

Hamidou Hassana



Quality Teacher Education in Cameroon

The Role of Sociocultural Backgrounds
in Pedagogical Reform Projects

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Dedication

To the late Prof. Dr. Rainer Kokemohr

In einer Welt schneller Veränderungen werden neben leistungsbezogenen Lernprozessen Bildungsprozesse wichtiger. Denn herausgefordert durch unverständliche Erfahrungen, wie sie zunehmend auch durch gesellschaftliche Veränderungen ausgelöst werden, führen uns Bildungsprozesse, indem sie unsere Orientierungen und Denkweisen verändern, zu deren ‚besserem‘ Verständnis, das, durch weitere Erfahrungen kritisiert, modifiziert oder widerrufen, weitere Bildungsprozesse nach sich ziehen kann. [Bildungsprozesse verändern uns], indem sie uns Unverstandenes und damit uns selbst in unseren Welt-Selbstverhältnissen anders verstehen lassen und uns ermöglichen, mit der Welt und mit uns selbst in wichtigen Dimensionen technischer, sozialer und kultureller Art ‚angemessener‘ umzugehen. (Kokemohr, 2021, p.28)

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1 Introduction: The Problem of Sociocultural Backgrounds (SCBs) and Quality Teacher Education (QTE) in Cameroon, Africa

This first chapter provides (1.1) general background to quality teacher education (QTE) reforms in Cameroon, Africa, which is followed by a preliminary presentation (1.2) of the pedagogical reform principles underlying some educational projects implemented in the EEC missionary station in Mbouo-Bandjoun in the West of Cameroon. The chapter introduces (1.3) the empiric problem of the significance of actors' sociocultural backgrounds (SCBs) for QTE in Cameroon, (1.4) the research questions, objectives, and scope. It also describes the (1.5) researcher's motivations and the significance of the investigation. The chapter ends by highlighting the book's general (1.6) organization.

1.1 Introductory remarks about QTE reforms in Cameroon, Africa

It is generally agreed that a quality teacher education improves the quality of teaching and learning processes (UNESCO, 2015). Quality teacher education in Africa, especially Cameroon, consists of institutional reforms for quality teacher training. In this perspective, the quality teacher education reforms in Cameroon predominantly concerned the quantitative provision and the improvement of human resources (trained teachers) to respond to economic and educational policies of ruralization after independence (Fonkeng, 2007) to cover up the deficit of teachers after the economic crisis of 1985 (SPEC¹, 1992; Tchombe, 1999; UNESCO, 2005; Fonkeng, 2007), to redefine the role of education in the development of democratic values and participation in a global world after the crisis period of struggle for democracy in 1991/1992 (education forum, 1995, education law, 1998), and to adapt to and harmonize the education concerning the demand of the internal and the global market (Bologna Process).

1 SPEC: Secrétariat Permanent de l'Enseignement Catholique (Permanent Secretariat of Catholic Education)

These political, economic, and social contexts of this structural evolution triggered educational paradigms of the literary civilization (IPAM², 1978, p. 17), the nationalization of education and its provision for all (UNESCO, 1972; IPAR³, 1969) as well as democracy and development (Biya, 1987/2018), globalization and millennium development goals (UNESCO, 2005). Subsequent teaching and learning orientations were, respectively, an instruction or a literacy development (IPAM, 1978, p. 157), a new pedagogical approach, NAP (Hamani, 2005), an objective-based pedagogical approach, OPP (IPAM, 1978) and recently, a competency-based approach, APC (Françoise Cros et al., 2009). In all these teacher education reforms, the top-down approach has remained the dominant orientation through the ideally promoted values and the paradigm of the learner-centered pedagogy present in educational discourses from NAP to APC as well as throughout the Active and Participative Pedagogy (PAP) and the Active and Creative Pedagogy (PAC) in the state as well as in some private educational organizations (SPEC, 1992; OEPP⁴, 2002).

Considering this general observation, teacher education reform in Cameroon appears to be much more an institutional phenomenon (Tchombe, 1999) than a substantial change of-and-in practice endeavor (Kokemohr, 1990; 2014). The initiating, conceptualizing, and implementing actors of these reform endeavors seem to be those from the top level of the educational institutions. For instance, Mapto Kengne (1998-2013, p. 5) pointed out that: “Teachers are not consulted on the various adjustments made to the educational system.” (own translation)⁵ Decision-makers seem to play a dominant role in these teacher education reforms.

This hierarchical orientation and dominance of educational reform endeavors depict the top-down mono-logical character of formal education. Kokemohr (2018, p.149) portrayed an example of a simplified structure of Germany's linear system of education in the 19th century, which consisted of three hierarchical levels. The top-level entails *Ethics* intending to provide educational ideas of a good life for all, *Sciences* aiming at providing a proven body of knowledge, and *Psychology* providing teaching and learning methods. The mid-level translates these into educational knowledge and skills conceived as education goals. The bottom level is the transmission level of knowledge consisting of classroom teaching-learning activities. This simpli-

2 IPAM: Institut Pédagogique Africain et Malgache (Pedagogical Institut of Africa and Madagascar)

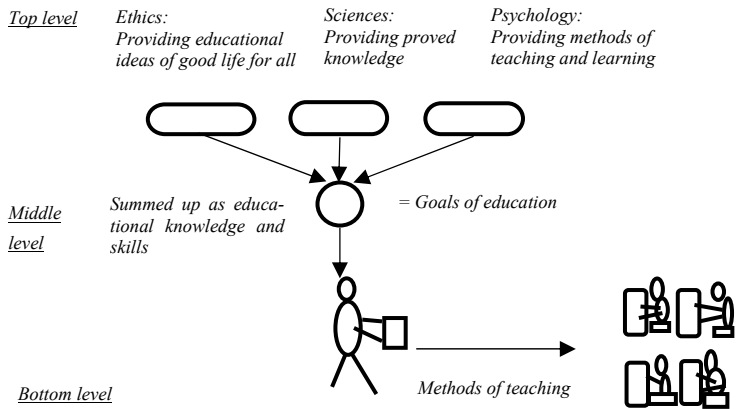
3 IPAR: Institut Pédagogique à Vocation Rurale

4 OEPP: Organisation de l'Enseignement Privé Protestant (Organization of Protestant Private Education)

5 Unless indicated otherwise, all the translations are author's translation. The indication “own translation” is used throughout the text purposely.

fied example of the structure of the German formal education from the 19th century also applies to African and Cameroonian educational systems.

Figure 1: Top-down structure of formal educational systems



(Source: author, adapted after Kokemohr, 2018, p. 149)

After the failure of the 1848/49 revolution, there was an attempt in Germany by the king (Hartmann et al., 1974, pp. 54-56) “to control the threat of social contingency by political and cultural administration and by military means simultaneously. As a result, a suitable system for controlling education was developed by some obedient pedagogues giving birth to a conservative paradigm of didactics focusing on a giving social, economic and political order” (Kokemohr et al., 2018, p. 128). According to Kokemohr “the idea was to define all parameters and methods of teaching-learning at school given the production of obedient people ready to accept the desired knowledge and the desired social behavior” (ibid., p. 129).

Similarly, the three hierarchical levels shown in the above chart seem to depict Cameroon’s general educational paradigm, where the teacher-learner interaction has remained mono-logically construed and reproduced concerning reforms in practice (Foaleng, 2010, pp. 14-15), even though the power relationship has become increasingly complex considering the globalization influence of the liberal economy and the social order (Bologna Process, UNESCO principles of education, UN’s millennium development goals). This top-down power relationship seems to promote a receptive development of teachers and learners in the sense that the former adopts a receptive attitude toward educational reforms provided at the upper and the middle levels (Kokemohr et al., 2018), whereas the latter are recipients of the body of knowledge the former transmits within the mono-logical system of education

at the bottom level (Kokemohr et al., 2018; Kā Mana, 2012a; Fonssi, 2012; 2018; Moukoko, 2012).

