THE IMPACT OF GRAND CORRUPTION AND ILLICIT FINANCIAL FLOWS IN CAMEROON

Grand corruption has multiple negative effects on vulnerable groups including children. The loss of large amounts of public resources significantly reduces funds available to provide basic services including health, education and child protection. Indeed, the amount of public funds available to invest in civil registration systems and critical infrastructure such as road infrastructure, energy, water, sanitation and hospitals is affected with the loss of colossal

amounts of public funds. Beyond reduced spending on social services, grand corruption can also lead to the failure to build institutions as well as suppressing the growth of public servant's salaries. Low wages imply less money for households and increased temptation to seek bribes. Conversely, studies show that increasing public sector wages in low income countries was associated with significant reduction in corruption index (Van Rijckeghem, 2001).

With respect to education, the diversion of funds and consequent unavailability of schooling resources prevent children from enrolling in school and lead to poor quality education for those who enrol. Previous estimates indicate that an increased score in the index of corruption by one point decreases school enrolment by about 5 per cent (Dreher and Herzfeld, 2005). A number of services cannot be extended to children due to lack of public funds. For example, many African countries could have had the means to finance school meals if there was no corruption. As a result, millions of children on the continent attend school on empty stomachs and this compromises their cognitive development and learning outcomes (Kremer et al. 2004).

Indirect impacts of grand corruption with implications for children include expenditure budget cuts to address corruption scandals and the potential radicalization of the youth. Specifically, grand corruption can have a double cost if the funds lost were contributed by donors. The use of public funds to reimburse stolen donor funds often leads to budget cuts as government attempt to re-balance the budget.

Another issue that is partly a consequence of thriving corrupt practices is illicit financial flows (IFFs). The African Union's Report of the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa considers IFFs to be "money that is illegally earned, transferred or utilized originating from activities including bribery and theft by corrupt government officials." (AU/ECA, 2015). IFFs can be a result of grand corruption practices, attempts at tax evasion or trade mis-invoicing or money laundering (Global Financial Integrity, 2015). Annually, it is estimated that US\$80 billion is lost annually in Africa due to IFFs (OECD, 2018) and this negatively affects development outcome (AU/ECA, 2015). This amount exceeds the value of aid received by African countries. Although IFFs have traditionally existed in developing countries, the amounts lost increased substantially during the 1990s and 2000, especially as African countries have become increasingly dependent on extractives for exports. Global Financial Integrity estimates that IFFs in Africa as a share of total trade averaged about 10 per cent per annum between 2004 and 2013. Specifically, US\$675 billion was lost in IFFs during 2004-2013 (Global Financial Integrity, 2015). These outflows were estimated for Cameroon at US\$7.5 billion.

D. WAYS AND MEANS TO COMBAT AND OVERCOME CORRUPTION IN CAMEROON

All forms of corruption reduce the availability of household and public resources to spend on critical services in a country such as education, healthcare and public infrastructure. Combating corruption is therefore an important step for increasing the funds available for families and

governments to invest in children and the future of the country. Reducing corruption is necessary for improving development outcomes for the youth in Africa and in Cameroon and it is also a human rights obligation highlighted in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (African Union, 2018). Cameroon can curb corruption through the following means and practices:

a. THE MORALISATION OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES & INSTITUTIONS

The solution to the problem of corruption is first of all in the hands of politicians and high ranking state officials, provided they are legitimate in the eyes of the people. They must have been chosen by people whom they serve and who can control them. In turn, they will have the necessary authority to get things done, give instructions, prohibit, punish or reward. They would then have the latitude to implement the programme they had advertised during their campaigns. In the absence of an independent electoral commission, and in a situation where the electoral process has been vitiated at the base by an electoral code that allows the ruling party to be re-elected indefinitely, where persons who have been corrupted by the authorities in power do their best to make sure that the regime remains in power and where the helm of the State and the politicians all owe gratitude towards the DOs, magistrates, civil servants, and other officials of public and private services who «validate» approve and support the various fraud schemes in the electoral process (GERDDES-Cameroon, 1999). These political preconditions mentioned above will have to be followed by a complete reform of legal texts, which would give magistrates the power to apply the law freely and impartially. In this way, the action of the media on a public to which the politicians have thus become accountable will bear fruit.

