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**The Growth of the Cameroonian Public Sector: An
Analysis from *Adolph Wagner's Approach***

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Abstract

Purpose: This article sheds light on the determining factors accountable for the growth of the Cameroonian public sector from Adolph Wagner's Perspective.

Methodology: To realize the objective, data were obtained through documentary and secondary sources, such as the World Bank Reports and other relevant documents. Information obtained was contently analysed, while numeric information was presented in percentages and tables.

Findings: Using Adolph Wagner's Approach, findings showed that the size of the Cameroon public service has grown in size due to political, economic and social determinants. Politically, it has increased due to political instability and voter maximization behaviours by politicians; economically, it is due to the demand for public and merit goods, the fight against

unemployment, and the government's regulatory role in the economy. Socially, it is accounted for by increasing population growth and demand for social services.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: This article from the Theoretical Standpoint of Adolph Wagner's perspective has resolved that the size of the Cameroonian public service has increased in size over the years as a result of political and socio-economic undertones, which to a greater extent has not been efficient service delivery. It is from this perspective that it is highly recommended that, there is an urgent need for accountability and responsiveness to be imbibed into the Cameroon public to ensure efficient delivery of goods and services to the public.

Keywords: *Growth, Cameroon, Public Sector, Adolph Wagner's Approach*

INTRODUCTION

Most political economists have over the years argued that although aggregate demand and supply can lead to economic growth without government intervention, it has also been established that events in Europe and beyond have demonstrated that the free market economy was unable to solve the 1929 global economic crisis which resulted to high unemployment, price hikes and to a fall in stock markets (Njimanted, 2012, p 47). In this sense, some authors have recommended the Keynesian doctrine which advocates for the government's intervention in the economy to stabilize prices, ensure a balance of payment, economic growth, full employment, reduce poverty and assure equitable distribution of income (ibid). The government's intervention in this light thus denotes that the role of the public sector can never be underemphasized in any economy with Cameroon inclusive. In the words of Pimpong (2017, p 1), the public sector is the largest spender and employer in virtually every developing country and sets the policy environment for the rest of the economy. Added to these, the main focus of the public sector is driven by its desire to realize the following objectives: better delivery of basic public services that affect the living standards of the poor; creating a climate conducive to private sector development; and making the state's apparatus market-friendly, managerial, decentralized and customer friendly, with the hope that it can better meet its societal objectives of good governance (Omoyefa, 2008, p 18). The main functions performed by the public sector have been summarized by Fagbemi (2013, p 9-10) as follows: implementing and enforcing economic, political and social policies of the government, designing and implementing public programs, generating revenue for the government, ensuring managerial, political and financial accountability, serving the people, monitoring and evaluating the performance of organisations be there public, private or non-governmental that are rendering services on behalf of government, driving all development initiatives, and delivering quality public services, such as education, electricity, water and transportation.

The growth of the public sector has become a global issue which over the years has attracted, and it continues to attract great attention (Bothe, 1987, p 1-2). Although this growth has not been uniform, neither in time nor in space, it should be underlined here that, several economic approaches have resolved that, "*public expenditure*" remains one of the veritable instruments for the determination of the size of any public sector (ibid, p 3-4). Public expenditure in this sense is a reflection of the demand for public goods and services. This implies that, the higher the public expenditure, the larger the size of the public sector, and the lower the public expenditure, the slower the size of the public sector. This assertion has been corroborated by Häge (2003, p 8) when the author noted as follows: "*...The most commonly used indicators of government size are expenditure measures derived from national accounts. Often simply total government expenditure is used to signify the size of the public sector...*". In this light, the author defines the following as falling under the domain of public or government spending "*...capital formation, subsidies, social transfers, military expenditure, interest payments, and civilian consumption expenditure...Besides traditional state functions like public safety and administration, it mainly includes spending on education, health care, child care, and other welfare provisions.... wages and salaries to public employees and public employment...*" (ibid).

