Examining the Challenges and Prospects of Women's Political empowerment in Cameroon Democratic Process

Kinge Ruth F.[1*]

[1] Department of Political Science, Gombe State University

Abstract

Democratic governance in most nation-states across the globe has seemingly not been able to maximally address the widespread marginalization, and exclusion of women in decision-making processes and administration in mainstream democratic activities. In Cameroon, the narrative has remained the same amidst the low rate of women's ascension into key political offices. This paper examines Cameroonian women's political empowerment vis-à-vis their capacities to influence state power amidst constitutional provisions and public policies which guarantee women's political rights. The paper argues that the lopsided institutional framework, deep-rooted traditional and cultural barriers exacerbated by poor funding, rough political terrain, and socioeconomic underdevelopment promote women's political disempowerment. Using context analysis the correlation between the variables was determined. Situating its argument within the participatory democracy approach and power theory the findings reveal that women have not advanced to a level where many of them who are academically and professionally qualified can be elected to high executive positions. The paper concludes that the massive mobilization of women into civic activities and political engagement resulting in women's sponsorship of choice candidates in political parties and beyond is a prerequisite for Cameroonian women's political empowerment.

Keywords: democracy, political empowerment, decision-making, institutions

INTRODUCTION

Across the globe, democracy has remained the most preferred form of governance, though the gender gap in political participation still persists. According to United Nations Women, at the global level, the gender gap in parliamentary seats reveals that women constitute 25% of all national parliaments, and there are 23 women serving as Heads of State or Government, ...with just 10 countries having a woman Head of State, and 13 countries having a woman Head of Government (UN Women, 2020). In corroboration, Oloyede (2016) argues that women are severely underrepresented in political leadership positions in African states and this constitutes 23.4% at the regional level, and in the West African subregion the figure stands at 15%.

Scholars have argued that despite the numerous declarations and normative frameworks available for nation states to establish equality on access to democratic structures, the participation and representation of all citizens are persistently absent as there exists a low presence of women in formal political outlets including the acquisition of political power and ascension to leadership positions. Among these frameworks are the 1979 UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979); The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights at Vienna that affirmed: "women's rights are human rights" (Delahanty, 2005:5-10); The Beijing Platform of Action in 1999, The African Union Gender Policy which took effect in 2004,

the Cameroon National gender policy which was adopted in 2014 and officially presented to the government on 23rd January 2015 (UN, 2015; Mbella, 2015).

Globally, the last twenty years have seen particular progress in bridging the gender gap in politics, governance, and administration, with women's representation, nearly doubling from 11% in 1995 to nearly 25% percent in 2020 (UN Women, 2020), In Africa, the gap in political representation along gender line works against women, as it avails women very limited access to influence politics, ensures their marginalization and their exclusion from democratic structures and processes.

In Cameroon, gender disparity and the marginalization of women still persist despite the significant successes associated with women's participation in the socioeconomic and political processes of the country. Speaking to the subject matter under review, there has never been a female Governor for any of the ten regions in Cameroon nor has there been a female prime minister and head of government in this country where women constitute about 49.98% of the population. This governance structure is at variance with the expectations of Articles 25 and 26 of the Covenant of the United Nations Human Rights Commission (FIDA, 2008) and the BPFA target of 35% affirmative action which seeks women's representation in political institutions in modern

* **Corresponding author:** Tel.: (234) 7066378242; Email: rkfanny@yahoo.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5203-2651

democracies. The expectations of the numerous international, regional, and national frameworks which aim at minimizing or eradicating gender inequality in modern democracies were predicated on the hope that state parties would address the socio-economic challenges of women's low participation in politics as well as ensure their massive and proportional political engagement in nation-states.

However, this paper seeks answers to the following questions: Is there a visible gender gap in political participation among men and women in Cameroon? what exactly informs this gender gap? To what extent does this gender gap impact women's political empowerment? What are the prospects for women's political empowerment in Cameroon? It is against this background that this paper examines the challenges and prospects of women's political empowerment in Cameroon.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Theorizing Democracy

As a multi-dimensional concept, democracy fundamentally relates to how people exercise control and scrutiny over political institutions. Scholars have generally posited that for democratization processes to be viable, stable, and sustainable, there is a need for enhanced citizens' representation and participation in decision-making processes. Popper (1988) sees democracy as an opportunity for people to control their leaders and oust them without the need for a revolution while stating categorically that "democracy is the rule of the people and that the people have the right to rule". Again, Diamond and Morlino (2005, and Agyeman (2003) contend that at the heart of a well-functioning democracy, legal equality, political freedom, and rule of law must be present as the foundational characteristics where the will of the people is the basis for legitimizing power and authority which is to advance their interest.

According to Phillips (1998), early philosophers and political thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, John Lock, Thomas Hobbes, and Hegel considered women fit only for domestic roles in the private sphere and maintained that there was no place for women in politics because of their suitability in caring roles as mothers and wives and as such kept women outside the public domain of politics. To (Rai, 2000), the public/private divide remains the foundation of the various forms of world democracies and the ancient and modern democracies have failed to recognize women as citizens.

It is the argument of this paper that, theoretically, democracy reflects the rule of the majority, within a just and equitable society, where freedom of expression, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, political freedom, the legal protection of individuals and groups rights strive, yet over the years it has built on the public-private divide and perpetuated the exclusion of women from citizenship. At this juncture, it is worthy of note that the political disempowerment of one group lubricates the sustainability of the other.

Elucidating empowerment in the context of women's political empowerment

Empowerment is a multidimensional concept and reflects the positive change. Empowerment is defined as a social action process that promotes the participation of people, organizations, and communities in gaining control over their lives in their communities and larger societies. Within this perspective, empowerment is not characterized as achieving power to dominate others, but rather as achieving power to act with others to affect change" (Stein, 1997). To Adams (2008, p. xvi) empowerment is the capacity of individuals, including women to take control of their circumstances, exercise power and achieve their own goals, and the process by which, individually and collectively, they are able to help themselves and others to maximize the quality of their lives. In corroboration, Rappaport (1984) sees empowerment as the mechanism by which people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their lives.

