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UNITE DE RECHERCHE ET DE
FORMATION DOCTORALE EN
SCIENCES HUMAINES, SOCIALES ET
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DEPARTEMENT D'ANTHROPOLOGIE

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF
MULTICULTURALISM IN YAOUNDE, CAMEROON.

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Award of a
Doctorate/PhD in Anthropology

Specialization: Anthropology of Development

By

SHARILA SHUKA BALON

Master's in Anthropology

Supervised by

Antoine SOCPA

Professor

Department of Anthropology



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To my husband, BERKA Dzekem, my kid sister, Mary LOLIKA BALON and my children;
Fonyuy BERKA DZEKEM, Bongkong BERKA, Sheri BERKA, BERKA Len, YUFOMO
Therese-Bright and Faour VILAMI.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is based on association lifestyle and its influence on living together titled: *Community association within the framework of multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area*. The central research question is: What role does the expansion of community association play on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area? Specific questions include: What are the types, and practices of community associations in Yaoundé urban area? How does membership and organization of community associations influence their socio-cultural activities vis-à-vis multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area? What are the effects of the expansion of intra-community associations and their increasing practice of socio-cultural activities on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area? The above questions led to the general research hypothesis. Community associations play an enhancing/diminishing role on multiculturalism. Association life influences interaction, networking and belonging, creating an impact on people's attitudes and behaviour which further enhance or injure living together. The central objective examines the role of community associations on multiculturalism in Yaoundé.

To understand this phenomenon, a mixed research method (quantitative and qualitative) was employed. Tools used to collect information were respectively questionnaires, interview guide, focus group discussions, community group discussions and passive observation. Documents (both published and unpublished) from libraries and the internet were consulted for secondary data collection. These sources allowed us to harness the ideas of other authors concerning our topic and related themes. We used interactionism and functionalism for research analysis. With regards to functionalism, we used the manifest and latent concepts to explain our field results. Major themes include community association and multiculturalism which were divided into sub-topics.

This thesis reveals that as a cultural practice, community associations through membership and socio-cultural activities are collective and symbolic. They can be learned, shared, as well transmitted from one generation to another. Intercommunity associations recruit members from diverse communities for different reasons. Through enculturation, intercommunity association facilitates cross-cultural interaction, socialization networking and multiculturalism. Intra-community on the other hand recruits individuals based on common community for mutual aid, community development and cultural sustainability. Through intra-group interaction, integration, socialization and networking, people are acculturated to enhance group cohesion and endogenous culture. Hence intercommunity associations promote multiculturalism while intra-community associations do not. However, the third hypothetical assumption was proven wrong because socio-cultural events and longevity of intra-community associations bring together members of diverse communities and encourage multiculturalism.

Key words: community association, multiculturalism, intra-community association, intercommunity association, membership and socio-cultural activities, Yaoundé urban area.

RESUME

Cette thèse focalise sur le mode de vie associatif et son influence sur le multiculturalisme avec pour titre : « *Les associations communautaires dans le cadre du multiculturalisme dans la zone urbaine de Yaoundé.* » La question centrale de recherche est : Quel rôle l'expansion de l'association communautaire joue sur le multiculturalisme dans la zone urbaine de Yaoundé? Les questions spécifiques incluent : Quels sont les types et les pratiques socioculturelles des associations communautaires? Comment l'adhésion et l'organisation des associations communautaires influencent-elles leurs activités socioculturelles vis-à-vis du multiculturalisme dans la zone urbaine de Yaoundé? Quels sont les effets de l'expansion des associations intracommunautaires et de leur pratique croissante des activités socioculturelles sur le multiculturalisme dans la zone urbaine de Yaoundé ? Les questions ci-dessus nous ont guidés vers l'hypothèse générale de recherche. L'association communautaire par le biais de "adhésion et des activités socioculturelles" joue un rôle positif/négatif sur le multiculturalisme. La vie associative influence l'interaction, le réseautage et l'appartenance, créant un impact sur les attitudes et les comportements des gens envers le vivre ensemble. L'objectif central examine le rôle des associations communautaires sur le multiculturalisme dans Yaoundé.

Pour comprendre ce phénomène, une approche méthodologique mixte (quantitative et qualitative) a été employée. Respectivement, les outils utilisés ont été des questionnaires, un guide d'entretien, des discussions de groupe et de groupe communautaire, l'observation passive, pour recueillir des informations. Des documents (publiés et non publiés) et Internet ont été consultés pour la collecte de données secondaires. Ces sources nous ont permis d'exploiter les idées d'autres auteurs sur notre sujet et questions connexes. Nous avons utilisé l'interactionnisme symbolique et le fonctionnalisme pour les analyses de données. En ce qui concerne le fonctionnalisme, nous avons utilisé les concepts manifeste et latent pour expliquer nos résultats de terrain. Les principaux thèmes comprennent l'association communautaire et le multiculturalisme, qui ont été divisés en sous-thèmes.

Ce travail révèle que les activités socioculturelles des associations communautaires en tant que pratique culturelle sont symboliques, collectives, peut être apprises, partagées, et peuvent être transmises d'une génération à l'autre. Les associations intercommunautaires recrutent des membres issus de diverses communautés pour diverses raisons. Grâce à des installations d'activités socioculturelles, il facilite l'interaction interculturelle, le réseautage de socialisation et le multiculturalisme. L'association intra-communautaire d'autre part recrute des individus basés sur la communauté commune pour l'entraide, le développement communautaire et la durabilité culturelle. Grâce à l'interaction intra-groupe, l'intégration, la socialisation et le réseautage, les gens sont acculturés pour améliorer la cohésion du groupe et la culture intra-communautaire. Par conséquent, les associations intercommunautaires promeuvent le multiculturalisme alors que les associations intracommunautaires ne le font pas. Cependant, la troisième hypothèse hypothétique s'est avérée fautive puisque par le biais d'événements socioculturels et la longévité, les associations intracommunautaires rassemblent des membres de diverses communautés et encouragent le multiculturalisme.

Mots clés: association communautaire, association intracommunautaire, association intercommunautaire, adhésion et activités socioculturelles, zone urbaine de Yaoundé.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABADCAM	Association des Bibliothecaires, Archivistes, Documentalistes, et Muséographes Du Cameroun
AFEBIK	Association des Femmes Bikok
APOPET	Association Pon Petut
ASBAM	Association des Bassa de Mbankolo
CAR	Central African Republic
ENELCAM	Entreprise Electrique au Cameroun
ENEO	Energy of Cameroon
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations
IFORD	Institut de Formation et de Recherche Démographique
ILO	International Library Organization
MECDA	Manyu Cultural and Development Association
MINATD	Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et de la Décentralisation
MINCULTURE	Ministère de la Culture
MINSEC	Ministry of Secondary Education
MURABELT	Mutuelle des Ressortissants Bassa-Mpo'o-Bati du Littoral
NSOBA'TI	Nso Cultural and Development Association
SONEL	Société Nationale d'Electricité
SWELA	Southwest Elites Association
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

LIST OF INITIALS

AAA	American Anthropological Association
ACHPR	African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights
ACHPR	African Union, and African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights
ACHPR	African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights
AEO	Africa Economic Outlook
AJRGNC	Association des Jeunes Ressortissants du Grand Nord, du Cameroun
ATR	African Traditional Religion
ATR	African Traditional religion
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BMD	Bachelors-Masters-Doctorate
BSLA	Building Strong Library Association
BSLA	Building Strong Library Association
CA	Community Association
CA	Community Association
CGD	Community Group Discussion
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CNIC	Chantier Naval et Industriel du Cameroun
CPE	Cameroon Pidgin English
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
EDC	Electricité du Cameroun
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSLC	First School Leaving Certificate
GBHS	Government Bilingual High School
GCE	General Certificate of Education
HTA	Hometown Association
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
NCPBM	National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

OALD	Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary
OAU	Organization of African Union
PPAA	Professional, Practicing, and Applied anthropologists
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SS	Sensory substitution
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNO	United Nations Organization
UPC	Union des Populations du Cameroun
USA	United States of America

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INTRODUCTION

This part of the thesis introduces the work with the justification of the research, scope of the research, the problems encountered during the research and the structure of the work.

Association life is a cultural practice that has been on the rise in most urban areas of Cameroon, especially as seen in Yaoundé. It is used to articulate socio-cultural heritage of Cameroonian ethnic communities. Cultural heritage preservation has been strongly defended by most international bodies especially the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Prior to 1960 Cameroon was under a multiparty system with several community associations aimed at developing the nation economically, politically and socio-culturally. Mokam (2006: xii), says: “*in Cameroon, from 1945 to 1961, there were many types of regional associations that globally had the following aims: preservation of traditions, promotion of solidarity, brotherhood and local development.*” According to Livret de Campagne Mouvement Interreligieux pour la Paix et le Développement Holistique (2019: 8), “*le Ngondo des Douala, le Kumze des Bamileke et l’Union Bantou des Bulu*” limpidly translated in English as ‘*Ngondo of Douala, Kumze of Bamileke and Union Bantou of Bulu typify associations that existed then.*’ Post-1960 saw a synthesis of associations and a mono-party culture led by the political party; Union of the Population of Cameroon (in French: Union des Populations du Cameroun - UPC). Monopartism was aimed at fostering national unity and cohesion amid diversity.

Due to liberalization pressure across the African continent, post-1982 brought another wave of party politics encouraging political freedom and association life. All of these were aimed at fostering living together and Cameroon wasn’t indifferent as it solemnized association life in 1990 following presidential decree – Law No. 90/53 of 19 December 1990 relating to freedom of associations. This led to an expansion of associations such as economic, artistic and cultural, socio-cultural, foreign, sports, religious, political and de facto associations in Cameroon.

Culturally diverse, Cameroon is largely categorized into three linguistic communities: the Bantu-speaking peoples of the south, the Sudanic-speaking peoples of the North, and the Semi-Bantu speaking in the west. Language use amid other cultural facets directly or indirectly shapes the way Cameroonians interact, perceive and interpret one another. Rural to urban migration often result in culture contact and consequences. Social conflict, stale relationships and disintegration

are some of consequences. Yaoundé is an urban area with a plethora of communities whose daily interactions shape attitudes and behaviour in ways that advance or mar multiculturalism.

Cameroon's socio-cultural especially linguistic diversity, potent with advantages both to individuals and communities has rather been a source of social conflicts seen in the use of hate speech and stereotypes (Delancey, 1973; Fonchingong, 2006; Geschiere, 1993; Geschiere, 2007; Kah, 2009; Konings, 2004; Konings, 2008; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2019; Anchimbe, 2011; Monga, 2000; Nyamnjoh, 1999; Nyamnjoh, 2010; Nyamnjoh, 2015; Oyono, 2010; Konings, 2009; Sala, 2014; Socpa, 2006; Yenshu Vubo, 2006), among others resulting to socio-cultural conflict and division among communities. Recognizing the above, Livret de Campagne Mouvement Interreligieux pour la Paix et le Développement Holistique (2019) argues that disharmony in Yaoundé in relation to socio-cultural diversity results from stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. Socpa (2016), confirms that: *"In Cameroon as elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s, the re-institution of multi-party politics gave renewed impetus to the antagonism between so-called "autochthons" and "allochthons", and led to an awakening of ethnic stereotypes...resulted in flexible and violent social conflict"* (Socpa, 2016: Abstract). Local Youth Corner Cameroon (2019), argues that stereotypes are the lead causes of social conflicts and intolerance in Cameroon as seen in the use of words such as "anglofou", "franco frog", and "cam no go", to vilify individuals and communities especially in Yaoundé. The author equally mentions "one cube of sugar" phrase used by Cameroon's Minister of Higher Education at a high-level forum – in Yaoundé – in 2016. It is considered to have incited Anglophone public opinion leading to a spiraling of the 2016 crisis and stalling development. Rustard, Plik and Methi (2019:7), confirm that 2019 registered 25 state-based conflicts in Africa with Cameroon featuring in the list. Consequently, Cameroon's cultural diversity can be considered endangered.

Pursuant to UNESCO's 33rd session in October 2005 in Paris on the protection and promotion of cultural diversity, encouraging dialogue to ensure wider and balanced cultural exchanges which are pivotal in this work, Decree No 2017/013 of 23 January 2017 to lay down the establishment, organization and functioning of the National Commission on the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (NCPBM) was instituted in Cameroon. Also, the advent of 1990 Law on Freedom of Association, the fore-mentioned issues and constant urbanization in Yaoundé provoke community members to create associations as spaces where they can feel a sense

of belonging. In the same strength of reasoning, association life is not new in Africa, Cameroon especially urban areas as seen in the role it plays in its political, economic and socio-cultural development. Nevertheless, living together presents a tool for development in urban areas. Associations facilitate the creation of intra- and inter-community relationships through belonging, socialization, interaction and networking.

This thesis investigates the practice of association life, especially intra-community association and its influence on multiculturalism in Yaoundé aside cultural sustainability, mutual assistance and intra-community(endogenous) development. The peculiarity of intra-community association is the homogenous nature (common community) members and sustainability of cultural identity, seen as one of the tenets of multiculturalism. Relative to the fore, self-help and village-centric development (Che and Mbah, 2021), intra-community associations advance collective lifestyle among members. This is observed through socio-cultural and economic activities such as mutual assistance – financial, moral, material and cultural – during events and cultural festivals, community development projects as well as incorporating tradition, customs and norms as seen during meetings, marriages, childbirths, religious activities, mourning, sickness and other forms of solidarity. These socio-cultural and economic aspects of associations in Yaoundé can impact living together. For example, it is perceived that through mutual assistance and community-centric development, intra-community associations enhance intra-community cohesion; hence encouraging monoculturalism against the backdrop of multiculturalism as opposed to intercommunity associations whose membership is heterocultural. Notwithstanding, community associations practice has proven to be beneficial in many ways.

Ethno-regional associations are very significant to Africa's ordinary people (Konings, 2009). They are a form of community associations that have been a survival mechanism for many – economically, psychologically, socially and culturally. Intra-community associations create spaces where most Cameroonian community members express their cultural heritage – tradition, norms, values, rites, through dance, marriage, “*bornhouse*”, food and eating habits, dressing style, folklore and music. Examples of these associations are: Association de Mvog Essom Ndana from the Beti community, Nso Cultural and Development Association (NSODA) from Nso, Famille Batela from Bamileke, Manyu Cultural and Development Association (MECDA) from Manyu, Association Pon Petut (APOPET) from Bamum and Association des Jeunes Ressortissant de Nord

(AJRN) from the North. With the fore, this work is out to examine how associations influences multiculturalism in Yaoundé. A justification of the need for this study is necessary.

I- RESEARCH JUSTIFICATION

The reasons for the choice of topic are both personal and scientific.

I.1 Personal Justification

From a personal perspective, this topic was settled upon due to several reasons. Personal experience in Yaoundé as an urban inhabitant is one of the reasons that motivated this choice. Living in this urban space for at least nine (9) years, led to a discovery that people from diverse communities and socio-cultural backgrounds cohabit this urban space. These inhabitants have different ways of perceiving and doing things, hence culturally diverse. Worth noting is the fact that these inhabitants ‘belong’ to one form of community association (CA) or the other. Two types of community associations are distinguished: intra-community and intercommunity associations.

It was realized that during weekends, Yaoundé dwellers leave their homes at given hours to meet in halls, public places (church premises, football fields and school yards) or personal houses. Members unite and engage in the management of socio-cultural and economic issues through activities such as enrolment of members, fundraising – sinking fund, savings, thrift and loan, and organization and execution of events. Via the above mentioned, associations promote socialization, networking, bonding and psycho-social security with potentials to impact multiculturalism.

An important trait of these associations and their role on multiculturalism is membership – a determinant factor for belonging. Intra-community associations enroll members from common community – “ethnic/tribal” – as opposed to intercommunity associations which defy “ethnic/tribal” frontiers to recruit culturally. Membership influences differentiation between ‘own’ and non-community members, belonging and social connectivity. Hence community associations play a role on multiculturalism. Observing this situation plus the national integration policy of unity and development, many questions pop up: Why do people unite and create associations according to communities? How are these meetings created? Who are those that

belong to the meetings? What are the prerequisites for membership? What activities do they practice? Why do they engage in such activities? What are the benefits of belonging? What keeps these people connected/disconnected within and beyond these gatherings? How does community association influence multiculturalism? With this, an anthropological resolve was arrived at – to study community associations and multiculturalism in Yaoundé as a point of interest.

I.2 Scientific Justification

Enormous scientific literature exists on community associations, especially regarding social, economic and cultural development of individuals and communities. Orozco & Garcia-Zanello define Hometown Associations (HTAs) otherwise called intra-community associations as: “*organizations formed by migrants living in the same community and sharing a common nationality*” (2000:57). These associations regroup individuals based on valued socio-cultural norms and values. These associations largely influence belonging and social connectivity/network life patterns of members. Extensive work by some authors in this area of study is seen below.

From a socio-historical perspective, W. Nkwi (2006) in a work titled: “*Elites, Ethno-Regional Competition in Cameroon, and the Southwest Elites Association (SWELA), 1991-1997*” studies how Southwest Elites Association (SWELA) and its historical antecedent fit into ethno-regional politics and the invention of ethnicity in Cameroon. This author argues that post 1990, there was a proliferation of ethnic construction by ethnic elites in most African countries south of the Sahara, Cameroon inclusive. The reasons for this expansion of ethnicization were manifold including efforts made by authoritarian regimes to retain power and ethno-regional elites gaining access to the state and its resources. Accordingly, in the early 1990s in Cameroon, multiparty politics helped create and shape elite associations along ethnic lines. The study also shows how the government used SWELA and SWELA in turn used the government to achieve their aims. Regarding the role played by associations towards multiculturalism, this study is limited.

Page, Evans, & Mercer (2010), in an article titled: “*Revisiting the Politics of Belonging in Cameroon*”, studied hometown associations in Cameroon and realized that some of the statements about home, belonging and politics are difficult to align with existing and obscure realities. The article was aimed at interrupting universal opinions on questions of belonging and claims of political segmentation. In a bid to explore this dilemma the article uncovers a land dispute in Bali

Nyonga, in the North West region of Cameroon and reveals how ideas of belonging remain central to the practice of politics, how the politics of belonging has changed over time, and how these organizations foreground forms of cooperation and the achievements of local solidarity. In like manner, Nagle (2009) posits that: “...*ethnic social movement tries to ethnically recruit new members, especially people who are interested in experiencing the cultures and sense of community*” (Nagle, 2009:5). Notwithstanding, there exist two categories of community associations – intercommunity and intra-community associations. Intercommunity associations regroup members from different communities (Monju: 2019), while intra-community associations unite people from common ethnic community of origin. The gap this work is interested in filling is the role community association plays on multiculturalism in urban areas of Cameroon – Yaoundé.

The above authors have variably worked on community associations of one nature or another with insights on the economic, political and social aspects. There are equally studies on the socio-cultural features of these associations but little lurks on intra-community associations and their role on multiculturalism as seen in Yaoundé. Considering efforts made by the national and international communities towards this resolve, for instance Cameroon’s 1990 Law on liberalization of association lifestyle and the National Commission for Bilingualism and Multiculturalism/living together is still an impasse in most urban areas. This work finds interest in contributing to science in this area. Hence Yaoundé urban area generally and intra-community associations particularly were studied. Several associations from eight ‘ethnic’ communities in Yaoundé to wit: Beti, Bassa, Bayang, Douala, Nso, Bamileke, Bamum, and Northerners, representing the three linguistic divides of Cameroon, their association culture, socio-demographic information, structural organization, membership and their socio-cultural activities were examined. Challenges of living together in Yaoundé, especially with respect to stereotyping and hate speech are seen as lead causes of socio-cultural conflicts and reduced living together. The quintessence of this dissertation in the domain of Development Anthropology is the use of the interactionist and structural-functionalist theories to explain how community associations especially intra-community associations influence multiculturalism in Yaoundé. The next point of interest is the scope of the thesis.

II- SCOPE OF THE WORK

In social sciences especially in anthropology, numerous research works have been discriminately done on multiculturalism and associations. However, little lurks around the field of anthropology – development anthropology. Development anthropology finds interest in providing detailed analysis and interpretation of qualitative information necessary for innovation. It suggests the involvement of local communities in any research and decision-making process that affects them from inception to completion, explaining the socio-cultural significance of such involvement. This does not however negate the importance of quantitative data collection in substantiating qualitative procedures. In this regard, this study intends to look at the role of socio-cultural aspects of associations of the Nso, Beti, Bassa, Bayang, Bamum, Bamileke and the Northerner's communities concerning multiculturalism in Yaoundé. In the same manner, literary work was done on chosen communities to enrich our ethnographic and bibliographic knowledge. With this, fieldwork was carried out among cultural associations of the above-mentioned communities in Yaoundé. Consequently, to grasp an all-inclusive knowledge of the phenomenon under study, an in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural perspectives of community associations and the role they play in enhancing multiculturalism in Yaoundé is imperative.

However, the inclusion/exclusion criterion of informants for this work is centered on belonging to a community association from the chosen communities. As far as community associations are concerned, socio-cultural paradigms that affect harmonious coexistence within Yaoundé urban area are sourced. With regards to community associations, this research is approached based on the socio-cultural issues that affect multiculturalism in the city of Yaoundé. This exercise wasn't completed without hurdles.

III- DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

Many challenges were faced during this work. Firstly, works on this topic in the field of anthropology mostly handled intercommunity associations while limited work exists on intra-community associations from the point of view of living together in Yaoundé.

Secondly, sampling, study size, and research instruments were a big challenge. During sampling, difficulties arose upon deciding which communities and associations to sample and study.

Thirdly, carrying out this study in our community of origin posed problems with familiarity and pre-notion. We had to detach ourselves from these notions to be able to carry out the research. In same regard, we were confronted with questions of sensitivity screening.

Furthermore, with regards to research instruments for data collection, ascertaining that questionnaires were answered was extremely difficult as informants took the questionnaires and kept for long before returning. To resolve this issue, several associations were visited and explanations made on how to answer the questionnaires which were collected at the end of most meeting.

Most importantly, the determined data collection period which was to run through 2020 was ruptured due to COVID outbreak. This is justifiable by the fact that during the pandemic associations stopped organizing assemblies to respect barrier measures and the CORONA scare. Even with the upliftment of security measures, some associations at the time of fieldwork hadn't started holding meetings. Meanwhile those that organized meetings were very strict concerning reception of non-members. This drastically decelerated and affected data collection and the entire process. An outline of the thesis is given hereafter.

IV-STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis comprises seven chapters, preceded by a general introduction and ends with a general conclusion.

The introductory part gives a summary of this work. It starts with an introduction, brings out justification, difficulties and structure of this dissertating.

Chapter One handles the background of the study. It establishes the research the context, research problem, research question, research hypothesis, research objectives, significance, sampling, research methodology, ethical consideration of the research, data analysis and the definition of concepts of the research.

Chapter Two covers the monograph and major communities settled in Yaoundé.

Chapter Three handles literature review and theoretical framework. The chapter presents literature on multiculturalism, its meaning, history, theories and characteristics. It briefly reviews literature on culture especially its characteristics. The section wraps up with aspects of community association such as socio-cultural activities and impact on multiculturalism. The second section presents theories of interactionism and functionalism used to analyze data in this work.

Chapter Four presents fieldwork data on intra-community association and multiculturalism in Yaoundé. The ethnography of intra-community associations entails the socio-demographic composition of participants, types, socio-cultural activities and their influence on multiculturalism. These features are organized under three main headings: socio-demographic composition, types of intra-community association, socio-cultural practices of community associations and several sub-headings.

Chapter Five focuses on membership and structural organization of members within intra-community associations in Yaoundé. It equally presents some observed associations.

Chapter Six is presented under two main headings: associations as pathways of multiculturalism and sources of disintegration in Yaoundé. The aim is to bring out intercommunity associations considered pathways of multiculturalism. In the second part we are examining factors that act as buffers to living together between diverse communities in Yaoundé.

Chapter Seven is based on the anthropological analysis of intra-community association with respect influence on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area. The thesis wraps up with a conclusion, sources of information, bibliography, annexes and table of content.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Chapter One deals with the thesis background. Specifically, it elaborates the research context, research problem, research questions, research hypotheses, research objectives, significance, sampling, research methodology, ethical considerations, data analysis and the definition of concepts of the research.

1.1 RESEARCH CONTEXT

Community associations (CA) is a major feature of urban culture worldwide. Community associations at the international level are alternatively known as “Hometown Associations” (Orozco, 2003; Caglar, 2006; Page, 2007; Evans, 2010; Orozco & Rouse, 2013). Intra-community associations are variably called “*njangi/tontin*” in Cameroon, “*stokvels*” in South Africa, “*Isusu*” in Nigeria, “*Susu*” in Ghana, and “*KO*” in Japan (Ademola *et al.*, 2020). Nyamnjoh (1998:322) edifies that “...*the Lions clubs, school and college associations, church groups and other fund-raising organizations are a longstanding feature of urban life.*” These exemplify intercommunity associations. The idea of “belonging” in urban spaces especially as seen in community association is determined by membership. Membership classifies them into intra-community associations and intercommunity. The later recruit members cross-culturally while the former integrates individuals from common community. Their activities influence the integrative behavior of members. They enhance socialization, networking and understanding among member, which are determinants for the promotion of living together. Hence, enhancing multiculturalism through belonging is a world concern. Asserting this, Norton, explains that “*enabling diverse positive interactions build belonging and cohesion*” (Norton, 2012:9). Thus, as a collective culture significant to Anthropology, community association offers grounds for people in their daily lives to bond and build networks that can enable among others, integration and cohesion. In a multicultural discourse, Modood (2011), underscores noticeable inter-racial and inter-ethnic mixing in cities such as London, emphasizing that they improved links between community and national identities. Hence association life is an urban culture that can meet diverse needs.

Association activities can lead to the achievement of social needs, and this plays a basic role in attitudes. Through association lifestyle, people could be moved to socialize, network and integrate. This, tallies with Maslow’s (1908 – 1970) hierarchy of needs. The third –

social/belonging – need in his 1943 paper titled: “*A Theory of Human Motivation*” explains, explains that belonging can create a favorable environment where people interact to attain social needs. This confirms the fact that association life influences relationships since social interaction impacts human development. Hence socio-cultural relationships influence human behavior, especially as seen in associations. Community associations could be family, friends, and community such as religious, professional and ethnic (McDonald, 2010). Terazas, Durana and Somerville (2008) hold that community associations are formed based on professions, ethnic affiliations or a common hometown for social relation and mutual aid. Since the importance of community association was originally for self-help and community development, it inspired many organizations – national and international – to recognize the importance of a bottom-up development culture.

Internationally, the foundation of Associations and Clubs are groups of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which is an organ of the United Nations, and inspired by the Preamble of its Constitution which says: “*a peace based exclusively upon political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure unanimous, lasting and sincere support from people of the world*”. Development cannot exist in a society void of peace. Locally, Konings (2009), edifies that “ethno-regional” associations are very significant to the ordinary people in Africa. From a local level developmental perspective, Portes and Landolt (2000: 543) observe that “[t]owns with community associations have paved roads, electricity, and freshly painted public buildings”. In the same strength of reasoning, Terazas, Durana and Somerville (2008:Summary) argue that: “*Hometown associations, [...]based on a common hometown, are typically informal, voluntary groups that bring members together for social, cultural, political empowerment, and economic development goals.*” Taylor (1920:16), informs that survival consists of: “*processes, customs, and opinions, and so forth, which have been carried on by force of habit into a new state of society different from that in which they had their original home, and they thus remain as proofs and examples of an older condition of culture out of which a newer has been evolved*”. Thus, migrants’ socio-cultural and economic survival in destination areas find expression in associations. A core value of these associations is cultural sustainability.

During migration, people move with their cultural baggage, which is constructed and reconstructed in their destination areas, especially through community associations. Hence the creation of community associations in the past began through family initiatives, which later spread to friends and communities in different orders. Referred to as “*Community of suffering*”, by Lacroix, (2010:5) association life started around post WW II to the 1960s as immigrant groupings. Fleeing the war, European immigrants faced with consequences of culture contact (cultural differences, racial segregation, hardship, stereotyping and stigmatization) and a desire to work hard and downsize their stay in Europe, took up menial jobs to raise funds and care for their families both locally and internationally. Thus, they formed small gatherings by which they pooled and sent remittances home. The idea of association spread through out Europe, prompting the creation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945. A strong desire to preserve and transmit peace, security and cultural heritage of communities led UNESCO to fashion several legal instruments such as: Declaration of Principles on Tolerance in Paris, France in 1995 and the 1966 Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Cooperation designed during UNESCO’s 1966 General Conference to accomplish this resolve. This commenced groundworks for the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage. This is ensued by the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity is 2001. Apart from the fore, UNESCO (2021), emphasizes that a significance of association life is its desire to spread understanding and cooperation, through face-to-face discussions with other people of all origins. The idea of has since been a norm among migrant communities in urban spaces. Linguistically, Terazas, Durana and Somerville (2008: Summary), validate that associations provide social networks for new immigrants, offering more tangible services such as language classes. Worth noting is the fact that language is an indispensable cultural tool with cohesive and divisive characteristics fashioned by the context and intent of its use. Other significances of associative life are social security – social networks and solidarity movements, financial security, social recognition and power (a cultural potential to create change). The importance of associations in the 1990s led to its ramification internationally, in Africa and Cameroon. In accord, Orozco (2004), observes that since the 1990s, there has been a rapid increase in the formation of HTAs from Mexico and Central America, throughout the United States. UNESCO (2021), approves that by the year 2020, there were over 4000 Associations and Clubs in more than 80 countries. Beside the fore, CAs also offer social capital as powerful tools to feed

people's socio-cultural needs which would be difficult to achieve individually within short space and time. Healthwise, socializing offers psycho-social support, builds self-esteem of members and promotes a lifestyle full of hope and dignity.

In the African continent, the 34th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) held on the 6th and 7th of February 2021, celebrated the importance of community association under the theme: *“Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building Africa We Want”*. This shows that the diversity African countries impact their socio-cultural atmosphere especially regarding integration and cohesion. The African Union recognizes this diversity with an aim to safeguard its rich heritage – both tangible and intangible. CAs are examples of intangible cultural heritage which seek to uphold African values as expressed in the *“ubuntu”* spirit – the virtue of humanity's collectiveness, compassion and togetherness. In a bid to guarantee the protection of African indigenous culture and ensure development of communities, the 68th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) was organized on the 4th of May 2021 in Addis Ababa. The commission defines, in Article 45 of the African Charter, key issues especially the protection and promotion of human and peoples' rights on the continent – rights relating to recurrent discrimination suffered by their communities, high poverty level, as well as destruction of the components that form the basis of their cultural identity. Prior to the above provisions, anti-living together tendencies historically affected Africa leaving countries like; Nigeria (religious conflicts, 1953 to present), Liberia (civil war of 1989 - 1996), Angola (civil war, 1975 - 2002), Mozambique (civil war, 1977 - 1992), Uganda (civil – ‘Bush war’, 1981-1986), Sudan (First and second civil wars: 1965-1969 and 1995-2005 respectively), Somali (from cold to civil war 1988 - 1991), Sierra Leon (armed conflict 1991-2002) in socio-cultural and political unrest with remnants making waves in the continent nowadays, marring development. The 2016 socio-cultural insecurity in Cameroon is one such historically regurgitated crisis which together with hate speech and stereotyping are affecting the multicultural state of Cameroon. Thus, the practice of CA can impair or repair living together in urban areas.

Cameroon is a culturally diverse country. Several authors have varying opinions as to the number of ethnic groups found in Cameroon. Building Strong Library Association (BSLA) Cameroon, Association des Bibliothécaires, Archivistes, Documentalistes, et Museographes du Cameroun (ABADCAM) and International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)

expresses that Cameroon is made up of at least 240 ethnic groups and as many languages. Contrarily and interdisciplinarily, Fongzossie *et al.* (2020), Tume (2020), Ngenge (2021), Usman (2021), and Abange *et al.* (2021) agree that Cameroon is made up of about 250 “ethnic” groups. They are spread among Cameroon’s three linguistic speaking groups: Bantu, Semi-Bantu and the Sudanese. Cameroon’s major towns to wit; Bamenda, Douala, Buea, Bafoussam, Garoua, Maroua and Yaoundé are multicultural. Yaoundé is Cameroon’s capital city and host to diverse local and international communities. As mentioned earlier, the multiparty system Cameroon experienced in the 1960s with many associations, was altered mono-party culture post 1960. Mono-partism was aimed at encouraging national unity and cohesion. However, 1982 introduced political freedom and association life among others, all aimed at fostering living together in diversity. Based on this, Nyamnjoh (1999), questions what keeps Cameroon together despite widespread instability in Africa and turbulence of the sub-regional environment in which it finds itself, as well as despite Cameroon’s own internal contradictions. The question is preceded by Cameroon’s national and international recognition for its peaceful culture amid cultural diversity. Recently, a new wind changed the status quo of things. Rustard, Plik and Methi (2019:7), lecture that: *“In 2019, 25 state-based conflicts were recorded [...] In 2019, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Somalia, and Burundi all saw external involvement in their domestic conflicts.”* Following unrests in Cameroon, forced migration pushed individuals from troubled parts of the country to those assumed safe – Yaoundé being the hub.

Consequent to migration, conglomeration and interaction between communities in urban areas especially Yaoundé, culture contact creates tensions leading to socio-cultural disintegration. Local Youth Corner Cameroon (2019:2), argues that Cameroon is culturally divided into four main parts – Sudano-Sahel, Grass-field, Sawa and Fang Beti – and linguistically between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians. The Francophone divide makes approximately 80% of the total population with the Anglophone being a minority with 20%. However, Benneh and DeLancey (2020), say Cameroon can largely be categorized into three linguistic communities: the Bantu-speaking peoples of the south, the Sudanic-speaking peoples of the North, and the Semi-Bantu of the west. This work investigates how language influences the way Cameroonians interact with one another as well as fashion relationships between individuals and communities.

Apart from language, the social culture of alterity/otherness and intolerance is a conflict activator. The International Crisis Group (2018), says in a political atmosphere, riots erupted between the Bulu and Bamileke in Sangmelima – during the post-electoral conflict of 2018. This happened concurrently with the population bulge in Yaoundé resulting from the Anglophone crisis that commenced in 2016, the crisis in the Far Nord, East and other parts of the country. Spill-over effects of these concerns are felt in localities around conflict zones and urban paces of the country.

From the above facts, the convergence of individuals from diverse communities in Yaoundé plunge people into culture shock which among others is expressed through stereotypes and hate speech. As a result, most Cameroonians find solace in associations where they have a sense of belonging. This cultural diversity challenge leads to the dilemma of a dichotomy of the ‘us’ and the ‘them’ – protection of one’s cultural (tribal/ethnic) identity through intra-community association on one hand and promoting multiculturalism on the other hand. Nevertheless, living together presents an extremely delicate and requisite tool for development in urban areas. Community association in Yaoundé is an environment that allows members to create intra and inter-community relationships through belonging and interaction.

Based on the fore, Decree No 2017/013 of 23 January 2017 to lay down the establishment, organization and functioning of the National Commission on the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (NCPBM) was instituted in Cameroon. The main responsibilities of NCPBM are to promote bilingualism and maintaining peace, national unity and strengthening people’s free will to live together. Hence associations are spaces where unity can be enforced in urban areas.

Most Cameroonian communities express their cultural identity through community associations, as seen in Essingam of the Beti, Nsoba'ti of the Nso, Ngondo of the Duala, Ngoun of the Bamun, and Lakaam of the Bamileke communities, to name a few. Other cultural expressions include dance, marriage, “bornhouse,” food and eating habits, dressing style, folklore, and music. The operationalization of Law No. 90/53 of December 19, 1990, relating to freedom of association, is done under the guidance of Ministries of Culture and Territorial Administration of Cameroon. Encouraging the fore, Cameroon Tribune of 20th September 2019 says the reform also intends to professionalize artistic and cultural associations nationwide for greater achievements. The fore is verifiable in the existence of a plethora of associations all over the national territory, urban areas and Yaoundé. Relative to the advancement of freedom of association aimed at fostering living

together in a culture held by NCPBM in Cameroon, contemporary changing lifestyles endorse an escalation of community association. Cameroon Tribune (2019) affirms that, the creation of the NCPBM is a response to discordant voices – division, hatred and tribalism, coupled with ‘secessionists’ fighting for separation of the English-speaking North West and South West Regions that constitute the base for the promotion of Cameroon’s cultural diversity and an asset for the development of Cameroon. Several factors cause social conflict in cities.

Cameroonians under the French, German and English colonial masters experienced the practice of indirect rule with an impact on their culture. Geschiere (1993), maintains that: “*it was a matter of policy to rule the new subjects through indigenous chiefs. In the societies where such chiefs were hard to find, the French as well as the British created new ‘chefs coutumiers’; for the French as well, the chiefs had to play a key role in the ‘encadrement de paysans’*” (Geschiere, 1993: preview). This author implies that the state was governed by communities through their leaders, a norm that inspired a new form of democratization for the state – exercising power and political expertise through elite associations as an alternative to multi-partism. Hence, associations became politicized. The fore and others are probable reasons for the exponential expansion of community associations in urban areas. The practice of association life in cities is not solely for self-help and community development but equally for holistic socio-cultural reasons that impact cohabitation. Rivas, Hale & Burke (2019), assert that association life can mitigate problems linked to developing new friendships, navigating different social and cultural norms, challenges of daily living – exemplified in language use and communication difficulties, and cultural differences. This typifies an avenue for the promotion of multiculturalism.

Yaoundé is Cameroon’s capital city, head quarter of the NCPBM and a center of attraction to people from diverse socio-cultural communities, both nationally and internationally. During weekends, its quarters are often littered with all types of community associations practicing socio-cultural activities that animate neighborhoods and facilitate social bonds.

Inter- and intra-community associations differ in ways such as membership, objective, organization, regulations, legal status and duration. However, the most significant difference in this thesis lies in membership since they are both collective cultural practices – playing a unifying role that allows for interaction and socialization. Interviews and observations reveal that associations are well organized and guided by internal constitutions, elected leaders and the led.

Their activities make life worth experiencing in Yaoundé. Observations and interviews also show that association life creates a sense of belonging, impacting intra- and intercommunity cohesion. Next is the problem that incited this study.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The problem that led to this research is as follows.

1.2.1 Problem

Cameroon is a culturally diverse country with over 250 ethnic groups coexisting in most urban areas as seen in Yaoundé. These ethnic groups are represented by associations in urban spaces. Community associations are perceived as organizations whose roles are to bring people together to enhance interaction, socialization, networking, and the creation of social ties that could lead to long lasting relationships. Encouraged by these perceptions and the enforcement of the 1990 law on freedom of association as amended in 2020, there has been an expansion of the practice community associations in Yaoundé urban area.

Despite the presence of numerous community associations in Yaoundé, and government efforts such as the creation of the NCPBM to foster social cohesion and the fact that Cameroon has been admired for its cultural diversity as noticed through institutions such as marriage, education, religion, private and public administration, the aspect of the dichotomy between living together and non-living together still exists in this urban space.

1.2.2 Problematic

Community associations are not a new phenomenon in urban areas of Cameroon especially as seen in Yaoundé. There exists two types of community associations intercommunity associations and intra-community associations. Intra-community associations have ethnic connotations which are absent in intercommunity associations. However, association life is a representation of collectivity and the culture of living together, which makes it an essential part of the African culture. In urban as much as in rural spaces (in the past as in the present), the role of community associations has been the promotion of social, economic, and cultural activities that enhance belonging (the daily expression of community membership) and living together. The

premise of community associations in this study is its ability to ameliorate multiculturalism by making available the social cement (such as membership, events, financial support, entertainment through dancing, eating, drinking, learning and understanding of cultures, socialization and networking) that can bind individuals and communities together in urban milieus. The practice of association life has become a ritual for most urban dwellers in Cameroon particularly Yaoundé, culminating in the creation of many “intra-” and inter-community associations locally – in a pidginized manner – called “*njang/meetingi*” or “*tontin*” (Tengeh & Nkem, 2017:4). Oral tradition holds that ‘*tontin*’ originated from and is used to stereotype the Bamileke community – ‘*les tontinards*’.

As a norm, “meetings” hold assemblies during weekends – mostly Saturdays and Sundays and occasionally within the week in private homes, schoolyards, church premises and/or community halls. They make interaction, networking and formation of social ties possible between members. “Meetings” – intra-community associations are usually known to be centered on cultural sustainability, self-help and community development, which is why it is common to hear statements like “*scratch ma back, I scratch ya own*”, or “*njangi na for backam*”. These expressions can limpidly be translated in English as; “a good turn deserves another”. These expressions are values that signify and demand loyalty to one’s association and community membership. Belonging to intra-community associations in urban areas comes with socio-cultural rights and responsibilities as seen in integration, respect for difference and loyalty to membership.

From an Anthropological lens, everyday lifestyle is a cultural product influenced by interaction, socialization and networking which can be facilitated by associations. Generally, scheduling “meetings” during weekends is because weekends are considered a time for socialization, relaxation, recreation and bonding (Dauda, 2017: 35). During weekends people are less committed to workload, hence they can come together to produce and reproduce cultural norms, values and beliefs. Some associations exercise meetings and activities in halls while others gather in private and public spaces. Some associations assemble following mandated dates and spaces while through polling others determine the date and venue for their meetings. As such some “meetings” rotate from house to house while others have regular locations.

Intercommunity association whose membership cuts across cultural boundaries – diverse communities – enable socialization, interaction, learning and understanding of the cultures of each other. Association life does not however, represent a state of utopia. Ela (1983), says: « *Si l'on veut comprendre la société africaine dans son devenir, avec ses tensions et ses conflits internes, il n'est plus possible de laisser hors du champ d'études les multiples problèmes posés par l'essor urbain...Le lieu de dissolution ou de crise des rapports sociaux traditionnels doit devenir le centre de gravité de réflexion. C'est peut-être en ville que se joue le sort de la « tradition » africaine* » (Ela, 1983 :7). This loosely translates in English as; “*if one wants to understand the future of the African society, with its tensions and internal conflicts, it is impossible to ignore the multiple problems posed by urban development... the crises of traditional social relations must become the center of gravity for reflection. It is perhaps in town that the fate of African tradition is played.*” Thus, associations are not spaces of utopia since they also experience tensions which they manage.

Cameroon’s urban areas especially Yaoundé is a conflation of its 250 (Awasom, 2007; Kouega, 2007; P.N. Nkwi, 2012; W.G. Nkwi, 2013; Dze-Ngwa, 2014;), ethnic communities and a myriad of international communities. These communities have associations which influence their lifestyle in Yaoundé. Nyamnjoh & Rowlands (1998: 321) attest that in many cases associations are founded principally for mutual aid based on the idea of haven attended same school, belonging to the same church or lived in the same neighbourhood, so that membership would cross ethnic boundaries. This would allow individuals to interact, socialize, learn and understand cultural differences and similarities as well as practice diverse activities. These activities include happy and sad events. These activities can ameliorate thought patterns and create social networks that shape cultural traits (Gonzales, 2022), of individuals and collective individuals – associations. Culture, defined by E.B. Taylor (1871) as “...*that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired as a member of society*” influences group dynamics. Therefore, anthropologically, community associations through interaction, socialization, networking and bonding offer an environment where culture can affect people’s knowledge, beliefs, morals, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits creating an impact on thought patterns of coexisting communities. Such influences can lead to desired cultural shifts in urban spaces – living together.

Being an amalgamation of several cultures and surrounded by African states that have experienced all types of conflicts, Cameroon before the twentieth century stood tall, as has been admired internationally for its peaceful culture. Mindful of its cultural diversity, the role played by community associations, especially intra-community associations of Cameroon's 250 communities in urban areas – Yaoundé – regarding multiculturalism is worth studying.

Despite the above, especially measures taken by the Government, such as the liberalization of cultural associations, the creation of the National Commission on the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (NCPBM) and knowing that culture is not watertight, human relationships often get chafed creating loopholes which are filled by misunderstandings. A study by Plik and Methi (2019:7), show that one of such chafed socio-cultural relationships got Cameroon registered among countries faced with state-based conflicts in Africa. Within the context of this work, interest is on issues such as hate speech and stereotyping that sometimes strain inter-community relationships leading to disintegration, socio-cultural tensions and conflicts. PeaceTech Lab (2019), argues that stereotypes are principal sources of socio-cultural conflict and intolerance in Cameroon, mentioning the use of “one cube of sugar” by Cameroon's Minister of Higher Education at a high-level forum – in Yaoundé – in 2016 to describe the Anglophone community. This is assumed to have provoked Anglophone community leading to an escalation of the 2016 crisis. Agwanda, Nyadear and Asal (2020), confirm that: *“clash of cultural identity also plays a significant role in fuelling the secessionist consciousness by the Anglophone Cameroonians.”* (Agwanda, Nyadear and Asal (2020: 5). These typify reasons for strained socio-cultural relationships. Consequently, the dawn of 2016 saluted Cameroon with upheavals, shifting its acclaimed ‘peaceful and cohesive’ identity (Buhrmester, Zeitlyn, & Whitehouse, 2022; Esse, 2021; Kaingu, 2020; Laborde *et al* 2018; Musah, 2021; Musah, 2022; Muki, 2021; Ndille, 2020 and Ojo & Clarke, 2021), to a conflict-stricken identity. Episodes of violent extremism in other parts of the country have resulted in, but not limited to the destruction of human life, property (both government and individual), radicalization of persons, massive displacement of persons (both internal and external), the ramification of hate speech use, environmental destruction, health/food disorder, insecurity, cultural breakdown, development stand still and consequently economic drawback. This led internally displaced populations to inundate every corner of Yaoundé, promoting subscriptions for community associations, especially intra-community associations.

Many researchers have studied the present field with interests connected to or far from what this thesis is embarking on. Stock-Smith (2012), from a philosophical perspective in Yaoundé, studied an age-old foundation of African society, in a modern, urban locality of Cameroon. The study unveiled that within the capital city, diverse communities create associations either on an “ethnic” basis or around other commonalities. The author examines why Cameroonians form associations based on common community (ethnic) and intercommunity groupings exploring how they function. The study holds that even though not a single association from the study reflects this extremism, communalism and tribal associations unfortunately are at the heart of bloody inter-ethnic conflicts worldwide. The author suggests a study on these associations, about nation-building, a gap which this thesis aims to fill.

Anthropologically Socpa (2016), examines coexistence between two categories of citizens in Yaoundé: the “autochthones” (the first settlers in Yaoundé known as sons and daughters of the soil) and the “allochthones” (other occupants normally called strangers). He is backed by Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2000), who explain that in the 1990s, Cameroon as elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa saw the re-institution of multi-party politics which gave renewed impetus to antagonism between so-called “autochthons” and “allochthons” led to an awakening of ethnic stereotypes. Socpa (2016), focused on “ethnic” stereotypes especially between the Beti, considered “autochthons” – first settlers of Yaoundé and other communities considered strangers – “allochthons”. This has been the case in Yaoundé where “ethnicity” has been politically expressed through a growing emphasis on labels such as “autochthon” and “allochthone”. Labeling intensifies differentiation between those who belong and those who do not belong to given ethnicities, exemplified in post 2018 electoral feuds between the Beti and the Bamileke (Monga, 2000 and Mfewou, 2018). The question here is do ethnic associations foster such segregative tendencies. Monga (2000), from a historical perspective, examines ethnic coexistence in Cameroon and observes that:

The process by which the pervasive experience of economic and social injustice in Cameroon has come to be perceived and voiced [is] primarily in ethnic and regional terms. It questions the extent to which expressions of ethnocultural differences can be used effectively to pursue and achieve political goals. Finally, it illustrates how the prevailing ethnic discourses coexist with a resilient sense of Cameroonian togetherness. [...] I have also looked at dance, painting, theatre, and comedy arts through which Cameroonians of diverse backgrounds express themselves. As a

complement to these popular sources, I have relied on scholarly articles on similar topics as well as my own first-hand observation of Cameroon and its political struggles (Monga, 2000:73-74).

Focusing on the existence of economic and social injustice, it examines the means of self-expression by Cameroonians from diverse cultures and tensions that arise due to the simultaneous creation of ethnic identities and national identity in Cameroon. The particularity about economic inequalities and social injustice according to this author is seen as illustrious arenas for political exploitation of cultural differences. Thus political discourses that emphasize ethnic particularities and the importance of localities are engaged. This is achieved through ethnic affiliation and rural constituencies. The fore shows that politicians use associations to display their cultural differences as a way of marking their cultural space, distinguishing themselves from potential or actual “enemy” groups, and “recruiting” allies. Also social and economic expressions have been used to hurt identities. Some can repair the wounds caused on individual and community identities.

Within the context of intercommunity associations, Monju (2019) studied the socio-cultural dimensions of the practice of physical activity among “*Deux zéro*” groups in Yaoundé. The work looked at the practice of physical activities regards with regards to health, leisure, and socio-cultural aspects that holistically bind humans not necessarily for competitive purposes, but rather for socio-cultural reasons, revealing how they contributes to group cohesion, integration and the maintenance of socio-cultural well-being among individuals. The work concluded that belonging to “*deux zéro*” groups encourage internal cohesion, benefits individuals socially, culturally and psychologically.

This dissertation studies community associations paying particular attention to socio-cultural activities of intra-community associations and examining how through local methods they influence multiculturalism in Yaoundé. Edjenguèlè (2005), in explaining local capabilities theorized as ethnomethodology by Harold Garfinkel says it is a people’s way of resolving issues affecting them using local methods. Hence community association could be seen as a people’s approach to daily life survival mechanisms and promotion of social cohesion through their activities. Community association serves as an environment for intra or inter-community meetings leading to intra-community or inter-community interaction, socialization, networking and bonding, hence promoting intra or inter-community living together. As an anthropological study,

this work makes use of interactionist and structural functionalist theories to contribute knowledge in the domain of association practices that strengthen humanity, improve interaction, socialization, and consequently living together among coexisting communities in cities. Hence, intra-community association as a socio-cultural construct within the framework of multiculturalism in Yaoundé can be understood by evoking the thoughts of structural functionalism and interactionism theories via an anthropological lens. Two concepts from structural functionalism: manifest function and latent function and the interactionist theory constitute the theoretical framework that orientate research questions as well as enable the explanation of research findings. Hence current thoughts about the role of community associations relative to multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area is analyzed through the lens of theories mentioned supra. What are the research questions that guided the work?

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To understand the relationship between community associations and multiculturalism, two categories of research questions (central and specific) were constructed to lead and ease the progress of our research.

1.3.1 Central research question

- What is the significance of community associations play on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area?

1.3.2 Specific research questions

- What are the types of community associations and socio-cultural practices of community associations in Yaoundé urban area?
- How does membership and organization of community associations influence their socio-cultural activities vis-à-vis multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area?
- What are the pathways of multiculturalism and causes of disintegration in Yaoundé urban area?

These questions were tentatively answered as follows.

1.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Our hypothetical answers are summarized between central and specific research hypothesis.

1.4.1 Central Research Hypothesis

Community associations play an enhancing/diminishing role on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area. Through composition and socio-cultural activities, intra-community associations diminish multiculturalism. Intra-community associations encourage intra-community social cohesion, integration, cultural sustainability and monoculturalism while intercommunity associations promote intercommunity integration, social cohesion and multiculturalism.

1.4.2 Specific Hypotheses

- There are two types of community associations in Yaoundé urban area: intra-community and intercommunity associations. These associations practice economic, social and cultural activities in Yaoundé urban area which are related to happy and sorrowful events.
- Membership determines the inclusion/exclusion criteria of persons enrolled by different associations. Intra-community associations enroll members based on common community of origin while intercommunity associations enroll members cross-culturally thus influencing a sense of belonging through interaction, socialization, networking and bonding. Socio-cultural activities of community associations are influenced by structural organization. Organizing associations administratively, economically, socially and culturally allows for their smooth functioning of associations.
- Intercommunity associations are pathways of multiculturalism while intra-community associations do not foster multiculturalism. Hate speech especially stereotypes are socio-linguistic practices that diminish living together in Yaoundé urban area.

The aims of carrying out this research are as follows:

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Cognizant of the fact that research objectives present the purpose of research, this dissertation has two sets of objectives: central and specific.

1.5.1 Central Research Objectives

- To examine the significance of community associations on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

- To identify the types of community associations, their characteristics and socio-cultural practices in Yaoundé urban area;
- To determine how membership and organization of community associations influence their socio-cultural activities vis-à-vis multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area.
- To examine intercommunity associations as canals of multiculturalism and intra-community associations as non-promoters of multiculturalism while hate speech especially stereotypes diminish living together in Yaoundé urban area.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE

This thesis has a pertinent significance because it stretches from theoretical to practical perspectives in resolving issues related to coexistence in Yaoundé, Cameroon and otherwise.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

The empirical relevance of this study is that knowledge from field data, their interpretation and analysis will add literature so that researchers and students hoping to engage in this area of research can exploit. Thus, literature review is related to the day-to-day socio-cultural life experiences of city dwellers as members of community associations, the relevance of these associations to living together through socialization and understanding of different cultures. Hence the works of Nyamnjoh (1998), Yenshu Vubo (2008), Page, Evans and Mercer (2010) reveal that intra-community associations (ethnic-based associations) are essential in the enhancement of belonging, mutual aid, and community development. How these associations foster multiculturalism has not been given considerable investigation. Notwithstanding Monju (2019), confirms that there is a link between the practice of intercommunity association life and living together. This work will equally increase literature of social sciences in general and anthropology in particular. Applied research methodology, the application of conceptual and theoretical

frameworks will enable an understanding of why there is an expansion of community associations in Yaoundé and the practices that foster them not just economically but socio-culturally as well.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

Research results would be practically useful in different managerial domains; locally, nationally and internationally. Managerial structures such as Ministry of Territorial Administration (MINAT), Ministry of Arts and Culture (MINCULTURE), NCPBM, and Ministry of Secondary Education (MINSEC). Local authorities of Quarters, Villages, City Councils, community associations who have interest in building a wealth of knowledge for the promotion of living together in their respective areas of competence will equally find it useful. Local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) involved in advocacy or other ventures within the framework of living together as well as the general public will benefit from this work, since it touches a domain – belonging, living together and social cohesion – of lifestyle that affects humanity. Internationally, this study could be useful to organs such as United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Organization (UNO), African Union (AU), and African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), to name these. Students and researchers engaging in this field of study can exploit it in future. With the fore, the methodology that allowed for the success of this thesis is expressed hereafter.

1.7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This part illustrates the methods, techniques and tools used to collect, analyze and interpret data for research objectives. A double research method documentary and field research were utilized. Primary research methods were done via the use of interviews, observation, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Community Group Discussions (CGD). The main aim of interviews and discussions with key informants is to understand and find meaning in their perception about community associations vis-a-vis multiculturalism. Secondary data collection method was done through literature review. The research makes use of content analysis by critically decomposing thoughts, ideas, opinions, and their meanings as written by others. Through these methodes the research is interested is socio-cultural characteristics of community associations, ideas, habits and experiences that demand an in-depth understanding of realities as well as description and provision

of apt meaning of these realities. All processes were incorporated to have a balance of information. Prior to field data collection, administrative procedures were fulfilled, courtesy visits paid to local authorities, local authorities and community associations.

Before engaging field research, knowledge in this area of study was gathered through secondary data collection – documentary research – methods. Characteristically, anthropology allows for the use of multiple qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, which on their own are valuable yet complementary. The above methods coupled with full amount of research ethics made physical and confidential immersion into community associations possible. Data collection made use of documentary, quantitative and qualitative research methods – including case studies, passive participant observation and interviews (in-depth, community, and focus group discussions). Interview and observation guides orientated the success of these techniques. Notwithstanding, secondary research data was retrieved through documentary literature review.

1.7.1 Secondary Research

This is data sourced from the works of predecessors.

1.7.1.1 Documentary Research

Scientific research requires a documentary (secondary) research procedure. The data is read word by word to derive codes (Bernard, 2006) by first highlighting exact words from the text that appear to capture key thoughts or concepts. These form the base for titles and sub-titles. The documentary approach (books, dissertations, journals/articles, decrees, laws and newspapers and several social web tools) was used for secondary data collection. Examples of visited libraries to understand the phenomenon under study are the University of Yaoundé I, Institut de Formation et de Recherche Démographique (IFORD), private/home libraries and the internet. Data was collected on community association relating to types, characteristics, structures and organization, perceptions, socio-cultural activities, importance to the day-to-day life of members, and impact on multiculturalism. The completion of documentary research enabled the construction of a framework (conceptual and) for this study. To have a wholistic view of the research phenomenon, quantitative research method was employed.

1.7.2 Primary Research

This is first-hand data collected during field work.

1.7.2.1 Quantitative Approach

Apart from complementarity, quantitative research was used for representative purposes, since different community associations from diverse communities were consulted. Numerical data was collected, analyzed and generalizations made regarding membership, characteristics and socio-cultural activities of associations concerning multiculturalism from the population of interest. According to Mouton (1988), the quantitative approach may be described in general terms as an: *“Approach to research in social sciences that is more highly formalized as well as more explicitly controlled, with a range that is more exactly defined, and which, in terms of the methods used, is relatively closed to the physical sciences”* (Mouton, 1988:155). Thus, to complement quantitative methods 550 questionnaires were administered and a population of four hundred (400) individuals (217 males and 183 were female), responded. The sampling was done as follows.

1.7.2.1.1 Population Sampling

To collect data on community association within the framework of multiculturalism in Yaoundé, sampling of several intra-community associations was employed for a wide coverage of many aspects of the phenomenon under study.

This thesis earmarked intra-community associations in Yaoundé as the research population. As target population from communities randomly selected from each of the three linguistic divisions of Cameroon – Bantu, Semi-Bantu and Sudanic languages – emphasis is laid on intra-community associations. This meant regrouping associations, taking into consideration their membership, characteristics, socio-cultural and economic activities in Yaoundé. With regards to the selection of communities from which community associations and target population were sampled, there was a random selection from the three linguistic – the Bantu-speaking peoples of the South (Beti, Bassa, Douala, Manyu) Semi-Bantu of the West (Bamileke, Bamum, Nso) and the Sudanic-speaking peoples of the north (Northerners) of Cameroon. Cluster sampling allowed for a random selection of individuals from different intra-community associations. During sampling, all the seven sub-divisions that constitute Yaoundé urban area were consulted. Hence

there was a random selection of intra-community associations with population representation from the various subdivisions of Yaoundé. Questionnaires were explored to collect quantitative data from participants as shown below.

Table 1: Representation of Population and Questionnaire Sample Size

Linguistic Origin	Community of Origin	Number examined	Percentage
Bantou speaking communities	Beti	53	14.0
	Bassa	53	13.3
	Douala	32	8.0
	Bayang	47	11.8
Semi-Bantou speaking communities	Nso	51	12.8
	Bamileke	56	14.0
	Bamum	54	13.5
Sudanic speaking communities	Northerners	54	13.5
Totals		400	100

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Table One (1) illustrates communities selected from the three linguistic-cultural zones of Cameroon. These communities form the base for the cluster sampling with selected Beti, Bassa, Douala, Bayang, Nso, Bamileke, Bamum and the Northerners from which the sample size of 400 participants responded to the questionnaires.

1.7.2.1.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used to obtain quantitative data from members of intra-community associations as indicated in table one above. Qualitative research methods were also engaged to complement quantitative methods.

1.7.2.2. Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research methods were employed to probe into the content (why/reasons) of realities. The use of this scientific research method allowed for the acquisition of data within social contexts, especially regarding people's viewpoints, habits, attitudes, values, traditions, beliefs and norms about subject areas. Mouton (1988), informs that qualitative method are: "*Those approaches in which the procedures are not as strictly formalized, while the scope is more likely to be undefined, and a more philosophical mode of operation is adopted.*" (Mouton, 1988:155). Bernard (2006), corroborates that "*you tell the story, as you see it, of how the themes are related to one another and how characteristics of the speaker or speakers account for the existence of certain themes and the absence of others.*" (Bernard, 2006: 451). Cognizant of the fact that data from respondents will be replicated, sampling was done as follows.

1.7.2.2.1 Sampling

Based on recommendations from some association members and leaders, the research sample size was made up of key persons randomly selected from different intra-community associations for face-to-face interviews and group discussions. The relevance of this number is being representative enough to avoid reductionism. A total of twenty-two (three from Beti, two Duala, three Bassa, three Bayang, three Nso, three Bamileke, three Bamum, and three Northerners) intra-community associations were randomly selected from the communities under study as case studies. Within these groups, population for qualitative and quantitative data recovery were sampled. This work adopted the following data collection techniques and tools.

1.7.2.2.2 Observation

Through observation data was collected as seen. Bernard (2006:343), says: "*you tell the story, as you see it*", within the context of the study. Data on usual habits in their normal context was recorded taking note of how the themes are related to one another or not, enabling researchers to create the link between association lifestyle and living together. In Anthropology participant observation, which is both a humanistic method and a scientific approach can bring out these details. However, because participant observation demands

an extensive period of active participation in the day-to-day activities of members of the study communities – usually a year and above, coupled with the fact that meetings were mostly on Saturdays and Sundays and some of the associations held their meetings concomitantly (on the same days and during same hours), passive participant observation technique was adopted. This was aimed at balancing consistency with validity. Observation was done at different times of the day, days of the week, months, and seasons, making use of different body senses (eyes, ears, nose, skin and tongue) so we could recognize different patterns and changes of occurrences in groups and environment. Association venues were, and houses of members and hung out with members in other places. Observation method made use of the following tools and techniques:

- **Hangouts**

Several outings with different association members on different days, occasions (especially Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays) as well as at different times (mornings, afternoons and evenings) allowed interactions with participants by talking and observing them during such moments. Hangouts were also done on meeting days since socio-cultural and economic activities are normally practiced during meeting days. This technique made observation of activities and followed up of thoughts and behaviour of diverse associations during meetings possible. Bernard (2006), confirms that; *“hanging out builds trust, or rapport, and trust results in ordinary conversation and ordinary behaviour in your presence.” [...] from hanging out, you want to know more about, and once people trust you not to betray their confidence, you’ll be surprised at the direct questions you can ask.*” (Bernard, 1940:368). Researchers settled on hanging out aligning with the fact that researchers need to get close enough to their informants to gain their trust (Bernard, 2006:367). Researchers, as well as respondents, trusted each other during the give-and-take information process. Hence, hanging out paved the way to building trust and gaining the confidence of informants and researchers in a bidirectional process which

equally made data collection easy. Data was collected using the following techniques.

- **Descriptive Writings:** In a descriptive manner procedures, speeches, free listing of lived experiences, thoughts and actions of members as well as physical and sensory occurrences around the environment/associations venues under study were recorded in a note pad. Detailed descriptions were used in a precise manner to organize collected data. What was observed in association venues, socio-cultural activities, participants of community association are described herein. Photography is another technic that was used.
- **Photography:** Cameras were used to record pictorial data such as features of the association venue and environs, and socio-cultural activities practiced by these associations among others. Photographs are captured to validate the coherence between what was observed and what was heard through in-depth interviews, community and focus group discussions. Visual observation – photography - being an integral part of anthropology allowed us to support our findings through illustrations. Apart from photography, sensory data recording was also used to substantiate observations.
- **Sensory Data Recording:** Kalwak et al (2018) did qualitative study on sensory substitution (SS) wherein they argue that it occurs when perceptual information normally accessed through one sense (substituted modality, such as vision) is instead represented by another sense (substituting modality, such as touch). The author implies that information which could be recovered through vision (the eyes) is instead accessed through touch (the skin). While the study used electronic devices as sensory substitutes, this study uses body sensory organs like the skin, mouth, nostrils, ears and eyes, during fieldwork to feel, taste, smell and hear ideas that couldn't otherwise be observed. Wong (2007), recognizes that: "*the sensorial experience of food endures in one's memory bank, long after the context in which it is consumed disappears or changes.*" (Wong 2007: 121). Sensorial experiences

influence peoples' moods and behaviour too. Hence, data was perceived by smelling the environment, feeling the textual composition of fabrics of different traditional regalia, and tasting and smelling different food aromas, odour/perfume of the environment to identify their links with behaviour and moods. Complementing hang-out, descriptive writing and sensory data collection, case study was adopted.

1.7.2.2.3 Case Studies

Eight (8) intra-community associations were studied. According to Patnaik (1990), information can be obtained via case studies to supplement other techniques in Anthropology of Developmental studies. Stark *et al* (2001:33) opinionated that: "*Case studies seek to engage with and report the complexity of social activity to represent the meanings that individual social actors bring to those settings and manufacture them*". Case studies reveal actual fieldwork (the people, the environment, activities) experiences in textual form. Baker (1987: 21), says: "*I shall invite my readers to step outside the closed study of the theorist into the open air of the anthropological field...There paddling on the lagoon, watching the natives under the blazing sun at their garden work, following them through the patches of jungle and on the winding beaches and reefs, we shall learn about their life.*" Case studies allow narratives of events as seen (Bernard, 2006:367). This study describes associations, their activities and perceptions as they were observed. Describing groups in detail falls in line with what Baker (1987: 22) explains that everyday speech, myths, magical formulae and the like, could be recorded in the vernacular. He emphasizes that translating the narratives from dialect often robs the text of all its significant characteristics. However, translations are necessary for comprehension. Thus different community associations were studied (Beti, Bassa, Bayang, Bamileke, Nso, Duala, Bamum, and the Northerners intra-community associations) in different parts of Yaoundé, data recorded – some in their natural language – as will be seen in subsequent chapters others in English and French. This enabled sampling of expressions, individuals' behaviours, and emotions during different socio-cultural practices.

Notwithstanding, some of the characteristics observed were physical environment (place/venue) of the associations, composition (community of origin as well as gender and age) of members and the way they interact with one another during meetings. Socio-cultural activities (how, when, who, where and why they are exercised) of associations were observed as well as dressing codes and eating habits of members. Formal and spontaneous interviews were conducted.

1.7.2.2.4 Interviews

Face-to-face interviews and discussions were made during fieldwork to complement other techniques. Semi-structured and spontaneous interview enabled data collection. Apart from face-to-face interviews, telephone calls and new media interviews were also carried out.

1.7.2. 2.4.1 In-depth Interviews

A total of sixty-four (64) participants were interviewed, made up of thirty-one (31) females and thirty-four (33) males. Question and answer sessions between researchers and informants allowed in-depth expression of realities through experiences and viewpoints by informants as well as profound probing. Certain questions spontaneously cropped up inspired by answers from respondents and assisted a further retrieval of latent data. Tape recorders were used to record the interviews for safe keeping of information. In-depth interviews embraced opinions of every member irrespective of age, gender or socio-cultural status. Interview guides were used to direct the process.

Interview Guide: An instrument made up of elaborated open-ended questions for data collection during fieldwork was designed and used. Bernard (2006:210), defines interview guide as a written list of questions and topics used to cover a particular theme. It guides and keeps the researchers' focus on the research theme during study as well as guards against collecting unnecessary information. This tool was used in assessing the level of

understanding and perception of respondents on community associations' impact on living together in Yaoundé.

1.7.2. 2.4.2 Spontaneous Interviews

Spontaneous interviews were done through casual chats with participants during meetings as some informants deemed necessary (Cook, 2020; Kim, 2018). Alternatively, spontaneous interviews were done during hang-out and private events. Conversations enabled this because respondents gave information freely without fear of being investigated in any kind of way.

Informally, questions were asked that enabled a probe into issues concerning community associations, their socio-cultural activities and relationship between members of opposing communities in Yaoundé urban area. Probing triggers spontaneity and free flow of conversation. Through interviews data was collected about types, membership (same place of origin or cross-cultural communities) importance, and impact of association on living together in Yaoundé. Discussions were also organized with informants.

1.7.2. 2.4.3 Group Discussions

Engaging with different community members individually is usually a cumbersome task. In order to gain time during data recovery, Group discussions (Antón, Malhi & Fuentes, 2018; Bernard, 2006; Gibson, 2022) – Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Community Group Discussions (CGD) – were organized with intra-community association to trade-off opinions on its practice of community association and impact on multiculturalism in Yaoundé.

In total eight (8) community associations were interviewed and observed as case studies. Fourteen (14) group discussions were organized – four (4) exclusively for men, five (5) for women from randomly chosen associations and five (5) for both genders in five different associations. Interviewing men and women exclusively was meant for homogeneity. Observation engaged people's behaviour in homogenous settings as they freely expressed themselves without fear of the presence of the opposite sex while mixed groups ensured examination of behavior in the presence of the opposite sex. There were Eleven (11) FGDs and three (3) Community Group Discussions.

The difference between the two techniques (FGD and CGD) according to Bernard (2006:237), lies on the size, composition and number of the groups. FGD classically is comprised of six to twelve (6-12) participants and a moderator. Members are homogenous – age, sex, and profession among others – without prior knowledge of one another (familiarity obstructs revelation). Bernard (2006) referring to Ruth Wilson et al. (1993) says, FGDs are made up of at least four (4) and at most fifteen (15) participants with an average of 7. The author stratified groups into homogenous sets of gender and profession and explains that FGD is used to discuss a particular topic. Similarly, P. N. Nkwi (1996), as cited in Bernard (2006), used participant observation, in-depth interviews, a questionnaire and FGD to study people’s perspectives of family planning in Cameroon. Through FGD the population was stratified into homogenous subgroups of age and gender, considering the discussion duration. They recruited a mixed group – of age and gender for the same study. The author’s use of diverse data recovery methods ensured validity since results were replicated for each of the methods used. Hence FGD involves several participants between 6 -15. In this dissertation, FGD population ranged between five (5) and seven (7) participants. CGD takes numbers larger than the limit (15 participants) for FGD. Participants for CGD ranged from nineteen (19) to thirty-one (31). In Africa in general, Cameroon and Yaoundé in particular, communal lifestyle is a norm. Hence gatherings involving huge crowds are an everyday way of life.

Eight (8) community associations were case studied. Fourteen (14) group discussions with randomly selected associations – four (4) exclusively for men, five (5) for women from each association and five (5) mixed genders were organized. Of these groups, eleven (11) were FGDs, while three (3) were CGDs. These were organized as follows:

1.7.2. 2.4.3 .1 Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

Focus Group Discussions were organized with participants ranging from five to eight (5-8) members of community associations. Most of the respondents at this level were persons sourced through personal contact and recommendations from group leaders and members. The significance of this technique was its ability to facilitate the collection of data related to the practice of community association and its influence on living together in Yaoundé urban area. Of the eleven

(11) FGDs, one (1) was made up of eight (8) participants, three (3) had six (6) respondents while seven (7) had five (5) participants. The population sample for FGD was sixty-one (61).

1.7.2. 2.4.3 .2 Community Group Discussion (CGD)

According to Bernard (2006), not all group discussions are FGDs while Moser & Korstjens, (2018) says CGDs are those made up of participants larger than FGD. During fieldwork, CGD were organized and guided by the same interview guide used for FGD. The question-and-answer sessions between researchers and members of community associations presented no marginalization as to, number, age, gender, religion, profession. According to this work, the fore is a necessary modification from FGD which usually recruits a minimum/maximum of six (6) and maximum of fifteen (15) participants. This was an adaptation to the study design, environment and population since the work is interested in understanding human relations. Hence studying an all-inclusive environment and complementing it with homogenous populations was an objective. Population target comprised individuals with necessary data. Hence every opinion mattered.

Three FGDs were organized; one with nineteen (19) participants, another with twenty-three (23) and the last had thirty-one (31), making a total of seventy-three (73). Totally, one hundred and thirty-four (134) respondents were recruited for both FGD and CGD. Both FGD and CGD consist of; a moderator (researchers), assistants (an observer, recording agent and note taker) and community association members. CGD helped avoid reductionism and sentiments from participants as well as encourage colloquial discussions (however within the framework of the study).

Some groups were comprehensive, accommodating and participated in interviews and group discussions while others showed little concern for the exercise. Discussions took place in community halls, private and public places. Time constraints made most discussions to last an hour and thirty minutes or less. Interest was placed on people's reactions as they talked in the presence of differences – gender, different age groups, statuses and community members amid other. Every discussion started with the central objective of the study. This was to understand people's habits during interaction in association and gatherings. These discussions were facilitated and directed by a focus/community group discussion guide. The research ensured that ethical concerns were respected.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Several concerns were taken into consideration during this research since the theme represents communities. Verbal consent was directly obtained from respondents because they are all adults. Informants were assured of the confidentiality (for research purposes and safekeeping) of information collected from them such that no harm is caused to them. Respondents were informed of the non-disclosure of their identity or any information that could lead to that effect. For this reason, pseudo-names have been used for analysis and face masks. Consent form conditions were read out for participants urging them to willingly consent to the research. Privacy was also taken into consideration. Informants who did not want to be interviewed in the presence of others were interviewed separately. The place for the interview with informants was also decided prior to the exercise. The collected data was further analyzed and saved.

1.9 DATA ANALYSIS AND MANAGEMENT

With regards to quantitative data, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 2021 Version was applied to analyze quantitative data. Both qualitative and quantitative data were managed as follow:

Documentary information was brought together and through content analyzes, relevant data was sorted and further stratified into titles and sub-titles. Data collected through interviews and group discussions (FGD and CGD) were audio-registered and later transcribed into bloc notes and Microsoft word respectively, to avoid loss of information. Through indexing, collected data was arranged according to ideas. Furthermore, through content analysis ideas were manually categorized into titles and sub-titles. Results from Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 2021 Version, were summarized using descriptive statistics of tables, histograms, bar charts relative frequencies and percentages. Observed data was equally taken in notepads and later typed and categorized following the same order. Each of the methods used – interviews, group discussions and questionnaires – were for complementarity and validity purposes. Necessary information was retained while unnecessary was discarded. All data collected was finally saved in a file and locked with a key in an external hard drive. Underneath is the definition of key concepts.

1.10 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

The title of this thesis is composed of several concepts. Concepts are often understood and interpreted differently and according to context. To minimize misunderstanding, a presentation of concepts that make up this dissertation's topic is important to orient the trend and context within which they are used herein.

1.10.1 Community Association

Community association has several definitions. However, to understand its definition and meaning as used herein, a look at separate definitions and meanings of community, association and the phenomenon itself is given below.

- **Community**

This is a concept that has no standard definition. It (community) can be defined in terms of locality, people, profession/occupation, education, culture, religion and recreation to name these. It can equally be seen to mean “urban”, national, or global ‘community’.

Etymologically, from the Latin word *communitatus*, the concept “community” is made up of three characteristics. The Latin prefix “Com-” means “with or together, “-munis-” means “gift, service or the exchanges a link” and the Latin suffix “-tatus” referring to “small or local”. Putting them together community would be seen as people living in a locality networking for various reasons. Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (OALD), (8th Edition) community is a noun defined as; 1. *“All the people who live in a particular area, country etc. when talked about as a group.* 2. *A group of people who share the same religion, race, job etc. (for instance, the polish community in London, ethnic community and farming community).* 3. *the feeling of sharing things and belonging to a group in the place where you live.* 4. *a group of plants and animals growing or living in the same place or environment.”* Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2005:247), defines community as a *“group of people living in one particular area or people considered as a unit because of their common interests, background or nationality.”* The fore definitions edify the concept “community”. Notwithstanding, community could mean “network” as defined by James *et al.* (2004), *“a group or network of persons who are connected (objectively) to each other by relatively durable social relations that extend beyond immediate genealogical ties*

and who mutually define that relationship (subjectively) as important to their social identity and social practice” James et al (2004:14). This point of view tallies with that of Vogl (2009) who defines community as the creation of bonds between clusters of people feeling a sense of unity/belonging.

Rapport & Overing (2004) hold that in anthropology one might usefully isolate three broad variants of a traditional approach. Thus ‘community’ is to be characterized in terms of (i) common interests between people; or (ii) a common ecology and locality; or (iii) a common social system or structure. According to this author, a community is made up of people living in the same location with shared interests, organizational structure and way of life. The definition by Rapport & Overing (2004) and the third of OALD form the foundation of how this work looks at the concept “community”. Hence community is made up of people from/living in same location and sharing feelings of belonging and interests. Feelings of belonging could be associated to community of origin, common school attended, leisure, occupation, and religion to name these. These several types of communities can be broadly categorized into intra (common community of origin) and inter-community (diverse communities but connected by occupation, education and leisure) in this work.

- **Association**

Many authors have defined this concept differently. Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2005:67), defines it as *“a group of people who are united for a particular purpose”*. This is confirmed by Doffana (2005), who says it is a pattern of individual and group relations and technical arrangement of parts in a whole. These authors both refer to association as a collective action. Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (OALD), defines association as a noun defined as 1. *“an official group of people who have joined together for a particular purpose (organization),* 2. *a connection or relationship between people or organizations.* 3. *an idea or memory that is suggested by somebody/something.”* While agreeing with the above definitions, this study finds interest in the first definition of OALD however, community associations are not always official.

- **Community Association**

Most city dwellers in Yaoundé, belong to one form of association or another. The two words “community” and “association” combined would read “community association.” Several

authors have defined community association differently. Community association is alternatively known as “Hometown Associations” (HTA) at the international level (Orozco, 2003), stokvels in South Africa, Isusu in Nigeria, Susu in Ghana, KO in Japan and “Njangi” or “tontin” (Gladwin, 1992), in Cameroon. “Njangi” by Anglophones or tontin by Francophones is variably known as “ngwa’a” in Nso, “tontin” in Bamileke, and “nkoan” in Beti. While membership and socio-cultural practices of these associations may appear distinct, and exclusionary, suggesting a semblance of independence and alterity, they are part of a continuous larger cultural whole from which they borrow and in turn lend cultures. Nnam *et al* (2013) believe that associations have to a great extent, maintained social order, progress, stability and peaceful coexistence in society, beginning from the pre-colonial era to present. They have however, not been seen as potential agents for the promotion of living together.

Belonging allows members to interact, communicate, socialize, network, and share common characteristics such as behaviour, attitude, norms, arts, and values. In a society where active traditional associations exist; members rarely deviate from the normative principles and social conventions. World Bank (2004) says CA are small philanthropic organizations that generally aid their communities of origin with members participating in (shared perceptions and interpretations) development efforts. Orozco & Rouse (2007) define community organizations as organizations that allow migrants from the same city or region to maintain ties with and materially support their place of origin. According to a report by Somerville, Durana, and Terrazas (2008), Hometown Associations are immigrant organizations based on common hometown and are typically informal, voluntary groups that bring members together for social, cultural, political empowerment, and economic development goals. HTAs also symbolize integration intermediaries in their country of destination.

From an anthropological viewpoint, Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), use the term “elite association” to symbolise urban-based associations made up of educated men and women who identify with a particular region or “ethnic” group, with examples such as; the country, Lion’s Clubs, schools and college associations, Church groups and other fund-raising organisations as examples of such associations. In furtherance of their arguments, they hold that community association meant a responsibility of educated elites to help others from the same family (community) and to pass the benefits of their success back to their village of origin. These authors

refer to association as a collective action, with shared responsibility. They display the nature, structure and functions of associations. However, an association is created once a group of people recognize their distinct commonness, unite to defend it and work for shared interests.

In this thesis community association is **a cultural practice established by a group of individuals with shared symbolic perceptions and interpretations to respond to individual, communal and societal needs.** They regroup persons based on commonality such as ethnicity, education, leisure, religion, neighbourhood and profession with shared feelings and interests for the sake of unity, mutual aid and community development. These associations have been broadly categorized into intra-community and inter-community associations. Intra-community associations are formed based on a common community of origin (with ethnic connotations) while intercommunity associations are associations whose membership are culturally diverse.

This categorization is based on membership – who members are and how they are recruited. Normally and within the scope of this work, membership is what determines belonging to an association. Bonds and networks are the foundation of associations that keep members glued to one another. Intercommunity association enrolls members cross-culturally while intra-community associations recruit members from common community of origin. Looking at their influence on multiculturalism in Yaoundé, intra-community associations is the base of contention. Intra-community associations are what Yenshu Vubo (2008), describe as associations that go under the much-pidginized terminology of ‘meetings’ (meaning ‘association’) or ‘efferti’ alternatively called “njangi groups”.

In this work intra-community associations enroll members based on common community of origin, practicing socio-cultural activities for unity, mutual aid, community development and cultural sustainability. Yenshu Vubo (2008), agrees that:

In general, associations will vary according to the sector of main preoccupation (economy and finance, culture and tradition, the social or solidarity based), according to intensity of social bonds, and the degree of resilience of structure and duration [...] We will examine the associations under two broad categories depending on the domain of activity. One can affirm that although association life is generally built around solidarity, the rallying point will vary according to whether we are talking of the economy, culture, the exercise of authority, or the enforcement of social bonds. For purposes of this study we will refer to two main categories: the economy, on the one

hand, and culture, social solidarity and tradition on the other. (Yenshu Vubo, 2008: 98).

This author classifies associations based on their activities into economic and socio-cultural categories. Deviating from the author, community associations are categorized into intercommunity and intra-community associations based on ethnicity and membership. Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998) explain that these associations are created for mutual aid and community development. Community associations are involved in three main socio-cultural activities established below.

1.10.2 Socio-Cultural Activity

Etymologically, Oxford English Dictionary (2015: 1414) “Socio” is a word connected to society, while “cultural” is related to the culture of people of a particular society or group, (Oxford English Dictionary, 2015: 357). Activity on the other hand is a word linked to a situation in which a thing or things are being done, (Oxford English Dictionary, 2015:14). Merging the three words produces “socio-cultural activity”, implying a blend of social and cultural activities.

The etymology of the concept “socio-cultural activity” from birth implies the nature of the processes taking place in an area, in which the activity orientation develops. Socio-cultural activities as njangi, thrift and loans, sinking fund, all types of events and festivals among others, of intra-community associations are put together to examine the influence of same association on multiculturalism. Vladyslava (2019), considers socio-cultural activities in two senses:

- In the broad sense - as a way of human existence, as a system of inherited experience, as a material and spiritual environment that will contribute to the formation and elevation of man;
- In the narrow sense - as a certain form of people's life, including the preservation and use of cultural and historical heritage (museum, library, archival affairs, national and local traditions), artistic education, creativity, leisure and entertainment organization, amateurism, ethnography, crafts, as well as provides the form [...] and the formation of their professional orientation as objects and subjects of socio-cultural activities (Vladyslava, 2019: 21).

In addition to the fore, associations also practice economic activities. This work finds interest in the role of these associations especially regarding how people’s behaviour are fashioned by such activities. The perspective of socio-cultural activities above bring out the perception used

in this work to explain how intra-community associations influence multiculturalism. This is consequent to the fact that humans in their culture, partake in socio-cultural and economic activities with symbols that create meaningful relationships. Armed with the above, a look at multiculturalism is the next point of focus.

1.10.3 Multiculturalism

Śliz and Szczepański (2017), argue that multiculturalism is hardly a new phenomenon in the academic milieu. However, multiculturalism cannot be understood without a good knowledge of culture. Hence, an attempt to answer to the question; “what is culture?”

1.10.3.1. Culture

Urban dwellers live in the same space but are withdrawn to several boundaries of spatial – ethnic – distinction (Tonkiss, 2005), enforced by institutions such as community associations through which cultural identities are created, represented, and recreated. Community association is one of such organizations where people represent, create and recreate culture. Culture has been studied differently in different disciplines over time resulting to unlimited definitions and interpretations.

1.10.3.1.1. Definition and Meaning of Culture

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, (2015: 364) defines culture as; 1-way of life, the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group. 2- a country, group, in its own beliefs.