In Cameroon, the size of the public sector has increased tremendously since the country gained its independence in the early 1960s. The number of ministries, government agencies and public enterprises has and are not only being created, but their increment has also been commensurate with increasing government expenditure. From 1961 to 1966 for instance, the government's expenditure was about 52.3 billion F CFA (Njimanted, ibid, p 48) as against 463.30 billion F CFA witnessed in the first quarter of 2019 (Trading Economics, 2019). Also, according to public expenditure statistics from January 2017 to January 2020, the overall public spending

though fluctuating has increased by about 593.9 billion F CFA as of January 2020 as indicated in Figure 1 below:

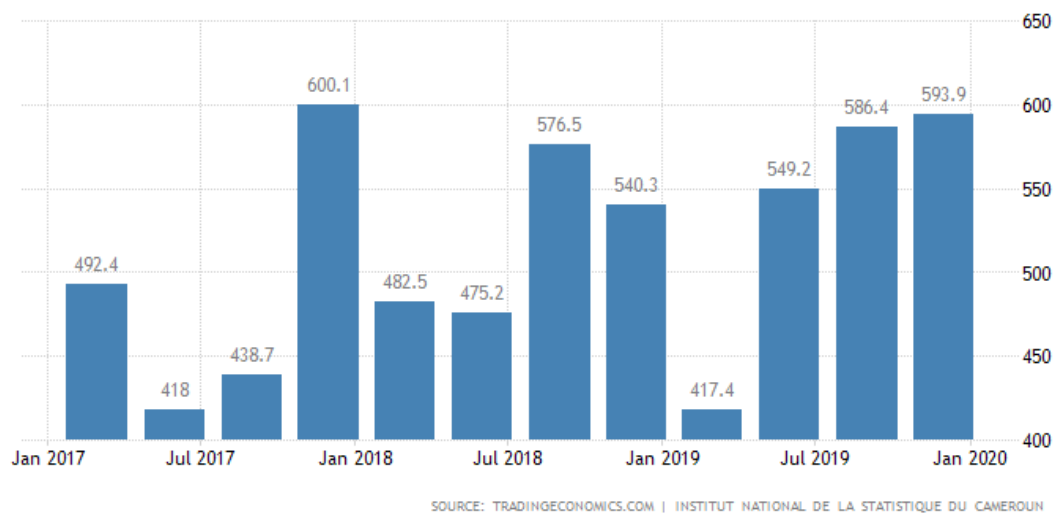


Figure 1: Trends in the Cameroon government's spending from January 2017 to January 2020

Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/cameroon/government-spending>

In addition to this, the 2023 budget of Cameroon was 10.1 billion dollars, depicting an increase of 4 per cent from the mid-term revised budget (US State Department, 2024).

This write-up is therefore concerned with the determinants of the size of the public sector in Cameroon. From this perspective, it should be underscored that the Cameroon public sector in particular is presently made up of 33 central ministries, 28 public enterprises (Business in Cameroon, 2016) and a handful of public agencies. These institutions have not only increased and extended some of their services to regional and local levels, but they have also witnessed some changes in their sizes. Against this backdrop, the following specific concerns have emerged: what accounts for the large size of the Cameroon public sector?

The Concept of the Public Sector

According to Kai (2019), the public sector refers to that portion of the economy composed of all levels of government and government-controlled enterprises. It is considered as all organisations which are established, run and financed by the government on behalf of the public (Ablanga, not dated, p 1). The public sector from the views of Dube and Danescu (2011, p 4) generally consists of at least three types of organizations as follows:

- *Core government*: This consists of a governing body with a defined territorial authority, such as all departments, ministries, or branches of the government that are integral parts of the structure, and which account for and report directly to the central authority like the legislature, council, cabinet, or executive head.
- *Agencies*: These are public organizations that are part of the government and deliver public programs, goods, or services. They exist as separate organizations in their own right as legal entities having a partial degree of operational independence. They are often headed by a board of directors, commission, or other appointed body.

- *Public enterprises:* These are agencies which deliver public programs, goods, or services, operate independently of government and often have their sources of revenue in addition to direct public funding. They may also compete in private markets and may make profits. In most cases, the government is a major shareholder.

The Statement of the Problem

The role of the public sector cannot be ignored in any polity. This is because it has been institutionalized to address public problems, which are societal, faced by a larger segment of the population. In essence, the public service serves as a cornerstone for societal development, economic stability, and the overall well-being of citizens in both developed and developing nations. This thus implies that the growth in the size of the public service is by consequence supposed to improve service delivery, increase employment opportunities, support economic development, and strengthen governance and accountability amongst others.

This is not the scenario in the Cameroonian political system. In recent years, its public sector has witnessed significant growth in size, without a corresponding significant positive development in terms of service delivery, employment opportunities, economic development governance and accountability. *What accounts for this state of affairs?*

From this perspective, that the main issue at stake here is that the Cameroon public service has over the years grown in size, without a corresponding meaningful significant development or positive implications on its citizens.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section is comprised of the empirical and the theoretical reviews. The empirical review here focuses more on previous research works and the literature gap, while the theoretical consideration concentrates on Adolf Wagner's Theory.