In an attempt to provide clarity to the various interpretations of the concept of empowerment, Karl (2002) identifies a six-staged process in empowerment namely awareness through education, skills and capacity assessment through training and professional development programs; capacity-building and skills development; participation and greater control in decision-making; action for change; and evaluation. The first stage would enhance women's chances of acquiring the requisite capacity and skills needed for their development. Therefore, Karl sees women's empowerment through problem identification and solution channels leading to the eradication of women's disempowerment in the monitoring, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms inherent in the six-stage model. In corroboration, Prasad (2002) views "Empowerment as a process geared towards participation, greater decision making, and transformative action through awareness and capacity building", noting that women's empowerment means to distribute equal power and authority between men and women creating an environment of freedom from domination and suppression. Blanchard, Carlos, & Randolph, (1996) see political empowerment as letting power out and note that it encourages people to gain the skills and knowledge that will allow them to overcome obstacles in life as well as help them develop to their full potential within the society. Speaking about women's political empowerment, Brill (2000), and Narasimhan (1999) opine that, without the voices of women being heard inside government areas and halls of public policy and debate, women are without the right to accountability – a basic establishment of those who are governed as well as exposing women into the mainstream of national activity as equal partners alongside men.

Constituting almost 49.58 % of the world's population, women are largely excluded from the political spheres across the globe. Apart from countries like Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, the Netherlands, Iceland, and Germany which have made tremendous efforts towards gender equality in governance and administration, women's political empowerment is still a mirage in Africa and Cameroon in particular. In Africa, events took a new turn with the emergence of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as Liberia's president in 2005 being the first female president in Africa. No doubt this development saw the birth of massive mobilization among women for greater involvement in politics. In recent times increased the number of women is seen to hold the apex seat in political offices such as Samia Sululu Hassan of Tanzania, elected on March 19, 2021, and Sahle-Work Zewde in Tanzania, elected on 25 Oct 2018.

Further, countries like Rwanda (61.25%) South Africa (46.1%) Namibia (44.23%) Senegal (43.03%) and Mozambique (42.4%) Faria (2021), (Statista, 2022) have stepped up their game in the direction of gender equality in politics while most African States are yet to meet the standards like the most populous African State, Nigeria with just 7%. Chandra (1997) concludes that women's political empowerment means the manifestation or re-distribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology and male domination.

Giving justification for an inclusive governance structure and equal political representation for men and women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (Africa Barometer, 2021) argues that quality decisions are associated with gender-balanced governments because they are inclusive in nature and ensure high representation as such women's contributions and perspectives are tapped firsthand. In corroboration, Ahikire (2007), Ford (2002), and Goetz (2006[a], 2009[b]) all agree that women should be entitled to new /more spaces in political representation at all levels to reflect the proportion of women in the population, on the basis that only women can best represent themselves, again they question, will the increase translate to new outcomes? Worthy of note that Cameroonian women acquired the right to vote and are voted for in 1946, and this took effect with the realization of women only being able to vote men into office. Until the 1980s, the percentage of women in the National Assembly remained below 5%. In 1997, the percentage of women in political leadership in Cameroon stood at 5%; from 2002-2005 it stood at 10%, and from 2008-2010 it stood at 13%. Specifically, in 2008 only 10 of the 180 members of the National Assembly were women (IPU (2009), Atanga, (2009), Abia and Fonchingong (2004).   Between 2015-2021 the number stands at 61 out of 180.

According to Ezuma and Fonsah (2004), this low political representation of women in Cameroon's political arena is orchestrated by the fact that most of the skilled, supervisory, and management staff positions are held by men including direct control of political institutions and decision-making processes. The reasons they argue are due to the fact that women lack educational qualifications for supervisory positions as well as the influence of culture and a lopsided democratic infrastructure. Though Adams, (2005); Awasom, (2002); maintain that Cameroonian women were involved in political activities before and during colonial times, Atanga (2010) argues that women's involvement in political activities during the same period of time existed but was minimal and peripheral since they were not involved in the daily running of their communities.

Cameroon's post-independence political landscape has been significantly marred by widely reported malpractices perpetrated by both formal and less overt informal political structures and institutions that have negatively affected women. This situation is known to be totally disruptive and extensively undermines the normal functioning and predictability of formal democratic processes. Men have manipulated and exploited various constituents including women, to accede to, and stay in power. Mungwa (1999) maintains that gender inequality in Cameroon is exacerbated by bad governance, mismanagement, corruption and in virtually all sectors of public life. The far-reaching implication of this political arrangement is that gender discrimination perpetuates women's abstinence from mainstream politics and decision-making in the Country.

It is argued in this paper that the integration of women into public and private life is a prerequisite for their emancipation and consequent participation in democratic processes.

 Among the many theories seeking to provide explanations for the differences between men and women as well as the subordinate position of women in modern democracies, gender inequality, causes, and what actions are to be taken to reduce or end it, this study reviews the power theory of political science and participatory democracy theories to facilitate the understanding of the challenges and prospects for women's political empowerment in modern democracies like Cameroon.

The theorists of participatory democracy as developed by Jean Jacques Rousseau, J.S. Mill, and G.D.H. Cole, (Wolf,1985) argue that democracy is a model through which citizens are involved in the decision-making processes of a state and political participation is indispensable for the realization of a just and viable society thereby creating shared interests, a common will, and community action, which gives legitimacy to politics. In a democratic state like Cameroon where women constitute as much as 49.98% of the country's population (World Bank, 2020 cited in Trading Economics, 2022), it is expected that the full participation of all citizens in the processes of decision-making, expression of political will in institutions of direct representation which allows for access to political positions, be able to present and defend their interests is upheld. However, the reality on the ground reveals a complex nature of modern democracy where there exists imposition of limitations on direct democracy and the gender constructs and relations within.