b. BUDGET TRANSPARENCY

A potential contributing factor to overcoming corruption in Cameroon is the extent to which citizens know and participate in budget discussions ranging from the National Assembly to the local councils in Cameroon. Opaque budgets hide the true picture of actual allocations made for services that benefit the public and are foundational to institutionalizing and perpetuating the abuse of public funds. As noted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, lack of transparency in resource mobilization systems “can lead to inefficiencies, mismanagement of public finances and corruption. This in turn can lead to insufficient resources being available to spend on the rights of the child.” (CRC, 2016). The international budget partnership (IBP) has since 2006 published an Open Budget Index (OBI) which tracks budget accountability with respect to transparency, participation and oversight. According to the budget transparency scores for 39 African countries covered by the OBS in 2017, the average budget transparency score is 25. Countries that score below this threshold are classified as having minimal budget transparency on the IBP classification i.e. their respective government discloses limited and low-

quality information about budget formulation, executions and audits. Statistics show that based on the the three budget accountability measures for the period 2010 – 2017, Cameroon scored the least in budget transparency in 2017 with a score of 7 out of 100 (International Budget Partnership and World Bank , 2017).

c. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Many countries are making use of smart technologies to deal with the excesses of public servants that are in routine contact with children. For example, biometric identifications have been used in some countries to reduce the number of ghost teachers and health workers. Adopting such technology can go some way in reducing the leakage of public funds. Beyond biometric identification, Cameroon can use online platforms and apps to publicize government expenditure releases or information regarding public procurement. Technology is also being used to monitor drugs prescribed to patients or text books sent to schools. Technology can also be used to track teacher presence in schools (AU/ECA, 2015). The Cameroon government through the Supreme State Audit (CONSUPE) and the National Anti – Corruption Commission (CONAC) could adopt new technologies to support the reporting of corruption since this can support the anonymity of persons and ensures that children and young people can report instances of corruption without fear of consequent reprisals. There are examples of such initiatives such as the Tell-it-True initiative in Liberia. This confidential, anonymous SMS suggestions box is placed throughout academic campuses in Monrovia. Information submitted through the TELL system is deliberated on a regular basis within the academic administration. Such schemes offer an opportunity for children as well as citizens in general to report corrupt practices anonymously. Cameroon can copy this example.

d. EDUCATE CHILDREN ABOUT CORRUPTION AND EMPOWER THEM TO HELP STOP IT

The Ministries of Education, supported by teachers, civil society, the United Nations and other partners should raise awareness of the ills of corruption among children through schools, clubs and the media. Children should also be empowered and supported to raise the alarm and report corrupt practices to authorities without fear of reprisal. Initiatives to educate and engage children on the ills of corruption are important for stopping the culture of corruption from blighting the next generation (African Union, 2018). For example, citizenship TV programmes and movies about corruption can be designed to educate the Cameroon public and people on how to prevent and overcome corrupt practices.

e. SHARE AND SCALE – UP GOOD PRACTICES IN FIGHTING CORRUPTION

Cameroon, with support from organizations such as the AU Advisory Board on Corruption, should be encouraged to share more examples of what is working well to stop corruption and hold perpetrators to account. Use of new technologies that have proven successful in reducing leakage

of public funds and increase transparency should be further scaled up (African Union, 2018).

f. THE ACTION OF CHURCH LEADERS AND TEACHERS

Religious leaders on the other hand do not have to wait for these socio-political reforms to take place before they act. However, their action has to be concrete and decisive, targeting not corruption in the abstract sense, which in fact is an idea against which it is very difficult or even impossible to fight, but specific acts of corruption carried out by well identified socioprofessional groups. Christians in this regard have a model in the person of Christ who did not limit himself to condemning wrong doing, but went further to speak out against the wrongful practices of what we might call the socio-professional groups of that time -the scribes, Pharisees and tax collectors. Talking to the latter, John the Baptist said (Luke 3, 13-14) «Exact no more than that which is appointed to you» and to soldiers he said «do violence to no man and be contented with your wages» Preachers should actively condemn the bad practices of those social actors whom the public considers as more easily prone to corruption: law enforcement officers, magistrates, teachers, health personnel, customs officers, vote holders as well as citizens who have reconciled themselves to it. Like Ezekiel (33, 7-9), preachers are the «watchmen» that God has sent on mission with the warning, «when I say unto the wicked, «O wicked man, thou shalt surely die, if thou does not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it: if he does not turn from his way he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered their soul». Corruption has become such a normal practice in Cameroon today that we find corrupt persons and corrupters of otherwise strong faith among the thousands of people who attend mass and services in our churches, temples and mosques. In other to open their eyes and prepare the way for them to turn back to the right path, the preacher should, like John the Baptist, point out to them that what they are doing is wrong and tell them what to do. It is surprising (although this paradox is not very obvious) that the Christian who prays fervently and daily for the kingdom of God to come should always look for the easy way out through acts of corruption, and in so doing promote the kingdom of the Anti-God. The word of God can only attain its goal if it awakens the conscience of the individual and transforms him, that is, makes him respect his neighbour and teaches him to work not only for personal gain but for the well being of all. The faithful believer who has become used to submitting his will to the authority of the revealed Word should not find it difficult to accept the rules laid down by society if such rules do not go against his faith. There is no religion in Cameroon today which does not advocate honesty, probity, the respect for duty and the spirit of discipline. Accepted religions that are being practised contribute in the forging of a social morality that can be taught. In this regard, it is a powerful weapon in the fight against corruption.