Empirical Review

In terms of empirical literature review, it has been observed that most scholarly research works have limited attention to the comprehensive examination of the Cameroonian public sector from the theoretical perspective of Adolf Wagner's Theory. It is this gap that this particular write-up seeks to fill.

Nonetheless, it should be underlined here that studies carried out by authors, such as Amin (2013), Tambi, M.D (2015), Njimanted (2012) and Tardzenyuy *et. al* (2019) have at their levels indicated some of the determining factors, which have increased the size of the Cameroonian public service, without laying more emphases to the comprehensive categorization of these determining factors into political, economic and social from Adolph Wagner's perspective.

Theoretical Framework

Adolph Wagner's Law of Increasing Government Expenditure

According to Nijmanted, "A turning point to the study of public sector expansion or growth is accredited to Wagner." (2012, p 49). It is based on this assertion that this write-up is analysed within the theoretical underpinnings of "Wagner's Law of Increasing Government Expenditures". Adolph Wagner, a German Economist was the first Economist to have paid great attention to the increasing activities and expenditures of the government. Although he is not the pioneer to have hypothesized on increasing public expenditure, it ought to be emphasized that he is the first economist to have employed empirical evidence to support this hypothesis (ibid). His views which summarized his empirical studies were carried out in 1883. These views were referred to as "Wagner' Law" or "The Law of Increasing Government

Expenditures"(Can, 2017, p 149). From the position of this theory, public activities within the national economy increase principally due to the following factors:

- i. When the government increases its expenditures in domains of both internal and external securities, and on justice;
- ii. When the government increases its expenditures for education, health amongst (ibid).

The theoretical views of Wagner has outlined above have influenced a great deal of economist over the years. Against this perspective, a Turkish Economist, Aktan Coskun Can has been able to summarize and categorize Wagner's Law on the determinants of public sector growth into what he termed the "...economic, political and social factors that forces the expansion of government"(ibid, 153). This thus means that public sectors with that of Cameroon inclusive have experienced growth in their sizes due to economic, political and social factors as elucidated by Aktan's Model in Figure 2 below:

<p>I. Economic Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The need of provision of pure public goods and services (internal and external security, justice, diplomacy services), -The need of provision of quasi-public goods and services (education, healthcare etc.), -Services where economies of scale occurs and natural monopolies (energy, transportation, communication etc.), -Depression and economic crisis (business cycles), -Fiscal illusion, -The supportive and substitutive role of the government for growth in less-developed and underdeveloped countries, -Full employment, -Re-distribution policies, -The implementation of the Keynesian expansionary economic policies.
<p>II. Political Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -War and conflict, -Cold war and external threats, -Vote maximization behaviour of politicians, -Benefit maximization behaviour of voters, -Budget maximization behaviour of bureaucrats, -Rent maximization behaviour of interest and pressure groups, -Political business cycles.
<p>III. Social Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Population increase, -Redistributive social policies, -Unbalanced growth and development among regions (provinces) ; Need for better regional development, -Terrorism , -Social aid and social services, -Social security servicesi.

Figure 2: Theoretical Determining Factors for the Growth of the Public Sector

Source: Can (2019, p 158)

METHODOLOGY

Information for this study has been essentially obtained from secondary sources. This involved the extraction of relevant information from the World Bank Reports and other documented sources linked to the Cameroonian public sector. Information obtained were contently analysed, while numeric information obtained were presented in percentages, tables and in chart formats.

Determining Factors Accountable for the Growth in the Size of the Cameroonian Public Sector

After gaining independence in the 1960s, the Cameroonian public sector has not remained constant, but its size has witnessed a landmark of mutations. Looking at the Cameroon central

administration for example, on the 9th of April 1992, it had 28 ministries. These increased to 32 ministries in November 27th 1992. From January 4th 2019 to date, the number of the central administration has increased to 67 positions. These are composed of the ministries of state at the presidency, secretary generals at the presidency, directors of civil cabinets, ministers, minister delegates, ministers in charge of missions at the presidency and secretaries of states (www.prc.gov, www.spm.gov). Beside these, the size of public agencies and enterprises has also increased as well. These changes are not for their own sake but are as a result of a number of determining factors. These factors in the light of this article are examined from the economic, political and social perspectives according to Can (ibid), whose views are strongly inspired by Wagner's Law as examined below:

Economic Determinants

Economic activities carried out by governments to solve economically related problems within their national territories have been noted to be a strong determine in the growth of the size of public sectors. This is the scenario in Cameroon where issues, such as the demand for public and merits goods, the provision of full employment, curbing depression or economic crisis and the regulation of the economy from the Keynesian thought have all increased the size of the its public sector. This is justified below:

Increasing Demand for Public and Merits Goods and Services

The ever increasing demand for public and merits goods and services is one of the determining factors that have increased the expansion of the Cameroon public sector. To Moye (2018, p 2), the general interest of the public sector is to stand for public goods. Although both public and merits goods are for the general interest, there are often distinguished from each other. A public good is a good that is both non-exclusionary and non-rivalry in that individual citizens cannot effectively be excluded from their use, and where they are used by one individual they cannot reduce its availability to others. Examples of these goods include: national defense, law enforcement, disease prevention, public sanitation among others (Saheed, not dated, pp 40-41). On the other hand, merit goods refer to goods and services that the government feels that people will under consume, and which ought to be subsidized or provided free of charge at a point in time (Geoff, 2018). An example of a merit good is subsidies to consumers or producers. The increasing demand of these goods has increased government spending in these sectors. In 2014 for example, subsidies granted to both public and merit goods related services in Cameroon were high in both rural and urban areas. In urban areas, the percentage of state subsidies to electricity, gasoline and kerosene products were 86, 96 and 61 percentages respectively, while in rural areas, there were 36, 13 and 61 percentages respectively (World Bank, 2019, p 19). In this same light, according to the 2019 Cameroon state budget, the amount of expenditure lines allocated to some public and merits related goods and services were increased as compared to those allocated in 2018 as indicated in the Table 1 below:

Table 3: Budget of Cameroon 2019 Allocation in Millions F CFA According to Expenditure Line

Budget of Cameroon 2019 Allocation in Millions F CFA			
Expenditure line	2018	2019	Difference
Grant and contributions	245.140	273.084	+27.944
Defense	238.910	247.447	+8.537
National security	83.947	120.055	+15.503
Justice	63.454	66.316	+2.862

Source: Extracted from Nkoutchou Hugue (2018, pp 18-20)

From the sectorial level, the ministry of water and energy also witnessed an increase in its budgetary allocation by 57 billion F CFA or 40 percent as compared to that of 2018. The increment in this budgetary size was aimed at financing heavy investment projects in the electricity sector such as the Nachtigal hydroelectric project and other dams (Hugue, *ibid*, p 11). In 2023, military Expenditure in Cameroon increased to 456.10 USD Million from 416.60 USD Million in 2022. Military Expenditure in Cameroon averaged 204.53 USD Million from 1970 until 2023, reaching an all-time high of 456.10 USD Million in 2023 and a record low of 20.30 USD Million in 1970 (Trading Economics, 2024,

<https://tradingeconomics.com/cameroon/military-expenditure>)

Curbing Unemployment

Unemployment has remained one of the main issues faced by the Cameroon government since independence. Unemployment rate in Cameroon measures the number of people actively looking for a job as the percentage of the labour force. In 1996, it was at a record high of 8.10 percent, while it has remained at an estimated 3.40 percent in 2018 like in 2017 (Trading Economics, 2019). Fluctuating unemployment rates have remained a call for concern to the Cameroonian government. The main goals of employment and vocational training according to the Growth and Employment Strategic Paper of Cameroon focuses on the promotion of decent and durable jobs as well as an increase in the employability of the active population through adopted vocational training, and the amelioration of transparency of the job market (GESp, p 165). In order to fight against unemployment, numerous financial and institutional measures have been institutionalized by the Cameroon government. The public sector has not only witnessed an increase in its budgetary allocation and expenditures, but structures have also been created at the national and local levels in this vein. At the central administration, the number of ministries directly or indirectly linked with the question of unemployment has increased. These include: the ministries of employment and vocational training, the ministry of social affairs, the ministry of labour and social security, the ministry of small and medium size enterprises and social economy, the ministry of agriculture and rural development, the ministries of basic, secondary and higher education amongst others. Other structures, such as the National Employment Fund (NEF), the National Civic Service Agency for Participation in Development (NCSAPD) (Tardzenyuy, Kongnso & Nodem, 2019, pp 56-59), the National Youth Council (NYC) among others have also been created to fight against unemployment at their various levels and competences.