Further, proponents of power theory like Morgenthau (1967) define power as man's control over the minds and actions of other men. As a multidimensional concept, power is seen differently by various scholars in the social sciences. According to Barnett, & Duvall (2005); Finnemore & Goldstein (2013), power does not necessarily mean the use of force or a threat by one person against another, rather power may be expressed through institutions. French & Raven (1959), and Barnett & Duvall (2005), perceive power as affairs that hold in a given relationship such that a given attempt between actors makes the desired change more likely to occur and may assume structural forms such that it shapes an actor's relations to other actors and may showcase the subservient relationship between them which may perpetuate legitimacy to some behaviors and groups over others. Among the five bases of power as posited by French & Raven (1959), and Clegg & Haugaard (2009), Weber (1978) are legitimate power, referent power, expert power, reward power, and coercive power. Legitimate power directly speaks to the discussions on challenges and prospects for women's political empowerment in Cameroon's democratic process. The structure of power relations in Cameroon reflects a precarious condition where all structures of governance and administration speak against women in their ascension to power and leadership positions as men are completely in control in a rigidly patriarchal society. This perpetuates severe gender inequality, and the marginalization of women in the private and public spheres places any action by women at the generosity of the man.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Given its wide usage of information in existing literature from official publications of government agencies on the subject matter, newspaper publications, available textbooks, journal publications, and internet sources, the paper relied on a secondary quantitative research method which ensured the wide usage of already existing data. In its rich and holistic nature, the quantitative research method provides in-depth knowledge in relation to societal structures, and human development. The diverse discussions and debates on women's political empowerment in modern democracies show the ever-growing concerns on human development at international, national, and local levels on the nature and structure of governance in nation-states. Discussions on the subject matter were descriptive in nature and

context analysis was used to facilitate an intuitive understanding of the variables. To improve on the reliability and validity of available information on the subject matter, multiple sources like official publications on government websites, and publications from scholars and international organizations were explored to minimize errors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Though women's participation in the decision-making process is necessary for Cameroon's political development, the majority of the population (women) is excluded from making meaningful contributions by virtue of women's disproportionate representation in governance and administration as women in the state legislature in Cameroon constitute 33%.

Table 1: Cameroon's female members of parliament from 1960-2021

Year	No of Members	No women members	Percent of women members
1960-1965	50	1	.8%
1966-1970	141	2	1.4%
1970-1973	137	5	3.6%
1973-1978	120	7	5.8%
1978-1983	120	12	10%
1983-1988	120	17	14.2%
1988-1992	180	26	14.5%
1992-1997	180	23	12.8%
1997-2002	180	10	5.5%
2002-2007	180	20	11.1%
2007-2009	180	15	8.3%
2013-2021	180	61	33%

Source: The National Assembly, (2021) Ministry of Women empowerment and Family (2009), Cameroon tribune No 6644, July 1998,

From the above table, In the post-colonial political scenario, Cameroonian women are gradually becoming politically active. In 1960, out of 50 members of parliament, 1 was a woman. In 1970, out of 120 members 2 were women; 2002 had 23 women out of 180 members of parliament. Among the 100 senators in 2020, 19 are females and 81 are males constituting 19% and 81% respectively. In 2021, out of 180 members, 61 are women. This low level of women's representation in key political positions in the country and low involvement in decision making processes seriously disempower women politically. Scholars have argued that parliaments should be "mirror images" of each country. Looking at the case of Cameroon, the structure of governance and administration is lopsided in nature and highly exclusive of women's interests, aspirations, perspectives, experiences and contributions which if tapped are good enough at enriching governance and administration in the country to carter for every citizen.

Table 2: Women ministers in Cameroon between 1990 and 2020

Year	Total No of ministers	No of women ministers	Percent of women ministers
1995	27	02	7%
1998	49	03	6%
2004	65	06	9.3%
2009	62	06	10%
2013-2020	32	05	1.6%

Source: Ministry of Women empowerment and Family, 2009; PRC, 2020

The above table shows an improvement in women's ministerial appointments at some level. It is worthy of note that appointments into government offices are subject to the chief executive's (president) decision. Though women's position in politics in the country is improving, they are still grossly underrepresented given their numerical strength (49.98% of the population) and this is working against their abilities to contribute meaningfully to the country's socio-economic and political development.

In the local councils, the country had no female mayor between 1982-87; in 1987-1992, it had 1 female mayor; in 1996-2001 there were 2 female mayors. The figures increased between 2002-2007 as it stood at 10 female mayors and between 2007-2012 there were 24 female mayors in the country. In 2020, the number of female mayors stood at 26 out of 386, recently the number dropped because some female mayors who died have been replaced by men. A detailed look at the above figures reveals that numerically female mayors are increasing though not proportionate to the women's population in the country. Again women in municipal councils increased from 7% between 1982-87 to 15% between 2007-2009, PMO (2021), MWEF (2009). Recently, at administrative levels, the women's ratio stands at 58 out of 336 constituting 15.5%, in the judiciary, there are 215 out of 1157 constituting 18% PMO (2021). Looking directedly at the institutions of government like the national assembly out of the 100 MPs who are directly involved in the decision-making process (bills, policy formulation, etc.) only 26.5% are females while 73% are males (Fokum & Fondjong, 2018), ensuring a disproportionate representation of women in decision-making committees in the national assembly; a clear indication that bills passed would not adequately address the needs of women, and a deep discriminatory political scenario is upheld

Cameroonian women's political empowerment has been hampered by a society that is deeply patriarchal in nature and lopsided political arrangement. Among these challenges to women's political empowerment are:

Political factors and institutional design, lack of affirmative action, and Quota

Institutional designs and political constraints are major barriers to women's political empowerment and engagement in democratic processes in Cameroon. Writing on the gender equality laws in Cameroon, Nkolo (1997) posits that alt-