g. FIGHT AGAINST IMPUNITY AND DENIAL OF SAFE HAVEN TO CORRUPT OFFICIALS

To combat high – level corruption, Cameroon can solicit help from the international community and internalize efforts against kleptocracy. Cameroon can adopt a national strategy in the form of a fight against high – level corruption by involving foreign partners and financial institutions in more robust efforts to develop best practices for uncovering and seizing stolen funds, enhance information sharing, and ensure greater accountability for development assistance.

Two crucial aspects of the fight against kleptocracy are the denial of safe haven to corrupt officials and recovery and proper dispersion of the proceeds of corrupt acts. The denial of safe haven is the act taken by a nation to identify persons who should be denied entry into the said nation because they are involved in public corruption that has serious adverse effects on the national interests of the said nation. This act prevents such corrupt people from coming into the country combating corruption to enjoy the fruits of their corruption and sends a strong message that the country combating corruption is committed to supporting international efforts to combating public corruption wherever it occurs (World Bank, 2005).

Asset recovery on the other hand is when nations work with international partners to trace and recover the proceeds of corruption. Using law enforcement and forfeiture tools, nations can also provide assistance to foreign investigations to recover assets. In recent years some countries' authorities have returned to various countries millions of dollars embezzled by these countries' former leaders. Moreover, Cameroon can work with international partners to enumerate best practices for identifying, tracing, freezing, and recovering assets illicitly acquired through grand corruption. They should also join other international financial centers in establishing and promoting best practices to deny entry to proceeds of corruption, facilitate sharing of suspicious financial information, and encourage and develop public and private partnerships (John Sullivan and Aleksander Shkolnikov, 2006).

III. METHODOLOGY

This study is guided by the epistemology of positivism and follows the causal research design in quantitative method of analysis. This is because quantitative research is often used to question relationships between variables yielding results that are predictive, explanatory, or confirmatory (Williams, 2011). It aims to produce generalized findings in the form of theories and formulae, and so is sometimes associated with positivistic and deductive studies (Bryman, 2012). The researcher sought to establish a relationship between grand corruption and the economic and social development in Cameroon. The study applied simple random probability sampling i.e selecting the sample randomly from the sampling frame using random numbers obtained from tables or generated by a computer. (Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A., 2009). A sample of 200 participants constituted of Parliamentarians, Senators, Company Managers, Public officials, individual entrepreneurs, students and the public in

general was drawn from the capital city of Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Research questions were administered with the use of questionnaires because it has the ability to harness data from a large sample that may be geographically dispersed, and provides broad statistical analysis options (Zikmund, 2003). Well-structured questionnaire was used in this study to provide a hypothetical response of 200 respondents on SPSS worksheet using a 5 Likert scale (SA-SD) and Mean as the measurement of central tendency.

A. DATA ANALYSIS

Statistical inferences and modelling with the use of statistical software’s like SPSS and AMOS were used in this research. Data obtained from questionnaires with open-ended questions was coded and analyzed with the use of SPSS 23 and AMOS 24 in order to have valid and reliable research results.

B. STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

H1: High Level Embezzlement of Public Funds has a significant negative impact on the Economic and Social Development of Cameroon

H2: Illicit Financial Flows has a significant negative impact on the Economic and Social Development of Cameroon

H3: Nepotism, Tribalism and Favouritism has a significant negative impact on the Economic and Social Development of Cameroon

IV. RESULTS

Pattern Matrix^a

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
EPF2			.901	
EPF3			.852	
IFF1	.612			
IFF2	.828			
IFF3	.846			
NTF1				.651
NTF3				.744
SLQ1		.725		
SLQ2		.563		
SLQ3		.901		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.
Note: EPF = Embezzlement of Public Funds; IFF = Illicit Financial Flows; NTF = Nepotism, Tribalism & Favouritism; SLQ = Standard of Living/Quality of Life

Table 1: Combined Table of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

As shown in table 1 above, data was cleaned using principal component analysis and promax rotation. The results displayed in the combined exploratory factor analysis table

above represent those indicators of the various latent constructs that were retained. Further analysis was done using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in order to confirm the validity and reliability of the aforementioned latent constructs used in this study. The result obtained is presented below.