Anthropologically, according to Linton, “*culture itself is intangible and cannot be directly apprehended even by the individuals who participate in it*” (1936:288-89). Boas (1938: 59) defines same “*as the totality of the mental and physical reactions and activities that characterize the behavior of the individuals composing a social group.*” The most acclaimed definition of culture is that of the British anthropologist E. B. Taylor (1832-1917) which states that culture is “*that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.*” Geertz (1973) , in his book “*The Interpretation of Cultures*” confirms that culture is a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms through

which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life. From the above definitions, culture can be seen as ideas, beliefs and customs, of a community which are shared and learned. However, in communities, people are connected through social institutions such as families, job, education, leisure, business and associations. The first definition of culture which tallies with that of Idang (2015), would be considered. Hence culture can simply be defined as *“the way of life of people of any given community”*. The way of life of people is understood to mean everything about human beings, both material (such as buildings and roads) and non-material (such as stories, music and ideologies). The definition of culture outlines various factors of ‘difference’ that exist between communities, especially concerning multiculturalism and provides diverse ways of interpreting particular communities and the world at large. It can be transmitted from one community/association to another. It interprets human behaviour as well as human interactions and relationships. Many elements can be used to classify culture however, it has been categorized under material and immaterial culture.

1.10.3.1.2. Types of Culture

Alesina & Giuliano (2015) assert that people’s way of life can be materially or immaterially constructed.

1.10.3.1.2.1 Intangible Culture

These are immaterial culture. Idang (2015), studied African culture and values states that African culture is embedded in strong moral considerations. It has a system of various beliefs and customs which every individual is expected to keep so as to live long and to avoid curses on them and others. Values, norms, traditions, beliefs, customs, languages and symbols are intangible cultural elements and societal constructs. These elements influence people’s behaviour and are often used as standards to determine good, bad, right or wrong. There is often a direct relationship between the values - norms, traditions, beliefs, customs – and attitudes of a culture. These elements vary from one society to the next; however, they are strongly upheld in their unique cultures. Etuk (2002: 22), explains that *“no group of people can survive without a set of values which holds them together and guarantees their continued existence.”* These are written and/or unwritten, spoken or unspoken rules that regulate the behaviour of people in a community. Norms, customs, traditions and knowledge determine the belief systems of communities; used to decide between

good/right/accepted/normal and bad/wrong/unaccepted/abnormal. Such rules maybe formal/informal, however, respected by members of the community. They are also transmitted from one generation to the next. Language is one of the tools used for cultural transmission.

Language is a cultural element used for communication (Kottak, 2008; Alesina & Giuliano, 2015; and Lassiter, 2014). As a communication tool, it makes use of spoken and unspoken signs, symbols and gestures, such that combining them allows for an expression of their thoughts verbally or nonverbally. Language can also be a source of conflict if communication is poor (interrupted, loses meaning in the process, misinterpreted) or purposefully used to harm (such as in hate speech or stereotyping). The importance of language in this work lies in the unifying role it plays in community association since members use it to interact, socialize and connect with one another. Being the soul of every culture, language is a tool that allows human thoughts and experiences to be learned, shared, and transmitted from one generation to the next. The method of communication could be different according to context/community, but the expressions carry similar meanings.

1.10.3.1.2.2 Tangible Culture

These are material/palpable culture. Tangible elements of culture are palpable and constitute a community's material culture. These could be exemplified by houses people live in, association halls, tools/technology that people use to carry out daily activities, dresses worn by members of a community, the furniture and eating utensils to name these. Meanings attached to material culture differ from one community/association to another. What is multiculturalism?

1.10.3.2 What is Multiculturalism?

Multiculturalism has been variably defined by many authors. Singham (2006), holds that multiculturalism is a democracy; that everyone is treated equally, respected and enabled to preserve their dignity. Equality and fairness are the focus of this definition. LibreTexts (2021), defines multiculturalism as the existence, acceptance, or promotion of multiple cultural traditions within a single jurisdiction, usually considered in terms of the culture associated with an ethnic group. This can happen when a jurisdiction is created or expanded by amalgamating areas with two/many cultures – as in French and English Canada and Cameroon, or through immigration from different jurisdictions around the world – as in Australia, United States, United Kingdom, and many other countries. Yaoundé is such an amalgamation of French and English culture as well as

distinct national (ethnic) and international cultures. These diverse cultures live together in the city of Yaoundé. Multiculturalism has been defined as the acceptance of cultural diversity (Prato, 2021) as well as the wealth of a culturally diverse society (Barakoska, 2013). However, the question is, do communities accept one another?

From an Anthropological lens, Erikson (2015:29), edifies that: *“multiculturalism refers to the coexistence of ‘several cultures’ within a single society.”* In everyday colloquial use, multiculturalism is a phenomenon synonymous to cultural pluralism (the co-existence of several cultures, communities) in a geographical location over some time while preserving their distinct cultural identities. Etymologically, the concept “multicultural” can be broken down into two syllables: “multi” and “culture”. From the Latin prefix “multi”, it refers to many or much. Culture depicts the way of life of people of a community. Hence within the context of this work, bringing together “multi” and “culture” would result in multicultural. Multicultural is defined as sub-cultures cohabiting same space each respecting, accepting, tolerating and affirming the other. This tallies with *“...a feel-good celebration of ethnocultural diversity, encouraging citizens to acknowledge and embrace the panoply of customs, traditions... that exist in a multi-ethnic society”* (Kymlicka, 2010: 33). This work allies with Erikson’s view of multiculturalism. This dissertation seeks to reveal whether cultural associations enforce multiculturalism or not in Yaoundé urban area. Notwithstanding Socpa (2002), says the diversity of communities in Cameroon makes social cohesion a perpetual hindrance in the country. Consequent to socio-cultural tensions in urban areas, a quest for living together is inevitable. Multiculturalism in this **work is understood as the coexistence of cultures within a given space and time**. Hence each culture accepting and respecting the other while preserving their unique identities. Haven seen the above concepts urban area is the next concept to define.

1.11 Urban Area

This concept, like many others, has diverse definitions. In urban economics Quigley (2008), argues that urban area is defined based on instruments such as education, housing, crime, public transport and local government finance to analyze urban issues. Urban anthropology deviates to focus on the definition of urban area from a cultural stance. Urban anthropology studies cultural systems and identities in towns, paying attention to the socio-cultural, political and

economic factors that design urban areas. Lee, Wakamiya, & Sumiya (2013), defines urban characteristics in terms of crowd behavior. In this dissertation urban area as opposed to rural area, is a space made up of multiple co-existing cultures – communities. Yaoundé is made up of about 250 co-existing communities and most of them have associations. Nonetheless, methodologically this work settled to work with associations from eight (8) communities; Beti, Nso, Bamileke, Bamum, Bayang, Bassa, Duala and the Northerners. Elaborating on the research area is our next point of focus.

CHAPTER TWO

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY SITE

Chapter two situates Yaoundé urban area where the thesis was carried out. Yaoundé is found in Mfoundi Division in the Centre Region of Cameroon. Eight communities were studied to wit: Beti, the original occupants, and Nso, Bamum, Bamileke, Bayang, Bassa Duala and the Northerners (other occupants). Basic information on these aspects of our work entails the chapter be arranged in two sections; a monograph of Yaoundé and some communities settled in Yaoundé.

2.1 MONOGRAPHY OF YAOUNDE

This monography takes into consideration the geography, history and socio-economic setting.

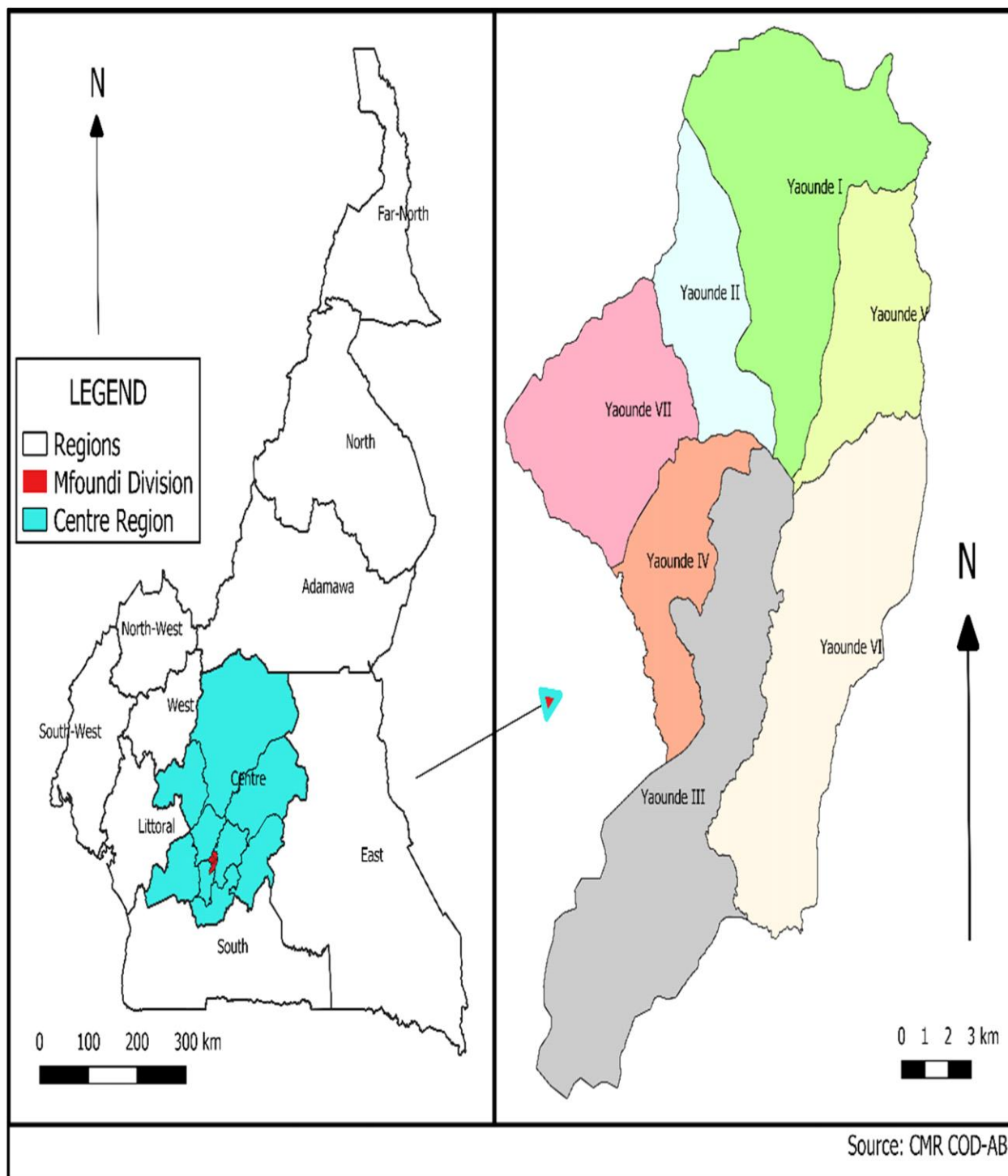
2.1.1 GEOGRAPHY

The geographic information is discussed under the following subtitles: location of Yaoundé, climate, relief, and population.

2.1.1.1 Location of Yaoundé

Yaoundé is the administrative capital of Cameroon. It is in the Centre Region, Mfoundi division precisely. It has an approximate surface area of 180m². Yaoundé is situated between latitudes 3°45'50" and 3°59'55" North and longitudes 11°22'40" and 11°30'25" East of the Greenwich Meridian with an altitude of 760 m. It is also known as "*La Ville aux Sept Collins*" because it is surrounded by seven hills that offer its particular features. Coupled with varying temperatures, Yaoundé is an appropriate host to people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Being in a mountainous terrain keeps people apart, with a considerable influence on their lifestyle. Hence many communities create associations to maintain ties with each other and those back in their community of origin. Yaoundé urban area is composed of seven Subdivisions namely, Yaoundé I, II, III, IV, V, VI and VII. These will be seen later. Yaoundé is an urban area and main city of Mfoundi with the following geographical limitations: to the West by the Nbankomo, to the East by Mefou-Afamba, to the South by Mefou-Akono, and to the North by Okola. The map presented below indicates the location of Yaoundé in the Centre region of Cameroon.

Map 1: Cameroon map showing the Centre Region and Yaoundé



Source: Adapted from Fannyuy K., et al (2020). Potentials of sustainable electricity production from sawdust by small-scale wood transformation units: a case study in Cameroon. 10.1007/s40095-020-00362-0. International Journal of Energy and Environmental Engineering.

Map one (1) shows different regions of Cameroon. The study area is Yaoundé and boldly highlighted on the map with a blue colour. The blue colour makes it possible for the study area to be distinguished in Cameroon Map. Yaoundé urban area has further been extracted and displayed to right showing all the seven Subdivisions. This dissertation covered all the seven Subdivisions of Yaoundé urban area, presenting a rich cultural mosaic of the city.

2.1.1.2 Climate

Yaoundé presents a tropical wet and dry climate. This renders Yaoundé friendly and hospitable to people from varying climate zones locally and worldwide. Consequently, administrative, political, diplomatic, as well as economic and other structures are represented herein. There are two principal seasons in Yaoundé dry and rainy. The rainy season stretches from February to November. Notwithstanding, Yaoundé has seemingly two rainy seasons due to diminished rainfall during July and August. Yaoundé has an average annual rainfall of 1600 mm with temperatures of approximately 23.5° C. This favourable climate makes agriculture one of the artisanal activities of the autochthones (Beti) of Yaoundé. As a result, crops such as maize, yams, cassava, and groundnuts are predominantly planted in the wake of the rainy season and serve as the main crops grown in the town amid others. These crops influence the eating habits of the diverse population of Yaoundé city since most migrants are familiar with them. Current climatic changes make prediction of seasonal changes difficult. This impacts association lifestyle. Difficulties in anticipating climatic conditions (such as sudden rainfall during the dry season and vice versa) obstruct makes it almost impossible for people plan certain activities ahead. For example, sudden rainfall may stop members from attending a meeting or festival. Despite the fore, good climatic conditions favour associations allowing them to carry out their activities smoothly. Climate, as well as the relief, constitutes characteristics of the city of Yaoundé which affect association life. This explains why the next feature is the relief of Yaoundé.

2.1.1.3 Relief

Located in the heart of the dense rainforest in the Centre Region of Cameroon, Yaoundé lies at a 750m height above sea level. As Tchindjang *et al* (2020:3), put it, Yaoundé is “located between the Sanaga (918 km length) and the Nyong (750 km length) are the main rivers watering

the region and the surrounding areas with their tributaries (Lom, Djérem, Mbam, Mfoumou, Mefou, So'o and Kellé),” with an undulating relief. The soil is claylike and reddish, used by the local population to make bricks for the building of houses. The dominant vegetation is a dense forest which allows natives to practice hunting though it is gradually being transformed into farmlands for human habitation.

Yaoundé is characterized by seven mountains and valleys, hence its name “La Ville aux Sept Collins”. According to Tiafack & Mbon (2017) these seven mountains are Mt Febe (1073 m), Mt Mbankolo (1098 m), Mt Messa (1015 m), Nkolondom (1221 m), Akok-Ndoe (967 m), Mbekoum (953 m) and Minloua (966 m).

Mount Fébé is neighbours with the Yaoundé Congress Hall in the Tsinga neighbourhood. The Hôtel Fébé – one of the famous hotels of the city, found on the foot of the mountain increased the popularity of the mountain. Mount Fébé equally hosts a Monastery which offers retreat to individuals and some members of these associations when they want to recollect themselves from the busy nature of the city. Mount Mbankolo is significant because it forms the naming base of the Mbankolo quarter. Human habitation has been made easy by the plateau (flattened nature) of some of the mountain tops, plains and valleys. Consequently, some communities have constructed association halls for their activities. Some of the buildings have halls which are rented out for various types of events to generate income for the communities concerned. Since culture's prime tenet is preserving the continuity of the people, population is the next point of interest.

2.1.1.4 Population

The population of Yaoundé has been witnessing exponential growth since it became the political capital in 1921. This is historically because that Yaoundé (the French-speaking parts of Cameroon) at the time was politically more active than the English section, making it possible for the retention of Yaoundé as the capital city amid other reasons. The increase in population led to the construction of road networks to facilitate mobility. Educational centres, churches and other social amenities were put in place to contain the socio-cultural needs of the ever-increasing population. Other factors that influenced the constant swelling of Yaoundé population range from the 1972 centralization policy of government administration and functions to its favourable

climate, the creation of the University of Yaoundé in 1962, food abundance, and availability of unskilled jobs. This cosmopolitan town recorded a population of about 1,500,000 inhabitants in 2002. According to statistics taken from the 3rd general population census of the habitat in Yaoundé on March 30th, 2010, Yaoundé covered a surface area of about 304 km² with a population estimated in 2005 at about 1 817 524 inhabitants thus an average population density of about 5 691 inhabitants per km². The growth rate of the city of Yaoundé is above that of the entire country notably; it registered a yearly natural growth rate of 4 per cent whereas that of the country stood at 2.3 per cent. At this same period, it was recorded that for 20 years the migration balance rate stood between 4 to 5 percent. The annual growth of the population is estimated at an average of 2.8 per cent between 1987 and 2005.

Most recently the Anglophone crisis (Ekah, 2020), locally called “*No-So*” – constricted form of North West and South West regions – that resulted to socio-cultural instability in the North West and South West regions of the nation, insurgencies in the East and Northern parts of the country have forced people to relocate and take refuge in cities such as Duala, Nkongsamba, Bafoussam and Yaoundé considered safe. Internally displaced people consider Yaoundé the major hub. The constant population increase plays on the socio-cultural and economic life pattern of Yaoundé urban dwellers. Due to cultural differences and population bulge, people from same ethnic community of origin stay distantly apart from one another further increasing the desire for the creation of community associations. These associations as mentioned are meant to bring people together for socio-cultural, economic and developmental reasons. The socio-cultural dimension, especially living together and cohesion is of interest to our study.

Prior to colonization, Yaoundé was typically made up of the Beti population. Today it is a cosmopolitan city due to rural-urban migration in the later years. Tamba (2016:30), holds that: “*totaling around two million people, the Beti constitute a more or less homogeneous entity, as far as language and culture are concerned.*” This population has increased with people from diverse ethnic origins now settled in Yaoundé. Nationals from neighbouring countries have equally found a home in Yaoundé, making the city an interestingly diversified place to live. Hence Yaoundé has become an urban attraction to many despite its challenges as shown below.

2.1.2 Urbanization

Urbanization and population bulge constitute one of Africa's challenging issues. An increase in population growth influences other factors in urban areas. This phenomenon in Yaoundé apart from social conflict caused by linguistic factors as seen in this work, increases pressure on food production/consumption and pushes the poor masses to exploit slums and marshy areas for habitation among others. According to Tchindjang (2012), Cameroon's urbanization rate increased from 37.08% in 1987 to 47.2% in 1997. In 2010, it reached a total rate of 52% with small discrepancies within the regions, with Duala and Yaoundé holding more than 75%. In Yaoundé, the rate of urbanization has moved from 37.8% in 1987 to 48.8% in 2005. According to the United Nations Statistics Division, Cameroon's urban population in 2011 witnessed a growth of 52.1% of the total population with an estimated urban growth rate of 3.2% between 2010 and 2015 (UN-World Statistics Pocket Book, 2013).

The town today has become cosmopolitan with substantial population growth displaying a variety of settlements and living standards. Its population is a unification of Cameroonian communities as well as foreigners. Urbanization, despite being a requisite of modernization and globalization, especially judging from a cultural point of view, becomes a factor not only of development in Yaoundé but equally impoverishes the masses in different ways.

Urbanization in Yaoundé equally exhibits some sort of social stratification. This is described through a relationship between the privileged and the under-privileged, whereby the privileged (rich or 'haves') and the under-privileged (poor or 'have-nots') live in contrasting prestigious and less prestigious localities. This dichotomy does not present absolute parallels because both the "privileged" and the "less privileged" today cohabit certain contrasting localities. The dichotomy exists between quarters such as Tsinga Elobi, known for scrap business and car spare parts dominated by Nigerians, Northerners, Central Africans, Senegalese, restaurants, tailoring and dominant markets for cattle and sheep, Carrefour Carrier, with slumps extending towards Mbankolo, Mokolo with business dominated by Bamileke community members engaged in building materials restaurants along the stretch to Mokolo. The road infrastructures in the recent past have been and are still undergoing maintenance – potholes are identified and repaired in major and quarter roads. Certain neighborhoods are tarred and others are observing road widening or

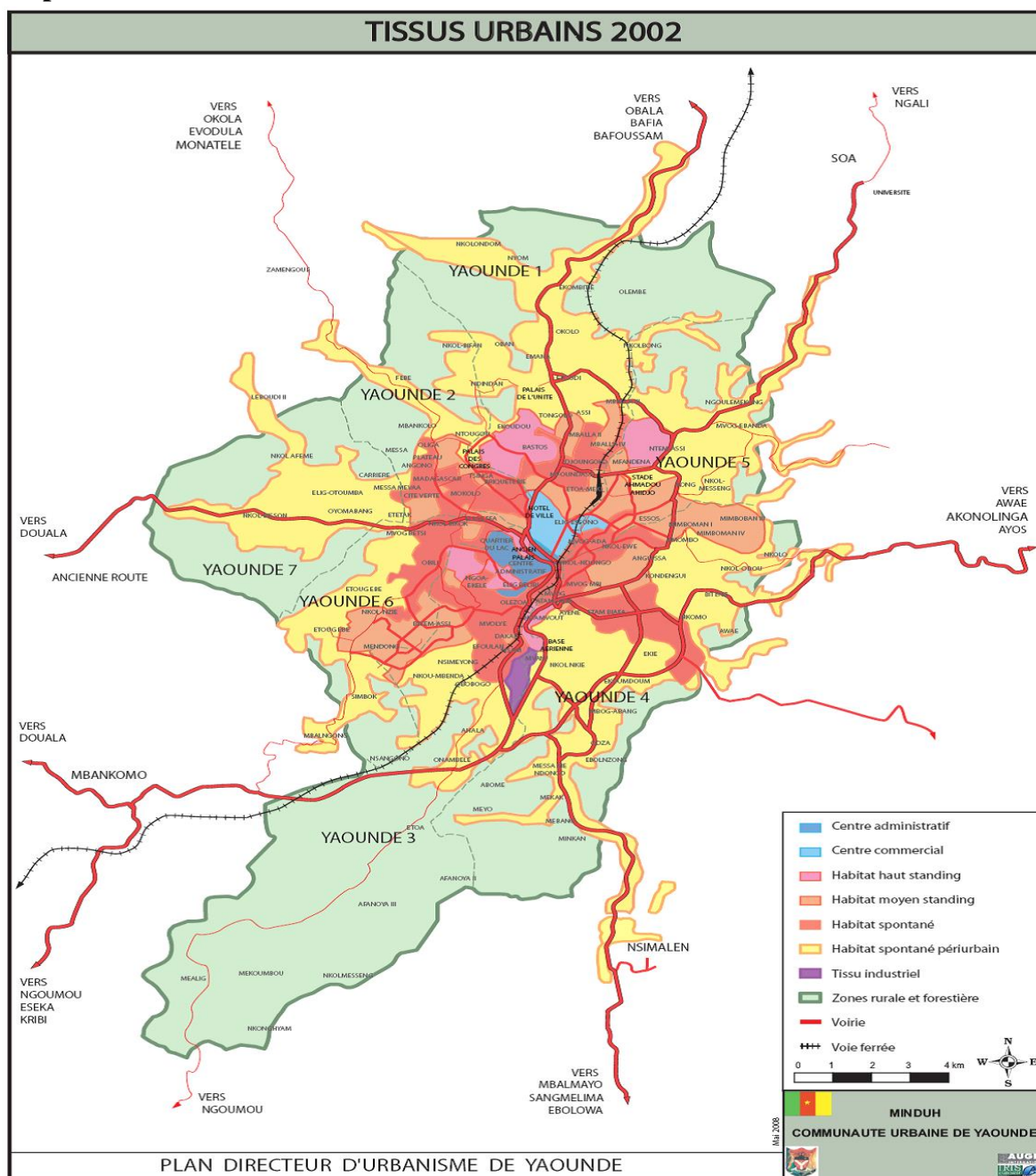
completion of reconstruction works. Localities such as the Odza, Damas, Nsimalen stretch, Biyem-Assi, Nlongkak, Olezoa, Emana to name these both in quality and quantity. These projects have improved the state of roads in Yaoundé – reducing their bumpy nature and making internal commuting enjoyable, achieved through the tripartite services of the Yaoundé City Council, Ministry of Public Works and Ministry of Urban Development.

Observation shows that work done by the above institutions has equally improved the scenario of habitation of certain quarters while others are yet to be visited. For instance, moving through the Bastos neighbourhood, commonly known in its French appellation “quartier des riches” shows well-mapped roads and good housing. The same goes for certain areas such as Biyem-Assi (around Monte Maison Blanche), Cite Verte and recently constructed low-cost houses in neighbourhoods such as Olembe. Olembe equally boasts of a giant stadium (Olembe stadium) which together with the Japoma stadium of Duala, the Limbe Omnisport Stadium, among others are earmarked as host of AFCON 2021.

Quarters in Yaoundé such as Briqueterie and Elig-Edzoa depict areas inhabited by the “have-nots” – the underprivileged. Paradoxically, renowned commercial activities are in operation in these places, a sign that they are not inhabited by just the have-nots (less privileged) but the haves - privileged - as well. The urbanization process of Yaoundé has attracted migrants from culturally diverse communities who have put in place community associations for socio-cultural and economic reasons. Today, the Beti who were the first settlers in this urban space occupy it with other local and internal communities.

The confluence of diverse communities (local and international) has created a sort of cultural “salad bowl” in Yaoundé. However, the diversity of Cameroon’s population resident in Yaoundé is challenged by intermittent social conflicts hindering cohesion (Socpa, 2002). The confluence of associations in Yaoundé is an important factor that can create enabling grounds for social cohesion. Diversity breathes development since people from different cultures have different ways of perceiving and interpreting of ideas. As such, a variety of ideas can be harnessed from different communities that will assist in making the city a place where living together becomes redundant. The Map Three presented underneath shows settlement patterns in Yaoundé.

Map 2: Settlement in Yaounde



Source : Extracted from Ntomba, G.E. (2007) *Planification Urbaine du Cameroun: Cas de la Ville de Yaoundé. Une Présentation du Plan Directeur d'Urbanisme de Yaoundé (PDU) horizon 2020. Yaoundé: CUY*

Map Two (2) is a representation of the urbanization of Yaoundé, showing the settlement patterns in the city as illustrated by various colours in the key. Color blue shows administrative concentration, sky blue depicts commercial areas, pink portrays an area for the “*haves*” (rich), pale

brown is for the “*have-nots*” (the poor), brown is a random settlement zone, while purple is for industrialized zone, and finally the rural and forest areas.

2.2 HISTORY OF YAOUNDE

The history of Yaoundé looks at the etymology of the name, the origin of Yaoundé, migration and settlement of people in the city of Yaoundé.

2.2.1 Etymology of the Name Yaoundé

Located in the south-centre of Cameroon, Yaoundé is a metropolitan town which historically and tracking successive migration, was initially inhabited by the *Beti-Pahuin*, “autochthones” before the coming of the Germans and subsequent “allogenes” – strangers/migrants. The historical evolution of the colonialists of Cameroon has a remarkable influence on the etymological evolution of the name Yaoundé. The name Yaoundé is from the Ewondo-Beti language “Ongola”, which signifies ‘the Ewondo fence’, loosely translated from French, “la clôture des Ewondos”. This fence represents the old German post office wall of Yaoundé presently known as “post central”. In 1889, German traders in their quest to establish camps faced rigid resistance from the Vouté and Eton clans and finally settled in the Ewondo (the mainstream ethnic group) section of the city. They named it Jaunde and subsequently ‘Yaunde’ while the French called it Yaoundé (an appellation that has stood the taste of time). It is spelt and pronounced differently by different countries; the British spell it Yaoundé, the French: Yaoundé; and the Germans: Jaunde. Following the bilingual nature of Cameroon, Yaoundé is equally known as “the City of Seven Hills”, a translation from its French version, “La Ville aux Sept Collins”.

2.2.2 The origin of the Urban Area “Yaounde”

Germans headed by Captain Kund Tapenbeck arrived Yaoundé in 1887 and used it as a military base to fight slave trade. While there, they met some locales farming groundnuts. When asked what they were doing, their reply was; “Mia Wondo” meaning we are ground nut planters. The Germans did not understand what the farmers said, so they named them “Jaundé”. Yaoundé is a word that originates from “Ongola” meaning “fence/enclose”. The word fence/closure is derived from the anecdote wherein Ombga Bissogo asked Essono Ela, the man who took in the first white

German- in 1889 demanded for a piece of land. He later enclosed the land with a fence. The Germans: Kurt Morgen, George Zenker and their guide Mebenga Mebono founded the capital city Yaoundé in March 23rd 1921. According to Monju (2019), the village from which the capital city was born had only 50 huts.

The evolution of Cameroon's capital city is summarily from Buea to Douala, and then Yaoundé. Following its defeat, Germany by 1918 was no longer the colonial master of the country. Yaoundé is found in Mfoundi Division of the Centre region. The 1921 condominium split Cameroon into two Britain and France. Yaoundé at this time was under the French Protectorate by the League of Nation and capital of Cameroon – a status quo which has been maintained till present. Pondi (2012), sustains that the Germans were inspired to make Yaoundé the capital city of Cameroon because of its geographic and strategic position – its favourable climate, temperature and the hospitable nature of its people. The colonial German logic accepted the notion of “*base arriere*” - rear base in English. These qualities and others put together have made Yaoundé a multicultural town embracing people not just from local ethnicities but internationally as well.

2.2.3 First Settlers of Yaoundé

Oral history has it that the Beti-Pahuin, descendants of the Azande from Sudan migrated into Cameroon and settled around Adamawa. Their stay there (in Adamawa) was however short-lived as they were forced to migrate southward due to the Jihadist movement. Monju (2019: 53), tells us that their migration coincided with the jihad and Fulbe (Fula) conquests of Usman Dan Fodio and his lieutenant, Modibo Adama, in the early 19th century. Thus, due to pressure from Fulbe raiders, the Babute and the Mbum fled once more into Beti-Pahuin lands, forcing the Beti-Pahuin to relocate once again.

This movement directed the Beti-Pahuin to Yaoundé, making them the indigenous occupants of the space, Ewondo being the first occupants of Yaoundé. Yaoundé was named after these settlers by the Germans. Tamba (2013:30), confirms the fore stating that: “*the Bèti occupy a major part of the Central and South regions of the country.*” According to Holly (2002), the collective people called Azante are a blend of separate clans. The Azende people live in a large area in Centre of Africa, in the South Western, North of Zaire – Democratic Republic of Congo

and to the east of the Central African Republic. The Beti are Bantu people, who are categorized under the Beti-Pahuin community (ethnic) and are commonly called “Beti” in Cameroon. The Beti are found in Cameroon, more precisely in the Centre region, Gabon, S \tilde{o} a Tom \acute{e} , Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Pr \acute{u} ncipe.

The Beti have a common origin and similar way of life. Those of the Centre region of Cameroon are made up of the Ewondo (more precisely Kolo), Bane, Fang, Mbida-Mbane, Mvog-Nyenge, and Eton (or Iton). Ewondo otherwise known as “Kolo” is a language spoken by Ewondo population of Cameroon. Kolo is spoken by over 500,000 native speakers (Mbanam: 2016). Some of their culture and belief systems were compromised by the Germans.

The Beti-Pahuin of Cameroon was visited by the colonial masters – Germans around 1887, who reproached the culture and belief system of the Beti. For instance, Luongo (2006:30) notes that: *“part of this process was the Germans saying that African culture was primitive, savage, childish, unevolved, and inferior and many Beti believing it, or at least having serious doubts about the worth and value of their traditions.”* The author further expressed the diminution of the Beti “**Sso**” rite but countermands itself with its analysis of the outlawing of widow and slave funereal sacrifice, stating that the “**Sso**” rite diminished over a decade or so with the presence and spread of colonial administration-missionary. Monju (2019), added that the Germans suppressed native customs which they deemed “barbaric” or unsavoury. These are exemplified by the sacrifice of a chief’s wives after his death and the “**Sso**” initiation rite. Equally, according to Holly (2002), their relocation disrupted their culture and beliefs. Hence the presence of the Germans and the constant movement of the Beti had an impact on their culture. The abolition of certain repugnant – according to the Germans – customs of the Beti was partial because other such practices like sex and slave trade weren’t banned. The Germans needed laborers for their plantations so they allowed the slave trade business to flourish and they used the locals for their socio-economic gain.

Following the defeat of the Germans at the end of World War I, their colonial territories including Yaound \acute{e} were succeeded by the French. The French took over the plantations and followed the paths of the Germans. The French differed from the Germans in that they allowed African territories to be autonomous. This autonomy introduced the first-ever community association in Cameroon by the Beti community. Monju (2019:56), views that: *“[...] the Beti-*

Pahuin were quick to seize upon it. An early example was the Bulu tribal union, a group of representatives from all clans who met to establish common tribal policies.” By the end of the colonial period, the Beti-Pahuin had registered successes in cocoa farming and made them politically strong. Hence association life is part of the Beti culture.

2.2.4 Co-occupants

The settlement of the Beti-Pahuin in Yaoundé made them the indigenous occupants of Yaoundé. However, other migrant communities who fled the Fulani raids also came to Yaoundé. The Beti-Pahuin would soon face confrontations from these migrant populations. Monju (2019), explains that some of the ethnic groups were very hostile toward indigenous groups during the process of migration. Hostility at that time was the only tool to conquer territories and impose hegemony. The Beti-Pahuin was not an exception to hostilities. Historical facts reveal that the Beti-Pahuin were militarily superior (Mbanam, 2016) and thus could dominate most of the indigenous tribes on their way. Groups who refused or resisted assimilation had no choice but to flee (Tchindjang et al 2012). The Maka who for instance were living south of the Lom River fled to the south and east upon the Beti-Pahuin's arrival. Yaoundé is the political capital of Cameroon, an attraction to its ever-rising population.

While holding a grip of the territory, other communities in search of jobs at the German plantations streaming in, increasing the population of Yaoundé. According to Mbanam (2016), the population growth was slow in the beginning. Rural-urban migration was massive towards Douala then later after 1957 Yaoundé witnessed a significant population increase because there was Cocoa crisis in Douala since this was a very important cash crop. The Beti-Pahuin took advantage of the situation; recruited more labourers, intensified their cultivation skills, succeeded in cocoa production, gained wealth and political authority not just in Yaoundé but in Cameroon as a whole. With an improved socio-cultural, economic and political status, Yaoundé became a confluence point and attraction for migrant communities. The inflow of people both locally and internationally created a cultural mosaic. This is affirmed by Tchindjang et al (2012:2), who wrote that: *“Yaoundé carries today more than 269,000 accommodations with more than 1,500,000 inhabitants on 14,500ha with a variety standard of life and housing qualities”*.

Population influx in Yaoundé has continued especially as vulnerable communities keep coming in from the North West and South West regions, the East and the Northern parts of Cameroon in search of security. According to the UN World Urbanization Prospects, Yaoundé's population in 1950, was 31,644. It has grown to 171,756 since 2015, representing a 4.30% annual change. In 2020 it stood at 3,992,000 and the 2021 projection of the population of Yaoundé is 4,164,000 inhabitants. Thus, Yaoundé which was predominantly occupied by the Ewondo is now an assortment of Cameroonian ethnic and many international communities.

2.3 PEOPLE OF YAOUNDE AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Cameroon's greatest wealth is its people – a culturally diverse population. Irina Bokova Director-General of UNESCO on the occasion of the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, held on the 21st of May 2017, reiterated that: “*Cameroon is an example of diversity to the world*”. According to Ruppel and Ruppel-Schlichting (2018), Cameroon is an “ethnically” (culturally) diverse country with about 250 communities. Some of the communities are interrelated while others have been assimilated into other groups through years of interaction. The cultural diversity of this city is a result of migration and immigration bringing together about 250 local and several international communities respectively while expanding its demography. Most international communities in Yaoundé came through diplomatic missions and are mostly found in Bastos. This is a quarter known to be inhabited by the haves due to high living standards. The incoming population increased the diversity of Yaoundé. All the 250 communities that makeup Cameroon are represented in the city of Yaoundé. However, the major ethnic groups under study are the Bamileke and Bamum from the Western region, the northerners from the North, the Nso from the North West, and Bayang from the South West, the Duala and the Bassa from the Littoral.

According to Local Youth Corner Cameroon (2019), Cameroon is culturally divided into four main parts (Sudano-Sahel, Grassfield, Sawa and Fang Beti) and linguistically, between the Anglophone (English) and Francophone (French). The population predominantly described as Francophone constitutes approximately 80% of the total population with the Anglophone minority constituting the remaining 20%. In all, Cameroon has ten geographical regions (Far North, North, Adamawa, Center, South, East, South, Littoral, Southwest and Northwest) with eight (8) located

in the Francophone region and the remaining two (2) in the Anglophone region. Going by the International Federation of Library Associations, Cameroon's communities are categorized under three language groups: Bantus, Semi-Bantus, and Sudanese. French and English are the official languages, spoken by 70% and 30% of the population, respectively by French-speaking and English-speaking Cameroonians. A representation of Cameroon's diverse communities settled in Yaoundé can be categorized in like manner.

2.3.1 The Bantu Group

This is a group of communities who speak Bantoid languages possessing cultures of Central and Southern Africa. They include Beti, Maka, Douala, Batanga, Bakweri, Bassa, Mbo, Bakundu, Bayang, and Pygmies (Pygmies are the oldest inhabitants of Cameroon. Locally known as the Babinga and Baguielli, they live in the southern forests), Malimba, and Bakoko.

2.3.2 The Semi-Bantu Group

They typically speak languages of West Africa usually associated with the Niger-Congo and spoken by communities of the Western grass-fields as well as parts of Adamawa, Northwest, and Southwest. They include but are not limited to Bamileke, Bamum, and Nso (the Tikars).

2.3.3 The Sudanic Speaking Group

This refers to communities speaking the Sudanic languages principally Arabic and showing cultural characteristics of same. According to Benneh & DeLancey (2020), the Sudanic-speaking peoples include the Sao, who live on the Adamawa Plateau, made up of the Fulani, Fulbe, Mafa, Toupouri, Shoa-Arabs, Moundang, Massa, Mousgoum, Kanuri, Guisga, Mataka ND Kapsiki.

According to Monju (2019), a summary of the composition of diverse communities of Yaoundé is displayed in the table below.

Table 2: ‘Ethnic’ Composition of Yaoundé

Main ethnic groups						Total
Mbamois and assimilated	Bassa and Assimilated	Bamileke and assimilated	Beti and assimilate	Other ethnic groups		
Yambassa (2.2)	Bakossi (0.2)	Bamileke (33.3)	Maka (1.2)	-Arab Choa & Massa (0.5)	-Koto & Mafa (0.3)	
Bafia (2.2)	Bakweri (0.3)	Bamum (1.1)	Baya (0.2)	-Mofou (0.2)	-Matakam & Tikar (0.3)	
Others (2.0)	Bakundo (1.2)	[Nso (0.4)	Bulu (3.3)	-	-Toupouri (0.5)	
	Douala (1.6)	Meta (0.4)	Eton (6.4)	Mousgoum, Bororo & Fulbe (2.1)	-Others (1.2)	
	Bassa & Bakoko (8.4)	Widekum (0.8)	Ewondo (19.3)			
			-Other Beti (10.4)			
6.40%	11.70%	36.00%	40.80%	5.10%		100%

Source: Adapted from Monju C. M., (2019:59), Socio-cultural dimensions of the practice of physical activities among “deux zero” groups in Yaoundé: A contribution to medical anthropology. University of Yaoundé I.

Making an extraction of research communities from table two (2), the Beti and assimilated (these are communities of differing ‘ethnic’ heritage that have been absorbed into the dominant culture of a society) are the greatest population with a percentage of 40.80% of the total population of Yaoundé. They are closely followed by the Bamileke (and assimilated) with a 36.00% population. The Bassa (and Bakoko) community is equally well represented in Yaoundé showing 8.4% of the total population. The Duala make up 1.2%, the Bamoun 1.1% and the Nso 0.4%. The Northerners are represented by Musgoum, Bororo & Fulbe 2.1%, Arab Choa & Massa 0.5%, Toupouri 0.5%, Koto & Mafa 0.3%, Matakam & Tikar 0.3%, Mofou 0.2%, and Bayang has not been represented in the table but falls under “Other communities, making 1.2%.

From the table, there is a close competition between the Bamileke and the Beti population in Yaoundé urban area. What constitutes the socio-cultural and economic background of Yaoundé? This is what we will be presenting below.

2.4 SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Yaoundé's socio-cultural and economic background is shaped by several factors. According to Pondi (2012), "*La situation géographique et stratégique de la région ; la douceur relative de son climat; le tempérament et l'état d'esprit plutôt accueillants de ses habitants; la logique coloniale allemande attachée à la notion de base arrière*" et enfin, *l'existence effective d'une résidence de Hans Dominique à "Yaunde Station", ce qu'on aurait appelé en d'autres idiomes, un "pied-à-terre*, (Pondi, 2012 : 14). This is limpidly translated in English as: "*The geographic and strategic location of the region; the relative mildness of its climate; the rather welcoming temperament and state of mind of its inhabitants; the German colonial logic attached to the notion of "rear base" and finally, the actual existence of a residence of Hans Dominique at "Yaoundé Station", what would have been called in other idioms, a "pied-à-terre".*" These characteristics among others –such as; education, marriage, job opportunities, social amenities – are some of the reasons why people migrate from their communities of origin to Yaoundé and other communities. These traits are equally some of the features that influence multiculturalism as will be presented under socio-cultural and economic backgrounds. This sub-section will primarily handle the administrative background of the study area – Yaoundé.

2.4.1 Administration of Yaoundé

Cameroon is a decentralized unitary state with a bicameral parliament. A head of state rules the Republic of Cameroon. Universal adult suffrage guarantees the Presidency for a seven-year term. Yaoundé is the capital of Cameroon (Akiba, 2020), and the head-quarter of the Centre Region. Cameroon's Constitutional Law of 18 January 1996 enshrined decentralization as a fundamental principle of the organization of state governance and the central government's commitment to transferring some powers to local authorities to establish local management, (Yombi, Chouaïbou & Agoume, 2019). However, following decree No. 2008/376 of 12 November 2008, Cameroon was administratively sub-divided into Regions, Divisions, and Subdivisions. Law

No. 2008/001 of 14 April 2008 states that decentralized local entities of the Republic shall be Regions and Councils and shall enjoy administrative and financial autonomy in their management with the interests of these localities at the centre of their management scheme. The Constitution in Section 55 (2) states that regional and local authorities shall have administrative and financial autonomy and shall be freely administered by elected councils. Yaoundé is divided into seven (7) administrative sub-divisions, managed respectively by a senior divisional officer and divisional officers. These officers are appointed by the Head of State. Their duties are regulated by Decree No. 2008/377 of 12 November 2008. There are 376 elected councils, 14 city councils and many subsidiaries within towns. Yaoundé, our study site is found in the Centre region. This region has 10 Divisions and 70 Subdivisions. Yaoundé is a city run by an urban/city council and several – seven – sub-divisional councils within it. There are equally traditional authorities who are auxiliary administrators ruling different chiefdoms in this urban setting.

2.4.2 Organization and Management of Yaoundé Councils

Council management in Cameroon generally and Yaoundé particularly has been restructured in recent years. Abomo, *et al* (2013), express how three main factors caused internal migration during the colonial period; the flight from colonial persecution and repression due to forced manual labour – construction of roads and railways in Cameroon both by the Germans and French-British – the suppression of subversive people during the struggle for independence in Cameroon as well as social and environmental factors. During the early and mid-1990s, ethnic tensions and economic recession in Cameroon exacerbated the process. Dongmo (1980), says internal migration as a cultural value in certain regions of the country, such as West Cameroon was predominant among the people of West Cameroon. This he argues is due to the lack of land, overpopulation, and a sort of moral community-orientated economics. These and others led to rapid demographic growth and urbanization of Yaoundé which obtains today. Foreigners equally found their way into Yaoundé due to various reasons, expedition, diplomacy, education and jobs. There was a substantial revolution in the city with expansions from north, south, east and west in 1992 which led to the creation of new subdivisions in 1992.

According to The Local Government System in Cameroon, Country Profile 2019, an inter-ministerial workshop was organized in May 2017, pursuant to the signing of the UN's New Urban

Agenda by the Government of Cameroon in 2016 wherein certain issues were esteemed necessary in developing a national urban policy for Cameroon. Among others were linking national urban policy to territorial planning; linking the national urban policy to Cameroon 'Vision 2035': working with various 'champions' and change agents to promote transformational leadership, taking into account culture and diversity, aiming at better management of land and adopting smart urban development approaches. All these are measures aimed at encouraging living together in Cameroon.

Meanwhile, Yaoundé faced with issues such as: accommodation and management of migrants, and immigrants led to a rise in the demand for space and housing. Apparently, the high demand for houses led to a problem in land tenure as prices of land drastically increased. This created social problems such as the sale and resale of land to several buyers by landowners. Mbanam (2005), says companies, para-public administrations, and international organizations not leaving out diplomatic missions saw an increase in Yaoundé. Educational facilities, schools, and training centres of higher education were established in Yaoundé and their concentration was registered in the capital city, Yaoundé. This also resulted in a large influx. The neighbourhood of the central region became incapable of accommodating the ever-increasing population. To address the situation, an expansion of the city was initiated and a subdivision - the Nkolbisson neighbourhood which today hosts the office of the Divisional officer was created in 2007. The Yaoundé urban area is made up of seven councils as described hereafter.

Due to reasons explained above coupled with social disharmony, enculturation and acculturation, Cameroon has made constitutional changes aimed at preserving territorial integrity and promoting cultural diversity in the country. For example, there's been a shift from the Federal Republic to a decentralized unitary state. With this and to guarantee free movement and interaction among Cameroonians, several transformations were implemented concerning councils in Cameroon.

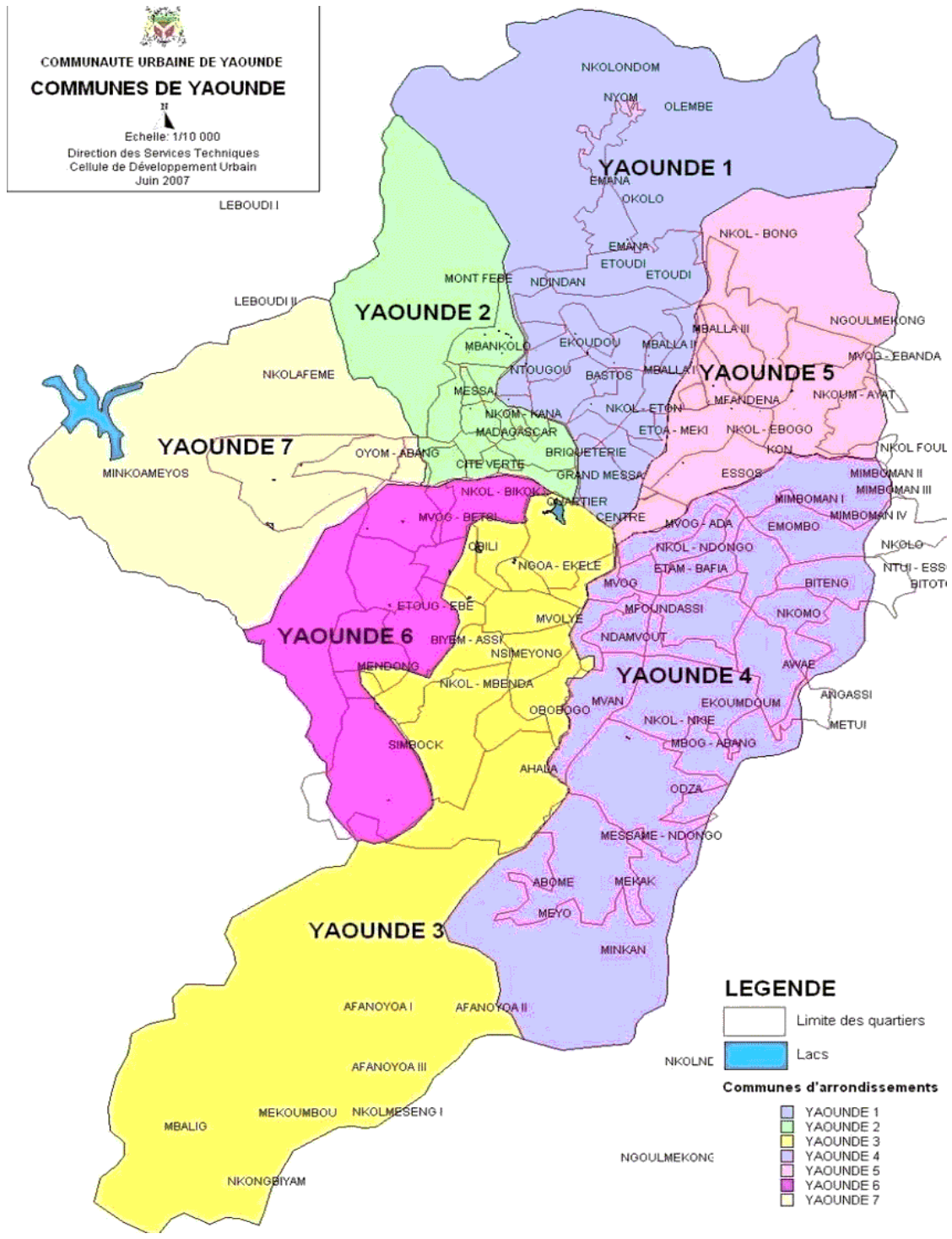
There are three main types of councils in Cameroon: city councils, sub-divisional councils – within a city council and councils (Wanie, 2019). City councils' rule over urban areas and are headed by government delegates appointed by the president of the republic. Sub-divisional councils are found within city councils and at their apex is an elected mayor who is assisted by councilors.

Local chiefs are supplementary local administrators. Ubink (2008), asserts that traditional authorities act as intermediaries between the government and the local population; and they are often a political force to reckon with, wielding enormous electoral and general influence in their communities due to their control over resources and people.

Law No2004/18 of 22 July 2004, Part IV, Chapter 1 section 110 places Yaoundé under the management of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Yaoundé City Council. The same law lays out the organization and functioning of councils. City Councils are headed by Super Mayors and their deputies. Mayors rule the sub-divisional councils assisted by councilors. The said law enforced the devolution of powers from central to local authorities. Hence, councils are responsible for socio-cultural - health, economics, education and sports, markets and town planning.

The mayor acts in dual capacity – a state agent and an agent of the council (Cobbinah & Darkwah, 2017). In his two-fold duties (representative of the state and a council manager) the mayor engages to promote social cohesion and order in his municipality in several ways. He ensures that laws and regulations are executed and respected, manages council revenue, officiates marriages, issues birth certificates and supervises council projects, builds roads, furnishes the council and protects public spaces, builds schools, and ensures a healthy environment among others. Below is a map showing the seven councils of Yaoundé.

Map 3: The different Councils making-up the Yaoundé Urban Council



Source: Système d'Information Géographique, CUY, (2011).

Map Three (3) shows a distribution of the seven councils that make up the Yaoundé urban area. The map equally shows the various neighbourhoods of these councils which will be further explained under respective councils in the lines that follow. The presentation will highlight the position of the council, surface area, population density, quarters that are found in the council, main markets, administrative institutions, roads and neighbourhoods, among others.

In this study, our preoccupation lies with the promotion of social cohesion in a multicultural urban space, Yaoundé. Yaoundé has seven sub-divisional councils as shown underneath.

2.4.2.1 The Yaoundé City Council

A super Mayor, appointed by a presidential decree heads the City Council. His remit includes coordinating the work of the City Council, implementing state policies, ensuring prompt processing of files, periodically evaluating activities and ensuring continuous training of staff. He ensures social security by rehabilitating populations. Some of the City Council's activities overarch those of sub-divisional Councils. There are seven sub-divisional Councils concerned to wit: Yaoundé I, Yaoundé II, Yaoundé III, Yaoundé IV, Yaoundé V, Yaoundé VI, and Yaoundé VII.

2.4.2.2 The Yaoundé I Council

This Council is identified on the map of Yaoundé in "Figure 4" with a baby-blue colour. It was created by Decree No 87-1365 of 24th September 1987. The Yaoundé I Council covers an approximate surface area of 61.40 km² having a population density of close to 300.000 inhabitants. The Council is headed by a mayor with headquarters in Nlongkak where there is a major junction linking four directions: Bastos, Avenue de Banques, Briqueterie and Etoi Miki. The Council is bordered by other Councils such as Yaoundé II (around Carrefour Warda, nouvelle route Bastos, the presidential pathway) Yaoundé III particularly by the River Mfoundi and the 20th May Boulevard and Yaoundé IV.

Yaoundé presents a mosaic of multicultural communities (both local and international), most of the administrative structures and diplomatic representations (with many foreigners). Avenue Kennedy is the central business district of Yaoundé. This is a place with a great display of commercial banks, other commercial activities such as restaurants, whole and retail sales shops, unfriendly activities such as pickpocketing and begging. One of the largest markets of Yaoundé –

Central Market – commonly known in French as “*Marche Centrale*” hosting co-cultures of the area. People buy from this market and resale for profits in quarters and other towns. Participant observation shows it is an area that is constantly on the watch because of the socio-cultural insecurity and high rate of vandalism existing here. Most business and bike riders’ strike actions take root from here. The French Cultural Institute found in Avenue Kennedy allows urban dwellers to meet, watch movies and hold conferences. Most outstanding neighbourhoods of this council are but not limited to: Essos, Bastos, Mballa I-VI, Djoungolo I-XII, Emanas, Etoa Meki, Elig Edjoa, Mfandena I-II, Olembe I, Nguosso. A recently constructed football stadium found in Olembe. Nylon Bastos is one of its quarters littered with drinking parlours, restaurants and scrap shops and known for high crime waves, with hot spots such as Elig Edzoa and Bata Nlongkak. There is a concentration of members of the Bassa and Northerners communities. From a view of Yaoundé I, the next location is Yaoundé II.

2.4.2.3 Yaoundé II Council

A look at “Figure 4” shows Yaoundé II distinguished by a lime green colour with corresponding quarters. It was created in 1987 by presidential decree N°87/1365 of 25 September, Tsinga being its capital. It was divided into two subdivisions to create the Yaoundé VII council. It covers 15km² and 15km², is situated to the centre-west of the northern section of the town and extends to the unity palace. It shares borders with Yaoundé I, Yaoundé III, Yaoundé VI and Yaoundé VII and has neighbourhoods such as Madagascar, Tsinga, Nkomkana I, II and III, Mokolo, Ntougou I, II and III, Febe, Oliga, Messa, Carrière, Angono, Doumassi and Ekoazon.

The Council hosts one of the biggest markets of Yaoundé – the Mokolo market. Fieldwork demonstrates that the Bamileke community members are the predominant migrant communities in Mokolo and its environs. It is also home to many diplomatic representations, the Saudi Arabian Embassy, United States Embassy, Italian embassy, Embassy of Greece, Tunisian embassy and the Libyan embassy. Conspicuous in this district are religious buildings such as: the Monastery of Notre Dame du Mont Fébé, Apostolic Nunciature, and the Great Mosque of Yaoundé found in Briquetérie. The Yaoundé Central Hospital seats in the council which also boasts of leisure sites such as Sainte Anastasie Wood, and the Multipurpose Sports Complex. The Congress Hall which

hosts most international conferences is equally found in its environs. Ethnographic studies revealed that this part of Yaoundé has a wealth of the Northerners, especially the Muslim community.

The Northerners own textile and tailoring businesses as well as control cattle and sheep markets. This neighbourhood is notorious for scrap business and motor spare parts dominated by Nigerians, the Northerners, Central Africans and Senegalese. There is an abundance of petit restaurants and roadside grilling, especially chicken, goat, beef, and mutton. There is an interspatial location of well-constructed and slum quarters in these localities; an expression of a hierarchy of the haves and have-nots, just like religious-cultural segregation seen with pork grills and goat/mutton/beef grills in particular locations. The slums extend towards Mbankolo and Mokolo. The Bamileke who are mostly engaged in building materials dominate business in this area. There are foreigners like Nigerians, and Chadians equally. There are restaurants along the stretch to Mokolo and travelling agencies lined up along the roads. It is home to all tribes.

Mokolo has a concentration of the Bamileke cultural centres of villages such as Bazou, Bassamba, Bakong, Mbeudou, Bangou, Nyabeu Mbit, Balengou, Poumpa, all having a common objective – reunite sons and daughters of the Ndeh for solidarity reasons as well as maintain cultural integrity. Yaoundé II has been laid out as part of the composition of Yaoundé city; the following section will dwell on Yaoundé III.

2.4.2.4 Yaoundé III Council

Yaoundé III Council can be identified on the map of Yaoundé shown in “figure 4” by yellow colour. It was created in 1987 by decree no.87/1365 of 25th September 1987. Its capital is Efoulan and it covers a surface area of 67.15km² with a population of approximately 300.000 inhabitants and is located in the west of Yaoundé. It shares borders with Yaoundé II, Yaoundé I, Yaoundé V, Yaoundé VI and Yaoundé IV.

Most state institutions such as the Supreme Court, the National Assembly, the Prime Minister’s Office, the Ministry of Secondary Education, and others are found here. The French Embassy, Military Headquarters - Quartier General, the University of Yaoundé 1 Campus, the University Teaching Hospital, National School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM), the student residential areas are equally found here. Yaoundé III is host to secondary educational

institutions such as Lycée General Leclerc and CETIC, higher institutions like the University of Yaoundé I in Ngoa Ekélé, the National School of Information and Communication Sciences and Technologies (ESTIC), the University Teaching Hospital, the Ministry of Scientific Research, University of Yaoundé II with its principal campus located in Soa under this district.

Some of the principal quarters are Etoug-Egbe, Ahala 1, Ahala 2, Efoulan, Simbok – where one of the largest Anglophone Catholic churches of Yaoundé is found. Obili - a predominant Anglophone quarter, noticeably visited by forces of law and order during spontaneous checking – is one of Yaoundé III quarters. IRIC (Institute of International Relations of Cameroon) is located in Obili opposite former Shell filling station. Oral history says the name Obili is a name derived from Ewondo language. Following a historic event whereby the Mvog Atemengue people (autochthones) who settled around Ngoa Ekélé, were obliged to leave the area. Hence, “Obili” in Ewondo means “obliged”.

Other quarters include Obobogo, Olezoa, Nsimeyong (the Bamum are highly populated in this part of the town following their history and settlement process), Nkolmesing, Melen 1 and 2, Mekoumbou 1 and 2, Messong, Ngoa Ekélé, Nyomo, Nkolfon, Afanoya1, 2, 3 and 4, Etoa, and Méyo to name these. Mvolyé is conspicuous for the presence of “The Mary Queen of the Apostles Basilica (French; The Basilique Marie-Reine des Apotres)” – a catholic monumental structure that sits in this part of Yaoundé with three statues at the foot of the valley serving as prayer ground for Catholic faithful. Equipt with information about Yaoundé III, a layout of Yaoundé IV is worthwhile will be shown below.

2.4.2.5 Yaoundé IV Council

Yaoundé IV is another district council with Kodengui being its capital. It has been illustrated on the map in “figure 4” by the lavender colour. It covers a surface area of 57,89km² with an estimated population of approximately 400.000 inhabitants, sharing borders with Yaoundé III, Yaoundé V, Mfou, Soa, Bikok and Nkolafamba.

It is made up of but not limited to the neighbourhoods such as Mvog-Mbi, Mimboman, Ntouessong, Odza, Biteng, Nkomo, Awae, Ewonkan, Ekounou, Messamme Ndongo Ekoumdoum, Kondengui, Ekie, Mvan, Anguissa, Emombo, and Nkolndongo.

The Council has two second class chiefdoms; Mvog-Belinga Chiefdom and Bane Chiefdom. It boasts of the Joseph Ndi Samba Yaoundé University, Siantou Higher Institute of Business and Technology and the Catholic University of Central Africa. There is equally the central prison of Yaoundé found in Kodengui which was constructed in 1967. The Council host the conspicuous Carrefour Super Market where most things especially local food items of Cameroon can be bought. There is a prominent “Carrefour de l’amicie” linking Awae, Ekie, Odza and Olympic quarters. It was formerly known as “Carrefour de la mort” (loosely translated in English as a “junction of the death”) due to numerous gruesome killings that were taking place there. However perhaps due to the repercussions that come with naming, it was renamed “Carrefour de l’amicie”. From Mvog-Mbi there are commercial centres like Socropole, Mahima Sopping Centre, Brasseries brewing company and towards Mvan there exist the military air base (101) Santa Lucia and travelling agencies like “Generale Voyage”, “Planet”, “Musango”, “Finex”, “Buca Voyage”. There are micro finances such as Express Union, Western Union and MoneyGram. There is the construction of an Auto Road around Barrier supposedly meant to lead to the Nsimalen Airport as well as link other parts of the town. Anguissa is the core of Yaoundé IV with the Malien stadium - a monumental structure of Cameroonian sport where Canon Sport (one of the Cameroonian football teams) usually carry out their trainings. From localizing Yaoundé IV, a look at Yaoundé V is the subsequent point of interest.

2.4.2.6 Yaoundé V Council

The Yaoundé V Council identified in “figure 4” above by a pink colour was created in 1993 by presidential decree n° 93/321 of November 25, 1993, covering an area of 20 Km². Its capital is Essos. It has an estimated population of 363,118 inhabitants (2014). Shares borders with Yaoundé I, Yaoundé III, Yaoundé IV and Yaoundé V. Some members of its neighbourhood are Ngouso, Essos, Nkolfoulou, Nfandena, Mvog Ada, Essessalakok, Momebelengal, Nkolmesseng and Nkol Mekong. The road network of Nkolmesseng is not very good because most roads are untarred and bumpy. This part of Yaoundé is composed of eight chiefs, three of whom are non-natives and governed by a third-class chief called Anguissa Ayisi. The chief of Essos 3 Mbamzouna Jean Claude’s mother is from the Western region, precisely Bamileke. There exist petit businesses, beer parlours, and street food vendors around Carrefour Emombo. The next area of presentation is Yaoundé VI.

2.4.2.7 Yaoundé VI Council

Yaoundé VI stretches from the centre to the southwest of Yaoundé distinguished on the map in “figure 4” by the fuchsia colour. Its capital is Biyem-Assi. The council saw its birth in 1993 following decree No 93/321 of 25 November 1993 and has an estimated population of 280.000 inhabitants. Its creation came as a result of the dissociation from the Yaoundé III Council. Hence, it shares borders with Yaoundé III and Yaoundé II. Its neighbourhood comprises Carrefour TKC, Biyem-Assi, Nkolbikok I and II, Etoug-Ebe I, Melen I, III, IV, V, VI and VIIA, Melen VIIB, Etoug-Ebe II and Mvog-Betsi. The Accacia market is located in this Council. The Council is famous for being the headquarter of Anglophone communities in Yaoundé. There is a zoological garden at Mvog-Betsi. The presentation of Yaoundé VI leads to Yaoundé VII.

2.4.2.8 Yaoundé VII Council

Yaoundé VII noticed on the map in “figure 4” by a beige colour is the baby of the Councils of the Yaoundé City with Nkolbisson being its capital. Its creation was made possible on the 13th of April 2007 following presidential decree n° 2007/115. It shares borders with Yaoundé I to the North and North West, to the south by Yaoundé VI, to the south west by Yaoundé VII and to the east by Yaoundé III. Some of its neighbouring quarters are Ngoulemakong, Oyom Abang I, OyomAbang II, Ndamvouth, Nkomassi, OyomAbang IV, OyomAbang III, EtetakNnom-Nnam, Nkolbisson, Ebot-Mefou, Nkol-So and Mbog-Doum.

There is an amalgamation of commercial activities around Carrefour Nkolbisson such as Complex Commercial Ble D’or next to a Boulangerie Patisserie. There are beer parlours and restaurants as well as around the area. Its main junction is always flooded with motor bikes and a fleet of clandestine cars. Carrefour Tsimi is located in this neighbourhood with a statue of the first settler Ntsimi Evouna and Institute Bilingue Ntsimi Evouna. The fore introduces socio-cultural facilities that ease life in Yaoundé is necessary.

2.5 SOCIO-CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Yaoundé is an urban area with several socio-cultural facilities that drive its economy. These provisions facilitate interaction and bonding between people in the city, making living and association life worthwhile. Some of these provisions are presented as follows:

2.5.1 Road Infrastructure

Roads are infrastructures whose role motivate socio-cultural and economic activities because they facilitate transportation and serve as an exchange nexus. In different places of Yaoundé, primary roads are the first category and make up the main road network. All the seven administrative sub-divisions of Mfoundi division and streets are connected through tarred primary roads allowing the transportation of people and cargo from one part of the city to another. Secondary roads, which may be tarred or not, connect quarters in the subdivisions. Within the quarters, track/trail roads connect residences. There are several problems with road networks. During the rainy season, some become very bad and inaccessible, especially the earth roads. Conversely, during the dry season some earth roads are too dusty because of their earthly nature. Road numbering has been used to identify some streets in Yaoundé. Farvacque-Vitkovic et al (2005:2), say: *“street addressing is an exercise that makes it possible to identify the location of a plot or dwelling on the ground, that is, to “assign an address” using a system of maps and signs that give the numbers or names of streets and buildings.”* Street numbering uses many forms however, the process is still problematic because not all roads and streets have been numbered.

The plate below exemplifies some streets identified through road naming and numbering.

Plate 1: Street naming and numbering in Yaoundé



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork: 2019)

Plate One (1) illustrates road numbering and identification in Yaoundé. An interview with Augustine on the 7th of September 2021 in Accacia reveals that streets and roads are numbered after people who have impacted society. For example by virtue of his socio-cultural and political status, King Njoya from Bamum during his exile stayed in Yaoundé II where a street was named after him, before he was relocated to Nsimeyong where he died. The function of street naming is its provision of a sense place, location and identity through language. Hence recognition through street and road numbering promote living together. Thanks to Charles Atangana's recognition, the Bamum community has a palace in Nsimeyong. Farvacque-Vitkovic *et al* (2005) explain that:

Street naming is usually the prerogative of municipal authorities, and the process is slow, involving a choice of names of individuals, heroic or historical figures, artists or benefactors, and often lengthy negotiations that are best faced rather than avoided. Usually, the most important streets are given the most prestigious names, creating a hierarchy of streets to match that of the names themselves, an especially delicate task when the names of politicians are used. As the case of Cameroon demonstrates, official decrees for street naming do not always produce results. The recommended solution is to adopt a number identification system. (Farvacque-Vitkovic *et al* 2005:103).

Improved measures of road and street numbering for ease and exactitude, are possible methods that can enhance not just living together but other services in urban areas. Despite the use of roads in their diverse forms, road maintenance in Cameroon remains a major challenge. To commute within the city, for instance, one must choose from a few transport infrastructures.

2.5.2 Transport Infrastructures

Transport infrastructure facilitates movement through several means aimed at gaining time to attain programmed activities, enable socialization and all sorts of exchanges. Choosing a means of transportation can be made from fleets of taxis or buses. There are also commercial motor bikes. Taxi buses have been installed in the city to be used by workers, students and farmers alike to cover long distances at affordable but varying rates. Buses are usually of assorted colours and have been installed in strategic parts of the city. For example, around Awae, buses take on-board persons heading towards Mfou and its environs, while buses around Camair transport people to Nkolfoulou, Soa and environs. Inter-urban transportation is also highly practiced. Buses, trains, and planes move people and cargo from Yaoundé to other towns such as Douala, Bamenda, Bafoussam, and Ngaoundéré. However, plane movements towards Bamenda and Bafoussam have

been thwarted for some time following the 2016 unrest. There are concentration points for agencies engaged in this business with outstanding ones found around Mvan, Etoudi and Biyem-Assi.

Another means of transportation is private or personal cars that owners use to move around Yaoundé. Private car owners transport themselves, families and friends. These car owners commute to work, school, market, church, community association venues and other places through their cars. It is faster and safer to use private cars to reach one's destination because the owner can avoid congested roads, taking on board and alighting.

With regards to taxis, traditional yellow taxis are used for intra-urban mobility. These professionals equally have associations called taxi drivers union (Daniel, 2010:17). A taxi in Yaoundé is boarded from the right side of the road whereby, a simple stretch of the hand qualifies for a taxi driver to accept by hooting "peem" – an indication that the passenger's location tallies with the driver's direction and acceptance, while a drive off indicates a decline. Two types of rates; alighting and taking on board characterize the use of taxis. Alighting rates are determined by negotiations between the Taxi Unions and the Cameroon Government while taking on board rates are negotiated between the commuter and the taxi driver. The standard taxi fare has evolved from 150FCFA in the day and 200FCFA in the night in most recent years to 250FCFA and 300FCFA during the day and night respectively. Notwithstanding, the price is debatable depending on the distance one intends to cover. A taxi in Yaoundé is boarded from the right side of the road whereby, a simple stretch of the hand qualifies for a taxi to accept by hooting.

Commercial motor bikes often called bikes/motorbikes/motor-taxi or in French "*motor*" are another form of transportation and source of income for young boys in urban areas. Their activities have been restrained to tertiary roads in Yaoundé urban area aimed at curtailing accidents. This thought is shared by Tende (2021:5), who argues that: "*motor bike calamities are on an upward trend over the years in Yaoundé. This is because the calamity trend shows that the accidents and consequences are increasing every day.*" Commercial motor bikes are noted for frequent registered accidents, as the city's hospitals receive accident cases from commercial motor bikes regularly. With the road and transport infrastructure of Yaoundé in place, another infrastructure that influences multiculturalism is religion as shown below.

2.5.3 Religious Infrastructure

Due to current economic, social and cultural changes, religious organizations have undertaken the liberty to reorganize themselves and build structures to house their activities. Religious infrastructure describes the affordable qualities of religious configurations, Kirby (2020). Religious infrastructure is made up of a web of relationship between people, buildings, objects, thought patterns, behaviours and abilities which allow people to come together and exercise certain activities together. Religion offers communities something to hold unto as a belief system – full of myths, rites, songs, and dances which impact social cohesion. Through religion, a sense of belonging and social connectivity is created within and between communities. Prior to colonialism, Cameroonians practiced African Traditional Religious (ATR) cultures. However, the Germans as expressed earlier tried to extinguish some of these traditions but only succeeded in making them sober during their stay. For example “*melan*” is a rite among the Beti that allows the skull of ancestors to be preserved for veneration by family members. Bochet de Thé (1887-1966), says « *rite collectif très solennel organisé par une association d’initiés masculins et féminins chargée de garder les crânes des ancêtres qui étaient entreposés au village dans la case du chef de famille* »; loosely translated in English as a collective solemn rite organized by an association of initiated males and females responsible for guarding the skulls of ancestors kept in the family head’s house in the village. This typifies how an association in the Beti community through African Traditional Religion eradicates spells using cultural practices. Post colonization, these rites continue to exist in the Beti community. This holds true for other Cameroonian communities whose religious practices were only suppressed but resurfaced post-colonization. Today, some Beti songs especially “*Bikutsi*” of the Ewondo clan is enjoyed across the nation, just as those of other communities. Colonization introduced diverse religions which are practiced in Yaoundé and other cities and there exist various Christian houses in urban areas such as: the Catholic, Presbyterians, Evangelical, Basal, Baptists, and several Pentecostal Churches. Islam is equally practiced in the city in Mosques. While Christian churches are found in every part of the city, Mosques are in specific neighbourhoods. The Yaoundé Central Mosque is found in the Briquetérie neighbourhood.

These diverse religious faiths co-exist in Yaoundé influencing the daily lives of Cameroonians. However, communities are inclined to particular religious practices because of the first missionaries who visited and shaped their religious culture. Hence devotees of given belief

systems from particular communities bond due to common religious practices creating an impact on living together in Yaoundé. In like manner, despite the goal of religion – worship and provision of basic moral principles – certain churches allow the practice of intra-community associations as seen with the Lamnso Choir in Simbock Church, the Douala Choir in Presbyterian Church Nsimyong among others. This further encourages intra-community cohesion. Some religions (especially Christianity and Islam) have feast days which are officially observed as public holidays in the entire country. By default, Yaoundé observes these public holidays. Feast days celebrated nationwide are Christmas, Easter, Good Friday, Ascension, Pentecost, Assumption – for the Christians while Feast of the Ram for the Muslim faithful. Apart from religion, electricity influences multiculturalism in urban areas as well.

2.5.4 Electricity

The electricity sector of Cameroon has witnessed managerial evolution. It has been managed respectively by; West Cameroon Electricity Corporation (POWERCAM, for Anglophone Cameroon), Entreprise Electrique au Cameroun (ENELCAM), and Electricité Du Cameroun (EDC), National Electricity Corporation (SONEL – in French La Société Nationale d'Electricité). On the 12th of September 2014 in Yaounde, SONEL became the Energy of Cameroon (ENEO).

ENEO runs electricity supply in Cameroon. However, in the peripheries there are constant outages. Mefou and Afamba Subdivision for one, most offices, business centres and schools use generators to beef up their electrical supply. Most of these places use electricity to light up buildings, type, print, and photocopy documents. Town dwellers use it in houses and business centres to run electrical appliances. Beauty salons use the same for esthetic reasons. They also use it to animate events, charge phones for communication, and surf the internet for local and international information. Electricity facilitates communication which brings people together when used positively and encourages social cohesion. As a result, it is a very important facility in the day-to-day life of Yaoundé city dwellers. This facilitates communication among community association members using social media. It takes the form of WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram media tools. Most intra-community associations use these means to plan and exercise some of their activities. These enable intra-community interaction and cohesion partially promoting the tenets

of multiculturalism. Education is equally another characteristic feature that can influence multiculturalism as seen below.

2.5.5 Education

Education be it formal or informal plays a significant part of community cultures. The latter is learned, shared, modified, adopted and preserved. This explains why it is passed on from one generation to the next. Culture is a human construction meant to prosper and preserve the continuity of communities as in the case of Yaoundé. Education offers a platform where such a culture can be achieved. affirms that: Associating access to education with progress goes back to the very early years of German colonization when chiefs competed with one another to invite the Missions to found schools in their villages, (Nyamnjoh, 1998). Education has been in existence since the dawn of colonialism. The Germans only opened a school in Yaoundé later in 1908. The opening of the school in 1901 and 1908 respectively marked the beginning of formal education in Yaoundé (Monju, 2019). Hence, formal schooling is the central nerve of every economy. Yaoundé has since seen a proliferation of primary, secondary and tertiary educational infrastructures. The city has also witnessed an increase in these facilities since the outbreak of the 2016 Anglophone crisis. This has been a threat to the educational environment which has in turn led to the proliferation of many schools in Yaoundé to absorb the internally displaced population.

The Constitution of Cameroon sustains that the State shall guarantee the child's right to education and that primary education shall be compulsory. As of the year 2000, it was recorded that 79% of the boys and 64% of the girls aged 15 could read and write. Cameroon has a national curriculum of French and English Sub-systems of Education. Cameroon's educational system is divided into three; primary, secondary and tertiary. The country's education system can be understood thus: Two years of pre-school for ages three (3) to five (5) - this, however, is not mandatory. Primary education is meant for children of the age range five (5) to eleven (11) children who merit it to earn the Government Common Entrance Examination and the First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC).

Closely following the primary school is a five-year program for secondary education Forms One (1) to Five (5) – for children of age range eleven (11) to sixteen (16) allowing them to obtain if merit, the Ordinary Levels. High school – Lower sixth and Upper Sixth – is undertaken within

two years for ages sixteen (16) to twenty (20) allowing students to earn the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Level. It is worth noting that the Technical and French sub-system offer four years of secondary education and three years of high school education. There is a multitude of Government and private schools offering education to Cameroonian youths. However, the government oversees the educational system and mandatory public examinations that qualify for completion and entrance to the next level. The academic year for primary, secondary and high schools stretches from September to June.

Universities and higher learning institutions take the period from October to July under varying programs. The Bachelors-Masters-Doctorate (BMD) system was en vogue in the University of Buea. It was adopted for the French sub system of Cameroonian universities in the 2007-2008 academic years. Courses of arts, science and business in universities are run within a three-year program while engineering undertakes between four to five years and the medical field is estimated to run through six to seven years to earn diplomas, degrees and certificates. Education is not limited to the formal sector – informal means such as music, art, family, communities (associations, observation, participation, playing, service etc.) peer groups (such as associations, chat forums,) etc. make education possible. Education can equally facilitate living together. Nyamnjoh (1998), edifies that: *“associations were founded principally for mutual aid based on having gone to the same school or belonged to the same Church or lived in the same neighbourhood so that membership would often cross-ethnic ties [...] Many of these associations go back to the 1950s and the first major expansion of secondary education in Cameroon.”* In agreement with this author, membership crosses ethnic ties on basis of haven been to the same school – such as Sacred Heart Students’ Association (SHESAN) and Saint Augustine’s Students’ Association (SAESA), church such as Catholic Women/Men Association (CWA/CMA) for the Catholics and Christian Women/Men Fellowship (CWF/CMF) for the Presbyterians, or neighbourhood but on basis of belonging to same ethnic tie, intra-community cohesion will be encouraged. Notwithstanding, some school associations are premised on ethnic ties.

2.5.6 Cultural Infrastructure

Cultural infrastructure refers to buildings whose primary aim is to accommodate the exhibition and experience of culture and cultural activities. Most often than not, these activities

appear unsuitable to be practiced in residential areas because of the noise that results from thereof. These include places like museums, theatres, concert halls, and galleries. The City of Melbourne Arts Infrastructure Framework (2016), says to be included means co-working spaces and office spaces where the specific tenancy mix is creative industry practitioners such as writers, publishers, and designers. Bedi (2013), confirms that cultural infrastructures are sports and recreation facilities such as; parks, sports facilities, sports associations, cultural facilities such as concert halls, museums, libraries, theatres, studios and specialized training centres, business travel and tourism, including both infrastructures of artificial and natural attractions, convention centres, hotels, restaurants, and other services that cater for tourists and business travelers. These centres encourage socialization and bonding. Thus, culture plays a major role in human development.

Urbanization comes with wanted and unwanted promises. While offering advantages to the social and economic domains of towns, pressure is exerted on the cultural, especially on the diversity of cultural heritage. Cultural diversity and social cohesion present the principal issues of urbanization in this dissertation. E.B.Taylor (1871), defines culture as: *“that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”* From this definition, culture especially looking at customs, capabilities and abilities, comprises all the intangible heritage of a community which can be revitalized for the growth and development of the society. Valorizing, understanding, accepting and respecting cultural diversity especially can be expressed through intra-community associations and infrastructures. In Yaoundé, structures such as the National Museum (opened in 1972, this is where national culture is conserved including relics of some ethnic groups), the Reunification monument (a monument built in memoriam of the post-colonial union between British and French Cameroon), the Amadou Ahidjo Stadium, the Multipurpose Sports Complex, the Olembe Stadium and Cultural Halls of diverse communities among others can be identified as centres which encourage socialization and cohesion. However, a space like Cinema Abbia where people from diverse communities used to get together to experience Cameroonian culture showcased through movies – in the seventies and eighties – as well as have a sense of togetherness has been shut down. It is worth noting that cultural heritage forms an important part of Yaoundé’s infrastructure. Equally, the aspect of human development has been taken hostage by collective individuals through cultural associations. This explains why these institutions have cultural infrastructures spread all

over the city of Yaoundé. These intra-cultural infrastructures make room for members of same communities to unite, interact, bond and increase the internal cohesion of communities. Consequently, the dilemma of living together remains preoccupying. Cultural infrastructure is a significant aspect of cities like Yaoundé and can have an impact on the economy of the city. Armed with the above information, a look at the economic background of Yaoundé is necessary.

2.6 ECONOMY

Maystre, Olivier, *et al* (2015), argue that culture and economy operate under a bidirectional dichotomy – culture influences economy same as economy influences culture. The importance of culture in economics has been validated in various ways. Klammer (1996), expresses discontent with economists on the negligence of the value of culture, saying he is uncomfortable about their verdict. The culture of a people represents their shared values and beliefs. Omitting culture during economic conversations, economists deprive themselves of any insight into the role that cultural values play in the economy. Fuchs (2015), in agreement views that cultural materialism allows us to critically understand social media's influence on culture and the economy. Consequently, culture has an important role in the economy of a community and vice versa.

Yaoundé is the administrative capital of Cameroon, with major civil and diplomatic services. The Beti especially the Ewondo, are the natives of this city are said to have gained economic power through trade during the colonial period (Monju, 2019). However, the over 250 communities co-habiting in Yaoundé converge in these markets for economic as well as social connectivity. There are more than a few markets in Yaoundé which are named after their area of location. The inhabitants of Yaoundé purchase local and imported objects ranging from, food to clothes, building material, internal decoration, cosmetics, kitchen wares, electronics, etc. Examples of these markets are Biyem-Assi market, Melen market, Mokolo market, Mfoundi market, Ekounou market, Madagascar market, Mendong market, Nkol-Eton market, Nsam markets and Accasia to name these. Most hawkers and roadside vendors buy from the largest markets – Mokolo, Central, and Mfoundi and resell in the quarters. There are quite some supermarkets such as Santa Lucia, Orca, Mahima, Dovv, Casino, Espace Landmark, Niki, Bricolux, Tsekenis and Cavetio de Julia Nats. These retail and wholesale shops are littered everywhere with a high concentration in

the heart of the town around “Avenue Kenedy”, visited by people from different cultural backgrounds for various reasons.

Yaoundé has industries such as but not limited to Timber industry, Brewery industries, Tobacco factories, Building materials, Carpentry workshops, Cane and Bambo workshops, Printing presses, Mechanics and Clay industries. These are revenue-generating centres. Many Commercial Banks and micro-financial institutions are found in Yaoundé. There is a naming culture which is centered on features such as hills, “Ville de sept collins”, events such as friendship (seen in Carrefour de l’amitie) and heroes such as Avenue Charles Atangana in Yaoundé. Following this pattern, despite the numerous banks spread all over Yaoundé, a concentration of same in central town led to the area being named “Avenue des Banks”/ “Quartier des Banques”. There is a Central Museum with cultural values which serves as an attraction to visitors/tourists with the potential of influencing Yaoundé’s economy. Same activities – economic, social, cultural amid others – carried out in these places influence the lifestyle of the community (environment) and members, creating avenues for social interaction and living together. The value that a place, as well as community, gives to its environment has an influence on the inhabitants, hence on cohesion, growth, and development of society in general. The monograph of Yaoundé takes us to communities of interest to our work will be the next feature.

2.7 PRESENTATION OF COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST

Socio-culturally stiff tensions between communities in major towns such as Duala, Bamenda, Adamaoua, Ebolowa and Yaoundé in particular are some of the reasons why these communities are studied. For instance, 2008 saw agitations from radicalized youths following food and transport crisis in Cameroon, because of a sudden increase in prices of the afore-mentioned commodities respectively that further degenerated into an ethnic identity crisis. In a particular case scenario, these tensions sent waves of violence to Ebolowa evidenced by brawls between what Socpa (2016), calls autochthones and allochthones. The autochthones (Beti and Bulu), armed with weapons (such as machetes, sticks, stones and others) asked the allochthones – Anglophones and Bamilekes – commonly stereotyped “anglo-bamis” to leave the territory. In recognition, Ceuppens & Geshiere (2005), assert that “Autochthony” and “indigenous” go back to classical Greek history and have similar implications. “Autochthony” refers to “self” and/or “soil.” “Indigenous” literally

means “born inside,” with the connotation in classical Greek of being born “inside the house.” Hence those who claim autochthony mean they are owners of the territory while all else are strangers. A presentation of communities (Beti, Northerners, Bamileke, the Bamum, Duala, Bassa, Bayang, Nso) in Yaoundé allows for an understanding of the cultural diversity of the study site.