Economic Crises

Public authorities are generally not at ease with economic crisis because there could escalate to citizens uprising. It is in this vein that Can (2019, p 153) has noted that in times of economic crises, public authorities are often predispose to increase public expenditures in certain sectors in order to curb the effects of such crises. An economic crisis from this perspective is a situation in an economy of a country where there is a sudden fall or downturn brought about by a financial crisis thereby, leading to falling Gross Domestic Product (GDP), a drying up of liquidity and rising or falling prices due to inflation or depreciation. An economic crisis can take the form of a recession or depreciation (Business Dictionary, 2019).. The economic crisis of 2008 according to Orosz (2018, p 187-188) has significantly increased governments landscape in the world. Governments have an instrumental role to play in the economy especially during economic crisis through the provision of public services, in the redistribution of income, and by limiting the volatility of businesses through automatic stabilizers as well as active fiscal policy (*ibid*, p 187).

The Cameroonian economy like others around the world has witnessed a number of economic crises. From 1986, the country witnessed a serious economic crisis which continued up to 1994. This was characterized by negative growth rates of 3 to 4 percent, rising price hikes, poor living standards amongst others (Tambi, 2015, p 7). Although the government tried to contain these crises by reducing public expenditures through measures, such as restructuring of public and semi-public enterprises, slashing public expenditures on education, road infrastructure, extension services, rural water supply, electrification, and health services; freezing recruitment and salary increment of public sector workers among others in line with the conditionalities of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, it should be noted that these measures did not stimulate the much anticipated economic growth (ibid, p 8). The authorities tried to cope by borrowing in order to finance budgetary shortfalls (ibid). Most political authorities are often scared of economic crisis as a result of citizens' protest. This was the case with the 2008 February uprising in Cameroon. This uprising which began as a result of rising fuel prices, poor living conditions, high prices of basic communities amongst others, soon escalated into wanton loss of lives, destruction of public and private property and mass arrests. In response to this revolt and in order to contain the crisis, the Cameroon government increased its public spending in certain key sectors by taking the following measures: it increased the salary of civil and military personnel, it reduced the prices of fuel, it reduced duties paid on cement, and suspended duties on essential goods, such as cooking oil, fish and rice (Amin, 2013, pp 678-794).

Regulation of the Economy from the Keynesian Perspective

Government's intervention in the economy is another determinant for the growth in the size of the public sector. According to Garrett & Rhine (2006, p 13), government should exist in any economy to ensure that the private sector operates efficiently. This in essence means that it is not there to replace the market mechanisms of demand and supply. In this light, it should be mentioned here that the size of the Cameroonian public sector has also expanded from the point of view of the Keynesian Theory. From this point, Baile (1995, p 18) has outlined four roles of government intervention in an economy as follows:

- *The allocative role:* Here, the government pursues the allocation of resources in order to maximise efficiency. This is generally referred to as allocative efficiency or the 'first best' allocation of resources.
- *The distributive role:* Here, the government balances efficiency with equity in the allocation of resources by using taxation, social security and the distribution of public sector services to influence the distribution of income.
- *The regulatory role:* In this case, the government legislates and enforces laws of contract, consumer protection, and justice among others so that the market economy may function.

The stabilisation role: Whereas the allocative, distributive and regulatory roles are microeconomic, the stabilisation role is macroeconomic in using fiscal, monetary and other economic policies to pursue objectives for the control of inflation, and unemployment among others (ibid).

Against this backdrop, it should be noted that the public sector in Cameroon has over the years expanded in size in terms of the structures created to ensure the aforementioned functions. At the level of central administration, the ministries of finance; trade and commerce; and economic planning and regional development have been created. Besides these, other public agencies created include the Telecommunication Regulatory Board (TRB), the National Commission of Petroleum Products (NCPP) and the Electricity Sector Regulatory Board

(ESRB). The mentioned structures have all been instrumental in ensuring the allocative, distributive, regulatory and stabilizing roles as theoretically defined by Baile (ibid) in the Cameroonian economy.