hough egalitarian principles are enshrined in the Cameroonian constitution, their reflection in various legal instruments turns to marginalize women in such areas as family life (A), and economic and public life (B). Though Cameroon has had increases in elected female candidates notably at lower levels of political seats, as well as appointed female members of parliament as seen in tables 1 and 2, it is yet to achieve the 35% affirmative quota benchmark. Nguelle (1997) opines that the marginalization of women within political institutions takes place at the level of investiture operations because the investiture automatically reflects the results at the polls. This no doubt seriously affects the chances of women being voted into political offices. Further, political parties refrain from investing in women substantive candidates in their electoral stronghold. In the 1992 general elections, CPDM invested in 25 women as substantive candidates to vie for 180 seats in the parliament, NUDP invested in 9 women to vie for 133 seats, UPC invested in 4 to vie for 122 seats, and MDR invested in 1 to vie for 80 seats in the various constituencies. The main opposition party, SDF had no female candidate (Cameroon Tribune, No 2633, 7th May 1997). Again in 1997, there were 2290 substantive candidates and alternative candidates invested. 110 women were substantive candidates as well as 163 women alternatives. From these numbers, CPDM had 13 female substantive candidates, SDF had 10, NUDP had 14, CDU had 5, UPC/K had 7, and MDR had 2. Non from MLJC. (Cameroon tribune, no 2633, 7th May 1997). Again, according to CEDAW (1999) in 1992 out of 49 lists submitted by the CPDM, only four were headed by women and from the 46 lists submitted by the UNDP, only 2 were headed by women. The MDR and UPC had no woman as the head of any lists. Meanwhile, during the February,9th 2020 local and parliamentary elections, political parties submitted their candidate lists and town like Ndu, which has the lowest number of female councilors in the Northwest Region (just one in 41), showed slight improvement thus the SDF had five women constituting 12% on their list and CPD had one in 11 constituting (27%), meanwhile the CPDM list had no woman. From the above analysis, it is evident that Cameroonian women are predisposed to discrimination and marginalization in terms of accessing political structures and resources in a democratic state as this political structure continues to play out. In a study on Uganda, Arhikiri , Musiimenta, and Mwiinein (2017) argue that Ugandan women are still remarkably absent in all spheres of life than men ranging from politics and citizenship to the economy and socio-cultural spheres though noting that the number of women in decision making structures is increasing but a change in respect to addressing women's needs is not happening as fast as is expected. However female MP Hon. Miria Matembe, (July 2013) in an interview confirmed that the increased presence of women in the parliament has made women visible and audible. Again, Arhikiri et al, (2017) state that the physical presence of Ugandan women in decision-making structures signified a major breakthrough into a domain that was historically not theirs and concluded that the increased presence of Ugandan women enabled a shift in the public conversation while noting the efforts of women leaders, particularly women Members of Parliament (MPs), towards bringing women issues to public bare.

Further, Fokum and Fonjong (2018) in their study of the Cameroon Parliament titled 'Increasing women's representation in the Cameroon parliament: do numbers really matter?' while using the parliamentary structures and the state (political regime) to analyze women's issues they interviewed 11 female MPs. They found out that women are represented in every structure in the legislature in the Cameroon parliament, noting that in the two main decision-making bodies in the parliament there are 16 women in a total of which 18.9 % of parliamentarians constitute the membership of these decision-making bodies. From the proportion of members of parliament involved in decision-making bodies, 26.5% are female MPs while 73.5% are male MPs. In an interview with Hon Judith, she stated that there is a need for women to get into parliament and subsequently the decision-making bodies for women issues to be pushed into the priority list for discussions during parliamentary sessions.

Some scholars have argued that an increase in the number of women in national parliaments does not translate to increased promotion of women's interests in bills passed, policies formulated, and necessary outcomes because in most cases members of parliaments are skewed towards party affiliations and interests. This is confirmed by Honorable Mary in an interview with Fokum and Fonjong (2018), where she states that though their number has increased in parliament, they cannot actually translate their numeric strength into articulating bills on the floor that would promote women's courses, especially because party interest/ideology is paramount. Secondly, the political structure is a semi-presidential system in which bills are drawn from the executive and parliamentarians i.e. executive bills, and private member bills, and in reality, most bills discussed come from the executive and women can only present bills through the private member bill platform and that rarely happens, even if it does, it rarely scale through because they do not have the numerical strength to secure a majority vote. This position is consistent with, Celis (2018) who argues that the relationship between the number of women in parliament and the introduction of pro-women legislation is "complicated rather than straight forward". Again Ahikire, and Mwiine (2014) in an attempt to facilitate the understanding of the obstacles to women's increased membership in parliament and decision-making processes in their work "Making a Difference: Embracing the challenge of women's substantive engagement in political leadership in Uganda1" interviewed a female member of parliament on the subject matter and she had this to say "When we see an increase of women in many leadership positions, it is exciting… but leadership with a difference is clearly still a challenge. Now we are enjoying the positions, but what difference are we making? (Woman MP, Zombo District ISIS-WICCE Dialogue for Women MPs, July 12, 2013)

In an interview with VOA on 08 March 2022, Wazeh, lamented that Cameroon's government is not doing much to empower women politically to achieve the set standards of international, regional, and national frameworks while stating that the country's electoral code is very clear on gender equality but does not spell out what quota is reserved for women, therefore the government should appoint qualified women into key political and administrative positions in order to harness their meaningful contributions towards strengthening socioeconomic, political and democratic processes in the country (Kindzeka, 2022).

Women's conception of politics

Notably, African politics is characterized by a turbulent environment, force, and violence. It is generally agreed that men possess the strength, are self-reliant, and can tussle in the political endeavor, whereas women are passive to engage in politics and governance. In Cameroon, this construct

through socialization has defined gender roles according to biological differences. Cameroonian women have perceived politics as a dirty game and continued fright at the thought of violence has further alienated them from mainstream politics. Though, emphasis is laid on women's numerical strength, translating such into the attainment of power has been difficult as women are perceived as a "supporters club, a team of cheerers and clappers" in contrast to their male counterparts. Konde (2005) concludes that men still dominate politics and public administration in Cameroon while women, though more invisible in the public sphere than men in the past, continue to be responsible for domestic and childcare tasks and their public appearances consist of cheering the men; and women are constructed as voters but not to be voted for. Atanga (2021) in her work Gender ideologies, Leadership and Development in Cameroon argue that women face an obstacle in their quest to ascend to leadership positions and these barriers display themselves in both physical and ideological spheres translating into leadership and organizational and ideological spheres respectively. In a 2013 interview with Ni John Fru Ndi, the national leader of the Social Democratic Fund (SDF) an opposition party in Cameroon, he stressed the need for increased representation of people in leadership thus "Our councils must be more representative – we must meet youth, ethnic and gender quotas, to represent the interests of all people." To this he announced a 25% quota had been introduced in the party structure but had been difficult to be meet over the years noting that some women are shy while Mbunwe state during same interview. "a lot of the men still believe that when you empower a woman, you are empowering her to hurt them (Adewunmi, 2013)