2.7.1 The Beti Community

Beti is generic referring to people who belong to a larger Pahuin group comprising Beti, Bulu, and Fang peoples (Dueck & Essele Essele, 2022). The Beti are a patriarchal Bantu people who originate from the northern parts of Central Africa, also found in Equatorial Guinea and northern Gabon to settle in Adamawa. Fleeing Ousman dan Fodio, a Muslim leader from the region of Adamawa in the north of the country, who decided to Islamise all Animist peoples in Cameroon at the time, they arrived their present locate from the other side of the river Sanaga on the back of a snake called Ngan-Medza (CheNeba *et al.*, 2018). They are respected for a conspicuous practice known as the “*Mebala*”, a tradition where affluent families come together in a ritual and offer their treasure to families considered to be less privileged. The Beti people come from the central and southern provinces of Cameroon (Socpa, 2017). The Beti were the first settlers in Yaoundé described by Socpa (2006), as; “*fils de la terre*” limpidly translated in English as “sons of the soil”. The Beti are a group of people originally called “*Ekan*” with a religious significance, “people of faith”. This name represents the autochthons (primary occupants) of Yaoundé. Following the evolution of socio-economic circumstances, these people became Beti. The origin of Beti described above though complex is affirmed by (Mfewou, 2018), that: “*The most accepted thesis is the origin given by the oral tradition. For the Beti, Nanga would be their ancestor of Bantu origin. He would have had descendants, Kolo Beti, Eton Beti, Mvele Beti, Mvan Beti, Meka Beti Bulu (the only girl) and Ntumu, the last born. Today, the main beti tribes are Eton, Ewondo, Bene who are direct brothers of Ewondo, the Fang who are considered Bene though*” (Mfewou, 2018: 5). Due to the presence of hills and forests, the lifestyles of the indigenous Beti are highly associated to agriculture. Hence, as good farmers, they produce cocoa, coffee, maize, groundnuts, and yams. The existence of four seasons, two dry seasons, and two rainy seasons enrich their agricultural practices. Farming is done by both men and women, with the men carrying out the most difficult tasks (felling down trees to create farmland, clearing, and transportation of farm

produce) and women engaging in less energy-consuming acts (soil- tilling, planting and weeding). Today, however, deforestation and urbanization have reduced the intensive farming of part of the Beti population. Beti community members typically occupy five divisions in the centre region namely: Lékié, Mefou et Afamba, Mfoundi, Mefou et Akono and Nyong et So'o as seen on the table below.

Table 3: Five Divisions occupied by the Beti people and their tribes.

Name of Dividion	Surface Area in KM²	Head Quarter	Tribes
Mfoundi	227	Yaoundé	Éwondo Tsinga Bene Étoudi
Lékié	3000	Monatelé	Éton Manguisa Betsenga
Mefou et Afamba	3338	Mfou	Mvele Bene Mbida-Ambani
Mefou et Akono	1329	Ngoumou	Éwondo Étenga
Nyong et So'o	3615	Mbalmayo	Bene Éwondo Étenga

Source : Adapted from ONOMO O. J. P. (2005-2006), *Transition entre nature social et nature économique des richesses chez les Beti du centre-Cameroun, avec les Eton et assimilés du Département de la Lékié comme communauté typique, Université de Yaoundé I.*

Table Three (3) shows the distribution and concentration of the Beti community in five divisions of the Centre Region: Mfoundi, Lékié, Mefou *et* Afamba, Mefou *et* Akono and Nyong *et*

So'o. It is illustrative that the Beti particularly the Ewondo – one of our sampled population - has a greater concentration in Yaoundé in Mfoundi.

From a religious stance, the Beti are rooted in Christianity and African Traditional Religion. E.B Tylor. (1832-1917) defines religion as a belief in spiritual beings. The Beti have a strong grip in traditional animist beliefs – a belief defined by E.B Tylor. (1871) as that belief that ascribes life, soul, or spirit to inanimate/lifeless objects. Like most African communities, they venerate their ancestors by collecting and keeping bones and skulls in reliquary boxes called the “*Byeri*” for worshipping - a practice which was misinterpreted by colonialists (especially the French and British) among others as cannibalism. These relics were typically used during rites of passage, with their cultured masks called “*So*” (animal-faced) and “*Ngil*” (human-faced). The Nso, Bamum, and Bamileke have similar masks for similar yet different practices. Their relocation disrupted their culture and beliefs. Prischard (1971), quoted by Holly (2002), observed that Azande did not stress clan affiliation at the local level. However, the coming of the European missionaries to their territory under German and French colonial rule converted most of them to Christianity. The predominant denominations are Roman Catholics and Presbyterians.

The coming of France after the Second World War introduced CA life in Cameroon. Monju (2019:56), informs that: “*the Bulu tribal union, a group of representatives from all clans met to establish common tribal policies.*” According to Holly (2002), clan disputes were settled between families of which they were comprised while disputes between clans were settled between elders of different **Azande** clans. Such settlements are made through conversations with community representatives. Currently, Yaoundé is occupied by Beti and other communities of which those of interest are presented below. By the end of this period – colonial, the Beti-Pahuin had registered successes in cocoa farming and made themselves politically strong. The fore leads to other communities coexisting with the Beti in Yaoundé. The first community of interest is Bassa.

2.7.1 The Bassa Community

The Bassa are a Bantu community in Cameroon whose population stretches through Littoral, Centre, and South regions. (Mfewou, 2018) asserts that:

The Bassa are Central African Bantu living in Cameroon, in the Central and Littoral regions, in the Nyong-et-Kéllé division and in Sanaga-Maritime. There are also Bassa

in the division of Nkam, Wouri and Mefou-and-Akono. Another ethnic group linked to the Bassa, is the Yambassa. The Bakoko and Bassa are undoubtedly, although to varying degrees, in the Douala zone of influence. (Mfewou, 2018: 7)

The Bassa are said to have migrated from Congo to settle in their current location. During the reign of the Germans, this community was displaced by the Duala indigenes together with some European traders. They were known as anti-colonialists who fought the Germans from expanding past the coast. They speak the Bassa language which is a derivative of the Bantu language from the Niger-Congo family.

Religiously most of the population are Christians. However, African Traditional Religion still has a strong grip on the land. This Cameroonian community consists of three sub-groups: the **Babimbi**, the **Likol** and the **Bikok**. They all originated from the same ancestor – **Mbam**. However, the name Bassa comes from a dispute that arose over the retribution of game – snake, between the sons of **Mbam**. Due to this dispute, the people have since been called Bassa which is derived from the word “**Nsa**”, meaning “distribution or division”. There are other ancestors of this tribe like the “**Sogol**” - ancestors of upcoming generations.

During migration, this tribe was split into two: part went across the river Sanaga and the other stayed behind. The determined **Likol** and **Bikok** crossed the river Sanaga while the **Babimbi** stayed back. The appellation “**Babimbi**” came from “**bimbi**” which means “make an effort”. A certain group of people from the tribe named this other group Babimbi because the people during migration refused to go across the river Sanaga. These three groups can be located thus:

- **The Likol** are situated in the Nyong - Ekelle division. They are known as **No-nlon**, which literally implies “those found upstream”. They are the backbone of the struggle for Cameroon’s independence.
- **The Bikok** group is located around river Sanaga, sandwiched between **Likol** and **Babimbi**.
- **The Babimbi** group did not go across the river. Hence, they situated themselves along the river, close to “**Ngog Lituba**” (transcribed as the Open Stone). This “**Ngog Lituba**” is a cave, which is known to be the spiritual remnant and shrine of the Bassa people.

Community members consider it full of myths and a representation of their traditional belief.

The Bassa community is hierarchically patriarchal (Gaytán & Basso, 2022; Ellong & Chehab, 2019; Irobi, 202; Mben, 2018). It is under the headship of two leaders: traditional chiefs

and patriarchs (locally known as the “Mbom-mbog”). The traditional chiefs are administrators while the patriarchs are the traditional rulers. Before the coming of the colonial masters, these people were ruled by patriarchs who were/are believed to have supernatural powers. The patriarchs owned both administrative and traditional authority. Nonetheless, the arrival of the colonialists changed the state of rulership, introducing indirect rule (that is ruling through chiefs). The colonialists separated the administrative and traditional powers of the “Mbom-mbog”. Administrative chiefs were introduced and charged with administrative duties such as organization of elections and administering census and have little cultural/traditional authority over their community. The colonialists ruled through the administrative chiefs. The patriarchs on the other hand performed traditional obligations. The patriarchs lorded over the people traditionally and possessed powers different from those of the administrative chiefs, because they were superior to the administrative chiefs. There is a traditional initiation rite that an individual completes before attaining the title of a patriarch – a powerful brotherhood circle in the Bassa community. Members have sacred responsibilities and authority. The authority of the patriarchs is superior to those of the chiefs. Consequently, the patriarchs act as protectors and healers of their tribesmen.

Furthermore, from a religious perspective, despite embracing Christianity predominantly Catholics and Protestants, these communities still cling to their African Traditional religion. Economically, the Bassa are involved in the primary sector principally in the natural resources management with farming and fishing being the chief activities. They produce palm and kernel oil. Palm oil is good for food preparation and kernel oil is an excellent body moisturizer, especially for babies. Palm oil is one of the most used food products in Cameroonian communities for cultural practices such as pride price, cleansing ceremonies and funeral ceremonies. These are events that enable socialization and living together. The Duala community will be presented next.

2.7.2 The Duala Community

The Duala community is Bantu both in language and origin (Awah, 2021: 22-23, and DeLancey, DeLancey & Mbuh, 2019). They are commonly known as the “Sawa”, or the coastal people of Cameroon as mentioned earlier. Linguistically, the local indigenous language is **Duala** (German) or Duala (French), a name shared with the locality - Duala town. Duala is a member of the Bantu group. Duala was a language used as a means of communication for trade principally

because of its extensive use by early missionaries. Before the arrival of the Germans in Duala the locals used unspoken messages for communication. Drumming was the most common method used to send signals across long distances. Although German and English were the first languages spoken in this part of Cameroon, French is widely used today. This is largely due to French colonization and urbanization. Duala languages used by this community include **Duala, Isu, Bakole, Bubea, Wumboko, Malimba and Mokpwe**.

Duala is a coastal Cameroonian community, commonly called Sawa (Mfewou, 2018), which like many others is believed to have originated from Congo, migrated, and settled in the Littoral region. “Douala” the commonly used French appellation known as “Duala” in German represents not only the name of the largest and economic capital of Cameroon but equally the people and their language. The Duala peoples are generally categorized into eight communities or tribes: the Duala proper, the Bakole, the Bakoko, the Bakweri (or Kwe), the Limba (or Malimba), the Isubu (Isuwu or Bimbians), the Wovea and the Mungo. They share an ancestral origin with the Bassa and the Batanga. The Duala communities have similar histories, and cultures and share a common origin. They are highly educated probably due to their long-standing contact with the Europeans. They are farmers and are equally involved in commercial activities. Their trading culture was motivated by the colonial masters, particularly the Germans and the French.

Traditionally and hierarchically, the Duala community is divided into three layers. The **Wonja** (Duala natives) with the right to inherit land are found at the topmost layer, with the Chiefs occupying the apex. Next to the **Wonja** is the **Wajili**; who are known to be descendants of slaves or non-Duala and lastly the **Wakomi** who are slaves and “strangers”.

The Duala like other communities integrate through associations, secret societies, and other groups. These provide a setting that allows them to find solutions to common problems. The ‘Ngondo’ is the biggest association of the Duala people which serves the purpose outlined earlier. The secret societies among the Duala of the Littoral region comprise the **Jengu, Munji Losango, and Ekongolo**, while in the Bakweri of the South West region, there is the **Mbwaya, Leingu, Nganya and Maalé**. An association such as the **Muemba** (plural: **Miembra**), is aimed at socializing and connecting all Duala peoples of a given age range or clan. Duala indigenes and the Limba (considered the natives of the land) originate from a common ancestor named **Mbedi**. He spent his life in a locality known as "Bakota" today known as the Republic of Congo. **Mbedi** had two sons,

Ewale and **Dibongo**. The two sons migrated north of Gabon and settled in Pitti, a locality around the Dibamba River, where they parted ways following a dispute. **Ewale** and his followers migrated to the mouth of the Dibamba River and further northwest to the east bank of the river Wouri estuary. Here Ewale and his people became the Duala. **Dibongo** on the other hand, accompanied by his followers went southeast to the Sanaga River further splitting into two groups. **Dibongo** moved upstream with some while others went downstream with a member of the group called **Elimbe**. **Dibongo** and his team formed the Limba. The Bakoko and Bassa communities were the occupants of the Wouri estuary before the coming of the Duala people. Through force, these original occupants were displaced to take their current location while the Duala inhabited their land.

The Duala community has several lineages: the **Bonaberi**, the **Bonaku**, the **Bonabela**, and the **Bonanjo** (including the **Bonapriso**). These clan names are representative of the founding families of each sub-group. Summarily, these clans and their families of origin are:

Bonanjo is a sub-group originating from the **Njo** family, **Bonapriso** is a sub-group originating from the **Priso**, family, **Bonaku** is from the **Akwa** family, **Bonabela** on the other hand is from **Ebele-Deido** and finally, **Bonaberi** takes roots from the **Bell** family. Nowadays, Duala is partitioned into urban and rural areas, with the urban representing Cameroon's commercial cultural diversity. The city dwellers, earn a living using skilled and unskilled professions. Hence, there are many companies and administrative units that offer jobs to this category of Duala people. Many Duala people live off rents, as they own parts of the city. The indigenous people are involved in farming, fishing and other unskilled and skilled jobs as well.

Religiously, these people are Christians of the Evangelical denomination particularly the Baptist. However, African Traditional Religions is still in practice. Traditionally, these communities believe their ancestors - the "**jengu**" which is a demi-human - live in the sea mediating between the living and God. They believe witchcraft influences their day-to-day life. After examining the Douala community, we will take a look at the Bayang community.

2.7.3 The Manyu Community

Manyu is found in the South West region of Cameroon (Awah: 2021), who like other community members migrate to Yaoundé for various reason. Ashu (2011), informs us that the

people of Manyu occupying the South West region of Cameroon originate from Nigeria tracing their ancestry from Ekoi. The Bayang are people found in Manyu Division in South West Region of Cameroon, whose headquarters is Mamfe. They are from the Bantu language group. Their local language is Kenyang just like the people themselves. Hence Bayang represents the people, the language and the locality (Eyong, 2017; Ngong, 2021; Ngoh & Anye, 2021). The Anyang and Keyang constitute some of the tribes of this area. Mamfe now extends to villages such Bessongabang and Egbekaw. Apart from the indigenes, there are the Widikum, Nso, Bali, Fouban and other tribes from the North West region who migrated there for agricultural and other reasons. The fertile volcanic soil of this locality which is good for agriculture has been the attractive factor to most communities. **“Mamfe”** the capital of Manyu is a name derived from misinterpretation and understanding of language the Kenyang language. Oral history has it that when the Germans came to Cameroon through the Cross River section of Mamfe, they met a Mamfe dweller (a man who was digging sand from the river for sale as a means of sustenance) and had a conversation with him for direction. One of the Germans in a bit to situate the location asked; “where are we now”, from the Bayang. The Bayang did not understand the German and rather said in his local language; **“mamfie fah”** – transcribed in English as; where should I put it? The Germans heard **“Mamfe”** and subsequently used it to name the area. Mamfe is a subdivision and the capital city of Manyu. It has a surface area of about 744square kilometres (km²) and shares borders with Nigeria around River Manyu. The fact that it shares boundaries with Nigeria makes it a receptacle for the Nigerian community. Manyu has a population of about 36,500 (2017 estimate). Mamfe has tarred entry and exit roads from the town such as; Mamfe - Ekok and Mamfe – Bamenda.

According to Takor (2017), leadership is inherited, given that the source of legitimacy for traditional authorities is historic. Their chiefs are political as well as spiritual leaders of the community. Traditional leaders can claim special legitimacy in the eyes of their people because these institutions embody the people’s history, culture, values, religion, and remnants of pre-colonial sovereignty. The Bayang also practice Islam and value African Traditional Religion – worship of other gods associated with their traditional institutions such as the **“Ekpe”** and **“Obasinjo”** societies. The famous Cameroonian dish *“water fufu and eru”* is a delicacy and traditional meal from this community alongside *“fufu and ogbono soup”*. English and French are

the official languages of Mamfe. However, the indigenous language is Kenyang. Pidgin is largely spoken in this locality as well. Economically the inhabitants are engaged in three main sectors which include: primarily noticeable management of natural resources with agriculture, fishing and forest exploitation is their principal activities. Mining and industrial activities make up the secondary sector while banking and transportation are the tertiary. Next Nso community.

2.7.4 The Nso Community

Like other communities, Nso coexists in Yaoundé. Chilver & Kaberry (1968), trademarked this community as one of the largest of the *Tikari* found in Bui Division in the North West region of Cameroon (Manjoh, 2018; Musah, 2021; Amadou, 2017). The Nso are said to have originated from Bornu and settled in Rifem (Mbankim). Fon **Kimi** who ruled Rifem had many wives and one of them was called **Yah**. Yah had three children – **Ngon’nsso**, **Nchare Yen**, and **Mfombam** in order of birth. Ngon’nsso, is the woman who founded the Nso dynasty, while **Nchare Yen**, founded the Bamum dynasty, and **Mfombam**, moved further to establish Bafia. Nchare Yen (the first son of the Fon) had been prepared for the throne of **Rifem**. Regrettably, after the death of Fon **Kimi**, **Mbwandu** – a half-brother to **Nchare** took over the throne as Fon of Rifem. Feeling humiliated, **Nchare Yen** decided to leave Rifem. On leaving, **Nchare Yen** cornered his sister **Ngon’nsso**, who chose to move with him. After the breakup in Circa 1394, **Nchare Yen** travelled south while **Mfombam** went east to Mbam (Bafia) and eventually founded the present-day Fondom and dynasties of Bamum and Nditam in the West and Centre regions respectively. **Ngon’nsso** travelled west with her followers and settled along with the bounds of the river Mape. They later travelled upstream along with the bounds of the river and settled first at Mbo’nsso’, where they met the Ntaankum people. With time, they abandoned this place and went upstream to Ndzennso. From there, **Ngon’nsso** and her followers crossed the river and moved to Kovvifem.

At Kovvifem, they met the original occupants who were a small group of hunters called the **Visale/ Nso’vesaiy/ mtaar Nso** literally translated as the “sons and daughters of Nso land” (autochthones in other words). **Ngon’nsso** and her followers were well received and when the Visale chief died leaving no male child to succeed him, the son of **Ngon’ nsso** known as **Le’** was installed *Fon* in exchange for some prestigious rights and privileges. The blend of the two groups led to the formation of the Nso community. Therefore, the name ‘**Nso**’ originated from that of its

founder – **Ngon’nsso**. The combination of these communities resulted in an inordinate cultural and traditional evolution whose organization and focal point are of Tikari origin. From this culture, the Nso language - “*Lamnso*” - was born, which is a synthesis of diverse languages spoken by integrated tribes at the time. The Nso stayed in Kovifem for a very long time and their population increased because they intermarried with people who came from other places and stayed there. Integration of incoming population into Nso was on condition they got married to descendants of the **Mtaar** and become the Nso. This is probably why the Nso strongly believe in intra-community marriage. For this reason, the general rule is that only the sons of the **Mtaar** women could be enthroned Fon of Nso. Hence, **Ngonso’s** son **Jing** was enthroned as the first Fon of Nso. Exceptionally, the mother of Fon Mbinglo Mbinkar hails from Oku (Mzeka, 1980). Eighteen (18) ‘*afon*’ (plural form for Fon) are said to have ruled, died and were buried in Kovifem. The reign of Nso in Kovifem lasted between the 15th to the 19th centuries.

The national census of November 2005 put the population of Nso at 321969 inhabitants. Due to population increase, these people are obliged to move from Kovifem and settle elsewhere – Kumbo. Before relocating, Fulani horse riders from Banyo raided Kovifem thereby precipitating their displacement. This attack caused the Nso indigenes to take temporal refuge in Kov-Ngongba, and later moved to Tavisia, where the ruling Fon **Sangoo** and his sons were killed by the Fulani raiders (*Baranyam*). Nso reigned without an heir for some time until **Fai Ndzendzev** during an expedition to Wimbum saw and saved a prince from slavery, groomed and enthroned him as Fon. Post the installation of Fon **Sangoo’s** successor in 1820, the **Barayam** invaded Kovifem again. This forced Fon **Sembumto** to move the capital to Kimbo (Kumbo). Migrating to Kimbo the Nso displaced the people of Nkar (the first occupants of the territory) to their present location. Nkwi and Warnier (1982), argue that in the year 1820, Fon Sembum I transformed the capital of Nso from Kovifem to Kimbo, situated at the main route that traverses the territory from North to South. Nonetheless, some Nkar people stayed behind and constituted the lineage known as **Tsenkar**.

Summarily, the name Nso was derived from that of its founder – **Ngon’nsso**. Nso has two main seasons – the rainy season and the dry season. The rainy season is a period of extreme farming activities. At the beginning of this season, farmers plant food crops and harvest them towards the end of the dry season. The rainy season begins from mid-March, sometimes April and continues until late September or early October. These seasons determine the economic activities of Nso

inhabitants. The hilly landscape of Nso with profound ravines and valleys, is a relief like that of Yaoundé. Nso are mainly farmers and still practice the activity in Yaoundé. With the Nso, the Bamileke is next coexisting community of interest.

2.7.5 The Bamileke Community

The Bamileke (Bamiléké in French) community stands as one of the biggest “ethnic” groups in the Western region of the country (Siebetchu, 2022; Tsobeng & Duminil, 2020; Yogom, *et al.*, 2022; Tsobeng & Duminil, 2020; Lengha, Hilaire & Fouda, 2022; Kemedjio, 2020). Notué (1984), explains that the name Bamileke is an administrative vocabulary artificially fabricated during the German colonial period because of the deformation of and poor pronunciation of a Bali expression “**mbalekeo**” which signifies “les gens d'en bas” limpidly translated in English as the ‘people below’. This inference by the Bali interpreter was with regards to the habitation pattern/altitude of the Bamileke population compared to their position as being lower.

The Bamileke are located in the Western Region of Cameroon. While some historians suggest that they are Neo-Sudanese, others affirm that they are Baladis descendants from 14th century medieval Egypt. They reached Tikar region towards the middle of the 12th century before splitting following the death of their last unique sovereign known as **King Ndéh** by 1360. **Yendé** the first Prince refused the throne and went along to cross the Noun where he founded Bafoussam. Between the 15th and 20th century, all other Bamileke groups were formed from Bafoussam, for example, the birth of Bansa in 1910 is because of the expedition of **FoTaghe** of Bafoussam. They have more than 100 political units and secret societies. These associations keep the traditional values of the people. Among their ancestral practices is the well-known retention of the skulls of their ancestors for continuous veneration. This is a cultural practice that has been religiously guarded for as long as their ancestry. The indigenous Bamileke are farmers, others make human and animal-like sculptures. Their industrious lifestyle is part of their culture in Yaoundé. Haven seen the Bamileke community, and the Bamum community is the next community to be presented.

2.7.6 The Bamum Community

The Bamum community is found in Noun Division in the Western region of Cameroon (Talla Makoudjou & Loumngam Kamga, 2017, Nsangou & De Limbepe, 2018). The Bamum

kingdom was founded by **Nchare Yen**, a prince from Rifum (present-day Mbankim) in the Tikar plain following the migration process of three royal descendants of Fon Kimbi – **Nchare Yen**, **Ngon'nso** and **Mfoumban** Circa 1394. The Bamum like the Nso and Bafia, are of Tikar origin. These three siblings during their migration process took different directions. **Nchare Yen** went on to begin the Bamum community while his brother **Mfoumban** moved further and founded Bafia.

Bamum has a hierarchical socio-political structure with the '*Mfon*' (Sultan) at the apex of the pyramid. Next to the '*Mfon*' are the chiefs, secret societies then commoners. The language of this community is called the "*shupamom*" traced to the Tikars of the Western Highlands of Cameroon. The Bamum through **King Njoya** invented their writing – the Bamum script – so they could write their history in the early 20th century. Islam is the dominant religion of the area practiced alongside Christianity. However, the Bamum practice African Traditional Religion – ancestral worship. For instance, the use of masks and statues to represent material culture is in vogue in Bamum. The community experiences rainy and dry seasons like other communities.

Foumban is a major town of the Bamum and home to a museum of traditional arts and culture making it one of Cameroon's major attraction centres of African traditional culture. Agriculture is the dominant economic activity of the people of this community. Cultivation of crops was traditionally reserved for women believed to be responsible for the feeding of the family. They produce crops such as potatoes, yams, maize, beans, banana, vegetables, cassava, plantain, and pepper. Two planting seasons are observed in the Bamum community namely the "*nfeu-mpeuh*" (during the dry season) and the "*nfeuh-nfeuh*" in the (rainy season). The men take care of the processing of palm wine from the palm tree (the raffia palm tree). These agricultural activities are also practiced in Yaoundé, making the town an easy to adapt and live location. With the presentation of the Bamum community, our next target will be the Northerners.

2.7.7 The “Northerners”

The Northern part (in French; le Grand Nord) of Cameroon is made up of three regions: the Far North Region, the North Region, and the Adamawa Region (Mahmood & Ani, 2018; Nomo, *et al.*, 2017; Nkouam *et al.*, 2017). They are bound to the west by Nigeria, to the southeast by the Central African Republic, to the east, by Chad. Garoua is its political and industrial capital and makes up 66,090 km² of the northern part of Cameroon. The North is divided into four divisions:

Bénoûé, which has Garoua as capital, Mayo-Rey, whose capital is Tcholliré, Faro, whose capital is Poli and Mayo-Louti, with Guider as capital. It has three major ethnic groups Chadic, Nilo-Sahel, and Fulani. According to Hilary Bradt, (2011), the Fulani (or Peuhl in French and Fulfulde in English) are tall, thin, lightly built people with aquiline noses, and oval faces and are light in complexion dominant in the North and North West regions of Cameroon. They are also found in the Savanna regions of Africa however arrived in Cameroon in the 19th Century. They are originally nomadic (Bororo and Wodabe) cattle herders. Today they are farmers and merchants.

The dominant language in the Northern half of Cameroon is Ffulde from the Fulani ethnic group, whose spread is because of Islam. They are an Islamic population. There is equally the practice of Christianity in the Northern region of Cameroon. Culturally Lamidos are rulers of this part of Cameroon with the authority to settle disputes. Minority communities have traditional political structures with chiefs who possess traditional authority. They are reserved and under-educated, especially the girls. The word Kirdir is the distorted word for *Kurdes* literarily functioning as a negative connotation used to describe non-Muslims as pagans. There are different non-Muslim ethnic groups in the North, each speaking its distinct language. Some can be identified as; Toupouri, Mouktele, Mofu, Dowayo, Mafa, Mada, Moundang, Kapsiki, Fali, Podokwo, Ouldémé, Gizigar to name these. However, as earlier mentioned, the most spoken language is Ffulde. The main economic activities practiced by the Kirdi are millet (sorghum) cultivation, and animal rearing (such as goats, sheep, and zebus). Farming of millet takes place on fields on the terrace made up of dry basaltic stones which are constantly cared for.

Presenting these communities of interest is necessary because it also justifies why community associations are created by these communities and why their role in the promotion of multiculturalism and social cohesion in Yaoundé is central to this work. Chapter Three comes next with a review of relevant literature and theoretical framework.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter three handles the literature review and the theoretical framework.

3.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this thesis, research objectives are the foundation upon which literature is reviewed, following a thematic order. This work's bone of contention is community associations and its impact on multiculturalism in Yaoundé as an urban practice. This chapter reviews multiculturalism, its meaning, history, theories and characteristics. However, for consistency reasons and before the presentation of multiculturalism, there is a brief review on culture (the quintessence of Anthropology) paying particular emphasis on its characteristics. Next will be a transitory history of the concept of "multiculturalism" for a better understanding of our research theme. The section wraps up with aspects of community association such as socio-cultural activities and the impact on multiculturalism.

3.1.1 Culture

Brown, McIlwraith, & Tubelle de González (2020:6) define culture as a set of beliefs, practices and symbols that are learned and shared. Together, they form an all-encompassing, integrated whole that bind people together, shape their worldview and lifeways. Community association is one the traits of their urban dwellers. These associations exercise socio-cultural activities that have a bearing on their daily life and attitudes. To understand these socio-cultural activities, a mastery of culture worthwhile. However, what are the characteristics of culture?

Bianca Sulkowski and Kent Deakin (2009), carried out a study titled "*Does understanding culture help enhance students learning experience?*" The study was debating whether cultural perceptions can explain student behaviour, tackle approaches to enhance teaching and learning in a multinational classroom. The researchers designed a questionnaire to test students' values associated with education, teaching and learning, ethics and aspirations. Results were triangulated with existing literature which questioned if culture could inform teaching and learning strategies.

They argue that, in an attempt to eliminate segregation and prejudice, institutions should focus on managing diversity rather than individual cultural groups within the student body.

They found that there is proof of positive link between culture and learning approaches. Practically, the research implies that to eliminate segregation and prejudice, institutions should focus on managing diversity rather than individual cultural groups. The researchers held that the paper is of significance to everyone supporting culturally diverse students. In this thesis, interest is in understanding how diversity can be enhanced through institutions – community associations in Yaoundé. These associations through socio-cultural activities impact relationships among members and between communities. However, what are the characteristics of culture?

3.1.1.1 Characteristics of Culture

To understand the concept of culture, one needs to look at its characteristics. Based on the definitions seen above and others, the following characteristics of culture can be deduced:

i. Culture is Collective

Collectivism is the quintessence of anthropology. According to Doda (2005:86), “*culture is all-encompassing*” hence collective. Culture is a collection of every aspect of daily life. It encloses all material and non-material aspects of human lives. E.B. Taylor (1871), reiterates that culture is that “*complex whole...acquired by man as a member of society.*” The definition deals with people interacting collectivity – within groups – to create culture. Community associations are groups where people collectively interact influencing relationships among members and communities. Boas (1928: 236), confirms that the forces that bring about changes are active in the individuals composing the social group, not in the abstract culture. This indicates that people are the creators of culture, in which case their absence leads to cultural imbalance. The point of culture is to preserve the continuity of mankind. Hence, we are studying how socialization in community association influences living together in Yaoundé.

ii. Culture is General Yet Specific

Doda (2005:86-87), argues that culture is general yet specific. Generally, all human societies of the world have a culture – ‘humanity’ – which distinguishes them from non-human beings. Individually, their diverse cultures however co-exist (as seen in Yaoundé urban area)

within a collective space. This generality of culture makes it possible for humans to negotiate daily coexistence – multiculturalism – in a common space. Despite generality, unique communities have specific cultures in which they are acculturated. Thus, within coexisting cultures individual cultures are expected to be valued and maintained. This finds expression in intra-community associations. This work is interested in examining how the way of life within specific groups (intra-community associations) and general (intercommunity associations) in form of belonging influences living together in Yaoundé urban area.

iii. Culture is Learned

Culture is civilization, it is learned, and shared (Mbonji 2005). Saylor Academy (2012), views culture as consisting of mental programs as it calls it software of the mind. According to Saylor Academy (2012), as cited in Hofstede (1991:4), every individual “carries within him or herself patterns of thinking, feeling, and potential acting which was learned throughout their lifetime.” This means the mind is consciously or unconsciously shaped by what individuals see, hear, think, feel, smell. through interactions and socialization during growth processes. These features condition the mindset of individuals, influencing their beliefs as to what is right or wrong, good or bad, normal or abnormal etc. and are expressed daily through thoughts and actions. In this dissertation, we are analyzing how learning how way of life of community associations impact multiculturalism in Yaoundé.

iv. Culture is Symbolic

White (1994), says “*symboling*” means bestowing meaning upon a thing or an act, or grasping and appreciating meanings thus bestowed. A symbol can be a sign, word, gesture, an art, food, among others which represents something. Symbols differ from community to community, however with similarities. For instance, if in Cameroon, looking down while talking to an elder is a symbol of respect. Yovsi & Keller (2003) illustrate this in Nso while Regis (2018) says averting one’s gaze is a sign of respect in Fulbe culture. Contrarily, in other countries like Canada, averting gaze is considered a symbol of lies and distrust (Global Deception Research Team, 2006 and Hare, Forth & Hart, 1989). It implies culture enables communities to give meaning to material and non-material culture. The National Flag of Cameroon for instance is a symbol representing the country wherever it is hoisted. Language is another symbol and one of the most important in any

community. In this work, interest lies on how symbols such as food, language, dressing, and artifacts among others are used by community associations to influence behaviour and relationships among members and between communities in a culturally diverse urban space – Yaoundé.

v. Culture is Shared

Lassiter (2014:5), Studied culture as a shared and negotiated system of meaning and explains that a system is a group of interacting or interrelated parts that operate with one another. He concludes that culture is better understood as a process. In this process interacting and interrelating communities exchange/share cultures with one another. Saylor Academy (2012), views that patterns of culture bind people together and enable them to get along with each other. Shared cultures create a dynamic of an in-group, where people relate with those they share with. This work is interested in studying how interacting and interrelating among individuals in community associations impact living together in Yaoundé.

vi. Culture is Dynamic

Doda (2005:911), says “*culture is stable yet changing*”. In other words, culture is dynamic. It is stable in the sense that what individuals and communities value is what they want to hand over to the next generation. However, because of culture contact, cultures are shared/exchanged causing cultural changes or hybrids through diffusion (the spread of cultural traits). Hence intra-community associations are passing down those ways of life that are valued by the associations as well as their communities of origin (for sustainability reasons) while intercommunity associations allow for cultural exchange. This work intends to investigate how through interaction in community association, stable yet changing ways of life (moments of peace/happy events and moments of tension or uncertainty/sorrowful events) influence multiculturalism in Yaoundé.

vii. Culture is Integrative

Navas *et al.* (2005) and Choudhry, Fang, & Mohamed (2007), recognize that culture is a complex system, made up of many parts that are interconnected and related to each other. Integration happens when people from a culture adopt fundamentals of another culture such as attitudes and practices (Berry, 2003). This happens in many migrant contexts as survival tools, regardless of where the individual moves to or is from. Individuals maintain the familiar (culture

of community of origin) while adopting core practices of the new cultures. E.B. Taylor (1871), by saying “*culture is that complex whole [...] acquired by people as members of a society*” implies adoption and adaptation of cultures from other communities, without necessarily discarding theirs.

The above tenets of culture are what this work intends to study about people in community associations and the impact they exert on living together in Yaoundé. Having seen the definition, meaning, types and characteristics of culture, subsequent arguments in the next part of this chapter will dwell on multiculturalism in a common urban space - Yaoundé. With an understanding of culture, a look at the history of Multiculturalism will be seen below.

3.2 MULTICULTURALISM: MEANING, HISTORY, THEORIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

This thesis is interested in examining how community associations influence living together and social cohesion – multiculturalism – in Yaoundé urban area. Prior to the presentation of multiculturalism, an understanding of culture and its tenets is necessary.

3.2.1 Aims of Multiculturalism

Like most concepts, multiculturalism is hardly a new phenomenon in the academic milieu. Erikson (2015), confirms that multiculturalism “*refers both simultaneously to ‘ethnically’ and culturally complex societies and to policies recognizing difference to achieve equity between the constituent groups of such societies*”. In other words, multiculturalism refers to the peaceful cohabitation of many cultures in a common space (Bousetta, & Jacobs, 2006). The world nowadays is made up of internally heterogeneous countries generally and cities such as Yaoundé in particular, with people from diverse cultures (language, arts, religion, beliefs, traditions.) living together. The objective of multiculturalism is to curtail segregation, all sorts of discrimination and social injustice occurring among individuals and communities, while encouraging peaceful coexistence. Thus, one of the tenets of multiculturalism is the protection and promotion of cultural diversity. In this work, multiculturalism is motivated by the quest for social cohesion in Yaoundé urban area through community associations. The next target is a brief history of multiculturalism.

3.2.2 A brief history of Multiculturalism

Historically, the existence of this phenomenon goes down ancient times with the history of mankind, beginning with the clash of the first hordes of the Homo sapiens. Its intensity was proportional to the degree of group diversity. This means people were naturally equipped with hatred for all those who belonged to other hordes. The variety - *polygenism* – of multi-tribes was created. By joining one, they were connected by a common culture to create tribal or national communities. Separate human hordes because of fights and wars created larger and more complex communities hence multicultural societies. This anecdote is recognized by the Polish sociologist Gumpłowicz quoted by Śliz and Szczepański (2017), who say conquest and multiplicity are closely related, and that fighting has been a factor of development since the dawn of time in the primitive times when the human race was made up of countless different tribes and groups, who were fighting all the time and as a result of the forced union of various elements in the state. Migration is one of the determinants of the phenomenon of identity in most countries. The 1960s mark the commencement of multicultural policies in the USA, especially following racism and the “Black Awareness” civil rights movements with proponents such as Martin Luther King Jr. in the USA. In the UK, Post-World War II saw an influx of non-white immigrants. Farrar (2012), asserts that multiculturalist dialogue surfaced in Britain in the 1960s, in the context of the introduction of practical policies for the elimination of racial discrimination hidden in terms of a philosophy of the social integration of ‘ethnic’ minorities. Multiculturalism has been used in inference to ethnic and racial discrimination. ‘Multiculturalism’ as an aspirational concept became commonplace in the 1980s.

This phenomenon was influenced by immigration processes as seen in countries such as Britain, America, Canada and other European countries. Australia in the 1970s has taken multiculturalism officially, welcome other nationals especially Asians. New Zealand is recognizing the role of Maori culture as a distinct national identity. It emerged when these countries began experiencing major population influx from immigration processes whereby migrants move with their cultural, linguistic, religious and other backgrounds. Being an old issue, its multiple derivatives such as ‘multicultural society’, ‘policy of multiculturalism’ came into academic glossary in 1960-s in Canada. The dictionary of Canadian political process defined multiculturalism as policy of the Liberal government of Canada in 1970s, which was continued

later by the Conservative government. Two theories explain multiculturalism in different societies. A look at these theories sheds more light on our comprehension of the phenomenon.

3.2.3 Theories of Multiculturalism

Basically, two theories the “**Salad Bowl**” theory and the “**Melting Pot**” theory influence multiculturalism worldwide as shown below.

- **The “Salad Bowl” Theory**

The language of Canadian Politics (2001: 184-185), tells that the ‘Salad Bowl’ theory is that was aimed at encouraging cultural heterogeneity, especially with the development of cultural heritage of communities in Canada that belong neither to the British nor to the French. Canada has been reconciling French-speaking Quebec and the English-speaking majority population while upholding the rights of the indigenous Inuit peoples. The salad bowl notion of multiculturalism in Canada did not oblige coexisting cultures to relinquish their cultural heritage as will be noticed with the melting pot theory.

- **The “Melting Pot” Theory**

Unlike the liberal salad bowl used in Canada, the Americans adopted the notion of a melting pot. The term first originated in the U.S.A. around 1788 to describe the cultures of many European, Asian, and African nationalities merging and melting into the culture of the United States. According to Crossman (2021), multiculturalism’s “Melting Pot” theory argues that many cultural communities merged and melted into a single society, abandoning their traditional culture to become assimilated in the new space. However, the melting pot perception of multiculturalism was contested for diminishing cultural diversity. In everyday colloquial use, it is a phenomenon synonymous with cultural pluralism; the co-existence of several cultures in a given geographical location over some time while holding onto their distinct cultural identities. Briefly stating, as a late 20th-century phenomenon, multiculturalism was influenced by immigration processes as seen in countries such as Britain, America, Canada, and other European countries

These theories are respectively from the American and Canadian societies. The former encourages assimilation, making communities abandon their cultures while the latter depicts a heterogeneous society that encourages liberalism and multiculturalism. This shows how different societies appreciate multiculturalism.

In Yaoundé, the Beti were the first settlers who witnessed a gradual influx and settlement of other Cameroonian communities – of which those of interest have been seen in the previous Chapters of this work – in the city. Migrant communities come to Yaoundé equipped with individual and community cultures. The merging of diverse cultures in a common space result in cultural diversity. Cultural diversity according to Socpa (2016) is a constant threat to social cohesion. Attempts to reconcile citizenship with cultural diversity have always centered on bridging the gap between national integration and “ethnic” differences. This work is focused on the impact of community association especially intra-community association on living together – multiculturalism – among individuals and communities in Yaoundé urban area. With knowledge multiculturalism history, presenting the traits of multiculturalism in urban spaces such as Yaoundé is necessary.

3.2.4 Characteristics of a Multicultural Society

Longley (2021), did an extensive study on multiculturalism and retained that multicultural societies are characterized by people of different races, ethnicities, and nationalities living together in the same community. Multiculturalism enhances positive communal diversity related to religion, gender, race, community – ethnic – and language. Longley resumed that characteristics of multiculturalism often spread into the community’s public schools, where curricula are crafted to introduce young people to the qualities and benefits of cultural diversity.

Quoted by Longley (2018: 6 -21), a study conducted by the Pew Research Center found that the “post-millennial” generation is the most diverse generation in American society. Contrary to the fore, oral history informs us that most schools in Yaoundé today have witnessed anti-diversity tendencies including brawls between teachers and students, students and students, and drug addiction. This has been elaborated above. However, multiculturalism can improve the situation. Singham (2006), in his work titled: “*Multiculturalism in New Zealand – the need for a new paradigm*”, studied multiculturalism and argues that the strength brought by diversity is a new paradigm. It is a fundamental tenet of democracy that everyone is treated equally, respected and enabled to preserve their dignity. Implicit in this assertion is the idea that everyone has something valuable to contribute to the community in which they live. Multiculturalism enhances the benefits of diversity through cultural interdependence, respect, justice, and tolerance for

difference between cultures, allowing different societies to promote uniqueness. The promotion of uniqueness has been studied by many authors in several disciplines. In anthropology, Nyamnjoh (1998); Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998); Yenshu Vubo (2008) among others have critically studied unique cultures through associations (especially intra-community associations) as promoters of distinct community cultures. In this thesis, interest lies on the impact that these associations through their socio-cultural activities have on multiculturalism. Multiculturalism as expressed in the “Salad Bowl Theory” promotes diversity. Diversity is beneficial to coexisting communities and society at large. For the individual, multiculturalism is aimed at encouraging individual communities to retain the cultures from their place of origin because through this uniqueness they derive the meaning of themselves (community identity) and their surroundings. Notwithstanding, it equally demands acceptance, tolerance, respect of other cultures and unity in diversity to enable cohesive living together.

3.2.5 Significance of Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism has numerous advantages, some of which are:

- **Encourages Cultural Diversity**

According to Longley (2021), multiculturalism is the key to achieving a high degree of cultural diversity. Barakoska (2013), subscribes to this view saying multiculturalism is a potential wealth of every society. Diversity in Yaoundé occurs when people of different communities (ethnicities), nationalities, religions, and ideologies come together to form a community. A truly multicultural community recognizes and values the cultural differences of people in coexisting communities.

- **Harnesses Technologies, Experiences and Skills which Lead to Innovation**

According to Longley (2021), multiculturalism brings together different backgrounds, skills, experiences, and new ways of thinking that come with cultural diversity making it possible for communities and organizations in all settings to benefit thereof. Barakoska (2013: Conclusion), attests that: *“multiculturalism is not achieved only in schools, but also in family upbringing, by powerful and influential means, mass media, books, movies and a complete social environment.”* For a society to function holistically, acceptance and respect for different cultures make room for

the presence and exploitation of a blend of multiple cultures that can benefit the complex whole. Hence socialization and interaction render society an interdependent complex whole.

- **Promotes Living Together**

Longley (2021) and Amin (2002), uphold that one of the principal significances of multiculturalism is its ability to reconcile cohabiting communities, promoting living together among them. To substantiate this, Barakoska (2013), explains that multiculturalism represents humanity's perspective on future socially cohesive life. Yaoundé is a city that has experienced good and sad socio-cultural moments. However, its cultural diversity would be a beneficial aspect to the population if duly guarded. In the lines that follow, this dissertation looks at some of the reasons that led to the quest for the promotion of multiculturalism in Cameroon and Yaoundé in particular. Living together among diverse communities can be strengthened through socialization, interaction and bonding in community associations. Through these processes, acculturation and enculturation allows association members to learn and understand one another, their similarities and differences and build stronger relationships. In relation to the fore, Erbas, (2019:27), quoting Nieto (1994), wrote about levels of multicultural understanding. According to the author, Nieto (1994) developed four levels of multicultural understanding that serve to embrace all communities coexisting in a common space. According to the author, tolerance, acceptance, respect, and affirmation solidarity and critique are the levels of understanding associated with multiculturalism.

Tolerance: Nieto (1994, 2004) claimed that tolerance is the first level of supporting pluralism which demands that differences be endured. Apparently, and according to the author tolerance is ambiguous because what is tolerated now may not be tolerated the next moment.

Acceptance: The second level of multicultural understanding is “acceptance.” According to Nieto (1994), acceptance “implies that differences are acknowledged and their importance is neither denied nor belittled” (p. 4). Accepting diversity is a quality that enhances living together.

Respect: This is the third level of multiculturalism. At this level, associations value differences. Respect for diversity requires that members interact more as requisite of living together.

Affirmation, solidarity, and critique: According to Nieto (1994, 2004), this level of multiculturalism provides the highest level of support for diversity. At this level, “conflict” is an

important part of interaction. When people come together, there is bound to be conflict. This level of multiculturalism requires that there be unity in diversity. This means the ability of diverse communities interacting and integrating without any feeling culturally unfit or unwanted. From the above explanations, why is there need for multiculturalism in Cameroon?

3.2.6 Why Multiculturalism in Cameroon?

Information at this point will be divided into two; the first will expose the reasons that led to the coming of multiculturalism in Cameroon and the second will focus on our study site explaining the reasons that increased the demand for the same in Yaoundé.

➤ The National Situation

Alund (1999), in his work *Ethnicity, Multiculturalism and the Problem of Culture, European Societies*, discusses the complex meaning of ethnicity and identity in the multicultural society of today regarding divisions in multi-ethnic Swedish society. The author holds that social inequalities tend to be understood in terms of cultural differences. However, Alund (2003), says culture is usually connected with ‘ethnicity’ and understood as pure, as an ‘essence’, related to some original and eternal ethnic core living out important aspects of cultural dynamics in multicultural societies. In furtherance the author argues that what is usually not recognized are cultural crossings and the emergence of composite identities. This means that within the framework of multicultural society new cultures, identities and ethnicities are created which sometimes injure living together. Consequently, culture contact breaths socio-cultural intolerance, disrespect and socio-cultural conflicts.

Cameroon like most African states is characterized by migration and cultural plurality (Rowlands, 2003; Yenshu Vubo, 2006). It is a highly diversified country concerning ‘ethnic’ communities, religion, gender, education as seen in norms, culinary habits, languages and belief systems. Ethnically, Cameroon’s over 250 communities are grouped into Bantus, semi-Bantus,) and the Sudanic speaking groups. These have been illustrated in chapter one of this study. Religiously people from the northern divide of Cameroon are largely Muslims, meanwhile (Fombad, 2015), the rest of the country is dominated by Christians, that notwithstanding, ATR still has a strong grip in these communities. At the national level, laws, ministerial departments,

institutions including community associations have been put in place to foster multiculturalism. At the community level such as in the city of Yaoundé, institutions and practices handle the phenomenon. These will be further discussed below.

However, from a linguistic perspective Cameroon is disproportionately divided into two: French and English. French is the majority while English takes the minority position. French dominance continues to rule as the two ever presidents (the former and current) of the country originate from French communities. During the reign of Ahmadou Ahidjo, the presidency was centralized as opposed to the decentralized system of Paul Biya, however, both presidents believe in the philosophy of national unity in diversity. Ngoh (1979), says:

The political evolution of Cameroon culminated in 1961 in the reunification of the French and British Southern Cameroons under the name of the Federal Republic of Cameroon. The United Republic of Cameroon, as the former Federal Republic of Cameroon- is now called, passed through the hands of the Germans, the British and the French from 1884-1961. The political evolution of Cameroon is very complex on account of the differences in the culture and political thinking of the three countries which ruled it. Germany ruled Cameroon from 1884-1915 as a colony and in 1916 Cameroon was divided between Britain and France following the defeat of the Germans in Cameroon in 1916. Britain and France ruled their respective portions of Cameroon as mandated territories - of the League of Nations from 1919-1945. After the Second World War, France governed her portion as a trusteeship territory of the United Nations Organization until it was granted independence in 1960; Britain also administered her portion as a trusteeship territory of the United Nations until 1961 when it was granted independence (Ngoh, 1979: 3-iii).

Communication influences the political, economic and socio-cultural atmosphere of Cameroon. Faced with the experience from three different colonial cultures – the German, French and English – the linguistic culture of Cameroon in general and Yaoundé in particular was greatly altered. Recognized by the 1972 Constitution, the linguistic and cultural diversity of Cameroon as well as its diverse communities is its greatest wealth. However, next door to the joys of the country's cultural diversity lies the sorrows of same evidenced in the colonial vestige of French and English cultural heritage which make it a suitable environment for anti-living together tendencies noticed through retarded socio-cultural development.

Culturally, identity construction and reconstruction has been on the rise following the establishment of Law No 96/06 of 18 January 1996 amending the Constitution of 2 June 1972 on liberalization of association. This led to an expansion of intra-community associations nationally,

where communities (ethnic) continue to preserve and reconstruct community identity by enrolling members of common origin. Association liberalization was strengthened in 1990 and most recently amended in 2020. Nyamnjoh and Rowland (1998), show how association life became rampant in the Anglophone fraction of the country, exemplifying Lions clubs, school and college associations, church groups and other fund-raising organizations. Nyamnjoh and Rowland (1998), argue that through the phenomenon of association life, especially intra-community association, political maneuvering took centre stage and led to an increased fascination with the 'ethnic' identity crisis. Udikoh (2013), says cultural identity is a unique aspect of every community just as human beings are unique despite contact with other cultures. In furtherance, Socpa (2006), analysis host and guest relationship, centered on land claims about dominant political discourses on the construction of national citizenship in Cameroon's multicultural context and claims that national citizenship remains highly precarious as long as community differences are instrumentalized for political ends. He argues that the politics of belonging through autochthony/indigenes (inclusion) and allogenes/strangers (exclusion) is a criterion used for political gains. As a result, Cameroon's quest for bilingualism and multiculturalism has been endangered by the gap in ethnic identification. The claim is confirmed by Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), who studied the role of community associations in ethnic identification process and explains that:

In order to understand different processes of urban/regional ethnic identification, we shall compare the role of elite associations in two regions of Cameroon; one in the Grassfields, characterized by 'chiefly' titles and 'chiefdoms', the other on the coast (South Western Province), distinguished by more diffuse, acephalous polities. We argue that the influence elites exert in their home regions depends on the respect they acquire in local politics for their knowledge of and influence over external affairs. The central point is that the extent to which urban elites will play a significant role in defining a regional identity for their home area depends on the resources they bring with them and the incentives that encourage them to mobilise local political support. To some extent this depends on the number of educated, literate adults that exist to represent a particular rural population as well as their willingness to remain identified with local interests (Nyamnjoh and Rowlands, 1998: 321).

In agreement to the above quotation, Sturgis, et al (2014), hold that while political reactions come in response to what is a complex set of dynamic and cross-cutting forces, a common underlying theme is a belief that racial and community heterogeneity is problematic for healthy

community life. Contrarily, this work looks at possible ways of negotiating living together amid diversity. In other words, diversity is a healthy feature for community living and development.

3.2.6.1 Why the Need for Multiculturalism in Yaoundé?

Amin (2002), argues that, although the national frame of racial and ethnic relations remains important, much of the negotiation of difference occurs at the very local level, through everyday experiences and encounters. At the urban level, especially Yaoundé, people from diverse communities have been and are continuously negotiating socio-cultural cohesion in many ways as seen in community associations. Cameroonian cities are culturally diverse and there are as many community associations as the number of communities cohabiting Yaoundé. Consequently, there is a need to engage in multicultural dialogues to limit threats to the city's cultural diversity extending beyond what already exists. The current context of the research area – Yaoundé – through numerous socialization issues has altered the complex whole especially socio-culturally, making it a touristic site for a close examination of its state of affairs. Though several authors like Nyamnjoh (2003), Nkwi *et al* (2015), Socpa (2018), Waindim (2019), and Yenshu Vubo (2008), among others have written extensively on cultural diversity, peace and social cohesion, little has been done on the role community associations play on multiculturalism. Cultural identity is an important aspect of every community, safeguarded by daily interactions. Nyamnjoh (2004), confirms that the upward passion of belonging and the ideology of conventional assumptions about nationality and citizenship is significant to the way citizens perceive and behave towards one another. Linguistically this type of perception is seen in the way Cameroon for some time suffered a language crisis. Fon (2019), asserts that:

“the unavailability of an English version of some key legal instruments and other issues provoked Common Law lawyers to go on a strike in November 2016. The relegation of the Common Law in Cameroon’s legal²& system adds fuel to the perceived “francophonization” of the country’s administration [...] lack of a legal and institutional framework to sanction or supervise the implementation of bilingualism remains a serious issue” (Fon, 2019: 59).

Failure to recognize language of a particular community implies denial of a people's cultural right. Yaoundé faced a language crisis in the 1990s, as one needed to articulate in French in order to be listened to and/or heard in government offices. International Crisis Group (2010), studied Cameroon's undulating stability and instability saying there were confrontations between

English and French political parties struggling for multipartism against monopartism respective against language odds to have political access. Strike actions were organized by Anglophones in Yaoundé in March and April 1990. During the 1992 presidential elections, violent attacks occurred between supporters of the ruling party and those of the leading opposition party Social Democratic Front (SDF) headed by an “Anglophone” Ni John Fru Ndi.

Cameroon’s linguistic diversity hasn’t only been thwarted by the unavailability of English versions of documents. The role language (Geschiere, 2007; Konings 2009; Socpa, 2016 and Yenshu Vubo, 2006) through stereotypes and hate speeches plays in disintegrating communities is equally a concern. Hence apart from the absence of English version of administrative documents, this dissertation looks at the role of stereotypic and hate speech language on multiculturalism in Cameroon especially Yaoundé.

An example of stereotypic language scenario that motivates the quest for multiculturalism in Yaoundé is violence post 2018 (Eyebe, 2022; Ketzmerick, 2022; Tamfuh, 2020) presidential election results. The leading opposition party in a bid to contest the results pressed for a fleeting moment of antagonism between their supporters and those of the ruling party which eventually led to ethnic insults. Tension from this exacerbated online trolling through hate speech which degenerated into violence and names calling such as “**les sardinards**” and “**les tontinards**”. The former being associated with the Beti-Bulu and the latter with the Bamileke. A revolutionist group against the regime in the name of Brigades Anti-Sardinards (Heungoup, Hans De Darie & Tanda T., 2019:12), was created which crisscrossed international communities. Promoters of antagonistic appellations – hate speech – often group themselves under ethnic ties to discredit other groups. The ripple effects of hate speech moved from Yaoundé to the rest of the world. Sturgis *et al* (2014), summarize that if living in culturally – ethnically – diverse neighborhoods can lead people to distrust and avoid one another, evidence of the situation can be found in London. In agreement with Sturgis, creation of intra-community associations and the idea of membership borders are evidence of such distrust in Yaoundé and promotion of disintegration. This can be seen with crisis between Bamileke and Bulu in Sangmelima in the South region in 2008 influenced by the food and fuel crisis (Konings, 2008; Pigeaud, 2019), which led to the xenophobic acts – of stigmatization of Anglophones and Bamileke communities (Anderson, 2013; Tiafack & Mbon, 2017), coupled with the looting and shoplifting which wasn’t welcomed by some who out of fear

packed and left. This shows how socio-cultural intolerance incites social conflict between coexisting communities. Such scenes lead to disintegration and anti-diversity hence the quest for the promotion of tolerance, acceptance, solidarity and unity in diversity in Yaoundé.

Apart from the fore, the Anglophone crisis of the North West /South West regions of Cameroon which commenced in 2016 makes living together difficult in major towns of the two Anglophone regions following attacks, kidnappings and killings from both the assailants and the state defense forces (International Crisis Group, 2010) with rippling effects in Yaoundé. This has caused internal displacement of persons and shifts in identities – for example, ordinary citizens who flee the war are now labelled Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the country, Yaoundé inclusive and refugees in neighbouring countries like Nigeria. Young Cameroonians have become military entrepreneurs to proxy war lords, others have replaced schooling with all sorts of menial jobs in a bid to earn a living in Yaoundé. Asanga & Achiri (2021), confirm that: *“The crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon which began as a protest by teachers and lawyers trade unions in late 2016 is becoming an intractable conflict which if not addressed risks destabilizing the entire Central African sub-region.”* These events are provocative to ideologies of cultural diversity and the quest for living together. The multicultural debate has been in the vanguard of most government policies in varying ways and a variety of meanings have been derived contextually thereafter (Śliz and Szczepański (2017). In cities such as Yaoundé, where migration has caused a push and pull tendency, bringing several communities (such as Nso, Beti, Bassa, Bamum, Douala, Bayang, Bamileke and the Northerners) together, diversity presents socio-cultural instability (Socpa: 2016) and usually, minority groups are often negatively affected the most. The advent of community associations (both intra and intercultural) in Yaoundé serves as instruments for enhancing socialization. Associations are presumably expected to foster living together. However, the expansion of intra-community associations (as co-cultures) puts to test the fabric of Cameroon’s quest for diversity. These associations tend to foster monoculturalism against the backdrop of multiculturalism. Hence the coming of intra-community associations has been seen to widen the gap between communities. At this level a look at various elements, institutions and the role they play in advancing multiculturalism is a necessity. The focal point of this discussion is to analyze how intra-community associations influence multiculturalism and social cohesion in Yaoundé.

3.2.7 Canals of Multiculturalism

Combating dilemmas of cultural plurality is one of the preoccupations of Cameroon's government and people. This section of the dissertation looks at harbingers of multiculturalism. The first route is the legal framework put in place by the state to handle anti-multicultural tendencies. Consequent to anti-living together tendencies experienced in Cameroon, the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism was created to foster Cameroon generally and Yaoundé in particular. Yaoundé was made the headquarters of the Commission.

3.2.7.1 Legal and Institutional Frameworks as Pathways to Multiculturalism

The multiculturalism debate has been on the frontline of most government policies in varying ways with a variety of meanings contextually derived thereof. Odhiambo (1997), explains that the quest for affirmative diversity as the way forward in a multicultural world is the advocacy of most political recommendations. This thesis is concerned with the promotion of multiculturalism as a bottom-up socio-cultural phenomenon. Cameroon in general and Yaoundé in particular is host to over 250 communities each having a particular cultural identity. To foster living together, the adoption of bilingualism – French and English languages – for effective communication was deemed necessary. This proved insufficient following debates to enforce unity in diversity, peaceful coexistence, and bilingualism amid others a legal framework to move the nation ahead. To that effect, the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (NCPBM) was established in 2017 by decree No: 2017/013 of the 23rd January 2017 with its headquarters in Yaoundé, whereby in the supporting document, chapter 2 article 3(2), states: *“Under the authority of the President of the Republic, the Commission shall be responsible for promoting bilingualism and multiculturalism in Cameroon to maintain peace, consolidating the country's national unity and strengthening its people's willingness and day-to-day experience concerning living together.”* The documents shows that commission's primary responsibilities resonate with of the authenticity of this work. Hence their major responsibilities are:

- Maintaining peace,
- Consolidating the country's unity,

- Build in people the will to live together daily. These include consolidating the country's bilingual and multicultural structure.

Thus, apart from language other cultural aspects of the country would be integrated to enhance living together. Furthermore, chapter 3, 4 (1), the Commission lays out the organization of the commission as follows: “*the Commission shall have fifteen (15) members, including one (1) Chairperson and one (1) Vice-Chairperson.*” It further specifies that the commissioners shall be chosen persons of Cameroonian nationality with recognized competence, moral rectitude, intellectual honesty and patriotism for a five (5) year tenure. This institution is commissioned to enforce multiculturalism in Cameroon. According to *the voice magazine* N° 390 of Tuesday June 2022, NCPBM's achievements range from, ensuring the use of official languages in both public and private enterprises, while respecting the users' choice of language. It is a language barometer by evaluating compliance of both languages as well as carrying out surveys and international benchmarking to strengthen Cameroon's bilingual and multicultural character. The commission has put in place a toll-free number to receive complaints against non-compliance with the constitutional provisions of bilingualism and multiculturalism and report same to the President of the republic. It acts as a language conveyor, popularising and vulgarising language on bilingualism, multiculturalism and togetherness as well as rendering reports, and recommendations on the way forward for the promotion of bilingualism and multiculturalism in Cameroon. From the report, language seems to be the centre of action to the commission.

Notwithstanding, bilingualism in Cameroon remains a controversy as Cameroonians are still grappling with mastering both languages. Despite the fact that Cameroon is celebrated internationally as a culturally diverse and bilingual country – member of Commonwealth of Nations and “La Francophonie” – stereotyping among diverse communities (Socpa, 2016), remains a daily culture while bilingualism is still questionable because most Cameroonians can only either speak one official languages, along with their mother tongue and pidgin English (for English speaking Cameroonians) or “Frank-Anglais” (for French speaking Cameroonians). Hence, Nsom (2015), observes that; “*C'est le Cameroun qui est bilingue, pas les Camerounais*” – limpidly translated in English as “Cameroon is bilingual not Cameroonians”. Cognizant of the focal role that language plays in culture, bilingualism which has been problematic in Yaoundé and other parts of the country was made part of the multicultural effort.

It is inescapable that Yaoundé being the headquarters for the Bilingualism and Multiculturalism commission be given a socio-cultural facelift in the exercise of its duty to lead the way for other towns in Cameroon to follow. A review of literature linked to other means of enforcing multiculturalism and ‘living together’ in Yaoundé will therefore be seen below.

3.2.7.2 Religion as Canal for Multiculturalism

Several religious systems coexist in Cameroon. Religious denominations are both internally complex and extraordinarily diverse. However, before talking about multiculturalism and religion, there is need to see what others say religion is and assumptions drawn from the definitions. Durkheim (1947), suggests that religion is the belief which every society holds about supernatural things. According to him, these are things that stir wonder and belief about practical things. In reference, he looks at religion as the belief in supernatural things being sacred (sacred traditions) while the belief in practical things is profane (such as possession of power that instigate wonders). Shifting from the idea of religion being linked to the supernatural, Nye (2008), says:

For many, there is a clear idea that religion is something that involves going to church (or some other religious centre), reading and reflecting on certain sacred texts, believing and having faith, performing certain ritual practices, and (/or) living one’s life in a certain way. It is the case that religion often involves some or all of these things, but we also need to recognise that it can (and often does) involve a lot more. When we look at religion cross-culturally – in different contexts and societies across the globe – religion very often impacts on all levels of life, at both the individual and social level (Nye, 2008:2).

This argument is supported by William (2015), who expresses the complexity that exists between religion and multiculturalism paying particular emphasis on the context in which it is exercised. He argues that unlike Western Europe and the United Kingdom, where discussions of multiculturalism usually involves religion, in the United States they are more likely to focus on race, ethnicity and immigration. He further holds that debates regarding religious diversity, pluralism, multiculturalism, the US history, culture as well as its legal discuss are interwoven. The author emphasizes on guaranteeing religious freedom and accommodating its diversity in the US is a continuous yet quarrelsome development. The United States of America in various ways has been seen as a yardstick for other countries. However, in comparing the tradition of Christianity and Islam, as religiously diverse practices Sanneh (2003), declares that the West does not have

ownership of the gospel. The author looks at the implications of Christianity to the character of the world emphasizing that the future of its tradition lies in the way it shapes people's character. While some proponents see religious diversity as a divisive factor in society, others believe the contrary. Based on the arguments of Śliz and Szczepański (2017: 44), it was because of religious wars in Europe but also agreements when members of religious minorities – Jews and Karaites (Judaism), Crimean Tatars (Muslims), Mennonites settled in Zulawy (radical Christian croaker)– arrived in Poland from Western Europe. They could freely practice their religion and tradition in Poland. They were not forced to accept Catholicism. Hence, Poland made religious ideologies liberal within its society. In the same manner, religious freedom allows members of diverse communities in Cameroon to practice any religion of their choice. Religion freedom is a possible way to encourage cultural diversity among communities.

Nkwain (2013), sees the introduction and application of multiculturalism in the Cameroonian context as a genuine contribution to mixing Western and traditional values that determine political, social, cultural and religious interaction in most African societies. Still within the Cameroonian context and in keeping with its responsibilities, the government, in its constitution offers Cameroonians the right to religious practices and worship. This right is guaranteed in the tradition, practice, and norms of same provided it is not injurious to the public. Consequently, Cameroon is a secular state with two principal religions: Christianity and Islam. African Traditional religion is widely practiced as well. The government takes charge of its religious responsibilities toward all Cameroonians by endorsing their right to whatever belief system they desire as long as these beliefs are in line with state norms.

The promotion of freedom of religion is enshrined in Article 18 of the multilateral treaty; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted by the United Nation's General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI) on 16 December 1966, and in force from 23 March 1976 following Article 49 of the covenant. The Article states that “everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.” Cameroon constitution, Law No. 96-06 of 18 January 1996 to amend the Constitution of 2 June 1972 provides that “the human person, without distinction as to race, religion, sex or

belief, possesses inalienable and sacred rights.” The preamble of the constitution provides for the freedom of religious practices in Cameroon. Most communities are inclined to pursuing the religious teachings of the evangelists/missionaries who introduced their communities to them (Smith, Smith, & Carvill 2000). Despite the secular nature of Cameroon, there are restrictions as to what religious practices are allowed to operate. This has to do with practices that are not injurious to people (such as witchcraft, the practice of harming people through superficial or spiritual methods such as affliction with disease or other harmful effects) murder and revenge practice. Several operational religious groups exist in Cameroon, even though only Christianity, Muslim and Bahai are registered and recognized by the Ministry of Territorial Administration (MINATD). African Traditional Religion (witchcraft is entirely different from African Traditional religion which is practiced by most African states, ethnic groups and kinships) exists in our context and their activities are usually carried out in shrines and other such places of worship. The existence of African Traditional Religion as a significant religious movement in Cameroon and other African countries has become widespread these days. In Nso for example, God is identified by “*Nyuybom*” (simplistic) or “*Anyuy*” (*deities*). God is called “*Si*” in Bamileke, in Beti s/he is called “*Nsi*”, while to the Bayang God is “*Mandem*”. These ethnic groups practice African traditional religion in one way or the other. The Ministry of Territorial Administration (MINAT) holds that there are 38 officially registered denominations in Cameroon and most of them are of Christianity sect. These and others are ways religious tolerance is projected and achieved in Cameroon.

Religion has been defined as a collection of beliefs – belief (and reverence to) a supernatural being, the proceeds thereof and social cultures attached to such beliefs (by social culture we mean the norms and values of life expressed in the phenomenon/institution, as well as the way behaviours, are shaped by same). These beliefs could be in one God or several gods (Stark, 2003). Different communities accommodate different religious belief systems. Equally different community associations respect difference when it comes to religion by giving room to members from different religious denominations to lead prayers during meetings and other events. Different religious groups have different ways of naming this being. In the Christian world s/he is called: God, Ancient of Days, Most High, Father/Abba (in Hebrew), Elohim, El-Shaddai, Yahweh, Jehovah and Adonai (Bartosik, 2000). Muslims call God Allah (Marbaniang, 2016), while African

traditional Religion is particular to different communities. Lin (2019) sustains that there are more than 4300 religions around the world, though over 70% of the world's population practices one of the five most influential religions of the world: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. Several types of religious denominations exist in the world: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism etc. There are three principal religions in Cameroon: Islam, Christianity and African Traditional Religion, with the existence of Christian churches and Muslim centres as infrastructures – places of worship as well as shrines for ATR. This work is interested in studying how different religions/belief systems through community associations influence interaction and living together in Yaoundé. Most associations commence and close their assemblies with prayers from different belief systems. Like religion, education can influence multiculturalism.

3.2.7.3 Education as a Canal for Multiculturalism

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and values to impart positive change in communities. It plays a huge role in preparing young and adult minds towards upholding good socio-cultural, economic, and political values. UNESCO holds that education is a human right and a force for sustainable development and peace. Education empowers people with the knowledge, skills and values to live in dignity, build their lives and contribute to their societies. Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) of the 2030 Agenda desires to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all are central to ensuring a full and productive life for all individuals and the realization of sustainable development.' The educational culture (formal or informal) has laudable values, norms, customs and traditions which could serve as a key to living together. Ndze-Ngwa *et al* (2016), carried out a study on peace and citizenship education in Cameroon wherein they argue that the school system offers an environment where peace and the re-enforcement of citizenship can be accomplished as well as encourage coexistence among Cameroonians. They further argue that there is a dichotomy between government policies and action. Accordingly, the government has well elaborated policies for conflict prevention, conflict management, and promotion of cultural diversity and social cohesion, but is lacking in the applicability of these policies which these authors presume could be done through education.

Multicultural education contemplates an equal chance of learning for all without prejudices as to community of origin, religion, social class and gender. It sorts to integrate learners from different social standing – cultural background/community, religion, gender etc. Lo Bianco (2004: Part 1), logically expressed that: *“multiculturalism in education is defined broadly as the adaptations made to formal teaching and learning in response to ‘ethnicity’ diversity. It is acknowledged that educational institutions adapt to social changes other than those deriving from ‘ethnicity’ or “race” differences, and that such adaptation is “cultural”, but the changes that concern the present discussion are confined to those deriving from ‘ethnicity’ and “race”.*”

Cameroon’s educational system makes provision for bilingualism and cultural diversity. Students from the French and English divides have the right to study anywhere in the country without discrimination. Formal education is what the analyses above is based upon. However, education cannot be achieved only in structured institutions such as schools. Human beings learn daily through various forms of experiences – participation, observation and spontaneity among others. What about jobs and basic skills which are learnt out of classroom settings? Formal education may enforce multiculturalism in several ways, especially in an attempt to foster cultural diversity and living together. However, other sectors such as community associations are worth exploring to allow members to better express their diverse cultural values.

Education in a nutshell is about imparting a positive change in individual and collective behaviour which in turn impacts communities. The fact that there is no segregation of communities attending particular schools in Cameroon shows that education gives room for individuals from diverse communities to interact and exchange cultures thereby promoting living together. The fore is reflected in Nieto’s four levels of multicultural understanding. Erbas (2019: 27) quoting Nieto (1994) says the author developed four levels of multicultural understanding that serve to embrace all students in the classroom. According to the author, tolerance, acceptance, respect, and affirmation solidarity and critique are the levels of understanding associated with multiculturalism. While tolerance is the lowest level of multicultural understanding, affirmation solidarity and critique is the highest level.

Tolerance. Nieto (1994, 2004) claimed that tolerance is the first level of supporting pluralism; at this level, differences are endured. According to the author, *“this level of support for multicultural*

education stands on shaky ground because what is tolerated today can too easily be rejected tomorrow” (p. 3). The author claims that if teachers were at this level, they would acknowledge students’ differences, but they would be unable to fully notice “*why some students are more successful than others*” (p. 4). In the same light of reasoning, through interaction, community associations members would be able to tolerate cultural differences. However, there would be some members who may find it difficult to interact with others and tolerate difference.

Acceptance. The second level of multicultural understanding is “acceptance.” According to Nieto (1994), the acceptance level of multicultural education “*implies that differences are acknowledged and their importance is neither denied nor belittled*” (p. 4). At this level, school administrators and teachers make students’ diverse backgrounds “visible” if they are allowed (Nieto, 2004). Community associations offer grounds for cultural difference to be recognized and valued.

Respect. The third level of multicultural education support is respect. At this level, teachers should hold differences in high esteem, and students’ diverse backgrounds do not serve exclusively as bridges to the mainstream culture of the class; rather, at this stage, teachers should support students and their education by understanding and relating to the students’ diverse backgrounds. This level requires more interaction among parents, teachers, and schools, and students’ experiences are used more frequently to enhance their schooling (Nieto, 1994; Nieto, 2004). With reference to community associations, through interaction and socialization differences would be learned, shared and understood. Understanding differences can lead to living together.

Affirmation, solidarity, and critique. According to Nieto (1994, 2004), this level of multicultural education provides the highest level of support for diversity. At this level, “conflict” is an important part of learning. In addition, at this level, multicultural education is concerned with “*equity and social justice*” (Nieto, 1994, p. 5). According to the author, students’ diverse backgrounds and families are “*embraced and accepted as legitimate vehicles for learning*” (Nieto, 1994, p. 5). Additionally, teachers are responsible for support of students’ efforts to critique their own cultures and others’ cultures to understand differences at this level of multicultural education. This level of reasoning allows solidarity (the bedrock of community association) to foster equality and unity amid difference. Thus, association members would be able to question their own culture and those of others for a better understanding of cultural differences to ameliorate lifestyles.

However, current tensions in schools – formal education milieus – present a controversy regarding education as a canal for multiculturalism. McClabe (1968), argues that:

I have no doubt that the capacity to value cultures other than our own is a crucial human advance and, as surely, I want to adopt a relation to my own culture which is not one of simple adulation and congratulation. However, it is not clear on what basis we can value other cultures nor exactly how we are to adopt this critical attitude to our culture. The theoretical arguments which are very generally held about the value of other cultures seem deeply flawed. (McCabe, 1968: 5-6)

Cultural heritage could be very instrumental in education as it is embedded with knowledge that can develop the community in many ways. Education at this point is not only formal but informal as well. Hence informal education through associations is an area that this dissertation presumes can fill the gap under study. It is assumed that participating in association life creates a feeling of belonging, which can be extended coexisting community members.

3.2.7.4 Marriage as Pathways of Multiculturalism

From the beginning till death man individuals must relate with others. Thus, culture cannot be created by an individual since culture is collective, shared, dynamic and learned in a common society. Marriage is an institution that enables interaction and bonding. It would be worth mentioning that marriage celebrations come with great socio-cultural worth and responsibilities. The socio-cultural worthiness of an individual derived through marriage is the social status s/he attains in society. Marriage events that lead to this social status comes with responsibilities. These responsibilities are lessened for celebrant(s) who belong to community associations through mutual assistance. As a canal for living together, marriage is a phenomenon that extends family frontiers (Goldfeder, 2017). Marriage as a cultural institution plays a unifying role as it brings families together (Ansell *et al.*, 2018). These families come along with their diverse personal and collective cultures capable of influencing social cohesion. Intercommunity marriage enhances intercommunity integration and living together.

Celebrating traditional marriage rites serves as key elements and events for the celebration of cultural identity (Pemberton, 2018). Most marriage rites have unifying role and are a representation of community culture – interaction, socialization and bonding among families and communities. Intercommunity marriages play a dual role of uniting individuals and integrating

community cultures. Offspring from such marriages would ensure continuity of the hybrid cultures – integrated communities – that result from intercommunity marriages. It has a socialization function and the product of marriage family – is the primary environment for this process. This is confirmed by Foeman and Nance (1999), who emphasized that the first blueprint for social interaction comes from the family of origin and to a large extent is determined by culture. Shifting from the role of marriage, an understanding of what the institution represents is worthy.

Marriage is variably defined by diverse agencies with regards to culture, place, religion and persons. Anthropologically the Royal Anthropological Institute (1951:111), declares that: *“marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that the children born to the woman are recognized as legitimate offspring of both partners”*. This definition institutes the socialization process of a man and a woman, the by-products of this process and the functions of the institution – responsibilities towards the children. Furthermore, Murdock (1949), defines marriage as a universal institution that involves residential co-habitation, economic cooperation and the formation of the nuclear family. The definitions are limited since they do not recognize types of marriages – polygamy and polyandry. Marriage can enhance distant living together between a man and a woman and by extension between families and communities. Contemporaneity has introduced residential and societal separation in marriage between mothers and fathers resulting in positive and negative effects on multiculturalism. This finds expression in what Feldman-Savelsberg (2016), in her book titled: *“Mothers on the Move: Reproducing Belonging between Africa and Europe”*. The author argues that because of certain challenges, women migrate from villages to cities, in search of opportunities while maintaining contacts with relatives from place of origin. They connect with hometown associations of non-kin and foster a better livelihood for themselves and their relations. This migratory phenomenon locally termed “bush-falling” – going abroad – despite shifting responsibility of offspring (left behind by migrant women), usually to her family – be it their parents, sisters and brothers especially during a transient period pays off. This could be explained that these women while abroad struggle through jobs to maintain the welfare of the family left behind, hence encouraging cohesion through remittances.

An aspect of marriage found missing from the definitions is the African idea of expanding family frontiers and intercommunity marriage (both local and international) – multicultural marriage – with interesting unifying roles. Mixed marriages in other words are not represented in

these definitions. They represent ways through which boundaries are broken and multiculturalism enhanced. P. N. Nkwi (2017), argues that even though Grass-fielders hold very strongly to their identity by forming cultural associations they inter-marry people from other indigenous groups. Hence intercultural marriages are instruments of multiculturalism. These explanations, introduce the crux of this study – the role of community association on multiculturalism.

3.2.8 COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

Community associations referred to as “*Community of suffering*”, by Lacroix, (2010:5) originated around post WW II and the 1960s as immigrant groupings. European immigrants (fleeing the war) faced with cultural transformations such as segregation, hardship and the longing to curb their stay in Europe, did menial jobs to earn money and care for their families, They formed small gatherings through which they sent remittances home. The idea of association soon spread through out Europe, instigating the creation of the UN in 1945. A strong desire to preserve and transmit peace, security and cultural heritage of communities led UNESCO to fashion several legal instruments such as: Declaration of Principles on Tolerance in Paris, France in 1995 and the 1966 Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Cooperation designed during UNESCO’s 1966 General Conference to accomplish this resolve. This commenced groundworks for the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage. This is proceeded by the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity is 2001. Also, UNESCO (2021) emphasizes that a significance of association life is its desire to spread understanding and cooperation, through face-to-face discussions with other people of all origins and exchanges of information. The idea of belonging has since been a norm among migrant communities in urban spaces. Community associations have alternatively known as *stokvels* in South Africa (Bophela & Khumalo, 2019), *Isusu* in Nigeria, *Susu* in Ghana, *KO* in Japan (Ademola *et al.*, 2020) and “*njangi*”/meeting in Cameroon. World Bank (2004), holds that they are small philanthropic organizations that generally aid their communities of origin with members participating in collaborative development efforts. Orozco & Rouse (2007) define community organizations as “*organizations that allow migrants from the same city or region to maintain ties with and materially support their place of origin.*” According to a report by Somerville, Durana, and Terrazas (2008), Hometown Associations (HTAs) are immigrant organizations based on common hometown and are typically informal, voluntary

groups that bring members together for social, cultural, political empowerment, and economic development goals. HTAs also function as integration intermediaries in their destination. Membership in a given circle of intra-community associations vary from few to many members and they could be chosen on the basis of age, ethnic affiliation, occupation, religion or educational background or any given social tie (Ademola *et al.*, 2020). Community associations differ from one another in terms of membership, monetary contributions and law enforcing mechanism used by different groups (Agengelu, 2012).

To mature the objectives of this study, literature in this study area was reviewed. Internationally Rocha-Trindade (1995), Gugler (1998), Minghuan (1999), Orozco (2003), Orozco and Rouse (2007) Schmelz (2007), Somerville, Durana, and Terrazas (2008), Sardinha (2009), and Çaglar (2013) from an international viewpoint and in various contexts worked on migrant associations in destination countries as will be further analyzed in this work. Nationally, association life is not a recent development (Yenshu Vubo 2008). Authors who have worked on this phenomenon in different regards include: Nyamnjoh (1998), Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), Nkwi (2017), Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2000), Geschiere (2004), Nyamnjoh (2006) Mokam (2006), Yenshu Vubo (2008), and Evans (2010). The proliferation of community associations in Cameroon was heightened with the liberalisation process influenced by multiparty politics (Nyamnjoh & Rowlands, 1998, and Yenshu Vubo, 2008). Mokam (2006), in the work : *Les associations régionales et le nationalisme camerounais 1945-1961*, confirms that : “de 1945 à 1961, le Cameroun connut l'existence de plusieurs types d'associations régionales dont les objectifs globaux avaient trait à la sauvegarde de la tradition, à la promotion de la solidarité, de la fraternité et du développement”. This indicates the values associated to community association. Solidarity for instance is a bottom-up culture that strengthens autonomy and allows association participants to ease their day-to-day tension through mutual assistance and community development initiatives. From a South African viewpoint where these associations are called “*stokvels*”, Kariuki, and Ofusori (2017) and Moliea, (2010), hold that these associations are microfinances alternatives as participants are able to start-up businesses, build houses and finance children’s education. Looking at Cameroon, Che (2013), Fonchingong & Ngwa (2005), P. N. Nkwi (1997) and Page (2007), hold that community associations enable rural development. These associations engage members to fund road construction/repair projects, scholarship programs to

further education of students from their area of origin, and enhance cultural sustainability amid other development activities. Quite a handful of authors as seen above in both published and unpublished works have underscored the awareness of association life. However, little lurks around the role associations especially intra-community associations play on multiculturalism. Many institutions have been studied and seen as channels of living together but Orozco (2003) and Lacroix (2010), explain that community associations have not been given considerable attention. This work looks at the role community association plays on living together between individuals and communities in Yaoundé. To understand how community associations influence multiculturalism, literature the concept “community associations” is established.

Reviewed literature about community associations from an international level has been presented below.

3.2.8.1 Community Associations at the International Level

As mentioned earlier community associations at the international level are alternatively known as “Hometown Associations” (Orozco, 2003), stokvels in South Africa, Isusu in Nigeria, Susu in Ghana, and KO in Japan (Ademola *et al.*, 2020). From an international perspective, Orozco (2003), Orozco and Rouse (2007) and Sommerville, Durana, and Terrazas (2008), inform that participants of community associations create them not only for nostalgic purposes but for self-help reasons as well. However, development of their community of origin has always been part of their objectives. A looked at the practice of community association by other countries and the Cameroonian diaspora shows practices are similar. Sardinha (2009), in a book titled: *Immigrant Associations, Integration and Identity Angolan, Brazilian and Eastern European Communities in Portugal*, studied processes and routes adopted by immigrants when adapting to a ‘new’ environment, as an issue. This author studies the case of Portuguese focusing on; traumas encountered by immigrants upon arriving host country, the pressures of adjustment, the redefinition of the ‘self’, in the host society, the impact of immigration on immigrants and how governments deal with new cultures and religious diversity as well as the demands of immigrants. The study reviews literature concerning immigrant integration and identity (re)formation. In targeting this, the author brings out different strategies and policies, ranging from multicultural approaches of integration to

assimilationist tactics. Identification, in this case, is seen as a dimension of social integration, implying the identification of an individual with that of the majority population.

In relation to this thesis, the objective of this research looks at the role of immigrant organisations when it comes to community integration, identity formation and participation, taking into consideration, negotiating tactics of adaptation when dealing with the host society and ethno-cultural differences. Using qualitative research methods, the study observes that integration and identity are not only socially but mutually constructed by the immigrant groups and the society they are becoming a part of. The author affirms that integration is an objective that can be accomplished within an intercultural framework arguing that integration is a gradual process toward achieving the acceptance of difference within a democratic, multicultural society. The focal point of association is the term 'voluntary' which according to the author is one's willingness to associate.

According to Rocha-Trindade (1995) and Minghuan (1999), another premise of immigrant groups' integration into a host society results from the extent to which the host society permits immigrants to insert themselves into the 'mainstream' through its policies, programmes and integration initiatives. Consequently, for these and other reasons, immigrants unite, and create links leading to the creation of collective organisations, also termed associations. The close relations between immigrant organisations, the people they represent and the powers-that-be in the host country imply that those who actively run the associations are also those 'in the know' when it comes to key issues and concerns. The privileged position of associations as 'community insiders', in conjunction with the fact that they often find themselves in a 'middleman' position, playing a crucial role as intervening actors in defending immigrant rights, and promoting and lobbying for their communities' well-being, is the foremost reason why the gathering of opinions from those at the helm of immigrant associations and who maintain relations with them, is fundamental. Given these arguments, the undertaking of an analytical study on immigrant associations' understanding of community integration and identity formation is of considerable importance. With this a look at how Cameroonians practice community association is our next area of focus.