Political Determinants

Apart from economic factors, political considerations are other factors which have influenced the growth in the size of the Cameroonian public sector. Political determinants in this light refer to those factors which are related to state power and the governing elites, who occupy elective and appointed state offices. From this portion, the political factors which have influenced the growth in the size of the public sector in Cameroon include political conflicts or instabilities and voter maximization behaviours by politicians as examined below:

Political Instability or Socio-Political Crisis

The infiltration of terrorist threats in the Northern Region such as Boko Haram, the sekele rebels in the East Region and the socio-political crisis in the North West and South West Regions have lately increased the size of the public sector in Cameroon. Government spending especially in the defense sector has increased tremendously. In 2018, 238.910 Million F CFA was allocated as the defense budget. This amount was increased to 247.447 Million F CFA in 2019, that is, an additional 8, 537 (Hugue, Op Cit, p 9). The socio-political crises in the North West and South West Regions which started in November 2016 have affected the size of the Cameroonian public sector immensely. This socio-political crisis or what has been termed the Anglophone crisis began as a series of strike actions and demonstrations initiated by common law lawyers and English-speaking teachers trade unions in what was considered as the Anglophone marginalization in Cameroon. The demands of the common law lawyers in these regions included: the creation of the common law department at the Advanced School for Magistracy and Administration; the re-deployment of civil law magistrates from the two common law jurisdictions of the North West and South West Regions, and also all common law magistrates from the two Common Law Jurisdictions of the North West and South West Regions; the translation of the purely French published Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) into the English language; the creation of a law school in Cameroon; the creation of the common law bench at the Supreme Court (Protest in NW and SW Regions: MINCOM gives an update. Accessed from <http://crtv.cm/fr/nouvelles/journal-national>).

Apart from common law lawyers, the English speaking teachers' trade unions, such as National Union of Teachers of Higher Education, (SYNES) Buea and Bamenda Branches, Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC), Cameroon Teachers Trade Union (CATTU), Presbyterian Education Authority Teacher's Trade Union (PEATTU), Baptist Teachers Trade Union Cameroon (BATTUC) and the Catholic Education Worker's Trade Union (CeWOTU) also summarized what they considered as the marginalization of Anglophones in the educational sector in eleven points as follows: that Anglophones with a pass in the G.C.E with qualitative grades cannot enter professional schools of their choice, while those who perform poorly fill all the spaces; that Francophones outnumber Anglophones in the professional schools in Anglophone Universities of Buea and Bamenda by a ratio of up to 90:10% in Higher Technical Teachers Training College (HTTTC) Kumba; 90:10% in Medical School in Buea; 80:20% in HTTTC Bamenda, whereas there are no Anglophones in these schools in Francophone Universities; that Anglophones who apply to read medicine are usually sent to Francophone universities, where operating becomes a serious challenge, and since they cannot cope, they give up; that as a result of this policy of discrimination and marginalisation, the government train Anglophone technical teachers and even the few Anglophones who are trained are sent to

work in Francophone areas; that the government has continued to send Francophones who do not master English to teach in Anglophone schools.

These teachers teach in broken English, thereby confusing the students. As a result, many do not perform well in their final examinations; that the Universities of Buea and Bamenda have been francophonised, and admissions into key faculties have been taken to Yaounde so that admission lists can be doctored; Anglophones are compelled to write *Certificat d' Aptitude Professionnelle (CAP)*, *Probatoire* and Baccalaureate in technical schools, with a tradition of poorly translated questions and massive failures on their part; that Anglophones children who graduate from the university cannot get jobs; they have become bike riders and call-box operators and sim card vendors; that lay private and confessional schools are doing so much to educate our children, but receive little or no subvention from Government. Even Religious Studies is mocked as a requirement for admission; that the election and appointment of authorities of the Anglo-Saxon Universities of Bamenda and Buea should be in strict compliance of Anglo-Saxon norms; that the 1998 Law on the Orientation of education in Cameroon provides for the creation of an Education Board, but that they are asking for separate boards which can address the needs of each sub-system (Teacher's Strike: PM Yang orders an Ad hoc Committee. Accessed from www.crtv.cm, November 2023).

This crisis has till date metamorphosed into an armed conflict due partly to government's inability in addressing the concerned of the mentioned trade union on time, and as a result of its repressive policies. As a consequence of the armed nature of this crisis since 2017, the government has initiated a number of measures address some of the grievances. Some of these initiatives it should be noted have had a high tool on government's expenditure. These initiatives include the following:

- The recruitment of 1000 bilingual contract teachers into the public sector to meet up with the shortage of teachers especially in technical domain.
- A special fund of two billion F CFA as subsidy for lay private and confessional schools.
- The creation of the bilingualism and Multicultural commission to enhance peaceful co-existence among the diverse socio-cultural groupings in Cameroon. In 2018 state budget, the commission was allocated 3400 Million F CFA (Hugue, Op Cit, p 21).
- The creation of the ministry of local government and local government to enhance effective decentralization. In the 2018 budget, 11477 was allocated to this ministry and in 2019, the amount was increased to 45756 Million F CFA (ibid, p 19).
- The creation of the ministry of local government and local government to enhance effective decentralization. In the 2018 budget, 11477 was allocated to this ministry and in 2019, the amount was increased to 45756 Million F CFA (ibid, p 19).
- The creation of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission
- The creation of the commission for reconstruction and development of the North West and South West Region;
- The establishment of the special status in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon, with the putting into place of structures, such as the independent reconciliatory and regional assemblies. The budget of the North-West Regional Assembly for 2024 for example was voted at the sum of 5.634 billion F CFA (NWRA, 2024);
- The creation of the center for humanitarian assistance

Voter Maximization Behavior of Politicians

In order to establish the relation between politics and public expenditure, Stigler (1970, pp 1-10) has noted that political power is mostly in the hands of politicians and the ruling party, who often try to meet the needs of voters by increasing public expenses. This in essence implies that, political gains especially in times of elections have been known to have increased public expenditure especially in developing world and Africa in particular. This is the scenario in Cameroon, where the state budget often increases during electoral periods. During the 2011 presidential election period for example, 690 million F CFA was allocated to the 11 candidates who took part in the elections. Also, 50 billion F CFA were set aside by the government in prelude to the presidential 2018 elections (www.businessscameroon.com). Added to this, the government through the ministry of territorial administration during the 2018 electoral period further allocated a special support fund of 700 million F CFA to regional administrators, such as governors, senior divisional officers and divisional officers. These funds in particular were to assist them to ensure that elections were carried out in a serene and secure atmosphere in their respective areas of jurisdictions (www.journalducameroun.com).

The mentioned funds at large are often allocated to political parties and politicians in order to enable them to carry out their campaigns. Campaigns from this perspective are avenues where political parties and their contesting candidates market their political programs to the electorate in order to win over their popular support and votes. According to Eco Martin Newspaper which was published on Wednesday 21st October, 80 billion F CFA was the amount to be allocated for the organization and management of the legislative, municipal and regional elections in 2020. More so, the budget allocated to the main elections management body in Cameroon, Elections Cameroon (ELECAM) has improved over time. In 2018 which was an electoral year for instance, the budget of ELECAM was 9.476 Million F CFA. This amount was increased to 9.556 Million F CFA in 2019 CFA (Hugue, Op Cit, p 19). In this same arena of elections, the Constitutional Council has also been institutionalized since 2018 to examine electoral petitions and declare the results. In 2018, the budget of this council stood at 2500 Million F CFA, while in 2019, it increased to 3050 Million F CFA (ibid).

Social Determinants

Social factors have been noted to have affected the size in the growth of the public sector. The Cameroonian public sector is not an exception to this rule. The main social factors which have determined the size of the public sector in Cameroon range from population increase and social services. According to Can (Op Cit, p 153), population increase causes an inevitable enlargement of the government. In the Cameroonian case, population increase over the years has been commensurate with increasing public expenditures. In line with the 2005 population census, Cameroon has a population estimate of 17 million inhabitants. Increasing population growth has in effect led to increase in the demand for more goods and services from the public authorities by the population. This in essence has increased government spending in order to meet up with these demands. From 2007 to 2015 for example, government expenditure in certain sectors on the Cameroonian economy, such as education, infrastructures, health amongst others have increased tremendously as indicated in the figure below:

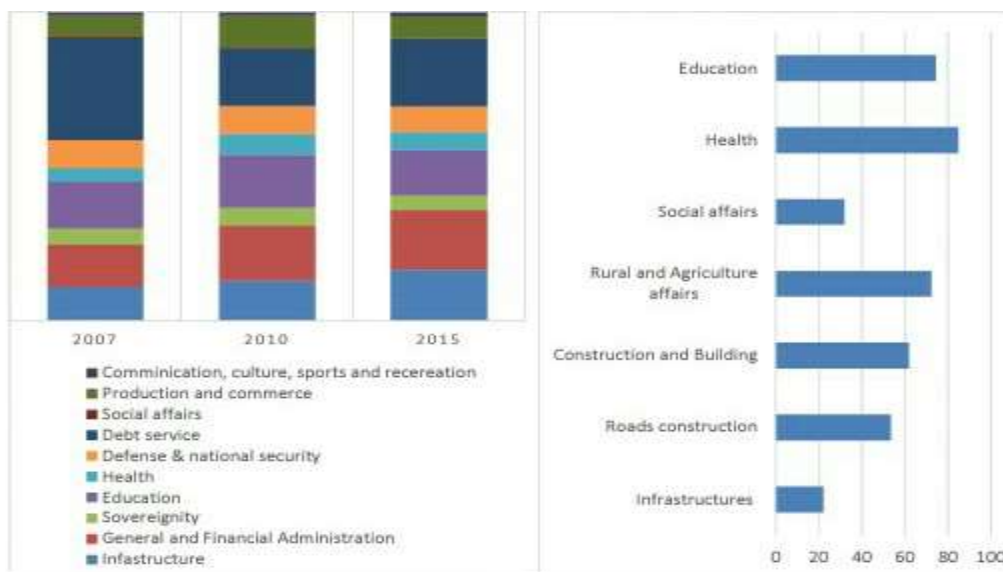


Figure 4: Percentage of the Share of Public Expenditures by Functional Classification from 2007 to 2015

Source: World Bank (2019, p 40)

In 2023, government expenditure on goods and services amounted to 480.2 billion, which is an increase of 86.6 billion (+22%) from 2022 expenditure (MINFI, 2023).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

According to the presentation above, it is evident that the Cameroonian public sector has increased considerable since gaining its independence in the 1960s. Having analysed the study from the Theoretical perspective of Wagner's view, it has been established that the main factors accountable for the growth in the size of the public sector in the Cameroon ranged from political, economic and social determinants. The political determinants identified are political instability and voter maximization behaviors by politicians. Economic determinants include: demand for public and merits goods, curbing higher rates of unemployment, and to the implementation of regulatory mechanisms from the Keynesian perspective. And lastly, social determinations included population growth rates and demand for social services.

Although the size of the Cameroonian public sector has been increasing especially in terms of its public expenditures, Njimanted (ibid, p 56) has concluded that this increase is not commensurate with both economic growth and development as a result of the following factors: heavy government expenditure on unproductive education, high degree of dependence on foreign technology and on foreign experts, high rate of under employment especially in the public sector, high expenditure on internal and external debt servicing, poor attitude to work especially in the Cameroon public sector, performance of political decisions over economic decisions and high rate of inflation, systematic corruption, excessive involvement of the government in superfluous expenditure, egocentrism, nepotism, tribalism and greed in the management and distribution of the national cake and to the absence of due process in the execution of public contracts.

Recommendations

It is evident that the growth of the Cameroon public service over the years has not have a significant positive effect on its citizens and its economy. It is from this position that the following recommendations are made:

- *Strengthening institutional capacity:* There is need for the government to invest in training and development programs for public servants to upgrade their skills and capabilities.
- *Promotion of transparency and accountability:* There is need for the government to implement measures, such as open data initiatives, regular audits, and anti-corruption strategies to promote transparency and accountability within public institutions.
- *Streamlining of administrative bottlenecks:* Simplifying bureaucratic procedures and reducing red tape to improve the ease of rendering administrative services can facilitate faster service delivery to citizens and businesses.
- *Investment in Infrastructure and Technology:* The government has to upgrade its infrastructure and invest in technology to modernize public services. This includes digitalizing administrative processes, improving internet connectivity, and adopting e-government solutions to enhance efficiency and accessibility.
- *Promoting Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):* The government should encourage partnerships between the public sector and private enterprises to leverage resources, expertise, and innovation in delivering public services and infrastructure projects.
- *Prioritisation of human development:* The government equally as a matter of urgency needs to allocate enough resources to improve healthcare and education services, ensuring equitable access and quality. Addressing gaps in healthcare infrastructure and educational facilities, especially in rural and underserved areas.
- *Sustaining Economic Development:* The government has to support initiatives that promote economic growth, job creation, and entrepreneurship. This also translates to the creation of a favourable inclusive business environment through regulatory reforms, investment incentives, and support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- *Addressing social welfare needs:* The government is encouraged to expand its social protection programs to alleviate poverty, reduce inequality, and improve living standards. In this light, it should target vulnerable groups, such as women, children, persons with disabilities, and elderly populations.
- *Promoting environmental sustainability:* The government can also implement policies and programs to protect natural resources, mitigate climate change impacts, and promote sustainable development practices.
- *Promotion of good governance and civic engagement practices:* There is a need for the government to strengthen its democratic institutions, promote civic education, and encourage citizen's participation in decision-making processes. In this same light, there is a need to promote a culture of respect for human rights, rule of law, and ethical conduct among public officials.

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