This linear and top-down power relation seems to persist in some reforms endeavored by private education organizations, such as the EEC and the Catholic Education Boards (reviewed in chapter 3). Therefore, teaching-learning interaction processes remained “beautiful principles” and had very little to do with observable field practice processes (Fonssi, 2011, pp. 14-15; 2018, p. 24). Moreover, Fonssi himself voiced this critique when he presented the pedagogical principles he described as fundamentals of the UEC, even though he portrayed them as “socle” or “souffle novateur des ambitions” (Fonssi, 2012, pp. 12-15). The educational or pedagogical reform principles seem most often so “beautifully” prescribed that they tend to assume automaticity in bringing about changes or improvements in practice. Thus, a failure in practice appears to be attributed to this dichotomist discourse of theory versus practice, like in the following claim of Fonssi (*ibid.*, p. 15): “Everything happened as if on the one hand the principles were abstractly affirmed in their majesty while on the other hand, the practice was royally outside their empire.”

The question is: In how far can the gap between some ideally formulated pedagogical reform principles and the field practice characterize reform criticism in the dichotomist discourse mode of good versus bad teaching-learning paradigms within cooperative educational relations sustaining the contradiction of cultures as a base for educational discourse (Kokemohr et al., 1990)? To reflect on this structure of power relations in cooperative reform endeavors, the work discusses the following critique of Kā Mana (2012a, pp. 64-65) of the projects Réseau Ecole et Développement (RED) and Comité d’Etudes et de Réflexion Pédagogiques (CERP) in comparison to the program Dynamisation Fontionnelle des Objectifs Pédagogiques (DYFOP). He submits that:

In the [RED] project, as in the CERP dynamics, it is also necessary to highlight the important weight of two German pedagogues whose theories have tended to break the dynamics of local creativity to the point of appearing in the eyes of some as a new form of domination that does not say its name. Whether about the pedagogue Hans Bühler during RED or Rainer Kokemohr during CERP dynamics, the suspicion of a foreign theoretical hold in Cameroon could not be broken (own translation).

The problem is not in how far this observation might be true or false, for the statement itself somehow claims to “mettre en lumière” some presuppositions of ‘briser,’ of ‘domination’ and the ‘soupçon’ of ‘mainmise.’” The author of this work would, thus, like to highlight the simplistic mode of criticism in place in the context of the cooperative educational project development evolving complex sociocultural (also economic and somehow political) background issues. His interpretation is that the different EEC educational

reform projects developed in cooperation with some German scholars and German protestant funding organizations, such as EZE-EED Bread for the World, are portrayed as suffering from this cooperation. The reason is that they are perceived on the backgrounds of colonial history, determining a black-white worldview leading to the interpretation of a world-self-relation, depicted as a contradiction of the good versus the bad, the local versus the foreign. This criticism seems to be reinforced in the latter relationship since Kā Mana claims the following as the first force of the project DYFOP in comparison to the others above-mentioned: “Moukouri Edeme placed his project [DYFOP] under the sign of local research, with local ‘intelligence’ doing local work on local realities” (ibid., p. 65). The DYFOP project succeeded in simplifying the understanding of educational, pedagogical, and didactic goals. It endeavored to classify these goals, objectives and aims into notional subcategories to facilitate the bottom level of teaching and learning interaction (systematization of curricula using some flowcharts).

However, one could object to the critique, for it dealt very little with the so-called local realities but rather tried to highlight objective-oriented pedagogies originating from the history of the birth of German⁶ didactics and the American military education experiences taken over by educational systems under the influence of the growing liberal economy. Meanwhile, the CERP project interested social communities for it researched family histories, sociocultural backgrounds of some actors of the EP (Kokemohr, 1996a; 1996b; 1997) and attempted a change in the dynamics of the classroom, the school, and the school society’s interaction (Kokemohr, 1999a; Foaleng, 2005; Fonsi, 2018). The discourse of foreign versus local is here constructed on the backgrounds of the colonial history of relationship (black-white worldview) still hunting North-South relationships, where the so-called local endeavor is ideally praised, and the so-called foreign is suspiciously portrayed, even though generally perceived as prestigious in the everyday social and educational life.

Even though the local-versus-foreign criticism underlined the suspicion of domination of the former by the latter (as appears in Kā Mana’s observation mentioned above), most of the cooperative educational projects involving a North-South partnership (within this example of a church context as well as within governments contexts) seem to be based on the prestigious character of “the foreign” and the strategic economic perspective (Kokemohr, 2015). The local is considered an ideal identity construction and claim (like presupposed in Kā Mana’s appreciation mentioned above of DYFOP). In other words, it appears to be an issue of reputation (prestige) and money (funding), which are put forward to justify the tendency to want “white” partners in an educational project instead of aiming at a joint struggle to tack-

6 See the above-mentioned chart, developed in Rainer Kokemohr (2018).

le educational problems. A German scholar talking about his experience in Cameroon recounted an exchange he had with one of his Cameroonian partners. The following is the passage of the story he shared.

Why do you need to have “whites” in the project? “That’s always good when you want to get the money,” he told me. His argument was, “Euhmm, euhmm, yes, we need “whites,” then that’s better acknowledged here, and that’s the way to get money.” There was not anyone who did not argue, “we need that for the project.” He never said that. //Reputation and money//Reputation and money (extract from the transcript of an interview with RK, own translation).

In this discussion involving North-South partners (Kokemohr, 1999a), reputation and money appear to have played a significant role in motivating cooperative projects and the subsequent interaction processes of their development. The research question is: How could this and other power relation features of the sociocultural backgrounds of the participants have influenced the development processes of the pedagogical reform projects in Cameroon, Africa? This study, therefore, focuses on the case of the EEC teacher education reform projects developed in Mbouo-Bandjoun in the Western region of Cameroon. Chapters 3 to 5 of this work provide further details on the projects’ institutional, philosophical, and pedagogical development processes. The paragraphs below provide general backgrounds of the EEC educational development in Cameroon and underline the pedagogical reform experiences in Mbouo-Bandjoun, which are further reconstructed in chapters 4, 5, and 6.

1.2 Preliminary Backgrounds of the Pedagogical Reform Principles of the UEC

The EEC has founded many primary and secondary schools in Cameroon to contribute to the state’s engagement in providing a good education for pupils and students. In developing teaching and learning in its schools, the EEC supported pedagogical research projects and actions in education. In collaboration and cooperation with European church funds and universities, the EEC educational board developed such projects to improve its educational quality by regularly organizing in-service teacher training programs at the Centre Polyvalent de Formation (CPF) in Mbouo-Bandjoun in the western region of the country.

In 1991, after some years of observation of the Cameroonian educational system and field research (in schools and school communities), an experimental pedagogical project of intensive in-service teacher training was launched in EP, a primary church school in Mbouo (Kokemohr, 1990; Kenmogne and Kokemohr, 1993; Foaleng, 2005). A research team conducted

the project from the University of Hamburg, led by Rainer Kokemohr, in collaboration with professionals from the EEC, led by Jean-Blaise Kenmogne. The program CERP dealt with the questions: “How can one awaken and liberate the learners' intellectual, affective, cognitive and social potentialities to make them creative in tackling present and future problems and challenges?” (Kokemohr, 1999a, p. 5). How can one awaken and liberate the inner creativity of each learner? To answer these questions, a pedagogical approach based on three principles was developed and experimented with within the Ecole Pilote de Mbouo. These pedagogical principles⁷ include the *principe d'interaction*, the *principe des sens divers*, and the *principe de la responsabilité réciproque* (see also Kokemohr, 2002a; 2014).