Schmelz (2007), in another study aimed at examining the organisation and capacity of the Cameroonian diaspora community resident in Germany and its activities concerning their country of origin, designed and did primary data collection through semi-structured interviews as a foundation for the study. The interviews were carried out with respondents comprising representatives of associations, prominent personalities from the scientific world, the private sector and the healthcare system through Internet research, and snowball sampling. Secondary research data was equally retrieved from selected documents and studies by various international organisations and integrated into the analysis as background material. Within the scope of study 33 key persons from associations representing Cameroonian descent were interviewed throughout Germany. Some interviews were mostly conducted by telephone. The interviews were focused on the German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia, with a high concentration of Cameroonian population in Germany. The guidelines for the study were the attitude of the Cameroonian government towards the diaspora reasons for migration (migration process and structure), framework conditions for social integration (the situation in the host country), Forms of organisation of the diaspora in Germany, and non-profit activities and remittances. According to the researcher, students constitute a particular focus of the Cameroonian study, because they represent a significant proportion of the Cameroonian diaspora in Germany. The author discovered that in everyday language the legal term “foreigner” is used to indicate “someone who does not belong”. The author explains that it is because the term was seen by the interviewed Cameroonians as being synonymous with “migrants of Cameroonian nationality” instead of using the statistical term “foreign population”. The term has contemporarily gained popularity for purposes of discussion of both identity and development policy. Governments, international organisations and development agencies equally use it. Citing; Cohen: 1997, Mayer: 2005, and Sheffer: 2003, she says the various usages, meanings and typologies of the term that have developed with time were discovered. Inherent in the term is the danger that “diaspora” may suggest cultural homogeneity among the migrants from a particular country, whereas in reality numerous differences – cultural, social, political and economic – are typical of migrants from a single country of origin.

In above analysis, intra-community association promote multiculturalism since they unite Cameroonians from diverse communities representing Cameroon. The study concludes that unlike other migrant groups from sub-Saharan Africa, Cameroonians in Germany are well organised and

are now starting to organise themselves as a diaspora community. There is a need for better linking migration to development policy approaches and measures in Germany. The author argues that new methods of returnee's promotion need to be developed; successful, long-term integration needs to be recognised as a prerequisite and opportunity for effective engagement in development policy by Cameroonian migrants and a link needs to be formed with persons and associations willing to become involved in governmental development cooperation. Members of Cameroonian diaspora contributions to the development of their country via money transfer activities through many non-profit money transfer services on both the collective and individual levels and these provide important poverty reduction, greater opportunity and empowerment.

This dissertation is aimed at studying community associations found within the confines of the national territory in urban areas as experienced in Yaoundé.

3.2.8.2 Community Associations at the National Level

In Cameroon community associations also called njangi/tontine (Forje, 2006), of various orders ballooned thanks to the 1990 law on the liberalisation of associations. In this regard the works of Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), on Elite associations in two regions of Cameroon – North and South-West regions aimed at understanding the dynamics of belonging by comparing their roles in the two regions exemplify our reasoning. This exercise led to the discovery and categorization of community associations into intra-community and inter-community associations as seen in the national territory, especially Yaoundé. Due to cultural plurality and culture contact many communities – ‘ethnic’, professional, educational, and leisure – to adapt in the ever-changing way of life, especially in urban areas of Cameroon resulting in association lifestyle. According to Nyamnjoh (1998), Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), Geschiere and Gugler (1998), Nyamnjoh (2000, 2004), Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2000), and Yenshu Vubo (2008), community associations can influence people's socio-cultural, economic, and political culture as well as the society in many ways. Two types of community associations exist in Cameroon. They are small philanthropic organizations that generally pool members to aid their communities of origin. They refer to an association whose members often contribute a fixed amount that is allotted to each member in turn (may be drawing of lots, bidding or any system that the group establishes (Ademola *et al.*, 2020). Membership in a given cycle of intra-community associations vary from few to many members

and they could be chosen on the basis of age, ethnic affiliation, occupation, religion or educational background or any given social tie (Sandsör, 2010). Community associations differ from one another in terms of membership, monetary contributions and law enforcing mechanism used by different groups (Agengelu, 2012).

3.2.8.2.1 Birth, Evolution and Expansion of Community Associations in Cameroon

Nyamnjoh (1998), in a comparative study of two elite associations in two regions of Cameroon; one from the North West and the other from South Western Region. He edifies that many associations go back to the 1950s with the first major expansion being that of secondary education in Cameroon. Most of these associations regrouped individuals under clusters of belonging to same school, church, and ethnic group. Nonetheless, the evolution of laws relating to the freedom and birth of association in sub-Saharan Africa closely follows the political history of the region.

During colonization for example, freedom of association was related to sociological and domestic political realities of most countries and was restricted (Anghie: 2001 and Article 19: 2001). This excluded the creation of non-governmental organizations as they were quite liberal at the time. However, post-independence saw a shift as preference was given to the colonial constraint of freedom of association. Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), further recognizes that in the era of President Ahidjo, in the 1960s and 1970s, elites had little or no reason to remain attached to their area of origin – village. The pursuit of regional ethnic loyalties was unwelcome. By implication, association life which was mostly focused on place of origin had slowed down. The single party system of Cameroon prior to 1960s suppressed many of the existing associations for political reasons. Cameroonians during this period weren't expected to pay allegiances to communities as proof of keeping ties with place of origin – ethnicities, villages or tribes. Notwithstanding the afore-mentioned pattern became inimical as people craved plurality.

3.2.8.2.2 Legal Framework Introducing Community Association in Cameroon

Following demands for diversity by the population, a Presidential decree - Law No. 90-053 of 19 December 1990 on the Freedom of Association, announced the liberalization of associations in 1990, giving everyone the freedom to create as well as to belong to any association. Yenshu Vubo (2008), aligns with the fore stating that, in Cameroon the emergence of association life was

concurrent with the liberalization process. Other authors thought this process injured the political underpinnings of the state, leading to an exponential expansion of associations – political, civil society, religious, professional and ethnic. Nyamnjoh & Rowlands (1998), elaborate the liberalization of association life in the 1990s, reiterating that loyalty was sorted by political elites from community affiliates through such associations for personal interests – to remain in power. Community associations as a result, did not only act as a socialization or self-help instruments but a political entity with the role of maintaining community political status and order. Many politicians exploited this for same reasons. The 1990 decree was amended in 2020 by *Law No.2020/009 of 20 July 2020 to Amend and Supplement Some Provisions of Law No. 90/53 of 19 December 1990 Relating to Freedom of Association.*

The above law opened sluices to a plethora of associations. These comprise; Civil Society Organizations (CSO), professional associations, alumni associations, leisure associations, elite organizations, political associations and community/cultural associations among others. Types of community associations will be studied below.

3.2.8.2.3 Types of Community Associations

There exist different types of community – intra-community and intercommunity associations which will be reviewed in this part of literature as well as their socio-cultural activities. Migration forms the base for which migrants and immigrants engage themselves in association life for various reasons. Even though this dissertation is interested in community associations they can be grouped into intra-community and intercommunity associations.

i. Intra-Community Association

Mentioning Gluckman (1940) and Mitchelle (1969), in a study titled: “*Elite association and the politics of belonging in Cameroon*”, Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), argue that intra-community associations recognize the complexity of family and kinship ties that bind urban migrants to their regions of origin in Africa. They emphasize that intra-community associations were created to promote self-help. Intra-community associations are identified as associations whose members originate from a common community exemplified by clan, traditional and community (ethnic) associations. Associations of this nature formed at the level of the church,

schools, neighbourhood, and professional milieu are known as intercommunity associations. Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998:325), inform that: *“associations of urban-based educated men and women who identify with a particular region or “ethnic group” are not a new phenomenon in Cameroon or elsewhere in West Africa.”* Community at this point is limited to ethnicity and the composition of the intra-community association is made up of people from the same “ethnic” origin. This study is particularly interested in intra-community association and their influence on multiculturalism. Some intra-community (ethno-regional) associations identified by Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998: 327-328) are Laakam – a Bamileke community-based association and SWELLA – an association affiliated with the coastal people. These groups enforce intra-cultural living together and cohesion rather than intercommunity living together – multiculturalism.

Evans (2010), studied people’s participation in community – intra-community – associations and found that there is a deep sense of belonging to their home place. He argues that its promotion is a potentially divisive mechanism as it may engender parochialism, increase the focus on autochthony and enhance ethnicization of the political landscape. He explores these issues in intra-community association life in Manyu Division, South-West Province of Cameroon, describing their history, activities and considering how the identities mobilizing them are constructed in three interlinked ways: geohistorical and genealogical; neotraditional; and national political. It concludes that while these associations occasionally engage in divisive politics in different spheres, analysis needs to balance this against their other activities and relationships.

Caglar (2013:17), studied migrant opportunities, settlements, and trans-localities, with objectives to explore the dynamics of migrant incorporations, the formation of trans-local connections, and the migrants in their agency to shape and actively participate in trans-local activities reaching beyond the confines of nation-states. The author realized that often, ethnic groups instead of embracing host locality and its multiple relations rather see them as the starting point for addressing questions of migrant organization and identities and their pathways of incorporation and transnationalism. The author argues that the ethnic lens used by these associations prioritizes one form of subjectivity over others. Hence, intra-community associations would be seen to have a reduction effect on the cultural plurality of the city, transforming multiple migrant social networks into monocultures. Thus, intra-community associations are associations whose membership is limited to descendants of same community (ethnic) of origin.

ii. Intercommunity Associations

These are associations that sign up participants cross-culturally such as occupational, educational, leisure and religious, among others engaged in common activities. Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998: 321), posit that: *“in the Anglophone part of the country Lions clubs, school and college associations, Church groups and other fund-raising organizations are long-standing features of urban life.”* This implies that inter-community associations can exist in every aspect of life. These communities are seen as made up of close niche ties and can be intra or inter-communitarian in nature. Intra-communitarian holds that they are composed of members of a same community such as profession, education, religion while inter-community is distinguished by their diversity of their membership. Monju (2019), in his study of “deux zero” groups in Yaoundé and their contribution to social cohesion and multiculturalism and explains that: *“The city of Yaoundé hosts at least one person from over 200 ethnic groups found in Cameroon and foreigners inclusive. Whatever their motives of being in Yaoundé, the city becomes their dwelling place thus, they feel free to join groups and participate in whatever activity”* (Monju, 2019:136).

“Deux zéro” groups according to this author, are sports and leisure associations that unite people from diverse communities of origins, professions, education and generational levels to practice physical activities. Some *“Deux zéro”* groups could be based on common community of origin while others like intercommunity associations transcend ethnic boundaries.

3.2.8.2.4 Activities and Motives of Belonging to Community Associations

Most community associations are involved in socio-cultural and economic activities (Kam, 2017). These activities have the capacity to influence living together in urban areas. According to Verhoef, (2008: 59), socio-cultural factors affecting members of a community can bring them together creating in them the ability to pool resources and receive moral support from members. He explains how groups were created and funds pooled to cover burial expenses as well as make savings for emergencies. In recognition, Francis and Hezel (2009: 1–11), alleging the Micronesians said these community members in their associations are inclined to non-income transfer of money and the benefits thereof – like transferring money to a relative to strengthen ties. This is a mechanism with abilities to bring about a change of mindset, values and habits.

Consequently, socio-cultural factors affecting individuals pull them together whereby people come together, pool their resources and gain financial, moral and cultural support from the association.

Therefore, community associations contribute to living together when participants mutually assist one another financially, socially and culturally. Intra-community associations, however, include ethno-cultural activities as part of the objectives. This work is interested in the role of socio-cultural activities of associations towards living together, which include:

i. Economic Activities of Community Associations

There exist different financial activities – such as savings, thrift and loan and “*njangi*. Community associations through structural organization enable the practice of economic activities for mutual assistance, community development and cultural sustainability. These activities are practiced in both intercommunity and intra-community associations with the ability to influence habits. Regarding inter-community associations, Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998:322) identify mutual assistance as one of their activities saying members donate funds for the development of the college and help each other promote their business interests and organize events that support an Anglophone identity. Equally, Yenshu Vubo (2008) in his comparative analysis of the practice of rotating savings in intra-community associations talking of saving culture, asserts that:

In the Moghamo area all associations have a financial side captured in the term ‘ashow’. An understanding of these organisational forms is instructive with regard to the background of the so-called informal financial sector that has blossomed in both rural and urban areas in a period when it was expected that financial sector reforms would usher in a period of relatively better conditions in the financial sector...Rotating Savings Clubs. These clubs are universal all over Cameroon and constitute a key element in the local savings culture. [...]the phenomenon constitutes the core of the savings culture of local peoples with roots buried far in the past [...]Proof of this is the importation of this model into the urban setting where the rotating savings clubs and small savings clubs or solidarity unions constitute the backbone of the financial sector in Cameroon and elsewhere in Africa (Yenshu Vubo, 2008: 98-100).

Despite the formal nature of organizing activities (such as written constitution specifying financial contributions, meeting dates, hierarchy of beneficiaries) and the cultural sustainability claim of these associations, they are seen to have economic activities whose culture of collective action through polling play a unifying role and make daily life worth living for members. Thus, older generations urge younger ones to sustain the practice and pay allegiance their community of

origin/village through developmental activities. This according to the authors is one of the yardsticks for measuring the impact of intra-community associations found of urban areas.

ii. Social Activities of Community Associations

Socially, community associations aim to bring people together for the sake of solidarity and to encourage living together. However, living together is noticed to be encouraged in intercommunity groups. Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), studied elite associations in the South West region of Cameroon, examining their formation, structure, characteristics and explain that: *“in many cases associations were founded principally for mutual aid based on having gone to the same school or belonged to the same church or lived in the same neighbourhood, so that membership would often cross-ethnic ties”* (Nyamnjoh and Rowlands, 1998:321). Thus, while stressing on intercommunity associations, these authors hold that community associations encourage solidarity among members through social economy – the art of engaging both social and economic objectives at the heart of their objectives and activities. Associations function as promoters of unity, mutual assistance, local saving and entertainment through collective action be it in intra-community and intercommunity associations. Gluckman (1940) and Mitchell (1969), quoted by Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), shift to focus on intra-community associations arguing that: *“whatever their origins, ‘traditional’ urban ethnicities in southern Africa were organized as associations for immediate self-help in town rather than as extensions of rural ethnic politics”* (p. 320). These authors proclaim that the creation of networks and social ties especially via self-help activities form the foundation of intra-community associations. These are noticed through the practice of various kinds of social (happy and sorrowful) – and financial and cultural activities in urban areas. Hence intercommunity associations are associations whose social network cut across cultural (ethnic) ties, enabling intercommunity networking, socialization, living together and hence multiculturalism. Examples of intercommunity associations according to Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998) include Sasse College and other active alma mater associations such as Bali Old Boys’ Association, the Sacred Heart Ex-students’ Association, Lourdes Ex-students’ Association, Saker Baptist Ex-students’ Association, Okoyong Past Students’ Association, St Bede’s Ex-students’ Association and St Augustine Ex-students’ Association. SWELA (South West Elite Association), a South West regional association that brought together all South West ethnic-based associations was also identified as an

intercultural association. Socially, intercommunity associations expand the boundaries of membership to embrace multiple communities in the cities as opposed to intra-community associations which circumscribe membership and socialization to common community of origin.

iii. Cultural Activities of Community Associations

Apart from economic and social objectives, community associations also exercise cultural activities where cultural sustainability (Yenshu Vubo, 2008) as well as indirectly, through other activities encourage cultural sustainability. Lassiter (2014: 54), holds that actions and practices have different connotations in different social contexts and different systems of meaning. Hence it is not the action itself that has meaning rather meaning is derived from the context within which the practice is exercised. Likewise, human behaviour is meaningless unless it is looked at contextually as occurring within larger systems of meaning called culture. Thus, associations organize cultural events, where traditions, norms, customs are valued and manifested through dressing, food, songs, dance, folklore, language, and art. Monga (2000), mentions Essingam (Beti community association), Ngondo (Sawa community practice), and La'akam (Bamileke association) as some of the means through which different communities encourage cultural practices in association life. Confirming cultural activities and their role in associations and daily life and using food as an example, Fieldhouse (1995: 185), citing (Kong & Sinha 2016; Twiss 2012) asserts that: *“In recognition of the multifarious role of food, research on food is expanding beyond its biological, dietary and nutritional functions with scholars exploring how food and its production, cooking, eating, storage and discard behaviours are related to sociocultural norms and social diversity in a society and nation.”* Culinary culture through community associations (preparations, ways of consumption, representation and uses of food) is perceived to represent value systems and cultural identity of communities. Similarly, W. G. Nwki (2017:142), asserts that identity is the most relevant value that underscores association life where monthly meetings are held and financial contributions are made for various reasons. The Kom people according to this author drink palm wine and eat traditional meals which consist of “fufu” and “kahti-kahti” (grilled chicken) locally called *“abain ni gwei e katign e”* during meetings. In town meetings, Kom people socialize as they do in their village. The important thing is the fact that in the city, the Kom identify with those who practice their culture while distancing those who don't practice the same. Hence

being a cultural asset and an identity marker, food culture creates a point of convergence – encouraging living together for members and divergence – discouraging living together.

As earlier mentioned, intra-community associations through their socio-cultural activities encourage cultural sustainability. This is illustrated by Page (2007), who describes how through the tradition of remittance and mutual assistance by a community association, burial rites are revived and enforced via mortuary construction in a village in Cameroon. Following the events of a conflict in the community witnessed by leadership of this association and challenged by it, they reacted by constructing the mortuary – a practice which encourages ethnic identity through belonging and support of community of origin. The author argues that the Bali-Nyonga Development and Cultural Association (BANDECA) constructed a mortuary in a government hospital in their community of origin. Through the activity of this association, the presence of the mortuary changed the temporality of death celebrations to suit the cultural needs of the community. The function of the construction of the mortuary is its ability to revise burial celebrations and enforce community identity through values of burial rites, rituals, norms and reconciliation of the masses. Thus, association members sustain community identity by encouraging the practice of burying community members back “home” through mortuary construction. As a socio-economic practice, one important aspect of mutual assistance is the mortuary construction through fundraising, association members ensure the erection of such infrastructure for their community. This socio-cultural practice encourages living together since it allows community members to keep their corpses at the mortuary while they prepare to receive family and friends from common and other communities. The above literature illustrates activities exercised by intercommunity and intra-community associations. This work examines the role of community association on multiculturalism in Yaoundé. From the literature, activities commonly practiced by community associations are;

a-Financial; encourage financial activities such as “njangi”, thrift and loan/local saving schemes, and fines, to enhance mutual aid among members as well as other fundraising activities for community development.

b-Social; facilitate creation of social networks and ties that are beneficial to members, communities and the society. Such bonds are encouraged via interaction and socialization, foster

social security and psycho-social assistance during happy and sad moments, forum for information sharing and laughter as well as a safe place for belonging and free expression.

c-Cultural: Intra-community associations enhance cultural sustainability of common communities manifested through cultural festivals, clothing, food, songs, dance, folklore and arts and craft. The presentation of the socio-cultural activities is ensued by an elaboration of the significance of these activities to members of associations and the communities.

3.2.8.2.5 Benefits of Community Associations

Community associations carry out various socio-cultural activities as seen above. These activities have several roles they play on members and communities as shown underneath.

i. Belonging and a Sense of Unity

Manca (2014), says social cohesion refers to the extent of connectedness and solidarity among groups in society. This has been illustrated by Monju (2019), who says intercommunity associations enforce cross community integration and cohesion. Intra-community associations on the other hand foster intra-group identity, integration and cohesion. The fore is exemplified in the works of Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998:325), who inform that people create associations to identify with a particular region or ethnic group. Belonging creates in people a sense of worthiness, trust and shared feelings. Evans (2010), studied people's participation in community – intra-community – associations and observes that association life creates a deep sense of belonging to their home place.

Apart from “place of origin”, belonging to community association enables members to belong to social networks that are capable of leading to other beneficial socio-cultural outcomes. Caglar (2013), in addressing the question of migrant agency and identities as pathways of incorporation and transnationalism, holds that ethnic groups usually rely on ethnic relations and networks rather address questions of migrant associations and identities as their pathways of incorporation and transnationalism. Through ethnic lens, he argues that ethnic groups in host country sharing ancestral identities become the privileged unit of analysis for the theorization of the agency of migrants, the dynamics of their settlement processes and trans-localization. Hence belonging to associations offer a medium for integration into destination countries or urban areas.

Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), argue that ethnic ties uniting those in town with kin and affine in regions of origin have exerted a more positive feedback effect to both reinforce and transform traditional identities in the village. Their thoughts have been credited by several authors, (Awasum: 1998; Gugler: 1971; Nyamnjoh & Geschiere 1998; Konings and Nyamnjoh: 1997& 2000; and Yenshu Vubo: 2008). The thoughts of the authors above fall in line with the concerns of this dissertation since intra-community association members in Yaoundé (ethnic/tribal or clan) pool resources through socio-cultural and economic activities for mutual aid, community and cultural sustainability. By default, a sense of belonging and feelings of home are the beneficial roles of associations to members. The point is that intra-community associations members through various socio-cultural activities seek to identify and maintain social ties with their community of origin as opposed to intercommunity associations that embrace cultural diversity in same circumstances.

Thus, despite the credits of unity and cohesion shown above, the role of intra-community associations within the context of this work with respect to multiculturalism is that they create ethnic boundaries in urban areas to protect community identities. The next importance of community associations is interaction, socialization and networking.

ii. Interaction, Socialization and Networking

When people get together, they interact and socialize creating networks of good relationships that can last for a long time. Through interaction, socialization and networks, a sense of solidarity, connectivity, “intra-” and inter-group living together for example become embedded in the attitude of participants of community association. So, by encouraging interaction socialization and networking among members from common community intra-community associations are recreating community culture and sustaining intra-community identity. Conversely, intercommunity associations strive to foster national identity by integrating people from diverse communities. However, the crux of this point lies in the fact that these associations enforce interaction, socialization and networking. In analyzing HTAs based on their essential role in transnational development, Yilmaz (2019), used content analysis and writes that:

HTAs stand out to be a source for social capital and a platform where transnational relations are formed. As a transnational feature of HTAs, social networks and relationships, cultural practices and political participation are all fostered and built by

HTAs. On the other hand, HTAs are remarkably important for the migration and development nexus. [...] These developmental activities become translocally situated while arising from the localities of the migrants extending beyond the nation-state boundaries. For this reason, I aim to analyze the selected HTA on the basis of its essential role in transnational development. Moreover, it's important to note that these developmental translocal ties are not necessarily formed on a national level but also on a city level where the migrant incorporation suggests particular 'dynamics and agencies' in a city context (Yilmaz, 2019: 244).

The author teaches that community association plays a significant role in migrant settlement by enabling the creation of intercultural relationships that can foster integration in their destination city. Locally, Yenshu Vubo (2008:96), confirms that: "*associations with an ethnic base but laying claims to a development role or function have been a very important feature of association life in Cameroon since colonial times. They have been an important, if not the dominant feature, of popular urban life, creating as it were a bridge between urban and rural spheres, on the one hand, and the traditional and the modern, on the other.*" While acknowledging that community associations create and maintain ties between urban and rural dwellers, this work shifts to examine if they influence peaceful cohabitation in urban areas. Hence it is concerned with whether these associations bridge ties among members of common communities or between coexisting communities in urban spaces as in Yaoundé. Community association promotes interaction, socialization and networks which allows participants to benefit from long term positive relationships and other opportunities that come with such ties.

In this dissertation, the focus is the impact of these associations on multiculturalism as a bottom-up mechanism particularly in Yaoundé since living together is a prerequisite of development. Development is one of the social practices and benefits of community associations.

iii. Autonomy and Development of Community of Origin

One of the desires of every individual or community is self-reliance and development. This probably explains why there is an expansion of community, especially intra-community associations in urban areas as seen in Yaoundé. Yenshu Vubo asserts that "*these forms of association life are a pointer to forms of autonomy that are essential to development*" (Yenshu Vubo, 2008:98). Also, Lacroix (2010), did comparative research on three immigrant groups (two North African Berber groups: the Moroccan Chleuhs and the Algerian Kabyles, and the Sikh

Punjabis from India) residing in two receiving countries – France and the UK. This work explains the emergence of hometown associations as autonomous bodies in strange lands committed to develop selves and place of origin since the early 1990s. Historically, migration of these people was triggered by British and French colonization. These people are three ethnic minority groups from their country of origin which have become the forerunners of the Indian and North African migration systems. Methodologically, using the theory of communicative action of “Jürgen Habermas” (communicative action is the process through which people form their identities) he was able to have a framework that addressed the coordination of collective actions. The author was able to come up with a symbolic framework that shows how migrants use *remittances* as a means of expressing who they are. They equally position themselves within and toward spaces of departure and arrival in urban settings to relate with newcomers and outgoing members. However, the author says the conditions of their settlement in the arrival countries are different saying the Berber groups have predominantly remained working-class groups while the Punjabis enjoy a better economic integration into multicultural Britain. Notwithstanding, looking at common cultural, religious and historical features, Algerian Kabyles turn out to be far less committed to transnational practices than their Moroccan counterpart. Conversely, Moroccans and Indians both display a high level of autonomy and engagement in cross-border development projects. This study shows how common factors have led these two distinct groups to become autonomous bodies that engage in similar practices – hometown associations – which facilitate their participation in developing themselves and their area of origin. Similarly, Nyamnjoh & Rowlands (1998), in their analysis of two elite associations mentioned earlier tell how they are involved in developmental activities as part of their objectives. Confirming this claim Yenshu Vubo (2008), sustains that community associations are autonomous organizations that perceive development (individual and community) as prior objectives. From the above literature, it is revealed that intra-community associations hold autonomy, development of selves and place of origin as their objectives.

Authors such as Awasum (1998), Konings & Nyamnjoh (2003), Nyamnjoh(1997), Geschiere (1998), Gluckman (1940), Rowlands (1969), Gugler (1971), Yenshu Vubo (2008), have studied and demonstrated positive effects resulting from ethnic ties among migrants resident in urban settings with kin and affine in regions of origin as both reinforcing and transforming traditional identities in the village. Development is said to be an aspect of society that precedes

social cohesion and vice versa. Hence, P. N. Nkwi, (1976), asserts that the *raison d'être* of any human association is always the welfare of its members. The development of a community is beneficial for all and paves the way to many opportunities which can be exploited by members of same. This work seeks to analyze the role of community associations in Yaoundé regarding cultural diversity and living together. Solidarity is the next benefit of associations.

iv. Solidarity and Social Cohesion

In his definition of social cohesion, Egoh (2019), says it is a social contract between different groups of people in the society. In agreement, Mokam (2006: xii), writes that: *“in Cameroon, from 1945 to 1961, there were many types of regional associations that globally had the following aims: preservation of traditions, promotion of solidarity, brotherhood and local development.”* Taking a leap, Nnam *et al* (2013), affirm that associations have to a great extent, maintained social order, progress, stability and peaceful coexistence in the society, beginning from the pre-colonial era through to the present. These are mostly intercommunity associations. Hence, community associations that promote multiculturalism are those who integrate individuals cross-culturally. However, associations that are ‘ethnocentric’ in nature rather maintain intra-community peace and order. Hence the significance of intra-community association was originally meant for local development, self-help and solidarity. Portes and Landolt (2000: 543), observe that: *“[t]owns with community associations have paved roads, electricity, and freshly painted public buildings”*. Similarly, Orozco and Lapointe (2004: 48), point out that investments made by Hometown Associations (HTAs): *“vastly outdo public works spending in small communities, and in many cases, basic infrastructural work carried out by HTAs forms the essential base for further economic development in these towns”*. Roads, electricity and public buildings are facilities that enhance social cohesion. Solidarity from association members can bring these infrastructures to fruition. Drawing from Page (2007), members of BANDECA through solidarity raised funds and constructed a mortuary for their community of origin which means consolidating intra-group cohesion. Community association has been a form of survival mechanism for many not only for political and economic reasons but equally for psychological, cultural and social reasons. Taylor (1920), informs us that survival consists of: *“processes, customs, and opinions, and so forth, which have been carried on by force of habit into a new state of society different from that in which they had their original home, and they thus remain as proofs and examples of an older condition of*

culture out of which a newer has been evolved.” (Taylor, 1920:16). Among some of the obvious positive outcomes of such groups belonging fosters:

- **Social security:** breathes reassurance when people interact and support one another.
- **Social recognition:** the need to achieve social status sometimes propels people to take up membership in CAs.
- **Social capital:** social networks create solidarity which offer social capital as powerful channels of mutual assistance. Social capital allows the accomplishment of tasks that an individual may not be able to achieve within a given time and space.
- **Psycho-social support:** importantly, CAs offer psycho-social support (emotional, spiritual, social) to members which enables a life full of hope and dignity.
- **Self-esteem:** belonging to CAs can improve the self-esteem of members since interacting in CAs have the potential to improve people’s sense of self-worth.

The fore mentioned qualities can influence the behaviour of association members as well as promote living together. According to Durkheim (1859), and from a moral standpoint, social cohesion is guaranteed by common values, norms, and beliefs of members of a community that makes them cooperate. This, he terms collective conscience. Social cohesion is a concept with a variety of meanings, comprising but not limited to encouraging individual and social trust, interactions, networks, solidarity, tolerance, civic responsibility and curbing conflicts in society.

Nyamnjoh (2000, 2004), Geschiere and Gugler (1998), Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (2000); Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), demonstrate how belonging can be politically, socially, and economically beneficial to members and the society, making way for interaction, socialisation, networking and creation of different types of relationships. In addition, Mokam (2006), says Community associations: « avaient trait à la sauvegarde de la tradition, à la promotion de la solidarité, de la fraternité et du développement. » In English, community associations characteristically safeguard tradition, promote solidarity, fraternity and development. These authors are all concerned with associations being presages of social cohesion and development through solidarity culture. Similarly, Somerville (2008) in a report titled: *“Hometown Associations: An untapped Resource for Immigrant Integration?”* examines hometown associations – intra-community associations are organizations that bring members together for social, cultural, political, and economic

empowerment. The author distances himself from the role of HTAs as international development agents, emphasis on the integration/mediation role they play in their destination countries, saying these qualities are usually disregarded. The report holds that HTAs offer opportunities for migrants to gain basic assistance in integrating into their new communities, as well as opportunities ranging from social, cultural and economic factors to involvement in political and organizational leadership. Furthermore, the report examines the intermediary aspect of HTAs in countries of origin and destination countries saying this aspect of HTAs is usually given less attention. It recommends that they be given utmost importance by governments of host countries reason being these organizations foster immigrant integration. It describes the current political context of Mexico as well as knowledge gaps that could be taken into consideration by policymakers to address policy options that could be engaged to encourage integrating immigrants. It also advises policymakers to formulate well-structured intervention mechanisms however within certain limits, that encourage the ability of HTAs to provide for communities at home and abroad.

Recommendations of Somerville (2008), fall in line with the objectives of this dissertation: examining how community associations influence (as intermediaries of) living together in Yaoundé urban area. Same recommendation is sustained by Yenshu Vubo (2008) who says:

Although the mobilisation of some of these movements took on a direction that tended to undermine the goals of collective life and the democratic ideal within the confines of the nation-state (witness the ethnic or ethno-regional drift in most African countries, and especially the Rwandan genocide), we argue here that it is still worthwhile examining the value of local forces in building viable social projects if we still have to live within the pluralistic world that the imperatives of the current nation-state system and the current globalisation process place on the diversity of peoples... The argument in this paper is that these forms of association life are a pointer to forms of autonomy that are essential to development (Yenshu Vubo, 2008:98).

By implication, this author sees development in Africa and other parts of the world as being initiated from the top with an opinion that a bottom-up development project can cause today's desired changes. In line with the above claims, Sachs (1995) cited in Yenshu Vubo (2008:98), proposed that: *“one viable strategy in meeting the development challenge is to forge new forms of partnerships among social agents that draw attention away from the ‘present imbalance in favour of the central level’, and ‘to encourage initiatives from the bottom.’*” Hence the objectives of this work are centred on the role community associations plays on multiculturalism in Yaoundé. Armed with reviewed literature, the second part of Chapter Two dwells on theories that will be used to understand and analyze research findings.

3.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The validity of theories – interactionist and functionalist – in this work is to define a frame that guides the interpretation of the significance community associations especially intra-community associations on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban space. The interactionist and functionalist (structural analysis) – with selected manifest and latent concepts – theories were employed to interpret and explain the role of the practice of community associations in a culturally plural community. These theories facilitate the explaining and understanding of how behaviour patterns formed through association lifestyle shape human relationships and how these relationships influence living together. The theories were therefore used to constitute a framework for this thesis as follows.

3.6.1 Symbolic Interactionism

The place held by symbolic interactionism in this thesis is found in the explanation of how through association life, socialization, interaction and networking of members of community associations influence the way individuals from diverse communities relate with one another. It assists in facilitating an understanding of how activities of community associations enable behaviours that foster or injure the promotion of multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area. How this behaviour pattern influences social cohesion among members of common or coexisting communities and hence living together is of the essence.

Cohabiting communities in Yaoundé and their socio-cultural practices as seen in their respective associations influence lifestyle. Intra-community associations have, as major objectives, bringing together members of common community, encouraging cultural sustainability, self-help and intra-community development. Intercommunity associations on the other hand encourage mutual assistance and intercommunity development among other subjective objectives. By intra-community associations enrolling members from common community while intercommunity associations recruit members from diverse communities it illustrates that intercommunity associations enhance multiculturalism while intra-community associations impair same. The above is assumed from the fact that intra-community associations encourage intra-community cohesion through interaction among association members while intercommunity associations promote intercommunity cohesion. Hence it can be deduced that intra-community associations

promote in-culture – monoculturalism while intercommunity promote multiculturalism through interactions.

Using symbolic interactionism from an anthropological perspective to understand associative life patterns is because the theory looks at humans as social and cultural beings. As social beings, members engage in association activities such as pooling through mutual assistance for self, community development and cultural sustainability and this presupposes that interactions between individuals influence human behaviour. Like the terminology of the theory, it is based on interaction. Hence, associative lifestyle is regarded as a culture that can improve or impair living together as a respond to social conflict through interaction. Cole (2020:1), argues that Herbert Blumer gave a clear definition of symbolic interactionism. It is a social theory which believes that society is the product of daily human interactions between individuals of same or diverse communities coupled with the interpretations that people attribute to these interactions. In other words, human behaviour is conditioned by values and norms put in place by society and acquired through everyday interactions. Proponents of this theory look at it from a micro perspective arguing that diverse communities have diverse values, attitudes, beliefs, traditions, norms, customs which shape the way people behave in society and that through interpersonal and group interactions rippling effects trigger the production of bigger social structures.

George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), an American philosopher is considered the first person to have come up with the interactionism theory. However, the roots of the theory could be traced to Max Weber (1864-1920). Weber argues that micro-level interactions influence human behaviour. Community associations can be placed in the micro level of society. Mead a pragmatist held that people shape their behaviour because of everyday interactions with other people. Quoted by Linh (2019:20), Mead's three original points of Symbolic Interactionism theory are: *“First, people treat objects based on the meanings that objects give them. Second, the meaning of objects arises from interpersonal social interactions. Third, the meaning of objects is captured and adjusted through the explanatory mechanism that individuals use when approaching objects.”* This means objects do not create meanings by themselves. Rather people create meanings for these objects when they use them through various interactions. The work of Mead was later developed into “symbolic interactionism” by Herbert Blumer. Linh (2019:20), elucidates this saying; Herbert

Blumer emphasizes that objects do not own their meanings. Rather, the meanings of objects are born through social interactions.

Still on the interactionist theory, Cole (2020:1), argues that: “*the central principle of the interactionist perspective is that the meaning we derive from and attribute to the world around us is a social construction produced by everyday social interaction*”. The meanings of attitudes and relationships are shaped when people interact with each other. Through such interactions for instance, people express perception of selves and others through communication by making use of symbols and language. Interaction influences behaviour of those concerned within a given context. The process allows individuals to adjust towards bonds determined by reciprocity. This is possible because such bonds impact the values, norms, customs, beliefs, rites, rituals and hence thought patterns of everyday experiences that make up people’s communities. Holding meetings and exercising mutual support among members of community associations for example serve as social insurance for individuals of these associations. Their socio-cultural activities facilitate the formation of social ties and networks that can create long lasting relationships.

Since this work is interested in studying the significance of community associations on multiculturalism in a culturally diverse society (Yaoundé), it was realized that social bonds are created communally among individuals and between members of communities, when people interact. Interacting with members of same community of origin allows for the preservation of group cultural heritage since the same way of life is recreated and through enculturation shapes the way people relate with one another in urban communities. Consequently, the practice of intra-community association enhances ethnicization, hence monoculturalism. Linh (2019:20), says it is understood that there exist three fundamental principles of interactionism – mentioned above. Hence interactionism has been chosen as one of the theories of this thesis because it explains how through interaction, people socialize, integrate and create social ties and networks in associations enhancing monoculturalism (internal cohesion) against the backdrop of multiculturalism. Contrarily, multiculturalism is seen to be endorsed by intercommunal interaction. The second theory of interest to this work is functionalism.

3.6.2 Functionalism

The second theory used is functionalism, particularly structural analysis, with emphasis on two concepts: manifest and latent function. The essence of this theory and selected manifest and latent concepts is to interpret and explain the role community associations play on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area. This theory brings out the role of associative culture on people's behavior – explaining the manifest and latent roles that belonging plays on the behavior of members of associations and the significance of resulting behavior on living together in Yaoundé.

Anthropologically, functionalism looks at culture from a holistic perspective. Culture is made up of different characteristics which function interdependently for the survival and stability of the entire system – Yaoundé urban space. Functionalism explains that society just like community association is made up of different interdependent parts – structural organization – with several objectives whose roles are aimed at promoting solidarity, cohesion and stability to keep the system whole and enable its continuity. Spencer, a functionalist who lived from 1820 to 1903, compared society to the human organism. He compares the functioning of structures/parts of society to the organs of the body. Spencer's analogy explains that society is made up of interdependent parts just like the organs of the body and that these parts function together to keep the entire system whole. Furthermore, a defect on one of the parts affects the entire system since all the parts work together as a whole. The objective of this theoretical approach in this work is to examine whether community associations through their structural organizations and socio-cultural activities in Yaoundé function to keep the city stable and cohesive by looking at the relationship existing among individuals. Individuals who constitute the various organs and carry out the socio-cultural activities of these community associations are interdependent and can anthropologically be said to be shaped by the values, norms, traditions, customs and knowledge of the associations and influence living together. In society community associations are an element like the family, religious congregations, educational institutions and the government that function together to keep society whole – multicultural.

Malinowski's bio-cultural functionalism and Radcliffe-Brown's structural-functionalism form the foundation of functionalism as were developed around the 1920s and 1930s respectively. Malinowski explains that individuals have physiological needs (reproduction, food, shelter, safety,

fun, mobility, and development) which can be fulfilled by social institutions. Malinowski further argues that human beings have four basic “instrumental needs” (economic, social control, education, and political organization) which equally need social institutions for their fulfilment. According to Malinowski, the physiological needs of individuals in a society can be satisfied through the interdependent functions of social institutions. Hence, the function of traditions, norms, customs and social institutions – community associations – in society is an interpretation of their relevance/influence in society. Malinowski supported his theory with ethnographic works, demonstrating the arguments of his studies of social life of the Trobriands. Malinowski studied a system of shell jewelry exchange among the Islanders, known as the “kula ring”. This tradition formed the basis of his best-known work – *Argonauts* – in 1922. *Argonauts* showed how the exchange of objects without any apparent value was a way of facilitating trade, negotiating status and extending relationships. This could be seen in food culture as an entertainment activity of community association with multiple roles that shapes people’s behaviours and relationships. Fieldhouse (1995), says: *“Food is used to define a sense of communal identity based on interest, ethnicity, religion, locality, and nationality. The love of a particular cuisine, dish or type of food can bring people together and be a factor in creating bonds and lifelong friendships and relationships. At the same time, food can also divide people based on their dietary preferences and religious restrictions. (Fieldhouse 1995: 185-186).”* Food can have a variety of roles, meanings and functions determined by context. Thus, the diverse role of food, places it beyond its biological, dietary and nutritional functions and explains how its production, harvesting, preparation, cooking, eating, conservation impacts behaviours which are related to socio-cultural norms and social diversity of urban spaces (Kong & Sinha 2016, Twiss 2012). Thus, from a community’s food culture, the way a society perceives, cooks, consumes and conserves food is believed to suggest its values, mindsets and identity. This affects urban lifestyle as people tend to stick to each other as a cultural value of food consumption. It also explains how most inhabitants of Yaoundé are exposed to intra-community relationships that shape their behaviour and thought patterns.

Culture is the core of Malinowski’s theoretical approach. Culture (material or immaterial) is an instrumental human creation meant to satisfy human biological, physiological, social and other needs. According to Malinowski, the exchange of shells explains functionalism because it plays a friendship role – social need. It satisfies the social and physiological needs of the Islanders

creating a bond between them. Hence the existence of customs, norms, traditions and social institutions – such as community associations – are interpreted in terms of their function in society. In this thesis, it is the role they play on multiculturalism that matters. In relation to Yaoundé, intra-community and intercommunity associations respectively play the roles of enculturation and acculturation. Culture is transmitted from one generation to the next, vertically/horizontally in community associations. Through intra-community association for example, learned culture plays a role in shaping people's behaviour, influencing how they relate with members of same community as well as members of other communities. Enculturation is a concept which implies the gradual acquisition and incorporation of the cultural values of one's community of origin while acculturation conversely denotes the gradual acquisition and adaptation of the cultural values and practices of another community by an individual. This shows why the Beti as well as the Duala, the Nso, the Bamileke among others have certain cultural features that set them apart from one another. These could be exemplified by the association lifestyle, food culture, traditional rites of different communities as will be seen later.

Radcliffe-Brown's structural functionalism concentrates on social structures as opposed to the biological needs of Malinowski. Radcliffe-Brown argues that society is made up of different interrelated institutions (such as economic, kinship, religious and political among others) that express social norms. According to him, these institutions have well-structured sets of relationships whose function is to maintain society. The function of folklore for instance is to maintain norms and patterns that control individuals and communities in society. Community associations also play the role of inculcating the norms and values of the community to the younger generation. Radcliffe-Brown inspired by Emile Durkheim's structural-functionalism argues that the fundamental function of society is to maintain social structures to keep it whole.

These explanations lead to the works of Robert King Merton whose structural analysis theoretical orientation especially pertaining to his latent and manifest concepts are instrumental in this thesis. Merton, like most functionalists regards society as an organism with different parts, each playing a role to sustain the stability and survival organism/system. As seen earlier, different parts – families, community associations, churches, schools, public and private sectors – function together to preserve the stability and continuity of society. If one part fails the entire system is affected. Influenced by the works of Parsons from the 1950s and in denial of Durkheim's positivist

and reductionist postulates of structural functionalism, Merton gave an alternate explanation of structural functionalism – structural analysis – whereby he looks at deviance as the key to understanding adjustments and disorder in the society. For instance, Loy & Booth (2004: 36) argue that deviant behaviour results in *“both change within the structure and change of the structure”*. Merton suggested a distinction between two concepts; **“manifest function”** and **“latent function”** published in 1957 and 1968. Manifest functions are defined as intended, conscious, or deliberate roles of social policies or actions created for the benefit of society. In contrast, latent functions are unintended or unrecognized roles of any organized social action, which may not be immediately obvious (Gilani; 2020) but affect society adversely. It is worth adding that latent functions exert consequential roles which may not be visible but evident.

According to Merton’s arguments, manifest function signifies the conscious roles/intentions of cultural practices/activities while latent function denotes the unintended/consequential roles of same. Manifest functions are obvious while latent are obscure. From the above differentiation, intra-community associations’ latent roles could be seen as an impairment of multiculturalism since membership is based on common community of origin and the major objective being cultural sustainability and community development. Enhancement because multiculturalism enforces preservation of distinct culture and impairment because same culture is reconstructed over and over. Manifestly, associative lifestyle is intended to promote mutual assistance, development of communities and social cohesion. However, the latent role of intra-community association in Yaoundé urban area is the promotion of monoculturalism while intercommunity associations – apart from socio-cultural activities, play the role of uniting diverse communities – enhancing multiculturalism. The associative lifestyle of the Bamileke community (with a concentration of cultural halls in Mokolo market) for example, could explain how the practice of intra-community association through solidarity, mutual aid and community development latently favours monoculturalism over multiculturalism. Consequently, members of intra-community associations mutually assist one another, develop community of origin, safeguard community culture and stick together during sorrowful and happy moments. This is the latent function of activities of intra-community association in Yaoundé. Membership latently creates a feeling of solidarity among participants, excluding them from other cohabiting communities. Merton illustrates his theoretical analysis with the “Hopi Indians” whereby during droughts, the

“Hopi Indians” get together to practice a ritual dance intended to mystically cause the rain to fall – manifest function of the dance. This performance creates a sense of solidarity – latent function – among the Indians irrespective of the outcome of the ritual. In a similar manner, Gilani (2020), illustrates the difference between manifest and latent functions of a prison. According to him, the manifest function of a prison is to protect society from having dangerous criminals behind bars as well as punish them for their crime against society by depriving them of their liberty. On the other hand, there is a possibility that criminals might gang up with other criminals and learn new dangerous skills of committing a crime from each other. Hence, the latent function of the prison can be the production of more knowledgeable criminals in society. Merton says some functions are intentional and observable while others are unintentional and obscure. He argues that manifest and latent functions could result in several unintended functions in societies. Intercommunity and intra-community associations acculturate/enculturate values held in high esteem by communities and associations on members. For example, self-help, cultural sustainability and solidarity among association members are intended cultural values learned and passed on from one generation to the next. However, the unintended consequences of the socio-cultural activities of these associations are enhancement of impairment of multiculturalism.

Merton’s distinctions between manifest and latent functions give a functional analysis of cultural patterns and social change with both scientific and meaningful insights. This leads to the core of this thesis – the significance/role of community associations on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban space. Equally, the law on the liberalization of association life in Cameroon in 1990 which went into action in 1996 and subsequently amended in 2020, plays a conscious role of promoting socialization, interaction, networking, bonding and sustainability of cultural heritage and living together and an unconscious role of promoting monoculturalism. These functions are in congruence with one of the prescriptions of multiculturalism as a social phenomenon – valorization of one’s culture, integration, acceptance of difference, tolerance, affirmation and living together.

Intercommunity association consciously and unconsciously promotes multiculturalism in Yaoundé since its membership integrates individuals from diverse cultural communities of Cameroon, enabling them to connect, socialize, interact and create social bonds that allow them to live together. Similarly intra-community associations consciously promote socialization,

interaction, integration and living together among members of common community of origin. Hence intra-community associations unconsciously promote monoculturalism.

From the fore, it is noticed that despite the expansion of association life with intra-community association being a plausible effort, the unintended role of these – intra-community – associations are that they impair multiculturalism while intercommunity associations promote multiculturalism. With theoretical framework in place, Chapter Four is the next area of interest which handles the ethnography of community associations and socialization in Yaoundé.

CHAPTER FOUR

ETHNOGRAPHY OF INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS IN YAOUNDE URBAN AREA

The objective of this Chapter is the presentation of field data concerning intra-community associations in Yaoundé urban area and their significance on living together. Apart from common community, community associations differ in number and size but are similar in structure and objectives. The ethnography of intra-community associations entails understanding the socio-demographic composition, the objectives and venue associations and the types of socio-cultural practices of these associations. These components are organized under four main headings: socio-demographic composition, objectives, venue and frequency of intra-community associations and socio-cultural and economic practices of community associations and several sub-headings.

4.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PRESENTATION OF INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

The composition of intra-community associations in Yaoundé is appreciated from data assembled during fieldwork. It is assumed that intra-community association is only meant for the elderly, low-income owners, less career-oriented persons and especially women. These opinions are backed by claims that community association is a time-consuming activity limited to the practice and preservation of cultural heritage. Notwithstanding, field data reveals the reality. Socio-demographic data examines the diversity of intra-community associations considering factors such as age, gender, occupation, religion, language, marriage, occupation and education as will be seen. Prior to that, the population studied during fieldwork is expressed as follows.

4.1.1 Presentation of Sampled Population

Through questionnaires (Bernard, 2006), a representative population was sampled for the study. From the cohabiting communities in Yaoundé, a total of 400 participants from eight communities (ethnic) took part in the study to wit: Beti, Bassa, Douala, Bayang, Nso, Bamileke, Bamum and the Northerners. Majority of the participants were from the Bamileke community (14.0%) while the least were from the Douala (8.0%) community group. This information is presented in Table Four (4) below.

Table 4: Population Distribution of Participants in Intra-Community association

Characteristics	Number examined	Frequency (%)
Bamileke	56	14.0
Bamun	54	13.5
Bassa	53	13.3
Bayang	47	11.8
Beti	53	13.3
Douala	32	8.0
Northernners	54	13.5
Nso	51	12.8
Total	400	100%

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork: 2019)

Table Four represents the number of respondents from each community that participated in this research. According to the table, there were four hundred participants, fifty-three (53) were of Beti origin, making up 13.3 per cent of the population. Fifty-three (53) from Bassa, showing 13.3 per cent, and forty-seven (47) from Bayang with 11.8 per cent. Another thirty-two (32) members showing 8.0 per cent were from Duala, fifty-one (51) from Nso illustrating 12.8 per cent while fifty-six (56) originate from Bamileke with a percentage of 14.0. Furthermore, fifty-four (54) participants showing 13.5 per cent came from Bamun and finally fifty-four (54) with a percentage of 13.5 were from the Northern region of Cameroon. The participants were categorized following different characteristics with age presented next.

The population according to Table Four (4) was divided into 7 age ranges of 15-24 to 75+. The majority belong to 46-55years age group with 31.3% and the minority is found within age ranges 15-25years showing 2.0% and 76 years and above with 2.0%. This is represented below.

4.1.1.1 Age and Intra-Community Association in Yaoundé

Fieldwork disproved the assumption that belonging to intra-community associations is meant for the elderly. Most associations are made up of mixed age groups otherwise known as “*generations*” (a generation has to do with a people born around the same time, raised in the same period showing similarities and preferential value systems). These generations however commune together as members of same associations. The different generations – age groups/ranges – that make up intra-community associations are categorized in the table below. Peter, a fifty-three (53)

year-old member of an intra-community association interviewed on the 4th of April 2020 in Etoudi stated:

“Our association has an intergenerational membership. Some are registered members and others are not but all are free to attend our activities. The least age for membership, however, is twenty-five (25) years (youths at this age are considered independent) and there is no maximum age. Irrespective of diversity in age, status, etc. everyone who hails from the community is free to become a member and is treated as an equal” (Peter, Etoudi: 04/04/2021).

The information above contradicts proponents of the assertion that community associations are activities practiced by the old and low-income earners. This is equally explained by the table below. Table Five (5) displays the age range of members of intra-community associations recorded during field activities.

Table 5: Age Distribution of Members of Intra-Community Associations

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
1 (15-24)	8	2.0
2 (25-34)	72	18.0
3 (35-44)	118	29.5
4 (45-54)	125	31.3
5 (55-64)	54	13.5
6 (65-74)	15	3.8
7 (75+)	8	2.0
Total	400	100%

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Data found in Table Five (5) demonstrates that eight (8) individuals showing 2.0 % fall in the “15-24” age range. These are young persons who are still dependent in one way or the other on their family members and one of the prerequisites for belonging to community association is financial and intellectual independence. These persons are passive participants – members with a burning desire to associate but who are not actively registered. This explains why membership for some of these associations begins from 25 years. Groups who had members below this age range said financial obligations to this category of members is facultative.

Participation in intra-community meetings timidly starts from “25-34” age intervals. There is a steady increase from “35-44” up to “45-54” where there is an almost even population distribution for both age ranges. This is the active population range and most members have family responsibilities to shoulder. These responsibilities can be attained through a steady cash flow – savings, thrift and loan – from associations since they make access to credit easy for everyone. This argument is supported by Njati & Muiruri (2018), in their study on Rotating Savings and Credit Association in Kenya whose analysis held that respondents of age brackets of 30-51 years constituted the active population whose savings from ROSCA would be used for beneficial activities to bring in capital to cater for education fees, food, and clothing among others. Monju (2019), studies physical activity among “*deux zéro*” groups. Looking at participation rate between the old and the young he corroborates that: *“their active nature, therefore, did not only push them to take part only in physical activity, but enable them to interact and build beneficial networks.”* (Monju, 2019:135-136). Consequently, persons who find themselves in these age ranges are in the active population group with a lot of family responsibilities where managing resources through associations proves necessary for them to achieve this need. This is a trait that allows them to take part in several socio-cultural activities as well as interact and create valuable relationships with members of the meetings. Most socio-cultural activities especially those that involve physical body movements (such as dancing and performing art) demand a lot of energy. Advancement in the age ladder diminishes one’s physical abilities shifting towards sedentary activities such as storytelling. Stories are also ways of handing down culture.

The age range “55-64” represented above is still an active age category as concerns association life. However with the age range “65-74”, the participation rate gently diminishes with an increase in age. Pavel, a fifty-six-year-old in an interview in Mimboman on the 17/02/2021 explained that; *“most advanced age members are given mobility privileges over others because while some are naturally feeble, others are battling health challenges, so they are unable to displace themselves from their houses to association venue. They are allowed to register and send their financial contributions”* (Pavel, Mimboman: 17/02/2021). Old age affects one’s ability to participate fully in community association. Consequently, from 75 and above, the number of participants drastically decreases. It was realised that from 75 years and above, members have become feeble and cannot actively participate in certain socio-cultural activities. However, they

can register and pay all their dues and attend gatherings if they can. They are otherwise exempted from certain activities which require physical displacements. Despite the participation disparity between these age groups, members continue to interact and socialize with one another creating networks amongst them.

Notwithstanding added to the above arguments is the fact that when people move from their place of origin to a new destination, there is a tendency of them clustering themselves where they feel a sense of belonging irrespective of age. Geschiere & Nyamnjoh (1998:88-89) asserts that: “[...] *the renewed emphasis on “belonging” and “autochthony”- have strengthened relations of a particularly explosive kind. To both urbanites and people “at home”, maintaining a feeling of belonging [...] remains a vital interest. The kinship terminology is stretched further and further to bridge new inequalities, between city and countryside, between rich people and poorer ones.*” Yilmaz (2019), also explains that looking at the physical and social space of hometown associations (HTAs) across migrant communities, it plays a role in enhancing socialization, cultural practices and networking. So it can be concluded that people from common community of origin come together to sustain community heritage, assist one another and develop their place of origin. Also despite the generational gap, the older generations come together to interact with the younger ones in intra-community associations, creating a favourable and enabling environment for cultural exchange. Age – especially with regards to independence and preferences – is a factor that influences association life. Gender equally plays a vital role in association life.

4.1.1.2 Gender and Intra-community Association in Yaoundé

It is commonly believed that community association is a more of a female than a male practice because it demands a lot of patience. This is a gendered perception, since “patience” is a value associated to the female gender. Such perceptions may be true in certain practices but generally, community association is open to both male and female genders. Fieldwork disclosed that both the male and female gender actively participate in intra-community associations. Notwithstanding there were associations that were reserved for men (such as Les Hommes classic de Bassa, and Bito Ba Bone Bella, a Duala association) just like there were associations reserved for women (Bikong ladies from Nso, Les Filles de Deido de Duala. Most of the associations from the Northern part of the country and Duala community are equally organized according to gender.

Most of these associations are either male or female groups. An interview with Abdoulaye, a (male) Cheik aged forty-seven (47) in Tshinga revealed that: *“it is customary for there to be a distinction between the male and female gender. Boys and girls usually separated at a very tender age, so they grow with that idea in mind”* (Cheik, Tshinga: 17/02/2021). Examples of gendered associations discovered during fieldwork include; Jeune Filles Coupable (Beti), Amicale Feminine **“Bikok”** (Bassa), Association Homme Classic (Bassa), Association des Filles Deido (Douala), **“Moni Kim”** (Bayang feminine group) **“Nyankpe”** (Bayang Masculine association), **“Bihkong”** Ladies (Nso), **“Mfuh”** Yaoundé (Nso men’s association) Association Des Femmes de Grande Nord (Northerners) among others. These are examples of same-sex associations of different communities in Yaoundé and show that same-gender community associations exist in association life as in all the different communities. However, the research is interested in the significance of community associations of both genders on multiculturalism as illustrated in the table underneath.

Table 6: Gender Distribution in Intra-Community Association in Yaoundé

Gender	Population	Percentage
Male	173	43.2
Female	227	56.8
Total	400	100%

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Gender has been represented in Table Six (6). The table shows that out of the 400 members of community associations, 227 individuals with a percentage of 56.75 are female while the remaining 173 persons representing 43.25% are male. These representations confirm the point of view that women actively participate in community associations than men in Yaoundé. Most of the female informants argued that women participate in these association than men because they involve themselves in savings activities which they use for family upkeep as opposed to the men who use their money for personal issues. They also affirmed that female participation encourages saving of money and savings requires self-discipline. The argument holds that intra-community associations make it possible for everyone to cultivate good saving lifestyles, especially the collaborative culture of self-discipline facilitated. The reason behind massive female participation in intra-community association concurs with Njati & Muiruri (2018), who say women are

motivated to join association because it offers a variety of beneficial services to members. In addition, Bouman, (2019: 7) says women's commitment to community groups serves as a means of empowerment for rural women in South Africa. Hence intra-community associations is a women empowerment – economically, culturally and socially – centre.

On the other hand, male informants emphasized that social pressure is one of reasons for male participation in intra-community associations. These respondents informed that apart from cultural sustainability, intra-community associations are getaways from daily life pressure. They also held that community association practices many activities which most men find time-consuming. Hence men participate in intra-community associations. Some men also held that weekends are days for them to rest and catch up with health and family. This is important to this thesis in that intra-community association allows members of varying gender to come together and interact and is a way of encouraging living together through tolerance amid diversity. The reason behind massive female participation in intra-community association concurs with Njati & Muiruri (2018), who say women are motivated to join association because it offers a variety of useful services to members. These included soft credits, saving lump sum of money to cater for family needs such as paying hospital bills for the sick. This could also lead to people finding romance (Monju, 2019) and other desirable relationships. Gender status shows that intra-community associations encourage diversity except for those that are purely unisex such as “*Les filles de Deido de Duala*”. Another feature that influences association life is marriage.

4.1.1.3 Marriage and Intra-community Association in Yaoundé

In Yaoundé as elsewhere in Cameroon, 18 years is the legitimate age for marriage according to Section 52 (1) of Law no 2011/011 of May 6 2011, amending and supplementing certain provisions of Ordinance No 81/02 of June 29, 1981, to organize civil status registration and various provisions relating to the status of persons, amends that: “*No marriage may be celebrated if the girl is a minor of 15 years old or if the boy is a minor of 18 years old.*” Some association members are married, others are single, yet some are divorced. People practice different types of marriage patterns. Nonetheless, while some individuals commit to intra-community marriage lifestyle, others prefer intercommunity marriage. This is illustrated in the table below.

Table 7: Presentation of Intra-community Associations according to Marital Status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Intra-community	228	59
Intercommunity	96	24
Others	76	19
Total	400	100%

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Table Seven (7) represents the marital status of association members. It shows that of the four hundred (400) respondents, three hundred and twenty-four (324) are married. This indicates that a huge proportion of associations members have parental responsibilities. To that effect, they need more economic resources to accommodate their families demands. These members find intra-community associations resourceful and consistent means of financial income. These thoughts are backed by Njati & Muiruri (2018), whose analyses of association life indicate that majority of the ROSCA members are married. Married participants also need to stay in touch with community members to tap socio-cultural resources to enculturate young family members into their community culture.

Among these married participants, two hundred and twenty-eight (228) representing 59% practice intra-community marriage, ninety-six (96) showing 24% practice intercommunity while seventy-six (76) with a percentage of 19 are in the “others “category. The last population category acknowledged “others”. “Others” according to respondents represent single, divorced, students and indifferent. This information shows that more people marry within their community of origin as opposed to marrying into other communities. It also shows that enrolling association members does not consider marital status (intra or intercommunity), hence there is no discrimination. Intra-community association allows members of various marital status to come together, interact, defend cultural heritage and self interest. Hence internal cohesion is encouraged through marriage. Notwithstanding intercommunity marriage could influence promotion of multiculturalism since it expands family frontiers and unites communities. Intercommunity marriages according to

repondents encourage acculturation, tolerance, acceptance, respect and affirmation/understanding of other cultures. Differences and similarities have uniting and dividing capabilities on living together, depending on the context. The next point of discussion in this work is the presentation of community associations according to religion. Religious belief systems affect living together.

4.1.1.4 Religion and Intra-community Association in Yaoundé

Religion – the belief in a supernatural power known as God or gods, influences living together since different religions have different belief systems. For this reason, there was a need to understand the religious backgrounds of members of intra-community associations. This has been demonstrated in the next table.

Table 8: Presentation of Intra-Community Associations according to Religion

Religious Affiliations	Frequency	Percentage
Christians	285	71.2
Islam	45	11.2
African Traditional Religion	55	13.7
Others	15	3.7
Total	400	100

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Table Eight (8) shows that two hundred and eighty-five individuals showing 71.2% are Christians. The next set of population distribution is that of the Muslims with forty-five (45) people showing 11.2% belonging to the Muslim faith. Furthermore, fifty-five (55) people representing 13.7% of the total population said they practice African Traditional Religion. The last population category made up 15 persons with a percentage of 3.7% opted for “others”. “Others” represents pentecostal groupings and those who were indifferent to religious affiliation. However, the majority of all are the Christians followed by the Muslims and finally African Traditional Religion. This result shows that people from different religious denominations come together to practise association culture. Uniting people from diverse religious belief systems in an association enables interaction, socialization and bonding among members. It also encourages tolerance, acceptance,

and respect of differences in beliefs and hence living together. This information introduces education as seen in the mastery and use of languages underneath.

4.1.1.5 Education and Intra-community Association in Yaoundé

Education especially formal education system embraces learning how to read, write and live together in diversity. An understanding of levels of education attained by members of intra-community associations is shown underneath.

Table 9: Presentation according to Level of Education

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
No formal	7	1.8
Primary	33	8.3
Secondary	126	31.5
Tertiary	156	39.0
Others	78	19.5
Total	400	100

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Table Nine (9) shows coexistence of people of various educational backgrounds. It indicates that 7 people showing 1.8% of the total population haven't had any formal education, thirty-three (33) individuals representing 8.3%, have attained primary education and one hundred and twenty-six (126) members with a percentage of 31.5 have been educated up to the secondary level. A further one hundred and fifty-six (156) people showing 39.0% said they have attained tertiary level of education. Finally, a population of 78 individuals with 19.5% opinionated for "others". "Others" represents people who are indifferent since they did not indicate their level of education. Despite a majority of the population being educated and the minority with little or no education both categories and "others" participate in the same association. This shows that despite the fact that formal education plays a role in shaping the attitude of members towards tolerance, acceptance, respect for difference and living together, informal education through intra-community association lifestyle equally promote same values. That explains why participants of

intra-community associations coexist in intra-community associations. Another characteristic that has an impact on association life is occupation.

4.1.1.5 Occupation and Intra-community Association in Yaoundé

In Yaoundé urban area intra-community associations are made up of people from diverse professions. These associations accept members based on community of origin and financial independence, as well as members from diverse professions. Generally, community associations are open to members from both private and public sectors as indicated in the table below.

Table 10: Frequency Distribution of Participants according to Profession

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Public service	87	21.8
Private sector	89	22.3
Commercial Agent	145	36.3
Others	79	19.8
Total	400	100

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Data in Table Ten (10) illustrates the frequency distribution of occupation of members of intra-community associations in Yaoundé urban area. From the table, the distribution of professions has been categorized into the public and private sectors. There are also students and a few other cases (such as the unemployed and the retired) who couldn't identify with any of the categories listed. These have been grouped under "others". Hence, the table indicates that eighty-seven (87) participants representing 21.8% work in the public sector while eighty-nine (89) people 22.3% are in the private sector. A further one hundred and forty-five (145) individuals showing a percentage of 36.3 are commercial agents while seventy-nine (79) people with 19.8% fall under "others" category. From the table respondents who work as commercial agents participate more in community associations proceeded by the private sector than the public sector while people who make up 'others' category come last in the list. This illustrates that association life allows coexistence of members from diverse occupational backgrounds.

The high participation rate by the commercial workers could be explained by the fact that individuals involved in commercial activities need to trade off their earnings through different forms of financial activities especially savings and other income-generating activities. Saving is a self-discipline attitude that is encouraged by intra-community associations especially with the collective saving system of these associations. The low rate of students and others could be attributed to the rules (age, financial independence and advanced age) put in place by most associations. However differences and similarities of profession coexisting in intra-community association is what is important in this dissertation. However, occupation findings are backed by Njati & Muiruri (2018), who summarise that ROSCA groups have a diversity of membership involved in different livelihood activities. A table clarifying the occupation of respondents is represented below.

Table 11: Some occupations of association members

Community Association	Profession	
	Public Sector	Private Sector
Beti	Teacher Student Commissioner (retired) Journalist Chief (Third Class) Police Officer Driver Unemployed (Retrenched) “Buyam sellam”	Teacher Banker Farmer Commercial Agent Hair Dresser Mobile Money Agent Cashier Builder Electrician
Bassa	Civil Servant Teacher Civil Servant (Retired) Government Secondary School Principal	Farmer Restaurant Owner Butcher Pastor Bar tender
Douala	Civil Servant Student Teacher Tax Inspector	Lawyer Disc Joker Banker Commercial Agent

	Pastor	Artist Pastor Seamstress
Bayang	Civil Servant Comissioner Administrative Assistant Teacher Police Officer Lecturer Pastor Chief (Second Class)	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Lawyer Commercial Agent « Bayam Sellam » Pastor
Nso	Civil servant Forestry Verterinarian Teacher Student Driver Pastor	Mechanic Chief Taxi Driver Motor Bike Rider « Bayam Sellam » Manager (Restaurant) Hair dresser Taylor Motor Mechanic Builder
Bamileke	Teacher Retired (Civil servant) Student Priest	Commercial Agent Retired (NGO) «Buyam Sellam » Priest
Bamoun	Civil Servant (Retired) Driver Teacher Pastor Civil Servant Student	Farmer Driver Call Box Operator Project Coordinator (NGO) Commercial Agent Student Nurse Supermarket Manager
Northerners	Retire(Director of General Affaires) Civil Servant Imam	Imam Cheikh Butcher Commercial agent

	Cheikh Teacher Unemployed Guard	Bar Tender Restaurant Sales Person Dress Seller Assorted food seller House ware dealer Hair Dresser “Chaii” Maker Teacher Grill Master/BBQ Chef Farmer Jewelry Vendor Commercial agent. Vegables Vendor Food Vendor
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Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

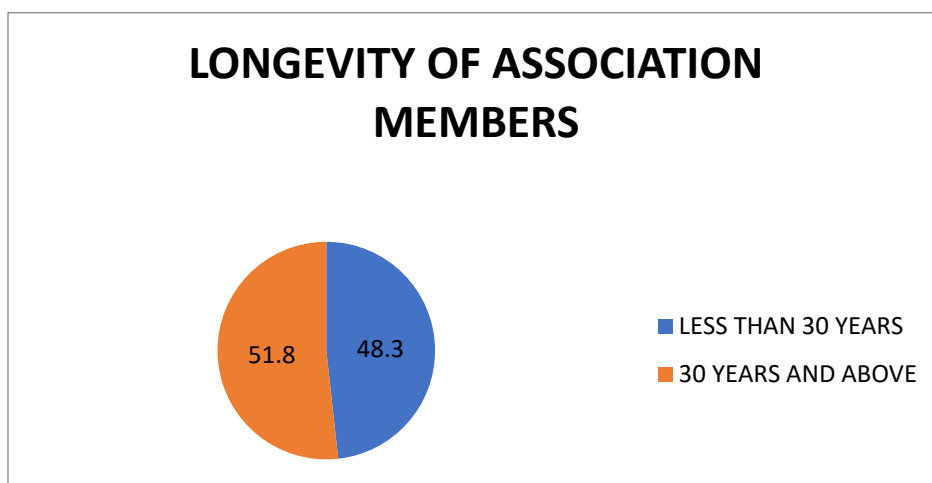
Table Eleven (11) presents the professions of some of the participants of intra-community associations in Yaoundé. As shown above, there is coexistence of persons of diverse occupations in intra-community associations of various communities. Majority of informants affirmed that the coming together of persons from diverse professional backgrounds gives an understanding that diversity in this area of culture fosters association lifestyle. This also shapes the way people interact since people come from all walks of life with varying experiences. The information equally plays a role in defining how difference and similarity coexists in intra-community association as it gives room for members from different occupational backgrounds to be able to appreciate and tolerate one another despite difference in profession. Consequently, participants of intra-community associations are engaged in a wide range of occupation and enjoy associative lifestyles through intra-community associations (Khan, 2019). This data is vital to this thesis since it enables an analysis of how interaction of members from diverse professions in associations influencing social networks and understanding between one another as will be seen in later chapters. Community associations wouldn't exist if there weren't resilient and active participants as handled below.

4.1.2 Duration of Intra-Community Associations and Resilience of Membership

Because affiliation is voluntary, membership is a yardstick to measure longevity, resilience and significance of intra-community associations to individuals and the society. Being a member of any community association can be attained upon fulfilment of certain conditions. However,

resisting the challenges that come with belonging is entirely a different thing. The resilience of membership influences the sustainability of intra-community associations in Yaoundé. A presentation of the duration of members in different associations in Yaoundé is necessary for this dissertation as shown in the pie chart below.

Pie chart 1: Longevity of Membership and Association



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Pie Chart one demonstrates the resistance of association members against the odds that come with belonging. According to the chart, 48.3% of individuals have been association members for less than thirty years while 51.8% have sustained membership for more than thirty years.

Adhering to community association lifestyle shows the value attached to the culture and the benefits thereof. It equally illustrates how despite challenges that come with belonging, ethnic affiliations and a sense of belonging urges the readiness of members not only to mutually assist one another but to defend their cultural heritage through socio-cultural practices and ensures internal cohesion. This also means that participants are benefiting in one way or the other from these associations. The lifestyle also provokes a question as to why the constant promotion of monoculturalism in the city of Yaoundé for more than thirty years (30) years. Maseng (2020), confirms the fact that longevity of membership affects longevity of association practice. This in turn influences multiculturalism since it holds that communities should hold on to their distinct cultures while embracing other cultures. A further question was asked to understand the duration

of community associations existing in Yaoundé. Data gathered concerning this question is shown in the table hereafter.

Table 12: Duration of association

Origin	Number examined	Duration of association	
		Less than 30 years	30 years and above
Beti	53	20 (37.7)	33 (62.3)
Bassa	53	23 (43.4)	30 (56.6)
Douala	32	9 (28.1)	23 (71.9)
Bayang	47	12 (25.5)	35 (74.5)
Nso	51	17 (33.3)	34(66.7)
Bamileke	56	10 (17.9)	46 (82.1)
Bamum	54	23 (42.59)	31 (57.4)
Northerners	54	19 (35.2)	35(64.8)
Total	400	133	267

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

From Table Twelve (12) longevity of intra-community associations in Yaoundé urban area is visible. According to data from the table, fifty (55) persons from the Beti community took part in this question. Twenty members showing a percentage of 37.7 of the population said they have been existing for less than thirty (30) years while the remaining thirty-three, representing 62.3% held onto thirty (30) years and above. Twenty-three individuals (23) with a percentage of 43.4 representing Bassa community associations said their associations have existed for less than thirty (30) years while thirty (30) have existed for thirty (30) years and above. The Duala community associations are represented by thirty-two participants nine (9) showing 28.1% held that they have been members of intra-community associations for less than thirty (30) years while twenty-three have been active for thirty (30) years and above. The next community is the Bayang. This community association was represented by forty-seven (47) members. Twelve of them acknowledged that their association has equally been in existence for thirty (30) years and below while 35 said their associations have been functioning for thirty (30) years and above. Fifty-one

individuals answered for the Nso community. Seventeen of the participants said their associations have existed for thirty years and below while thirty-four (34) with 66.7% said they have been enduring for 30 years and above. There were fifty-six (56) Bamileke participants. Out of the fifty-five, ten (10) of them held that their associations have existed for thirty years and below while forty-six (46) opined that theirs have been active for thirty (30) years and above. The Bamum community was represented by fifty-four (54) individuals. Twenty-three (23) respondents said their associations have been in existence for thirty years or less while the other thirty-one participants recognized that their associations have been operating for thirty years and more. Finally, out of the fifty-four Northerners who took part in the exercise and 19 said their associations have existed for thirty years or less while the other thirty-five (35) respondents said mentioned thirty years (30) years and above.

The data indicates that the majority (267) of associations have existed for at least thirty (30) years. The long duration of existence of intra-community associations and the fact that a majority of association members have been participating in this culture for more than thirty years is an indication that community association is not a recent phenomenon in Yaoundé urban area. It also shows that association life significantly influences the lifestyle of urban dwellers and the cultural diversity of Cameroon. Since gathering people is one of the fundamental objectives of association life, the practice either encourages intra-community or intercommunity socialization, networking and social cohesion. This equally shows the commitment of members to sustain community culture as well as their wellbeing. A duration of twenty years and more in Yaoundé shows the degree to which endogenous socialization, cohesion and integration among members is encouraged in Yaoundé.

Intra-community association is an urban practice that unites people, encourages sustainability of cultural heritage, networking and creation of social ties between members irrespective of age, gender, religion and social status is very instrumental to Yaoundé urban culture. The practice intra-community association is beneficial to individuals, their communities of origin and the society, since belonging for long influences the way people interact and socialize as association members, community members and coexisting communities in Yaoundé as a whole.

The demographic presentation of intra-community associations holds a significant point in this dissertation. Apart from defining the characteristics of members, the data shows that intra-

community associations while regrouping members based on a common community of origin embraces other aspects of diversity as seen in age, gender, education, marital status and occupation, which influence group dynamics. It also shows that association life significantly influences the lifestyle of urban dwellers and the cultural diversity of Cameroon. The next part of this thesis brings out a categorization of communities according to quarters from which associations were randomly selected in Yaoundé. Before categorizing these associations an illustration of communities according to linguistic composition will be done.

4.2 INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS ACCORDING TO LINGUISTIC DIVISIONS IN YAOUNDÉ

This section presents an identification of the linguistic divides from which intra-community associations were sampled and the different types of intra-community associations existing in Yaoundé. Identification of communities studied is tackled first.

4.2.1 Identification of the Origin of Communities Studied in Yaoundé.

Fieldwork clarified that several intra-community associations exist in Yaoundé urban area. The communities from which members of these associations originate fall under the three main language groups of Cameroon. This constitutes the base from which the research communities with respective intra-community associations were randomly selected.

The Bantu communities are made up of Beti, Maka, Duala, Batanga, Bakweri, Bassa, Mbo, Bakundu, and Bayang communities. The **Bantus** can further be divided into the forest (Beti, Fang, Bulu, and Maka.) and the coastal (Duala, Bakweri, Bassa, Mbo, Bakundu and Bayang) people. A random selection of the Beti, from the forest communities, Bassa, Duala, from the coastal people of Littoral and the Bayang communities from the coastal population of the South West region of Cameroon was done for this dissertation.

The Semi-Bantu communities comprise of the Bamileke, Bamum, and the Tikars. The Bamileke, Bamum and Nso from this category were randomly selected as well.

The Sudanic speaking communities are the third category predominantly made up of the Northerners. Some of the communities that make up the Northerners are Fulani, Fulbe, Mafa,

Toupouri, Shoa-Arabs, Moundang, Massa, Mousgoum, Kanuri, Guisga, Mataka and Kapsiki. These communities usually group themselves as people from the Northern part of the country. Some of the areas where these communities' members can be easily found is presented below.

4.2.2 Identifying Communities and Quarters where Members are Found in Yaoundé

Yaoundé has been described in Chapter Two of this work as a miniature Cameroon composed housing all 250 communities – ethnic – that make up Cameroon. Below is a presentation of quarters where some members of these communities can be easily located in Yaoundé.

Table 13: Spatial distribution of communities under study in yaoundé according to sub-divisions and quarters

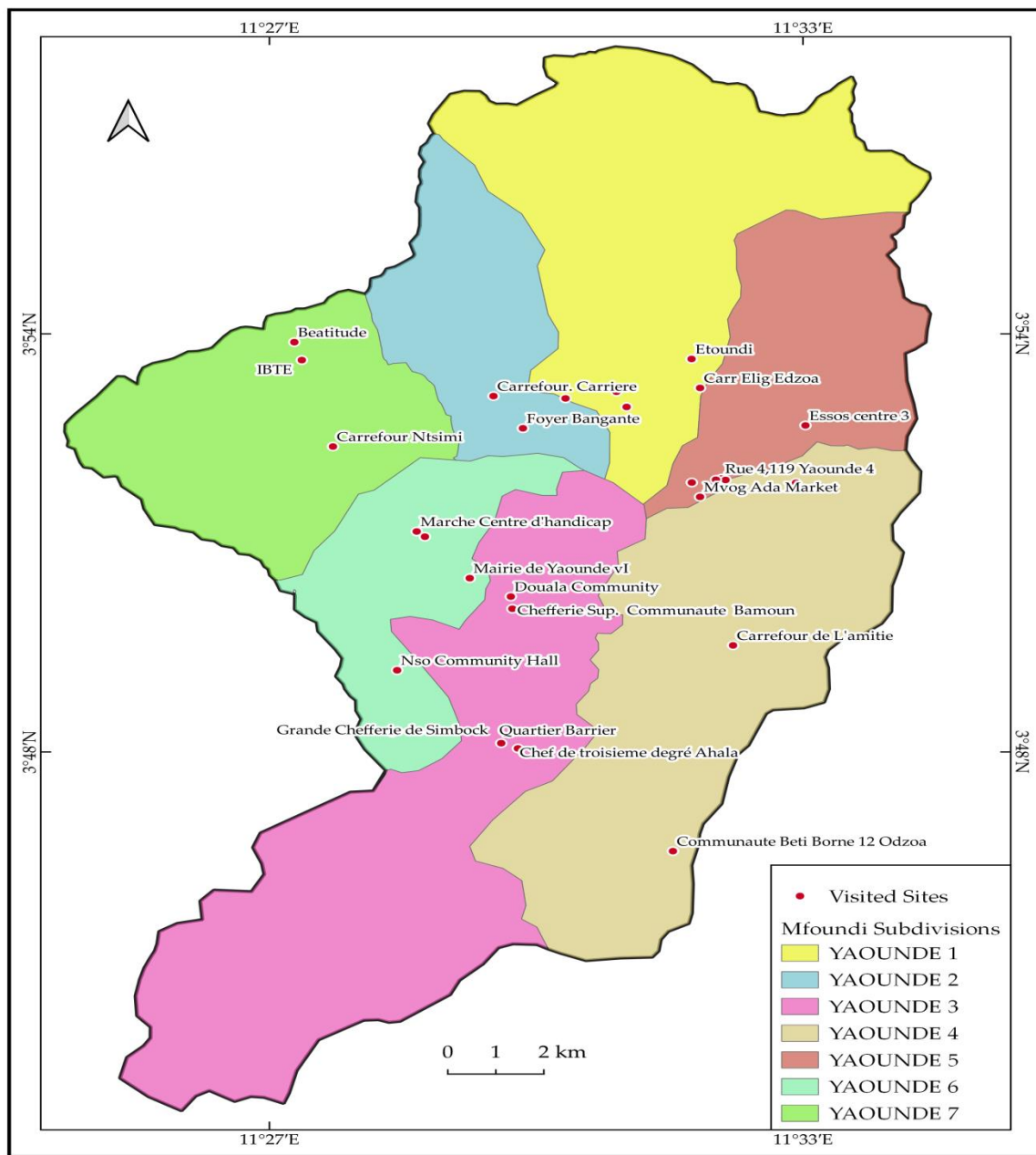
Sub-division	Quarter	Communities
Yaoundé I	Bastos Bata Nlongkak Regi Mballa II	Bassa, Douala Beti Douala Bamileke
Yaoundé II	Cite Verte Madagascar Mini-ferme Mobile Messa Briquetérie Tsinga	Bamoum Bamileke Beti Northerners Northerners Northerners
Yaoundé III	Carrefour Vogt Nsimeyong Obili Mvolye Obobogo	Bamileke Bamoun Douala Nso Beti (Ewondo) Nso
Yaoundé IV	Emombo Mimboman Nkouabang	Northerners and Nigerians Bassa Beti

Yaoundé V	Titi garage Ngouso	Northerners Bamoun
Yaoundé VI	Nsimeyong Efoulan Biyem-Assi Simbock Mendong Ahala Accasia, Simbock Tam-tam TKC	Bamoun Bayang Bassa, Nso, Bamoun Nso, Beti, Bamileke Bayang, Beti (Ewondo) Nso, Bamileke Bamoun Nso, Ewondo, Bassa
Yaoundé VII	Oyom Abang Nkolbissong Nkomo (Avae) Cité Verte Mokolo (Bamileke)	Bassa, Beti Bassa, Nso Beti Beti Bassa, Douala Bamileke

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Data in Table Thirteen (13) displays some concentration points of members of various communities in the seven sub-divisions of Yaoundé. However, these localities are not definitive settlement points of different community members because individuals from these communities can be found in many other areas of Yaoundé. What type of community associations exists in Yaoundé? Underneath is a map representing some of the quarters that were visited by researchers during field work.

Map 4: Map presenting spatial distribution of sites visited in Yaoundé during fieldwork



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

The map above shows the spatial distribution of some of the quarters that were visited during field work. The map shows that ethnographic work was representative enough as all seven

sub-divisions of Yaoundé indicated with different shades of colour on the legend/key and the red dots represent visited sites.

With information about the identification and distribution of communities studied a presentation of some intra-community associations is the next area of interest.

4.2.3 Presentation of Intra-community Associations in Yaoundé

Intra-community association is a common practice in most urban areas of Cameroon, Yaoundé inclusive. Mokam (2006), confirms that association life is not a new phenomenon in Cameroon and elsewhere in Africa. Orozco (2004), also notes that there has been an increase in association life in cities from the 1990s. These assertions are corroborated by Gugler (1997) and Geschiere & Gugler (1998).

Intra-community associations presented here include associations that were observed from different communities during fieldwork. An exhaustive list of these associations will be presented in Chapter Five of the dissertation.

Table 14: Presentation of Observed Associations According to Linguistic Categories and Community of Origin

Linguistic Categories	Communities of Origin	Name of Association
Bantu Speaking people	1. Beti	Association de Mvog Essom Ndana
	2. Bassa	Association des Bassa de Mbankomo (ASBAM)
	3. Douala	Les filles Deido de Duala
	4. Bayang	Manyu Cultural and Development Association (MECDA)
Semi-Bantu speaking people	5. Nso	Nsoba'ti
	6. Bamileke	Famille Batela
	7. Bamum	Association Pon Petou (APOPET)
Sudanese speaking people	8. Northerners	Association des Jeunes Ressortissants du Grand Nord

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Table Fourteen (14) illustrates some intra-community associations sampled for case study (observations, interviews and discussions) during field work in Yaoundé urban area. These associations have been classified according to their community of origin and under the three linguistic categories of Cameroon. Members from different communities create associations according to their communities of origin. These associations are considered escape routes from daily stress with potentials of nurturing values such as socialization, interaction, networking and cultural sustainability. Consequently, intra-community associations encourage tolerance, acceptance, respect and living together among individuals of common communities. Such associations are principally aimed at safeguarding cultural heritage, promoting mutual assistance and community development. Hence, they promote endogenous cohesion.

