



Julius Lambi

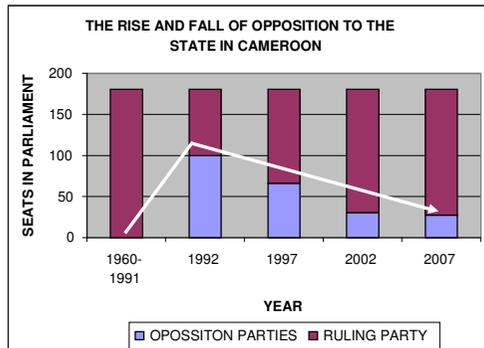
# Democracy in Crisis: Bottom-up Pressure and Participation in Local Governments in Cameroon

## Background



Democracy, in the form of multi-party elections was introduced in Cameroon and other sub-Saharan African countries in the early 1990s. It was hoped that political liberalization would promote the good governance principles of participation and empowerment that are instrumental for promoting pro-poor reforms.

However after the initial euphoria, democracy in Cameroon is regressing as citizens remain excluded from local government structures and the ruling class increasingly dominates decision-making.



## Research Questions

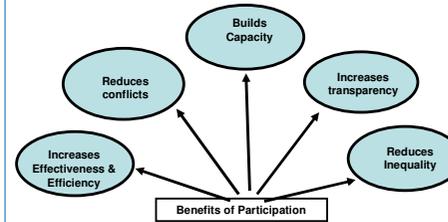
Focusing on the challenges of bottom-up pressures for a deepening of democracy in Cameroon, the following questions will be addressed:

- \* Since the start of political liberalization in 1992, how and why have Local Government structures changed (or failed to change) as regards opening space for participation?
- \* How do power structures and institutions operate to block bottom-up pressures for participatory governance at the local level?
- \* How does civil society challenge exclusion at the local level and what are the potentials and limits of such bottom-up pressures for a deepening of democracy?

## Theory

Participatory democracy theory which sees active involvement of citizens in community decision-making as the 'best

practice' for attaining the attributes of good governance is of relevance for addressing the research questions.



The study will also make use of institutional theory which provides the tools for understanding how the mix of normative factors, regulatory structures and cultural context determine the outcomes of the political system.

## Research Methodology

This research will use six case studies of the political relationships between local governments and communities in Cameroon to make inference on the place of bottom-up pressure for promotion of more deliberative democracy.

Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews, group discussions and through

analysis of policy documents. The research will use Power and Institutional analysis to examine how the political process sets boundaries for the participation of certain actors.

## The Researcher



Julius Lambi studied Life Science for his first degree in his home country Cameroon. In March 2007 he obtained a Master's degree in Environmental Management from Aalborg University, Denmark and his thesis analysed the factors that influence citizen participation in community waste management schemes.

In the course of his Msc, he worked briefly as an intern with a Local Government consultant agency in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. His interest in Governance research is identifying practical measures that communities can use to override dominating power structures and gain access to participation.

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