First, the *Principe d'interaction* was understood as the freedom to interact, reflect, and discuss a target pedagogical problem of common concern. Such freedom at the base of pedagogical action should be a commodity to all participants (learners and teachers), the teacher monitoring the discussion as a partner of the learners in the pedagogical context of teaching-learning. Learners in such a context are active partners and immerse themselves fully in search of an explanation of a phenomenon, argumentation, an opinion, or a resolution of a pedagogical problem. Thus, lessons should be phrased in an interesting pedagogical problem that triggers the learners' potentialities in a quest for solutions (Moukoko, 2012).

Second, the *Principe des sens divers* is developed around the paradigm of problem-oriented pedagogy. There are many ways, routes, possibilities, methods, and perspectives to explain, argue, or resolve a pedagogical, didactic problem. In contrast to the traditional teaching-learning approach, where the teacher provides the knowledge on a pedagogical subject (*sense unique*), the *Principe des sens divers* states diversity in approaching a pedagogical problem that is a common concern of mostly the learners, the teachers only being monitors of the pedagogical context of teaching-learning. There is no prior, ready-made solution, explanation, or argumentation that the teachers⁸ transfer to the learners for memorization. The teachers rather contribute to the debate as members/partners of the group discussion or as facilitators of the learning process and context.

The *Principe d'interaction* helps trigger the students' intellectual, affective, cognitive, and social potentialities to reflect on solutions concerning a target pedagogy creatively. Hence, the *Principe d'interaction* is a prerequisite to the *Principe des sens divers* since the freedom to interact makes learners more active and use their potential to create solutions. Learners are actively immersed in knowledge construction and contribute to the process by indi-

7 More about the conditions, the circumstances, and some practical experiences of these reform ideas further reconstructed and discussed in chapter 4 of this work.

8 This is here considered as the only instance of authority of a knowledge detention.

vidual potentialities triggered by the freedom the pedagogical context of teaching-learning provides.

The last principle is the *Principe de responsabilité réciproque*, which completes the other two components to set up a collegial social context that engages all participants. Reciprocal responsibility reinforces the solidarity within the group members (class) to integrate them into the given social context with a common goal and vision. It relies on reciprocal criticism and acceptance, such as a democratic principle of freedom of a society to participate in an ongoing discussion on a given problem of common concern.

These pedagogical principles have proven successful at the EP (Kokemohr, 2002a; 2014), where the church decided to put the approach forward to train its teachers accordingly, creating a teacher training college named Institut de Pédagogie pour Sociétés en Mutation (IPSOM) in 2005. This institution initially aimed at training teachers at the primary school level. However, it was turned into training teachers at the secondary school level due to the state regulations regarding higher private training institutions⁹ (Foaleng, 2005). IPSOM started its experimental academic year on October 3, 2005, with five students enrolled in four disciplines of specialization: English-, French-, history-, geography- and mathematics didactics. Five other students later joined to reach the number ten of the first IPSOM students (Foaleng, 2005). The EP was transformed into the Ecole de Référence (ER) from this time on.

This training is based on innovative pedagogical principles (above defined) for a more autonomous learner-centered education (Kokemohr, 2009; 2011). In 2010, with the state's liberalization of the medical training sector, the church created the UEC with two other faculties: the Faculty of Agronomy and Environmental Sciences (FASE) and the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMSS). IPSOM became the Faculty of Sciences of Education (FSE), and the School of Theology in Ndoungué became the Faculty of Protestant Theology and Religious Sciences (FTPSR). These institutions were developed within the Cameroonian context and a top-down approach to teaching and learning culture. In many ways, this new dynamic of teacher education based on socio-constructivist principles, even though promising, has been challenging both teachers and students who had to learn to build knowledge together. The act of building knowledge together seems to be compromised and helped by some features of the sociocultural backgrounds of teachers, learners, and administrative staff involved in the process.

9 More on this is discussed in chapter 5 on the institutional framework of the pedagogical reform projects of the EEC in Mbouo-Bandjoun, West Cameroon.

1.3 Empiric Introduction to the Problem of the Study

The study uses an extract from the transcript of the introductory phase (1mn:17s) of an international colloquium¹⁰ in 2008 at IPSOM to provide an introductory framework for the problem of the significance of the actors' SCBs for a quality teacher education (QTE) in Cameroon. The colloquium served as a scientific follow-up reflection on the project IPSOM. This empiric material was chosen because it appears to be an authentic academic set-up or setting that gathered students, teachers-researchers, German cooperation scholars, and university administrators to discuss adequate teaching-learning methods and philosophy at IPSOM. Therefore, its analysis might reveal instances or occurrences that somehow depict features of SCBs that could inform about the everyday life of the project.

Excerpt from the transcript of the opening speech of the colloquium at IPSOM (February 2008):

Monsieur Jacques (MJ): ah, euhm, euh, ah pour tout ce que nous aurons à faire pendant cette journée/euh! ah! Merci à tous les professeurs à tous les collègues pour tous les exposés que vous avez préparés et je crois tout simplement que le Seigneur conduit les travaux et que nous mettions à profit ce temps que nous nous sommes donné pour cet atelier. J'espère de tout cœur que nous arriverons à la fin de ces quatre jours de travaux à des perspectives qui permettraient vraiment euh! non seulement d'avoir des réponses aux questions qui se posent et que nous nous sommes posées à travers les différents exposés que nous allons partager mais que nous pourrions euh! ouvrir des nouvelles perspectives euh! que nous pourrions ouvrir des nouvelles dynamiques qui donnent vraiment à l'IPSOM, euh! de retrouver euh! l'esprit de retrouver le euh! rêve que nous portons et qui permet effectivement à l'IPSOM de garder son originalité et pourquoi pas comme nous avons toujours rêvé de proposer des démarches aux autres fondateurs euh! même l'Etat, euh! pour que l'enseignement devienne quelque chose que ce que nous vivons maintenant. C'est le vœu que je formule de tout cœur, euh! à l'ouverture de cet atelier. Merci à vous, merci à toutes et merci à tous. //Tous: (applaudissements dans la salle)

The author, in the following, attempts to do a micro-analysis of this extract with an emphasis on language use.¹¹ The first sentence of Monsieur Jacques displays four different instances of enunciation devices.

10 The colloquium gathered African/Cameroonian education specialists (from the Democratic Republic of Congo, IPSOM, and University of Yaoundé), joined by colleagues from Germany (the University of Hamburg, Ruhr University of Bochum).

11 With the term language use, the use of specific tenses, the enunciation system, the deictic markers, metaphors and/or other figures of style are meant. This notion is further discussed in the second section of the theory in chapter 1 below,

- (3) The listeners: identifiable in the language use such as “*merci à tous les professeurs à tous les collègues, pour tous les exposés que vous avez préparé*” (thanks to all the professors, to all the colleagues, For all the reports that you have prepared);
- (2) A connection to a high normative instance of *le Seigneur* (the Lord);
- (1) The speaker “*je*” (I); and the presence of
- (4) an “inclusive” “*nous*” representing both “*vous*” and “*je*” (3 and 1) that is, *you* and *I* form an “inclusive we” refers to all the participants in the workshop, including Monsieur Jacques.

