

CHILD SOCIALIZATION IN TRANSNATIONAL SPACES OF EDUCATION IN CAMEROON

A qualitative research project

The Cameroonian (nation-)state led school system is challenged with new types of school education which transcend and transform national borders, which are conceptualised as *transnational spaces of education*. Besides *international* organisations (these organisations are based on intergovernmental treaties), as for instance the UNESCO, or ministries responsible for the regulation, new non-state actors offer education and learning opportunities in which *political, economic and cultural relations between persons are intensified and transcend nation-state borders* (Adick 2008: 173). These transnational spaces of education appear for example as off-shore branches of universities, or in form of “International Schools” offering the International Baccalaureat or also in form of culture institutes, as for example the Confucius Institute or the British Council which offer language courses and information about the culture of the country it represents (ibid.: 169).

For instance, the “International Schools” or the religious oriented Islamic Schools partly differ in their curricula and some of these organisations offer internationally accepted school leaving certificates, unlike the schools led by the Cameroonian government. Thus they gain increasing significance in the school-education field. Besides they follow other educational goals than the nation-state led school system, since latter predominantly serves nation-building and stabilising goals and national interests in general. However, transnational spaces of education constitute spaces of „*de-nationalization*“ of political and social processes within which common interests, values, patterns of action i.e. social life transcend or even transform national borders (cp. Khagram & Levitt , p. 1). And this makes transnational spaces of education a relevant field of scientific interest for child (socialisation) research and comparative education research.

Sources:

Adick, Christel (2008): Transnationale Bildungsorganisationen in transnationalen Bildungsräumen: Begriffsdefinitionen und Vorschlag für eine Typologie. In: *Tertium Comparationis* 14(2), pp. 168-197.

Adick, Christel (2008): Transnational organisations in education. In: Pries, Ludger (ed.): *Rethinking Transnationalism. The Meso-link of organisations*. Routledge, New York etc., pp. 126-154.

Khagram, Sanjeev & Levitt, Peggy (2008): Constructing transnational studies. In: idem. (eds.): *The transnational studies reader. Intersections and innovation*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1-22.

Aims of the research

Until date, the Cameroonian school education system struggles to redefine itself and emancipate from colonial rule, nearly 60 years after independence. However today, the nation-state school system strongly inherits the legacies of the French and British colonial school system. Hence, this calls for scientific debates on whether transnational spaces of education in Cameroon can be regarded as a pathway to overcome the colonial ideologies and to conceptualise new spaces of emancipative, locally and socio-culturally contextualized As well as negotiated school education for new generations or whether they serve as *soft power tool* of in fact new forms of imperialism.



German School in Yaoundé
Source: <https://citoyennemondiale.wordpress.com>

Theoretical Approaches

This research project follows the macro-sociological and global-historical approach according to the *World-System Theory* (Immanuel Wallerstein), so as to historically reconstruct the transfer of knowledge, education and culture between the centre, the semi-periphery (for instance China and the Arab world) and the periphery (Cameroon). Since this theory is not a specific theory of education it will be linked with Pierre Bourdieu's *theory of capitals* as well as to *socialisation theory*.

This also enables to elaborate the meso- and micro-social level which will additionally be examined from the perspective of *postcolonial theory*, so as to gain further socio-cultural insights to the local contextualisations of the transnational transfer and exchange of culture, knowledge and education – which finally exerts impacts on the child socialisation.



Rain Forest International School, Yaoundé/Cameroon.
Source: <http://rfris.org/performing-arts/gabriella-naine-gallery/>

Research Questions

1. How many and which types of TNEs exist in Cameroon and how were they initiated in global historical processes?
2. In how far are “forms of modernity” expressed in TNEs and in how far are they locally contextualized in TNEs on micro-social level as well as on the meso- and macro-social level in Cameroon?
3. In how far do socialization processes of pupils in TNEs differ from socialization processes of pupils of the state school system?



Confucius Institute in Yaoundé/University of Yaoundé II, Cameroon
Photo by Jun Li, Yaoundé, Cameroon, August 12, 2014
Source: <http://cies2015.org/response-li.html>



Islamic school in Cameroon
Foto: Reuters
Source: <http://www.lapresse.ca/international/afrique/201004/15/01-4270822-musulmans-et-chretiens-a-egalite-en-afrique.php>

Research Methods

- Field research/qualitative research
- Document Analysis (e.g. curricula, school programs)
- Semi-structured interviews; expert interviews