4.2.4 Categorisation of Intra-community Associations in Yaoundé urban areas

Intra-community associations can be categorized into family, clan, entire community (ethnic), professional, educational and friendship, as shown below. McCabe *et al.* (2013) hold recognize that relationships amongst family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and communities determine belonging. Some intra-community associations are:

- **Family associations**

Family associations in this case are of two kinds: immediate family and community family association. McCabe *et al.* (2013) confirm that social relationships are based on family and friendships. Family associations practice the same socio-cultural activities as other associations. However, immediate family associations are limited to the immediate (or extended) family level. An example of such an association from the Bassa community is “Log Bilim”. Deziré, a twenty-nine-year-old intra-community association member, interviewed on the 10th of August 2021 in Damas, said: “*our family association. We carry out normal njangi, savings activities, and socio-cultural activities. The meeting is limited to our family members, including aunts, uncles and cousins,*” (Deziré, Damas). Like every other association, they practice socio-cultural activities aimed at uniting members, advancing the living conditions of members as well as advancing the culture of the community. Yenshu Vubo (2008) says some of the associations go beyond solidarity to take on the enhancement of a sense of belonging that assimilates the ethnic group into a family. By family, we mean the nuclear and extended family grouping themselves as sons and daughters

of particular (ethnic) communities. Such associations could be limited to the immediate family or extended to other relatives such as aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews. Family from the point of view of Yenshu (2008: 95) goes beyond the immediate confines of nuclear and extended African families assuming the entire community as a family such as “Famille Bazou” and “Famille Bakoup” from the Bamileke community and the Tayong Tagnyi Nkongha family from Bayang community. Such associations encourage cohesion at different family levels.

- **Clan/tribe associations**

Clan unlike family associations extend their membership to extended family members. According to McCabe *et al.* (2013), relationships amongst friends, neighbours and communities, determine how people manage low incomes and move on with their daily lives through organisations. Such associations encourage socialization, integration and mutual assistance of one another. An example of such association case-studied is Association des Filles de Deido de Duala. This association unites women of Deido origin resident in Yaoundé. Association de “*Mvog Essom Ndana*” is another clan association – of the Beti community. It is precisely one of the sub-clans of the Ewondo community. This is confirmed by an interview with André a thirty-eight-year-old association member interviewed on the 17th of March 2021 in Simbock who recognized that: “*Our clan discovered that the youths are missing out on our core culture and so decided to create an association that regroups members of our clan following a matrilineal descent. Our main aims are to revive and sustain our cultural values in youths, encourage managerial skills, and assist each other,*” (André, Simbock: 17/03/2021). Community members form their associations according to their clans. “**Famille Batela**” is the name of a Bamileke association from one of the sub-clans of Nde. They organize thrift and loan during assemblies and other socio-cultural activities and strive to conserve the cultural heritage of their communities. Most clan associations fall under what Yenshu Vubo (2008), explains above as associations that go beyond solidarity to enhance a sense of belonging, assimilating the ethnic group into a family. Although some associations’ membership is derived from a wide community base, they take the designation of ‘Family Meeting’ as seen in Famille Nde, Famille Batela, and Famille Bakozou, associations of the Bamileke community. The Manyu community also have such associations such as Akwaya family group, and Bang Yinto family associations. Whatever the appellations, they are associations that regroup members based on a common community of origin and encourage cohesion at same level.

- **Community (ethnic) /Village Associations**

Yenshu Vubo (2008: 96), recognizes that there exist ethnic based associations as a popular urban culture. His thoughts are confirmed by Caglar (2013), Evans (2010), Gluckman (1940), Michelle (1969), and Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998). Community/ethnic associations bring members from different families and clans together playing a socialisation and development role as seen in their objectives along which are unity, cohesion, cultural sustainability and mutual assistance. As urban dwellers, belonging to these association pools people together allowing them to create social ties in town. The data above is confirmed by an interview with Geraldine a 43-year-old association member interviewed on the 23rd of November 2021 in Emana who explained: *“Our association is very old association and it unites members of our entire ethnic group. It is an umbrella association that also registers other groups from our community,”* (Geraldine, Emana: 23/11/2021). Community associations are larger than clan and family and sometimes have baby groups especially those that have followed all administrative registration procedures. Examples of such associations are “Association de Bassa de Bankomo”, “Nso Cultural and Development Association”, “Manyu Cultural and Development Association”, and “Association Pon Petou”- from the Bamum community resident in Yaoundé. Their practices have been discussed in Chapter Four of this dissertation. Yenshu Vubo (2008), edifies that these associations help to bring people together based on affiliation to home area or hometown. Associations aim to promote mutual support, community development, and enjoyable socio-cultural activities for members.

- **Friendship associations**

Some intra-community associations are created based on friendship ties (McCabe *et al.*, 2013). Such associations regroup friends (Nyamnjoh and Rowlands, 1998), based on common community and interests. In an interview with Mathilda, a 48-years-old member of a friendship intra-community association on the 9th of June 2021 in Nsimeyong, she said: *“We are a group of thirteen women in our association who have been friends since university days”* (Mathilda, Nsimeyong: 09/06/2021). Thus, friendship ties influence the creation of intra-community associations. Examples of such associations are “Association home et femme classe Bassa”, “Association des jeunes filles Beti and Bihkong” (Nso association). “Association des Jeunes Ressortissants du Grand Nord, Cameroon” is a friendship intra-community from the Northern

section of the country. Friendship associations equally carry out socio-cultural activities like every other association aimed at improving the lifestyle of members and similar other objectives of association life.

- **Traditional associations (Secret Societies)**

Traditional associations express social solidarity that is so vibrant in mainly traditional rural society, functioning as the basis of survival in the direction of sustainability and helping generate a forward-looking vision for the society (Yenshu Vobu, 2008: 96). Traditional associations were formerly seen only in villages/communities (Nwunasungazi, 2014), but they exist in urban areas, engaging members in socio-cultural activities like every other association. Following an interview with John, a 49-years-old association member interviewed in Odza on the 9th of June 2021, he expressed that: *“Our group is a small secret group that was created here in Yaoundé for cultural display. There are secret groups from our community that cannot be represented here since they are directly linked to the Palace”* (John, Odza: 09/06/2021). Examples of such associations are the *“Ekpe”* and *“Obasinjo”* from Manyu community and the in Nso there is the *“Rum”, “Chong”, Kikum”*. Whether family, friendship, clan or traditional, intra-community associations have mutual assistance, community development and preservation of cultural heritage as their primary objectives.

The next part of Chapter Three looks at the objectives, venues and frequency of assemblies of intra-community associations in Yaoundé urban area.

4.3 OBJECTIVES, VENUES AND FREQUENCY OF ASSEMBLIES OF COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

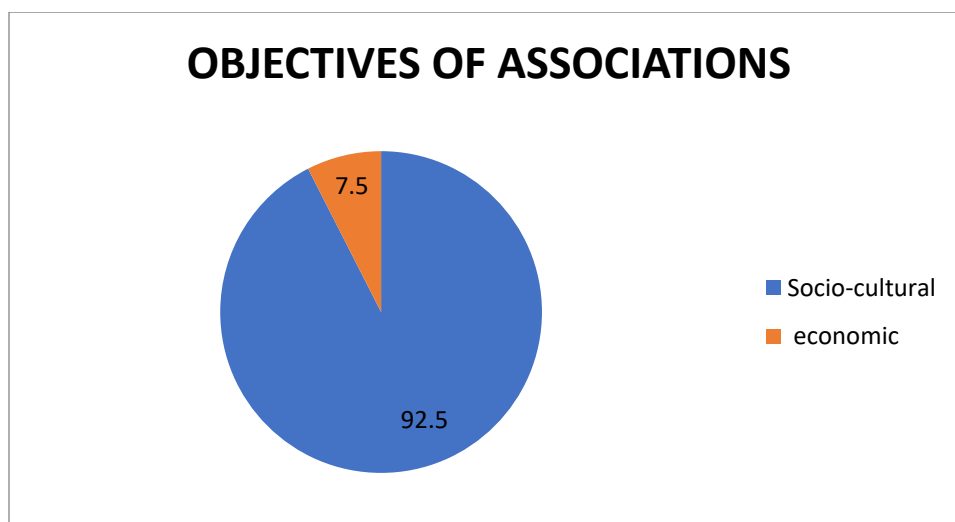
This section describes the objectives of associations, where these associations hold their meetings as well as the frequency of their assemblies.

4.3.1 Objectives of Community Associations

According to Atim (1999) and W. G. Nkwi (2006), intra-community associations project unity, mutual assistance, community development and cultural sustainability as their primary objectives. Rules and procedures are put in place to guide and run the activities of associations. Most associations have standardized such rules and regulations in form of a constitution to enable

them function and achieve their objectives. People come together during association assemblies, for socio-cultural events as well as for religious, leisure, educational, professional and other reasons. Community associations organize cultural events which attract the participation of cross cultural individuals. Nevertheless, why these associations exist especially in Yaoundé is what is examined in this level. It was observed that most associations convene assemblies once or twice a month during which many issues concerning the welfare of individuals, the association and the community – hometown/village – are discussed. The reasons that motivate the creation of intra-community associations could be financial, social or cultural. Field research revealed that community associations are created for the following reasons.

Pie chart 2: Aims of creating community associations in Yaounde



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

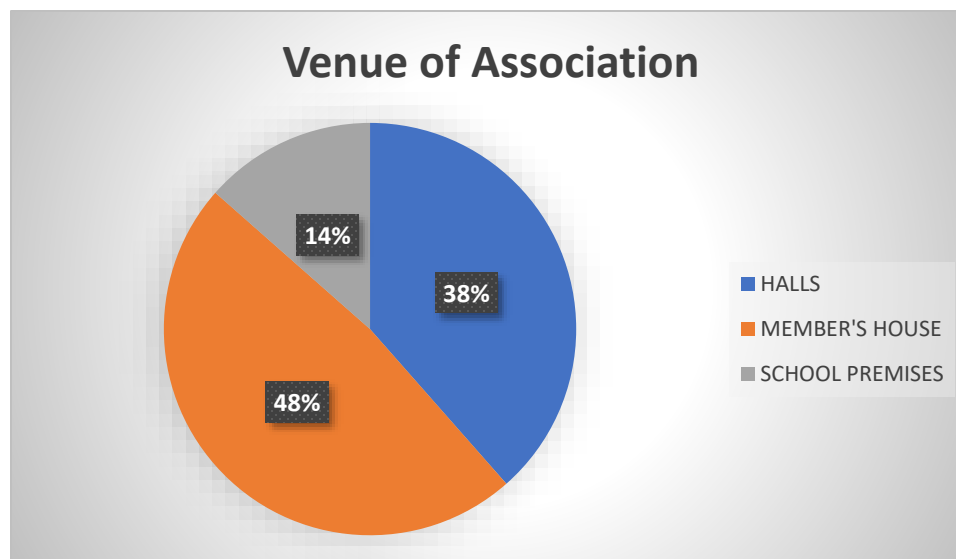
Asked why meetings are created participants are urged to respond by selecting socio-cultural or economic reasons. Their answers have been represented on pie chart two (2) above. 92.5 % of the four hundred (400) participants said their associations are created to meet socio-cultural needs while the remaining 7.5 % acknowledged that their associations are created to assist them to meet their financial day-to-day life demands. This could be explained that the socialization need – the need to socialize, interact, bond– and relieve selves of stress accrued during daily encounters (such as stereotypes and hate speech) and other tensions is a push factor that stimulates people to belong to such associations. Verhoef (2008: 59), affirms that socio-cultural factors

affecting people bring them together into associations enabling them pool their resources and obtain moral support from the association. Associations are designed to pool a wide range of cultural, financial and social needs for the sake of solidarity in Yaounde urban space.

Finding people with common values become an ideal environment for this need to be fulfilled. Socio-cultural reasons range from preservation of cultural heritage to interaction, socialization, networking, entertainment through food, drinks, folklore and dance among others meanwhile economic reasons comprise all financial activities that community associations engage (such as savings, njangi, thrift and loan). Respondents held that these are strategies used in most associations to enhance saving attitude especially through collective saving initiatives. Hence the more the members, the more the savings and benefits. Financial activities also act as social insurance for members in many ways as will be seen in subsequent chapters. From the data in the Pie Chart Two (2), community associations are created most noticeable for socio-cultural – interaction, socialization, and networking. With the reasons for which community associations are created, knowing the venues where these associations hold their assemblies is necessary.

4.3.2 Venues where Intra-Community Associations Convene Meetings

Creating associations is accompanied by a set of rules and regulations. To accomplish these objectives, associations must meet, organize and carry out socio-cultural activities. These activities will assure the sustainability of the associations and their objectives. These meetings do not happen in abstraction as they are carried out in infrastructures put in place by the associations, in private homes and public spaces. Information collected from an FGD organized with both men and women on 7th March 2021 at Simbock, edified us that: *“we used to hold our meetings in individual houses. But as time went by the population expanded. Due to the destruction of private property that was recorded, we decided to build a hall that can accommodate association. The hall is used by the various associations of our community to organize meetings and cultural events”* (FGD, Simbock: 07/03/2021). The pie chart below illustrates places where community associations usually gather.

Pie chart 3: Venue of Assemblies

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

An association venue can be any place decided by the association members to hold their meetings. When deciding on a venue for meetings, many factors (such as the number of members, parking lot, types of socio-cultural events and frequency of meetings) are taken into consideration.

Data in Pie Chart Three (3) reveals percentage of spaces where intra-community association members gather to deliberate issues concerning them and carry out other activities. Following the pie chart, individuals representing 38.5 % per cent of respondents held that they always assemble in community halls. Community hall according to respondents represents a building constructed by members of the said community association. This according to respondents is a means of ensuring autonomy amid other reasons. Another group of persons, representing 48 % per cent of respondents said they hold their meetings at members' houses. Most often, such meetings rotate from one house to the next respecting well-established hosting calendars. The remaining category of persons representing 13.5 per cent of participants acknowledged that their meetings are held on school premises.

The data displayed on pie chart three (3) shows that associations hold their meetings in several venues to deliberate their affairs and exercise socio-cultural activities. Most used spaces

among them are community members' houses followed by community halls, and lastly school premises. This information according to different communities is detailed in the Table 15 below.

Table 15: Venue of assemblies according to various communities

Place of origin	Number examined	Place of meeting		
		Halls	Members house	School premises
Beti	53		*	
Bassa	53		*	
Douala	32		*	
Bayang	47	*		
Nso	51	*		
Bamileke	56	*		
Bamum	54		*	
Northerners	54			*
Total	400	3	4	1

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

From Table Fifteen (15), the Bamileke, the Bayang and the Nso held that they have community halls where assemblies are organized while the Beti, Bassa, Duala and Bamum said they organize meetings in members' houses. The last population the Northerners said their meetings are mostly held on school premises. While the first and second categories have no particular issue with men and women attending meetings together, the last category could be explained by their culture – gender segregation – whereby men and women are not expected to hold social gatherings together.

Abdul, a twenty-nine-year-old respondent in an interview on the 25th of July 2021 at Rue Henri Dunant (2.008) in Mokolo informed that: *“Notre association se siege dans une ecole publique”* (Abdul, Mokolo: 25/07/2021). Translates as: *“our association seats in a public school”*. We were told “others” represent rented places, palaces, schools, bars, restaurants, as well as virtual

spaces (WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter). Below is a pictographic illustration of some community associations' venues.

Catalogue of some venues of intra-community associations in Yaoundé

Plate 2: Nso Community Hall



Source: © Yaoundé (Field work: 2021)

Plate Two (2) shows the Nso Community Hall in Simbok located between the Anglophone and Francophone Catholic churches in Simbok.

Plate 3: The Northerners' Association Venue



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork: 2021)



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork: 2021)

Plate Three (3) represents Ecole Publique de Messa – a primary school in Messa quarter Yaoundé where most Northerners hold assemblies. The figure pictures a classroom occupied by one of the associations who are praying to commence their activities. A litany of associations from the Northern part of Cameroon meets here every Sunday.

Plate 4: A Bamileke Community Hall



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork : 2021)

Plate Four (4) represents a Bamileke community hall found in the heart of Mokolo, behind the market. Community members unite here every Sunday for their assemblies. The hall with a capacity to host about 300 people is still undergoing finishing touches as seen from its earth floor.

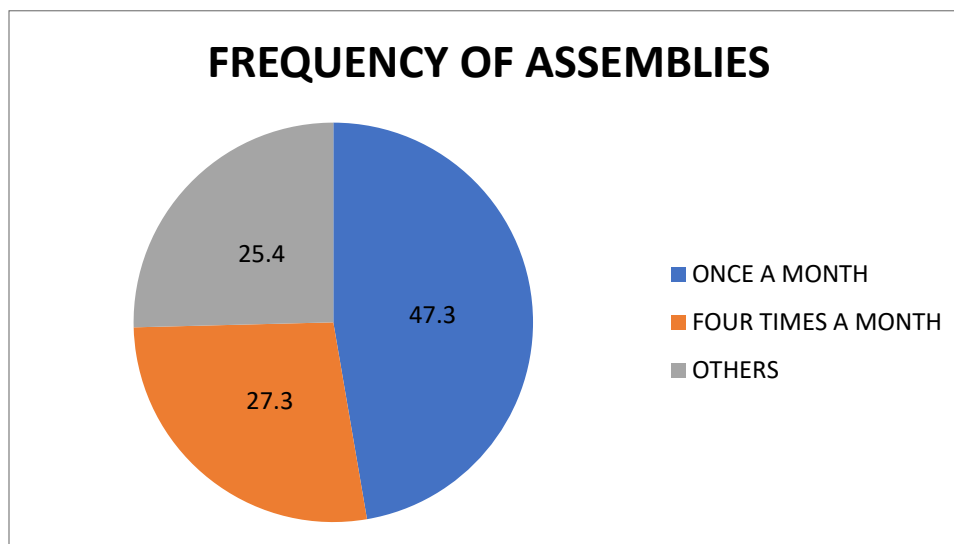
The pictures above represent some of the venues where community associations organize their assemblies. These show that infrastructure plays a role in enhancing association life and living together. People need to converge somewhere socio-culturally and economically safe to accommodate their activities. This leads to a look at the frequency of organization of assemblies.

4.3.4 Frequency of Assemblies

The quintessence of community association is uniting people. Coming together enables interaction, socialization and networking which can lead to living together. Associations organize meetings to talk about social, cultural and financial issues affecting members and communities.

The frequency with which intra-community associations organize assemblies in Yaoundé is summarized in the pie chart below.

Pie Chart 4: Frequency of Meetings



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

According to respondents, frequency of assemblies denote the number of times associations hold assemblies per month. Some associations have two sets of assemblies; executive and general. General assemblies are held once/twice a month. Before general assemblies (for those who convene executive assemblies), an executive meeting holds a day prior to the general meeting.

Respondents reacted to the frequency of organizing assemblies as revealed by Pie Chart four (4) above. Of the 100% of association members that participated in the exercise, a group of individuals representing 47.3% said their meetings are organized once a month. Another group of people with a percentage of 27.3% voted four times a month while the remaining group of respondents showing a percentage of 25.4 held on to “others”. By “others”, respondents refer to holding meetings either twice a month or organizing spontaneous assemblies when an important event comes up. During a FGD with the Beti Association members, held on the 16/04/2021 Simbock, it was collected that: *“We hold our main assemblies once a month. But when something serious crops up, an impromptu gathering is announced inviting members to show up to engage in talks that can lead to a solution”* (Focus Group Discussion, Simbock: 16/04/2021). These are

some of the frequencies at which intra-community associations organize assemblies to achieve the objectives. Some major activities that these associations engage have to do with the preservation of (tangible and intangible) cultural heritage such as; dressing code, decoration, craft works, oral tradition, singing, dancing, cooking, eating and drinking. The next part of Chapter Three engages the socio-cultural and economic activities of associations.

4.4 SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

Culture represents the way of life of members of a community. It has a critical role in every community since it shapes the values, norms, customs, traditions of the community. By implication, community associations as institutions have cultures capable of shaping the way people interact, communicate, socialize, network and bond as members of common communities of origin as well as coexisting communities. Socio-cultural and economic activities of intra-community associations carry the cultural and economic expressions of communities. For instance, marriage, funeral and other rites of passage practiced by different intra-community associations in urban areas facilitated by mutual support represent the cultural value of these communities. Respondents held that most association activities represent their cultural identity. These activities impact the way of life of members of the associations, their communities or origin and urban area. These activities may be unique to associations (and communities) since they define the characteristics of specific communities. Notwithstanding their representations cut across diverse communities. Social and cultural activities significantly affect the quality of life, the welfare of urban dwellers and the development of urban areas.

From the above assertions, socio-cultural activities enable individuals to interact, socialize, network and create bonds that unveil their ways of perceiving themselves and the world. These activities are inter-dependable and can be studied holistically. An interview with Pièrre, a 62-year-old community association member, on the 10th of May 2021 in Ahala, confirms the above statement when he says: *“our association organizes ceremonies for different types of events. We have happy and sad events which we engage in when we come together”* (Pièrre, Ahala: 10/06/2021). This part of the thesis allows an examination of the socio-cultural activities of community associations within the framework of multiculturalism and social cohesion in

Yaoundé. Some of the activities were observed in meetings as well as during events celebrations organized by associations.

4.4.1 Events Organization

Celebrating is an intrinsic social trait of human existence. In addition to organizing and forging friendships and bonds through celebrations, people and communities learn about each other's way of life. The way association members collaborate and assist one another during events shows the level of solidarity existing among members, which equally influences their behaviour, how they interact, socialize and network. Ademola *et al.* (2020), agree with the above assertion saying that intra-community associations otherwise known as 'Rotating and Savings Credit Association' (ROSCA) is a social gathering where members share a common language and culture. It provides opportunities for participants to socialise, support each other in economic endeavors and encourage each other towards attaining a financial goal. The behaviour of association members towards one another in good and bad times create psychological impacts that portray supportive or disruptive attitudes with similar effects to the health of members, associations and the society as a whole. For example, mutual assistance as one of the activities of associations (Monju, 2019), influence the psychological mindset and behaviour of members. Such attitudes equally promote or discourage the interactive and integrative behaviour of association members.

Intra-community association has been described as a socio-cultural practice that brings people together with chief reasons being to enforce unity, cultural preservation, development of individual and community wellbeing. In order to achieve these, members mutually assist one another morally, financially and otherwise. A group discussion organized with forty-three (43) Nsoba'ti members on the 12th of February 2019, gathered that the association has master-minded many happy and sad events in its community hall at Simbok. Occasionally associations invite persons from other communities, showcase their culture through activities such as singing, dancing, eating and drinking habits, among others and allow them to take part in some of their activities. Events celebration by individuals as seen below is also assisted by association members following their constitutions.

Table 16: Frequency of Events that Attract Assistance from Community Association

Types of Events		Frequency of Respondents	Percentages	
Happy Events	Marriage	150	37.5%	61.5%
	Child Birth	72	18.5%	
	Promotion and academic achievements	24	6%	
Sad Events	Deaths	109	27.2%	34.75%
	Sickness	30	7.5%	
Others Religious events such as baptism, communion, etc., promotion of member, education among others.		15	3.3%	3.75%
Total		400	100	100

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Table Sixteen (16) shows the types of events that demand the assistance of association members. Accordingly, 150 (one hundred and fifty) persons with a percentage of 37.5% said they contribute to marriage events, 72 (seventy-two) people showing 18 per cent held that they contribute for childbirth while a group of 24 (twenty-four) individuals with 6% opined that they contribute for promotions. Another 109 (one hundred and nine) people representing 27.25% said they take up contributions when someone is mourning (death) and a further 30 (thirty) people showing 7.5% acknowledged that they contribute when someone is sick. Finally, 15 (fifteen) persons with a percentage of 3.75% said they contribute for “other” occasions. According to respondents “others” represent religious activities, impromptu events (such as fundraisers/free-will donations etc.) or demand for assistance (like assisting other communities to host their events)

The events have been largely categorized into happy and sad events, where happy events are those that express values of jubilation and celebration exemplified by marriage, childbirth, religious ceremonies and achievements. Sad events on the other hand express sorrow and include events such as death and sickness. These events shape behaviours differently. It is recognized that

the greatest contribution is done for happy events as seen with 61.5% of the total contribution while sad events show 37.75% of contributions attract the least contribution. This can be explained by the fact that people deal with a lot of stressful experiences and will find escape routes – especially through events celebrations – to laydown these burdens. Also people like to be happy and celebrating is part of happiness. During such events, members pool socio-economic resources together to ensure success. By this, associations play a financial and insurance role towards members. Consequently, people will always contribute more for happy than sad events.

4.4.1.1 Celebrating Happy Events

Ntando and Mangaliso (2019), argue that intra-community associations known in South Africa as stokvels enable members to meet survival needs. Happy events are survival needs with an expression of joy and happiness and their effect is a resonance of same, stimulating positivity and the spirit of sharing. Ademola *et al.* (2020), recognize that these associations offer opportunities for members to socialise, freely discuss, support each other. Thus, celebrating is a collective culture that is encouraged in community associations. With this reasoning, the way association members commit themselves to celebrate, what they celebrate, where and who they celebrate with, what they do during celebration and how they celebrate has influenced socialization, networking, bonding, integration within and between communities. Thus the coming together of persons during events celebrations enable reconciliation and improvement of relationships among individuals and between communities. Such gatherings also encourage and provoke laughter and sharing. Laughter, for example is a by-product of happy events. Laughter - a health and human behaviour enhancer - is an activity that stimulates the secretion of endorphins. Endorphins are endogenous opioid neuropeptides and peptide hormones in humans and other animals whose release regulate human behaviour. Scientifically, Manninen *et al.* (2017), argue that social contacts are vital to humans. Increasing the opioidergic (endorphin secretion) activity by laughter resulting from social contact may be an important neurochemical mechanism in reinforcing and maintaining social bonds between humans. Examples of happy events include; marriage, birthdays, “*bornhouse*”, religious ceremonies, academic achievements, career advancement, political achievements, becoming a member of an association and construction of a house among others. Some of the above events are explained as follows.

4.4.1.1.1 Marriage

Marriage is an example of a rite of passage whose social function plays a major role in uniting families and communities. Fieldhouse (1995: 78), says : “*major transitional crises of life, the rites of passage, are marked in almost all societies by ritual or ceremonial distribution and consumption of food*”. Assemblée Générale Descendance Essom Naa Bana (2019 :5), defines marriage (***alug***) from a Beti traditional perspective and in French as: “*le mariage traditionnel est l’union formelle et solennelle organisée, en vertu de la coutume « ekeng », entre des personnes de sexes opposés n’appartiennent pas au mémé clan*”. It is literally translated in English as: “*traditional marriage is a formal and solemn union organized between individuals of the opposite sex who do not belong to the same clan in Ekang custom.*” In addition Conrad P.’s definition of marriage cited by Udikoh (2013:70) in her work titled “*Marriage and reproductive health dynamics in Momo Division in the North West Region of Cameroon,*” says marriage is: “*a socially approved relationship between a socially recognized male (husband) and a socially recognized female (wife) such that the children born to the wife are accepted as the offspring of both husband and wife.*” This is a western way of defining marriage. Shifting to an African point of view, Fosong, (2017: 29) define marriage as “*a ritual process which unties two families*”. According to the author, marriage is a union between two families. Most marriage celebrations allow for families of both parties to actively participate not just in the celebration but in subsequent activities that concern the couple. Examples of such events are birth celebrations, death celebrations, achievements among others. Marriage is revered and celebrated differently by different communities as well as associations. However, Cameroon’s Constitution recognizes three types of marriages; traditional/customary, religious and contract – which could be between individuals from diverse communities or associations.

Within the context of this work, marriage is a happy event that allows people to celebrate. According to field data, marriage ceremonies are subject to assistance from association members. Community associations have normalized several ways of assistance including (but not limited to): financial, physical and moral (gifts and “*aso ebi*”). “*Aso ebi*” is a borrowed appellation of Nigerian origin for a fabric/uniform and dress pattern chosen to celebrate an event, usually loin clothes or lace – decided by the celebrant or a dress code – African or Western. These are an expression of material/artistic culture of diverse communities. Regarding financial assistance, money is contributed by members and given to the celebrant during/after the marriage ceremony.

A delegation is put in place to purchase a befitting gift decided by the group or demanded by the celebrant. The ceremony in some associations is attended by all while in others a delegation represents the association. Attendance illustrates physical support which plays a role in enhancing people's behaviour. Aurelia, a 53-year-old member of the Bamum community association interviewed on the 12/04/2019, at Nlongkak said;

As per our meeting, members decide which of their marriages they want us to participate in. During marriage ceremonies, our meeting opens a contribution page wherein each member is obliged to pay 5000FCFA. The celebrant decides whether we should buy a gift or hand the money in liquid form. Sometimes we attend the celebration in our uniforms and other times we go in assorted wear depending on the celebrant. Our group is always honoured by the celebrant who makes sure a table or two are reserved for us during the reception (Aurelia, Nlongkak: 12/04/2019).

There are several marriage-related rituals which are valued by a cross section of associations. These rituals range from the announcement to the presentation of the invitation, the ceremony and post-ceremony which vary according to the community and association. There are however some similarities. Fabian, a 52-year-old member of one of the Nso associations interviewed in Nkolmiseng on the 13/5/2021 said; *“in our group, marriage is announced with a crate of assorted drinks or equivalence of wine which is received with cheers from members signifying confirmation of receipt and acceptance of the invitation. The beer/wine is a replacement for palm wine which is what was offered before. But due to modernity, palm wine has been replaced with beer or wine these days”* (Fabian, Nkolmiseng: 13/5/2021).

Drinking beer or wine upon invitation is a ritual which signifies acceptance and respect of an invitation by association members. It is during drinking that members proceed to deliberate on the dressing style and gifts they would offer to the celebrant, meanwhile, contributions towards the occasion equally begin. Preparations to assist in a marriage ceremony by most associations begin with financial contributions. Most associations have a standard amount stated in their constitution that each member is expected to contribute towards such occasions. During fieldwork, different amounts levied by associations for each member to contribute was sampled. Edward, a 57-year-old association member interviewed in Damas on the 11th of April 2021 explained that: *“As concerns financial contributions during marriage a standard amount (usually 50 000frs) is removed from the sinking fund and handed to the ladies for a gift to be bought for the celebrant”*

(Edward, Damas: 10/04/2021). A contrary opinion was sampled from a Focus Group Discussion held on the 5th of February 2021 involving seven (7) women in Mvog Betsi. They said:

“Weddings are joyful events. We encourage people to contribute 5000frs individually. By contributing individually, people are showing how happy they are with the celebrant. We also understand the state of mind of persons and relationships with each other during such contributions. When one is truly happy with a celebrant s/he contributes promptly and vice versa. Sometimes individuals express their happiness by bringing personal gifts apart from the general contributions” (Focus Group Discussion, Mvog Betsi: 05/02/2021).

As noticed above, marriage contributions have been defined differently by various associations, but they represent the same thing. However, some members have different levels of affiliations which propel them to prepare separate packages to trade off their relationships during such events. Some associations (especially big ones) said they have established rotatory lists (where people are categorised into groups) to represent them in events and bring feedback to the general assembly. Pooling financial resources play a unifying role in intra-community associations.

The marriage ceremony of one of the members of a Bamum association gave an insight of this event and rituals. Prior to the official marriage, there was a **“knock door”** ceremony. **“Knock door”** in Beti culture is called **“nsili-alug”**. The Bamum like most Cameroonian cultures, demands that there be a **“knock door”** before marriage. A **“knock door”** could be termed a **“traditional engagement”**. It is a ceremony common to most African communities, which permits the family of a male, called **“wanle nsum”** in **“Lamnso”** – language used for communication in Nso community – to visit the family of the girl called **“wanle ngon”**, in same language to demand traditional list to engage a girl). In the morning of the **“knock door”** day, the **“wanle ngon”** according to Nso culture is fully rubbed with a cream called **“bii”** in **“Lamnso”**, - a cream formed from the mixture of camwood and eucalyptus oil. **“Bii”** is applied on the **“wanle ngon’s”** body. It is said to enhance a **“wanle ngon’s”** beauty before she meets her groom. This culture is similar to that of the Bamouns. However, since a Bamoun **“wanle nsum”** was asking a Nso **“wanle ngon’s”** hand in marriage, the Nso culture takes precedence. Rubbing of **“bii”** on girls is rarely practised nowadays or symbolically done. On the **“knock door”** day, the **“wanle nsum”** is accompanied by his family to the **“wanle ngon’s”** house. The most obliged people to be present are; the **“wanle nsum’s”** parents, the family head and the **“wanle nsum”**. A list is handed to the **“wanle nsum’s”**

family as will be seen later. The pictures below illustrate the participation of group members during a Bamoun Traditional marriage ceremony held at Eleveur a quarter in Ngoussou. This is the official asking of a girl's hand in marriage which precedes the *“knock door”* also known in Beti as *“nsili alug”*. Hence underneath is a Bamoun traditional marriage ceremony witnessed during fieldwork.

Plate 5: Pictographic presentation of Bamun association member's marriage ceremony



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork : 2021)



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork : 2021)

Plate 5, (from left to right are picture 1 and picture 2). Picture 1 illustrates the joyful arrival of the groom's family and association members ushered in with a Bamun dance called *“Yahyah”*. Dancing carries a unifying role among most African communities since it is a collective practice. There is the representation of the Bamun tangible culture as seen with the traditional regalia worn by association members and the use of traditional musical instruments – such as drums, gongs and balafon – from the artistic works of the Bamouns. Singing and dancing the Yahyah dance represent the community's intangible unifying culture as well. The Yahyah dance is an intangible Bamun culture used to express the joy of finding a wife and to present the wife to their ancestors. This dance has been and is still being sustained through association life amid others. The dance could be regarded as a representation of the value of hospitality and unity in this community. The grooms' family comes with many items – two bags of salt, two boxes filled with loin clothes – locally called *“wrapper”*, and two goats (these two goats are an equivalence of the number of children that the couple already has) among others – which according to Bamun tradition should be offered to the bride's family”. In picture (2) a peace plant – a symbol of acceptance and the beginning of a good relationship between the two families – is offered to the groom's family head by the bride's family head.

In the Beti culture, items to be offered during “*nsi alu*” among others include: red wine, crates of beer, rum, fish, juice, loin clothes, glasses, cigarettes and marches. However, it is permitted for anyone to express their largesse in any community.

Plate 6: Identification of the bride and couple’s gift prepared by association members



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork : 2021)



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork : 2021)

Plate 6 (from left to right are pictures 1 and picture 2), and picture 1 shows an important part (bride identification) of the ceremony. The bride and her friends are masked using white clothes so the groom’s family could identify their wife. If the groom’s family chooses the wrong girl they are expected to pay a fine which is an equivalence of the transport fare for the team that brought the bride to go. The money is meant for the team to take the “wrong choice” back and return for another identification exercise. The activity goes on in circles till the family identifies “his” bride. The picture shows a gift prepared by meeting members for the couple.

The gift offering ritual is a culture which demonstrates the role objects play in facilitating social bonds, extending relationships and family frontiers. It is usually a conspicuous procession where members line up and dance to the rhythms of traditional (or religious as well as secular) music to hand it over to the celebrants. Failure to attend a marriage ceremony or any other such event in most of the associations attracts a fine. The payment of fines vary from one association to another. Fines could be any amount equivalent to the transport fare – to and from – the event if out of Yaoundé. In other cases, the amount is accompanied by an additional punitive sum. However, members whose absences can be justified excuse themselves before the occasion. Most associations say individual contributions are done while some said a standard amount is

contributed by all. Fines are play a disciplinary and behaviour regulatory role in intra-community associations. The point here is the value of transparency, equality and harmony, since they are fun rituals that can influence living together. Another happy event is childbirth.

4.4.1.1.2 Childbirth

Childbirth, commonly known in its pidginized version as **“bornhouse”** (a phenomenon used by most Cameroon Anglophone communities to describe the celebration of a newborn baby into a family). It is known in French as **“voir bébé”**. It is called **“I nkehé man”** in Bassa community, **“Ghveevi wan”** in Nso, **“eyene moan”** in Beti, while in Foulfoulde it is called **“minguel ketché”**. The birth of a baby brings happiness to the family, friends and association members demanding celebration. According to Yves, a 47 years old association member interviewed on the 22/06/2021 at Nylon Bastos, *“many new parents often find it difficult to resist celebrating the coming of their baby (whether or not it is the first) but for our association to take part in the celebration, it must be announced in the assembly respecting all rituals”*. Whether association members get the news of the baby from friends or relatives of the parents, some associations demand that the news be officially announced in the assembly for it to be considered worthy their support and celebration. This is one of the traditions which community associations value so much as it depicts the value of recognition and respect of the association by members. Once this is done, the **“bornhouse”** is said to have been announced. The assembly after concerting with the family concerned sets a date for the **“bornhouse”**. Different communities and associations have different rituals performed during this celebration, as with marriages. Monju (2019) identifies **“born house”** as one of the happy celebrations of intercommunity associations in Yaoundé.

The Beti (particularly the Ewondo clan) for instance during **“bornhouse”** celebration, place a peace plant branch at the entrance to the newborn’s house so that every well-wisher jumps over it while entering the house. This is a ritual whose value is found in its ability to shield evil intentions from visitors toward the baby. During the celebration, association members come with gifts as a sign of friendship and Some associations demand a bar or two of Savon and an amount of money be put in an envelope and given to the new mother. The amount given respects what the association’s constitution stipulates. An interview with Vivian, a 59-year-old Nso lady and intra-community association member on 05/09/2021 in Simbock said; The association members on the day of the **“bornhouse”** sing songs of joy while welcoming and wishing good health, prosperity,

happiness and many other blessings to the child. Others praise God for his good work etc. A typical example of a song which the Nso community sings during “*Ghveevi wan*” is;

A yini oo! Ver yen lim ye a lim oo Tatah! (X2)

A yini oo! Ver yen lim ye a lim oo!

A yini oo, ver yen lim ye a lim o oo beri wo oo! (Vivian, Simbock).

It translates as “We have seen the marvels that God has done for us! Thank you, Lord!” The newborn’s family in return entertains their wellwishers with food and drinks. In a nutshell, contributions and fines for “*bornhouse*” are conceived similar to what obtains for marriage events. These contributions do not only promote friendships and social ties but act as socio-economic insurance through mutual assistance. Celebrations and feasting also enable individuals learn and understand each other’s culture to facilitate living together. Associations manifestly function as bridges between association members as seen in mutual assistance activities while latently creating boundaries between communities since they only celebrate persons who belong to their circle.

4.4.1.1.3 Religious ceremonies

Religious ceremonies present yet another kind of event that necessitates the participation of association members in some cases. They equally carry with them representations of cultural identity especially through entertainment as seen with food and drinks. They range from baptism to first holy communion (for most Christian members and Catholics respectively), initiation into groups such as Catholic Women/Men’s Association, Christian marriage, Presbyterian Women/Men’s Fellowship, Feast of the Ram (“*aid-el kebir*”) and Feast of Ramadan (“*aid-el fitr*”) for the Muslims etc. We witnessed the initiation of a Nso meeting member into the Presbyterian Christian Women Association during fieldwork. During the occasion, meeting members were expected to be present, however, very few attended the church ceremony. The majority of the members showed up at the celebrant’s house. The celebration respects similar assistance rituals like marriage and “*born house*”.

Marriage, “*born bouse*”, religious events and others are events that community associations celebrate. In addition to nurturing and forging networks, friendships and social bonds

through the feasting and celebrations, association members learned to tolerate, accept and value one another. Showing up and celebrating events of this nature by members indicates that community association plays a unifying role among urban dwellers. Its ability to encourage living together is embedded in interaction, socialization and networking among members. These actions play a role in boosting the individual development self-esteem, social integration and cohesion among people. Living together can also be influenced by sorrowful events.

4.4.1.2 Sorrowful Events

Sad events are socio-cultural activities observed by community associations in Yaoundé. While some sad events lead to melancholic attitudes, others influence mixed feelings – sad and cheerful (Russell, 2017). Appraisal of sadness differs from one community/association to another. While an event is regarded as sad in one community, it may not be so in another. Within the context of this work sad events are events that result from unhappy circumstances leading to sadness in the state of mind of those concerned (Klein, 1940). Behaviours towards people who are grieving vary from person to person, group to group and from society to society. However, company and support can influence the behaviour of those concerned. Some sad events observed by associations are deaths, accidents and illness which are subject to various forms of support from members.

4.4.1.2.1 Mourning

According to Gugler (2002), a home or community is often physically located as the prospective burial place. Most traditions insist their dead be buried in their homeland. Equally, most associations ritually mourn a dead member or a member's relative (as defined by the association) paying respect to the customs and traditions of their place of origin. Ernest, aged 52 interviewed on the 28/08/2021 in Ahala said: *“In our association mourning follows several stages; death announcement, contributions for burial, assistance (singing religious and traditional songs, dancing offering chewable and drinks) during laying in state and taking part in activities on the day of the burial days and after the burial”* (Ernest, Ahala: 28/08/2021). Depending on the age of the bereaved, the event could be total mourning (a young person) or a combination of mourning and merry-making (advanced-age persons) as seen in most Cameroonian communities. Hence it is common to see most banners, brochures and booklets of advanced age deceased persons captioned: *“Celebrating the life of...”* The pictures below illustrate the mourning rites of the Beti community

for an adult male. According to this community, an “adult male” is a married man, someone who has rendered recognized service to his people among others. Once the adult male is confirmed dead, an announcement through drums (in the yesteryears) or modern-day communication technologies is made. Such occasions bring together people from diverse communities, an opportunity to reconcile broken ties.

Plate 7: Funeral of a Beti Chief

(Picture 1)



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork: 2021)

(Picture 2)



Source: © Yaounde (Fieldwork: 2021)

Plate 07, picture one demonstrates the – “*esani*” – the mourning of a Beti chief in a typical traditional manner. “*Esani*” is a sad dance of the Beti – “*ekeng*” tradition which is meant to give homage to a man considered to have served his people through his positive life attributes. Picture two illustrates ladies dressed in animal skin, leaves and black clothes. Black is a colour which has been instrumentalized to represent death and mourning and sorrow (Akpa, 2017). Black is worn by family members, friends and other mourners. Other dressing styles distinguish identity of the death and community. The animal skin worn by both the male and female for instance represents the bravery of the dead in this community.

Plate 8: Funeral of a Manyu Elderly Woman



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork: 2021)

The picture in Plate 08 illustrates the mourning of a Manyu mother. Traditional food is served alongside drinks to celebrate the life of the woman. The casket is open for viewing on the stage of the meeting hall with the picture of the woman conspicuously placed by it. The picture we were told is to show and remind well-wishers of the appearance of a person that is gone. The area where the casket is placed has been decorated with purple and white colours. Purple is a mourning colour which symbolizes pain and sorrow. White is a colour that cuts across many events, however, it symbolizes rebirth in this event. The family of the deceased is hopeful that their loved one will be reborn when the time comes.

Mourning is a delicate event in every community. The attitude which members conduct toward bereaved member can boost or shatter the mindset of the concerned. Solidarity is a powerful social ingredient which can promote socialization and integration. Assistance during mourning is organized for members, and relatives of members (parents, spouse, children etc) as determined by the group. Contributions are either made when someone dies or a standard amount is retrieved from a social account commonly called “*sinking fund*” or “*trouble fund*” in pidgin. Different amounts are contributed for the death of a member/relative just like the sum retrieved from the social fund. Amounts levied also vary from one meeting to the next. During group discussions, some associations said an envelope of 200 000 CFAF is given to a bereaved family if a member dies. The association members receive an envelope of 150 000 CFAF for a spouse, 100 000 CFAF for a parent and 50 000 CFAF for a child. Desk contributions vary from 10 000 CFAF to 2500 CFAF. In some associations, the entire amount is given to the bereaved member or family and a

delegation is arranged to accompany the corpse to its resting place. In other cases, part of the amount is used for one-way transport fare and the delegation completes the rest. During fieldwork a collection of exhortations said by association members when handing the money to a mourning family or association member such as: *“she was one of us but has left us with you, we are with you in mourning”* or *“our sister, dry your tears with this token”*, *“clean your eyes and see off your sister/spouse”* (Vivian, Simbock: 23/08/2021), respectively for family members and inter-se. There has been a shift in most of these ceremonies nowadays.

Hitherto, individuals were buried with material possessions. Customarily job descriptions, gender, hobbies inter-alia were taken into consideration (Meskell, 2021). Farmers for instance were buried with hoes/machetes respectively for women or men, guitars for a musicians, books and pens for teachers while others were buried with dresses and accessories (jewelleries). Dying was regarded as a passage unto another world. Hence the dead will need their tools on their way. Nowadays some communities still cling on this tradition while the paradigm shift is real for others as people are simply buried in nice clothings and caskets. According to Mauron (2005), mourning also differentiates the culture of the “haves” (rich) and “have-nots” (underprivileged). The “haves” bring in musical teams and burial bands to dance and showcase the nicely crafted casket with same symbolising the profession of the deaths.

In this thesis, some associations have normalized burial ceremonies of their members/relatives to be accompanied by singing, praying and dancing to wish the dead farewell. In some cases, members embellish the lifestyle of the dead as explained by *“Passe-partout”*, a name given to a 57-year-old Bamileke association member (a *gatekeeper* character of the association who has information about any and everything), on the 22/05/2021 in Emana. He said, *“when our association loses a member or relative, we do a show with the member’s casket before his burial. For example, my friend who liked eating a lot died two years back. We ate and fought on his casket before he was laid to rest”* (Passe-partout, Emana: 22/05/2021). When the deceased is finally laid to rest, feasting takes centre stage. People usually eat and drink at this time while listening to traditional, religious, secular or conventional music. Entertainment may be grand or moderate depending on the age, the financial status of the deceased’s family, his/her friends, the association’s support and his/her relationship with people while alive. Hence mourning and

feasting are usually twin traditions during events, especially for the elderly. This is illustrated in plate 08 showing the Manyu association celebrating the life of one of their mothers.

Post burial, condolence visits are other types of rituals organized according to the rules and regulations of different associations. During this visit, the meeting may offer savon accompanied by exhortations such as “*our brother/sister, take this savon and wash the dresses used during mourning*” (Vivian, Simbock: 22/05/2021). In the yesteryears, when people lost someone, they used to cry and roll on the floor to express grief, loss and pain. So offering savon was meant for the mourners to wash off the dust or mud that they picked during mourning. Nowadays, though rolling on the floor is no longer a norm, the savon tradition is still practised. Such solidarity comforts mourners creating long lasting social networks and bonds. Association members may also cook food, buy drinks and carry along aside contributions. These activities differ from one association to another as well as from one community to the next. They facilitate formation of friendship ties that can influence the behaviour of individuals, eventually leading to the promotion of living together. This is recognized by Kopka (2020), who says mourning may also result in turning any bereavement into foundations of living together.

4.4.1.2.2 Sickness and Accidents

Sad events equally include sickness and accidents. They are usually categorized under sickness and preoccupy some associations. Depending on the severity of the event, some associations either do a free-will donation, contribute or withdraw money from their social account and assist the member. This illustrates the social insurance function of the emergency fund and mutual assistance of intra-community association in urban areas. The amount for assistance during sickness equally differ from one association to another just like with mourning and marriage. The full amount contributed is given to the concerned.

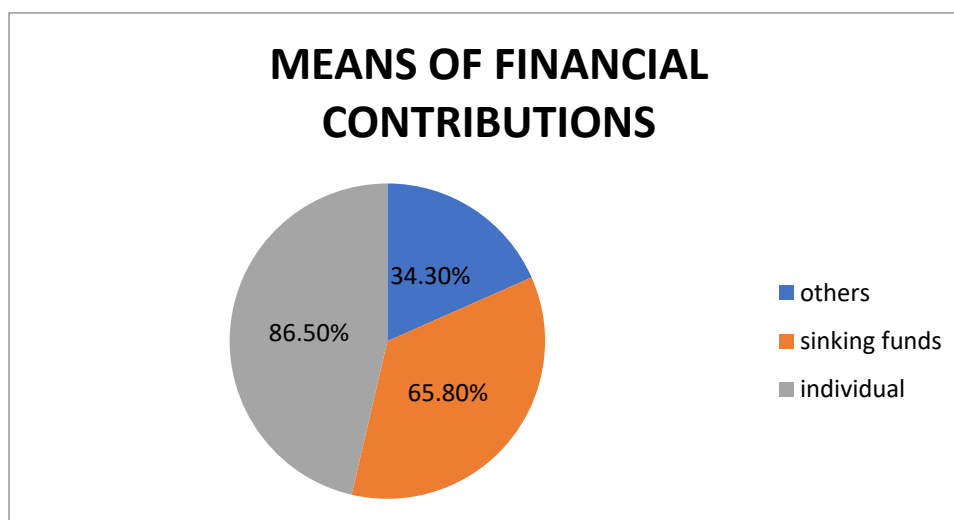
Some associations organize themselves into groups to take visiting turns to the concerned. During visits, members pray and wish the ailing member or relative to the member rapid recovery. Social capital and moral support during such moments play an important role in the psychology, interaction, socialization and networking character of the member concerned. In general, these events are based on a spirit or feeling of cooperation and belonging and illustrate that knowledge and beliefs are strongly associated with the cultural values (Beasley & Jason, (2015). Thus, these

events demonstrate the value associated to mutual assistance through positive relationships, belonging and living together. Financial, material and moral assistance are offered by association members during such events as shown below.

4.5 ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES DURING EVENTS

Community associations urge members to engage in mutual support of one another through financial activities during events celebrations. Harris & Sutton (1986), express how ceremonies can create settings in which people can exchange emotional support. Economic assistance is one of the ways through which self-help activities are fulfilled in associations and illustrate the value of solidarity. Asked how they financially contribute to assist members during such events, the responses from participants are summarized in the pie chart below.

Pie chart 5: Contributions to Assist Association Members



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Of the 400 respondents that took part in the exercise, 65% of them said money is taken from the sinking fund to assist members during particular events. Examples of such events are deaths and marriages. Another group of people representing 85.50% said they do individual contributions to assist the member. This category of events is exemplified by; birthdays, “*born house*”, promotions “amid others. The last set of individuals with 34.30% voted “others”. According to respondents, “others” is made up of free wills, material assistance and affiliations among others. Majority of respondents said they do individual contributions followed by those

who held that a standard amount of money is taken from the sinking fund. These are ways through which intra-community associations assist members during various events.

The fore information was confirmed by Norbert, a 58-year-old association member in an interview on the 16th of July 2021 at Obili said:

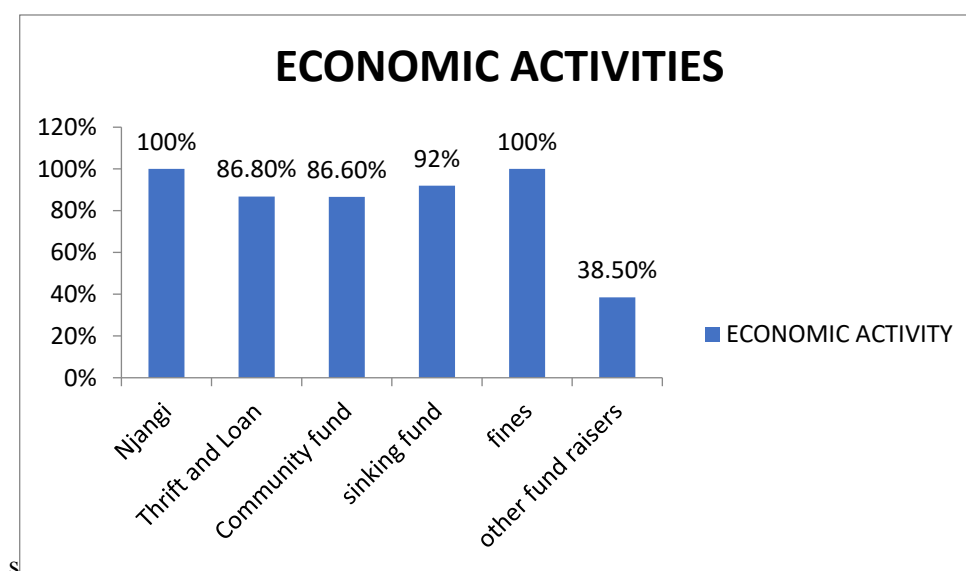
Our association assists members morally, financially and materially. There are occasions that we offer both financial and material support in others we offer financial only. However, our association is organised such that events like marriage, deaths and sickness have standard amounts that are removed from the sinking and put in an envelope and handed to the benefactor. The amounts vary; for marriage, an envelope of one hundred (100 000) CFA is given to the member. For death, an envelope of one hundred and fifty (150 000) CFA is given to the bereaved member while during sickness (must be announced and of a certain degree), individual contributions of one thousand (1000) CFA per member are made (Norbert, Obili: 16/07/2021).

The above information shows that solidarity plays an important role in the practice of association life, shaping the world view of participants and their behaviour. Cultural sustainability through association has been expressed through marriage, childbirth, and death as seen above. Associations equally foster social-economic and individual development through economic practices.

4.5.1 Economic Activities towards Mutual Assistance and Community Development

Ntando and Mangaliso (2019), argue that the: “*prevalence of poverty and unemployment in most developing economies is fuelling interest in informal self-help financial groups*” (Mangaliso, 2019: 2). Economic activities of intra-community associations are not only meant to redeem participants from poverty, rather they are a way of pooling resources in a collective spirit to assist one another. As a norm with most associations, members are encouraged to participate in financial activities of the association with the aim of promoting mutual assistance and community development and cultural sustainability. However participating in these activities is facultative in some associations. The practice of these activities vary from one association to another. The table below shows the frequency of activities that association members participate in.

Bar graph 1: Self-help and Community Development Activities



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Data on bar graph one (1) shows that out of the four hundred (400) persons that participated in the questionnaire, all of them practice “njangi”, representing 10 per cent of the total respondents. The second activity on the chart is thrift and loan. From the chart, 86.80 % answered positively about the practice while the remaining percentage stayed indifferent. According to the chart, 86.60 % of the participants accepted that their associations carry out community development projects while the rest remained silent about the activity. As concerns the sinking fund, 92% of the participants accepted that they practice sinking fund while the remaining 8% do not.

All associations acknowledged practising fines as a disciplinary measure for deviant behaviour during assemblies. As for other fundraising activities, 38.50 % of association members thought that they do exercise some other fundraising activities such as free donations for incidents that do not concern members or any occurrence that the meeting decides assistance to be offered. The information shows that the most practised self-help activity is njangi and fines with 100 % followed by sinking fund showing a percentage of 92. Thrift and loan with 80.80 % come closely to sinking fund, then community development activities with 80.60 %, and finally other fundraisers with 38.53 %.

Affirming the above information by Majorie, a 34-year-old respondent and member of an association on the 21/05/2021 at Simbock, explained that: *“In our association, a minimum of 500CFAF is paid-in during every assembly by all as the rule for December saving. We have two types of savings; end of the year and school fees. The end-of-year envelope is distributed in December and the school fee is given out in August. A fine is levied on those who fail to contribute or deducted from their saving at the end of the year. People have educated their children, bought land and built houses through these schemes”* (Majorie, Simbock: 21/05/2021). Some associations oblige members to save money however, it is facultative in others. Whatever the law, the aim of saving, njangi and thrift and loan is an expression of collective culture of association life for mutual assistance and community development.

4.6 PERCEPTIONS OF INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN YAOUNDÉ

Perry (2017), posit that ethnocentric sensitive environment, can escalate into full blown altercations and politicised to create tensions between ethnic communities. This was the case in Cameroon in the 1960s when ethnic groups were politically invaded creating fractions between communities. Cameroon’s cultural diversity today, is particularly felt in most urban areas through the coexistence of its 250 ethnic communities. Yaoundé can be considered a cultural miniature of Cameroon as it houses individuals from these communities. It also hosts international communities. International community members like Nigerians are found around Briquetérie, Madagascar and Nkom-Kana and are involved in car spare part businesses. Chadians are equally found in these neighbourhoods while others like the British, Americans, French, and Italians to name these – mostly on diplomatic missions – are located around Bastos. Bastos is a quarter conspicuous for being inhabited by *“the haves”* (commonly known in French as *“quartier de riches”*). Migration from rural to urban areas (Mbobda, 2018) as in Yaoundé started during the colonial period and heightened during post-independence. The trend has been on the rise ever since. Recently it is realized that while some people move to the city for social amenity reasons such as education, jobs, business, socio-cultural instability of different parts of the country (the North West, South West, the North and Eastern regions) has led to forced migration and increasing urbanization in Yaoundé. This was affirmed by Edwin, a *“Bayam-sellam”* of the Accacia market

and member of Bayang community association interviewed on the 23/05/201 who said *“I was a builder in Mutengene. I left in 2017 due to the killings that were taking place in the South West. Arriving here, a friend introduced me to buying and selling second-handed dresses. This is what has been feeding me and my family. I was also introduced to my village meeting which allows me to meet, interact and commune with people from my village.”* (Edwin, Accacia: 23/05/201). The influx of individuals from different communities to Yaoundé further increases its cultural diversity. However, it is perceived that the fact that most community members come to Yaoundé and cling to associations from their community of origin makes integration and living together a slow process. Respondents held that the expansion of intra-community associations increases boundaries created by ethnicization. This idea is supported by Geschiere (1997), and Nyamnjoh & Rowlands (1998), especially from a political standpoint.

With the ethno-demographic presentation of intra-community associations, their socio-cultural activities and the fact that these associations promote intra-community culture against the backdrop of multiculturalism, Chapter Five comes next with a presentation of membership and how they are structured in Yaoundé urban area.

CHAPTER FIVE

COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURAL ORGANIZATION OF INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS IN YAOUNDE

Chapter Five focuses on membership and organisation of intra-community associations in Yaoundé. In order to appreciate the administration of community association, the functioning, relationships, socialization, network and interaction patterns of intra-community associations, their composition (membership) and organization are studied. It allows for an examination of who the members of these associations are, what are pre-requisites for membership and subsequently how they are organized. This section dwells on presentation of intra-community associations, analysis of membership and organization of associations. Hence, a brief introduction of the associations studied is shown below.

5.1 PRESENTATION OF INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

There exist a plethora of intra-community associations in Yaoundé urban area. However, during fieldwork eight associations were observed and interviewed as will be presented below.

5.1.1 Beti Community Association

Association de “*Mvog Essom Ndana*” is the name given to a Beti, precisely one of the sub-clans of the Ewondo community association that was studied. The actual name of this clan is “*Essom Mendanna*”, but because in Ewondo some letters are silenced during pronunciation, the prefix “Me” has been taken out leaving it with “Ndanna”. Hence the name “Essom Ndanna”. Ndanna was the mother of the descendants of this clan and consequent to the fact that the Ewondos follow a matrilineal system; the offsprings are named after the mother. The roots of Atangana Mballa can be traced as the eldest of the children of this Ewondo sub-clan, Essom Ndana. From the same family originates Mvog Fouda Mballa, meaning his own mother was called Mballa and many others.

The association was created in 2002 by descendants of “*Mvog Essom Ndana*”. It reunites members of this community once every two months to deliberate issues related to their clan. “*Association de Mvog Essom Ndana*” has as objectives; create links between members of the

community, enhance cultural development, promote leadership, encourage self-help among members of same clan and make available information that can educate members about their roots.

The association encourages members to engage in mutual assistance activities that can enable them to assist one another achieve socio-economic and financial needs. Social events such as educational achievements, rites of passage exemplified in “*born house*” which is locally called “*eyené moan*” in Beti, marriage, and death are some events where the value of collective solidarity is expressed through associations. It exercises economic activities which include savings, (facultative), sinking fund (with a standard amount per member), njangi, and cultural activities such as revision of some norms, customs, traditions etc. and exercising them to improve the lifestyle of the community members. They equally take part and showcase their culture in the events mentioned above. It was observed that the association begins its activities with prayers, food (assorted) is served in the course of the meeting and ends with exhortations from the president, encouraging everyone to be on good terms with one another and to be back sound and healthy for the next assembly. This signifies one of the aspects of Beti's oral culture. An informant, Placide a 37-year-old on the 1st of November 2021 in Ahala said “*pour être un leader au monde Beti, tu doit être l’homme de parole*” which translates in English as “*you have to be a man of good words to become a leader in the Beti community*” (Placid, Ahala: 01/11/2021). This also explains why one of the objectives of the association is to foster leadership. It has a general assembly and an executive bureau made up of a President, a vice president, a minute secretary, financial and social secretary, who together strive for the success of the association.

To become a member of the association, one has to be a descendant of the “**Essom Ndanna**” clan or be married to a member of the clan. The assembly venue of the association is the “Chéférie de Triosième Degré Simbock”. The next association is that of the Bassa community.

5.1.2 Bassa Community Association

“**Association de Bassa de Bankomo**”, known by its acronym “**ASBAM**” is a Bassa intra-community association made up of 80 members. Bassa is one of the rare Cameroonian communities found in three different locations: Centre, Littoral and South regions. **ASBAM** is an association that regroups persons from Bassa living in Yaoundé with its headquarters in Bankomo. They trace their origin to Egypt and make up one of the Bantu-speaking groups of Cameroon. Oral

history has it that during migration, the Bassa settled around Emana, however, due to land disputes with the Beti, they were gradually displaced to their present location around the coastal region. They have a concentration in Nkolbisson. Like other communities, the Bassa migrate from place to place in search of better living conditions in every sense of it. According to a community focus group held with men and women in Eloumndem, on the 26th of August 2021:

The Bassa have a population density in Mvog Ada. This is explained by the fact that the train station around 1960 was found where present-day Camtel is situated and there was a commercial centre where Hilton Hotel is situated. So the railway coming from Douala passed through the Bassa community to “Post Centrale” which was a bridge over river Wouri reason why there is always flooding around Central Town. The Bassa migrated to be educated in well-established schools in the capital city, sell agricultural products, as well as simple rural exodus. Hence the Bassa who came via train stopped at Mvog Ada, and made friends with people around there, who later gave them land. They settled in Mvog Ada built houses and invited their brothers who gradually increased their population at the site. Nowadays, however, the Bassa are found everywhere in Yaoundé but are highly concentrated in Mvog Ada. We made attempts to create a cultural association but after a while, certain issues popped up and it was dissolved. Notwithstanding, some people go by family associations, others by professional, friendship etc. (Community Group Discussion, Eloumndem: 26/08/2021).

Hence in keeping with their roots while in Yaoundé, the Bassa get together through various types of intra-community associations. ASBAM is one of such Bassa associations that regroup people from Bassa community of origin for solidarity, socialization, self-development, unity and cultural preservation. It encourages the preservation of cultural heritage through language, singing, dancing and food among others. Consequently, it is an intra-community association based in Yaoundé. The association was created in 1986 by members of the community. Just like every other community, communing is part of the Bassa culture. The association has a general assembly and an executive bureau. The executive has a four-year term renewable once. To become a member of the association, the individual has to be of Bassa origin. The association holds in the houses of members and rotates so that everyone can host it. Registration is done annually and is a prerequisite for recognition as a member of the association.

Following their constitution, ASBAM sits every second Saturday of the Month from 3: PM to 6: PM and beyond. This timing is meant to allow people to wrap up their activities before attending the meeting. Coming at 3 pm is early enough for them to carry out their activities and

close on time for people to return to their various destinations safely. It was observed that the CORONA Virus affected attendance followings warnings that it spreads through human contact. Attendance today is still very low. Sometimes members come early and other times they come very late, presenting excuses for themselves and on behalf of others. Most of the older members send their contributions. The association practices activities such as monthly njangi, thrift and loans, monthly savings, and other fundraising activities as well as offers solutions to problems affecting members. The association like most others begin and end with prayers. The Douala community equally have associations in Yaoundé.

5.1.3 Duala Community Association

Douala is a Bantu coastal (Sawa, which means people of the coast) community believed to have originated from Congo/Gabon, migrated and settled in the Littoral region. “Duala” is the name of the community and language. The people are predominantly Protestant Christians with a church in their name located in Briquetérie, adjacent to the Multipurpose Sports Complex. However, we studied the association “**Les Filles Deido de Duala**” as seen below.

“**Les Filles Deido de Duala**” feminine clan association that regroups women from the Deido clan. The association is aimed at uniting grandmothers, mothers, daughters and granddaughters from the Deido living in Yaoundé. The association was created in 1991. The female population of Deido were united and indifferent to the concerns of others. This group’s creation was to bring these women together and to reinforce knowledge of the culture of the community. It is a rotatory association that holds in the houses of members. It seats every second Saturday of the month. There are over eighty (80) members. Membership is limited to individuals from Bassa or spouses and cuts across all age groups. However, certain financial contributions are obligatory while others are facultative. They encourage the preservation of cultural heritage through language, food, and clothing, among others. They entertain themselves with traditional and assorted food. Another community of interest is the Bayang from Manyu Division.

5.1.4 Bayang Community Association

The people of Manyu Cultural and Development Association go by the acronym “**MECDA**”. MECDA has been in existence since 1972 approximately fifty (50) years. It is an association that brings together all the members of this community resident in Yaoundé with an

enrolment of more than one thousand members. Bayang are Manyu people located in the South West region of Cameroon. They are a Bantu group who originated from the Niger-Congo with ancestry from Ekoi. “Bayang is the name of the community and “Kenyang” is the language. Hence the people who speak the “Kenyang” language are called “Bayang”.

“MECDA” is the Yaoundé branch of a general assembly which unites people from Manyu subdivision worldwide. The subdivisions are Eyomojock, who speak “*ejagam*”, Mamfe Central speak “*kenyang*”, Akwaya speak “*Anyang*”, “*Otiti*”, and “*Assombo*” and the Upper Bayang who equally speak Kenyang and other assimilated languages. All the languages are similar with minor differences in their ways of expression. However, the four sub-divisions of Manyu (the upper Manyu, Mamfe Central, Akwaya, and Oyumojock) have their sub-unions depending on different the clans. As a norm, when attending the meeting a typical Bayang male is expected to dress in a loin cloth locally called “*sanja*”, white shirt, red cap, a towel on the neck, and holds a walking stick locally called “*motina*”. “*Motina*” means the third leg and a defence tool for the elderly. The culture of this community demands that the female wraps a pair of loin cloths – locally called in its pidginized form as “*wrapper*”– on her waist and over a blouse. She covers her head with a head scarf and holds a handbag. The pattern has shifted as members come in other local as well as Western cultures and dressing styles. The highest title holder of the Manyu people is called “*Siseko*” who has a special sitting position in the association venue.

MECDA was created by the Manyu people as a worldwide association with branches in every part of the world. In Cameroon, its branches are spread throughout major towns. Yaoundé’s branch and cultural hall are found in Mvog Ada. The Manyu association has as objectives; unite all those who originate from Manyu, maintain and promote the Manyu cultural heritage by teaching culture to those without any cultural knowledge. Membership is open to descendants of Manyu community or their spouses. They have monthly sessions which sit every last Sunday of the month though in other towns they sit twice a month to uphold solidarity and harmonise their socio-cultural activities. Some of their activities are fundraising for the assistance of members and the village, solving problems concerning association members, monthly “*njangi*”, saving and loan scheme.

5.1.5 Nso Community Association

“**Nsoba’ti**” means “Nso Cultural and Development Association.” It is the name of the Nso community (ethnic) association that was studied. It means a union of the people of Nso. Once in Yaoundé and faced with cultural diversity these people try to keep their cultural heritage buoyant by getting together, communicating in the language they have an affinity for, rehearsing their culture and teaching younger generations same. P. N. Nkwi (2017), informs that these associations are also called cultural meetings. Nsoba’ti as a meeting that regroups people of Nso origin living in Yaoundé and its environs, is a representation of the Nso community in Yaoundé. It refers to Nso Cultural and Development Association - “Nsoba'ti”.

Nso Cultural and Development Association “Nsoba'ti” Yaoundé was created in 1993. Local folklore suggests that its founding president was Dr Maimo Henry. However, the association was recognized under Reg. No. 00196/RDA/J06/BAPP of 1st December 1998 was created in 1998. Part of the culture of the people of Nso like other communities is belonging/community living. Nso has so many cultural events, ceremonies and initiation rites, which are mostly exercised through associations. In Yaoundé and other urban areas there exist different types of associations under the canopy of Nso culture. These associations could be tribal, educational, occupational and fraternities, and sometimes a mixture of all. Some associations function as sub-groups of “Nsoba’ti”. “Nsoba’ti” is therefore an umbrella association used to foster cultural values, norms, beliefs, and rites of the people of Nso. Membership is limited to Nso community members. Non-descendants of the community must be married to a member of the community.

Nsoba’ti as per the constitution is supposed to meet three times a year. However, due to many constraints and especially the CORONA Virus scare, they organize two general sittings – at the start and end of the year. It has a general assembly and an executive body. There are monthly and regular meetings at the level of the quarters. Quart meetings are branches of the general association. They are ruled by quarter presidents known in Nso as “*Tahn-teh*” – singular (plural is *Atahn-teh*). Notwithstanding, during general assemblies, the “*Atahn-teh*,”- branch presidents and messengers of **Nsoba’ti** - carry important information from the hall – “*Ngai Nso*” to the quarters. Some of the activities of **Nsoba’ti** are fundraising for the development of members and the village, njangi, saving and loan schemes, and solving individual and group problems, among others. When

attending the meeting, a typical Nso man wears a sleeveless top (locally called “*danchiki*” or in Nso “*ndzeijav*”) over a white t-shirt, a cap (“*gham*” in Nso) and a feather (depending on the traditional title), a sheath and a machete. The association has a community hall in Simbock where it organizes different types of events. The Bamileke community was also studied.

5.1.6 Bamileke Community Association

“**Famille Batela**” is the name of the Bamileke association that was studied. It is an association that regroups members of one of the sub-clans (**Batela**) of Nde. The association was created in 1958 and has been in existence since then with an enrolment of one hundred and eighty (180) members. Bamileke is a community from the western region of Cameroon. It is made up of seven administrative divisions: Bamboutos, Haut-Nkam, Hauts-Plateaux, Koung-Khi, Mifi, Menoua, and Nde. Though different, the chiefdoms have parallel politico-social structures and languages. They are very industrious/commercial operators in Cameroon. This commercial lifestyle was inspired by contact with their colonial masters and the commercial activities which they assisted them with. Hence, they learned the industrious lifestyle from the Europeans. Like most community associations, “**Famille Batela**” is Bamileke association of 80 members from both gender. “**Famille Batela**” literally means an assembly of the people of Bamileke precisely from the Batela clan of the Nde village, leaving in Yaoundé. It has a general assembly and an executive bureau made up of a President, a vice president, a minute secretary, financial and social secretary, who together strive for the success of the association.

The main objectives of the association are unity among members, solidarity, personal development, and preservation of cultural heritage. Other values of the community such as; respect for self, hierarchy and others are recommended within the association. The association accepts members from a common community of origin. Notwithstanding, members of different communities ready to adhere to their rules and regulations are given an equal opportunity to participate. Despite being open to the general public, the majority of its members originate from Batela village. “**Famille Batela**” meets every Saturday of the month from 4:PM as per its constitution in their community hall in Mokolo. Formerly the presence of all in the hall (association venue) was obligatory but with the coming of Coronavirus, membership dwindled. Members with advanced age who are susceptible to be attacked by the virus stay home and send their blessings

and financial contributions to younger members. The executive is the only body of the association whose presence is obligatory. The association prides itself in activities such as fundraising, training the young in trade, solving members' problems, njangi, savings, thrift and loans. With information about the Bamileke community association, a look at the Bamum community association is next.

5.1.7 Bamum Community Association

“APOPET” is the acronym of the Bamum community association observed during fieldwork. APOPET stands for “**Association Pon Petut**”. It literally means an assembly of the people of Bamum from the village Njintot, resident in Yaoundé. Sons and daughters of Njintot created the association in 1995 for the promotion of their cultural heritage, unity among them and self-help. The association is made up of three hundred and forty-two (342) members. Bamum, found in the Western Region of Cameroon, precisely in the Noun Division, was founded by Nchare Yen, a brother to Ngon'nso and Fombam. Its capital is Fouban. It is a community made up of people from two backgrounds; from the Tikar, at Rifum with a Sudanic origin – the dominant population and the second from Bamileke origin (the initial settlers of the present day Bamum location) who were partially assimilated by the Bamum. The community is made up of both Christians and Muslims.

The Bamum are all over Yaoundé (especially the Christian Bamum). However, the Bamum culture especially the Muslim population promotes cluster living. Apart from culture, living in clusters by members of this community also stems from the fact that upon arrival in Yaoundé in the 1930s, they were allocated land in Nsimeyong; a quarter in Yaoundé III. Raphael a 54-year-old Bamum resident in Melen, on the 30th of September 2021 narrated that in the 1930s when the ruling king Njoya of Bamum was exiled by the colonial masters from his land, he left with a handful of his people determined to follow their king. This shows the loyalty of Bamum people to their culture and community. King Njoya – who died in exile in Nsimeyong – was received and installed in Nsimeyong quarter by Charles Atangana. The Bamum community has since been in pacific coexistence with other communities. Consequent to the fore, the Bamum have a population density at Nsimeyong as well as Briquetérie. Nsimeyong in Ewondo means “*land of strangers*” – denoting a segregation between the “us” and the “them”, hence the land was given to Sultan Njoya by Charles Atangana who was on exile. This reception and land allocation also shows the

hospitality of the Beti people. The Bamum presently have a palace in Nsimeyong with a chief and sub-chief and in Briquet rie/Carrier. They have constructed a cultural hall to host assemblies. The Bamum have a culture similar to that of the Nso people. They are fascinated by their culture and loyal to it. Their identity is manifested through cultural activities such as folklore, songs, dance, food and eating habits, language, initiation, incantations and even the way the people dress. These among others are cultural traits that make up their identity. The presence of the Bamuns in Yaound , the need to promote their culture, develop selves and community motivated them to engage in intra-community association life. Hence, sons and daughters of Njintot village created **APOPET** as one of the Bamum associations. It takes place in the house of an elderly member.

The association has a general assembly and an administrative body to ensure its functioning. The primary objective of the association is to preserve the cultural heritage of the community, develop the material and financial life of its members, unite members and enforce solidarity. To become a member of **APOPET**, the individual must originate from Bamum, precisely from Njintot or be a spouse. Membership has no gender discrimination. The individual just needs to be mature enough to take up responsibilities.

APOPET sits every first Sunday of the month as per its constitution. Everyone’s presence being an obligation. However, respecting an obligatory attendance of all was perturbed by the CORONA Virus pandemic. Hence few members and the executive come together to keep the association physically buoyant while most financial operations are done via media tools. Physically present members deliberate issues of the day and forward a report to their media forum. The association exercises activities such as; fundraising for the assistance of members and the village, solving problems, monthly njangi, “kitchen njangi”, (a type of njangi whereby individuals contribute kitchen items such as detergents and cooking oil in cash or kind) as well as saving and thrift and loan schemes. The start time for the meeting is 2:00pm and closes at about 5-6pm. The meeting usually starts and ends with prayers. With information about the Bamum community and association, the Northerners next is the next and final association studied.

5.1.8 The Northerners’ Community Association

The Northerners have a few associations in Yaound . However, “**Association des Junes Ressortissants du Grand Nord, Cameroon**” is that which was studied. It is an association of

young friends from the North. The North of Cameroon is divided into three regions, Adamawa, North and the Far North. These regions have a variety of villages and languages but Ffulde is the most used. Among the different cultures, the Peul is dominant in this part of Cameroon and it has a religion that valorizes respect and organization among others. The main association venues for members of the community are Ecole Publique de Messa and Ecole Maternelle Ekoudo. The **“Association des Jeunes Ressortissants du Grand Nord, Cameroon”** is a general organization that brings together young members of the Northern community (Le Grand Nord in French), for unity and solidarity. It is made up of a group of young members of the said community who are involved in small-scale commercial activities (of different orders) in the Central Market (Marché Central in French) created the association in 1998. These persons after hustling gathered arbitrarily (anywhere) every night and discussed daily events. After a while, they felt a need to do something to improve their businesses and lives. Hence, the meeting was formed in 1998 and many others got enrolled on it. It operated timidly due to lack of resources, especially human to direct its activities. Over the years, it evolved and presently has an executive bureau made up of the President, vice president, general secretary, accountant, treasurer, and social secretary. The association’s main objectives are self-development, solidarity and unity among members. To become a member, one must be an origin of the community or married to a member of the community. The association has sixty-six (66) registered members. It sits every Sunday from 2:00 PM for a two-hour deliberation. Their venue is a public school. The association encourages members to practice activities such as fundraising for the assistance of members and the village, “njangi”, saving and loan schemes, and solving problems of individuals and the village. We were informed it is an association that welcomes both men and women without discrimination. However, women mostly stay at home and send financial contributions through their spouses.

With the presentation of intra-community associations selected for case studies, a further look at what it takes for anyone to become a member of associations in Yaoundé urban area is the next point of interest.

5.2 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

By virtue of membership people gain access to socio-cultural and economic resources of an association. Community associations are organized and administered by people – members –

who share a common ethnic origin (Alesina & Ferrara, 2002). Without members, there will be no association since the primary aim of an association is to bring people together. Mukorombindo & Coetzee (2013), argue that membership offer access to communal social support networks fostering relations, trust, building community identity and promoting values of ubuntu. Community associations stand out as important networks in this regard. Membership in community associations is usually voluntary but guided by a set of rules and procedures. Respecting these rules and procedures facilitate the achievement of association goals. In line with the main objectives of most intra-community associations; safeguard cultural heritage, develop individuals and community of origin, David, 38-year-old Bamum resident in Effoulan on the 5th of March 2021 said:

When we came to Yaoundé, we felt a need to regroup ourselves to know one another and get information about what is happening to community members here and back home. This is to enable us to assist one another and our village in one way or another. Here in Yaoundé, we can circulate information when we come together in our meeting than when we are scattered. It is when people come together that they know when and how to assist one another as well as raise funds to carry out developmental projects in the village. The main objective of our association is to rally the sons and daughters of our village, to learn our culture from the elderly, to help one another, and to also help those in the village (David, Effoulan: 5/03/2021).

This was confirmed by a 43-year-old female respondent Estel, resident in Simbock who explained that: *“the main objective of Nsoba’ti is unity, preservation of cultural heritage and development of our village”* (Estel, Simbok: 22/06/2021). On the 20th of July 2021, Pierre, a 53-year-old Bamileke resident in Nsimeyong corroborated the argument when he mentioned that: *“Our primary objective for creating our village association is to bring everyone – male, female, young and old together to develop one another and our village. We oblige everyone to build a house in the village through several ‘njangi’ schemes and make contributions to carry out developmental projects in the village,”* (Pièrre, Nsimeyong: 20/07/2021). This similarity of objectives corresponds with those gathered from the Bayang, Bassa, Douala, Beti and Northerners though with minor modifications. This shows that by coming together, members of various community associations interact, socialize, and learn about each other. Through various networks, they carry out many self-help activities and community development in Yaoundé. Hence, this reunion will allow them to organize themselves, assist one another and carry out developmental projects in their village as well. Somerville, Durana, and Terrazas (2008) argue that intra-

community associations provide a social network for new immigrants by offering more tangible services such as language classes. Most associations encourage members to communicate in their local languages, trace their roots and create ties. Language as a communication tool in Cameroon represents a cultural mine for orature – traditional songs, folklore and incantations in diverse communities. Through communication, the oral culture of communities is preserved and handed down to younger generations. Apart from learning the values, norms, customs, knowledge (literature, poems, and folklores) among others through community language, these associations have other roles that they play in society as will be seen later.

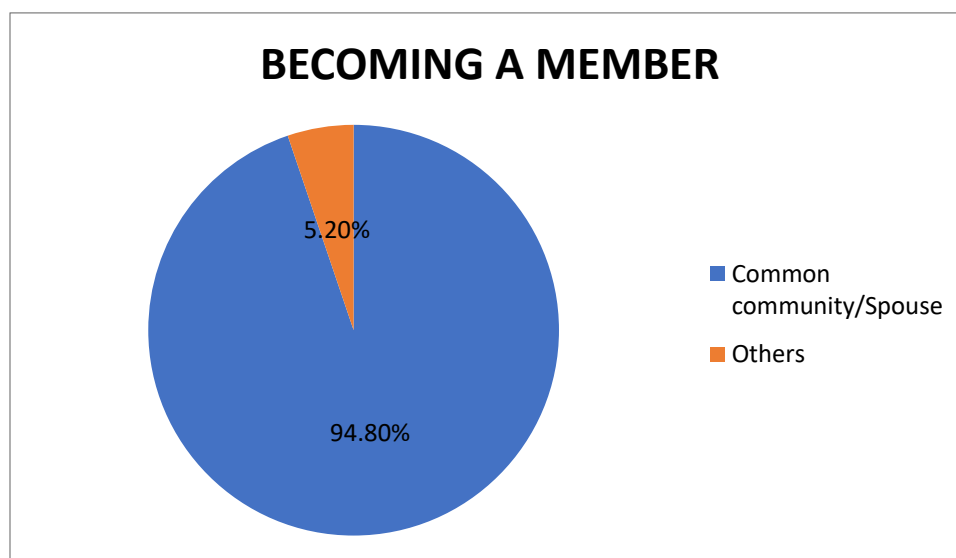
Nyamnjoh (1998), while studying the role of two community associations in two regions of Cameroon, one in the Grassfields and the other in the coast (South West Region) with regards to belonging found that for urban elites to play a role in defining a regional identity for their home area depends to some extent on the number of educated adults that exist in their home area to represent a particular rural population as well as their willingness to remain identified with local interests. He further edifies that these associations encourage the young to gain an education and go abroad; however, they should strive not to forget their debt to those who supported them. By this, the author sees association life as a channel to encourage education as one of the ways of giving back to community of origin. This means members of these communities create associations and try to educate as many young people from their communities as they possibly can. This equally allures many people to commit to these associations since they can benefit in one way or the other. Hence membership is the core of intra-community associations. How are members enrolled in these associations?

5.2.1 Enrolment of Member

Membership is a major aspect of community association because it determines inclusivity/exclusivity and how belonging affects interaction, socialisation, bonding, networking and living together in the association and between different communities, especially in Yaoundé. Bringing people together through association culture, has become a norm in urban areas (Gulisova, Horbel, & Noe 2021), in general and Yaoundé in particular. People pool resources (economic, social and moral) to assist one another to attain their needs. However, the criteria surrounding the acceptance of individuals as members of intra-community associations within the scope of this dissertation is what will be examined below. A cross section of respondents held that community

associations enroll members following criteria such as; belonging to common community of origin, be a spouse to a member of the community concerned, be recognized by the community in one way or the other as shown in the pie Chart below.

Pie Chart 6: Prerequisites for Membership



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Pie Chart Six (6) represents expected conditions which mobilization of membership into intra-community associations obliges individuals to satisfy. According to the chart, 94.80% of the four hundred (400) respondents that took part in the exercise said to become a member of their association; one must be a member of the community concerned or be married to someone from the community. Emphasizing community membership indicates respect, acceptance and tolerance of community culture, and readiness to safeguard it through association activities for continuity. Also, the 1990 law on association allows for communities to create associations that can enable them to safeguard their cultural heritage. Hence a majority of association members are ready to sustain intra-community culture. It also means that apart from cultural sustainability, majority of the association crowd recognizes the importance collective action. This category of persons understands the need for acculturation, so they can be fully immersed and participate as members of the community. Most African traditions, Cameroon inclusive hold that once married to a community the individual becomes part of that community. Following a CGD (composed of both men and women) held on the 19th of June 2021 in Biyem-Assi, said: *“when a member of our*

community brings his or her spouse, and all necessary matrimonial rites have been completed, the spouse becomes part of us, so he/she can become a member of our association. Such persons are entitled to enjoying all the privileges that we enjoy as members of this meeting” (Community Group Discussion, Biyem-Assi: 19/06/2021).