According Kindzeka (2019), in mobilizing women ahead of the February 9, 2020 elections in Cameroon, to not only take part at the local and parliamentary elections by voting but, also standing as political candidates, groups like More Women in Politics (MWP) and others engaged women in towns and villages. In an interview with Kemche, a member of Cameroon's polygamous Bamikike ethnic group, on whether his wives should take part in the elections, he states "he is not sure his wife would perform her household duties if she became an elected official" stating they should be in the kitchen, farm, taking care of the family and being respectful to their husband not wasting time on political activities. While one of the wife Stephanie Ngono, a primary school teacher, disagreed and opted to participate in the elections, despite her husband's resistance, she is committed to run for office. This interview report indicates that the traditional gender roles are still dominant in Cameroon and most women are limited by this cultural and social arrangements. This phenomenon cuts across most African countries as in 2016, in one of his official visits to Germany and hosted by Angela Merkel, the Nigerian president is seen to say "I don't know which political party my wife belongs to, but she belongs to my kitchen and my living room and the other room" after Mrs Buhari publicly expressed concerns about her husband's government being hijacked (BBC, 2016). Again most women in Cameroon are still economically dependent on men as they still face gross discrimination in the economy leaving women with little or no economic incentives to invest in politics and ensure their politics participation. Notably, the above positions are consistent with Kwachou's (2015) position which holds that hegemonic ideological spaces sustain women's effective powerlessness, even when their resources allow them to be in performative positions of power.

Lack of economic incentives (Financial backing)

Women's historical experience of discrimination puts them in a disadvantaged position economically. Engagement in political processes is an expensive venture and requires solid financial backing for success. Over the years, sexual division of labor and job opportunities offered on a sexual basis has given men productive gender roles, enabling them to possess more purchasing power over their female counterparts. To Nkolo, the "egalitarian principles conflict with other principles as it upholds that the husband is the head of the family estate. (Section 213 of the civil Code). Section 1421 of the civil code further stipulates that 'the husband alone shall administer the joint estate. He may sell, alienate and mortgage it without the consent of his wife. To this end Nkolo notes "the principle of the freedom of trade and industry officialized by law no 90/31 of 10 August 1990 governing commercial activities in Cameroon, marginalizes women in the economic and public sector, especially married women who have to obtain permission from their husbands to engage freely in trade due to marriage regulations" (Section 74(2) of Ordinance 81-02 0f June 1984) Nkolo, (1997). Further, Fonjong (2005) explains that women are discriminated against with regards to ownership of property and access to factors of production especially land and capital, and this impact their economy negatively. This situation he explains impedes their access to new opportunities consequently limiting their level of productivity and leaves women economically weak and politically less active. It is worthy of note that, the politics, governance and administration in Cameroon limit women's ability to improve their socio-economic status, a condition which ensures their inability to raise finance capital to cater for their political ambitions. Fonjong (2005) attributes women's low political representation in Cameroon to lack of highly skilled jobs, limited access to training, the reluctance to hire women, and the confining of women to certain administrative roles and other sociological and family related considerations, access to quality education and ownership of property, land and capital thereby limiting their level of productivity leaving women financially dependent on men, and vulnerable to crisis situations. In this regard, Som (2000) argue that the co-existence of written laws with customary traditions that do not always favour the promotion of women's rights and lack of resources allocated to the mechanisms to promoting women's development have further impacted negatively on the realization of women's role in politics. To this end during the 2021 8th March, women's day Mokake says "women were asking Cameroon to ratify the Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa' which it signed in 2006 and respect the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, ratified the country in 2005" (Mokake cited in Moki, 2021)

Cultural factors

Political culture combined with traditional and cultural attitudes regarding women have long been documented as a great barrier to women's representation, participation in politics, and access to power (Rathod, 2007). These customary practices are biased by subjugating women to men, undermining their self-esteem and place them at a disadvantage vis-à-vis their male counterpart in the socio-political scene. Cameroon is a patriarchal society, which considers women secondary to men and this patriarchal structure prevents women from holding high social, economic and political positions. According to Fomunbod (2009) the Violation of women's human rights has been going on but no one has

paid attention and the root causes of these violations include marriage practices, physical abuse, socio-economic barriers, and lack of legal protections. Fomunbod blames the situation on a problem tree that has its roots deeply entrenched in patriarchy, female exclusion, and women's human rights abuses.

The tradition continues to influence women's attitudes towards political participation in Cameroon and has been a force in domesticating gender divisions. There exist visible and unwritten customary practices that limit the ability of women to actively participate in the political system. These socially constructed norms and practices include among others negative perceptions of women not being present in key decision-making bodies in traditional settings. Corroborating this view Nguyen (1997), and Werner, (2008) argue that a male preference has been shaped and reinforced over so many generations that are deeply rooted in people's minds and exists as a social stronghold resistant to opposition holding that women are inferior to men and incompetent in roles in the public space. To this end, women in Cameroon are excluded from public activities as a consequence of a patriarchal view of gender roles. For example, Fokum and Fonjong (2018) interviewed Hon Magdalene on efforts to present bills that would eradicate bride wealth, she states that the question of the payment of bride wealth is a serious problem in her constituency, stating "I cannot table a bill for the removal of bridewealth payment because I consider it a custom that has been practiced in my community for many generations. Trying to change such customs will be going against the traditions and customs of my people". It is worthy of note that this position of the MP does not reflect the current disposition of women who think this traditional method and others are major forms of women subjugation and exploitation reducing women to mere commodities and properties to men. Further, the respect for traditional norms may also explain why many women do not support the political ambitions of other females. Even if a woman chooses to participate in politics, she may find it difficult to balance the time and effort required both for family duties and political participation. As such, a double burden of family responsibility has rendered Cameroonian women ineligible for public decision-making positions. This is consistent with Atanga (2012) who contends that traditional and gender ideologies condition and inhibit women's empowerment in all spheres and ascribe dominance and powerful positions to men and subservient social positions to women. No doubt this condition ensures women's inability to meaningfully contribute to governance and administration of the country

Prospects for Cameroonian Women

Amidst the challenges faced by women in Cameroon, they struggle to compete with men in the political and democratic processes. Some have been appointed to key positions as ministers like Minister of Women Affairs and the family is headed by a woman, and directors in ministries among others. The establishment of the department of gender studies at the University of Buea is a response to getting women to acquire the required training to fit in the ever-demanding political and social environment. Based on the BPFA requirements on Gender and affirmative action, the government's gender policy stipulates 30 % women representation in government but the number of women in key positions of power is still not encouraging. Arguably men currently control power and dominate all spheres of life including governance and administration and will not easily give it away, therefore bridging the gap would require a genuine understanding of power politics by women. Notably, men are in

the strict majority in the 2018 municipal and 2020 parliamentary elections in the country. For instance, of the 386 mayors, 24 are women, and there has never been a female governor of any region since independence, again of all 39 ministers in the country, only 6 are women, and only 2 women out of 58 divisional officers. This subjugated position of women in Cameroon's democratic process is consistent with Atanga's (2018) position in a study carried out in 2009, that women took up less than 5% of the total talking time in parliament, and 26% of women constitute the faculty staff membership in universities in Cameroon, with less than 10% at the professorial cadre and less than 18% in administration.