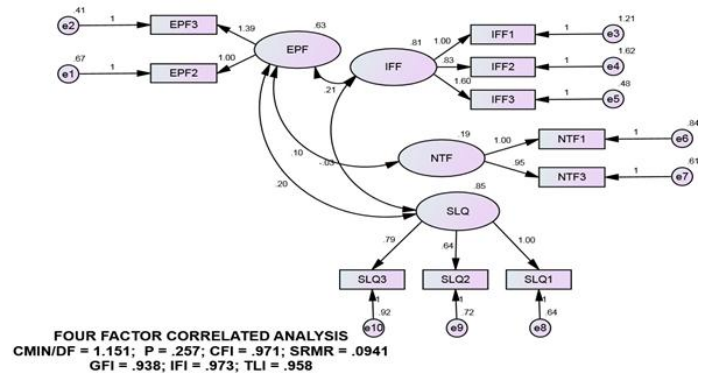


Figure 1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

This confirmatory factor analysis diagram above confirms the validity and reliability of the latent constructs used in this study. They are (i) Embezzlement of Public Funds (ii) Illicit Financial Flows (iii) Nepotism, Tribalism & Favouritism as the independent latent variables and (iv) Standard of Living/Quality of Life as the dependent latent variable, influencing the economic and social development of Cameroon. Also, as presented above, the admissibility requirements for the results to be valid and reliable were met using confirmatory factor analysis.

Again, further analysis using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) was conducted in order to meet the validity and reliability requirements necessary to proceed to test the hypothesis. The diagram below shows the SEM model.

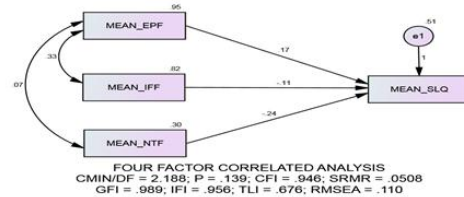


Figure 2: Structural Equation Model (SEM) Analysis

However, based on the figure above depicting the results, the Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis conducted failed to meet the validity and reliability requirements necessary to proceed to test the hypothesis.

Nonetheless, path analysis was used to test the hypothesis as presented in the output results below.

Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
EPF2 <--- EPF	1.000				
EPF3 <--- EPF	1.387	.424	3.270	.001	par_1
IFF1 <--- IFF	1.000				
IFF2 <--- IFF	.830	.194	4.274	***	par_2

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
IFF3 <--- IFF	1.598	.380	4.200	***	par_3
NTF1 <--- NTF	1.000				
NTF3 <--- NTF	.946	1.018	.930	.353	par_4
SLQ1 <--- SLQ	1.000				
SLQ2 <--- SLQ	.644	.171	3.773	***	par_5
SLQ3 <--- SLQ	.790	.207	3.816	***	par_6

Table 2: Path Analysis – Multiple Regressions

Hypothesis	P-Value at 95% CI	Decision/conclusion
H1: High Level Embezzlement of Public Funds has a significant negative impact on the Economic and Social Development of Cameroon	P = .001 Statistically significant	There is not enough statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that high level embezzlement of public funds has a statistically significant negative impact on the social and economic development of Cameroon
H2: Illicit Financial Flows has a significant negative impact on the Economic and Social Development of Cameroon	*** P ≤ 0.001 Statistically significant	There is enough statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that illicit financial flows has a statistically significant negative impact on the economic and social development of Cameroon
H3: Nepotism, Tribalism and Favouritism has a significant negative impact on the Economic and Social Development of Cameroon	P = .353 Not Statistically significant	There is not enough statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis nor to conclude that nepotism, tribalism and favouritism has a statistically significant negative impact on the economic and social development of Cameroon

Table 3: Test of Hypothesis

V. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study have shown that high level embezzlement of public funds and illicit financial flows have a statistically significant negative impact on the economic and social development of Cameroon. This can be seen in table 3 where the P-value for hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 is significant within a 95% confidence interval being P = 0.001 for H1 and P ≤ 0.001 for H2 respectively. However, hypothesis 3 (H3) i.e nepotism, tribalism and favouritism was found not to have a statistically significant impact on the

economic and social development of Cameroon. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that Government policy in the fight against corruption in Cameroon should focus and lay more emphasis on strengthening the existing anti-corruption institutions such as the supreme state audit (CONSUPE) and the anti-corruption commission (CONAC) or reviewing legislation governing such institutions by giving them more powers. The powers of these institutions should not only be to identify and report corrupt officials to the presidency but should also be to conduct arrests where necessary, freeze bank accounts and cease the assets of those officials and individuals guilty of corruption. Also, the culture of the fight against corruption and education of Cameroonians beginning from the infant level concerning issues of corruption should be intensified and made obligatory. In this way, the standard of living and quality of life of Cameroonians shall greatly improve as a result of a corresponding increase in the social and economic development of Cameroon.

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