The remaining 5.20% population adopted “others”. “Others” would mean individuals from any Cameroonian community. In the “others” classification, respondents also mentioned being recognized by the community in question for what they have done to the community. It could be a service rendered, construction of any kind of infrastructure for the benefit of the community. In most cases, such persons are made honorary members of the association. To confirm this, Abdul a 49-year- old respondent interviewed on the 13th of October 2021 in Nsimeyong said *“when the Bamum arrived in Yaoundé following King Njoya’s exile, they were welcomed and given a piece of land to settle in Nsimeyong. Nsimeyong I am told means “land of strangers” in Ewondo. Charles Atangana who offered land to members of the Bamum community as well as other Beti community members considered themselves family. Thus, the Beti always come to our cultural events and vice versa”* (Abdul, Nsimeyong: 13/10/2021).

The aims of creating associations and the criteria for membership recruitment influences on interaction, socialization, networking patterns as well as multiculturalism in Yaoundé. With the fore, association members will be presented according to their location in Yaoundé.

5.2.2 Presentation of Association Members According to Location in Yaoundé

Yaoundé is made up of seven sub-divisions hosting members from all the communities of Cameroon as well as international communities. Data was collected from respondents spread across these seven sub-divisions as shown in the table below.

Table 17: Distribution of association members according to location in Yaoundé

Origin	Number examined	Location of members							Significance
		Yaoundé 1	Yaoundé 2	Yaoundé 3	Yaoundé 4	Yaoundé 5	Yaoundé 6	Yaoundé 7	
Beti	53	13 (24.5)	2 (3.8)	15 (28.3)	1 (1.9)	5 (9.4)	6 (11.3)	11 (20.8)	X ² =123.860 P<0.001
Bassa	53	21 (39.6)	0.0 (0)	8 (15.1)	6 (11.3)	6 (11.3)	4 (7.5)	8 (15.1)	
Duala	32	3 (9.4)	9 (28.1)	17 (53.1)	2 (6.3)	1 (3.1)	6 (18.8)	2 (6.3)	
Bayang	47	8(17.0)	0.0 (0)	7 (14.9)	5 (10.6)	4 (8.5)	22 (46.8)	1 (2.1)	
Nso	51	9 (17.6)	2(3.9)	6 (11.8)	8 (15.7)	5 (9.8)	14 (27.5)	7 (13.7)	
Bamileke	56	7 (12.5)	10 (17.9)	16 (28.6)	5 (8.9)	1 (1.8)	13 (23.2)	4 (7.1)	
Bamoun	54	11 (20.4)	10 (18.5)	9 (16.7)	4(7.4)	7 (13.0)	9 (16.7)	4 (7.4)	
Northern ers	54	16 (29.6)	7 (13.0)	5 (9.3)	0 (0.0)	5 (9.3)	13 (24.1)	8 (14.8)	
Totals	400	88	40	83	31	34	87	45	

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork: 2019)

Data in Table Seventeen (17) shows that fifty-three (53) Beti community members participated in the questions; thirteen (13) representing 24.5% live in Yaoundé I, two (2) showing 3.8% came from Yaoundé II, fifteen (15) representing 28.3% were from Yaoundé III, one with 1.9% came from Yaoundé IV, while five (5) showing 9.4% came from Yaoundé V. Six (6) of the participants with 20.8% come from Yaoundé VI and a final eleven (11) showing 20.8% came from Yaoundé VII. There were fifty-three (53) Bassa respondents; twenty-one (21) of them representing 39.6% were from Yaoundé I, there were no participants from Yaoundé II, eight (8) showing 15.1% came from Yaoundé III, six (6) representing 11.3% came from Yaoundé IV. A further six (6) representing 11.3% came from Yaoundé V, while four (4) came showing 7.5% were from Yaoundé VI, and finally eight (8) with 15.1% were from Yaoundé VII. The Duala community was represented by thirty-two (32) informants; three (3) of them representing 9.4% came from

Yaoundé I, twelve (9) showing 28.1% came from Yaoundé II, seventeen (17) representing 18.8% were from Yaoundé III, two (2) with 6.3 % came from Yaoundé IV, while one (1) with 3.1% came from Yaoundé V. Six (6) of the participants with 18.8% came from Yaoundé VI and finally two (2) showing 6.3% came from Yaoundé VII. There were forty-seven (47) associations members from the Bayang community; eight (8) of them representing 17.0 % were from Yaoundé I, none came from Yaoundé II, seven (7) representing 13.9% came from Yaounde III, a further five (5) with 10.6% came from Yaoundé IV. Next we had four (4) showing 8.5% was from Yaoundé V, followed by twenty-two (22) with 46.8 ù from Yaoundé VI. Finally, twenty-two (22) persons with 46.8% were recruited from Yaounde VII.

Fifty-three (53) informants represented Nso. Nine (9) of them representing 17.6% were from Yaoundé I, there were two (2) participants showing 3.9% from Yaoundé II, six (6) showing 11.1% came from Yaoundé III, eight (8) representing 15.7% came from Yaounde IV. A further five (5) representing 9.8% came from Yaoundé V, while fourteen (14) showing 27.5% came from Yaoundé VI. Finally, seven (7) with 13.7 % were from Yaoundé VII. We had fifty-six association members from the Bamileke community; seven (7) of them representing 12.5% were from Yaoundé I, ten (10) showing 17.9% are from Yaoundé II, sixteen representing 28.6% came from Yaounde III, a further five (5) came from Yaoundé IV. One showing 1.8% was from Yaoundé V, followed by Yaoundé VI with 13 individuals representing 23.2 per cent and finally, four (4) persons were recruited from Yaoundé VII with a 7.1 per cent representation. For the Bamum population distribution, there were; fifty-four (54) associations members from the Bamum community; eleven (11) of them representing 20.4% were from Yaoundé I, ten (10) showing 18.5% are from Yaoundé II, nine (9) representing (16.7)% came from Yaoundé III. Another four (4) responded from Yaoundé IV, while seven (7) showing 13.0% were from Yaoundé V, followed by nine (9) with 16.7% from Yaoundé VI. Finally, four (4) persons were recruited from Yaoundé VII with a 7.4 per cent representation.

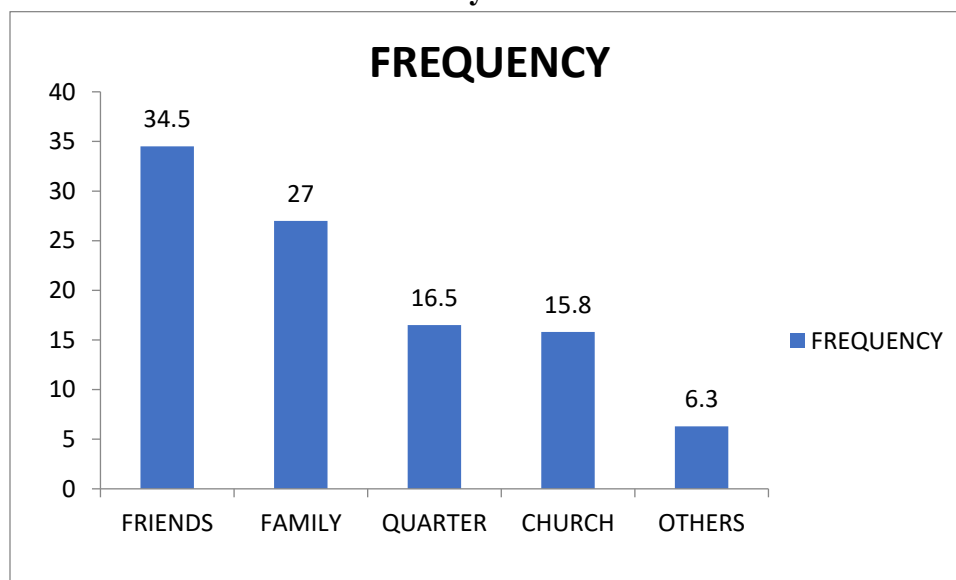
This community was represented by 52 (52) informants; sixteen of them showing 29.6% responded from Yaoundé I, seven (7) with 13.0% came from Yaoundé II, five (5) representing 9.3% were from Yaoundé III, and none with 00% responded from Yaoundé IV. Yaoundé V was represented by five (5) respondents with 9.3%. Thirteen (13) of the participants with 24.1% responded from Yaoundé VI and finally, eight (8) showing 14.8% responded from Yaoundé VII.

The information above indicates that at least one respondent from each of the community associations was recruited from all the seven sub-divisions of Yaoundé. The information shows that informants were representative enough of Yaoundé urban area and the degree of expansion of intra-community associations in Yaoundé. This equally shows the level of commitment people invest in community association and the number of people whose behaviour are influenced by these collective identity through association life. This indicates that people are influenced by activities of intra-community association as well as their socialization, interaction and networking patterns – this cuts across most communities that exercise intra-community association. Information about the population of intra-community associations led to an understanding of how people get to know about the existence of intra-community associations.

5.2.3 Knowing about the Existence of Community Associations

Before one starts thinking of joining an association, information about the existence, activities and location of the association has to be known. Apart from new communication technologies, information about intra-community associations is spread through members by way of mouth-to-ear. Notwithstanding, neighbours, church members and other affiliations also influence the source of information and decisions about belonging to associations. In a bid to understand how members know about existence of associations before becoming members, their responses were graphically summarized as follows.

Bar graph 2: Frequency Distribution of Ways People Learn about Existence of Intra-Community Associations



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

From data in Bar Graph (2), one hundred and seventy-six (176) making 100% of the entire respondent, 34.5% of the population held that they learn about the existence of associations from friends, 27% said they get information through family members while another 16.5% acknowledged that quarter members were their source of information. 15.8% of the total population talked of church while a final 6.3% chose other sources of information. The above information was confirmed in an interview on 05/06/2021 with Hotense, a 27-year-old lady in Cité Verte. She expressed that: *“I learnt about our association and was introduced to it by my friend who is a member of the association. I was recruited because my mother is a granddaughter of the community and a friend (female) introduced me to the group”* (Hotense, Cité Verte: 05/06/2021). This is an association that exclusively recruits females (such as mothers, wives, daughters and granddaughters) as members of a particular clan of the said community. The data above reveals that even though membership of intra-community associations is limited to common community of origin, this is not a factor that circumscribes how information about their existence and activities spread. Hence the activities and influence of such groups speak for themselves. Armed with this information an elaborate list of intra-community associations is shown below.

5.2.4 Record of Intra-Community Associations of the Eight Communities Studied in Yaoundé

Inventory was done on existing associations from the eight communities under study and results are shown below. Some names of associations are in the local language of the communities and have been maintained. It is noticed that translating names from mother tongue to English or French sometimes alters the meaning. Secord (2004), supports this assertion saying it is good to maintain the ideal of the ‘mother-tongue’ in our own time and avoid alterations.

Table 18: Inventory of intra-community associations in Yaoundé

Community	Name of Associations
Beti	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Association Mvog Essom Ndana 2.) Anyang Etudi 3.) Association des Mvog Ebanda 4.) Association Mvog Fouda 5.) Dignité be Ngoan be Mvog Mbia 6.) Association Mvog Evouna 7.) Association Mvog Mbia 8.) Otitié
Bassa	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Association de Bassa ESSOS (ABEKO) 2.) Association de Bassa de Mbankomo (ASBAM) 3.) Adna Ndog Nlét 4.) Adro 5.) Ancienes Succeda du Lycee d'Elig-Essono 6.) ASMIMA 7.) Association Babem 8.) Association Bassa Bakoko 9.) Association Bassaa-Mpo'o-Bati 10.) Association de Femmes Actives de Bassa 11.) Association des Femmes Dynamiques de Babimbi 12.) Association des Femmes NDOCK POL 13.) Association Homme Class 14.) Association Femme Classe 15.) Association des Femmes Bikok (AFEBIK) 16.) Association Kekedi

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17.) Association Liten 18.) Association Log Bilim 19.) Association Mbodga Titi Ngwé 20.) Association Mbog Lia'a 21.) Association NDAP Lu 22.) Association Okeke 23.) BA. NLAI. Ndoznsul 24.) Elog Mpo Bati 25.) Hogbe Malong 26.) Jeune capable 27.) Koi Bassom 28.) Log Batjom 29.) Log Ngom 30.) Mutuelle des Ressortissants Bassa-Mpo'o-Bati du Littoral – Nkolbison
Duala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Ndola Makam Ladies 2.) Amour, Antraide, Solidarité (A.A.S) 3.) NDEDA LOBA 4.) IDUBWA 5.) Crystal 6.) Bona Mulemba 7.) Bito Ba Boni-Bella Yaoundé 8.) Bomi Ba Benè-Bella Yaoundé 9.) Bomi Ba WEA MATANDA 10.) Les Filles de Deido de Duala 11.) BONA BELLA
Bayang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Manyu Cultural and Development Association (MECDA) 2.) Akwaya family group. 3.) Bang Tinto family group nominal. 4.) Besongabang Element Cultural and Development Association (BECDA) 5.) Eyang Exhang family meeting 6.) First Bachuo Ntai nominal 7.) Kembong Cultural and Development Association (KECDA) 8.) Mbinjong Development Association 9.) Nchang Development and Cultural Association (NDCO) 10.) Nchenty Ndifaw Development and Cultural Association

	<p>11.) Nkockenock Development and Cultural Association 12.) Obang Cultural and Development Association 13.) Osiereakeng Development and Cultural Association 14.) Osiereakeng Development and Cultural Association 15.) Ossing Développement and Cultural Association (ODECA) 16.) Tayong Tanyi Nkongha family group</p>
Nso	<p>1.) Dashi, Nkomkana 2.) Ngongbah Vekovi Association 3.) Jakiri Students Association (JASA) Carrefour Emia 4.) Kifee Cultural and Development Association (KIKUDA). Obili 5.) Kikaikom Association 6.) Mantum Kifom Association (MATAKI), Cite Verte 7.) Mbam Valley Cultural Association 8.) Meluf Cultural and Development Association (MECUDA) 9.) Njie and Kiyam association (NJIE KIYAN), Chapel Obili 10.) Nkar Development and Cultural Association (NKAEDECA), Shell Obili 11.) Noi Cultural and Development Association (NOCUDA) 12.) Nsobati Women Association (NSOBAWA) 13.) Shiy Students Association (SHIYSA) 14.) Wainama Cultural and Development Association (WACUDA) 15.) Wassi Cultural and Development Association (WACUDA)</p>
Bamileke	<p>1.) Arooy 2.) Association Biyali Bi Mouko'o (Enfants (MOUKO)). 3.) Association des Batcham de Yaoundé (AREBY) 4.) Association des jeunes solidaires ressortent l'Ouest résident à Yaoundé. 5.) Association des jeunes Des NDE de Yaoundé 6.) Association des Jeunes Ressortissants de Bioka (AJERBI). 7.) Association des jeunes ressortissants FONGO-NDENG de Yaounde (MAZONG MA-AH TSOH FONGO-NDJENG).</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none">8.) Association des professionnels des Pet T ressortissants de Menoa (APTREM).9.) Association des ressortissants Batcham de Yaoundé (AREBY).10.) Association des ressortissants Batcham de Yaoundé en provenance de Bamenda.11.) Association des ressortissants du village Bansoa de Yaoundé (NGUI PESSAA).12.) Association des ressortissants NGAKOUP-BALENG13.) Association famille Bete Fieutchi de Yaoundé14.) Association famille Bssoung Nepalen (BISSOUNG-NEPALEN)15.) Association famille CHOT-NKET16.) Association Famveu de Yaounde17.) Association Nguipe Ssa'a Nkolmesseng.18.) Association réunion Bangoulap de Yaoundé19.) Association voice unie à Yaoundé20.) Associations voix unie des ressortissants de Magna à Yaoundé.21.) Association Binam Femme (Association de L'ouest).22.) Bamilekie famille Mbakon23.) Communauté Baham de Yaoundé.24.) Communauté BANGOULAP de Yaoundé.25.) Communauté Baham (Association de l'ouest).26.) Famille Bopmou27.) Famille Bajoulap28.) Famille Banekouane29.) Famille Bazou30.) Famille Mbakong31.) Famille Nde32.) Jeunes Active de L'Ouest.33.) L'association des jeunes Meji (AJM).34.) L'association Des jeunes solidaires du quartier Essos35.) Réunion famille Batela36.) Réunion famille Borgnoum Bangante37.) Solidarité des jeunes élites Nouma Yaoundé.38.) Communauté famille Bangoum
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Bamum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Famille Djutsit 2.) Solidarité des jeunes élites de Noun a Yaoundé (SOJENY) 3.) Association famille Famveu de Yaoundé 4.) Mpouakone Fetain 5.) Association des NGODI. 6.) Association Pon Petut (APOPET) 7.) Association Mosthvetam de Yaoundé 8.) Association des Petut ressortissants de Menoa (APTREM) 9.) Koutouram en avant statut de l'association 10.) Comité de Développement de Massin (CODEMA) 11.) Comité de Développement du Village de Kouram Antennae de Yaoundé (CODEVIKO)
Northerners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Association des Jeunes Ressortissant de Nord (AJRN) 2.) Association des ressortissants de Tsanaga 3.) Association de Femmes Ressortissant de Grand Nord 4.) Association des ressortissants de Bourlai 5.) Association des ressortissants de Kapsiki 6.) Association des ressortissants de Koza 7.) Association des ressortissants de Shuwa arabes 8.) Association des ressortissants de Mada 9.) Association des ressortissants de Muyang 10.) Association des ressortissants de Zulgo'ouldemes 11.) Association des ressortissants de Ldarbak 12.) Association des ressortissants de Basara 13.) Association des ressortissants de Hina

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

The inventory result on Table Eighteen (18) is an illustration of the expansion of intra-community associations in Yaoaunde urban area and the extent to which different communities regroup themselves in form of associations for autonomy, self-representation, preservation of culture and internal cohesion. It further illustrates the extent to which members of different communities foster monoculturalism against promotion of multiculturalism. With this information, there is a need to understand how these associations are structured.

5.3 STRUCTURAL ORGANIZATION OF INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

There is hardly any community (even communities without formal structures have people whom they look up to for direction) or association without an organizational structure. Ordinarily, associations are hierarchical. Yenshu Vubo (2008) edifies that:

In terms of structure and composition, all associations have formalised hierarchical structures [...] Apart from an executive committee some of these associations have an advisory council or council of elders. Invariably, the association will have branches nationwide or even in foreign countries, depending on the residence of persons of that community of origin in a locality (Yenshu Vubo, 2008:105).

Associations are pyramidally structured into general assembly (made up of all the members) and the governing body – the executive bureau. The structuring of the executive bureau takes into consideration the administrative, economic and socio-cultural characteristics of the association. The structuring of an association can influence interaction, socialization, and relationships that occur within associations and hence group cohesion. Somerville, Durana & Terrazas (2008), explain that as groups, community associations bring members together for social, cultural, political empowerment, and economic development goals. The organizational structure of associations is presented in the following order; administrative, economic and socio-cultural. It can be concluded that organising associations hierarchically becoming an almost universal feature of association life in the African context.

5.4 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

The administrative structure is the governing body which is made up of members who in their interactions and relations oversee the governance of associations as seen in Yaoundé. They are charged with upholding the objectives, norms, traditions and values of associations. This section handles the general assembly, leadership, and power structure of associations in Yaoundé.

5.4.1 The General Assembly

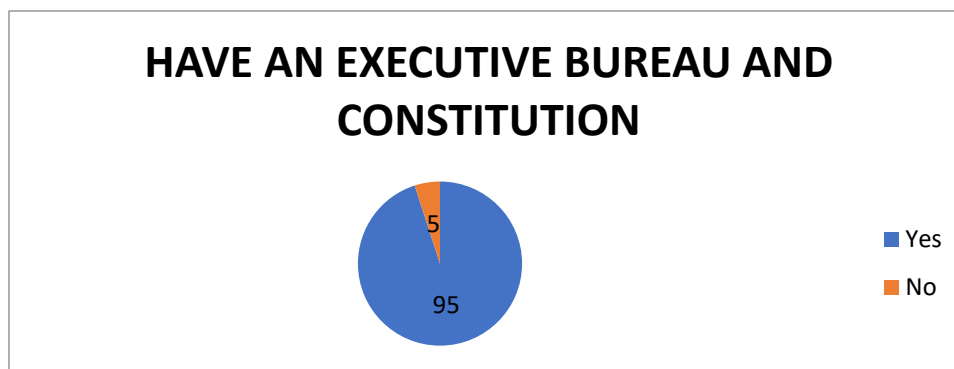
Intra-community associations exist to meet common interests – mutual assistance, community development and cultural sustainability. A well-structured association is essential for effective and efficient functioning towards attaining its objectives. The general assembly –

composed of all the members of the association is the highest organ of the association. This is the body that takes decisions for the association. In most big intra-community associations, the general assembly meets twice a year or quarterly while in smaller associations, both the general assembly and the executive body meet regularly as regulated in the constitution. Community associations ordinarily hold meetings with all the members in their respective venues as seen above. Their venues are adapted to the size of membership and some extent, the convenience of the types of socio-cultural events they organize.

Within the general assembly, some members are selected to lead the associations towards achieving their goals. These bodies of members make up the governing body or executive bureau.

5.4.2 The Governing Body

In most cases, associations are governed by an executive bureau. The number of persons that constitute an executive bureau depends on the association, with defined responsibilities depending on the size and objectives of the association. These persons are the leaders of the association. Njati & Muiruri (2018), assert that members look up to officials as role models who lead from front. This included providing schedules of activities such as contributions and attending to group duties and providing timely feedings. Leadership – the ability (of an individual or group of persons) to direct and influence association members towards accomplishing set goals is made-up of several leaders in an association: the president, vice president, the advisers, the general secretary, the financial secretary, the treasurer, and the social secretary (locally known as a Chief Whip) with varying responsibilities as well. This team of governors together with the ordinary members are expected to interact in a way that will enable them to achieve their aims. Worth noting is the fact that ordinary (locally called floor members) members and the executive members constitute the general assembly. During fieldwork, it was realized that the activities of associations are structurally organised by the general assembly under the guidance of their leaders. In an attempt to know whether these associations have leaders, a “Yes” or “No” question was asked and answers detailed in the table below.

Pie chart 7: Presence of Executive Bureau

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Information on the Pie Chart above indicates that 95% of community associations have an executive bureau. The remaining 5% indicated that they are not governed by an executive body. The results is an indication that leadership is an indispensable factor when it comes to the administration of community associations and that these associations and members are adopt laws to guide their activities. These ideas are recognized by Yenshu Vubo (2008) when he says that: *“Typically, an association’s constitution makes provision for an executive committee and a general assembly which brings together all members.”* (Yenshu Vubo, 2008:105). The fore explains why a further

5.4.3 Electing Leaders

Leadership especially in big associations is an indispensable factor, since leaders are the ones who drive the association to ensure they attain their objectives. The election of leaders is exercised using the majority principle. Some prerequisites have to be met before persons are made leaders of associations. These conditions may not be the same for all associations. However, some of the conditions that guide associations in selecting the right leaders that will direct their activities range from; must be a member of the association with good records, must have a mastery of community culture, must be an all-inclusive and embracing individual. The later is a quality locally known as a *“man of the people”*.

5.4.3.1 Must be a Member of The Association

During fieldwork, it was discovered that to be selected leader of intra-community associations, one must originate from the community. Leaders of associations are not just chosen from anywhere. Kirmayer, *et al.* (2009), recap that leaders should have a good social record, mastery of the association, longevity and show some good leadership skills. Equally, Mayoux (2006), reiterate that being a member of the association with a good record means the individual is registered, is in good standing with all obligations and responsibilities, actively attends meetings and participates in all activities regularly. This was acknowledged in a focus group discussion on the 7th of March 2021 both 3 men and 4 women in Simbock responded that “ *to be a leader, one is expected to be a member of an association, have a mastery of the culture before he/she is elected a leader to that association, the individual should express seriousness about obligations and responsibilities and the individual should regularly attend meetings and participate in all activities of the association*” (Focus Group Discussion, Simbock: 07/03/2021).

The information above indicates that membership is an important criterion that determines belonging as much as leadership elections. By this, a leader must be someone who belongs to the association. Being part of the association means the individual shares the interests and objectives of the association and is ready to defend them. The value of being serious about obligations and responsibilities is an indication that the leader must be responsible enough to be able to lead by example. This is affirmed by Yukl & Mahsud, (2010) who recommend good behaviour for a good leader. Mayoux (2001) equally recalls that good behaviour is a collateral requirement for local leadership. Respondents recognize that individuals are expected to be in good terms with the association regarding punctuality, respect for objectives, rules and regulations of the association, and timely regularization of financial obligations. Seriousness about obligations and responsibilities as a member of a group is a value that can influence the behaviour of others towards the direction of the leader.

Lastly, a good leader is expected to be an active participant in the activities of the association rather than a passive one (Bass, 1999). With information on the criteria of being a registered member, a look at mastery of community culture is important.

5.4.3.2 Mastery of Culture of Community of Origin

One of the primordial objectives of intra-community associations as seen in earlier chapters is cultural sustainability. This point of view was recognized by a focus group discussion held on the 9th of June 2021 in Mendong. The members of the discussion held that “*someone can't claim to defend what s/he does not know*” (Focus Group Discussion, Mendong: 09/06/2021). As a result, to keep up with one of the main objectives of these associations – safeguard the culture of the community – the aspiring leader has to be well-armed with the culture of the said community. Notwithstanding, one can learn the culture of the community by belonging to the meeting and actively participating in activities. Apart from the above conditions there exist unwritten criteria that condition leadership selection.

5.4.3.3 Unwritten Criteria that Condition Leadership Election

Unwritten criteria are latent laws/conditions or characteristics of persons that do not appear in the constitution of associations, however, they are present and shape the minds of association members especially when it concerns leadership election. These laws and characteristic put together make up “people’s man” or “man of the people” in common language and social status.

- **Be a “*Man of the People*”**

This is a term used by Alexander (2004), in the United States of America to describe John McCain as one of America’s prominent political figures with a straight-talking form of politics. In contrast to the above author and citing Chinua Achebe’s novel “*Man of the People*”, Bhat (2014), illustrates how the author use satire to identify Chief Nanga – his main character – as being nothing but a “*Man of the People*”. Hence being a man of the people is someone who takes the interests of the masses at heart over his selfish interest – holding onto political position irrespective of the plight of his people – as illustrated in the 1960s in Chinua Achebe’s “*Man of the People*”. Being a “*Man of the People*” is an everyday language which means putting the people first and self last. Respondents edified that such an individual should be a selfless, good communicator, confident, fun to be with, willing to render services to the people, can influence the behaviour of people and is loved by people (at least by a majority). These are characteristics of “*Man of the People*”. This probably explains why some respondents agreed that an association leader must be

a “*Man of the People*”. Respondents who disregarded this condition argued that being too confident and self-sacrificing could lead to manipulative behaviour and attention-seeking. Consequently, such individuals would be working for self-glory and not for the association, which could lead to disfunction of the administrative unit.

- **Social Status**

Apart from being “*a man of the people*”, a timid category of respondents mentioned social status as one of the conditions that association leaders must possess. Gibb (1947) in his paper “*The principles and traits of leadership*” underscores status as one of the social characteristics an individual should possess to make a good leader. A focus group discussion on the 21st of February 2021 made up of seven (7) women in Mvog Betsi agreed to these assertions saying that:

Social status is another element that can influence an individual’s aspiration of becoming a leader in our associations. Even though this is not outrightly written in our constitution, it is witnessed during elections. Most often, people who have solid social status can assist our youths, widows, orphans etc in many ways – such as job opportunities, offering business capital, educational opportunities etc. A leader also has to be someone who is loved by the people, he may one day lead. (Focus Group Discussion, Mvog Betsi: 21/02/2021).

Judging from this, it can be deduced that social status is an unwritten, unspoken condition that can boost an individual’s chances of becoming a leader in an association. These last two criteria are not written but are present in the minds of individuals as they condition their choice of leaders. An important point of interest on leadership is the instrument used to manage their organizations.

5.4.3.4 The Constitution of Associations

Every social organization demands that behaviours be kept in check so they can reach their goals. Macmillan School Dictionary (n.d: 157), defines a constitution as a set of basic laws or rules that control how a country is governed or an organization operates. A constitution is an important element of an association (Monju, 2019). The constitution is a document with a set of rules and regulations ordering the composition, power flow between leaders, and activities of an association. The constitution defines the rights and responsibilities of members of the association and the instruments necessary to keep them in order. During fieldwork, it was revealed that some meetings have constitutions while others do not. In an attempt to figure out the number of associations that

have constitutions, a “yes” or “no” question was asked and replies were displayed in the histogram below. The response to this question was summarised in Pie Chart (4) above. Data on the pie chart four reveals that 95% of the population acknowledged having an executive bureau and constitution. The constitution is the management tool of most associations. The remaining 5% of the respondents said they don’t have any managerial tool. Consequent to the fact that a majority of associations in Yaoundé have constitutions, it could be said that most associations in Yaoundé are well structured. Hence respect for one another is ensured during meetings.

The minority of the respondents held that their associations do not have constitutions. During a mixed FGD with on the 23rd June 2021 in Nkolmiseng, they said:

We are a group of people from the same community but diverse in economic and social backgrounds. We are made up of the young and the old, literate and ‘illiterate’. Some of us have travelled to many parts of Cameroon. We know things differently and we understand the idea of respect differently. However, as Africans, we believe that elders have more experience than the youths in certain aspects of life, so we can look up to them for advice in many areas when necessary. We advise one another in our various fields of experience. When someone commits a gross offence, we have various ways of making the individual atone for the mistake, depending on the gravity of the offence (Focus Group Discussion, Nkolmiseng: 23/06/2021).

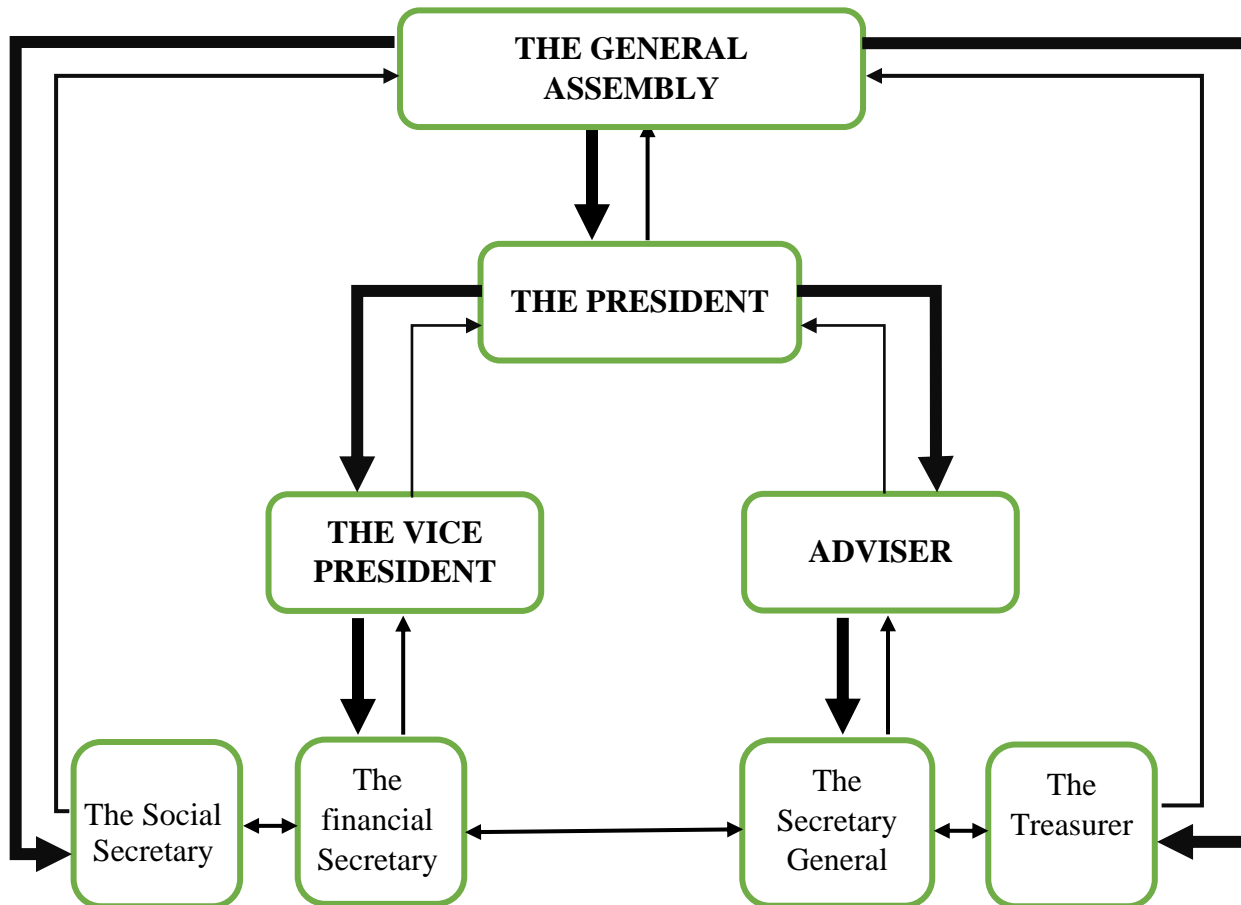
From the information above and judging from an anthropological perspective, some meetings are guided by unwritten rules and regulations. Consequently, not every association is run by written rules and regulations. There are unwritten laws, customs and values that guide people’s day-to-day lifestyle and behaviour such as letting elders sit while the youth stand when there are limited chairs or respect for adults. These are adopted by some associations. So in Yaoundé, some associations have constitutions that guide the running of their activities while others are guided by unwritten laws, norms and values. Armed with the information above, a look into the power system of associations and how they influence the interaction and behaviour of association members.

5.5 POWER STRUCTURE IN ASSOCIATIONS

Power is the possession of authority over – the ability to influence – others. Thus power structure represents the way authority is spread – economically, politically, socio-culturally – between people and within associations. Concerning the power system, Yenshu Vubo (2008:97), identifies that intra-community associations are organized economically, politically, culturally and

socially. Associations are administratively organized economically and socio-culturally for functional reasons. Administratively, the way power operates – the inter-relationship between different leaders – in intra-community associations makes power structure an important trait to dwell on in this part of the dissertation. During fieldwork, it was discovered that power structures in most associations have adopted the centralized structure – contemporary ranking systems (power flows from the general assembly, president, vice president, general secretary, among others to ordinary members – however, some associations blend it with the traditional power stratification system of title holders and elders who most often are taken as advisers. By this, the actions of one leader play a role in that of another and the entire system. For instance, during an interview with 46-year-old Patrick in Simbock on the 19th of June 2021, he said: *“Our association is a meeting with a government. At the apex of our government is a president, followed by a vice president and the general secretary. There is also the treasurer, the financial secretary, the Chief Whip and the floor members. These people make decisions but when it comes to cultural issues, they seek advice from the advisers and title holders”* (Patrick, Simbock: 19/06/2021). Power relation between leaders of associations and the general assembly during decision-making follows a top to bottom direction, usually concluded through unanimity. By interacting with one another, the behaviour of one leader affects those of others. This further affects the functioning of the association. This system is commonly used by intra-community associations because it makes running the affairs of these groups easy, regulates socialisation and interaction, ensures order and facilitates the attainment of objectives. A common demonstration of the power structure that exists in most associations is shown in Diagram One (1) below.

Diagram 1: Structural Organization of Intra-Community Associations



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Diagram One (1), shows that the general assembly can influence the decisions of the association. The general assembly comprises all members of the bureau and floor members. Power influences decisions that have to do with the livelihood of the association. Examples of such decisions are; carrying out developmental projects – such as buying land, relocating the venue of the association, community development, organizing cultural events, mutual aid and the appointment of honorary members. By arguing that power rests in the hands of the general assembly, it means decisions are made following a simple majority vote of the assembly. Notwithstanding the president has the power to make operational decisions in line with the constitution. For example s/he can delegate members of the executive board to represent him/her/association during happy or sorrowful events as well as during external invitations. Operational decisions of the President respectively flow down to other members of the executive

bureau and the floor members as indicated by the thick black arrows. Also, power is in the hands of the general assembly because anyone can contest a decision made by the president or any other executive member. Members of the executive bureau revert to the president indicated by the light arrows. In other words, apart from strategic decisions that influence power flow from the General Assembly downward, operational decisions direct power flow from the president, down to the vice-president, with a further horizontal spread to the general secretary, the financial secretary and treasurer and the social secretary (locally called chief whip). From this level, the decision flows to the ordinary members who are the executors of the power. Hence from an interactionist perspective, power dynamics are spread between members of this structure in an interdependent way. Hence the behaviour of an administrator creates an impact on that of others since their roles are interdependent. The role of the administrative department influences that of the executive department which are both influenced by the financial department. Interaction between members of these departments play a role on the attainment of objectives. The administrative department for instance makes decisions to be implemented by the executive department who need money from the financial department to exercise their responsibility. This affects that of the financial department which in turn affects that of the executing department. Thus the general assembly can question or object to the decisions of the president for reconsideration.

The advisers play an advisory role though found at the same horizontal level with members of the executive bureau. They advise the president on issues concerning the running of the group and traditional affairs. Advisers could be elders or title holders of these communities with experience in association life (for example Nso, Bamoun, Bamileke) and customs. Advisers could simply be members voted from assembly. An interview with Marcel a 53 years association member on the 7th of April 2021 in Odza confirmed that: *“Egalitarian societies like the Beti and the Bassa simply elect their executive member. In these communities, you must be a good communicator to be able to win people over”* (Marcel, Odza: 07/04/2021). Hence power structures do not only represent leaders but the behavioural aspects of power flow. With the administrative structure, a look at the socio-cultural and economic organization of intra-community associations is the next area of interest.

5.6 SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC ORGANISATION

Intra-community associations are largely expressive of social solidarity as a vibrant function in a mainly traditional rural society (Yenshu Vubo, 2008: 97). They function as the source of survival through collective action. As seen above meetings are organized administratively to meet the day-to-day needs activities of these associations and above all those of members in Yaoundé urban area. These meetings are also structured economically and socio-culturally so they can effectively function to ensure realization of collective interest. Economic organization tackles the financial resources that need to be brought together for the realization of socio-cultural activities, while socio-cultural organization includes the social and cultural activities to be harnessed to meet the goals of associations. These attributes – economic, social and cultural – play interdependent roles in associations. This is because decisions taken by one affects the other and eventually the functioning of the whole association. Hence for any activity – economic, social or cultural – to mature, members are expected to come together, interact, communicate ideas (in a social context) for a good decision to be arrived at. For smooth functioning, ideas must be in sync and decisions are made. Based on decisions, finances are disbursed and action (executors, general assembly) follow suit for whatever socio-cultural activity to take place. Hence the different structures are interdependent on one another. At this point, the the organization of these meetings under socio-cultural and economic organization will be presented next.

5.6.1 Socio-Cultural Organization

The objectives of these associations are centred around three themes: solidarity among members, development of communities of origin, and promotion of cultural heritage (Yenshu Vubo, 2008:1003). Solidarity encompasses the objectives of these associations (Kilonzo *et al*, 2019) but becomes more apparent when associated with the promotion of cultural identity. Nyamjoh (2008), Nyamnjo and Rowlands (2008), hold same opinions about community associations. By socio-cultural organization, it means the hierarchy of leaders and the web of relations existing between leaders in intra-community associations in Yaoundé, their interdependence and how behaviours shape and are shaped by this network. Since culture influences behaviour, decision-making, and association performance, the web of relationship created in this sense allows members to interact, socialize and integrate for the realization of the

objectives of the association. An outline of the obligations and responsibilities of members of associations will precede the presentation of structures and organization of socio-cultural activities.

5.6.2 Obligations and Responsibilities of Association Members

In most associations with written constitutions, members have well-articulated rules and regulations that must be respected for the welfare of all. Associations without constitution go by mutual respect and unwritten laws that help keep them under check. In order to master the socio-cultural and economic organization of intra-community associations it is necessary to know the posts of responsibilities and the obligations and responsibilities of the leaders and general assembly are as follows:

5.6.2.1 The President

The President is the general coordinator who presides over general assemblies and executive meetings. He/she ensures the smooth functioning of the meeting, making sure all members of the executive bureau exercise their duties responsibly. The president represents the association or delegates members to represent the association upon invitation for any event (happy or sad).

5.6.2.2 The Vice President

He/she attends all meetings and assists the president in running the association. In the absence of the president, he/she assumes the position and responsibilities of the president. Also represents the association upon invitation for any event (happy or sad). Executes the duties assigned him/her by the president within the confines of the association.

5.6.2.3 The General Secretary

He/she is the custodian of documents and records of the association. He/she attends all meetings – both general and executive and takes down minutes. He keeps all decisions and correspondences of the association. He reads minutes in every assembly to recall what was done during the previous meeting and for updates on incidents raised during previous sessions.

5.6.2.4 The Treasurer

The treasurer attends general and executive meetings. He/she keeps the financial records and updates the association's account (if available). He/she produces every record and money when demanded for the running of the association.

5.6.2.5 The Financial Secretary

The financial secretary attends general and executive meetings of the association liaise with the treasurer and notes down all financial records (income and expenses). He/she takes charge of the duties of the treasurer if the treasurer is absent. The financial secretary is a signatory of the association's bank account (if available) alongside the President and the Treasurer in some associations. Other associations stipulate members to take part in the signing of the association's bank booklet/cheque.

5.6.2.6 The Advisers

They attend general and executive meetings of the association. They advise the governing body on social and cultural issues concerning the association.

5.6.2.7 The Social Secretary (Chief whip)

The Social Secretary attends general and executive meetings of the association and maintains peace and order. He/she notes down unwanted behaviour for eventual disciplinary sanctions. Sanctions are often done in form of a fine, either financially or materially.

5.6.2.8 General Assembly

Ordinary members (commonly called floor members of associations) are the governed. Notwithstanding, together with the leaders, they constitute the general assembly. The General Assembly attends the general meetings only and make proposals for the welfare of the association. They are expected to obey the rules and regulations (written or unwritten) as well as each other in the associations. They offer support (moral, financial or material) when necessary.

Members and leaders have the right to attend meetings organized by the association, and to vote and be voted for any post of responsibility. They equally have the privilege of being assisted

– financially, materially or morally – by the association during happy and sad events. Enlightened with information about the obligations and responsibilities of association members, we will look at the way associations are socio-culturally and economically organized to carry out their activities:

5.7 STRUCTURAL ORGANISATION OF INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

Intra-community associations are structurally organized to facilitate the functioning of members in their various capacities and enable them to achieve set objectives. The various structures are:

5.7.1 Organising and Executing Structure

This structure is made up of the president and the general assembly. It is concerned with organizing assemblies and events and making sure requirements are put in place for the effective exercise of their activities. The structure organises assemblies and events for the association. Intra-community associations as seen above hold meetings once or twice a month. However, during fieldwork, it was discovered that CORONA Virus scare pushed meetings to reconsider the frequency of convening assemblies and maximum number of people to attend. Some made use of the internet while others stopped convening meetings. The organising and executing structures ensure that meetings and events are effectively carried out. They also ensure unity within the association. The general assembly together with the president decide on the venue (if they don't have a hall) for an event that demands an environment different from their usual venue (like people's houses). Some of the activities organized by this structure are general assemblies, childbirth, marriage or condolence visits which have been explained in Chapter Four. The next organization studied is the disciplinary organization.

5.7.2 Disciplinary Organization

The disciplinary organization is made up of the president, the social secretary, the financial secretary, the treasurer and members of the association. This structure aimed at keeping peace and order in the association, settles disputes and sanctions misconduct, noise making as well as lateness. Most misconducts and disputes are sanctioned through fines. Fines as punitive sanctions could be material or financial imposed on individuals or groups for misconduct in one way or the

other. There are several types of fines levied against defaulters depending on the gravity of the misconduct. Bernard, a 36-year-old association member interviewed on the 12th of May 2021 said:

As a social secretary, I am responsible for maintenance of peace and order and as well as the active presence and participation of members. I take down names of latecomers for disciplinary sanctions. If there is a serious issue (particularly concerning registered members), and it is reported to the assembly, the president addresses the issue immediately at the level of the quarter. If at the level of the quarter, the problem cannot be resolved by the quarter heads. The association tries not to allow it to escalate or go further to the courts or otherwise. The advisers together with some elders concert and give solutions to the problem. For minor problems, fines are levied. Noise making for instance is 200FCFA, late coming is 200FCFA, and failure to host a meeting is fined according to our rules. The meeting begins at 2: 00 PM. An hour after 2: 00 PM, 100 FRS is paid as a fine before the defaulter enters the hall. These are disciplinary measures and I make sure they are fulfilled to the later, failure to which other measures may be taken. Another situation would be a disregard for hierarchy. Misbehaviour towards hierarchy ranges from disregard for decisions, to quarrelling with hierarchy among others. These attract sanctions in form of fines and equally vary concerning the gravity of the offence. Our uniform is a gown worn with white beads while the men wear shirts sewn from the loin clothes and worn over black trousers. When this is not respected the defaulters equally pay some fines (Bernard, Odza: 12/05/2021).

Apart from the social secretary, the disciplinary structure involves the responsibilities of the financial and executive organization. This creates a relationship, revealing that discipline and interdependence of organs strive to ensure attainment of objectives. During fieldwork it was observed that late coming attracts disciplinary sanctions exemplified in the plate below.

Plate 9: Illustration of Discipline through a Fine Basket



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork: 2021)

The basket placed at the door in Plate Nine (9) is a statutory disciplinary norm of the Bamileke association. Similar norm holds in other associations. The General Assembly begins at 2: 00 PM, however excuses are taken within an hour for those who have tangible reasons to permit them come late. At 3:00 PM the basket shown above is placed at the entrance of the hall. Late comers are expected to pay a fine of 100 FRS – which is put in the basket – in order to gain access to the hall. Failure to comply with this norm attracts other measures. Other measures could be, charged with buying drinks for the assembly, suspension from assembly, deduction of money from the savings of defaulters.

With information about the disciplinary organ in place, our next area of interest is the economic organization of intra-community associations.

5.7.3 Economic Organization

Solidarity in intra-community associations is one of the main objectives of these associations (Hamish & Vupenyu, 2020) but becomes more apparent when associated with the promotion of cultural identity. Economically, associations are organized to handle interactions that take place during financial commitments. This organization takes into consideration interactions between the President, Financial Secretary, Treasurer and Floor members. It was realized during fieldwork that intra-community associations are economically organized to facilitate the running of several (social, cultural, disciplinary among others.) issues of the associations. This structure handles activities such as membership registration, “*njangi*’ collection and registration, thrift and loan and fundraisers as will be seen below. The organization is a web between the social, the cultural and economic organs interacting to promote the aims of the associations.

5.7.4 Membership Registration

In Yaoundé, most intra-community associations have registers where names of recognized members are recorded. A registered member enjoys the rights and privileges of the association. Recognition and registration guarantee not just membership but also inclusion in the social and financial security as well as other practices of the association. Registration varies from one association to another. Most associations seal membership registration upon payment of a certain amount of money. In order to know whether or not people pay money to become members of these

associations, the participants of a community group discussion organised on the 22nd of May 2021 in Mvog Ada had the following to offer:

“ Our association has various ways of generating income. Membership is attained upon registration with the sum of 1000frs. We also pay sinking fund which is used in times of distress. There is the village development fund which every member is expected to pay and the building fund. Before one becomes a member of the association, s/he is supposed to contribute towards the building of our association hall. This together with the sinking fund has been summarised to a standard amount of 10000frs. ” (Community Group Discussion, Mvog Ada: 22/06/2021).

Data retrieved during the above group discussion holds that intra-community associations recruit members not only based on condition common community of origin or marriage to community member but additionally because of the individual's independence and ability to be financially responsible. This is judged by the aspiring member's ability to comply with registration and other dues. Hence the fact that members acknowledged that they pay “1000frs” to become members indicates that money is a powerful tool that influences the running of the affairs and relationship of these associations.

The organization of membership of intra-community associations vary from one association to another. It was unveiled that, for some associations, before one is admitted, the individual goes through some scrutiny by members of the association while the aspiring members equally assess the members and activities of the association during the premonition period. The premonition phase for some groups means attending the meetings uninterruptedly for several sessions. After this period, if the aspiring member still expresses interest and the members of the association are in accord with the aspirant's intention, then s/he is asked to fulfil financial obligations that guarantee his/her membership. Amounts to be paid range from 1000FCFA to 3000FCFA for different associations. To know how membership payment is organized, an analysis of data retrieved from the focus group discussions of 22nd of May 2021 in Mvog Ada above was done in addition to data from the interview organised between researchers and Alfred a 68-year-old association member held on the 22nd of May 2021 in Nkolmeseng who said: *“3000frs is paid*

before anyone is recorded as a member to my tribe's associations. In another association where I belong, 2000frs is the registration fee while 1000 FCFA is the levy for members of the general village association” (Alfred, Mvog Ada: 22/06/2021). The homogeneity of the amount paid by individuals to become members of the same association reveals the value of non-partiality ensued by the association which is a prerequisite for living together. Hence everyone is equal in the association and has the right to enjoy all the privileges that come with membership. Nevertheless, the disparity shows that some associations have different objectives to fulfil. Hence different associations demand different amounts according to their objectives. Thus membership in associations swells the population of meetings and serves as social security – insurance – to members/association and posterity of the association. Pursuant to becoming a member, everyone is entitled to participate in any fundraising activity organized by the association.

5.7.5 Fund-Raisings Mechanisms

Fundraisers are schemes put in place by associations to generate funds through pooling for mutual-assistance and developmental purposes. Within the context of our work, an explanation of how sinking funds, njangi, thrift and loan are organized.

5.7.5.1 Sinking Fund

Sinking fund is variably called emergency fund, development fund, or “trouble fund” in Pidgin English. Etang, Fielding & Knowles (2011) define emergency fund as money that assists members facing a major emergency such as serious illness or death. Among others, it is a statutory fundraiser established by community associations to handle emergencies. Members contribute a certain amount of revenue which is kept aside as funds for emergencies and future expenses. The sinking or emergency fund is a common practice not just in intra-community associations but in intercommunity associations as well. It is equally organized by the financial department encouraging members of the association to set revenue aside for unforeseen events. Such events could be for individual or collective (the association) issues. The practice of sinking funds by different associations was affirmed by the results recovered from “*economic activities*” as seen in the table below.

Table 19: Practising sinking fund

Practice sinking fund	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	368	92
No	32	8
Total	400	100

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork: 2021)

Table Nineteen (19) shows that three hundred and sixty-eight (368) persons representing 92% of four hundred (400) respondents said they set aside revenue in the association as sinking fund while thirty-two (32) others declined the practice.

The information shows that a majority of community associations in Yaoundé raise funds through sinking fund activity. The importance of the activity could be explained that, just like registration, sinking fund acts as a type of financial/social security for the members of the association and the association itself. It also enables people to sustain value attributed to their family, friends and associates that facilitate collective action. The money is used for various issues concerning the association and its members. For example, it allows members to arrest family and other emergencies or upon invitation to a happy or sad event, money is withdrawn from the sinking fund and placed at the disposal of the organizing department for executing such action.

A minority of respondents said their associations do not consider the practice. Some associations prefer to carry out instant contributions or free-will donations to rescue any situation that come their way.

During fieldwork, it was noticed that in some associations the totality of the sinking fund is paid either at the beginning of the year or done instrumentally over a stated period. The amount equally differ from one group to the next. Sinking like emergency fund enables immediate action to rescue any emergency. Another type of fundraising activity of interest is the “*njangi*”.

5.7.5.2 “Njangi”

“*Njangi*” has been used by some authors to refer to intra-community associations, however, it is a rotatory (weekly, monthly or quarterly) voluntary fundraising/savings activity, usually with well-defined amounts contributed by participants of community associations. Forje (2006), defines njangi as contributions given to members in a rotating form at the end of every sitting. Thus, it is a self-help activity done by willing members of the association. Notwithstanding, it is a collective exercise aimed at encouraging members to achieve projects which otherwise could not be done within short notice or through individual means.

In a “yes” or “no” question to confirm the practice of “*njangi*” by association members, the responses from our respondents were summarized in Bar Graph 2: Self-help and community development activities with all of them attesting to the fact that they are all engaged in “*njangi*”.

Table 20: Practicing “Njangi”

Practice sinking fund	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	400	100
No	00	00
Total	400	100

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork: 2021)

From the results presented above, all intra-community association members practice “*njangi*”. Hence intra-community associations have a way of organizing “*njangi*”, a concept which will be discussed below.

Organization of “Njangi” Scheme

The success of every “*njangi*” depends on how it is organized. Different community associations have structured their “*njangi*” schemes in different ways to suit their size and objectives. “*Njangi*” is organized such that members periodically contribute a defined amount –

or range – of money which is handed to the beneficiary. It was revealed that beneficiaries of “*njangi*” obtain their package either quarterly, monthly, bi-weekly or weekly. The process is repeated until every member concerned benefits from same. Some “*njangi*” especially monthly are organized such that beneficiary(ies) of the month automatically host(s) the meeting. The money raised through “*njangi*” assists members in many ways such as starting up a business, paying children’s school fees, feeding families, building houses, and organizing parties.

It was also observed that participants of “*njangi*” schemes have well-structured rules to guide their periodic benefits. Thus, depending on the size of the association, people benefit individually or in groups – and later share. Still on the organization process, some associations rally participants under different “*njangi*” schemes within the same association. For instance, following observation in one of the associations, people were grouped into 50 000FCFA category, 100 000FCFA categories and 150 000FCFA categories. In other associations, this categorization does not exist as beneficiaries are allowed to pledge huge sums of contribution. However, while some associations leave the maximum amount to be contributed open, there is usually a minimum.

Whether individual group benefit or categorization of persons according to amounts, most associations go by balloting to enable the organizing team draw-up the “*njangi*” calendar for the period it is expected to last. Balloting is done in two ways; the first is numbers (from one to the equivalence of participating members) are written on pieces of paper, placed on a support (bowl or plate) and passed round for participants to randomly pick. At the end of the ballot, people declare their numbers and their names are written against the numbers indicating when they will benefit/host from the “*njangi*”. Number one benefits first followed by number two till the last in a progressive order. The same exercise is done for group benefits. Group benefit is particularly practiced by associations with huge numbers of registered members. People are grouped so that the “*njangi*” period does not exceed a given period – a year or two. This calendar “*njangi*” scheme allows members to programme themselves and plan how best to invest or use their revenue. The calendar allows participants to receive their “*njangi*” in two ways. The first method is that people get liquid cash the day they benefit. Another method is that participants do online (usually mobile money) deposits to the accounts of the beneficiaries. In another method, some associations insist the money be deposited in credit unions or bank accounts of the participants. We were edified that the last method is for security reasons since members contribute huge sums of money.

With regards to the amount contributed for various “njangi” schemes, different associations as earlier mentioned have different amounts. In a community group discussion held on the 19th of June 2021 in Nlongkak, participants informed that they have three different schemes of “njangi”. The idea is for everyone to be able to take part in at least one of the schemes. The minimum amounts for contribution are 5000 FRS, 10 000 FRS and 100 000 FRS. The maximum is undefined as people are free to contribute whatever sum they can afford, however within the range. Some meetings allow people to contribute one million (1000 000 FRS) and above. After pooling, the “njangi” gives a substantial amount which can be used by the benefactor(s).

The organization of “njangi” plays several roles in associations. It serves as financial security to members. It can be used to ensure numerous financial obligations. It also acts as a disciplinary tool, such as assessing the presence and punctuality of members. Observations show that during the exercise of “njangi”, presence as well as late payment are noted. Members marked absent or who come late (when the books for contributions have been closed) are levied a fine. Hence, “njangi” obliges participants to be present and on time for the assembly. It was also observed that the structuring of “njangi” schemes equally serve as a social stratification mechanism. The “haves” (richer members) take part in “njangi” with huge sums while the “have-nots” (poorer members) participate in lower amounts. The importance of “njangi” lies in the fact that it contributes to the social, cultural and economic welfare of association members in Yaoundé. Apart from “njangi”, there also exist thrift and loan schemes.

5.7.5.3 Thrift and Loan Scheme

To improve on members’ personal development such as building a house, starting a business, carrying out huge projects or avoiding unnecessary expenditure, associations through thrift and loan also known by Godly & Wilfred (2021), as credits and thrift co-operative, enable members to exercise collective saving. This is one of the ways employed by associations to encourage self-help in intra-community associations. Members save money in the associations’ coffers. Amounts are recorded in a record book and given out as loan to prospective borrowers. This in turn generates interest which is refunded to members at the end of a specified period and the cycle continues, thus the name merry-go round activity. On the 4th of May 2021 at Carrière in an interview, Mohamed said: *“When I came to Yaoundé, things were very difficult for me and my*

family. I was introduced to Nsoba'ti and after a while, I borrowed money from the meeting and started a small business. From the business, I started saving gradually (like 500 FRS, 1000 FRS or even less) which is given to me with interest at the end of the year.” It has assisted me and my family during our stay in Yaoundé (Mohamed, Carrière: 4/05/2021).

Saving is a kind of social and financial security for members of the association and association as well. Savings can act as financial security in the sense that they could be used as collateral for a member who intends to take a loan from the association to accomplish a particular project. Another area of organization is community development fund.

5.7.5.4 Community Development Fund

Involvement of intra-community associations in activities meant for the development of their places of origin differ from one association to the next. Most intra-community associations differently carry out varying development projects in their community of origin and the amount of money needed to realise projects equally vary. Community development projects could be: educating children through scholarships, constructing roads, offering equipment for different types of local activities and building schools. Associations have built halls meant for their assemblies and socio-cultural events. These buildings are constructed from finances brought together by members of the association. To understand how development or building projects are organized, the following table shows the results of respondents in this regard.

Table 21: Frequency Distribution of Associations Organizing Community Development Funds

Organise community development funds	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	344	86%
No	56	14%
Total	400	100%

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork: 2021)

Table Twenty-one (21) illustrates that out of 400 participants, 344 respondents with 86% belong to associations with an organized community development fundraising scheme while fifty-six (56) individuals making 14% of the respondents held that they are members of associations that do not carry out such projects. It can be summarized that majority of intra-community associations have community development fundraising mechanisms. Those who said they do not have such fundraising system argued that they are still baby groups while others said they contribute to such projects in other associations.

Equipped with the information above, observed relationships of different bureaucratic organs of intra-community associations will be presented next.

5.8 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATIVE, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION OF INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

Observations reveal an existence of interdependent relationship between the administrative, social, cultural and economic organization in intra-community association or the general assembly and executive bureau. Presidents of most associations preside over assemblies assisted by collaborators in their diverse capacities as enshrined in their constitutions. Normally, activities of executive members affect the whole system.

There is an interplay between attendance and financial contributions in intra-community associations as observed in a roll call exercise – a name calling process to determine who is present or absent – by the social secretary (locally called chief whip). When the social secretary calls the

name of a member, he/she comes to the table and deposits his/her financial contributions for the day. This exercise apart from playing a disciplinary role – respect for hierarchy – also demonstrates the social relationship existing between members and leaders of the association. This can be explained that by answering one's name, the member admits to the value of respect towards others and self and by executing his/her financial obligations. During the same exercise the member's presence or absence is ascertained by the social secretary. The financial secretary equally notes down his/her financial situation and so does the treasurer. The process goes on for all the members of the association and the leaders. Thus, respect is bi-directional during financial, cultural and social interactions among members – floor members respect the executive bureau by responding to their names and the executive bureau in turn respects floor members by taking down necessary information about them. The executive bureau equally renders accounts to floor members. The plate below illustrates this relationship.

Plate 10: Socio-cultural relationship between members and leaders of an association



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork: 2021)

Plate Ten (10) illuminates interactions between association members and the executive bureau of a Beti association. The member is fulfilling her financial obligations towards the association as a member. She answers present to her name, called by the social secretary and presents her money

(thrift and loan, *njangi* and others) to the financial secretary. Upon confirmation of the amount, the money is handed to the treasurer. The money will either be kept in the coffers of given out as “*njangi*” or loan to meet the social needs of members/association. This picture illustrates the interdependent relationship existing between different organs of the association.

Fortified with a brief presentation of associations studied during fieldwork, it can be said that within these associations the administrative, socio-cultural and economic organization of intra-community associations create a web of interdependent relationships in Yaoundé. The organization and activities of intra-community associations are a result of joint efforts put in place by the social, cultural, economic and administrative structures. Through these efforts, a feeling of belonging/ inclusion, interdependence, and security is created among members of intra-community associations in Yaoundé urban area. By this, members of the executive bureau will not exist if there were no ordinary members or general assembly of the association. So, the leaders and the led relate in an interdependent web of activities with one another other. Different organizations of intra-community associations need each other for the association to function well. Thus the fact that members of the organizing and executive structure need to relate for money be made available to plan and execute events explains this. These structures interact and create a relationship with the financial structure to outsource the money necessary to finance the activities of associations. All of the above-mentioned function in a chain for the well-being of one and all in associations. Intra-community associations play a role in improving the skills of members and altering their behavior patterns towards human relations which can lead to the enhancement of living together.

Armed with the administrative, economic, and socio-cultural organizations of intra-community associations, it can be determined that structuring influences functioning as creates an enabling environment for proper management of associations in Yaoundé, without which achieving their objectives would be unfounded. Consequently, the organization and management of intra-community associations do not only encourage endogenous cohesion and cultural sustainability but equally ensure their posterity. Chapter Five seeks to analyse intercommunity associations as pathways for the promotion of multiculturalism in Yaoundé. An examination of the sources of disintegration among individuals and communities in Yaoundé will equally be done in this chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

PATHWAYS OF MULTICULTURALISM AND CAUSES OF DISINTEGRATION IN URBAN AREAS

Multiculturalism can be enhanced through channels such as education, marriage, religion, leisure, occupation and associations among others. Equally, several reasons account for social disintegration in urban areas. Armed with intra-community associations in Chapter Four and the claim that they do not foster multiculturalism, Chapter Five aims to establish a link between intercommunity associations and multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area. Hence, Chapter Five is sub-divided into two main sub-headings: intercommunity associations as pathways of multiculturalism and association venues as pathways of multiculturalism in Yaoundé.

6.1 INTERCOMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS AS PATHWAYS OF MULTICULTURALISM

Following association culture, Yaoundé could be termed both an integrated and a disintegrated socio-cultural space. Balla (2019 :213), explains that: *“Yaoundé est à la fois très diverse et très communautarisée, les différents groupes ‘ethnoculturels’ qui s’y installent essayant de se donner une visibilité grâce à des marqueurs identitaires (vêtements, productions artistiques, habitats, etc.) et à des réseaux d’échange (associations culturelles ou d’épargne [tontines] spécifiques”* (Balla, 2019 :213). This translates in English as (Yaoundé is both diverse and community-based, with different ‘ethnocultural’ groups each trying to gain recognition through identity markers (clothing, artistic productions, habitats, etc.) and exchange networks (cultural or savings associations). The coexistence of 250 ethnic communities (each having specific cultural traits) explains cultural pluralism in Yaoundé. The centrifugal nature of intra-community associations is consolidated by Van Dyk & Nefale (2005), who edify that like most African communities Yaoundé operates on the “ubuntu” principle – a concept that broadly refers to communality, cooperation, and sharing. Nonetheless, there exist intercommunity associations whose activities promote multiculturalism in Yaoundé. Since the inception of Law n° 90/53 of 19 December 1990 relating to freedom of associations, amended by Law n°2020/009 of 20 July 2020

to amend certain aspects (especially regarding community association) of the former law, there has been an increase in several types of associations. Apart from intra-community associations as examined in Chapter Four, several types of intercommunity associations – professional, leisure, educational, community and traditional – exist with distinct objectives. Despite their varying objectives, they have unifying roles since they recruit members from diverse cultural backgrounds. This allows people to learn, understand, accept, respect and affirm cultural difference. Nyamnjoh & Rowlands (1998:3) exemplify lion's club, school and college associations, Church groups as long-standing associations and feature of urban life whose membership often cut across ethnic frontiers. Within the context of this dissertation, professional, alumni, leisure and religious associations will be examined as pathways of multiculturalism in Cameroon.

6.1.1 Professional Associations

Schensul *et al.* (2017), in a study titled “*Anthropology Works: A Home for Professional, Practising, and Applied Anthropology*”, studied the American Anthropological Association (AAA) which has been a scholarly home for anthropology and anthropologists since its creation in 1902. The authors hold that the associations provide intellectual home for scholar constituents, and membership appear stable. Notwithstanding, the fact that associations unite people from diverse cultural backgrounds indicates their latent function in promoting multiculturalism. Thus membership consists primarily of students, anthropologists in the academy, Professionals, Practising, and Applied Anthropologists (PPA) with a very limited representation in areas of discipline from diverse cultures. AAA provides mentoring, professional development, cross-section summits, dialogues and discussions about professional anthropology, and regular articles. The objective of the author is to move the AAA forward to support both PPA anthropologists and the AAA's survival as a home for all anthropologists. In as much as professional associations are meant to foster the growth of members and the institutions in various domains, the fact that membership cuts across diverse communities is a pointer to its multicultural nature. Thus they are canals of multiculturalism. Schein (2013), affirms that organizational culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions that is learned by a group as it solves problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel about those problems. Professional

associations are organizations that enable learning, understanding, and transmission of values, norms, mores and traditions. Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), equally edify that in many cases associations were founded principally for mutual aid on the basis of having gone to the same school or belonged to the same profession, church or lived in the same neighbourhood so that their membership would often go beyond ethnic ties. The objectives of professional associations are concerned with improving performance and maintenance of professional lifestyle. These organizations differ from community to community and from one occupation to another. Anthropologically this part of the dissertation intends to see how these associations seek not just to improve on performance or status of professionals but the role they play in enhancing living together in Yaoundé urban area.

The culture of associating professionally impacts the lifestyle – ideas, values, norms and traditions of members. This equally plays a shifting role in the thoughts, feelings, and actions of participants. To understand how occupational associations influence multiculturalism, an understanding of their associational culture is pivotal. The culture of professional association builds on interactions, networks, and socialization, offering opportunities for members to connect with other people at various levels. The benefits that members accrue from belonging to professional association is one of such cultures.

6.1.1.1 Benefits of Professional Associations to Members

Looking at the advantages of professional associations, Mata, Latham & Ransome, (2010: 453), recognize that “participation can facilitate networking, skill-building, collaboration, and mentoring.” Pack-Brown & Williams (2003), in same light of reasoning argue that these associations promote ethical behaviour, within a multicultural context among professionals and within the profession. Their benefits allow members to interact and socialize at various levels.

- **Creating bonds**

Once a member of a professional association, one can easily expand business ties as well as create new ones through various networks, service opportunities, and mentoring (Mata, Latham and Ransome, 2010). In like manner professional ties can be expanded through professional associations. These associations usually engage themselves in socio-cultural activities among which are happy and sad events. Such activities foster amicable bonds among members. The bonds

can be formal or informal yet long lasting. Mentoring ties between accomplished persons and younger members for instance can be created with long lasting effects.

- **Opportunities (such as seminars, jobs, marriage, conferences and business)**

Mata, Latham and Ransome, (2010), affirm that conferences may contribute to increased professional development, collaboration, and advocacy, which translate into more effective ... programs and initiatives. The opportunities that professional associations introduce participants into can lead to formation of other social ties. This tallies with the affirmation made by Monju (2019), when he says activities of leisure associations have open gateways to people finding romance. Romance can lead to living together through marriage. Similarly, professional associations have activities that can lead to such outcomes. Busby, Willoughby & McDonald (2019) assert that many relationships combine elements of romance, sex, and cohabitation. Thus professional associations offer opportunities which if properly exploited can lead to living together.

- **Professional Advancement**

According to Schensul et al (2017), backed by Nyamnjoh (1998), professional associations provide mentoring, professional development and dialogues. Belonging to professional association offers the possibility of free or subsidized courses and certifications for members. Such associations have formal and informal mentoring ties with accomplished persons that younger members can benefit from in several ways.

6.1.2 Alumni Associations

Arceo (2010), posits that alumni associations are institutions that are used to create, maintain, or modify relations between educational organizations and their populace. In addition, Kirkland (2018), argues that alumni networks have been involved in raising funds for scholarships. Sociologically, Sociological Alumni Associations are establishment that aim to promote cordial relations among members, promoting educational, social and professional interests as well as the overall development of the Department of Sociology and its alumni. Anthropologically, Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), argue that alumni associations create networks aimed at encouraging education, cordial relations among members and scholarship opportunities. Alumni like professional associations regroup individuals of given schools (college, university, professional

institutions) or other educational institution with a primary aim of; protecting and promoting the integrity of same as well as enhancing the growth of members. Coming together also promotes unity and cohesion among and between members, the association and their alma mater. Examples of alumni associations include Saint Augustine Ex-Student Association, Jakiri Student's Associations, Our Lady of Lourdes Ex-Students Association among others. These benefits of membership in alumni associations are as follows.

6.1.2.2 Advantages of Alumni Associations

Alumni Associations create a forum for ex-students to meet and recollect past experiences, know 'where', what 'who' is doing and share common future goals. Singer, and Hughey (2003: 58), say: "*these associations raise funds for scholarships*". They do not only take individuals down memory lane but assist one another happy and sad moments. These are characteristics of oneness, communalism and hence multiculturalism.

- **Creating bonds and impacting society**

Yenshu Vubo (2008), confirms that individuals experience self-satisfaction by giving back as a benefit from belonging. Most associations of this order pride themselves in giving back to the institutions that groomed them into what they have become, creating networks, and giving useful information and advice to students. Giving back instils a sense of worthiness and friendship ties.

- **Diverse Benefits**

According to Singer and Hughey (2003: 58), members of alumni associations are entitled to discounts, subscriptions to alumni magazines, opportunities to enhance leadership skills and establish personal and professional contacts that may serve as resources. In today's highly competitive world, belonging to alumna can facilitate networks that would enable members to pick-up jobs (Nyamnjo and Rowlands: 1998). Most associations have such networks that can assist in placing students in some organisations as well as offer career-oriented development skills. Gaining jobs through alumni networks can improve the livelihood of individuals, their dependents and open routes to more social networks that can promote living together.

6.1.3 Leisure Associations

According to Brightbill (1960), leisure is:

A block of unoccupied time, spare time, or free time when we are free to rest or do what we choose. Leisure is time beyond that which is required for existence, the things

which we must do, biologically, to stay, alive (that is, eat, sleep, eliminate, medicate, and so on): and subsistence, the things we must do to make a living as in work, or prepare to make a living as in school, or pay for what we want done if we do not do it ourselves. Leisure is [a time] in which our feelings of compulsion should be minimal. It is discretionary time, the time to be used according to our ... judgement or choice (Brightbill, 1960:4).

Several authors have studied leisure groups and stressed their importance not only in the physical realm but in the social as well. Pressan *et al* (2010), carried out a study on health benefits of leisure groups where they examined whether engaging in multiple enjoyable activities could be associated with better psychological and physiological functioning. The study assessed participants from four different studies, looking at their participation in ten different types of leisure activities as well as measure their positive and negative psychosocial states. Resting blood pressure, cortisol, body mass index, waist circumference and perceived physiological functioning were assessed. It revealed that enjoyable leisure activities are associated with psychosocial and physical measures relevant for health and well-being. Socio-culturally, a healthy society and mind can inspire living together. From an Anthropological perspective, Monju (2019), studied “*deux zero*” groups in Yaoundé, examining the practice of physical activities among “*deux zéro*” groups, exposing how they contribute to group cohesion, integration and to the maintenance of socio-cultural well-being among individuals. How do leisure associations enhance multiculturalism?

6.1.3.1 Advantages of Belonging to Leisure Associations

According to Monju (2019), belonging to “*deux zéro*” groups does not only encourage physical fitness, it equally benefits individuals socially, culturally and psychologically. Leisure associations offer advantages such as social security, social networks, socialization and integration. For example through self-help activities, members create social ties through networking, gain social and financial insurance. Most important to these associations is their ability to improve members’ self-esteem, body image and psychological health (Monju, 2019). Hence leisure associations offer benefits to individuals that range from physical to socio-cultural.

6.1.4 Religious Associations

Durkheim (1954: 47-47) explains that religion is “*an eminently collective thing [...] a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden beliefs and practices which unite in one single community called a Church, all those*

who adhere to them.” Durkheim’s definition limits his views on the ‘church’. By this Durkheim’s thoughts are exclusionary since he fails to converge the views of Bahai, ATR, the Shintos, the Buddhists, Muslims and the Hindus who do not have churches. As such, his definition does not capture the universal norm of religion – living together – which transcends Christianity. The objective of religion is to bring people together and this can most likely happen through religious conventions, reunions, and associations amongst others. Niba (2013), studied Catholic Women’s Association as an association of women and asserts that the association regroups women under the umbrella of the Catholic Church. Women as mothers play a very important role in the church. This association is concerned with the fight and prevention of HIV, and in providing health care delivery to people living with HIV and AIDS. They do not only provide spiritual guidance to their members but often provide a variety of local health and social services. These are all characteristics of living together enhanced through belonging to religious associations.

In this dissertation religious associations are organizations that unite individuals based on common religious beliefs. Different religions create internal groups to handle their daily affairs and functioning of the institution. Examples are prayer groups, choirs and bible study groups. They create such groups and try to strike a balance – between gender, age and ethnic representations. Examples of categorisation could be age (groups made up of the young or the old), gender (women and men’s groups), community (different ethnic communities represent themselves through such associations. A fifty-year-old Christian in Nsimeyong on 11/05/2021 said;

“We recognize the various ethnic groupings in the Presbyterian congregation and allow for groups to be formed and for them to sing in mother tongues. The Presbyterian Congregation of Nsimeyong is like a melting pot. We have the Halleluiah choir that sings in different languages from the North West, the Bethel sings in the Douala language, we have the New Zion choir that sings in the Ngemba language and the Temple choir that sings in the Kenyang or Ejagam languages. We recognize and respect different cultural groupings, especially in those positive values of ethnicism. For the negatives, we try to keep them aside. We enhance cultural diversity but also regulate it with the Gospel of Jesus Christ” (Christian, Nsimeyong: 11/05/2021).

Another respondent Lilian supports the thoughts of the above participant saying: *“The idea of tribal groups is not meant to create fractions but rather to make people feel at home away from home.”* (Lilian, Nsimeyong: 11/05/2021). Tacitly, religious associations are a form of recognition, acceptance and respect of cultural difference within the religious milieu. Religious institutions are

different from cultural associations in that; first and foremost the norms and doctrines are related to a supernatural being (God, known respectively, in Nso, Beti as ‘*Nyuy*’ and ‘*Nsi*’) whose relationship with humans inspires reverence, awe and respect. Their teachings, traditions, norms, and values give strength to morality. Hence members of religious associations are guided by the values, norms and traditions of spirituality, morality and unity.

6.1.4.1 Benefits of Belonging to Religious Associations

Nordung (2009), asserts that: “*Without spirituality, the process of widening people’s choices for them to live a long and healthy life cannot be achieved*” (Nordung, 2009:13). Religious associations encourage spirituality as a canal to healthy lifestyle which has to do with living in good relationship with others. Membership into such groups offers a sense of belonging and security to the individual and group. At the same time it offers a sense of unity, peace and accomplishment to its members where people with the same thought patterns are brought together to communion and take up responsibilities for a good cause. Solidarity among members is one of the objectives and benefits of religious association that can enhance living together.

Multiculturalism has been defined in this dissertation as the cohabitation/living together of diverse communities in a common space, each accepting, tolerating and respecting the other while maintaining their unique cultures. To foster multiculturalism among members of Cameroonian communities, many actions have been taken by different agents. From a top to bottom point of view, *Law No. 90-053 of 19 December 1990* on the Freedom of Association announced the liberalization of associations in 1990. In 2020, *Law No.2020/009 of 20 July 2020*) amended some provisions of the fore mentioned decree relating to freedom of association. This led to an expansion of various forms of association life nationwide. Intercommunity association brings individuals from diverse communities together. Monju (2019), exemplifies this process in leisure groups found in Yaoundé commonly called “*deux zero*”. Through socio-cultural activities of these associations, members interact, socialize, and network with one another creating an enabling environment for the promotion of multiculturalism. These associations do not exercise their activities in non-places. They are organized in public or private places (venues), which is the next area of interest.

So far there has been an appreciation of how belonging to intercommunity associations influences multiculturalism. Apart from the human aspect of intercommunity association, the

infrastructural aspect – venues – where these associations hold meetings will be considered to understand whether they are places with potentials to influence multiculturalism or not.

6.2 ASSOCIATION VENUES AS PATHWAYS OF MULTICULTURALISM

Urban area has numerous public spaces; markets, churches, schools, council halls, stadia, bars, restaurants, and community halls among other spaces make it possible for people to come together. Respondents' opinions regarding association venues as spaces that promote multiculturalism was solicited and their responses are presented in Bar Graph Three (3) below.

Bar Graph 3: Association Venues and Promotion of Multiculturalism?



Source: @ Yaoundé (Fieldwork: 2021)

Bar Graph 3 above shows that from the four hundred (400) participants that answered the questionnaires, 73.23% of them see public places (such as halls, church premises, schoolyards) as venues that encourage multiculturalism while 26.77 say these places do not encourage multiculturalism. As concerns private places, 53.3% held that they promote living together while 46.7% objected to the this. In a bid to understand why these decisions, an interview was held with 53-year-old Cletus (a carpenter) on the 5th of March in Obili revealed that:

“Association venues like halls and schools have big enough space to contain people from diverse backgrounds. When building these places the conception considers the fact that people come from different cultural backgrounds, some come in cars, others on moto bikes foot etc. Public places are vast, airy, can accommodate a huge number of members, their automobiles and activities unlike private houses. Also, these are

places where people meet and interact passively for fleeting moments. Private places on the contrary are small and do not make provision for crowds. Convening meetings in houses where there is permanent habitation is good for small crowds. Also, meetings in private houses cause trivial issues like misuse, wear and tear of private property, development of lustful feelings and attitude toward older children of the houses by association members.” (Cletus, Obili: 05/03/2021).

From Cletus’s respond and many others, there is disparity between public and private places – concerning accessibility, diversity, crowd accommodation, respect, – as suitable or unsuitable spaces that promote multiculturalism. Public spaces and their capacities to accommodate many people are most convenient for the diverse individuals enrol in these associations. Bar Chart Three (3) and the excerpt above can be illustrated in plate (11) hereafter.

Plate 11: Display of an association member’s house and a community’s hall as venues

Picture 1



Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork: 2021)

Picture 2



Source: © Yaounde (Fieldwork: 2021)

Plate Eleven (11), picture 1, presents the Manyu Cultural Centre situated at Carrefour Cornier, Yaounde IV. It is located at an intersection between Anguisa, Emombo and Mvog Ada, precisely around road number: “Rue 4.119”. It is fenced to ensure security and painted in a medium brown colour to enhance its aesthetics and beauty. The hall has a yard for outdoor activities such as; traditional dances, parking, cooking and other outdoor activities. Hence a conducive space to accommodate large crowds of associations members, their automobiles and guests. Picture 2 on

the other hand shows an association member's house. The house is big enough to accommodate twenty members but unsuitable for external socio-cultural activities and huge crowds. Hence apart from possible indoor activities – njangi, savings, thrift and loan, the association venue cannot boast of hosting socio-cultural activities like drumming and dancing.

The pictures demonstrate two association venues; association venue one is large enough to accommodate members from different communities as well as accommodate different socio-cultural displays, a typical place for passive but consistent stay. The second is an individual's house; a place conducive for permanent stay which can accommodate small meetings and their activities. Arguing further, Augé (1997), confirms the above viewpoints as well as responses in Bar Chart Three (3) by saying:

One of the major concerns of ethnology has been to delineate signifying spaces in the world, societies identified with cultures conceived as complete wholes: universe of meaning, of which individuals and groups inside them are just an expression, defining themselves in terms of the same criteria, the same values and the same interpretation procedures [...] urban concentrations, movements of population and the multiplication of what we call 'non-places', in opposition to the sociological notion of place, associated...culture localized in time and space. The installations needed for the accelerated circulation of passengers and goods (high speed roads and railways, interchanges, airports) are just as much as non-spaces as the means of transport themselves, or the great commercial centres, or the extended transit camps where the planet's refugees are parked (Augé, 1997:33-34).

To bring out what he considers place, Augé, (1997: 52), talks of anthropological places saying they are: *“all places whose analysis has meaning because they have been invested with meaning, the need for which is endorsed and confirmed by every new circuit and every ritual reiteration. These places have at least three characteristics in common. They want to be – what people want them to be – places of identity, of relationship and of history.”* Hence though private houses fall within the description of Augé, public venues according to this author are also places – anthropological places – where relationships are created through interaction, socialisation and networking and histories cumulated through socio-cultural activities. Historical elements related to living together (such as events that rally diverse populations) are primordial in this case.

Apart from association venues, there are other spaces in Yaoundé representing Cameroon's cultural heritage such as the National Museum, the Unity Palace and the Reunification Monument.

The Reunification Monument has been illustrated in a picture below. It is a national symbol and an example of a national infrastructure depicting a continuous memorial and quest for unity among Cameroon's diverse cultural communities. Going by Augé's definition of anthropological place, the Reunification Monument is a non-place. However, this space signifies living together because despite being a transient space, it is aimed at creating in people the feeling of belonging and unity. Hence apart from touristic reasons, the convergence of individuals from all walks of life at the Reunification Monument shows recognition, acceptance and respect for the monument and perhaps the course. Converging in such spaces allow people to interact, network, socialize and create relationships that may be temporary or permanent.

Plate 12: The Reunification Monument of Cameroon



Source: @ Yaoundé (Fieldwork: 2021)

Plate Twelve (12) is a representation of one of the Cameroon's places of integration – The Reunification Monument. The Reunification Monument situated at Quartier General in Yaoundé was constructed in the 1970s to memorialize the post-colonial unification of British and French Cameroon. It was crafted by Gedeon Mpondo and Engelbert Mveng. The monument represents

the result of the unity between Cameroon's culturally diverse communities willing to live together in a serene socio-cultural atmosphere for the betterment of the country.

Despite the fore, Socpa (2006), says the culturally diverse nature of the country renders social cohesion a continuous negotiation. Plate Twelve (12) above is a representation of one of Cameroon's places of integration – the Reunification Monument. The Reunification Monument is found in Yaoundé and was constructed in the 1970s to memorialize the post-colonial unification of British and French Cameroon. It was crafted by Gedeon Mpondo and Engelbert Mveng. The monument represents the result of the unity between Cameroon's culturally diverse communities willing to live together in a serene socio-cultural atmosphere for the betterment of the country.

With a comprehensive analysis of the link between intercommunity associations and multiculturalism, a look at sources of disintegration among Cameroon's communities is next.

6.3 CAUSES OF DISINTEGRATION

Prior to the colonial period Yaoundé was mostly inhabited by the Beti. Guyer (1980), agrees with this assertion and argues that before the colonial period, the Beti were the last migrants in the forest who fled over the Sanaga River from the invading Fulani. Quinn (1980), also says these people settled near what would soon be the German inland settlement of Yaoundé, while Moluh (2013), holds that the Beti are the original ethnic communities, inhabitants or 'first comers' of Yaoundé. Socpa (2017) and Guyer (2018) agree with the fore authors. Today Yaoundé is a confluence of almost all the 250 communities of Cameroon, who are integrated through education, profession, intercommunity associations, marriage and public spaces such as the reunification monument, the National Museum, as well as markets, community halls and stadia. However, urbanization, cultural differences expressed along various lines especially ethnicization and poor language use, is believed to have led to a gradual erosion of the country's cultural wealth – diversity – resulting in disintegration of the communities.