Currently out of 180 members of parliament in Cameroon, only 61 are women constituting 33.89%, and out of this number, 58 women were elected against 109 men and 3 got renewal by mode of designation as well as 10 men making a total of 119 men and 61 women. Evidently, Cameroon's democratic process is a reflection of an unjust and ironically retrogressive structure that upholds a political, governance, and administrative structure that does not respect international instruments to which it is signatory like the 35% affirmative action (BPFA), African Union Gender quota of 50/50 representative quota for women in the national legislature. It is argued herein, that as the 21st century unfolds, this condition is consistent in its subjugation of women and outright exclusion from the democratic process in Cameroon though women have continually improved academically and are professionally qualified and can be elected to high executive positions, a condition which has orchestrated and exacerbated political apathy among women and further discourages other women from engaging in politics and governance in Cameroon democratic process

Meanwhile, according to ELECAM (2021) of the 7 million registered voters in the country, only 30% are women. Looking through the demographic composition of the country, this presentation of gross gender imbalance shows a disproportionate engagement of women in Cameroon's democratic process. However, the prospects for Cameroon women's political empowerment bears on the ability of women to rally behind women interested and qualified to engage in direct democratic ventures, encourage, harness resources and support the ventures and empower them by voting for them and forming a strong protective bond around them, such that their positions in a representative democracy is established and sustained. This will ensure the presence of women in the political arena. On the other hand, though the government has enacted laws that ban political parties from engaging in political activities without meeting the government's 30% benchmark for gender representation when presenting candidates for elections, it needs to institute stronger mechanisms for implementing the existing laws in order to facilitate women entrance into the political arena.

Though scholars have argued for the implementation of affirmative action to level the gender gap in political participation in nation states across the globe, much is yet to be achieved in this direction. According to UNW (2022), only 4 countries have attained 50% or more women in parliament with Cuba at 53%, Rwanda at 61%, Bolivia at 53%, and the UAE at 50%, while 19 countries just reached 40% upward including 4 from Africa, 5 the Caribbean and Latin American countries and 1 in the pacific. Meanwhile, during the 2020 elections in Kuwait, no women were voted into the parliament, at this current rate, the UNW notes that gender parity is far from becoming a reality, and the closest time to imagine such is 2063. Meanwhile increased women's presence in

national parliament is making a great deal of impact on policy outcomes at all times with countries upholding 30% minimum representation. Given that considerably literature reveals countries with the best policies outcomes and high records of growth and development on the African continent like Rwanda, and South Africa among others are those which have upheld the prescriptions of the international quota system of 35% for women in parliaments and decision making-bodies, against the background that only women are capable of advancing their interests based on shared values and experiences in houses of parliaments, promote policy formulation and outcomes that are women oriented and in turn able to transform parliament to achieve their common goals.

CONCLUSION

Consistent with the literature on obstacles to women's political empowerment and engagement in modern democracies globally, the study found out that women in Cameroon are discriminated against and excluded from its democratic process that otherwise would ensure their development to their full potential, and this condition is exacerbated by lopsided political and administrative structures which continue to perpetuate their subjugation. Further, it is revealed herein that, women have demonstrated consistent active interests and involvement in the country's democratic process through their involvement in civic duties, and national governance, though some of the positions they occupy are by appointment. This is reflected in the number of women who have been elected as members of parliament over the years ranging from 15 in 2009 to 61 in 2021. Women elected to the senate stood at 20 in 2013, and 17 of these women were elected while 3 were appointed by the president of the republic being the first ever senatorial elections in the country, and 4 women were appointed and 22 were elected giving a total of 26 women out of 100 members in the senate in 2018 till date. This no doubt shows women are increasingly having a better understanding of how to participate in the country's political and electoral processes, as well as increased confidence among women in their ability to raise issues in a male-dominated country like Cameroon. Further, women are increasingly understanding the politics, governance and administrative structure in Cameroon thereby acquiring political knowledge, a requirement to ensure their entrance and domineering status on the political stage in the country, be it vying for political offices, mobilization for membership drive to support, promote and elect their chosen candidates or influence political decisions in the Country. The study also found out that there is a tendency for women to be specifically engaged in contesting for political offices and elections given the increasing number of women who are elected and appointed into the national legislature since independence as seen in table 1. Perhaps an important finding to report here is the examination of the challenges to women's political empowerment and engagement and how women are impacted in Cameroon's democratic process. Here, the study finds out that some variables, such as institutional arrangements/framework, for example, the constitution and electoral code do not spell out quotas reserved for female representation in the national legislature in both upper and lower houses as well as for political parties' structures. Again, the lack of enforcement mechanism for the law stipulating 30% female inclusion in all political party candidates' lists submitted to ELECAM for consideration during elections is visible as the ruling party CPDM is seen not to have respected this law during the 2020 local and parliamentary elections. Further, the constitution grossly limits women's socioeconomic development as found in sections 213 and 1421 of the Civil Code, section 74(2) of Ordinance 81-02 0f June 1984. Culturally women depend on men in decision-making processes especially married women who need to ask for permission from their husbands before they can engage in political activities and much more like contesting for political offices. These trends largely limit women as they cannot exercise their franchise and they constitute the largest population, and most times they do so in favor of their male counterparts. Most notable among these findings is the increasing presence of women in politics despite the myriad of challenges that impede their political empowerment. These efforts of women towards their political empowerment are seen to challenge the authority of men over their individual decision to engage in democratic processes that determine their livelihood and their generations to come, like contesting for political offices and stepping out to vote during elections. There is great evidence that women's political knowledge has increased over time, are interested in politics, and uphold increased political commitments. It is the position of this paper that a united front from women in Cameroon would provide a strong force capable of shifting the power dynamics in favor of women. However, Kinge (2016) contends that Cameroonian women's political participation/representation is likely to increase as their levels of income and education increase as they would acquire skills, develop intellectual capabilities and competencies to positively influence the system of governance, and these will increase their chances to be politically empowered and enable them to benefit from the existing political processes in the country.