In short, Monsieur Jacques (“*je*” in 1) in connection with a high normative instance “*le Seigneur*” (2), talks to “*tous les professeurs*” “*vous*” (3). The object of the speech is not clearly stated since he uses vague referents (a) “*pour tout ce que nous aurons à faire*” (what exactly are 3 and 1 are going to do?), (b) “*pour tous les exposés que vous avez préparés*” (which reports? on which topic or theme?). He further refers to “*les travaux*” (what work?) and “*atelier*” (but atelier of what?). Nothing is mentioned about the topic or the theme that is the object of the “*atelier*,” the “*travaux*,” and the “*exposés*.” What is mentioned is rather the schedule “*pendant cette journée, à la fin de ces quatre jours de travaux*” (during this day, at the end of these four days of work). Moreover, as participants of the colloquium, the students of IPSOM are not explicitly mentioned in this introductory speech of MJ. Could he have assumed that by saying, “*pour tout ce que nous aurons à faire pendant cette journée*” (for all that we will do during this day), he also included the students in this inclusive “*we*”? Or could the presence of the students as participants in the workshop implicitly be meant in the last utterances of MJ: (“*Merci à vous, merci à toutes et merci à tous*”)?

However, one can identify some references to the different “roles” that Monsieur Jacques assigns or attributes to the different instances by reading the tenses and corresponding modes he uses.

Reference 1: “*Merci à tous les professeurs pour les exposés que vous avez préparés*” (“thanks to all the professors for the communications that you have prepared”).

Using the past tense (“*avez préparés*”) in the indicative mode, Monsieur Jacques recalls the task performed by the professors, which consisted of preparing the different communications in the workshop.

Reference 2: “*que le Seigneur conduit les travaux*.”
(that the Lord conducts the works).

under pragma-linguistic micro-analysis, especially the inference analysis in the perspective of Kokemohr (2002b, 2019), as discussed in the methodology chapter 7 of this work.

The correct grammatic form of the verb should here be “conduise” because of the presence of the conjunction “que,” which, in French, introduces the subjunctive mode: “que le Seigneur ‘conduise’ les travaux.”¹² Thus, the use of this verb in the simple present tense and the indicative mode is incongruent. However, this incongruence is not hazardous; it seems not to be an error due to the spoken language conditions (often fluency overcomes accuracy in oral speech) if one considers further verbs used in the subjunctive mode:

“et que nous mettions à profit”;

“que nous pourrions euh! ouvrir des nouvelles perspectives euh! ”

“que nous pourrions ouvrir des nouvelles dynamiques.”

These prove a good mastery of the subjunctive tense by the speaker. As a high normative instance, “le Seigneur,” in whom “je” (I) strongly believe, the use of the simple present tense in the indicative mode is purposeful. Therefore, the statement “je crois tout simplement que le Seigneur conduit, que nous mettions à profit” (I simply believe that the Lord leads so that we make a profit of the time) indicates the “role” that the high normative instance of the Lord plays, which, according to Monsieur Jacques who “simply believes” (“je crois tout simplement”), is the instant, present reality of the workshop. Henceforth, Monsieur Jacques states an “axiom,” a “principle,” from which further argumentation should start. “Je” (Monsieur Jacques), in his position as a pastor (therefore representative of the Lord) and administrative staff of IPSOM (thus, institutional hierarchy), believes simply that the Lord leads the works. He hopes, dreams, and, consequently, states a wish (which is somehow like an orientation from the chief) that he, the professors, and the (other participants?), could open new perspectives and new dynamics for IPSOM to propose approaches to other educational school founders and the state during the workshop. This seems to be his role, identifiable from the reading of the types of verbs (hope, dream, wish, formulate), the tenses (present), and the modes (indicative and subjunctive) in his speech.

As a pastor, Monsieur Jacques stands for whom who speaks on behalf of the Lord (“le Seigneur”), and, as such, his speech is on a high normative base that is not debatable (“le Seigneur conduit les travaux”). Foucault described an implicit structure of a “simple, strong belief” as pastoral power. He (1979, p. 237) underlined that: “In Christianity, the tie with the shepherd is an individual one. It is personal submission to him. His will is done, not because it is consistent with the law, and not just as far as it is consistent with it, but, principally, because it is His will”. Therefore, “the Lord conducts the works” is a strong fact on which the workshop relies, according to the speaker “je”; it is, hence, the only reality in the present. One can say that in this workshop’s

12 In English, expressing a wish, the sentence should read: “I simply believe that the Lord led the works and that we could make profit of the time.”

opening speech, “je” constructs his own culture of pastoral power. In this discourse, he establishes a shared social world:

I (Monsieur Jacques as a pastor and chief of IPSOM in connection to the Lord who presently conducts) and you = we should take this time to open new perspectives.

This might sound like a performative process of a social reality construct, which, according to Bohnsack (2010, p. 101), is a “structure of practice” in Bourdieu’s sense (1972 and 1974). It is “habituated practices, based on the incorporated experiential knowledge of the actors which guide their activities” (ibid, Bohnsack, p. 101) and as such forms “implicit or tacit knowledge” (ibid.) shared. What could be the roles of the students in Monsieur Jacques’ speech? What could the students benefit from the workshop in which they are implicitly present? How could such implicitness concerning students in academic settings structure and participate in their learning activity and process?

A teacher in a classroom context will commonly say: “Today, we are going to talk about this and that; we are going to see this and that,” giving little room to the learners for any choice or suggestion of neither their topics of interest nor their alternative method of work. There is the belief that the process of teaching-learning is a matter of hierarchy, meaning the sociocultural organization system of “elders,” “chief,” “chieftaincies,” like in the Bamiléké tradition and many other peoples’ traditions in Cameroon. The learner is passive, and the teacher is active. But how can such sociocultural backgrounds influence the teaching methods and the philosophy of teacher education? The language people use somehow maintains and promotes this sociocultural aspect. In the empiric part of this study, the author further analyzes how the participants’ language use displays features of the pyramidal conception of knowledge influenced by the hierarchical organization of the Cameroonian society.

The Cameroon educational system essentially reflects its sociocultural setup, where the power structure is mono-logical and a top-down system. For instance, the family head, ultimately, is the decision-maker and decides what is good or bad for the other family members. With its historical colonial antecedent (Njimoluh, 2010), formal education has also helped reinforce this pattern in the modern Cameroonian context. The teacher knows it all, and the learner memorizes the lesson, which is then reproduced at a given time in an exam sanctioned by grades and certificates.

1.4 The Problem of the Study, Related Research Questions, and the Scope

In all the educational issues mentioned above, very little is said about the individual initiative, and, consequently, no innovation is given any priority. The whole concept of knowledge as a shared commodity that both teachers and students can debate is somehow belittled, and, hence, teacher training appears to be a top-down process of knowledge dispensation, where the trainer conveys what they know. This present study questions the roles of such features of SCBs on the quality of the teacher education in Cameroon, Africa, using a narrative interpretation and a documentary analysis of empiric data from the daily life of actors in ER, IPSOM, UEC (2006-2016). It addresses how features of the sociocultural backgrounds of actors play a certain role in how they interact and construct teaching methodology and philosophy they use in their everyday life activities within the target pedagogical reform projects.

It is assumed that trainees, trainers, and the administration staff come to the project with their sociocultural backgrounds, which can be identified at the levels of their personal history and the institutional backgrounds of the educational system in Cameroon. These features of the SCBs play certain roles and function in the way they interact and construct teaching methodology and philosophy they use in their everyday life activities within the project. These roles and functions shape the institutional and classroom practice realities. The objectives of this study consist of reconstructing the historical backgrounds of ER-IPSOM-UEC to provide a systematic setting for discussion of the pedagogical principles of *interaction*, *sens divers*, and *responsabilité réciproque* as fundamentals of these projects.