6.3.1 Disintegration in Yaoundé Urban Area

Disintegration could be seen as the absence of cohesion (Khosrokhavar, 2021), caused by many factors. Poverty is one of these factors. Kumase (2010:4), in his book titled, *Aspects of*

poverty and inequality in Cameroon”, while looking at the profile and determination of poverty and inequality in Cameroon informs that since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), there has been a rising focus on issues related to poverty and inequality. The author further expresses that between 1990 and 2005; about two-thirds of the country experienced an increase in income inequality. By implication, the income of the “haves” (the rich), increased relative to those of the “have-nots” (the poor). Socially, an interview with 46-year-old, Laurentine on the 8th of June 2021 in Biyem-Assi confirmed that poverty leads to distrust and disintegration in urban areas when she says the poor of some communities tend to make assumptions (such as favoured communities) that lead them to other communities. This respondent looks at the negative implications of socio-economic inequality between the rich and the poor revealing that it is the *“lead cause of distrust among people in Yaoundé”* (Laurentine, Biyem Assi: 08/06/2021). Wobilla (2013), endorses that socio-economic injustice breaths corruption and heightens suspicion and distrust between individuals. Hence socio-economic injustice between the “haves” and the “have-nots” only enhances disintegration among individuals and communities due to feelings of frustration, antagonism and hatred.

Historically, Bisin and Verdier (2015), hold that cultural values can persist over a long time. Similarly, historical events affecting social cohesion of any society can endure for a long period. For instance Ambazonia is a word whose historical origin has created conflicts between individuals and communities (PeaceTech Lab, 2019), with rippling consequences nationwide. Konings (1999), Konings & Nyamnjoh (2003) and Halle (2014) argue that the name was coined in 1984 by a group led by Fon Gorji-Dinka, who unilaterally declared the ‘Republic of Ambazonia’ an independent state that would have comprised all Anglophone – the North West and South West – regions of Cameroon. The term was taken up in 2016 triggered by strike actions of the teachers and lawyers (Awasom, 2020), which inspired pro-independence actors wishing to reassert their identity and separate the Anglophone regions from the rest of Francophone Cameroon (Ani, Kinge, & Ojakorotu, 2018). Anglophone pro-independence actors in a self-descriptive way use Ambazonia to assert an identity and a cause. On the 12th of May 2021, a 38-year-old intra-community association participant Roudrigue, said historical communication reveals circumstances before they take place. Consequently, the use of Ambazonia, a word that originates from Amba Bay – Amba bay is the natural boundary of the former “Republique du Cameroun”

and Southern Cameroons – led to conflict and insecurity with wavelets all over the national territory. Nowadays, insecurity in the two Anglophone regions of Cameroon have escalated into huge losses (both human and property) and division between individuals and communities that has spiralled into other towns of Cameroon, Yaoundé inclusive.

Socio-linguistically, *The Good News Bible*, (1994, Genesis 11: 1-9), introduces language as the origin of division among cultures and people in the story of the “Tower of Babel”. The story recounts the origin of diverse languages in the world as a punitive action from God against people’s pride and arrogance. The “Tower of Babel” is an infrastructure that was built in the land of Shinar (today Babylonia). The people of Babylonia were an integrated and united people speaking one language who decided to build this Tower to make a name for themselves. It is believed that God was provoked because the Tower’s top reached heaven. God decided to confuse the workers by interfering with their communication and make them stop the process. Thus God introduced diverse languages under which humans were regrouped, making it difficult for them to understand one another and hence disintegration. This anecdote shows that despite Cameroon’s great wealth found in its ethnic and linguistic diversity, the dichotomy between French and English has been a source of disintegration in Cameroon for so long. Depalma, Napier and Dze-Ngwa (2015), say statistics remind that linguistic diversity that characterizes the human condition is a fragile thing and that certain languages need to be nurtured if they are to survive into the 21st century and beyond. Hence Cameroon’s bilingual culture and the fact that it is linguistically divided into three categories; the Bantu, semi-Bantu and the Sudanic speaking people place the country in a state of constant linguistic negotiation. From the fore, Musah (2022: 25), argues that English language and Anglophone values were relegated to the background while French was systematically and subtly imposed on the Anglophones and their institutions as a means to assimilate them. However, respect is paid to both languages all over the country today.

From an educational perspective, Christian Cardinal Tumi cited in Dze-Ngwa *et al.* (2009:4), argues that: “*education is the deliberate and systematic influence of the mature upon the immature, through instructions, discipline and the harmonious development of all the faculties of the human being with his end to ensure, but of course, to philosophise*”. However, in an environment where the necessary influence of the mature on the immature is cohesion, the authors argue that conflicts are present within the different political, economic and social divide and within

“the whole ecology of social relationship: the family, the school and the neighbourhood, as well as within and between nations” Dze-Ngwa *et al.* (2009: 4), hence the need for durable peace. This is confirmed by Emmanuel, a 28-year-old University student and member of intra-community association resident in Ngoa Ekelle who says: *“One would expect the school milieu to be the safest of all places like hospitals. It is rather unfortunate that daily headlines in all media platforms carry acts of violence committed in one school or another, especially in Yaoundé”*. If the school milieu presents discordant behaviour, then Dze-Ngwa *et al.* (2009: 9), would be recognized when they recommend that durable peace can only be achieved through sustained peace education. The aforementioned variables are sources of disintegration in Cameroon, especially in urban areas. Nevertheless in this dissertation, stereotypes and hate speech are socio-linguistic practices that proliferate disintegration in urban areas especially as seen in Yaoundé.

6.3.1.1 Stereotyping

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2015: 1463), defines stereotype as *“a fixed idea or image that many people have of a particular person or thing, but which is often not true in reality.”* Moving away from the dictionary, stereotypes are not always untrue, rather they are made of facts that have intentionally been misconstrued to reflect messages that users intend to pass across. Thus, context and intent matter. Communities have also been represented with such ideas or images. These make the stereotyped communities uncomfortable. According to Pickering (2015), stereotyping is a way of representing and judging other people in fixed, unyielding terms. These revolve around alleged characteristic of categories to which people are assigned. Thus, communities are reduced to stereotypes that result from these assigned categories, rather than being understood through the totality of their culture. Hence communities are represented through assigned categories which are incomplete, further homogenized and naturalized. Stereotypes limit perceptions and interpretations, exerting huge influence when they are normalized and seen to be irrevocable and they stir social conflicts. Coser (1956), cited in Dennen (2005: 3), defines social conflict as: *“a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals”*. Social conflicts have been a source of disintegration in many urban areas as well as Yaoundé. Hence Ngolle Ngolle cited by Cameroon Tribune (2019), sustains that social conflicts or stereotypes kill living together.

Allport (1954:191) defines stereotype as “*an exaggerated belief associated with a category. Its function is to justify (rationalize) our conduct in relation to that category*”. Stereotypes play a role in shaping belief about certain aspects of social categories (communities), influencing the way information is perceived, interpreted and acted upon such that the social category (community) is appreciated. Stereotypes have been used to prejudge, dehumanize and push through discrimination of certain aspects of people simply because they belong to given communities. The above definition is quoted in so many stereotype research, especially since Gordon Allport (1954) was a well-known psychologist in his time and author of “*The nature of prejudice*” (Dovidio *et al.*, 2010). Stereotypes represent a tradition of viewing and representing people from a point of view (of a cultural perpetrator) rather than through a balance of all traits of the concerned. This dissertation further holds that the definition explains the role stereotyping plays in the disintegration people and communities in Yaoundé urban area.

Consequently, explaining stereotypes as mentioned by Allport, one can say that they are partially true, however, they homogenize and inflate cultural traits that are seen to characterize specific categories. In other words, these traits are generalized or tagged to all individuals who are part of this specific category (Pickering, 1995). Categories can be any measure such as ethnicity, religion, gender, or age. Once categories are fashioned, perceptions are made and generalized about them. Luthans, 2010 explains that the individual/community stereotyping another usually does so based on their knowledge about the community or group in general. According to Pickering (2001), stereotypes tagged on groups are usually seen to be simplistic, inflexible and inaccurate, and these stereotypes can hurt the socio-cultural identities of individuals and communities. Since stereotypes do not consider similarities in individuals and communities, they have destructive effects on same. This implies they promote erroneous perceptions of people, their culture and behaviors. McShane and Von Glinow (2014) reject the fore statement saying that not all stereotypes are exaggerations or false, but that stereotypes often have some truthfulness. Stereotypes, are not always untrue or negative in nature. Stereotypic beliefs or perceptions can be positive (for example ‘Asians are good students and employees’), negative (‘senior citizens are too old to be good employees’) or neutral – ‘Australians like cricket’ – (Mullins, 2010; Whitley & Kite, 2006). Therefore, it should not be perceived that all stereotypes are a clear representation of all members belonging to a given community or the totality of the community.

From an Anthropological lens Socpa (2016), argues that in the 1990s, ethnicity was expressed politically through a growing emphasis of labels such as “autochthon” and “allochthons” in Yaoundé. This meant a dichotomy between those who belong and those who do not in Yaoundé. To understand the origin and use of these stereotypes, the author asked questions such as ‘where do these labels come from? To what do they refer and how are they defined and used by elite groups and political parties? According to him, under Cameroon’s first post-colonial government headed by Ahmadou Ahidjo, inter-ethnic relations between the Beti and Bamileke were relatively harmonious. (Socpa, 2016; Tioworkonko,1993: 121; Geschiere, 1995: 4) hold that this peaceful situation slowly degenerated from 1982 when Paul Biya became president. President Biya hails from Bulu ethnic group of the Beti tribe of the South Region (Fonchingong, 2004), of Cameroon and his government has made concerted attempts to stimulate the emergence of a Beti economic force (Socpa, 2016). According to Konings & Nyamnjoh (2003), despite concrete official support, such as huge government subsidies for Beti entrepreneurs, results are mostly disappointing, and this has, over the years, reinforced existing stereotypes that place Bamileke “businessmen” in opposition with Beti “bureaucrats”. These are stereotypic labels capable of igniting feud. Despite the fore, one of the most glaring challenges in recent years has been a shift from ethnic labels to differentiating communities through “autochthons” and “allochthons”.

Stereotyping therefore, is the way through which generalized representations and judgments are made of individuals and communities based on certain characteristics as will be seen further. Another cause of disintegration is hate speech.

6.3.1.2 Hate Speech

This is the use of derogatory language against individuals and communities. Language is a cultural tool specific to human beings and distinguishes them from other living things (Weitzman, 2013). Its use can foster or slow down living together among people and diverse communities. This is because language allows people to express their perceptions of self and others in various ways. This thought is credited by Tamfuh (2020: 193), when he says: “*Utterances are communicative acts produced as individual self-expression of social reality referred to as the instrument of society*”. This means as a cultural tool, the use of language with malicious intent can lead to disharmony in society. Language for instance has been used as an online mobilization tool

especially through Facebook to spread hate and to disinform (Jules Roger, 2018). According to PeaceTech Lab (2014), hate speech has been a feature of modern Congolese politics, including the time of the first free elections in 2006. Local Youth Corner Cameroon (2019:4), quoting (Cohen-Almagor, 2013), says hate speech is defined as a bias-motivated, hostile, malicious speech aimed at a person or a group of people because of some of their actual or perceived innate characteristics. Hate speech conveys discriminatory, intimidating, disapproving, antagonistic, and/or prejudicial attitudes toward those characteristics, which include gender, race, religion, ethnicity, colour, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation. Cameroon Tribune (2019), displays the reactions of Professor Elvis Ngolle Ngolle, a Cameroonian and political scientist regarding hate speech. He defines hate speech as any language be it verbal or body language, any write up, declaration, any word, conversation, reports and research work that are intended to hurt someone or group, inflict pain, exclude or destroy someone else. The above author holds that for some time now in Cameroon, there is an upsurge of hate speeches disseminated through social media networks, audio and print media, which destroys society and blocks people. The expansion of hate speech in Cameroon can be explained in two things. The democratic political and governance system that have been put in place allow people to feel free and want to exercise their freedom. People are expressing this freedom in a way that is not in conformity with the law, but rather reflects their states of mind, social status, economic and social conditions and negativity. The second reason is that due to modern communication (internet) and globalization, there is a tendency of people copying what is seen elsewhere. Automation makes it easy for people copy things from elsewhere and practice in Cameroon. This according to the Cameroon Tribune (2019), is the wrong way of reacting to globalization and modern communication that is more and more instant. Hate speech kills living together, national cohesion, national unity, and patriotism. Tackling hate speech, necessitate a revisit not to history but to Cameroon's cultures. The founding fathers of Cameroon believed in and had the vision of a country united in diversity among its cultures, (Cameroon Tribune, 2019). Consequently, hate speech destroys this culture – living together – promotes anti-diversity among people, creates social conflicts, ripping individuals and communities apart. According to Oxford Advanced Dictionary (2015: 687), hate means to have a strong feeling of dislike for someone or something. Oxford Advanced Dictionary (2015: 1431), holds that speech could be a formal talk, that a person gives to an audience, the ability to speak, the way in which a

particular person speaks, and the language used when speaking. Hate speech has been used in diverse ways to express and represent individuals and communities derogatorily. Bringing together hate and speech and going by the definition of OAD hate speech can be defined as the derogatory use of language against a disliked individual, community or something.

Local Youth Corner Cameroon (2019), in a study titled “*Hate Speech and Violent Conflict in Cameroon*” argues that apart from violent conflict in Cameroon resulting from poor governance, poverty, discrimination, and marginalisation, another fuelling factor is hate speech. It explains that the phenomenon grew from the days of colonialism to independence and to the birth and growth of democracy extending to the present. In examining the relationship between hate speech and violent conflict in Cameroon, the author used secondary data from off and online interviews, surveys, focus group discussions with young people, traditional and religious authorities, social media influencers, civil society actors and government officials identified from five regions in the four geopolitical regions of Cameroon: South West, Far North, Littoral, Centre and North West regions as well as the diaspora communities. The author holds that hate speech appears as propaganda, fake news, falsehood and destroys social cohesion in Cameroon. Same hate speech is emerging among politicians during elections as well as civilians against government or citizens fanning violent conflict in Cameroon. The study demonstrates the process involved in hate speech leading to violence as well as presents examples of commonly used hate terms and the main authors of hate speech in the country. The publication accentuates on the predominant influence of hate speech in fuelling the current crisis in the Far North, Northwest and the Southwest regions of Cameroon and brings out eight positive practices undertaken by young people in Cameroon toward solving hate speech. It suggests among many recommended solutions that public condemnations of hate speech by government and citizens are not enough and calls for legislation to curtail and penalize users of hate speech. In reaction, the government in 2019 endorsed Law No 2019/020 of December 24, 2019, to amend and supplement some provisions of Law No 2016/7 of July 12, 2016, relating to Penal Code outlining penalties to be meted on persons found guilty of hate speech. Despite the fore, hate speech and stereotyping still exists in urban areas.

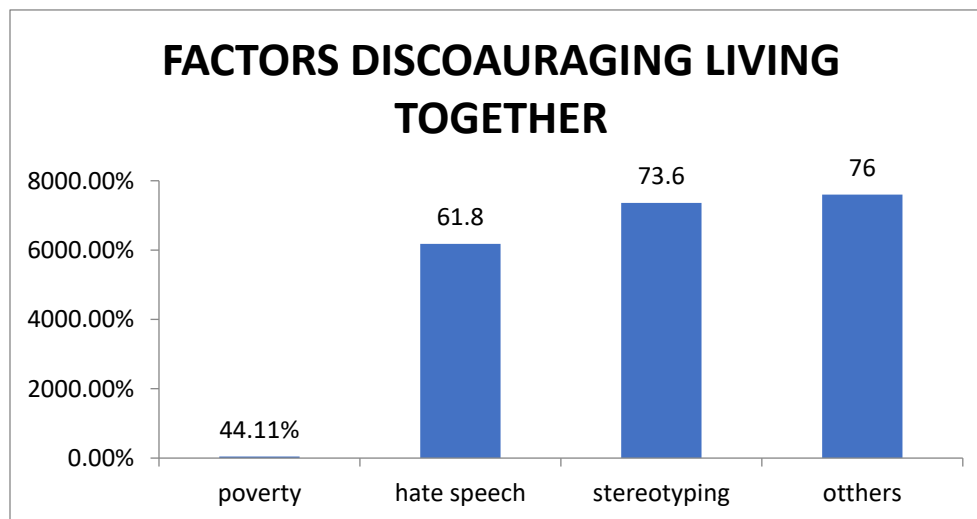
The views above are consolidated by Local Youth Corner Cameroon (2019), which carried out research in Cameroon to understand the dynamics of online hate speech and the connection between online hate speech and offline violent events. The research found interest in identifying

and contextualizing language as a contributive factor to violence. It identified and contextualized inflammatory language embedded with hate that could lead to violence from which they created lexicons that can feed monitoring software to better track how hate speech spreads and who is using it. This lexicon investigates the landscape of online hate narratives in Cameroon and argues that since 2016, Cameroon has seen an uptake in hateful and inflammatory rhetoric in the context of an intensifying crisis between Anglophone and Francophone communities and political elites – a crisis that is rooted in dynamics sown in Cameroon’s colonial past from transition to independence and post-independence era, today.

In this complex context, hate speech in Cameroon according to Local Youth Corner Cameroon (2019), is used as a tool to achieve political and material ends. It is also used to disparage, exclude, dehumanize, foster hate and disintegration among individuals and communities in urban spaces. Hate speech has not only been applied on online platforms, but it is also used in daily relationships in almost everywhere in urban areas. It is used in the markets, schools, on the road, job site among others. Its increase as well as the use of stereotyping carry cultural attributes – such as guide people’s perceptions and interpretations about accepting or rejecting ‘others’ – that cause disintegration among persons and communities in urban spaces. The prevalence of hate speech across online platforms as well as in public debates such as that which preceded 2018 presidential election often have harmful consequences. This lexicon’s aim was to serve as an initial guide to specific words and phrases identified during a finite period in Cameroon (Local Youth Corner Cameroon, 2019). Abel (2019), says division looms over Cameroon due to its bilingual culture –English and French – use that plunged the country into a strife in 2016. Cameroon’s bilingual culture regarded as a unifying factor in the country also plays a divisive role as seen in the use of both languages to spread hate. Thus, Local Youth Corner Cameroon conducted a series of focus group discussions with representatives of Cameroon civil society members coming from all 10 regions meeting in Yaoundé to validate the meaning and context of hate speech terms, whereby their discussions were centered on how online hate narratives can fuel violence on the ground. Based on the fore

and fieldwork, hate speech and stereotyping are advanced as socio-cultural causes of disintegration in urban areas as shown in Bar Chart 4.

Bar graph 4: Factors influencing socio-cultural disintegration.



Source: @ Yaoundé (2021)

Graph 4 demonstrates factors discouraging living together in Yaoundé urban area. According to the Graph, 44.11% of the total population said poverty promotes disintegration; hence 55.89 are of a contrary opinion. Secondly, 61.8% of the total population confirmed that the use of hate speech causes disintegration therefore 38.2 percent disagrees on this fact. With regards to stereotypes, 73.6% held that it promotes disintegration in Yaoundé; 26.4 hold a contrary view. Lastly 76% of the entire population held that other factors discourage living together in Yaoundé. According to respondents, others include intra-community associations and the media.

Socpa (2002: 38), recalls that stereotypic representations had been in existence before the 1990s, “*mais n’avaient pas l’audience qu’elles ont acquise depuis le debut du processus démocratique*”, loosely translated in English as ; (but did not have the magnitude that they have gained with the advent of democratic processes). In recent past, stereotyping could not be used in public spaces because people feared being tagged as “tribalistic”. However, modern communication technology today facilitates its spread nowadays. Kleis (1980), says despite disagreement with generalization, there are more “ethnic” manifestations in urban areas than exist

in the rural. Drawing especially from Igbo migrants in Cameroon reveals that rural centres often favour the articulation of an ethnic identity which is, in some respects, more functional and consolidated in towns. Kleis (1980), acknowledges that the Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth and his colleagues broke new ground with their provocative analyses of ecological factors which condition the maintenance of ethnic boundaries. They noted that individuals often downplay or transform their ethnic identity in response to the local environmental situation or particular ecological niche that the group comes to occupy. Thus due to culture contact communities would undergo a cultural shift – become users of stereotypes and hate speech – in response to stereotypic and hates speech they face in their present environment while others find solace in association lifestyle. From the works of authors above, stereotyping and the use of hate speech are not new. A synthesis of stereotypes and hate speech coupled with ideas from individuals and communities in Yaoundé is presented below. The result is an expression of what is slowly yet denting Cameroon’s greatest wealth – cultural diversity – especially as seen in Yaoundé urban area. Some commonly used stereotypes and derogatory words are presented below.

6.3.1.3 Some Stereotypes, Hate Speeches, their Origins and Consequences

Stereotyping and hate speech are socio-linguistic push factors that urge common community members to recoil in intra-community associations and ascertain (W. G. Nkwi, 2017), their “derogatorily” assigned identity – their misjudged/hated identity and values – through belonging. Thus, language has been used stereotypically to label, dismember/exclude, dehumanize, malign, and destroy the dignity and identity of individuals and communities in urban and other areas of Cameroon. They have been seen above as factors that impair multiculturalism in favor of disintegration. Some stereotypes and hate speeches, their origin, use and implications as illustrated below are a blend of results from primary and secondary sources.

➤ **“Serpent à Deux Têtes”,**

Otherwise called “taxi-men”, “taxi-man”, “backstabbers”, “*traitres*” or “traitors”, are derogatory terms used to represent members of the Bamum community and the community itself as traitors and inferior. An interview with Martin, a 45-year-old in Ahala said the appellation “*serpent a deux têtes*”, loosely transcribed in English as “two-headed snake”. originates from the

“Bamum cultural and ancestral symbol found at the entrance to the Bamum palace signifying the victory of the conflict fought between the Bamum and the Pou community in the 19th century. The symbol signifies power and protection. However, since it is believed that a two headed snake just like a double-edged sword is an appellation that implies treachery, the Bamum are seen as treacherous. They have for a long time dominated the taxi industry especially in Yaoundé, hence the appellation “taxi-men” (Martin, Ahala: 10/09/2019). This portrays the misinterpretation and misuse of a community’s traditional symbol and source of livelihood by some, to misrepresent the entire community. Notwithstanding, when used among community members the meaning is totally different. Thus depending on the context and intent the appellation can be stereotypic or not.

➤ **“Mutton”**

Alternatively called “Nordiste” and “terrorist”, “mutton” (sheep in English) is a terminology used to refer to the people of the Northern region of Cameroon to mean the animal “sheep” or “senseless”. Hamidou a 46-year-old during an interview on the 9th of September 2021 at Carrière confirmed that: *“I would get offended being called ‘mutton’ when I just came to Yaoundé. I would feel less human. But today, it doesn’t bother me anymore. My friends and I nicknamed each other ‘mutton’ and use it among us” (Hamidou, Carrière : 09/09/2021).* The term is used to denote inferiority against this community and its members. Its aim is to refer to the Northerners as followers – people who move without any sense of purpose just like the sheep do. Representing members of this community as “Mutton” has become a norm to the extent that it doesn’t bother the people again. Notwithstanding, stereotypes hurt the cultural identity of communities.

➤ **Proud for Nothing”**

Otherwise called “*craine dans le vide*”, “*vide poche*” (limpidly translated in English as ‘empty pockets’), “mami water”, “mami wata” “*timbre dans la poche*”, (literarily translated in English as ‘stamps in pockets’) are terminologies used to lable individuals from the Duala community. An interview with Emmanuella, a 29-year-old student and member of an intra-community association interviewed on the 9th of September 2021 stated that: *“les gens nous appellent, “vide poche”, “mami wata”! eh bien ça ne veut rien dire pour nous parce qu'on sait de quoi on est fait”* (this loosely translated in English as; People call us “empty pocket” and “mami

water”, well that’s nothing because we know our worth). “Proud for nothing” is a language used against members of the Duala community to insinuate laziness while Mami water is used to mean they are witches and wizards in inference to “*jeungu*” – a water ritual culture of this community which has been misinterpreted and given a negative connotation. Jeungu called ‘leungu’ in Bakweri is a water goddess venerated by the Sawa people. “Timbre dans la poche” suggests a community made up of people who are ever ready to sue their offenders. There are many other reasons. Adding to the list, Socpa (2002: 40), says the Duala are also known by the representations; ‘Kodock’, ‘Dicka Akwa’, ‘Yondo Black’. These according to the author are people from the Duala community considered to have been at the origin of political opposition in the country. Hence member of the Duala community are labeled after the fore-mentioned personalities.

➤ “Sorcellerie”

According to André, a 36-year-old Bassa association member, interviewed in Madagascar on the 10th of September 2021: “*the Bassa are usually called “sorcellerie”, “musong”, “nganyu”, “nsemiss”* (André, Madagascar: 10/09/2021). These are stereotypic words used to describe members of the Bassa community. These words imply that people from this community have a strong affinity for sorcery (witchcraft). These words create a belief system that causes receivers of the information to reject members of the community. Thus they have dehumanizing connotations since they instigate fear in anyone relating with members of this community.

➤ “Anglo-fou”,

A focus group discussion with three (3) men and four (4) women in Simbock on the 3rd of March 2021, revealed that: “*Being people from the North West (Region), we are called many names by Francophones and Anglophones from the South West as well. Francophones call us ‘les bamendas’ ‘anglofou’, ‘anglo folle’, ‘anglo-fools’, ‘les anglos’, ‘anglo fu-fu’, ‘anglo-bête’ while Anglophones of the South West region call us “graffi”, or ‘cam no go”*. (Focus Group Discussion: 03/03/2021). Local Youth Corner Cameroon, (2019), analyses the words “*anglofou*”, “*anglofools*”, “*anglo folle*”, “*les anglos*”, “*anglo fou-fou*”, “*anglo fu-fu*”, “*anglo-bête*” and said they are used to denote Anglophones by Francophones. The authors said these are contracted forms of terms ‘Anglophone’ (somebody who speaks English) and ‘fou,’ which is an adjective meaning

‘inferior’ or ‘foolish’. *‘Les bamendas’* portray same definitions. Hence Anglophones are seen as foolish and inferior. In addition to the above claims, Socpa (2002: 43), says *“in ways that are injurious, Anglophones are called ‘Nigerians’ or ‘Biafrans’.”* Nigeria is used to represent the proximity of the English-speaking regions of Cameroon to Nigeria, as well as excluding and reminding these communities that they originate from Nigeria so they should be suspected of having secessionists’ vestiges in reference to the Nigerian Biafra war of 1967. Thus, they are an “other” and do not belong.

➤ **“Graffi”**

W. G. Nkwi (2017), engaged a study on migration of Bamenda Grassfielders to the littoral region of Cameroon and analyzed how over space and time association lifestyle enabled continuity of community identity in a socio-heterogeneous setting. The author argues that North Westerners are often identified as “graffie”, a concept which traces its roots to the 1930s and became a strong term in the language of most Cameroonians in 1990s. “Graffie”, a creolized word which means “people from the Bamenda Grassfields” has been used to identify them as people from the Bamenda Grassfields as well as vilify them as being “less civilized” as compared to the “civilized” coastal people. Geographically, the Bamenda Grassfields region is made up of savannah, interspersed with forests in the valleys. This author implies that the name “graffie” had been constructed over the years due to continuous movement from the Northwest ‘grass fielders’ to the coastal region of Cameroon following push-pull factors. Hence by creating intra-community associations, these communities are ascertaining their “graffiness” – their identity and values – through belonging. Yenshu Vubo (2008) and Kah (2019), recognize the use of the term “graffie” to denote people from the grassfields. Equally in a bid to confirm the information from the Focus Group above, Local Youth Corner Cameroon (2019), explains that “Ngelafis”, “ngelafi”, “graffi thing”, “graffi people”, “graffi man”, “Bamenda”, “graffi” are “cam-no-go”, “gelaffi”, “Bamileke” are alternative words for “graffie” and “cam-no-go”. They say it is a Pidgin word derived from the phonetic pronunciation of the English words ‘grass field’. They are commonly used by both Francophones and South Western Anglophones to refer to people from the Northwest Region of Cameroon, as people from the grass fields. When used by the Francophones, the language becomes more offensive. The author further argues that it means people from this part of the country are

“selfish, crafty, have a hidden agenda”, “uncultured and uncivilized”. While stereotyping can be considered as untrue, they are incomplete representation of a community ‘s people and culture.

➤ **“Cam-no-go”**

“*Cam-no-go*” alternatively stands for “*l’ennemi dans...la maison*”, “*come-no-go*”, “*came-on-go*”, “*came-no-go*”, - Graffi are *come-no-go*”, “*Ghana must go*”, “*Wajili* (in Bakweri language), “*Wangala*” (in Bakweri language). According to Kah (2019), the re-introduction of multi-party politics and the liberalization of politics in Cameroon during the 1990s saw the use of ‘venomous’ conflict instigating language in some cities. In the South West region, “*come-no-go*,” synonymous to a dreaded skin disease, was/is frequently used to denigrate people from the grass-fields of the country. In Yaoundé the author says the archbishop of at the time called Anglophones “*l’ennemi dans...la maison*” *lipidly translated in English as the “enemies in the house.”* This proceeded the coming of the ‘Social Democratic Front (SDF)’ political party in Bamenda against government laws. The author continues that against national unity and integration of 1961, this language in Cameroon’s urban area is derogatory and has led to conflicts and segregation. “*Cam-no-go*” is a pidginized way of stating that something comes and stays for good – it ‘comes and doesn’t go’ or “permanent imigrants” (Yenshu Vubo, 2006:139). It was originally used to refer to a common skin disease that is particularly persistent and difficult to treat. The phrase was first used in 1996 by the Governor of the Southwest Region, Oben Peter Ashu (Yenshu Vubo, 2006:139) to refer to people from the North west Region who had moved to and settled in the Southwest Region, in the context of asking them to leave as if they had recently come. Since then, according to the Author, the use of the term has widened to refer to any “settlers who have refused to return to where they came from meaning they are “unwanted,”. This endorses the autochthones and allochthones assertions of Socpa, (2016) The distinction made by Yenshu Vubo, (2006), as “*the popular imagination between people considered indigenes (sons of the soil), “settlers”, on the one hand, and others considered immigrants, non-natives or “come no go”.*” (Yenshu Vubo, 2006:139). Kah (2012: 77), confirms the above saying: “*North Westerners detested being referred to by South Westerners as “come-no-go”.* Despite their localized usage, their implications are a threat to living together.

➤ **“Ambazonia” and “Ambazozo”**

Local Youth Corner Cameroon (2019), says they are often substituted with words like Southern Cameroons, West Cameroon, Anglophone Cameroon, “Ambazonie”, “Ambazonie”, “Ambazonians”, “Ambazonian”, “Ambaland”, “Ambazonian terrorists”, “secessionists”, “seperatists”, “restorationists”, “Ambavirus”. These terms originate from the word Amba Bay. A bay is considered a natural boundary of the former “Republique du Cameroun” and Southern Cameroons. The name was coined in 1984 by a group led by Fon Gorji Dinka, who unilaterally declared the ‘Republic of Ambazonia’ an independent state that would comprise the two Anglophone Cameroon regions. Local Youth Corner Cameroon (2019) explains that the term was taken up again following 2016 events by pro-independence actors wishing to reassert their identity and separate the Anglophone regions from the rest of Francophone Cameroon and has been used by Anglophone pro-independence actors in a self-descriptive way to proclaim an identity and a course. The name is a repudiation of Cameroon’s identity – unity in diversity – hence using it means instigating conflict and disintegration. When used to refer to all Anglophones, or when used in combination with ‘terrorist,’ they take a more belligerent meaning –stigmatization. Hence the word instills fear. From an Anthropological lens, these are cultural misconceptions whose role is to shift the identities of individuals and communities from who and what they’ve always perceived of themselves to new, external and circumstantial ones ascribed by others.

➤ **“Two Cubes of Sugar in a Basin of Water”**

According to Musah (2022 :32) and Local Youth Corner Cameroon (2019), this phrase was first used by Cameroon’s Minister of Higher Education at a high-level forum in 2016, to represent the North West and South West Anglophone communities of Cameroon as two cubes of sugar in a basin of water that will dissolve. A majority/minority subculture representation can be deduced from this phrase by observing that, it symbolizes the use of language to describe a whole community – Anglophone Cameroonians – as being insignificant in relation to the majority

Francophone Cameroonian communities. It is considered to have incited Anglophone public opinion leading to a spiraling of the 2016 crisis.

➤ **“Franco-frog”**

According to Asobo (2015), the anglophone students called the francophones ‘franco-fools’ and ‘frogs’. These are stereotypic conceptions that wound the cultural identities of communities and they are discordant in nature. Often substituted with terms such as “*crapaud*”, “frogs”, “franco-fools”, “*franco-fou*”, “*francobete*”. ‘Franco,’ stems from Francophone (French speaking), and ‘frog’ (the amphibian). It is a term used to refer to Francophone Cameroonians, connecting them to their French colonial heritage. According to Local Youth Corner Cameroon (2019), referring to the French as ‘frogs’ has murky origins but was popularized during WWII by British and US soldiers. However, it is currently used in Cameroonian context, with negative attributes to the Francophone Cameroonians, linking them with French cultural identity. The author mentions attitudes such as being arrogant, loud, boisterous and speaking without really conveying any useful message. This correlation does not only represent the Cameroonian Francophone community negatively but extends same to the French community. This is a dehumanizing and disparaging way of representing entire communities. Other such attack and counter attack terminologies in daily use are *les sardinards* (the Beti communities), versus “*anti sardinards*” and “*les tontinards*” (the Bamileke community), while some used by Local Youth Corner Cameroon (2019), are: Rat, Dog, (a representation of Francophones) Biafra (used to represent people from the South West region of Cameroon), Black leg (representing the Bamum) and Bamilek – the Bamileke community.

➤ **“Mbami”**

Ngap Fohkjav (1992: 82-86), cited in Socpa (2002: 38), “*Mbami*”, otherwise called ‘*Marquisards*’, ‘*Etrangers*’, ‘*Envahisseurs*’, ‘*Ntongtu*’, ‘*Twitwi*’, ‘*Chiches*’, ‘*Villageois*’, ‘*Juifs*’, ‘*Petits*’, ‘*famla*’, “*Commerçants au Cameroun*”, “*Entrepreneur*”, “*Solidaire*”, are ways of describing the Bamileke community. Socpa (2002: 41), argues that the Bamilekes have been given various names such as: ‘*Travailleur*’, ‘*bamile-cons*’, ‘*bosniarques*’, ‘*chinois*’. This author holds

that the Bamileke are represented as “*bosniarques*” in allusion to the Bosnian Herzégovine confrontations, while “chinois” is in reference to the Chinese. Thus, these represent the Bamileke as the most populated Cameroonian community who have infiltrated every corner of the country.

➤ “Bête”

Socpa (2002: 41), writes that ‘*Bête*’ is the worst way to dishonor the Beti community. Alternatively known as ‘*betise*’, ‘*seigneurs de la forêt*’. They are also called ‘*migrateurs*’, seen as herbivores that eat everything on their way, ‘*des ambianceurs*’, and ‘*des jouisseurs*’, represented as people who adore ‘*les plaisirs du bas ventre*’ (Socpa: 2002), consumers of red wine which implies that they are the happiest people on earth. The Beti are also called ‘*Pays Organisateur*’, meaning they belong to the elected class, thus invited to the national feast. These are destructive misrepresenting of the cultural identity of an entire community. Stereotyping can be considered untrue or true. It is a linguistic malpractice showing incomplete knowledge and representation of a community’s culture with intended and unintended consequences.

Stereotypes and hate speech propagate prior beliefs, misinformation and hate. Stereotypes create prejudices about communities, shifting their cultural identities towards the perspective of reductionism just as much as hate speech foster otherness among communities. These linguistic tools function in creating a sense of exclusion, pushing people to recline to their comfort circles – intra-community associations. With knowledge about intercommunity associations (such as professional, alumni, leisure, religious among others) as pathways of multiculturalism as well as factors that destroy living together in urban areas, the next section discusses how intra-community associations fail to enhance multiculturalism.

6.4. INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS AS PROMOTERS OF MONOCULTURALISM

Community association as an urban practice rallies people for various reasons. The values surrounding these reasons influence their expansion. Intercommunity associations for instance are as many as the foundation upon which they are created (for example professional, leisure, religion, and alumni) however, the fact that living together is advanced by these associations is hinged on

the diversity of their membership. Intra-community associations on the other hand assemble people from common communities of origin primarily for cultural sustainability, mutual aid and community development. The last two reasons cut across both types of associations. However, based on the problematic of this dissertation, the focal point about intra-community association rests on their ability to influence living together through their socio-cultural activities.

Intra-community associations depict a micro point of interaction among people of common community of origin. Intra-community association through socio-cultural activities allows individuals to interact, socialize, learn, share and hand down cultural values to younger generations. The meanings and values derived from and bestowed to these activities strengthen social bonds among community members. This is in line with what Cole (2020:1) says: *“the central principle of the interactionist perspective is that the meaning we derive from and attribute to the world around us is a social construction produced by everyday social interaction”*. The interactionist theory was employed to explain how association members through memberships, socio-cultural activities which are facilitated and exposed by information communication technology. Together they enhance interaction, socialization, integration, networking and create bonds that enhance group cohesion among themselves. This creates a feeling of belonging among association members and exclusion from other communities. It equally encourages the preservation of community culture and monoculturalism against the backdrop of multiculturalism. However, because objects do create meanings for themselves, association members use socio-cultural activities such as cultural festivals, celebration of happy and sorrowful events to regroup not only intra-community members but intercommunity members as well as to learn, share, and hand down their cultural values and their interpretations. Food and drinks shared during interactions carry symbolic connotations embedded in group and community values. These all culminate to the creation of long-lasting bonds among members and strengthening of group cohesion. Linh (2019:20), elucidates the information above by saying, Herbert Blumer emphasizes that objects do not own their meanings. Rather, the meanings of objects are born through social interaction. Hence through socio-cultural activities and the use of information communication technology intra-community association members interact, create various networks which further facilitate group cohesion among one another.

The meanings of objects are known when people interact with each other and these shape people's behaviour (Turino, 1999). Communication through symbols and language for example is one of such ways meaning is created from associations life in society. Interaction creates a social behaviour among those concerned within a given context and the process allows individuals to adjust towards those bonds which are determined by reciprocity. Hence, they impact the thought patterns and values, norms, customs – events and experiences – that constitute a community. In this dissertation, it is realized that social bonds are created in a reciprocal manner among individuals and between members of communities, when people interact (Hwang, 1987). This leads to the creation of social networks with an emphasis on the value of reciprocity. Interacting with members of common community allows for preservation of group values since the same way of life is recreated and through enculturation shapes the way people relate with one another in communities (Ajrouch, 2000). Consequently, the practice of intra-community association enhances loyalty to one's culture and solidarity among community members which leads to group cohesion and preservation of community culture. Along with the fore, intra-community associations encourage group cohesion through interaction, networking, unity, and solidarity among members (Van Houtum, 2004). Such interactions are facilitated by socio-cultural activities, such as “njangi”, sinking fund, thrift and loans and activities of cultural events to name these. Such occasions and the results thereof indicate the willingness of members of intra-community associations to interact with one another for mutual aid and development of community of origin. Hence interacting allows intra-community associations to foster group cohesion and preserve community culture. Notwithstanding, cultural events that allow intra-community associations to integrate diverse communities make intercommunity interaction and integration possible. Hence intra-community associations promote multiculturalism. The second theory of interest is functionalism as shown below.

To give more insight to the above reasoning, the role of intra-community associations in urban areas is appreciated by how members sort to overcome feelings of unacceptance, intolerance and exclusion. Forthwith, intra-community associations play a manifest role in promoting feelings of belonging, unity and group cohesion. For example, encouraging education through scholarships by community association is a manifestation of the role intra-community associations play towards promoting the welfare of individuals and their communities of origin. Within the context of this

thesis, such socio-cultural activities – meetings, dancing, dressing, food among others – play a role in improving interaction, networking, a sense of belonging and unity among community members. Hence mutual aid and community development activities encourage group interaction and interdependence which further influence intra-community cohesion. Community cohesion creates a feeling of belonging, inclusion and exclusion. Members feel included to the association and community as well a latent feeling of exclusion from others who do not make part of the association. This defines what Socpa (2002) and Yenshu Vubo (2008) term “autochthones and allouchthones” or inclusion and exclusion (Sung, 2021). Inclusion otherwise known as “the us/our”, members of intra-community associations of given communities and exclusion refers to “the them”, non-members of “our intra-community association” and community. Hence people’s behaviours shift towards protecting the “ours” against the “them,” cultural traits which are which are unwritten and unspoken yet enculturated in upcoming generations.

However, socio-culturally members of intra-community associations communicate unwritten messages. They organize various types of cultural events – *‘born house’*, marriage, death celebrations, cultural festivals among others with entertainment practices that carry cultural identity markers. These activities have potentials to nurture integration and living together when done over and over. Hence, the food they cook, how they eat, the people they eat with are part of urban daily activities. Similarly, what people drink, the way they drink and who they drink with can influence attitudes towards one another. The clothes people wear, how they accessorize them and when they wear them can impact attitudes and living together. Most intra-community associations have uniforms sewn from loin cloths – women sew gown (locally known as “Kaba” and an appellation from the dressing style of the Duala community) while men sew shirts and wear over a pair of trousers. This dressing style is an adaptation to promotion of unity, comfort and environment. Even though different communities have dressing styles that identify them with their communities of origin, women of most associations wear “kaba” to accommodate their various metamorphic stages of life – anti and post-natal body shapes and sizes. During events celebrations *‘asoebi’* translates this unifying value of dressing across different communities. Since it is worn by members and non-members of common community. Thus, dressing has unifying values. Notwithstanding, The thesis titled: *“Community association within the framework of*

multiculturalism in urban areas of Cameroon: The case of Yaoundé. A contribution to Anthropology of Development,” studies community association as a cultural practice looking at membership and socio-cultural activities as a way of life that plays a role on multiculturalism in Yaoundé.

It was appreciated that within intra-community associations where individuals – from common community, however separated by difference in social spectrum – facilitate intra-community integration through membership registration, preservation of community cultural identity, interactions, formation of social ties and respect for cultural values via social networks and the new media.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ANTHROPOLOGY, COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION AND IMPACT ON MULTICULTURALISM

Chapter seven is a discussion of role plaid by community associations on living together in Yaoundé which is the crux of this Chapter. Structured in two sections, the first part examines the relationship between community association and anthropology while the second examines the impact of community associations on multiculturalism. The structural-functionalist – with selected latent and manifest concepts – and interactionist theories evoked in Chapter Three are applied to examine the above relationship among members as well as between communities in Yaoundé urban area using an anthropological lens.

7.1 LINK BETWEEN ANTHROPOLOGY AND COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Anthropology as a discipline studies human beings holistically. Hence it studies human beings from a cultural approach. As a branch, Development Anthropology handles all aspects of people's cultural and developmental lifestyles. Therefore this branch studies how cultural patterns affect people's behaviour and society. Community association in this thesis is the coming together of individuals – intra-culturally or interculturally – for socio-cultural and economic reasons. Categorized into intercommunity and intra-community associations, it is realized that intercommunity associations enroll individuals from diverse communities for specific reasons as well as for solidarity, socialisation, interaction, networking and creation of social ties that can culminate into multiculturalism. Intra-community association on the other hand rallies persons from common community of origin for the sake of solidarity, mutual aid, community development and preservation of cultural heritage. These associations carry out socio-cultural activities whose meanings exert manifest and latent functions on the attitudes of individuals. The role played by these activities on the attitude of individuals has rippling effects on association members and coexisting communities. Hence from fieldwork it could be deduced that community associations consciously or unconsciously influence multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area.

Community association is a normalized urban culture in Yaoundé. Through CA, individuals group themselves along various lines of affiliations (common community, education, profession, leisure) to make life worth living. Somerville (2008), in a report titled “*Hometown Associations: An untapped resource for immigrant integration?*”, studies community associations based on a common hometown and affirms that they are organizations that bring members together for social, cultural, political, and economic empowerment. The author’s emphasis is placed on what he terms the “often-overlooked” characteristics of HTAs as potential intermediaries of integration in their destination country. In Yaoundé urban area, and in agreement with Somerville (2008), community associations are intermediaries of integration and living together (Monju, 2019). However, the later author bases his arguments on intercommunity associations saying they influence social cohesion and multiculturalism in Cameroon. This dissertation investigates community associations laying emphasis on the role they – intra-community associations – play on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area.

Anthropologically, the objectives (solidarity, mutual assistance, community development and cultural sustainability), composition (members), organization (administrative, social, economic, and cultural), socio-cultural activities (njangi, savings, thrift and loan, events celebrations, eating, drinking together among others) and the bonds that are created between members make CA an anthropological concern. From the afore-mentioned, the values attached to the functions of these associations and how they influence coexistence in a multicultural space – Yaoundé – shows that CA culture is well-suited for Anthropology of Development. It is worth mentioning that studying the role community association plays on living together in Yaoundé urban area is a pertinent anthropological concern. A report involving a study of 100 Mexican HTAs spread all over the United States of American, Orozco (2003), argues that:

Hometown associations (HTAs) fulfil several functions; from social exchange and political influence to the pursuit of low scale development goals in their home community [...] have increasingly been working to improve their towns. [...] With the emergence of HTAs and their efforts to improve their communities, it is important to determine the extent of their ability to participate in development and to forge alliances with other players. [...] Certain features that make it possible for an organization to work on development projects include: choosing to promote some form of social, economic, or cultural development, the ability to improve quality of life; the capacity

to allocate resources, and the ability to identify needs and assess the impact of their assistance (Orozco, 2003: 3-4).

The above report of Mexican HTAs resident in the USA, is relatively a simulation of the Anthropological context of the practice of intra-community association in Yaoundé urban area. The practice and its socio-cultural activities; economically (promote self-help through sinking fund, “njangi”, thrift and loan schemes, several forms of fund raising, and community development via sinking fund), socially (socialisation, interaction, networking and bonding), and culturally (preservation of culture through membership, meetings, organization and practice of cultural events, entertainment through eating and drinking habits and communication) will be analyzed below. It is realized that these CAs exhibit manifest and latent functions that influence how people interact, bond and behave within the association and between communities. The values attached to CA culture, their impact on members’ attitudes as well as between communities determine their ability to enhance or impair multiculturalism in urban areas. As an anthropological concern, community association through socio-cultural activities can be seen as follows.

7.1.1 Community Association is Dynamic

Doda (2005:911), argues that: “*culture is stable yet changing*”. In other words, culture is dynamic. Similarly, association culture is dynamic. Improving the quality of life of members is the primary role of community associations through membership and practice of socio-cultural activities. This falls within the context of Anthropology of Development. Anthropology of Development studies the nature, content and transformation of social phenomena (Mumtaz: 1994). CAs have an incredible ability of adapting to ever-changing socio-cultural environment wherein apart from exercising their peculiarities, have a number of common characteristics and socio-cultural activities. They are a multi-functional, mutual assistance and solidarity organisation. With emphasis on intra-community association, they exhibit common characteristics of solidarity, collective or mutual assistance and community development where practiced. During fieldwork, most intra-community associations especially those with governing bodies, in explaining how dynamic they are held that the executive organ usually sits before the general assembly to assess what has been achieved and set up objectives for subsequent assemblies. Anna, a 53 years old president of one of the Bassa community association on the 22nd of May 2021 confirmed that:

“Our executive meeting holds a day to our general assembl.,Tthat is every second Saturday preceeding second Sunday. Every member of the executive bureau is expected to attend the meeting. During these meetings, we usually discuss issues that were raised in previous assemblies. We assess those that have been carried out to understand how successful or unsuccessful the activity was. For instance during last executive session, we talked about members who have consistently been eschewing social activities like “bornhouse”, birthdays, invitations etc. of some members. During this meeting we try to figure out a way to bring members to order apart from asking them to pay fines. We also look into unaccomplished assignments to know why they have not been accomplished and what needs to be done. With these, we then set up an agenda for our next meeting, taking into consideration resolutions arrived at during the executive meeting” (Anna, Barière: 22/05/2021).

Assessment brings out the strengths and weaknesses of community associations and hence the socio-cultural state of the association. Such information is necessary for change and progress within the association. For instance, payment of fines by defaulters of Anna’s association cited above, proved unproductive since people still refrained from social events. This and in agreement with Antia (2005: 17), who confirms that: *“Culture is not fixed and permanent. It is always changed and modified by man through contacts”*, association culture is undeniably dynamic and could be changed to adapt to current circumstances. Since association culture is fashioned by members through norms and traditions, for the effective functioning, the association of the above respondent – Anna (22/05/2021) – decided to alter disciplinary norms relative to participation in social events to suit the current environment. Hence in order not to allow indiscipline to destabilize the institution, there is need for constant norms and value shifts to adapt to the changes brought by daily life experiences. This has been exemplified with the dynamic action of the executive bureau of Anna’s association. community association is its collective nature.

7.1.2 Community Association is Collective

Boas (1938:159), holds that culture is: *“the totality of the mental and physical reactions and activities that characterize the behavior of the individuals composing a social group [. . .]”*. Collectivity is the quintessence of anthropology. This dissertation looks at intra-community associations as target population whereby people in a collective sense engage in socio-cultural activities with abilities of influencing behaviour and thus living together in Yaoundé urban area. E.B.Taylor (1871:1), defines culture as *“that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society”*. This

definition expresses that as a cultural trait, collectivity influences behaviour of individuals. Olima (2013), affirms that in Nairobi – Kenya, participating in activities of neighborhood association is a collective response and nature of neighbourhood residents that are aimed at improving the quality of life of neighbourhoods. Intra-community associations present an environment where individuals from common community in a collective setting create and recreate community culture through various socio-cultural activities for the wellbeing of members, communities and the society. The culture of providing financial support is a learned behaviour in association lifestyle (Willows & October, 2021), and of course a collective culture. The focal point of these socio-cultural activities is the solidarity, development and attitude altering role they play in people's day-to-day life. Values attached to these activities fashion attitudes of members towards each other, impacting collective living and social cohesion. The practice of mutual aid activities like 'njangi', savings, thrift and loan through polls as well as entertainment and events celebrations are some of such practices in Yaounde. These practices portray how African culture values collective action. Hence, Olima (2013), says associations are well-defined spatial and social entities that give meaning to urban environment

Being a collective practice, culture can be shared and transmitted through socialization and interaction. Consequently, socio-cultural activities of these associations could be learned.

7.1.3 Community Association is Learned

Matuku & Kaseke (2014), express how the poor are forced to learn and engage self-help initiatives in order to address poverty, by participating in association culture. According to this author, association culture empowers members to divorce themselves from dependency culture. Thus as an Anthropological concern, association life can be learned through contact. As a norm learning is locally regarded as imparting knowledge on the younger generation by the older ones in a process called enculturation. for intra-community associations or acculturation with regards to intercommunity associations. However, there exist the horizontal learning process among members of same generation (Danchin *et al.* 2004) and association. Willows & October (2021), asserts that the culture of providing financial support is a learned behaviour in association lifestyle. Enculturation allows persons to learn and adopt the values, norms, rituals, traditions and habits of

their communities. This was recognized during an interview with Donald, a 28 year old member of an intra-community association in Biyem-assi on the 17th of May 2021, he expressed that:

Older generations have more experience and cultural knowledge than the younger generation. In our meeting, adults have been instrumental in teaching us how to sing and dance traditional songs and dances. We have a sub-group that sings and dances to entertain people in exchange for money. Apart from our usual meeting days, Friday evenings have been put aside for training. During sick days we organize traditional songs and dances. These traditional songs and dances are taught by our elders and some of our age mates who have been singing and dancing over the years. We observe footsteps and movement of other body parts and follow the rhythm of the song to do same. This is our source of income and we have to learn to be able to entertain people (Donald, Biyem-Assi: 17/05/2021).

Although intra-community associations define membership with respect to common community of origin, most of their members are of different age groups, gender, education and marital status. Fieldwork shows that younger generations learn from adult generations. Thus, culture can be learned through acculturation (Masgoret & Ward, 2006). As earlier mentioned, one of the conditions for enrolment of individuals from different cultural backgrounds into intra-community associations is ‘marriage’. This allows them to insert themselves in the new community through contact. Field observation revealed that an elderly man pledged that a younger member (the host for the day) be asked to pay a fine for failing to serve ‘gizzard’ (an organ of the chicken which the community’s is culture demands it be served to men and in order of seniority) in his plate. As a norm, an older woman was asked to take the young lady aside and educate her about the ‘gizzards’. Following the rules of the association the gizzard is placed in a small bowl and served to men according to seniority. The older woman pleaded on the girl’s behalf who apparently was a novice to the association culture. The younger female through this experience, discipline and advice learned the value this community attaches to the ‘gizzard’. She equally equips herself with knowledge from the older generation in order to handle similar situations in future. Hence through enculturation individuals learn the socio-cultural practices of intra-community association.

Similarly, intercommunity association members through socialisation and interactions can learn and adapt cultures of other communities. Hence members learn and promote diverse cultures – multiculturalism. Once learned, culture can be transmitted from one generation to another.

7.1.4 Community Association is Transmitted

Keesing (1958:16), in his book titled “*Cultural Anthropology*” defines culture as: “*the totality of learned, socially transmitted behaviour.*” Cultural transmission constitutes one of the tenets of Anthropology and can be facilitated through community association. Intra-community association as an urban culture and target population has cultural sustainability as one of its basic objectives. This explains why most associations enroll members from different generations. Cross generational membership makes transmission of culture from one generation to another possible. Hoover (2022), calls it inter-generational transmission of cultural – the ability to pass knowledge from one individual to another across generations – that makes human beings unique among animals. Since culture denotes the totality of the pattern of behaviour of a community, it means everything that differentiates that community from others. This includes among others, the values, traditions, norms, food, rites, greeting habits, dressing style, songs and dance patterns. They can be transmitted from one generation to another through community association. These claims are backed by Tam (2015), in his assertion that intergenerational cultural transmission refers to the transmission of cultural ideas such as values, beliefs, knowledge and practices from one generation to the next. Apart from horizontal – such as peer – transmission, culture can also be transmitted from parents to children (vertically) and can also be learned cross-culturally – between individuals from different communities. Whatever the type of transmission, cultural sustainability is the objectives and expected result of intra-community association. Bernadine, a 36-year-old member of an association in Etoudi on the 3rd of June 2021 confirmed that;

I have Beti parents but I was born in Shisong. Shisong is a village in Bui Division in the North West Region of Cameroon. My parents worked in Shisong for the greater part of my childhood and we lived beside the Shisong Cardiac Centre, then it was just a general hospital. I lived in Nso, made friends in Nso and I bet I can speak Lamnso like an indigene and even do so in the third person plural to the elders. I can equally cook all the delicacies such as “kiban” “nyu-se-ji” and khahti-khahti” (corn fufu , huckle berry and grilled chicken), “tokuni”(mashed potatoe and beans), “nchem” (pumpkin leaves) mushrooms amid others of Nso. I used to explore the forest with friends in search for kula nut especially in the biting morning cold. When my father retired and we moved here –Yaoundé –I didn’t know how to cook most of the food here. I also had to learn the language from my grand parents who are always around. However, when I became a member of one of our Beti associations, I understood so many things about my roots and culture.I have also learned about the complexities of

association life especially with respect to the Beti culture (Bernadine, Etoudi : 03/06/2021).

Bernadine's experience is confirmed by Redfield *et al.* (1936:146), who explain acculturation as: "*the process of cultural change that occurs when individuals from different cultural backgrounds come into prolonged, continuous, first-hand contact with each other*". Community associations serve as intermediaries of cultural transmission. Intra-community associations function as acculturation and enculturation centres where people adopt beliefs, behaviours, values, traditions from members of the association and community through interaction and transmit them to other generations. By learning how to cook the meal of a new community for instance, the individual equally learns the eating habits (why, when and how food is eaten) of the community. In an interview with Roland, a 27-year-old Bamileke association member in Carriere explains that: "*I started following my elder brother to his meeting and shop when I was just ten years old. Then we had just moved to Yaoundé. I saw how they contribute money to order goods for their businesses. I assisted him in selling his goods and saved the little I was making in his name. Today I own two spare part shops in this town.*" Roland's brother and the association where they belong unconsciously handed down a culture – spare parts business – to him. Conscious or unconscious transmission of socio-cultural patterns of life, habits and practices are the roles intra-community and intercommunity associations play on the attitudes of members. What these associations hold valuable are transmitted from one generation to the next. This explains why both older and younger generations are accepted in these associations – vertical and horizontal cultural transmission. Hence culture is enculturated among members of common communities and acculturated between members of diverse communities. Community association is also integrative.

7.1.5 Community Association is Integrative

Bello (1991: 189) informs that culture is: "*The totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenges of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms thus distinguishing a people from their neighbours.*" Integration happens in socialization processes, when people from diverse communities cohabiting a larger environment for instance adopt fundamentals of other cultures. E.B.Taylor (1871), by saying *culture is that complex whole ... acquired by people as members of a society*, equally implies adoption and adaptation of cultures from host society,

without necessarily discarding one's own. This happens in many migrant contexts especially with regards to inter-community associations as survival tools. By being a member of intercommunity association for example, observing and participating in various practices, members from different communities while maintaining their distinct cultures adopt the core practices of other cultures. However, consistent participating intra-community association encourages internal integration. Community associations is also symbolic.

7.1.6 Community Association is Symbolic

To symbolize means to represent through symbols. Anthropology 4 you (2020), in analyzing characteristics of culture educate that culture is based on symbols, and is passed from one generation to another through symbols. People learn cultural beliefs and behaviors through symbols. This author's views are confirmed by Nwaolikpe (2013). Symboling is the way society/community attributes meaning to daily life happenings. Language for example is one of the most used verbal symbol that give meaning to cultural practices, thoughts and feelings. Hence community associations use language – through songs, riddles, and speeches – as a communication device to narrate, interpret and give meaning to their feelings, thoughts, experiences and activities.

Food is equally symbolic in community associations. Perry (2017:108), argues that through food, a person can access his or her culture. He continues that the way food is used, served and consumed can signify the identity and culture of an individual, community or nation. Thus, the type of food and drinks served in association can also represent place of origin. Apart from being an instrument that symbolizes identity and value (communion), it could also symbolize power and community culture; how one feels about self and others. For example, the order in which food is served – how, who and when the food is served in associations indicate the power structure of the association and sometimes community. Thus through food, association members symbolically interact to represent their culture. For example, in a Nso association when food was served, it was observed that the social secretary ushered the President to serve himself first, followed by executive members, then adults and finally the younger members. These are dependent on power. Power being the ability to introduce an order which people follow – transmit – over and over until it becomes a norm. Nonetheless some people did not respect the order. This symbolizes power and authority; the fact that the president is at the apex of the association gave him the privilege of being served first. It also symbolises the value of hierarchy in Nso society. The features expressed above

typify existing links between community association and anthropology as a cultural practice. Below is an illustration of the link between food and power.

Plate 13: Food as a symbol of communication



Source: @ Yaoundé (Fieldwork: 2021)

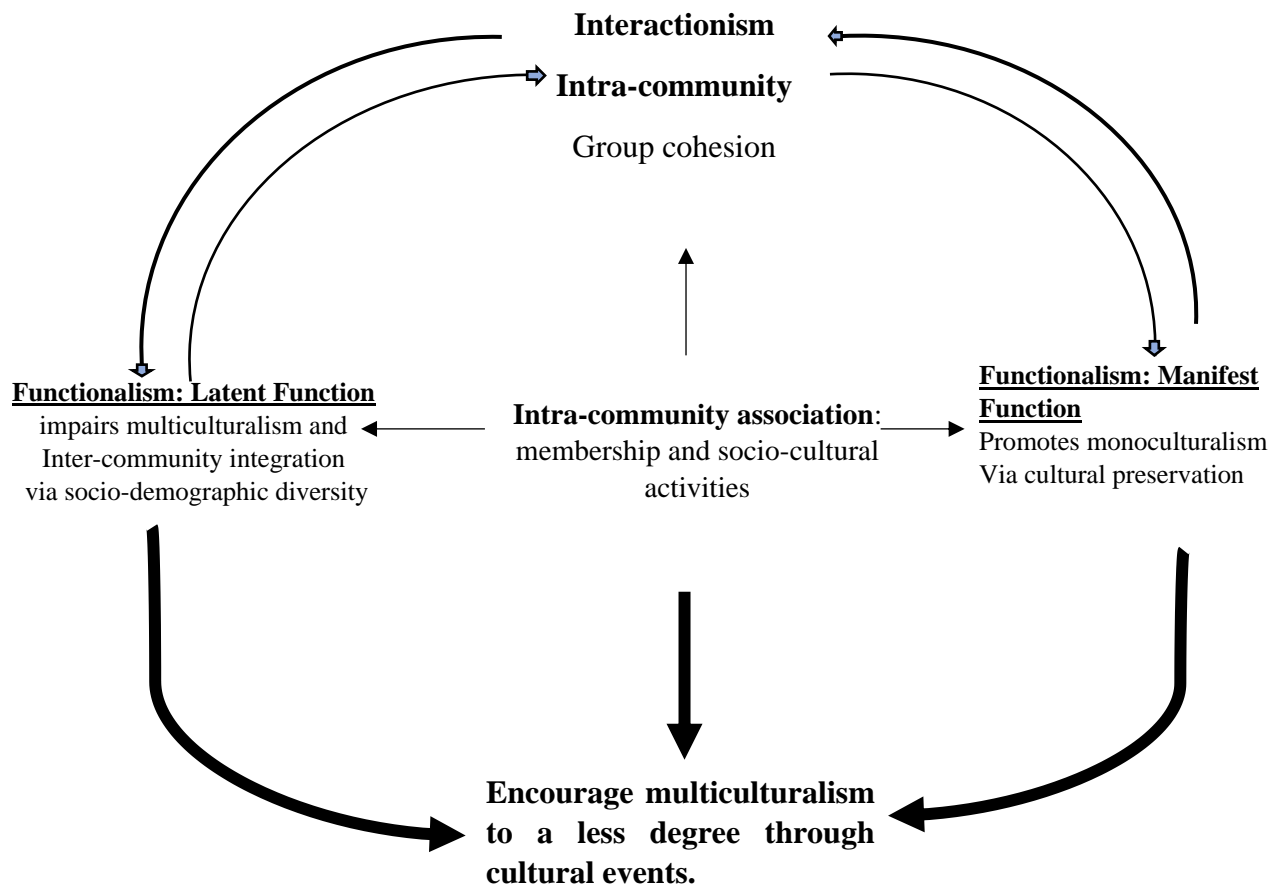
Plate (13) illustrates how an Ewondo intra-community association shares a local meal in traditional way – Bobolo (Bâtons de manioc) – with chicken. Bobolo, a starchy cassava meal wrapped in banana leaves and accompanied with beef, fish and pork. Plates are assembled on the floor, filled with food and served. It was observed that visitors were served first while every other member picked their plates without any hierarchical order. The sharing of food shows in part, the egalitarian tradition of this community as opposed to most African communities as well as their hospitality towards non-community members.

The above cultural tenets are what this thesis studied about people in community associations and the impact they exert on their attitudes and subsequent living together in Yaoundé urban area. With the definition, meaning, types and characteristics of culture, subsequent arguments in the next part of this chapter will dwell on multiculturalism in urban space - Yaoundé.

7.2 INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON MULTICULTURALISM IN YAOUNDE URBAN AREA

When people migrate from their community of origin to other areas such as multicultural Yaoundé, they are faced with challenges Clignet & Sween (1974). Challenges are often related to culture shock. Examples of culture shock could be socio-cultural such as stereotyping, hate speech, poverty, food culture, belief systems, language barriers, among others. Antagonistic behavior in such an environment can lead to frustrations, feelings of exclusion and cultural nostalgia pushing individuals to create in associations, where they can relate based on commonality. Oke (2006), explains that it is commonplace for the older generations in many places to value the cultural patterns of their own times better than the succeeding patterns. A longing for return to superseded cultural patterns is what is referred to as ‘cultural nostalgia’. Also, in times of social difficulties, people often tend to look back to the past for solutions to their social problems, believing that the past was better than the present. Such feelings among others propel common community members to group themselves in community associations where they can share collective feelings. Thus, apart from the obvious reasons of the formation of community associations they also function as escape niches from culture shock of feelings of unwantedness, socio-cultural and economic inequalities and exclusions among others. Two types of associations have been identified in this regard. Intercommunity associations enhance multiculturalism while intra-community associations impair multiculturalism. Nonetheless multicultural principles express that in culturally diverse societies, cohabiting communities should learn to accept, tolerate, respect and live together with others while cherishing and safeguarding their distinct cultures. In the section that follows, the interactionist and functionalist (with selected manifest and latent concepts) theories have been put together to analyze how community associations impact living together. Below is a sketch that summarizes our explanation. It shows that the propensity for the promotion/non-promotion of multiculturalism by intra-community association is present in the translations of values of socio-cultural phenomena such as membership and activities – such as financial contributions and events celebrations.

Diagram 2: Schematic representation of relationship between Intra-community associations, socio-cultural activities and multiculturalism



Source: © Yaoundé (2021)

The diagram above is a schematic representation of the relationship between intra-community association, membership, socio-cultural activities and multiculturalism, as discussed under characteristics of intra-community associations and their influence multiculturalism.

7.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON MULTICULTURALISM

Erikson (2015), says multiculturalism refers both simultaneously to ‘ethnically’ and culturally complex societies and to policies recognizing difference with the aim of achieving equity between the constituent groups of such societies. Living together can be attained in culturally diverse communities when difference is recognized, respected, valued and tolerated and similarity

celebrated. The multicultural phenomenon in its quest to enforce living together among diverse communities demands that while integrating, respecting and tolerating other cultures individual communities should strive to prioritize preserving their unique cultures – **illustrated via manifest function of intra-community associations in diagram where community members aim to preserve their culture**. Based on the fore multicultural principles, common communities through meetings preserve their distinct cultures. However, it is believed that intra-community associations play a diminishing role on multiculturalism in Yaoundé – **latent function** holds that members of same community interact among themselves – while intercommunity associations play an enhancing role. Nonetheless, during cultural events these associations promote multiculturalism through invitation of members from diverse communities.

How membership, culture and socio-cultural activities as features of intra-community associations shape the behaviour of members vis-a-vis living together in Yaoundé is necessary.

7.4 MEMBERSHIP OF ASSOCIATIONS

Members are the people who make up associations. There will be no association if there were no members. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2015: 925), defines membership as *“the state of being a member of a group, a club, an organization.”* Smith (2013: 1) defines membership as *“being in some sense a part of or supportive of a group.”* Membership in this dissertation refers to being a part of an association with deep feelings of belonging, inclusivity and support of the activities of the association. Membership is the feature that differentiates intra-community from intercommunity associations. With regards to intra-community associations, membership enrolment is based on people from common community of origin while intercommunity associations enrol members from diverse communities.

Markova *et al.* (2013), edify that: *“there is a sense of belonging and social inclusion through membership connection”*. By implication, membership creates boundaries of inclusion and exclusion between those to belong and those who do not belong (insiders and outsiders). Similarly, Berry (2013), studying intercultural relationships in plural societies held that in a multicultural model (of society) there is a national social framework of institutions (called the larger society) that accommodates the interests and needs of the numerous cultural groups, which

are fully incorporated as “ethnocultural” groups (rather than minorities) into this national framework. The concept of the larger society refers to the civic arrangement in a plural society or urban area (Yaoundé), within which all “ethnocultural” groups attempt to live together. Tacitly, the author is confirming the fact that as opposed to intercommunity, intra-community associations by recruiting members from common community of origin within a multicultural society are reducing living together in urban areas because their activities influence attitude of members towards intra-group cohesion.

The argument holds that membership creates boundaries similar to what Socpa (2016), and Monga (2000), call “autochthones” versus “allochthones”; meaning members of the community versus strangers, or what Berry (2013), from an international point of view calls “indigenous and immigrant” communities. Furthermore, these assertions fall in line with what Abouna (2011: 87) terms “le eux et le nous” loosely translated in English as the “them” and the “us”. In this work “the us” represents inclusivity while “the them” represents exclusivity with respect to belonging to associations and communities. Intra-community membership is understood in this work as those who belong to intra-community associations of the same community of origin while intercommunity membership refers to those who belong to mixed community associations. The inclusivity/exclusivity character is emphasized in intra-community associations because these associations are more concerned with preserving intra-community culture, thereby enforcing boundaries of ‘the us’ and ‘the them’.

A recurrent criteria mentioned by most members of intra-community associations is that individuals must originate from common community. To confirm the assertions of the authors above, a community group discussion held on the 19th of June 2021 in Biyem-Assi, stated that: *“in order to earn membership in our association, the individual must originate from our village. If the individual is from another community of origin, the person must be a spouse or be someone that we recognize for one reason or the other. Once a spouse the individual becomes part of us and is free to enroll in our association, as well as attend meetings and take part in our activities”* (Community Group Discussion, Biyem-Assi: 19/06/2021). Consequently, once a spouse the individual leaves the “them” community and becomes a member of the “us” community. Hence the spouse of a member can become a member of an intra-community association.

This dissertation is interested in the influence of belonging on living together, especially as seen in a multi-ethnic city (Yaoundé). It is concerned with understanding how membership influences the way people connect with one another, the activities they carry out and how these shape the attitudes of members and their relationship with other community members. From a functionalist perspective, feelings of worthiness, belonging and boundaries between members and non-members is the role membership plays on association members. These feelings and boundaries are made manifest during meetings and socio-cultural activities since members interact and integrate among themselves enforcing group cohesion. Boundaries are created when association members bond between them and alienate non-members or other community members. Hence membership latently separates members – ‘us’ from non-members – ‘them’ of intra-community associations in urban areas. Summarily, membership plays a role of creating boundaries between “us” (members of common community) and “them” (members of other communities). Next feature is the socio-cultural diversity of intra-community associations.

7.4.1 Socio-Demographic Diversity of Intra-Community Associations

UNESCO World Report (2009: 21) expresses that: *“the challenge inherent in cultural diversity is not posed simply at the international level (between nation-states) or at the infra-national level (within increasingly multicultural societies); it also concerns us as individuals through those multiple identities whereby we learn to be receptive to cultural differences while remaining ourselves.”* Socio-demographic diversity as an important feature of intra-community association plays an integration role on association with consequences that are capable of influencing living together in Yaoundé urban area. According to Longley (2021), multiculturalism is key to achieving a high degree of cultural diversity. Beaman (2007:14) cited in Monju (2019), confirms this assertion when he says: *“Refugees coming to the United States of America are sent to different locations where there is the presence of a pre-existing ethnic or nationality-based community”* (Monju, 2019:225). This policy acts like a social cement that promotes integration and living together between migrants (refugees) and host communities.

In this dissertation and with reference to intra-community associations, socio-cultural diversity entails members of a given community with variables such as age, sex, marital status and level of education which strengthen intra-group cohesion. On this count Gilbert, a member of an

intra-community association interviewed on the 21st of May 2021 at Omnisport said: *“My group accepts individuals (young and old), who are descendants of our community or spouses of our community. Membership does not discriminate the age, religion, occupation or sex. Within the association, we interact with one another, making sure unity exists in the association. That is why we assist each other in times of joy or sorrow.”* (Gilbert, Omnisport: 21/05/2021).

From a functionalist perspective and judging from the above assertion as well as several similar responses received from informants during fieldwork, intra-community associations by enrolling socio-demographically diverse members are consciously encouraging intra-community solidarity, community development and cultural sustainability. Despite the socio-demographic diversity of intra-community associations, they latently discourage multiculturalism in Yaoundé through feelings of inclusion and exclusion. This exclusion/inclusion tendencies are manifested through internal group cohesion and influenced by socio-cultural activities. Socio-cultural practices such as the development of community of origin, *“njangi”*, material and immaterial support of members during happy and sad events encourage group solidarity and cohesion. Before looking at group cohesion and socio-cultural practice, the role culture plays in sustaining community heritage and how it influences the practice of association life with respect to multiculturalism is situated below.

7.5 CULTURE AND CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY

Culture is the core of anthropology which impacts every aspect of life as well as the way intra-community activities are practised. The type of activities practiced in associations, the venue where they are carried out and people with whom they are practiced can influence people's behaviours towards sustaining culture. For instance members of intra-community associations will actively participate in activities of their association because the association is made up of people from same community of origin. Yenshu Vubo (2008) affirms that: *“These associations survived into the post-colonial period, constituting in some cases the only safety valve for free expression where association life [...] these are what have been referred to elsewhere as home-based associations”* (Yenshu Vubo, 2008: 96-97). Based on the above, culture allows people to share ideas, values, norms and traditions of the community as members of same community of origin. It

facilitates group cohesion thereby encouraging transmission and preserving community heritage. Similarly, Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998: 321), agree that: “*Ostensibly it was the responsibility of educated elites to help others from the same family and to pass the benefits of their success back to their village of origin*”. Aiding same community members means conserving intra-community ties and cultural sustainability in urban areas. This plays a role of promoting monoculturalism.

Culturally and following the introduction of Law No 96/06 of 18 January 1996 amending the Constitution of 2 June 1972 regarding the liberalization of association life, the practice of community association has been on the rise. This has led to an expansion of intra-community associations nationally and communities (ethnic) continue to recruit members of same community endorsing the reconstruction of community identity. Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), show how association life became rampant in the Anglophone fraction of the country, exemplifying Lions clubs, school and college associations, ethnic, church groups and other fund-raising organizations. Via association life, especially intra-community association, political maneuvering took center stage and led to an increased fascination with ‘ethnic’ identity crisis (Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998). Udikoh (2013), says cultural identity is a unique aspect of every community just as human beings are unique despite contact with other cultures. Socpa (2006), in analyzing host and guest relationship, centered on land claims, in relation to dominant political discourses on the construction of a national citizenship in a multicultural context such as Cameroon, held that national citizenship remains precarious as long as community differences are instrumentalized for political ends. One can equally say that intra-community associations are being instrumentalized to foster monoculturalism in destination places thereby discouraging multiculturalism. Notwithstanding, this work is interested in the role played by community associations on multiculturalism in urban areas. Thus intra-community associations play the role of encouraging members to stick to their cultural identity. From the fore, culture plays a role in safeguarding the cultural heritage of communities through objectives of associations as follows:

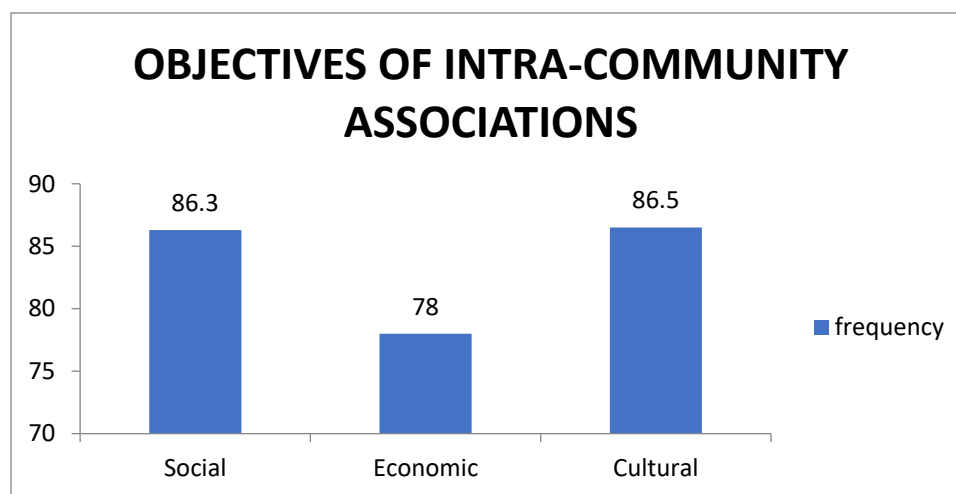
7.5.1 Objectives of Associations

Objectives of are the reasons for which associations are created. These objectives are the framework that shepherd the activities of community associations under the auspices of different

structural organs. Common objectives noticed in community associations are **economic** (njangi, thrift and loan, emergency fund, community development fund), **social** (uniting people, enabling interaction, integration, networking and bonding among members), **cultural** (preserving cultural heritage). While the culture of intra-community association is circumscribed to that of the community concerned, intercommunity culture is all encompassing – they are cultural diversity sensitive. This explains why culture is sustained through membership and cultural practices.

To achieve the objectives of community associations, the administrative, social, economic and cultural organs of the executive bureau come together to ascertain that the activities are effectively carried out. These socio-cultural and economic activities put together shape the behaviour of members. Explaining the assertion above, Spanos & Prastacos (2004), propose that: *“Much like a weaving process, the creation of organizational capabilities entails the synthesis and integration of constituent elements within the realm of a behavioral “place” that represents a particular condensation of actors and knowledge flows within the broader organization”*. This is also confirmed during fieldwork where most informants confirmed that belonging to intra-community association impacts relationship among them as association members as well as between them and their communities of origin as the larger community. Constant assembling fashion behaviors, strengthen bonds and enforce group cohesion. This principle was established in a community group discussion held on the 19th of June 2021 at Nlongkak with thirty-one (31) members of a Bamum association, who summarized that: *“Our association plays a very important role in our lives and our village. We hold meetings once every month. Our members come together to practice our cultural activities such as dancing, singing, eating, traditional rites. We also try to help one another through sinking fund, “njangi” and savinsg. We enjoy singing and dancing our local songs and sometimes carry out several projects back home”* (Community Group Discussion, Nlongkak:19/06/2021). The information above is approved during quantitative data collection whereby in order to know the objectives of intra-community associations, participants were asked what moved them to create associations in Yaoundé. Their responses have been summerized in the bar as shown below.

Bar graph 5: Presentation of Objectives of Intra-Community Associations



Source: @ Yaoundé (2021)

Bar Graph (5), illustrates the reasons which propel community members to create intra-community associations in Yaoundé. According to the Graph, 86.3 percent of participants said intra-community associations are created to meet social needs of members. Kaur (2013), asserts that Maslow's social needs refer to the need to be affiliated – the need to be loved, tolerated, respected and accepted. Supporting the above, Rosca (2013), says that socialization is a primary human need. Social needs are the need to belong, socialize, interact, network and create social relationships as seen in in associations. Socialization is thus a vehicle of communication since values are learned and handed down to younger generations. However, to encourage multiculturalism these should be reciprocally attained. Achieving these needs plays a role in defining the attitudes of members as well as enabling them to function as integrated parts to keep system whole. When association members function well, the entire system equally falls in place.

A second variable is economic to which 79% of the respondents said is one of their association's objectives. Through economic objective, the social value of association life could target financial security such as assisting members in times of emergencies, construction of houses, paying school fee and other major family and social responsibilities. These are achieved through various financial schemes as seen in the dissertation. Consolidating the above idea, Bisrat, Kostas & Feng (2012), contend that ROSCAs are informal financial institutions serving the financial service needs of many.

The last variable is culture. According to the Graph, 86 participants said one of their objective is cultural sustainability. This information falls in line with data collected through observation and interviews as most participants said the main objective of their association is to safeguard cultural heritage. This thought has been endorsed by many authors. Fonchingong (2006), informs that njangi groups carry out a breadth of activities that touch on the livelihood of members and the community areas such as social, economy and culture. Fonchingong (2013), in another study titled *“On the fringe of poverty: Care arrangements for older people in rural Cameroon”*, says njangis are cash generating societies and survival mechanisms of members. On the same strength of reasoning Page (2007), in an article *“Slow going: the mortuary, modernity and the hometown association in Bali-Nyonga”*, says the association is concerned with promoting the cultural heritage of Bali-Nyonga as well as distinguishing between indigenes and strangers. Mercer, Page & Evans (2009), in *“Unsettling connections: transnational networks, development and African home associations”* also argue that due to huge distances between home and destination towns, home associations are the only means of preserving their culture as no one would do it for them. The above are thoughts that credit the assertion that intra-community associations hold preservation of intra-community heritage in high esteem and diminish their inclination to foster multiculturalism.

Consequently, Eagan (2021), argues that *“national unity could become impossible if people see themselves as members of ethnic or racial groups rather than as citizens of a common country.”* From the above argument the fact that intra-community associations register members based on common community of origin, implies intra-community cohesion is favoured to the injury of national cohesion and living together. This is substantiated by Ronald (n.d: 154) who says: *“Community... leaders are often interested in the survival of the group.”*

Using the interactionist and functionalist – manifest and latent concepts – theories, it can be deduced that culture influences the practice of intra-community association and multiculturalism in many ways.

Through interaction, members socialize, network and create social bonds within the association. Association culture facilitates interaction among members of association and interaction leads to learning, sharing, transmission and hence sustainability of community culture. How does association culture impact multiculturalism?

Bringing people together to interact and socialize are the intended consequences of the expansion of community associations especially as enshrined in the 1990 Law. However, the unintended consequences – latent function – of intra-community association culture is that they disfavour the promotion of multiculturalism. Thus, boundaries of belonging (especially as seen in membership) in intra-community association encourage sustainability of community culture in urban life.

Intercommunity association culture on the other hand encourages multiculturalism since membership cuts across diverse communities (Monju, 2019). This is confirmed by Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998:321), when they assert that: “*associations were founded principally for mutual aid on the basis of having gone to the same school or belonged to the same church or lived in the same neighbourhood, so that membership would often cross ethnic ties.*” The fact that associations are formed so that membership would cross ethnic frontiers implies that intercommunity association culture functions in encouraging multiculturalism by urging members from diverse communities get together, socialise, interact, learn, respect, and accept one another’s culture. This is backed by Awasthi (2003), who worked on the interfaith “*Sufi tradition*” of India. The author says “*Surfi tradition*” is a multicultural society that celebrates diversity and confronts intercommunity conflict, advising individuals to promote these principles and values in society. Kasic & Senehi (2009), in their article “*Promoting Reconciliation through Community Relations Work.*” Says intercommunity groups have been organized around some volunteering and cultural activities to enhance multiculturalism. Thus intercommunity groups enforce multiculturalism.

Intercommunity groups promote multiculturalism since they value unity in diversity through membership. Consequently, intra-community association through sustained group cohesion unconsciously endangers Cameroon’s quest for multiculturalism.

7.6 INFLUENCING GROUP COHESION

Cohesion could be defined as that feeling of belonging that keeps people glued to one another and to any human community such as family, friend, neighbourhood, religion, association or country, (Block, 2018). In this work, group cohesion is the feeling of belonging that binds individuals socially, culturally, and financially together as members of an association. An

understanding of how group cohesion is motivated within intra-community associations is appreciated through the examination of some of the elements that influence group cohesion.

7.6.1 Characteristics of Intra-Community Associations that Influence Group Cohesion

Several factors can influence group cohesion among members of community associations. Within the context of this dissertation, intra-community association group cohesion is influenced by membership, socio-cultural activities and communication technologies.

7.6.1.1 Belonging

There is a tendency for people to stick together when they feel accepted, respected, and wanted as members of any human organization. Izumi (2015), says membership makes one feel like an important part of group. Same holds for a family, association, community or country. Feelings of unacceptance, unwantedness and exclusion from any human organization equally makes people to exclude themselves from the organization or society. Prior to the expansion of association life in the 1960s, the feeling of belonging was less associated to internal boundaries. Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998: 320), explain that: *“during the era of President Ahidjo, in the 1960s and 1970s, there was much less reason for elites to remain attached to their ‘village’.”* By implication citizens were attached to the nation than communities of origin. This also implies that the liberalization processes and the implementation of community association, unconsciously empowered membership of community associations to determine feelings of belonging. Hence intercommunity associations play the role of enhancing cross cultural group belonging, inclusion and cross-cultural cohesion while intra-community association promotes intra-group/endogenous group cohesion. An interview with Patrick a member of a Bayang association who on the 19th of June in Simbock backs the above claim when he said: *“I feel at home when I am in our association.”* This is further substantiated by Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), when they recognize the : *“importance to the village as ‘home’ or ‘place’, where it would be unthinkable not to be buried”* (Nyamnjoh and Rowlands, 1998: 321). *Similarly*, intra-community association as a representation of place of origin in urban area plays the conscious role of integrating members from common communities and enforcing group cohesion while unconsciously impairing multiculturalism. In these associations, group cohesion and ties are strengthened among members through socio-cultural activities.

7.6.1.2 Socio-Cultural Activities and Group Cohesion

Socio-cultural activities are activities that enhance the cultural and social development of individuals, communities and the society in general. During meetings and celebration of happy or sad events association members come together and through socialization and interaction create bonds that foster group cohesion. Intra-community associations practice financial, social and cultural activities. These activities enable association members to express their cultural values of collective action and unity while encouraging members to bond more and to protect distinct community cultures. Some of the activities that allow members to socialize, interact and bond are assemblies/meetings, celebration of events and financial assistance.

7.6.1.2.1 Organizing meetings for self and community development

Intra-community associations just like intercommunity associations organize assemblies to bring members together (Fox, 1992). During assemblies activities are planned and practised by members of common and diverse communities to foster self and community advancement. Nyandoro (2018), says South African women organize week-end assemblies through Stokvels and other Merry go round meetings in the urban areas to improve on their socio-economic conditions. During field work, this was established in a community group discussion held on the 19th of June 2021 at Nlongkak with thirty-one (31) members of a Bamum association, they summarized that: *“Our association plays a very important role in our lives and our village. We hold meetings once every month. Apart from common community of origin, age, sex and religion, our members are people from all walks of life who come together to sustain our cultural heritage as well as socio-cultural practices such as njangi, thrift and loan. We enjoy singing and dancing to our local songs and sometimes carry out several projects back home”* (Community Group Discussion, Nlongkak: 19/06/2021). From the above assertion, intra-community association members organize meetings and exercise mutual assistance through njangi, thrift and loan, sinking fund while community development activities are encouraged through community development funds. Hotense, a 27 years old Bassa association (AFEBIK) member, located in Cité Verte expressed backs this up saying; *“through community development projects we have built a Women Empowerment Centre, provided cassava crushing machine to Poma women and offered agricultural material to farmers back home. We also offer didactic material to schools in Poma to promote education”* (Hotense,

Cité Verte). Promotion of education is one of the several types of community development activities that most intra-community associations encourage. The Manyu Cultural and Development Association (MECDA), acknowledged same activities. From an interactionist perspective, meetings create favourable environment for people to socialize, integrate, network and improve on selves and communities. These processes foster group cohesion in one way or another. Thus intra-community association promotes values such as inclusion, collectivity and respect for one another (as seen with socio-demographic differences) and other community values, which all lead to group cohesion. Events celebration equally strengthen group cohesion.

7.6.1.2.2 Events organization, celebration and mutual assistance

Organizing and celebrating events is an intrinsic social trait of every human community (Ganz, 2010), which in association necessitate assistance from members. Nyamnjio and Rowlands (1998: 321), confirm that: *“In many cases associations were founded principally for mutual aid.”* During happy and sad events, association members assist one another in several ways, emphasizing the value of solidarity and collective action. Solidarity enhances bonding and group cohesion. The attitude of association members towards one another in good and bad times play a role in shaping their cultural and psycho-social state. They either play a supportive or disruptive role to the health of a member, hence influencing member’s way of interaction with others.

Since the primary reasons for creating intra-community association are to safeguard culture, develop self and community of origin, members assist one another in various ways (morally, financially and socially) by different associations to ensure the survival of same. This was confirmed by a community group discussion organized with MECDA association on the 22nd of May 2021 in Mvog Ada who said that: *“ we have sinking fund from which assistance is offered to members during happy and sad events according to our constitution. We are currently planning our usual academic award ceremonies for students who perform well in the GCE Ordinary and Advanced levels annually. It usually takes place every December during which students receive scholarships”* (MECDA, Mvog Ada :22/05/2021). Some happy and sad events that necessitate association assistance are marriage, ‘born house’, religious ceremonies, career advancement, education as well as death and sickness. Assistance could be done morally, physically or financially. Thus these associations secure economic, social and financial security.

7.6.1.2.3 Financial activities for self-help and community development

Intra-community associations have internal rules and regulations that encourage members to get involved in one type of financial activity or another. Most financial activities encouraged by intra-community associations are: savings, njangi, thrift and loan, community development fund, sinking/emergency fund and other good will and fund-raising activities. These financial activities enhance self-help and community development. They also foster autonomy of community association and constitute one of the pillars for the formation of intra-community associations. Yenshu Vubo (2008: 99) attests that: *“The ‘njangi’ of the coastal peoples operates much on the same principle with regular contributions, which are donated to members in turn... they assist in solving major problems within a family setting such as paying for children’s education, building a house, buying farm implements and investing in small businesses.”* Confirming this assertion, Majorie, a 34 year old respondent and member of a Bassa association on the 21st of May, 2021 at Simbock said; *“In our association we save a minimum of 500FCFA every sitting, that will be shared in December. We have two types of savings: end of year and school fee. End of year is distributed in December and school fee in August. A fine is levied on those who fail to contribute or deducted from their saving at the end of the year. People have educated their children, bought land, built houses and started businesses from these schemes”* (Majorie, Simbock :21/05/2021).

From an interactionist perspective, association members come together and pool resources to encourage solidarity and unity through socialization, interaction and networking among members. Such activities and the results thereof indicate the value of unity through pooling and willingness of members – of intra-community associations – to interact with one another and improve on their welfare and community development. Same holds for intercommunity association members who strive to respect difference of others while upholding individual culture.

Functionally, meetings play a manifest role in promoting group cohesion. For example, encouraging education through scholarships by association is a manifestation of the conscious role it plays in promoting the welfare of community members and communities. Within the context of this dissertation, the function of these activities is to enhance interaction, networking and living together among association and community members. Hence financial and community development activities encourage group interaction which influences intra-community cohesion.

Conversely, the unconscious implications of intra-community cohesion lies in the fact that it enhances monoculturalism against the backdrop of multiculturalism.

Organizing the above activities also serves as a means of upholding group values, norms, beliefs and traditions which further promote group cohesion.

7.6.1.2.4 Community Heritage as Promoter of Group Cohesion

Some group values promoted through socio-cultural activities of associations include culinary (food and drinks consumption), art (dance, dressing, singing) as well communication (symbolic and oral) tradition. However food, drinks and oral tradition are of interest.

Traditional Food Consumption

Valuing food as part of intangible culinary heritage to be protected and transmitted to future generations represents a component of community identity marker and valuation. This valuation is a norm among people from common community sharing same territory, exposure to food type (Rozin, 2006) and attachment to their place of origin that dates decades back. Among the multifaceted functions of food, group cohesion is of importance at this point in this work. As an intangible culinary heritage – eating and drinking – plays important identity and unifying role in every human community. Perry (2017), in an article titled: *“Feasting on culture and identity: Food functions in a multicultural and transcultural Malaysia,”* views that even though Malaysians are divided by belief, culture and creed, they are united in their love for the country’s multicultural cuisine. This author illustrates how food is an integral factor in uniting Malaysians, letting them to learn about their diverse cultures and traditions. Notwithstanding, different communities have different eating and drinking habits. Nyangono *et al.* (2021), look at food consumption from a dietary point of view during a study of food from a total of 41 most consumed meals. These meals are selected from different communities among which were: Bafia community (06), Hausa community (09), Dschang community (06), Eton community (06), Mbo community (07) and Bamougoum community (07) and prepared to evaluate their composition (moisture, ash, water, proteins and lipids). To them food consumption influences human behaviour in Yaoundé urban area arguing that: *“Cameroon is characterised by ethnic and cultural diversity, which implies a diversity of eating habits that is richness for its populations. Several studies in Cameroon*

highlighted a lack in knowledge of the composition of a healthy diet as a barrier to healthy dietary behaviours” (Nyangono *et al*, 2021: abstract). The above indicates that what communities eat, the people they eat with, how they eat, the number of times they eat per day, gestures and beliefs – associated to prayers made before and after eating – rules people keep while eating are all determinants of collective lifestyle with possible impact on group cohesion.

Following a community group discussion held with members of the Bayang intra-community association on the 22nd of May 2021 at Mvog Ada, they explained that: *“The extinction of a particular specie of cocoyam that women of our community used for preparing fufu, due to downpour acid rain at a point in time, led to the discovery of cassava. Cassava has been adapted to make what our community members commonly call ‘water fufu’ which is eaten with ‘eru’ as our traditional food. Apart from the circumstance that led us to adopt cassava as fufu, bieng eaten with finger tips shows how interconnected we are.”* Consuming fufu and eru strengthens feelings of commonness among Manyu community members. From fieldwork and as shown above, the Manyu community have ‘*water fufu*’ (previously made by pounding and moulding cocoyams into tiny loaves for esthetic purposes). Today cassava is used to make “*water-fufu*”. The people of this community went through a disastrous period which altered the use of cocoyam as basic product for preparation of water fufu to cassava. During this time, they remained connected and ate the new kind of fufu. So eating water fufu conveys collectivity and unity among members, hence group cohesion.

The Nso community on their part have corn fufu, huckle-berry and grilled chicken locally called “*kahti-kahti*”. Fufu in this community is prepared from corn flour and eaten with fingers. Like the Bayang, the Nso traditional meal is prepared, served and eaten in most restaurants and several types of festive occasions in urban areas especially Yaoundé. Members of this community value this food to the extent that they would share it at the least opportunity.

An interview with Pierre, a 44-year-old Beti community member on the 10th of May 2019 at Ahala, showed that the Beti widely consume “*okok*” (a meal made from ‘eru’ leaves and groundnut paste), “*sanga*”(made of fresh corn and huckle berry) eaten with a spoon. They also eat “*baton de manioc*” (a starchy paste made of fermented and ground cassava swathed plantain leaves), similar to what the Bassa people consume.

A focus group discussion held on the 24th of April 2021 with six men at Nkolbisson revealed that apart from “*okock and sanga*” the Bassa eat “*mbongo chobi*” (a sauce made by mixing ground mbongo spices, African nutmeg, cat fish or tilapia) accompanied with manioc or “*mintouba*” (made from cassava and palm oil tied in banana or plantain leaves).

On the 8th of May 2021, a community group discussion organized with a group of (15) women from the North revealed that the Northerners eat millet fufu called “*ngaouri*” or rice fufu complimented with “*bokko*” (sauce made from baobab leaves) or “*folere sauce*” (a sauce made from folere leaves). It is served in a bowl and eaten with fingers.

The Douala eat “*ndolé*” (a vegetable soup made from bitter-eaves and groundnut paste) accompanied by “*miondo*” (same as bobolo but smaller in quantity and size), plantain or yams, just to name these. This meal is eaten with cutlery. One similar trait about the eating habit of these communities is fact that most meals are eaten with finger-tips.

Apart from water, most of these communities drink rafia or palm wine. They also drink locally brewed sweet drinks of various flavours or beer, as well as locally brewed corn beer after eating. The Northerners drink “*chahi*” or “*bili-bili*” while the Nso accompany their food corn beer commonly known as “**shaah**”. Palm or rafia wine consumption cuts across most communities.

Association members do not only consume their local food but equally savour diverse food from other communities. Some associations offer food and drinks during every assembly while others share food once during particular events. A community group discussion organized with Manyu community association on the 22nd of May 2021 at Mvog Ada revealed that:

A contribution of 1000FCFA is made by each member to assist the hosting group. The association offers drinks and food occasionally. Beer, gaseous and non-gaseous sweet drinks are consumed alongside palm wine, wine, and water. There is a rotatory list in which people have been grouped to take turns and entertainment. The women cook the food and have their list while the men bring the drinks following their list. Consumption of traditional meal is encouraged, however, it can be accompanied by other types of foods (Community Group Discussion, Mvog Ada :22/05/2021).

The table underneath illustrates the distribution of food consumption between traditional and assorted meals in community associations by members.

Table 22: Frequency Distribution of Intra- and Intercommiuty Food Consumption in Meetings

Types of food	Frequency	Percentage
Intra-community or Traditional Food	123	30.75%
Intercommunity food	258	64.5%
Others	19	4.75%
Total	400	100%

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Table Twenty-two (22) shows that one hundred and twenty-three (123) persons representing 30.75 percent of respondents acknowledged that they enjoy eating traditional food during meetings while two hundred and fifty eight (158) representing 64.5 percent of the respondents are of the opinion that in addition to their traditional food, they consume food from other communities. The remaining nineteen (19), with 4.75 percent opted for ‘others’ – ‘others signify indifference to food preferences. From the data, a good portion of association members promote consumption of intra-community food while a few have no preferences. However, majority of the respondents represented by 64.5 percent like eating a food from diverse communities. This could be explained that, the active group population is most notably the millennial generation (Frey, 2018), and are the most diverse adult generation. The millenials are found within the age range thirty-five to forty four (35-44), considered to be of transition age and have been groomed in cities. In addition thrity to this range, the forty-five to fifty-four (45-54) range equally fall in this category. These age ranges say they have been exposed to diverse cultures so they enjoy eating food from diverse communities. *“Heaven & Tubridy (2003), approve that youth are seen as the part of society that is most likely to engage in a process of cultural borrowing that is disruptive of the reproduction of traditional cultural practices, from modes of dress to language, aesthetics and ideologies Heaven & Tubridy (2003), same with food culture.”* This generation called mellennials is considered most multicultural. Frey (2018), says:

The “millennial” label is applied to a generation with birth years of 1981 through 1997, which followed the “birth dearth” period of Generation X (born 1965-1980), which was preceded by the baby boom generation (born 1946-1964). The exact dates of the millennial generation vary among researchers. However, as with the baby boomers,

the millennials' distinction is associated not just with their large size—at 75.3 million, the millennial generation has now surpassed the baby boomers—but also with their unique attributes in terms of demographics, tastes, and lifestyles. As their name implies, they are the first generation to reach adulthood in the new millennium, suggesting that they will usher in changes that will be followed by later generations this century [...] Millennials are distinct from earlier young adult generations in one important demographic respect: their racial and ethnic diversity. (Frey, 2018:6)

Consequently, this generation which in this dissertation fall under the age range 35-44 and 45-54 have been accustomed to eating diverse food while the older generation for the love of nostalgia would want to stick to intra-community food consumption.

Respondents were further asked why they ate and drank during gatherings and the following table is a summary of their responds.

Table 23: Frequency Distribution of Reasons People Eat and Drink During Meetings

Reasons for eating and drinking	Frequency	Percentage
To commune with association members	168	42%
To quell hunger and quench thirst	180	45%
Others	52	13%
Total	400	100%

Source: © Yaoundé (Fieldwork, 2021)

Information on Table Twenty-three (23) indicates frequency distribution of reasons people eat and drink during meetings. It reveals that one hundred and sixty-eight (168) persons representing 42% percentage eat because they want to commune with community members. A further one hundred and eighty (180) individuals representing 45% percent said that they eat to satisfy the urge and suppress hunger while fifty-two (52) persons with a 13% percent chose “others”. Others include: people who eat because of nostalgic feeling of attachment to community of origin, eating simply because it is good and tasteful irrespective of the community it identifies with. This information shows that apart from collective opinion, individuals have different reasons why they eat in community associations. Thus Perry (2017), says: “*At the individual level, food nourishes and is a source of energy to the human body. Food also plays a role in the mental, emotional, spiritual and social well-being of a person. It provides multisensorial pleasure that affects our moods and*

actions and is used as a source of comfort. It also triggers nostalgia and memories of people, places and events” (Perry, 2017: 184). Eating and drinking are a twin culture. Respondents identified that apart from water people consume several brands of sweet drinks, beers, wines and whiskeys during meetings. Eating and drinking have unifying values not only in community associations but also in other social gatherings. Gunkel (2016) defines food as “a system of communication, a type of language through which we express identities and relationships, including gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, festivity, and sacrality” (Gunkel, 2016: 246). Food is also seen to evoke feelings and create emotional attachments. Mannur (2010) cited in Perry (2017), *elaborates the role of food in creating “nostalgia, performing cultural identity, and establishing alternative networks of intimacy not circumscribed by lines of blood and filiation”* (Perry, 2017:184). Most associations assign individuals to take care of food and drinks distribution during entertainment. Drinks for example have disciplinary roles to play. They are tools used to atone for misconduct in associations and whatever is asked is shared in the association. Hence Perry (2017), expresses that at the communal level, food can be a symbol of identity and unity. The penchant of intra- or intercommunity food can bring people together and influence the creation of long lasting relationships at the intra- or intercommunity level.

The information confirms the fact that eating and drinking are not only meant to quell hunger/thirst or for entertainment purposes but play other roles in collective culture such as enhance a sense of belonging, identity, solidarity and unity. This can be expressed as ethnomethods (Mbonji, 2005), used by community members to strengthen feelings of belonging among associations members. From an interactionist point of view, eating and drinking (especially traditional food) in intra-community association is perceived as group values that are learned, shared and transmitted from older to younger generation through interaction. Hence food culture creates long lasting memories in people’s conscious banks that can foster cohesion. Oral tradition is another community value used by intra-community associations to enhance group cohesion.

Oral Tradition

Linguistically, Heaven & Tubridy (2003: 152), write that “*culture is the language through which we learn to read the world.*” It is the collection of learned assumptions that are used daily to interpret the meaning of reality, thereby influencing relationships. Language has been described

as a significant intangible culture (Craith, 2008) capable of upholding group cohesion. Schweitzer & Drews (2020), argue that language helps team members to understand their internal diversity and develop a joint sense of the team's history, strengthen the team's self-concept and foster team cohesion. Language is a communication tool that is capable of expanding group cohesion among members of community associations. Nso community members for instance use "*Lamnso*" to express themselves for better understanding while the Bamums use "*Shupamom*". The most spoken language among the Northerners is "*Fulfulde*", the Beti have "*Ewondo*", "*Bulu*", "*Eton*", and the Duala speak "*Duala*". The Bayang speak "*Bayang*", the Bamilekes speak **Ngemba, Megaka, Ngombale, Ngomba, and "Bamboutos" while the Bassa speak the Bassa language.** Using community language to communicate facilitates understanding between members of associations of particular communities. Different communities have unique languages.

Plate 14: Illustration of association member communicating with local language



Source: © Yaounde (Field work : 2021)

Plate fourteen (14) illustrates an association member using community language as a communication tool to pass across information in the assembly. It is a means used transmit culture from older to younger generations or horizontally. Its role is to express different thoughts, feelings and emotions among others. Most intra-community associations make efforts to use their local languages to express their feelings, thoughts and ideas about selves and others. Scassa (1996),

explains that language shapes individual identity by defining the collective in which the individual is most culturally at ease. Language is about relationships. Language plays an important role of bonding the individual to the association and community thereby increasing group cohesion. Associations practice and offer free language classes to members as seen above and this enforces group cohesion. Language is thus a vehicle of transmission of a community's culture.

While conventional music and dance is gradually becoming the norm in society, some associations through socio-cultural events endeavour to hold on to traditional music and dance in urban areas like Yaoundé. Notwithstanding, French and English serve as a bridge to the linguistic differences. Cameroon's bilingual culture on the other hand breathes discordant tendencies since majority of Cameroonians do not have a mastery of both official languages. Cameroonians are expected to be conversant with both languages in order to encourage peace, unity and willingness to uphold their bilingual culture as enshrined in the country's NCPBM. In order to sustain values, beliefs, traditions, feelings and ideas of a community, some associations encourage local language, folklore, songs among others for communication. As a result, languages of different communities have been used in different parts of this work.

From an interactionist lens, the use of intra-community language encourages preservation of intangible oral heritage and enforcement of community cohesion among association members. Contrarily, using French and English in intercommunity associations foster the promotion of multiculturalism (Monju, 2019), since people are encouraged and encourage themselves to learn both languages to communicate with persons from other communities.

Armed with information on how socio-cultural activities influence group cohesion, a look at information and communication technology is the next area of focus in the paragraph below.

7.6.1.2.5 Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Communication and information sharing methods have, over the years, evolved from the use of gongs, oral, written letters, print media, travel agencies or covering long distances on foot to ICT. UNESCO World Report, *“Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue”* (2009), says: *“the entire landscape of communication and cultural contents — understood to encompass the press, books, radio, recorded media, cinema and television, as well as more recent*

phenomena (new media or information and communication technologies) such as the Internet, [compact discs] CDs, [digital video disc] DVDs, video games, chat rooms and the blogosphere from the standpoint of cultural diversity.” ICT influences our daily lives socio-culturally and otherwise, with an influence on individual and collective identities, norms, and values. New technologies/media (such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, e-mails) are being invented daily whose roles are to reduce distance between individuals and communities. Communication gadgets such as android phones and computers are technological advancements that have come to enhance transmission (especially instant) of messages that were done manually, hence improving our daily life. From observation of association venues, it was discovered that association members use mobile phones for communication along with other means of transportation. Hence, there were cars and motor bikes parked around most venues. This indicates the way ICT and technological innovation influence association lifestyle and group cohesion. It is worth saying that intra-community association members while trying to relate back to their community of origin which may have been compromised or simply to maintain ties, part of their recreation/creation as a community depends on technological innovations (Foster, 1978). These innovations have shortened communication distances and improved on the socio-cultural and economic lifestyle of members. Members can easily interact, socialize, and network further enforcing group cohesion.

Most popularly used social networks are Messenger, WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram. Most intra-community associations recognize the use of WhatsApp, messenger and Facebook for their internal transactions. Financially, they acknowledged the use of cash applications or mobile payment services through mobile phone applications such Mobile Telecommunications Network (MTN) and Orange Mobile Money in Cameroon. The use of ICT tools enabled by telephones and computers have eased and influenced communication everywhere especially Yaoundé. Consequently, instant messaging has bridged long distances that people sometimes embarked on by foot or vehicle to contact others for a discussion. These have been reduced to telephone calls and electronic messaging. Today happy occasions such as marriages, birthdays, and “**born houses**” that were organized physically in houses or written invitations can be done virtually. In like manner, sad events such as deaths and accidents that were transmitted through mouth-to-mouth are today done through phone calls and electronic messages. These create an impact on

networking, socialization and solidarity among individuals in intra-community association and between communities. Hence social media influences cultural practices as well.

Adelle, a member of an intra-community association interviewed on the 7th of March 2021 in Messa held that: *“Social media keeps us connected to one another. We used it during the Corona outbreak to keep our association bouyant. We play ‘njangis’ and do other financial contributions through mobile money and communicate the information in our group forum”* (Adelle, Messa: 7/03/2021) This information shows that most association members are in possession of android phones to facilitate communication, preserve social ties and networks among members in Yaoundé and elsewhere. How do social networks influence group cohesion?

7.6.1.2.6. Enhancing Group Cohesion through Social Networks

There exists a relationship between social networks and group cohesion. Social network has been defined as strong or weak social ties formed respectively between family or close friends and acquaintances (Liu, Sidhu, Beacom & Valente, 2017). Social network in this dissertation is understood as the use of human relations as well as internet-based/media platforms as means of interactions among people (friends, family, peers or association members) in which they create, share and exchange information and ideas physically or virtually. It is made up of a connective web linking different individuals. Consequently, social networks enable the expansion and organization of social capital at the intra-community as well as intercommunity association levels. This promotes group cohesion, thereby encouraging or thwarting multiculturalism. Relating social networks to the enhancement of multiculturalism, they have the ability to influence integration and social cohesion at intra-community or intercommunity association level. Kindler, Ratcheva & Piechowska (2015), warn that such networks are characterised by distrust towards other groups of others while increasing inner group cohesion.

Observations reveal that most associations members use communication technologies especially the new media in urban spaces to enhance network ties through interaction, socialization, cultural exchange among people with the potential of influencing attitudes and behaviours, hence group cohesion. UNESCO (2009) explains that: *“The changes taking place in the media landscape are fundamentally characterized by three factors: connectivity, interactivity*

and convergence. Connectivity refers to the growing interdependence between the networks and global flows associated with new communications technologies — email, the Internet, mobile phones and the (increasingly urban) environments in which people live.” Froment *et al* (2017) recognize the assertion above saying that social networks have drastically changed communication between people, constituting a means of everyday use by which information is created and shared in a simple, instantaneous way with the rest of the world. Thus intra-community social networks enhance intra-group cohesion and diminish intergroup cohesion and living together. Next element to look at is factors that influence social networks.

7.6.1.2.7 Factors Influencing Social Network Creation

Several factors influence social network among intra-community associations that can create an impact on group cohesion. Worth mentioning are:

7.6.1.2.7.1 Socio-Cultural Factors

Socio-cultural factors have been described in this work as having to do with forces found in societies and cultures that can influence the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of members of these societies. Socio-cultural factors emphasize how social and cultural relationships within the context of this work influence social networks. This is consequent to the fact that humans in their everyday activities, engage social and cultural factors that facilitate creation of social networks.

Despite the the fact that intra-commmunity association members originate from common communities they vary socio-demographically in sex, age, occupation, marital status, to name these with an influence social networks among members. The fact that one of the aims of community association is sustaining culture, it allows for networks to be created since members share common values. This could be explained that asociation members bring together intra-community resources such as socio-demographic ties and community cultural package (norms, traditions, beliefs, language) for the construction of sociol networks that facilitate building strong ties to overcome daily challenges. Consequently, by virtue of the fact that members originate from common communities, bonds and networks are created in associations which promote solidarity among members. Solidarity strengthens group cohesion. Solidarity could also be built financially.

➤ **Financial Factors**

Money has both social and economic values which ensure socio-cultural and financial security among members of associations. As a collective practice, the need of association members to save and borrow money together demands the creation of social networks. A community group discussion with a Bamileke Association made up of thirty-one (31) members held on the 8th of May 2021 at Mokolo, informed that: *“We have saving schemes that enable us keep money in association coffers for household and business use. We also have the emergency fund that makes money available to members at anytime to take care of emergency situations.”* (Community Group Discussion, Mokolo: 08/05/2021). This is in harmony with the explanation of Etang *et al.* (2011), who say these associations fill the gap in some developed and many developing countries where formal savings or credit facilities are inaccessible especially to low income earners. Intra-community associations offer substantial network foundation to improve the problem of financial exclusion by assisting members to save money and access credit. Thus community associations offer networks that unite participants, with an advantage of saving and accessing finance on little or no interest and fortify social ties for other socio-cultural benefits. These further reinforces group cohesion and leads to an examination of how community of origin facilitates bond creation.

➤ **Bonds within Common Community of Origin**

Social networks allow members of common community to bridge gaps such as distance between place of origin and destination towns and create long lasting bonds that can facilitate interaction among them. Most members of intra-community associations use these networks on daily basis to send and receive calls, messages and money for socio-economic reasons. Froment *et al* (2017) endorse the function of social networks in enhancing group cohesion among members of *intra-community associations*. In addition, UNESCO World Report, (2009: 136), explains that: *“Connectivity influences the way people across the globe earn their living, the sort of food they eat, the music, cinema and television they choose as entertainment.”* Hence ethnic bonds among members of associations are strengthened through social networks. A community group discussion with the Bamileke Association comprised of thirty-one (31) members held on the 8th of May 2021 at Mokolo revealed that: *“Association life has given us a family in Yaounde different from our biological families. This family assists us in many ways when we have problems or carry out*

celebrations” (Community Group Discussion, Mokolo :08/05/2021). Community association play a role of making available networks that can assist participants in good and bad times, by reducing cost and shortening distances. Networks of common community were also created along gender lines (same sex networks), age (there are networks of the young and the old), friends (members developed particular filiations). Some common community networks considered religious ties. During hang outs, informants explained that these different bonds allow members to network even out of meeting venue.

From an interactionist view point, common community of origin made it possible for association members to interact, socialize, and create social bonds capable of influencing attitudes and behaviours, hence group cohesion. In line with UNESCO World Report, (2009: 136-7), which explains that: *“Connectivity influences the way people across the globe earn their living, the sort of food they eat, the music, cinema and television they choose as entertainment.”* It can be deduced therefore, that social networks can shape the behaviour of association participants as well as create social ties with long lasting effects. Meanwhile from a functionalist lens, internal group cohesion unconsciously creates the “we” and the “them” feelings of division between association/community and non-community members, with diminishing effects on multiculturalism. Apart from social networks intra-community associations present a number of benefits that members enjoy.

7.7 BENEFITS OF BELONGING TO COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

Community association is a common culture in most urban areas in Cameroon. In Yaoundé, practising community association comes with benefits irrespective of the type of community association – intra-community or intercommunity. Rivas, Hale & Burke (2019), suggest that participating in association life can mitigate problems linked to developing new friendships, navigating different social and cultural norms as well as challenges of daily living. Shifting from socio-cultural norms towards economic and mutual assistance, Forje (2006), says promoting savings and providing a basis for lending to the poor is a growing concern. Consequently, the essence of any human association is its ability to improve the life of its members, the community and enhance social cohesion. Some benefits of community associations are as follows:

7.7.1 Cultural Benefits

Cultural benefits range from preservation of community culture through enculturation and acculturation (promotion of multiculturalism) to community development through socio-cultural activities.

7.7.1.1 Cultural Sustainability

One of the principle objectives of intra-community associations is preservation of community culture. Celebration of marital rites, mourning rituals, cultural festivals mentioned in Chapter Three are all identity markers and ways by which belonging to intra-community associations assist in preserving community culture. Celebrating these events also play a unifying role among members. Hence collectively, association members reproduce and sustain community culture in host communities. Equally, members who lost touch of some cultural values, norms, traditions can learn from others during interaction. Fabian, a 52 year old member of one of the Nso associations interviewed in Nkolmiseng on the 13th of May 2021 said: “ *I have benefited so much from belonging to NSODA. Not only have I grasped so many cultural values, my children always accompany me when there is a major cultural events in the community hall. They have equally learned a lot which I could not teach them*”(Fabian, Nkolmiseng: 13/05/2021). From a South African perspective, Koenane (2019) affirms that these associations enhance group identity. Consequently, intra-community association fosters sustainability culture and identity through enculturation of community values, norms, customs and tradition among members in Yaoundé.

7.7.1.2 Development of Community of Origin and Host Community

One of the characteristics of community association is its ability to foster development of community of origin by depending on self-help and community-based initiatives (Iwara, Adeola, & Netshandama, 2021). Bouman (2019), corroborates that tontine is shown as a multi-functional self-help institution, with the emphasis on collective investment and community development in the city or village. Nyamnjoh & Rowlands (1998), while studying two elite associations explain that they incorporate community development activities as part of their objectives. Confirming this claim Yenshu Vubo (2008), says one of the roles played by community associations is

development while Koenane (2019), says they go beyond individual enrichment. Also, Fabian, a 52-year-old Nso association member interviewed in Nkolmeseng on the 13th of May 2021 said: “*We have a community hall in Simbock built by members of our association and we carry out many development projects back in the village as well.*” (Fabian, Nkolmeseng: 13/06/2021). From the above, it is realized that intra-community associations hold development of place of origin – in town as in the village – in high esteem. It is one of the objectives intra-community associations which equally makes part of cultural sustainability. However, building halls as avenues for assemblies does not only portray these associations as monoculture promotion centres but also shows the infrastructural advancement brought about by these associations to the host community.

7.7.2 Socio-Economic Benefits

Community associations have enriched members socially and economically in different ways. Socio-economic benefits of these associations range from feelings of belonging and unity, to social network formation, discipline and finance.

7.7.2.1 Feelings of Belonging and Sense of Unity

Socio-cultural and economic exclusion as well as disharmony are factors affecting most individuals and cohabiting communities in urban spaces. To overcome these adversities, individuals pool socio-cultural and economic resources in a collective culture through associations. Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), argue that ethnic ties uniting those in town with kin and kith in regions of origin have exerted a positive feedback effect to both reinforce and transform traditional identities in the village. Feelings of belonging and sense of unity are felt during socio-cultural activities such as marriage and funeral celebrations supported by these associations. During funeral celebrations where the bereaved family and association for instance are struck with despair, association norms demand some form of solidarity be shown to the concerned by bringing together psychosocial, material and financial support. One of the traits of intra-community (ethnic) integration in urban areas with a unifying role is the celebrations of marriage bonds among them. Marriage celebrations are opportunities to celebrate unique cultural identity, extend and strengthen social bonds between families. Backed by several authors, (Gugler: 1971; Awasum: 1998; Nyamnjoh & Geschiere 1998; Konings and Yenshu Vubo: 2008), intra-community associations

members through various happy and sad events seek to identify as members of a common community and maintain membership among themselves and with their communities of origin while in Yaoundé – away from home. The fore is established in a Community Group Discussion on the 19th of June 2021 at Nlongkak with thirty-one (31) members of a Bamum association, mentioned above who said: *“Our association plays a very important role in bringing us together. We hold meetings once every month...people from all works of life who come together to sustain our cultural heritage as well as socio-cultural practices such as njangi, thrift and loan. We enjoy singing and dancing to our local songs and sometimes carry out several projects back home”* (Community Group Discussion, Nlongkak: 19/06/2021). The assertion confirms the fact that the role of association life is not only a tool to sustain cultural heritage of communities concerned but also an escape route from poverty, conflict Ncube (2020), daily socio-cultural stress, stereotyping, hate speech and exclusion members face. They also enforce feelings of belonging (Schein, 2013; Schensul *et al.* 2017; Monju, 2019; and Balla, 2019) as benefits of association lifestyle.

7.7.2.2 Having Fun, Laughter and Finding Romance

Moloi (2011), declares that at the community and local level, stokvels are a collective medium used by Black people to empower themselves socially. Fun, laughter and romance are indispensable social habits of human being in every society. In this dissertation laughter and fun are reported as important social benefits of intra-community associations. During an interview with Pierre, a 53-year-old Bamileke respondent in Nsimeyong held on the 20th of July 2021, he said: *“there are people whose presence in the association assure us that we will have much fun and laughter. They have stories, riddle and jokes which are told in our local language that can make one to laugh and forget his/her problems,”* (Pierre, Nsimeyong :20/07/2021). Members of other associations confirmed that apart from obvious economic and cultural concerns established by most intra-community associations, social reasons – fun and laughter – are stress reliever which enjoy in meetings. During hangouts especially as exemplified by the Bamun wedding in Chapter Three, the assertion about laughter and fun was established as many association participants were seen either eating, drinking, singing, dancing, talking or laughing during the celebration. The Yaya Dance of this community apart from cultural values also symbolises joy, fun and laughter. This is supported by Monju (2019), who mentions finding romance in “deux zero” groups as another type

of social benefit. Hence community associations play a role in fostering fun, laughter and romance which can enhance people's psycho-social lifestyle.

7.7.3 Formation of Social Networks and Social Capital

Networks are social capital created through several human relationships: family, friends, common community or origin, age, education or profession. Creating relationships is one of the benefits of belonging to community associations which come edged social security benefits. Such relationships are strengthened because members share common values. For instance, the homogeneity of common language makes it easy for intra-community association participants bond easily. Member's affinity for local food, folklore, and dressing style among others are identity markers that distinguish them from other communities, shape their worldview and allow them to create networks. These networks enable association and community members to bond and collectively achieve other things such as accessing job and educational opportunities as witnessed with the Bayang association. Egbide (2020: 196), who acknowledges that: *“majority of the entrepreneurs agreed that they have benefitted from ROSCA [...] by building strong networks of relationships [...] It provides opportunities for participants to socialise, freely discuss, support each other in economic endeavors and congratulate each other in attaining a financial goal.”* Social networks are endowed with a wealth of benefits among which social capital is a part. Social capital allows members to bond well with association and community members. Fonchingong (2006), argues from a gender perspective that enhancing female participation hinges on efforts at erasing cultural stereotypes that project women as domestic workers, improving literacy, increased access to productive resources and improved agriculture that is compromising women's participation and empowerment drive. The quintessence of any social gathering especially in relation to the context of this work is to facilitate unity, self and community development through interaction and socialization. Schensul *et al.*, (2017) debate that relationships among members of the American Association of Anthropology brings benefits of socialization and networking amid others. The author is concerned with intercommunity associations. Similarly, Yilmaz (2019: 244), in his content analysis of Hometown Associations (HTAs) from an international perspective argues that they are a source of social capital and a platform where transnational relations are formed. In Cameroon and in congruence with Yilmaz, Yenshu Vubo (2008:96), explains that a very important

feature of association life in Cameroon is bridging the rural and the urban. Association life does not only aim to link the rural and urban but equally creates bonds within the urban environment that can foster social cohesion.

A focus group held with members of Bassa intra-community association members in Biyem-Assi on the 14th of April 2021, attest that: *“We have monthly meetings which allow us to come together not just for financial aspects but to also have fun. We also strive to know one another by sharing information about ourselves and the village. In case there are things the community needs we put our resources together and assist.”* (Focus Group Discussion: 14/04/2021). The information above are illustrations that through community associations members create and maintain bonds through interaction and socialization among association members as well as with other members of community of origin (for intra-community associations). Even though the informant does not emphasize the financial benefits of social networks, Tengeh & Nkem (2017), shift from to illustrate that stokvels played an equally significant role in providing the capital, which was necessary for the growth of their businesses. Hence, Egbide (2020), attests that social capital refers to the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively. This shows that social network formation can lead to social as well as cultural and financial assistance of association members and communities.

Thus, social networks are social capital built based on the value of belonging and trust which allows members to engage collective actions of mutual assistance, community development and cultural sustainability. These developmental endeavors are facilitated financially. Belonging also offer financial benefits.

7.7.4 Discipline and Financial Benefits

Financial exclusion is one of the problems faced by low income earners. Accessing savings and low or interest free credit is one of the measures put in place by associations. However, this demands a certain degree of self discipline Thus Gugerty (2007), says self-commitment is the key reason for joining a rosca emphasizing that: *“You can’t save alone—it is easy to misuse money.”* *“Saving money at home can make you extravagant in using it.”* *“Sitting with other members helps you to save.”* *“It [a rosca] makes you look harder for money to save.”* *“It is difficult to keep money*

at home as demands are high” Gugerty (2007: 22-23). Belonging compels participants to develop self discipline to meet up with obligations. Additionally the fear of risk aversion in such gatherings will push members to participate timely in financial activities. Fieldwork disclosed that intra-community associations endorse the practice of several types of financial activities. An interview with Shella, a 28-year female member of Bayang Association on the 6th of April 2021 at Accasia said: *I lost my father barely two years after I came to Yaoundé. I did not know many people and I was a trader. However, I didn't do all the necessities by myself because I had joined our village association. The meeting sent information to the association forum and members contributed but financially and morally. Some members whom I have never met called me and sent me money. Others called and sympathized* (Shella, Accasia: 06/04/2021). The respondent's information shows how members financially benefit from association life. However, this is in addition to psycho-social and cultural support that comes with association life since they are also experienced through solidarity networks of associations. Financial activities common to these associations are njangi, thrift and loan, fines, community development fund, emergency fund among others. Since financial activities and social solidarity networks are beneficial to association members and communities, it illustrates the extent to which intra-community associations address financial and social exclusion among community members. These create positive impact on the behavior of members towards one another and the community. This is affirmed by Maseng, (2022:11), who says: *“stokvels enable members to meet survival needs in their households”*.

Armed with the information above, an analysis of the role of stereotypes on communities and multiculturalism in Yaoundé is the next point of interest.

7.8 ROLE OF STEREOTYPING AND HATE SPEECH ON MULTICULTURALISM IN YAOUNDÉ URBAN AREA

Stereotyping and hate speech have been expressed in this work as derogatory communication tools instrumentalized to misrepresent, dehumanize, hurt or vilify individuals and communities, rob them of their cultural dignities and identities as well as malign and exclude some from the national culture and identity. These values kick against multicultural tenets which emphasize on respect, tolerance, acceptance and affirmation of cultural difference while

maintaining and valuing individual cultural values. Hence multiculturalism is about accepting cultural plurality, integration and harmonious living together. Stereotyping often leads to social conflicts and has been identified as one of the reasons for diminished multiculturalism.

Within this work, emphasis on intra-community association is meant to demonstrate the tension and conflict instigating role of stereotypic language and hate speech as push factors that urge community members to get together in intra-community associations, ascertain their identity and feel at home away from home. It has been established that stereotypes and hate speech are often used by members of different communities against one another creating tension and social conflicts. The use of stereotypes and hate speech has been a cultural expression of Cameroonians at all levels and generations of the society over the years. Some of them and depending on the user(s), context(s) and intent are neither offensive nor dehumanizing. Nevertheless, in most cases they are used as negatives. The role played by stereotypes could be to exclude, to degrade, segregate, disintegrate, dehumanize, dispossess and hurt individuals or communities. This creates social damage on persons, which could be a permanent tag on the person so referred. Socpa (2002), recognizes that :

Les stereotypes qu'ils soient moqueurs et taquins (blagues) sont toujours utilisés dans l'intention manifeste d'exclure un individu ou le groupe auquel il appartient parce qu'on estime qu'il a posé un acte répréhensive. Les membres de chaque groupe 'ethnique' développe un corpus de mots pour meubler leur vocabulaire de l'exclusion ethnique. Même les plus hautes responsables politiques de l'état ne sont pas épargnées du fait de la majesté de leur fonction laquelle l'on accorde peu de considération. Dans ces conditions, l'autre n'est vu qu'à travers le prisme de ces concepts qui ne présente que ses attributs négatifs (Socpa, 2002 : 41).

The above quotation is limpidly translated in English as: (*Stereotypes whether mocking and teasing (jokes) are always used with the clear intention of excluding an individual or the group to which he belongs because he/she is believed to have done something wrong. Members of each 'ethnic' group develop a group of words to fill their vocabulary of ethnic exclusion. Even the highest political leaders of the state are not spared because of their majestic function which is given little consideration. Under these conditions, the other is only seen through the prism of these concepts which only presents its negative attributes.*) The author is analysing the segregative role of stereotypes (and hate speech) expressed by community members through ethnic lexical culture against other individuals and communities. Due to the above reasons, common community

members tend to exclude themselves from the multicultural whole where coexistence has no membership feelings to create intra-community associations with networks that offer a sense of belonging, acceptance and unity. Hence the feeling of exclusion leads community members to exclude themselves from the main society (Yaoundé urban area) and recoil to associations. Hence intra-community associations consciously serve as avenues for cultural sustainability, mutual aid and community development activities as enshrined in the 1990 law. Nevertheless, these associations play an unintended role of dismembering communities and fashioning them into monocultural units of “common community of origin”, where they interact, socialize, bond, network, and recreate unique cultural identities. The result of reduced cross-cultural interaction is misunderstanding of cultural differences, limited acceptance, intolerance, disrespect and disintegration among individuals/communities as well as a diminishing role on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area. Consequently, within the framework of this dissertation and knowing that interaction, socialization and networking foster living together, the latent function of regrouping people from common community is the recreation of same cultural identity and less intercommunity integration.

Despite the above analysis, it was discovered that intra-community associations to *an extent* promote cultural diversity and multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area.

7.9 INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION AS HERALDS OF MULTICULTURALISM

Intra-community associations have so far been perceived as organizations that favour autonomy and monoculturalism against the backdrop of multiculturalism. However field observations of socio-cultural events organized by these associations whose values of solidarity and networks carry traditions, norms and customs that portray collectivity – the quintessence of Anthropology – reveal that intra-community associations are fertile grounds for the promotion of multiculturalism in urban areas. Coexisting community members participate in activities of these socio-cultural events thereby enforcing collective learning, understanding, acceptance, tolerance and affirming cultural differences and similarities. Such occasions give room for integration. Examples of socio-cultural events include born house, funerals, marriage ceremonies, cultural

festivals amid other cultural events. Among the diverse activities these associations organize, marriage and royal summon are examined below.

- **Marriage events as promoters of multiculturalism**

Marriage as earlier mentioned have a unifying role in both intra- and intercommunity celebrations. Both intercommunity and intra-community associations urge members to participate in social and financial contributions to mutually assist one another during marriage events. Intra-community associations distinguish themselves by the introduction and celebration cultural identity during such events. Communities have traditions, customs, rituals, and norms whose values are expected to be respected during such events. In the recent past, albeit the unifying role of marriage, activities during and after “*knock door*” – a marriage procedure wherein the bride price is negotiated – carries different representations. In an interview on the 23rd of July 2021 in Olembe, 38-year-old Annie from Duala origin confirmed that one of the marriage rites they practice in their community is the bride price. She further says:

In my community association, “Boni Ba Wea Matanda”, a group of women give the list of requirements for bride price. The Sunday before the bride price list is given, the women cook a huge egusi pie (huge enough that it can be cut with a machet). If upon cutting the pudding, the women see that the core of the pudding is not well cooked, the egusi cannot be shared to the boy’s family. On the contrary if it is cooked to the core, the girl’s family can distribute it to the boy’s family. The boy’s family receives the egusi and eats with joy and merry. The joy and merry represent the fact that their family has increased by a new member. (Annie, Olembe : 23/07/2021).

In this community, a girl is represented by eggussi – eggussi pie/pudding precisely. Her maturity and readiness to get married is determined by the preparation of the eggussi. If cooked to the core, then she is mature and can be eaten. Hence the girl is ready for marriage. Sharing the eggussi represents acceptance of the groom and his family. This is confirmed by a song that is sang by Duala women while cooking the eggussi pudding. It goes thus: “*Ngondo Ebei tè...Kè muto pè a bei ndé*”. This is literarily translated in English as; “If the eggussi is cooked, then the woman is ready for marriage.” Individuals from other communities interested in marrying women from this community are expected to respect, tolerate and accept this tradition. This rite might be different from that of the Bamun community established earlier, but they represent the same thing – pre-

nuptial rites leading to the union of a couple, families and sometimes communities. The Bassa also observe a similar tradition during marriage.

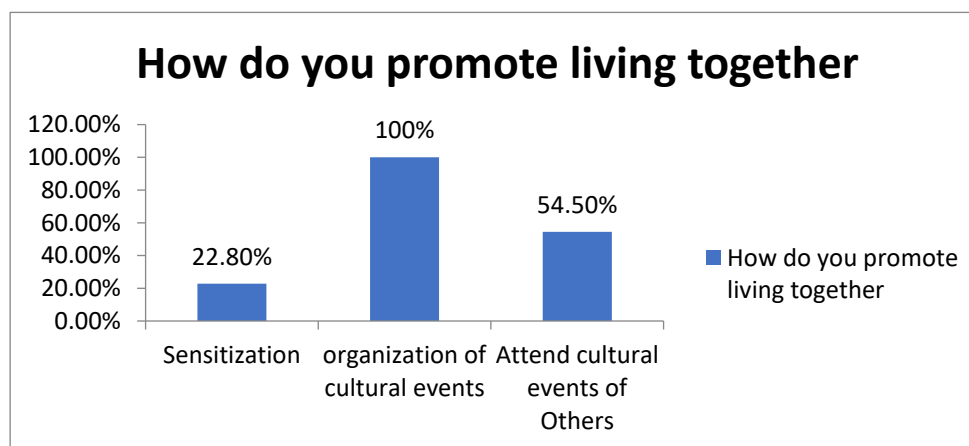
During a focus group discussion with the Bassa community on the 24th of April in Nkolbisson, they said they do not have same cultural representation like the Duala, but argue that:

In Bassa culture, during “koré momé” – ‘knock door’ – the boy’s family visits the girl’s family without the boy. Tradition demands that the boy does not go along with his parents during this initial visit. The girl’s family asks many questions regarding the boy’s behaviour and intentions from his family. There after a list of items to be presented as bride price is given to them. This is effective if the girl’s family is in accord with the responses from the boy’s family. Among the items, the most important is a rum. Specifically “St James” – a whiskey brand – is the rum that this community demands to be offered by the boy’s family. Upon arrival on the day of the traditional wedding this whiskey is given to the girl by her future father-in-law, who receives and hands over to her father (Focus Group Discussion, Nkolbisson: 24/04/2021).

In Bassa community as well as others (who adopt sharing of palm wine), people offer their daughters to grooms based on their behaviour and intentions towards their daughters as well as the daughter’s acceptance of the boy. However, the “rum” from groom’s family is a condition to have a daughter’s hand in marriage in the Bassa community. Probably, the price and quality of the whiskey would mean the quality of life the boy is expected to give their daughter. The idea here is that, every community has a traditional construct regarding certain socio-cultural events. They may be practised differently but represent similar ideas. Equally, marriage for instance is a celebration with unifying roles. Despite the community of origin, traditional marriage celebrations represent similar roles – unity and living together. Intercommunity marriages promote multiculturalism as expressed above. This is verified by Rahim, (2012), when he establishes that promotion of multiculturalism can be witnessed during birthdays and marriages and other social events. A prominent feature during marriage celebrations is that the celebrants invite their friends irrespective of their communities of origin. Most associations through mutual help activities encourage these celebrations, morally, financially and physically to ensure success. Hence intra-community associations support marriage celebrations and unintentionally prosper both intra-community and intercommunity integration (for mix marriages) with a role of enforcing multiculturalism. McClintock (2009), argues that: *“intra-group cohesion has an important impact on intergroup negotiations. Understanding how to manage intra-group cohesion rests largely on*

[...] a comprehension of the intra-group norm(s).” This was confirmed during fieldwork as shown in the following bar Graph below.

Bar graph 6 : How do intra-community associations encourage multiculturalism



Source: © Yaoundé (Field work : 2021)

Data on Bar Graph six indicates that all associations encourage living together through cultural events. It shows that 22.8% sensitize members while 54.50 encourage living together by attending cultural events of other associations. The graph equally show that 100% of respondents said their associations encourage multiculturalism through cultural events that they organize in Yaoundé urban area. This could be explained by the fact that during such events invitees come from diverse cultural communities of Cameroon. To credit the above assertion, an example of a cultural event – Royal Summon – called “*Tooy Fon*” in “*Lamnso*”, was organized by the Nso community in Yaoundé urban as observed during fieldwork.

- **Royal Summon as Fascilitator of Multiculturalism in Yaoundé Urban Area**

The “*Tooy Fon*” is an event that was organized by Nsoba’ti Yaoundé, sponsored by the Nso community nationally and internationally. “*Tooy Fon*” is organized for various reasons – traditional peace brokering – peace negotiations – being one of them. The event took place in “*Ngai Nso*” – the Nso Cultural Hall in Simbock. It was attended by members and non-members of the Nso community.

Plate 15: Royal Summon by the Fon of Nso in the Nso Cultural Hall



Source: © Yaoundé (Field work : 2021)



Source: © Yaoundé (Field work : 2021)

The images above were captured during the *“Tooy Fon”* loosely translated in English as ‘Royal Summon’. The *“Fon”* of Nso through Nsoba’ti summoned all members of Nso resident in Yaoundé and beyond with a message of peace and reconciliation. Other community members were invited for the event.

During field work, it was learned that in Nso culture, ‘Royal Summon’ is a traditional call made by the **Fon** of Nso whenever there is some important message to pass on to the Nso people. As a norm a royal summon is organized and executed in the **Fon’s** palace. However, due to insecurity in North West and South West regions of the country – the essence for which the summon was made – the event was organized in the Nso Cultural Hall under the auspices of *“Nsoba’ti”* in Yaoundé. The *“Ngai Nso”* is a cultural space that represents the Nso community and identity. It carries with it cultural partitionings and adornments to host cultural activities. In his message, the **Fon** of Nso asked every “son and daughter” of Nso living in Yaoundé to be peaceful and responsible citizens. Other community members – especially as seen with the presence of some dignitaries such as the **Fon** of Kiluun, the **Fon** of Mbot, and the **Fon** of Bafia – were invited. The event started with a prayer session led by the Catholic priest, whose sermon was centred on reconciliation. Apart from water, entertainment comprised assorted brands of beer, palm wine and corn beer commonly called “shah”, wines and whiskeys. Food was served especially corn fufu, huckle berry and chicken locally called “kahti-kahti”. Many traditional

dances graced the occasion with fabulous performances. “Mfuh” performed for the welcome and installation of the Fon of Nso”, “kikum ke kibahri”, “suubi” and “njang ye branki” animated the event while “njang wanto” performed the exit ceremony. The event stirred laughter, embraces and bright smiles on faces of persons from Nso and other communities at the end of the day. The presence of individuals from other communities coupled with smiles and laughter is an indication that interaction and socialization can bridge cultural boundaries boundaries for a united front even in the midst of crisis. From an Anthropological lens, *“Tooy Fon”* is an event that offers opportunities not just for identity celebrations but also to strengthen intra-community integration. The unifying role of such events proves its promotion of multiculturalism, since it benefits both the organizing, coexisting and host communities.

Plate 16: Fons who attended the *“Tooy Fon”*



Source: © Yaounde (Field work : 2021)



Source: ©Yaounde (Field work : 2021)

Plate Sixteen shows dignitaries that responded to the invite from the Fon of Nso to participate in the Royal Summon. The two pictures represent Fons from different communities – disorderly from Mbot, Kiluun, Bafia and Nso.

Theoretically from an interactionist perspective, the event recounted above enables interaction, socialization, and integration among members of Nsoba’ti association, the community as a whole and coexisting communities in Yaoundé. During such events people meet, learn and understand cultural differences, make new friends, information is exchanged and new bonds are created. Furthermore, from a functionalist perspective, the above event plays a manifest role in

ex[posing and advancing the culture of the Nso community in Yaoundé while latently encouraging integration and socialization among diverse coexisting communities. Thus intra-community association to some degree promotes multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area.

This chapter has mapped out, examined and analysed perceptions of how membership, cultural preservation and endogenous group cohesion contribute to diminish multiculturalism in Yaoundé. This is enhanced through feelings of inclusion/exclusion and thought patterns of inhabitants of diverse communities in Yaoundé, where stereotypes and hate speech provoke feelings of exclusion and associations enhance a sense of inclusion. From a functionalist perspective, intended consequences of group cohesion and integration promoted by socio-cultural activities of intra-community association play a role in socializing members, enabling enculturation and transmission of cultural values from one generation to another. Ngah (2015:349) says: *“These associations are examples of auto-organizations of the milieu. They exploit and enhance solidarity links existing between members.”* Intra-community associations foster feelings of belonging through group cohesion and intra-community integration among members in Yaoundé urban area.

Interactionist perspective also reveals that intra-community associations encourage multiculturalism. By inviting people from diverse communities during cultural and other events, intra-community associations are enhancing socialization, interaction, integration and latently encouraging multiculturalism. Equipt with the link between anthropology and community association, the expansion of intra-community associations and impact on multiculturalism, characteristics of intra-community associations that impair multiculturalism, the role of stereotyping and hate speech on individuals, communities and multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area and intra-community associations and promotion of cultural diversity and living together, this dissertation is concluded as follows.

CONCLUSION

Cameroon is a culturally diverse country that has been largely categorized into three linguistic communities; the Bantu-speaking peoples of the South, the Sudanic-speaking peoples of the North, and the Semi-Bantu language people situated mainly in the West. These among others shape the way Cameroonians interact with one another. Association life is a cultural practice that has been on the rise in most urban areas of Cameroon, especially as seen in Yaoundé. With respect to Law No. 90/53 of 19 December 1990 relating to freedom of associations, there has been a mushroom of associations such economic, artistic and cultural associations, socio-cultural associations, foreign associations, sports associations, religious associations political and *de facto* associations in Cameroon. However, in this dissertation interest is centered on community associations especially intra-community and intercommunity associations and their influence on multiculturalism.

Through membership and socio-cultural activities, association life enhances interaction, socialization and networking among members. These processes influence people's feelings of belonging, acceptance, respect and collective action. By participating in socio-cultural and economic activities for example, members foster a sense of unity through collective actions. Economically, apart from medium of exchange and store value, collective action endows money with a unifying role in the daily lives of association members. Psycho-socially, members relieve each other's suffering in times of difficulty. Hence how, when and where people use money as well as collective visits and support impact relationships among group and between community members.

The research problem was framed thus : Cameroon is a culturally diverse country with over 250 ethnic groups coexisting in most urban areas as seen in Yaoundé. These ethnic groups are represented by associations in this urban space. Community associations are perceived as organizations whose roles are to bring people together to enhance interaction, socialization, networking, integration, and the creation of social ties that could lead to long lasting relationships. Encouraged by these perceptions and the enforcement of the 1990 law on freedom of association as amended in 2020, there has been an expansion of the practice community associations in Yaoundé urban area.

Despite the presence of numerous community associations in Yaoundé, other government efforts to foster social cohesion such as the creation of the NCPBM and the fact that Cameroon has been admired for its cultural diversity as noticed through institutions such as marriage, education, religion, private and public administration, the aspect of the dichotomy between living together and disintegration still exists in this urban space.

The research problem was guided by the following research questions, hypothesis and objectives.

The central research questions was; what role does the expansion of community association play on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area? The specific research questions on otherhand were, what are the types of CAs and socio-cultural activities practiced in Yaoundé urban area? How does membership and organization of CAs influence their socio-cultural activities vis-à-vis multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area? what are the pathways of multiculturalism and causes of disintegration in Yaoundé urban area?

A central research hypothesis assumed that: Community associations play an enhancing/diminishing role on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area. Data from fieldwork explained that community associations play an enhancing as well as diminishing role on multiculturalism. Field results show that membership and socio-cultural activities of community associations influence multiculturalism in Yaoundé. Consequent to the fact that intercommunity associations are made up of people from diverse communities they foster encourage multiculturalism. However, intra-community associations on the other hand, aside promoting and sustaining intra-community cultural heritage, was found to be a promoter of multiculturalism. This was ascertained through activities such as cultural festivals as they integrate members from diverse communities and the fact that they last longer than most intercommunity associations. Thus as an anthropological phenomenon, community association is a dynamic, integrative, symbolic and collective practice which can be learned, shared, transmitted from one generation to the next through interaction, socialization and networking as a result of socio-cultural activities.

Three specific hypothesis were framed from the central hypothesis which are to substantiate the central research hypothesis and verified as follows:

There are two types of community associations in Yaoundé urban area: intra-community and intercommunity associations. Through composition and socio-cultural activities, intra-community associations encourage intra-community social cohesion, integration, cultural

sustainability and monoculturalism while intercommunity associations promote intercommunity associations promote intercommunity integration, social cohesion and multiculturalism. With regards to this hypothesis it was discovered that there exist two types of community associations – intercommunity associations and intra-community associations – and both of them practice socio-cultural activities. The activities found common among them are: holding assemblies, celebrating happy and sorrowful events, organizing cultural festivals (accompanied by entertainment through food and drinks) njangi, thrift and loans as well as self and community development activities. Described in the works of Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), Orozco & Garcia-Zanello (2000), Orozco (2003), Nyamnjoh (2008), Yenshu Vubo (2008), Page, Evans, & Mercer (2010) and Longley (2021), these activities are practised in Yaoundé urban area with a primary objective being improving/maintaining the well-being of individuals and contributing to development of community of origin.

These associations practice economic, social and cultural activities which are related to happy and sorrowful events. Membership determines the inclusion and exclusion criteria of persons enrolled by different associations. Intra-community associations enroll members based on common communities of origin while intercommunity associations enroll members cross-culturally, influencing a sense of belonging. Socio-cultural activities of community associations are influenced by their structural organization. With reference to the second hypothesis, it was revealed that enrolment determines the inclusion/exclusion of members and non-members respectively, thus creating boundaries between members of diverse communities. This because intra-community associations register members based on common community of origin while intercommunity associations sign up members from diverse cultural backgrounds. This influences a sense of belonging through interaction, socialization, networking and creation of social ties. Socio-cultural activities of community associations are influenced by membership and structural organization of associations. The virtues of membership of intra-community association is recognized through the works of; Gluckman (1940), Mitchelle (1969), Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), Evans (2010), and Caglar (2013). Membership of intercommunity association on the other hand is recognized in the works of Brightbill (1960), Mata, Latham and Ransome, (2010), Arceo (2010), Schein (2013), Niba (2013), Schensul *et al* (2017), Kirkland (2018) and Monju (2019) among others.

Intercommunity associations are canals of multiculturalism while intra-community associations foster monoculturalism. Socio-linguistic practices of stereotypes and hate speech cause social conflict and disintegration in Yaoundé. In relation to this hypothesis, it was realized that intercommunity associations are canals of multiculturalism. It also validated that stereotypes and hate speech cause disintegration and enhance the creation of intra-community associations. Intra-community associations encourage endogenous group cohesion and integration among members of common community. This hypothesis was partially approved and partially disapproved. The work reveals that intra-community associations are steadfast at safeguarding cultural identity, endogenous integration, through creation of internal bonds, networks, socialization and interactions. The hypothesis is partially true in the sense that by recruiting members of common community, it respects one of the principles of multiculturalism – preserving community culture. Equally, their longevity and practice of cultural events by intra-community associations – which integrates individuals from common and diverse communities – creates an enabling environment for cultural *mélange* and exchange. Due to the fore intra-community associations are seen to be promoters of endogenous interaction, socialization, networking, creation of social ties which unintentionally lead to the promotion of multiculturalism. Authors who affirmed the reasoning that group cohesion is encouraged in intra-community associations and related works on multiculturalism are but not limited to Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998), Nyamnjoh (1998), Froment *et al* (2017), Orozco (2003), Socpa (2006), Yenshu Vubo (2008), UNESCO (2009), Nagle (2009) , Page, Evans, & Mercer (2010), Modood (2011), Isabelli-García *et al* (2018), Frey (2018), Orozco & Garcia-Zanello (2000) and Longley (2021). These authors and many others motivated thoughts of this dissertation with their works on issues related to the research theme. With these hypotheses outlined, a look at the central hypothesis follows suit.

With these assumptions, the aims of carrying out this research were: To examine the role of community associations on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area. From the central research objective, three specific objectives were formulated which are: To identify the types of CAs and socio-cultural activities that are practiced in the Yaoundé urban area. To determine how membership and organization of CAs influence their socio-cultural activities vis-à-vis

multiculturalism. To examine how intercommunity associations act as canals of multiculturalism while intra-community associations foster monoculturalism. It also seeks to analyze how socio-linguistic practices of stereotypes and hate speech cause disintegration in Yaoundé.

A double research procedure, made up of documentary and field research as applied in anthropology for the verification of hypothesis. Documentary research allowed for the collection of secondary data from both published and unpublished documents sourced from libraries and the internet. A mixed research methodology made up of qualitative and quantitative methods was employed during ethnography to collect primary data. Hence methods used were observations, interviews, group discussions and surveys. The application of the above methods made use techniques such as passive participant observation, in-depth interviews, spontaneous interviews, case studies, focus group and community group discussions as well as questionnaires respectively. The tools used to facilitate the process were interview guides, observation guides, questionnaires, notepads, pens, cameras, tape recorders among others. During data analysis, secondary data was synthesized and content analysis employed to bring out differences and similarities and they were further classified into themes and sub-themes. With regards to primary data, interviews were transcribed and arranged in the same order as secondary data while observed data was used to compare, complement, confirm and to reject interviews. Data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 2021) and subjected to descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts, tables, charts and percentages.

This work was organized in seven chapters. It begins with an introduction and ends with a conclusion, not leaving out the front and back matters. Thus, chapter One lays down the background of the study. Chapter Two portrays the monograph of Yaoundé and some communities settled therein. Chapter Three is concerned with literature review and theoretical framework. Chapter Four presents ethnographic data on intra-community association and multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area. Chapter Five focuses on membership, structural organization and presentation of some observed intra-community associations. Chapter Six illustrates pathways of multiculturalism and sources of disintegration in Yaoundé urban area. Chapter Seven gives an anthropological analysis of CAs in relation to their effects on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area.

To analyze and interpret the role of community associations on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area, symbolic interactionism theory by Hubert Blumer and the manifest and latent concepts extracted from structural functionalism theory by Robert King Merton were put in place. Noteworthy is the fact that during this research, all seven subdivisions that make up Yaoundé urban space were visited from which 23 intra-community associations were randomly selected to represent eight ethnic communities. With the fore, the interactionist and functionalist (with selected manifest and latent concepts) theories were employed to examine the practice of intra-community association in relation living together in Yaoundé urban area.

The theory of symbolic interactionism is one of the theories used in this work. According to Cole (2020:1), Herbert Blumer gave a clear definition of symbolic interactionism as a social theory which believes that society is the product of daily human interactions between individuals of same or different communities coupled with the interpretations that people attribute to these interactions. As such, human behaviour is the consequence of values, rules, and norms put in place by society and acquired through everyday interactions. Proponents appreciate this theory from a micro perspective arguing that people have different values, attitudes, beliefs or traditions which shape the way they behave in society and that through interpersonal and group interactions rippling effects trigger the production of bigger social structures. George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), is considered the first person to have come up with the theory of interactionism, however, the roots of the theory could be traced to Max Weber (1864-1920). Weber argues that micro-level interactions – such as those in community associations – influence human behaviour. Community associations fall under micro level development of society. From a micro perception, intercommunity associations assemble people from diverse communities, creating an enabling environment for cross cultural interaction. This allows individuals through socialization to interact, connect and exchange their world views, a prerequisite to multiculturalism. Intra-community associations on the other hand depict a micro point of interaction among people of common community of origin thereby encouraging monoculturalism.

Functionalism, particularly structural analysis with emphasis on manifest and latent functions is the next theory of interest. Merton like most functionalists regards society as an organism with different parts where each has a function. As mentioned earlier, different parts of society (such as families, community associations, churches, schools, ministries) function to

preserve the stability and continuity of society. Influenced by the works of Parsons from the 1950s, Merton gave an alternate explanation of structural analysis whereby he looks at deviance as the key to understand adjustments and disorder within the society. Loy & Booth (2004, p. 36) cited by Gilani (2020), argue that deviant behaviour results in *“both change within the structure and change of the structure”*. Merton suggested a distinction between two concepts; **“manifest function”** and **“latent function”** published in 1957 and 1968. Manifest functions are defined as intended, conscious, or deliberate functions of social policies or action, which are created for the benefit of the society (Merton, 2016). In contrast, latent functions are those functions which play unintended or unrecognized roles in any organized social action, wherein they may not be immediately obvious (Gilani; 2020) but affect society. Merton argues that manifest function signifies the conscious functions/intentions played by cultural practices/activities while latent function denotes the unintended role played/consequences of cultural practices/activities carried out by community associations. Merton’s distinctions between manifest function and latent function gives functional analysis of social change and cultural patterns both scientific and meaningful insights, which is the core of this dissertation is the role played by community associations in the city of Yaoundé vis-a-vis multiculturalism. Structural analysis with selected manifest and latent concepts were used to analyze and explain the role played by community associations especially intra-community associations on multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban area. From an anthropological perspective, functionalism looks at the culture of community association from a holistic perspective, where it is made up of different characteristics such as members and socio-cultural activities which function interdependently to keep the entire system whole. Since the role of community associations is to keep individuals united, intra-community and intercommunity associations as collective practices are expected to keep society whole. Apart from conventional reasons, community associations serve as safe haven for community members challenged by culture shock – such as stereotypes and hate speech – to escape from misinterpretations and misconceptions to a place where there is a feeling of belonging.

These associations are made up of different interdependent parts; the organizing structure, the financial organ, disciplinary organ, general assembly whose roles promote solidarity, social cohesion, and integration within the association and society. Furthermore, a defect on one of the parts affects the entire system since all the parts work together for the whole. To explain further,

community associations are created with the objective of fostering interaction, socialization, networking and living together. Hence by interacting with members of same community over and over and practicing socio-cultural activities of same of community, the aims of these groups are made manifest in daily life. As opposed to intercommunity associations, intra-community associations encourage endogenous cohesion and living together, since the culture of association lifestyle has a bearing on people's behaviour and choices. From a functionalist point of view, it is noticed that despite the expansion of intra-community association being a plausible effort, they have intended and unintended roles/consequences. It is perceived and interpreted that these associations manifestly promote autonomy, internal cohesion and monoculturalism while latently diminishing multiculturalism. This is because the activities of these associations influence members toward defending personal interest, community heritage and development, to the detriment of national identity – national integration and cohesion.

Despite the perceptions that intercommunity associations encourage multiculturalism while intra-community associations impair same to a lesser degree, it was realized that socio-cultural activities – especially festivals, cultural heritage preservation, longevity and others – of intra-community associations play a latent role in influencing multiculturalism in Yaoundé urban space.

The major research results are as follows: Community associations urban practices whose roles can enhance or diminish multiculturalism. There are two types of CAs, intra-community associations and intercommunity associations. They have socio-cultural activities which are aimed at encouraging unity, mutual assistance, cultural sustainability and development. They are collective, symbolic, can be learned, shared, and transmitted from one generation to another via enculturation and acculturation. Intercommunity associations are canals of multiculturalism while intra-community associations promote monoculturalism. Stereotypes and hate speech function as promoters of social conflict and disintegration in Yaoundé urban space.

The dissertation's modest contribution to knowledge can be seen in areas as follows:

Increasing and filling existing research gap in empirical literature which motivated this area of study. Literature review was mostly centered around intra-community associations being instrumentalised for political gains, cultural sustainability, mutual aid and endogenous development

while intercommunity associations in addition to the fore, promote multiculturalism. The often overlooked potential of intra-community associations as heralds of multiculturalism is the lacuna that this thesis attempts to fill. Hence other students and researchers interested in this field of study will exploit it as secondary data source to build research hypothesis and objectives. Similarly, the research area will contribute knowledge to association practice as possible sauces of living together in urban areas. This thesis looks at socio-cultural activities of intra-community associations as heralds of multiculturalism because they unite association members through economic, social and cultural practices as well as enforce cohesion between diverse communities during cultural events.

It illustrates the significance of theories in this area of research by showing how they have been used to practically analyze and interpret ideas from fieldwork. Point in case, the interactionist theory shows how interactions among members of intra-community associations lead to group cohesion. It also illustrates how through cultural events intra-community associations play a role in bringing together people from diverse communities, thus promoting living together in urban areas. From a functionalist perspective, intra-community association manifestly brings members of common community together while latently creating an inclusion/exclusion tendency between members of the associations and other community members. The exclusion tendency of intra-community association practice as shown by functionalism is however counteracted by the interactionist theory which explains how cultural events of these associations influence intercommunity inclusion – hence multiculturalism. Thus socio-cultural events members interact with persons from other communities, creating an impact on the way they appreciate themselves and others.

From a linguistic viewpoint the thesis will contribute to bring the attention of everyone to the awareness of consequences of social conflicts resulting from the culture derogatory language use – hate speech and stereotypes. Emphasis is on intra-community associations because during migration these are primary contact points and socialization agents for community members in destination areas. Thus, members can be sensitized about the consequences of poor language use. Government policies could consider encouraging more intercommunity associations as well as encourage measures in intra-community associations that accentuate cultural events which would

unite diverse community members. Government policies would also find interest in encouraging frequent points of socialization and interaction between diverse communities by refurbishing theatre arts and cinema halls to encourage local movies and entertainment industries. Intra-community associations could be encouraged to organize carnivals for cultural exchanges and enhancement of intercommunity bonds.

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VIII. CIRCULARS, DECREES, CHARTE AND DECISIONS

Decree 1987/1365: City Council of Yaoundé

Decree 2007-117 of April 24, 2007

Decree No. 2017/013 of 23 January 2017 to lay down the establishment, organization and functioning of the National Commission on the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism.

Law No. 1987/015: sets up city councils.

LAW No. 90/53 of 19 December 1990 Relating to Freedom of Association

Law No. 2004/17 of July 2004 on the Orientation of Decentralization

Law No. 2004/18 of July 2004 comprising Rules Applicable to Councils

Law No. 2004/19 of July 2004 comprising Rules Applicable to Regions

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IX. ORAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

a. In-depth Interviews

N°	Pseudo-name	Age	Sex	Quarter	Date of interview
1	Alima Sylvie	35	Female	Mendong	04/10/2019
2	Vilon Peter	51	Male	Etoudi	04/10/2019
3	Ebot Shella	28	Female	Accasia	06/10/2019
4	Wirdin Edwin	65	Male	Accasia	06/10/2019
5	Alassan Herve	49	Female	Mendong	06/10/2019
6	Afoka Henriette	38	Female	Mendong	12/09/2019
7	Ngagoum Esther	32	Female	Mendong	12/09/2019
8	Bilong Martin	45	Male	Ahala	10/09/2019
9	Woda Fabian	52	Male	Nkolmeseng	13/12/2019

10	Abdoulaye Hamidou	47	Male	Tsinga	17/02/2021
11	Vernyuy Peter	56	Male	Mimboman	17/02/2021
12	Atem Yves	47	Male	Nylon Bastos	22/06/2021
13	Abdel Mohamed	29	Male	Mokolo	25/07/2021
14	Wandi Vivian	58	Female	Simbok	05/09/2021
15	Kernyuy Angeline	57	Female	Cité Verte	16/10/2021
16	Zambo Hotense	27	Female	Cité Verte	05/06/2021
17	Eloga David	38	Male	Effoulan	22 /11/2019
18	Ngueking Estel	43	Female	Simbock	12/11/2020
19	Binyom Marcel	56	Male	Nkolbison	26/08/ 2021
20	Ayuni David	38	Male	Effoulan	22/06/2021
21	Atsena Estel	43	Female	Simbock	10/09/2019
22	Djiala Pierre	53	Male	Nsimeyong	20/07/ 2021
23	Abdul Mohamed	29	Male	Mokolo	12/11/2021
24	Ayuk Shella	28	Female	Accasia	06/03/ 2021
25	Binyuy Faith	31	Female	Jouvence	19/08/2021
26	Nkongho Emmanuel	69	Male	Mimboman	16/07/2021
27	Kenfack Pièrre	62	Male	Ahala	10/05/ 2021
28	Mounjopou Fabian	52	Male	Nkolmiseng	13/5/2021
29	Ngowan Aurelia	53	Female	Nlongkak	12/10/2019
30	Ndione Magloire	34	Female	Nkolbisson	22/05/2021
31	Jean Pierre	57	Male	Emana	20/06/2021
32	Laware Majorie Marie	34	Female	Simbock	21/05/2021
33	Bihina Bernadette	43	Female	Biyem-Assi	14/03/2021
34	Nguea Henriette	49	Female	Mendong	12/10/2019

35	Fochue Patrick	46	Male	Simbock	19/06/2021
36	Atangana Bernard	36	Male	Odza	12/06/2021
37	Sali Oumarou Mohamed		Male	Carrier	04/06/2021
38	Kenmogne Bernard	36	Male	Essos	12/05/2021
39	Nyoum Anna	53	Female	Barriere	22/05/2021
40	Bernadine	36	Female	Etoudi	03/06/2021
41	Nkenfack Donald	28	Male	Biyem-assi	17/05/2021
42	Kemka Alfred	68	Male	Nkolmeseng	22/05/ 2021
43	Laurentine	46	Female	Biyem assi	08/06/2021
44	Noumi Bertilde	52	Fmale	Odza	01/03/2021
45	Nana Gilbert	39	Male	Omnisport	21/05/2021
46	Kitwe Adele	46	Female	Messa	07/03/2021
47	Tchouate Andre	38	Male	Simbock	17/03/2021
48	Njokam Désiré	29	Male	Damas	10/08/2021
49	George	52	Male	Simbock	03/10/2019
50	Wilma	39	Female	Simbock	16/10/2019
51	Ateba Brian	67	Male	Simbock	16/10/20/19
52	Banla Beatrice	45	Female	Etoudi	02/11/2021
53	Bidjoka Lilian	51	Female	Etoudi	02/11/2021
54	Goupou Brigette	52	Female	Elig Edzoa	16/07/2021
55	Bidzogo Vivian	36	Female	Etoudi	02/11/2019
56	Kenneth	28	Male	Beatitute	10/08/2021
57	Mvodo Marie	41	Female	Etoudi	02/08/2021
58	Ouambo Roy	28	Male	Beatitute	10/08/2021
59	Ngah Valerie	53	Female	Mvog Ada	09/05/2021
60	Verla Edward	57	Male	Damas	11/03/2021
61	Mbinkar Brenda	36	Female	Byiyem Assi	14/03/2021

62	Elouga	53	Male	Ahala	10/09/2019
63	Mohamed	36	Male	Mokolo	15/02/2021
64	Norbert	58	Male	Olembe	23/07/2021

COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Group	Date	Quarter
1 Community group discussion with men	08/05/2021	Mokolo
2 Community group discussion	22/06/2021	Mvog Ada
3 Community Group Discussion with men and women	09/12/2021	Nlongkak

Focus Group Discussions

N°	Group	Date	Quarter
1	Focus Group Discussion with men and women	09/06/2021	Mendong
2	Focus Group Discussion with men	08/03/2021	Mbankolo
3	Focus Group Discussion with women	24/05/2015	Acasia
4	Focus Group Discussion with women	08/06/2015	Efoulan
5	Focus Group Discussion with men	06/03/2021	Mimboman
6	Focus Group Discussion with men and women	24/04/2021	Nkolbisson
7	Focus Group Discussion with men and women	14/03/2021	Etoug Ebe
8	Focus Group Discussion with men and women	07/03/2021	Simbock
9	Focus Group Discussion with women	21/02/2021	Mvog Betsi
10	Focus Group Discussion with men	14/04/2021	Biyem Assi
11	Focus Group Discussion with women	26/06/2021	Nkolmiseng

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ANNEXES**CONSENT FORM**

Dear Sir/Miss/Mrs,

I am SHARILA SHUKA BALON, a PhD student from the University of Yaoundé I, department of Anthropology. I am out on a research programme to collect information on the topic *“Community associations within the framework of multiculturalism in urban areas of Cameroon: The case of Yaoundé.”*

PhD student, Department of Anthropology, University of Yaoundé I.

Contact : (+237) 670 825 117, email, balonsharila@gmail.com

SOCPA Antoine,

Professor University of Yaoundé I.

Contact : (+237) 677783852/694949394 ; asocpa@yahoo.com

Please proceed and answer the questionnaire over leaf.

Research Topic: “Cultural Associations within the Framework of Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion in Urban Areas of Cameroon: The Case of Yaoundé.”

NB: Please answer by crossing corresponding numbers and/or providing information where necessary. It is ok to choose more than one answer per question. You are welcome to give your opinion(s) as well.

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- 1) **Quarter/Place of residence in Yaoundé**
- 2) **Community of origin?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Indicate for others (even foreigners)

 1. Beti
 2. Bassa
 3. Duala
 4. Bayang
 5. Nso
 6. Bamileke
 7. Bamum
 8. Northerners
 9. Others
- 3) **Gender** 1) Female 2) Male

1	2
---	---
- 4) **Age range**
 (1) 10-25 (2) 25 – 35 (3) 35 – 45 (4) 45 – 55 (5)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 55 – 65 (6) 65 – 75 (7) 75+
- 5) **Religion**
- 6) **Occupation**
- 7) **Marital Status** (If married answer question (6) if not skip to question (7))
- 8) **Marriage type** (Is your partner from your community or not?)

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

 - 1) Communal group 2) Inter-community 3) International 4) Others
- 9) **Level of education**

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

 - 1) Never been to school 2) Primary 3) Secondary 4) Tertiary 5) Others
- 10) **Mastery of languages**

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

 - 1) Mother tongue (local language) 2) English language 3) French language 4) Others (Indicate other languages such as; German, Italian, Spanish etc.)

SECTION B: COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION AND CHARACTERISTICS

- 11) **Which community association do you belong to?**

1	2
---	---
- 1) Intercommunity association (for example; sports, professional, ex-student, religious association)
- 2) Intra-community association (for example tribal, clan, family). **If you belong to two (2), continue to question 11.**
- 12) **What is the name of your association?**
- 13) **Why was the association created?**

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---
1. To preserve cultural heritage
2. To develop community members
3. To develop community of origin
4. Others
- 14) **Where does your association hold its assemblies?**

1	2	3
---	---	---
- 1) Halls
- 2) Member's house
- 3) Others
- 15) **How often does your association organize meetings?**

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---
- 1) Every Sunday
- 2) Once a month
- 3) Twice a months
- 4) Others
- 16) **How long have you been a member of the association?**
- 17) **How did you know about the association? (choose at most two)**

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Please indicate for others
- 1) Friend, 2) Family 3) Quarter member, 4) church member 5) Other options
- 18) **What motivated you to become a member?(You can select more than one option)**

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---
- 1) To develop myself
- 2) Meeting and interacting with members of my community of origin
- 3) Assist in community development
- 4) Others opinions

SECTION C: MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION OF INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

- 19) **How many people are in your association?**
- 20) **What is the age range of members of your association?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 1) 10-25 2) 25-35 3) 35-45 4) 45-55 5) 55- 65 7) 65-75 8) 75+
- 21) **How did you become a member of the association?**

1	2	3
---	---	---

 1) Be a member of the community of origin
 2) Be married to a member of the community
 3) Others
- 22) **Explain your answer to question (22) above**
- 23) **Does your association have an executive body?**

1	2
---	---

 1) Yes 2) No
- 24) **What is the composition of the executive body?**
- 25) **What qualifies someone to be elected member of the executive body?**

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---

 1) Be a registered member
 2) Mastery of community culture
 3) Longevity
 4) Others
- 26) **How long has your association been operating?**
- 27) **Does your association have rules and regulations/constitution?**

1	2
---	---

 1) Yes 2) No

SECTION D: SOCIO-CULTURAL ACTIVITIES OF INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS IN YAOUNDE

- 28) **Does your association practice socio-cultural activities?**

1	2
---	---

 1) Yes 2) No
- 29) **What types of economic activities does your association practice?**

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

 1) "Njangi"
 2) Savings and loan
 3) Community development fund
 4) Sinking fund

- 5) Other fund raisers
- 30) **What types of social activities does your association assist members with?**

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---
- 1) Marriage
2) "Bornhouse"
3) Promotion
4) Sickness
5) Death
6) Others
- 31) **What types of cultural activities does your association practice**

1	2	3
---	---	---
- 1) Traditional dances
2) Cultural events
3) Others
- 32) **What is the range of amount contributed during njangi?**
- 33) **Does your association offer food and drinks during meeting?**

1	2
---	---

1. Yes 2. No
- 34) **What type of food does your association offer during assemblies**

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

1. Traditional food, 2. Food from any ethnic origin 3. Imported food 4. Snacks 5. Others
- 35) **What type of drinks does your association offer during assemblies**

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

1. Palm wine 2. Other wines 3. Beer 4. Corn beer
5. Water 6. Others

SECTIONC: INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION AND LIVING TOGETHER IN YAOUNDE.

- 36) **What according to you would be some of the recurrent problems that make co-existence difficult in Yaoundé? (You can select more than one option)**

1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---
1. Poverty
2. Stereotyping
3. Hate speech
4. Others
- 37) **Briefly explain your response in question thirty-eight (36) above.**
- 38) **How does your association encourage solidarity among members?**

- 39) **Have you ever suffered from stereotyping and hate from members of other communities?**

1	2
---	---

1. Yes 2. No
- 44) **What are some of the stereotypic appellations or names do members of other communities call you?**
1.Nso
2. Beti
3. Duala
4. Bassa
5.Bamileke
6. Bamum
7.Bayang
8.Northerner
- 45) **What would you say is the origin of the stereotypes mentioned above?**
- 46) **How does stereotyping make you feel?**

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

INTERVIEW GUIDE

TYPES OF COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS AND SOCIO-CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

- What types of associations do you belong?
- When and why was your community association created?
- Where and why does your association convene meetings?
- Why did you become a member?
- What kind of socio-cultural activities does your association practice?
- Who are the people invited to participate in your activities?
- Why do you practice socio-cultural activities in your association?
- How do you organize and carry out socio-cultural practices?
- Does your association organize cultural festivals?
- What types of food and drinks does your association entertain members with during meetings?
- Why the choice of food and drinks?

MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION OF INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS

- How are members recruited into your association?
- How can you classify the people that make up your association?
- What is the structural organization of your association ?
- What is the composition of your association's executive body?
- How does your association ensure discipline?

INTRA-COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, STEREOTYPES AND LIVING TOGETHER

- What types of conflicts do members of your association experience with other community members?
- How does your association manage intercommunity conflicts?
- How do members stay connected to one another?
- How has belonging to your association been of help to you?

OBSERVATION AND SENSORY GUIDE

- Types of socio-cultural activities.
- How intra-community associations practice socio-cultural activities.
- How intra-community association members are organized.
- People involve in socio-cultural activities.
- Venure where socio-cultural activities are practiced.
- Sound, Smell, feel, of venure of association

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