Therefore, the study recommends massive mobilization of women towards a membership drive aimed at using their human capital resources to secure their places in governance and administration in the country via registering as members of political parties, contesting for political positions, and voting during elections among others. Again, the need for women to organize themselves and build their own economic base and regain some control over their destinies through women's enterprises and businesses sponsored by women towards women's financial empowerment is imperative. Further, new agricultural technologies should be made adaptable and available to women farmers in both the rural and urban areas in Cameroon by women-led NGOs and other women organizations. This will boast women's economic base and promote gender sensitivity in development programs, and women's organizations should be "women-centered and create awareness with mutual aid as their main goal irrespective of class. This should boast women's active campaigns for women's participation in politics and increase support for women running for public offices. All these efforts would be geared toward breaking the male hegemony which characterizes Cameroon's political landscape.

REFERENCES

Adams, R. (2008). Empowerment, Participation and Social work. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Adman, P. (2008). "Does Workplace Experience Enhance Political Participation? A Critical Test of a Venerable Hypothesis." Political Behavior 30.

Adewunmi, B.(2013) "Women in African politics: a vote of confidence" https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/09/women-african-politics-vote-cameroon September,9.

Africa Barometer (2021). Women's Political Participation International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance ISBN: 978-91-7671-397-6 p 18.

Aluko, Y. A. (2011). Gender and women's political leadership in Nigeria. The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, 9(1), 37–55.

Atanga L. et al (2009). Gender and language in African contexts: Edingburgh: Edingburgh University press.

Atanga L. L. (2018). Gender-inclusive university governance: AN analysis of the University of Bamenda. Bamenda: University of Bamenda unpublished MBA Dissertation.

Atanga L.L. (2021). "Gender Ideologies, Leadership and Development in Cameroon" Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, December 17, www.gjia.georgetown.edu.

Agyeman, K. (2003). "The Quest for Moral Democracy" in Oguejiofor J.O. (ed) Philosophy, Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers. 333-352.

Atanga, L. L (2010). Gender, Discourse and Power in the Cameroonian Parliament. Langaa, RPCIG Mankon- Bamenda, Cameroon.

Awasom, S.Y (2002). 'A critical survey of the resuscitation, activation and adaptation of traditional female political institutions to the exigencies of modern politics in the 1990s': the case of the takumbeng female society in Cameroon. A paper presented at the CODESRIA 10th General Assembly, Kampala, Uganda.

Arhikiri J., Musiiment, P., and Mwiinein, A.S. (2014). in ISIS-WICCE 2014c's "Making a Difference Beyond Numbers: Towards Women's Substantive Engagement in Political Leadership in Uganda" Feminist Africa 20.

BBC (2016). Nigeria's President Buhari: My wife belongs in Kitchen. October, www. bbc.com.

Batliwala, S. (1995). Meaning of Women's Empowerment. Women's World, 23-34.

Barnett, M. & Duvall, R. (2005). "Power in International Politics". International Organization. 59 (1) 39-75. ISSN 0020-8183.

Blanchard, K. H., John P. Carlos, & Randolph, A. (1996). Empowerment takes more than a minute. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Bratton K. A. and Ray L. P. (2002). Descriptive representation: Policy outcomes and municipal day-care coverage in Norway. American Journal of Political Science, 46(2), 428-437.

Brill, A. (ed.) (2000). A rising public voice: Women in politics worldwide. New York, UNIFEM.

Celis K. (2008). Gender representation. In: Goertz G, Mazur A, (eds). Politics, Gender, and Concepts: Theory and methodology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

CEDAW. (1979). Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. United Nations. General Assembly.

Celis k. (2018) Gender Quotas and Democratic Participation www.journal.sagepub.com.

Chattopadhyay, R. and Duflo, E. (2004). Women as policy makers: Evidence from a randomized policy experiment in India (Econometrica 72(5), pp. 1409-1443.

Chandra, S. K. (1997). Women and empowerment. Indian Journal of Public Administration, July- Sept.

Chidam'modzi, H.F. (2003). "The Problems of Representation: Dilemmas of African Democracy" in Oguejiofor J.O. (ed) Philosophy, Democracy and Responsible Governance in Africa. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers.

Childs S. & Krook M. (2009). Analyzing Women's Substantive Representation: From Critical Mass to Critical Actors. Government Opposition. 44 (2), 125-145.

Delahanty J. (2005). "Introduction-Sexual Health and Reproduction Rights: Refocusing Priorities" Development, 48 (4) Society for International Development Palgrave Macmillan. 5-10.

Diamond, L. and Morlino, L. (2005). Assessing the Quality of Democracy. JHU Press. ISBAN 978-0-8018-8287-6.

Ford L. (2002). Women and politics: the pursuit of equality. Houghton Mifflin College Press.

Finnemore, M. & Goldstein J (2013). "Puzzles about Power", Back to Basics: State Power in Contemporary World, Oxford University Press, doi:10.1093/prof:oso/9780199970087.003.0001, ISBN 978-0-19-997008-7

Fokum VY, Fonjong LN. (2018). Increasing women's representation in the Cameroon parliament: do numbers really matter? Sociology International Journal. 2(6):754–762. DOI: 10.15406/sij.2018.02.00134

Economic, social, and cultural commission (1990). Report to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights(E/1990/5/Add.35, para. 21) (www.un.org/Depts/unsd/gender/5-3 afr.htm) retrieved 2010.

Fonjong, L. (2005). "Fostering Women's Participation in development through Non-Gov't Organization Efforts in Cameroon" The Geographical Journal, Vol 167 #3

Fombe, M. (2005). ' How women wiled power in the traditional milieu'. Femina.