Furthermore, it aims at identifying, describing or interpreting features of the SCBs of the different project actors (mainly teachers and learners at ER and UEC) to identify and interpret the roles and functions of these features in shaping everyday life “realities” of the project. However, the empiric part of the study is limited to pedagogical actors in classroom situations in ER and UEC (teachers and students or pupils). In other words, this study does not investigate the SCBs of all the different actors involved in the projects. Actors from German backgrounds are not included in the main sample. Although there is an interview with an actor from a German background, its transcript is rather analyzed as an expert source of historical background information about the development of the projects. It aims to comparatively highlight individual interests and commitment influences throughout this development process.

Reasons for this scope of the study include the lack of necessary time in a doctoral work to open the investigation to all the different intercultural and

international actors involved in the projects. Mainly, it is the interest in concrete pedagogical interaction dynamics that might inform about the influence of the SCBs of the teachers and the learners on the quality of teaching and learning processes regarding the pedagogical reform principles developed at EP, ER, IPSOM, and UEC in cooperation with German scholars. This focus on the direct pedagogical actors (teachers and learners) assumes to deduce the effects of intercultural pedagogical reform experiences on the field's main participants. Therefore, the empiric part of the study treats the problem of the significance of the sociocultural backgrounds for the quality of teacher education from the perspective of classroom interaction and the teachers' autobiographical narrations.

The present work neither investigates these features and roles of the SCBs of a quantitative representative sample from African experiences of the teacher education reform nor uses a similar sample from the Cameroonian context of teacher education. It is limited to a specific experience developed by the EEC in Mbouo-Bandjoun in cooperation with German and Cameroonian scholars and development experts, financed by the German Protestant development services, such as EZE, EED, and DÜ, now merged in Bread for the World. It opens a reconstructive window on the history of the development of this experience, pointing out and analyzing how the SCBs (of intercultural actors) might have played a certain role in the quality of its development process. Furthermore, the study pertains to an empiric micro-analysis of pedagogical discourses in a Pilot Primary School (École Pilote, École de Référence de Mbouo) and college teachers' autobiographical narrations.¹³

1.5 Interest and Significance of the Study

The interest in investigating the significance of the SCBs of some actors involved in the pedagogical reform projects of EEC in Mbouo-Bandjoun has been developed throughout the author's experience as an undergraduate student, a graduate student researcher, a part-time assistant lecturer, and a coordinator of the student services office at IPSOM-UEC. In these different positions within the projects, he acquainted different actors at different levels of action and responsibility.

13 Teachers of primary and secondary private schools (especially the EP-ER of EEC Mbouo and a laic private college in Bafoussam).

As an undergraduate student, he was very much engaged in working with the administration¹⁴ of IPSOM-UEC and the scientific follow-up research team¹⁵ led by Kokemohr from the University of Hamburg, Germany. As a graduate student, he assisted Professor Kä Mana in organizing and coordinating the project Forum Hebdomadaire of UEC, which he scientifically followed up and investigated for his master's work. The findings of his master's research proved the existence of a considerable gap between the repetitive discourse about the three reform principles¹⁶ and the everyday academic campus life. The jury of his master's work agreed with him that, although the overall assumption of the pedagogical, philosophical, and practical significance of the reform principles, the infrastructural development, the academic quality of the training, the commitment of international and local partners, students, and administrative staff, the gap between the discourse and the practice remained considerable.

Considering his experience working with the different partners involved in the project IPSOM-UEC, he was eager to investigate further the social and cultural aspects of this gap. Instead of researching the causality of such a gap, he decided to study, at a doctoral level, the relationship between the actors' SCBs and the quality of their practice from a reconstructive qualitative micro-analysis of the everyday practice within the target projects. Foaleng

- 14 The author was elected as the representative of students (*délégué des étudiants*) at IPSOM and served as bridge between the administration and the students' academic interests and practical needs as well. Concerning the latter, he created a project of a campus shop to supply students, trainers and cooperation partners with everyday basic needs, such as mineral water, coffee, soft drinks, cool beer, basic furniture and telephone credit. The Dean's assistant of IPSOM, Mme. Dorimaine Mboujiko, assisted the project financially. He also organized cultural activities on the campus in cooperation with the youth of the Mbouo. These activities served to integrate the campus in the small village town of Mbouo, since the campus is a little remote. In this position, he got acquainted with the Mbouo community, the different missionary institutions in the station (college, hospital, training center CPF) and the state authorities of the Bandjoun division.
- 15 In this position (volunteer work), he logistically and interculturally assisted the intercultural/international team of Professor Kokemohr. He was also active in field research, making interviews, recording colloquia, for workshops sessions and further acted as a discourse facilitator during research workshops with students. The position provided him access to the sociocultural worlds of the Bandjoun, the Bafoussam and Bamoun folks during visits to traditional local authorities, festivals and other cultural events typical of the Bamiléké folk. The position sustained his research curiosity and equipped him with basic qualitative research techniques. As a volunteer facilitator, he was available for the different parties and cultures. Moreover, he could experience most of the intercultural misunderstandings and sometimes open communicational crises in the project IPSOM.
- 16 These pedagogical reform principles were presented briefly at the beginning of this introductory section and are further discussed in chapters 4 to 6 of this study.

(2005) studied the experience of the reform school *Ecole Pilote* de Mbouo in his doctoral work under a post-colonial perspective of North-South cooperation. His investigation highlighted the sociocultural contexts of Bandjoun. It showed how the colonial experience marked the educational development in that locality.

Instead, this study focuses on intercultural and multicultural international pedagogical reform cooperation. It especially addresses the problem of the significance of the sociocultural backgrounds for the quality of teaching and learning processes from the perspective of classroom interactions and biographical experiences, considering the theoretical framework of *Bildung* as a transformative process. The research interest, thus, lies in *Bildungsprozessen* rather than in postcolonial pedagogical discourse, although some of the issues were used to understand the complex sociocultural context of Cameroon. These personal and academic backgrounds constitute an academic motivation to pursue his doctoral studies and investigate the actors' SCBs, and the quality of teacher education in Africa as a qualitative case study of the EEC pedagogical reform projects Mbouo-Bandjoun, West-Cameroon.

This reflection on quality teacher education can be an interesting topic for a national scholarly discussion on this domain. Most of the statistics and data available in this domain are obtained from state institutions and schools (Rodriguez, 2009; UNESCO, 2010). The private sector of education and training seems to have received little attention, and, therefore, very little empiric data is available to assess the quality of training and practice in this sector. A survey on the roles and functions of some features of the SCBs of students, teachers, and administrative staff in their everyday life activities could, thus, be significant to both educationists and policymakers in Cameroon and elsewhere. A systematic look at how a pedagogical reform project – a private initiative of the Evangelical Church of Cameroon's school system – is socially constructed by its actors could probably help discuss the challenges this sector faces. The study will, thus, contribute to further discussions of quality teacher education in Africa, especially in Cameroon. Its results may also be interesting for scholars and policymakers of teacher education in other countries.

1.6 Organization of the Book

The book is constructed around three parts entailing twelve chapters. The first part comprises six chapters addressing (1) an empiric introduction of the problem of the study, (2) a conceptual, theoretical, and (3) literature reviews to provide a theoretical framework for the understanding of the problem of the significance of actors' SCBs for the quality teacher education in Came-

roon, Africa. The other three chapters of this part provide contextual backgrounds of understanding (4) the pedagogical and didactical reform principles sustaining the cooperative intercultural (5) pedagogical reform projects developed in the EEC missionary station of Mbouo-Bandjoun and (6) their reception by the actors involved in the projects. The second part describes (7) the methodological framework of the study. It constitutes an empiric analysis of the transcripts of (8) a class conference session in class 4, (9) a group discussion with the teachers about the class conference, (10) a lesson in class 6, and (11) two group interviews with teachers of ER and five college teachers trained at ISPOM-UEC and working in private schools in Bafoussam. The (12) general conclusion of the work discusses the interpretative findings of the study, answering the research questions mentioned above and opening perspectives for further research interests on related topics.

Part 1: Contextual and Theoretical Frameworks of the Concepts of Sociocultural Backgrounds and Quality Teacher Education in Cameroon, Africa

2 Understanding the Concepts of Sociocultural Backgrounds (SCBs) and Quality Teacher Education (QTE) from a Theoretical Perspective of *Bildung* as a Transformative Process, according to and beyond Bourdieu's Theory of Habitus and Capital Forms

This chapter develops a conceptual framework for the present study of sociocultural backgrounds (SCBs) and quality teacher education (QTE) in Africa, focusing on the Cameroonian context of private church education. It seeks to construct theoretical backgrounds to understand the concepts of SCBs and QTE. Moreover, the chapter provides (2.1) backgrounds for the multi-cultural Cameroonian context, sustaining socially constructed sense related to these concepts. It further redefines the role of migration in framing a cultural brace and the role of external invasions with respective cultures in shaping the complex multicultural case of the Cameroonian people. The chapter highlights the Bamiléké society as the sociocultural context of this study. This section ends with an attempt to capitalize on the discussion of the sociocultural complexity context of Cameroon, Africa, for a general understanding of the concepts of SCBs and QTE.

Furthermore, the chapter addresses the understanding of SCBs and QTE from (2.2) the theoretical viewpoint of a *Bildungsprozess*, referring to Koller and Kokemohr to apprehend the transformative processes of *Bildung* as perspectives of change according to and beyond Bourdieu's social concepts of *habitus*, economic, social, and cultural capital. Based on Koller and Kokemohr, this study investigates the possibilities of transformation processes in the EEC pedagogical reform projects in Mbouo-Bandjoun.

The chapter terminates with (2.3) a conceptual perspective of understanding of SCBs and QTE, which unites the difference and analogy implications of Bourdieu's theory of habitus and capitals, Koller and Kokemohr's descriptions and empiric research of processes, defining *Bildung* as transfor-

mations (changes) of “fundamental figures of world self-relations.” It attempts to synthesize these theoretical understandings, associating them to Bohnsack’s methodological terminologies of the frame of orientation and the conjunctive space of experience to understand SCBs and QTE.

2.1 Understanding the Concepts of SCBs and QTE within the Complex Multi-Cultural Context of Cameroon, Africa

2.1.1 The Concept of SCBs in the Philosophy of Education/Teacher Education in Cameroon, Africa

A discourse on the philosophy of education/teacher education in Africa can introduce the problem of SCBs features of teacher education, meaning that it can provide some moral consideration. In this context, the dominant moral philosophy discourse is communitarianism, where the concept of community is central to African (especially Sub-Saharan African) societies. The importance of community as a group dynamic is constructed around the ultimate moral goal of harmonious social life. Therefore, community and harmony are essential to understanding the concept of the SCBs and their significance for a quality teacher education in Cameroon, Africa.

2.1.1.1 A Philosophy of Communitarianism

As in many Sub-Saharan African countries, Cameroon's philosophy of teacher education is most often discussed in terms of its reliance or reference to western philosophy, especially to teacher training orientations. The reason might be the inherited character of western education in this part of the world. Although many scholars, after the independence of Sub-Saharan African countries, engaged in a national discussion on African philosophy, the so-called Africanists (Metz, 2009), the tendency to refer to the western philosophy of education appears to be dominant, or, as Kokemohr (2018, p. 64) called it “westernized education systems,” all the while considering the globalization context of the 21st century (Agbor Eta, E. et al., 2018).

However, many scholars agree that what characterizes the Sub-Saharan African philosophy or moral philosophy is the emphasis on “communal” ends (Metz, 2009, p. 182). The moral philosophy of “a person is a person through other persons” portrays *communitarianism*. Although this moral principle is taken as a foundation for afro-communitarian ethics in the sense of Metz after Tutu, it has already been claimed by Mead (1934) to portray the symbolic

interactionism of human relationships. Mead's statement, "we are what we are because of our relationships to others" (ibid., p. 279), admits this social character of humanness. Besides, the debate on "communitarianism" versus "individualism" seems to be an old discussion that was opposed in the 1900s by Walzer (1983) and Rawls (1971/1999).

The author of this work does not aim to develop further or discuss the essence of this philosophical debate. However, the concept of a communitarian philosophy is crucial when later empirically highlighting the role of the group or the community in a Cameroonian sociocultural context and, therefore, in teacher education. But how did Metz come to such a moral principle of afro-communitarian ethic?

First, the principle: "A person is a person through other persons," portraying community ends, was not Metz's statement, but rather his reconstruction of "afro-communitarianism" based on literature (he mentioned Wiredu, 2004, p. 20) on the African traditional culture (here understood as morals). He named it an afro-communitarian ethic, comparing it to the utilitarian western moral philosophy (Metz, 2013, p. 192). Thus, he recalled some prominent principles that Sub-Saharan theorists construed to highlight the communal relationships portraying identity and solidarity within the afro-communitarian ethics discourse. These include:

- Gbadegesin (1991, p. 65) portrayed community as a social end whereby "every member is expected to consider him/herself an integral part of the whole and play an appropriate role toward achieving the good of all."
- Mokgoro (1998, p. 3) stated: "Harmony is achieved through close and sympathetic social relations within the group."
- Gyekye (2004, p. 16) claimed that "the fundamental meaning of community is sharing of an overall way of life, inspired by the notion of the common good"; and
- Iroegbu (2005, p. 442) thought: "The purpose of our life is community service and community belongingness."

Moreover, Metz encompassed these senses of "community" as a combination of identity, understood as "sharing a way of life" and solidarity, claimed to be "caring for others' quality of life." A combination he assimilated into the "broad sense of friendship or love" (Metz, 2013, p. 196). Might one understand Metz's combination of identity and solidarity as a pragmatic sense of the broad and normative principle: "A person is a person through other persons"? Metz's moral philosophy is more intense elucidation is apparent in what he develops to be an African moral theory (Metz, 2013, p. 194). For him, "a moral theory counts as African insofar as it is informed by beliefs and practices salient among traditional black peoples below the Sahara Desert," which he articulated under the principle that "an act is wrong insofar as it fails to respect communal relationships, those in which we identify with and exhibit solidarity toward others." Metz conceived that "to identify with

each other is, in part, for people to treat themselves as members of the same group, that is, to share a sense of *togetherness* principally by conceiving of themselves as a ‘we’ and taking pride and shame in the group’s behavior” (Metz, 2013, p. 10).

Furthermore, Metz (2013, p. 199) underlined four facets of community from a Sub-Saharan perspective. First, *community* comprises “the idea of people psychologically identifying with one another, by thinking of themselves as a ‘we’ and taking pride or shame in what the ‘we’ does.” Second, community means: “identifying with others practically, participating in joint activities.” Third, it covers the idea of “mutual aid, a relationship in which one helps others, ideally repeatedly over time.” Last, *community* encompasses having “positive attitudes towards others’ good.” In this sense, and according to Biko (2004, p. 46, cited by Metz, 2009, p. 183):

We regard our living together not as an unfortunate mishap warranting endless competition among us but as a deliberate act of God to make us a community of brothers and sisters jointly involved in the quest for a composite answer to the varied problems of life. Hence, in all we do, we always place Man first; all our action is usually joint community-oriented rather than individualism, which is the hallmark of the capitalist approach.

It appears critical that Biko's theoretically inspired normative claim on the dichotomist view of community-oriented action and individual capitalist approaches seem less empirically grounded. Metz and Biko view this afro-communitarian moral theory of promoting communal relationships in contrast to the western, especially the utilitarian, moral theory based on the principles of respect and utility. According to Metz (2013, p. 194), “the most influential Western moral theories are the principle of respect, that an act is wrong insofar as it degrades a person’s autonomy, and the principle of utility, that an act is wrong insofar as it fails to improve people’s quality of life.”

Finally, regarding the above-mentioned moral principle of communitarianism, Metz (2013, p. 96) cited Desmond Tutu (1999, p. 35) to present or “legitimate” this essence of togetherness in Sub-Saharan African philosophy: “Harmony, friendliness, community are great goods. Social harmony is, for us, the *summum bonum* – the greatest good. Anything that subverts or undermines this sought-after good is to be avoided like the plague.” One could understand this strong statement of the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize Winner Tutu as his fight against the Apartheid system in South Africa and his role in conciliating the South African peoples for peaceful cohabitation.

Claiming that social harmony is the *summum bonum* of the South African peoples portrays a political, moral, theological, and humanitarian ideal in this context. Tutu phrased the moral principle of communitarianism (or togetherness) as follows: A person is a person because he recognizes others as persons. Acknowledging (recognizing in Tutu’s term) the humankind of others has been re/formulated otherwise (Metz, 2013) as “identifying to others,”

thus, assimilating Tutu's claim that a person is a person because he recognizes others as persons to the moral principle of a person is a person through other persons. Within this context of South African peoples, the moral of communitarianism is often and widely pointed out in the Ubuntu philosophy/theology, which Tutu (1999, p. 24) himself defined in these terms: "bringing people together is what I call *Ubuntu*, which means 'I am because we are.' Far too often, people think of themselves as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole world. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity".

Many scholars agree that the concepts of person, connectedness, and humanity are central in the Ubuntu philosophy/theology. When investigating what Ubuntu is, Gade (2012, pp. 488-493) described two clusters of the definition of the term in different discourses among the South Africans of African Descent (SAADs). Ubuntu, on the one hand, is "a moral quality of a person" and, on the other hand, "a phenomenon (ethical, philosophical, African humanism) according to which people are interconnected." He also highlighted the inclusion-exclusion nature of ideas on Ubuntu (ibid. pp. 498-500). The inclusion conception of Ubuntu considers it to be "a moral quality" possessed by all persons since all *homo sapiens* are persons; or a "phenomenon according to which persons, understood as *all homo sapiens*, are interconnected" (ibid. p. 498).

The exclusion ideas of Ubuntu, on the contrary, confers "moral quality" and "connectedness" only to some *home sapiens* since not all of them are persons. In the sense of Gade's reflection, the moral quality of a person and the connecting nature of persons somehow exclusively belong to some *homo sapiens*. Gade interpreted the latter as being "dangerous¹⁷" and the former as being positive for reconciliation and peacekeeping within the specific context of post-apartheid South Africa. Below, the author attempts to discuss how dangerous this might also be in educational reform and teacher education development, following a mono-logical orientation of linear education.

2.1.1.2 Social Harmony and Orientation of Teacher Education

First, the author wants to refer to the pragmatic criticism mentioned above regarding Metz's ideal of harmony. Although these positive moral principles constitute ideal characteristics of Sub-Saharan African ethics, their normative character could be subject to a pragmatic social, cultural, and pedagogical discussion. These seem to portray an ideal traditional African society as ho-

17 The inclusion-exclusion characters of social or communal morals seem dangerous to the point that it could lead to tribalism as the case in Cameroon multi-cultural peoples (Mbuyinga Elenga, 1989).

mogeneous by considering social harmony as an ideal end. Considering the complexity of present Sub-Saharan African societies (societies in mutation) and Cameroon in particular, it is worth questioning these traditional normative principles in a teacher/education.

The question is: What does it concretely mean that a person is a person through other persons in a Sub-Saharan (especially Cameroon) teacher/education? In other words: How problematic could the combination of identity and solidarity principles aiming at social harmony be? How do they organize power relationships and inclusion-exclusion processes characterizing the educational actors' sociocultural backgrounds? How could this advance or hinder the innovation or quality of an education/teacher education? Metz (2013, p. 200) reflected on work-based education endeavors and how they fit afro-communitarian educational ideals. His argument is that:

given *characteristic forms* of school-based and work-based learning, the latter is much more likely to promote virtue, conceived in afro-communal terms, than the former. One is likely to be friendlier while on the job than in the classroom.

What he meant by characteristic forms mainly refers to the contexts of the two forms of learning. School-based learning is formal or institutional, professional, written, has standard curricula, is theory-based knowledge, and is oriented toward degrees/certificates for competing in the labor market (ibid. p. 193). Work-based learning, however, is practical and informal, characterized by mutual aid and positive attitudes towards others. As such, "it includes part of what afro-communitarian ethic prizes" more than a classroom does. But how significant is Metz's claim that "one is more likely to be friendlier while on the job than in the classroom" (ibid, see above citation), considering the complexity of an actual workplace (factory, public services) displaying competitiveness and jealousy among the workers and exploitation, marginalization, and precarization of the working class (see Eribon, 2009)?

In Cameroon, and especially within the Bamiléké culture, it is often common to hear people say "on colle ensemble" (we stick together) to portray their community-based culture of a self-world-conception (Kokemohr, 1999b). This cultural context underlines what is referred to as the solidarity of the members of a group or a society. Among other common-sense utterances accounting for solidarity, one might hear within communities is saying goodbye at the end of a conversation. Although they say goodbye, the protagonists often say "on est ensemble" (we are together). It appears difficult to translate the term "on" (French) into "we" or "one" (English), as will be discussed in another part of this work, because of its diffuse and vague character (Kokemohr, 1999b). The indefinite pronoun "on" often occurs in utterances expressing a certain community relationship orientation in everyday communication (ibid.). Rather, it depicts a transcendental concept of togetherness that symbolizes more than the physical identities of members of a

group or a society. It is a *summum bonum*, a homogenous conception of community, which might complement Tutu's idea of social harmony as the "greatest good."

In this view, Tutu's (1999) conclusive statement: "Anything that subverts or undermines this sought-after good is to be avoided like the plague" (p.35), seems to portray the inclusion-exclusion nature of mono-logical statements. Since "they are constructed by excluding the semantic-pragmatic backgrounds to which they are related" (Kokemohr, 2018, p. 57), distinguishing closed systems to open systems of thought. This may portray an exclusion of some members of the group who somehow do not seem to "stick together" within this specific context of the Bamiléké culture and possibly within the general political and social context of Cameroon (today), where public order seems synonymous to social harmony (*summum bonum*).

In Tutu's words, the ideas of subversion and impairment are to be avoided like a "plague." In other words: diversity and contradictory perspectives are not welcome. For, the mono-logical system of knowledge, as Kokemohr (ibid., p. 57) portrayed it, "tends not only to cut off semiotic elements of diversity but [it also tends] to exclude people of deviant behavior." It appears dangerous "because, if it is the dominant discourse of a group or a society, it weakens the dynamic potential of facing unknown challenges" (ibid., p. 72).

The exclusion character of Tutu's idea of social harmony relies on the metaphor of a "plague," taking after a religious image of "malediction," interpreting a catastrophic medical image of a rapidly contaminating disease (today, one might consider the pandemic of Covid-19). If educational goals are mainly summarized (maybe solely) in this pursuit of social harmony in the sense of a monological system of orientation, it might be dangerous because it might lead to the reinforcement of an actual persisting teacher-centered education. The teacher might then conceive themselves or their job as the agent of "anti-subversion," of "anti-undermining" attempts from the learners to use the diversity of their potentials to construct relationships for themselves and the world. So how does this communal philosophy reflect higher education ends in Sub-Saharan Africa?

The orientation of higher education in Africa, as normatively discussed by Metz (2009, pp. 185-187), covers ends of "foster[ing] development," "support[ing] culture," "rectify[ing] injustice," "promot[ing] personhood," and "realiz[ing] the majority's aspirations." Although Metz (2009) tried to describe each, they remain pragmatically abstract. So how do these normative goals meet the university reality in Africa and Cameroon? Fonkoua (2005, p. 111) put his arguments in the following terms:

Teacher training must no longer be based on the logic of established knowledge, the assimilation of which makes it possible to achieve a type of behavior that induces and instills a given attitude in the learner. The main and new idea is using

the competency-based approach in the design and practice of education and training (own translation).

If this seems to be the philosophical and pedagogical orientation of the Cameroon teacher education, one may then ask to what extent this is specific and relevant to an African or a Cameroonian culture and society. How does Cameroon come to this “main and new idea” of teacher education? Which sociocultural considerations underline these orientations and this main and new idea of a competency-based approach in the design and practice of education and training? In other words: How do these orientations reflect or might reflect the complex SCBs contexts of Cameroon?

2.1.1.3 Complex SCBs Contexts of Cameroon

Like most African countries (especially Sub-Saharan Africa), Cameroon entails complex sociocultural contexts. Although a certain communal sociocultural orientation is generally depicted as a community-oriented life organization, sociocultural diversity, ethnic multiplicity, and subsequent linguistic heterogeneity make it difficult to speak of cultural and social hegemony.¹⁸ As mentioned above by Metz, the problem of communitarianism (as a homogenous feature of the SCBs in Sub-Saharan Africa) appears to be more complex when looked at from an educational angle concerning teacher education. How significant are Cameroon’s multi-ethnic and multi-cultural realities for the practice of an appropriate quality education?

In chapter 3, aspects of this question are discussed, namely those concerning harmonization endeavors of the bicultural educational system in Cameroon. This section, therefore, provides a preliminary conceptual discussion of the broad and diffuse concept of the sociocultural background. The problem of multi-culturalism and its impacts on the discourse of a quality teacher education could be an aspect of such a preliminary discussion.

2.1.1.4 Cameroon: A Multi-Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Country, Nation

Cameroon is a country situated in central Africa. It consists of a fascinating mixture of cultures, landscapes, and biodiversity, causing it to earn the appellation “little Africa” (Tanang et al., 2014, p. 2; 2013, p. 13). The sociocultural diversity of Cameroonian societies entails ethnic multiplicity and linguistic heterogeneity. This reality is construed by internal migration due to ethnic

18 Here, a social and cultural hegemony in terms of a standardized cultural and social identity or perception, like it is the case in most European, Asian or North American countries, is meant, although the social and cultural realities in each of these countries appear as complex as in African countries.

conflicts and external sociocultural influences of its encounter with Muslim and Christian cultures throughout the history of Cameroon. The internal migration of populations is a frame for an ethnic multiplication and a cultural brace in Cameroon. During slavery and Muslim raids in the 18th and 19th centuries, populations were spread across Africa, being pushed from the North to the southern equatorial parts of the continent. The continental migration movements induced the formation of major ethnic groups comprising the Sudano-Sahelian and the Bantu peoples in Cameroon. The internal migration effect contributed to the multiplication of hundreds of sub-groups, constituted by family division and internal power struggles, making defeated princes or leaders move to another area and form their kingdoms (see also Pradelles de Latour, 1997 who highlighted internal causes of the movement of the Bamileké Folk overall the Cameroonian territory).

This multiplication effect applies to the ethnic tribal diversification of populations in the northern, the southern, and the western regions of the country, contributing to the linguistic and cultural diversities (see also Tanang et al., 2013, pp. 13-15). For instance, within the grand group Bamileké,¹⁹ there are many ethnic tribal groups, such as the Bandjoun, the Bangwa, the Bangante, the Mbouda, the Bayangam, and the Bafoussam, just to name a few. Therefore, continental migrations and internal movements of populations have contributed to the formation of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversities in Africa, especially in Cameroon. This makes it difficult to speak of either the Cameroonian “culture,” the Cameroonian “society,” or the Cameroonian “language” as a homogeneous sociocultural identity. It is preferable to speak of the Cameroonian cultures, Cameroonian societies, Cameroonian languages, and Cameroonian systems. One might generalize that all is plural in Cameroon.

This plurality further applies to Cameroon’s historical experiences of encounters with external imperial and religious cultures and socialities. The country has experienced both complex colonial encounters (ibid., pp. 13-15) and religious influences, consisting of three colonial dominations: the German occupation (1884-1919), the French and the English occupations during the mandate of the Societies of Nations (SN) after the First World War (1919-1960-61), and the Muslim invasion of the “Grand”-North in the era of Ousmane dan Fodio (Betché, 2018, pp. 30-33). These were also influenced by two religious and cultural systems, namely Islam (with the Fulbé and Muslim cultures) and Christianity (with western cultures), developing respectively Islamic Coran school and Western (European) modern education systems.

19 This is mentioned here because of the sociocultural context of the reform project’s goal of this investigation. The same multiplication effect applies to the grand groups in the North, the South, the East, the North-West, the South-West and the coastline of the country.

These multiple colonial and religious experiences have, therefore, influenced educational orientations²⁰. The sociocultural/linguistic diversity and its educational correlations have backgrounds for sociocultural-political misunderstandings (leading to current open conflicts) and the national cultural heritage. According to Inglis (1996, p. 17), “multiculturalism is an enrichment for the society as a whole.” Tanang et al. (2013, p. 10) claimed that “in Cameroon, languages are unquestionably the most immediate manifestation of cultural diversity understood here as the expression of human creativity and the sum of the peoples' collective experiences” (own translation from the French text). In the perspective of national unity, the constitution of Cameroon of 1996, in its first article, sub (3), states: “The Official languages of the Republic of Cameroon shall be English and French, both languages having the same status. The State shall guarantee the promotion of bilingualism throughout the country. It shall endeavor to protect and promote national languages”.

Based on this fundamental law, the President of the Republic set a decree²¹ creating the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (NCPBM) with the mission of “promoting bilingualism and multiculturalism in Cameroon to maintain peace, consolidation of the country’s national unity and strengthening its people’s willingness and day to day experience for living together.” Even though the state addresses sociocultural and linguistic diversity issues, the political diversity culture remains challenging, considering the current political tensions²² resulting from antagonistic political interpretations of sociocultural diversity.

Although the Bamiléké is generally spoken of as a sociocultural identity, the reality appears to be more complex because this ethnic depiction is cosmopolitan and displays sociocultural diversities.

2.1.1.5 SCBs to the Bamiléké People and the Problem of its Significance for QTE within the EEC Educational Projects in Mbouo

Foaleng (2005, p. 55) reviewed the name Bamiléké, commonly used as an ethnic depiction. He claimed: “The term was a colonial administrative term, which has emerged as a term for an ‘ethnic’ identity and has gradually been

20 Two systems of education established after the French and British educational systems. These are thoroughly discussed in chapter 3 below.

21 DECREE N° 2017/013 of January 23, to lay down the establishment, organization and functioning of the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multi-Culturalism.

22 The author refers principally to the current socio-political crisis in the English-speaking regions and to overall sociocultural tensions sustained by the tribalistic political discourse in Cameroon.