Fomunbod D. S. (2009). cited in Houmfa M (2011) article on 'Cameroon women must fight for political representation. Radio Netherlands : Africa Desk 29 June 3.31GMT

Garba, P. K. (1999). "An Endogenous Empowerment Strategy: A Case-Study of Nigerian Women" Development in Practice, Vol. 9, No. 1/2 , pp. 130-141.

Gangrade, K.D. (2001). Gandhi and empowerment of women: Miles to go" in Promilla Kapur (ed.), Empowering the Indian Women, New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India

Goetz, Anne Marie. (2009). "Governing Women: Will the New Public Space for Some Women Make a Difference for All Women?" Governing Women: Women's Political, Effectiveness in Contexts of Democratization and Governance Reform. London: Routledge.

Heater, D. B. (1964). Political Ideas in the Modern World. George G .Harrap & Co Ltd.

Inglehart, R., Norris, P., & Welzel, C. (2002). Gender Equality and Democracy. Comparative Sociology, 1(3-4), 321-45.

International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) (2008), Cameroon, Response to Request for Information.

International Women's Rights Action Watch (2001). Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minne. 30114th Ave. 5, Minneapolis MN 55455.

Inter Parliamentary Union. (1994) "Plan of Action to Correct Imbalances in the Participation of Men and Women in Political Life"

Inter Parliamentary Union. (2008). "Discriminatory laws in Cameroon". submission to the United Nations Human Rights Commission. www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women (2020) Women in politics 2020 map.

International Republican Institute 2016: "Women's Political Empowerment, Representation, and Influence in Africa.

ISIS-WICCE. (2014c). "Making a Difference Beyond Numbers: Towards Women'sSubstantive Engagement in Political Leadership in Uganda". Research Report available at http://www.ISIS-WICCE.org

Inglehart, R. & Norris, P. (2003). Rising tide: Gender equality and cultural change around the world. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Kimber, R. (1989). "On democracy". Scandinavian Political Studies. 12 (3) : 201, pp 199-219 doi:10.1111/j.1467-9477.1989.tb00090

Kindzeka (2019). "Cameroonian Women Urge Representation in Politics" Voice of America. https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_cameroonian-women-urge-representation politics/6179670.html November, 19.

Kindzeka (2022). "Cameroon women rally to demand more in Political representation" Voice of America. Africa www.voanews.com.

Kinge, R.F. (2016). "Gender differentials in political participation in the south west region of cameroon: the implications on women development", *Review of Public Administration and Management*, 5(9), 65-73.

Konde E. (2005): African Women and Politics: Knowledge, gender, and power in male dominated Cameroon, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, ISBN 0-7734-6065-9

Matland, R. E. & Taylor, M. (1997). Electoral System Effects on Women's Representation. Comparative Political Studies, 30, 186-210.

Kwachou, M. (2015). Explanation into the influence of studying women and gender studies on past and present students of the University of Buea. London: University College, London. Unpublished MA dissertation.

Mbella G. (2015) Cameroon: National Gender Policy Now Available. Cameroon Tribune, Yaounde www.allafrica.com

Ministry of Women's Affairs. (2009). A Policy on Gender and Equality and Women Empowerment: Replies to questionnaires on the Implementation of The Dakar and Beijing platform of Action. Online accessed 11/03/2011.

Morgenthau, H. J. (1967). Politics among nations: The struggle for power and peace. Knopf.

Moki E. K. (2021). "Cameroonian Women Mark Women's Day with Calls for Political Inclusion" https://www.voanews.com/africa/cameroonian-women-mark-womens-day-calls- political-inclusion.

Mungwa A. (2001). "Mastering Political Forces and structures for Empowerment: challenges for women in post-independent Cameroon. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis.

Narasimhan, S. (1999). Empowering women: An alternative strategy from rural India. New Delhi. SAGE.

Norris, P. (1993). Conclusions: Comparing Legislative Recruitment. In J. Lovenduski & P. Norris (Ed.), Gender and Party Politics, (pp. 309-330). SAGE.

Norris P. (2009). "Petroleum Patriarchy? A Response to Ross" Politics & Gender, 5(4), 109-118.

Karl, M. (1995). Women and Empowerment: Participation and Decision Making. London: Zed Books.

Phillips Ann (1998), Feminisms and Politics, Oxford University Press

Paxton, P. (1997). Women in National Legislatures: A Cross- National Analysis. Social Science Research, 26,

Prime Minister's Office (PMO) (2021) "Paul Biya reshuffle government…"www.spm.gov.cm

Prasad, R.R. (2002). Participation and empowerment – rhetoric and realities. Kurukshetra, a Journal on Rural Development, New Delhi.

Rappaport, J. (1984). Studies in empowerment: Introduction to the issue. "Prevention in Human Services," 3, 1–7

Popper, K. (1988). "The Open Society and its enemies revisited" The Economist (2016 reprint).

Som, N. (2004). Cameroonian Minister on the status of women, report to the Committee on the Elimination of discrimination against women. ESCC

Stevens, P. J. (2006). 'Women's aggressive use of genital power in Africa's Transcultural psychiatry, 43.

Steiner, H. J. (1988). Political Participation as a Human Right. Harvard Human Rights Yearbook,1(Spring): 77-134.

The National Assembly (2021). Number of MPs (Members of Parliament) per gender www.assnat.cm/index

UNESCO (1999). Unit for the Promotion of the Status of Women and Gender Equality, Passport to Equality, Paris.

Weber, M. (1978). Economy and Society. University of California Press.

Werner, J. (2008). Gender, Household and State in Post- Revolutionary Vietnam. New York: Routledge.

Wolfe, J. D. (1985). "A Defense of Participatory Democracy "The review of Politics. 47(3) 370-389 doi:10.1017/S0034670500036925. ISSN 17486858.

Wolfe, Joel D. (1986). "Varieties of Participatory Democracies and Democratic Theory". Political Science Review. 16: 1-38

Trading Economics. (2022). Cameroon indicators, June 16. www.tradingeconomics.com

United Nations (2015) Cameroon Ministry of Women's Affairs Replies to Questionnaire on the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms www.un.org/women.

United Nations Women. (2022). 'Facts and figures: Women's leadership and political Participation' Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures.