

**Research Article**

Volume-02|Issue-09|2021

**Intercultural Relations: The Case of the Sino – Cameroon Intercultural Relations****Kume Alfred Gimandze\***

Centre for the Development of Best Practices in Health (CDBPS-H) Yaounde Central Hospital

**Article History**

Received: 07.09.2021

Accepted: 20.09.2021

Published: 30.09.2021

**Citation**

Gimandze, K. A. (2021). Intercultural Relations: The Case of the Sino – Cameroon Intercultural Relations. *Indiana Journal of Arts & Literature*, 2(9), 17-28.

**Abstract:** The world has become a global village and the development in information and communication technology (ICT) have facilitated the way people in different parts of the world with different cultures now interact with one another on a daily basis. Intercultural relations can hereby play primordial roles for people study other cultures and know how to make greater profits from them in all the political, economic, social, cultural and psychological behaviours and interactions with the people we meet in our various professional lives. This paper portrays the challenges (that were faced by Cameroon and China in their early encounters due to cultural differences) and the advantages both countries now enjoy as a result of the comprehensive application or understanding of intercultural relations. It is quite difficult for two people or two countries to work or do business together if they don't understand each other. The Sino – Cameroon intercultural relations is a perfect example of how intercultural studies can help unite the various countries of the world and then spare human beings from the crisis and wars the world is facing today. Human cultures are interconnected so much such that you cannot alter one area without influencing the others. Cultures move along with the political, economic, social, psychological and even the environmental aspects of human activities.

**Keywords:** Cameroon, China, global village, Intercultural relations, work.

Copyright © 2021 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

**INTRODUCTION**

All human interactions are by definition intercultural. When two individuals meet, it is an intercultural contact since they both have different (sometimes drastically different if not opposite) ways to perceive, discover and create reality. Culture is a very important aspect of a society, it is acquired through acculturation or socialization by the individual from the society and it subsumes every area of social life (Donald Hendon and al. 1996). Human beings throughout the planet earth have in some point in time been using their cultures to be in some sorts, units of division or separation so much such that people with different cultural backgrounds looked upon themselves as extra beings from the others. This way of doing things or viewing other human beings could have been the genesis of slavery and racism.

The world has become a global village where people interact with others, goods and services crisscrossing the borders on regular basis. As such, it is thus necessary to adopt and adapt to the changing trends of the global village. Following the global changing world in domain such as the advancement in transportation and the information and communication technologies (ICTs), it is thus necessary to build a global community. The increased movement of diverse global populations in the twenty-first century has become more complex than we may have imagined even five years ago. (Lee 2003) restated by (Fay Patel and al 2011) claims that ‘developments in transportation and communication technology have been rapidly removing geographical boundaries’ and that people also move

across cultural boundaries. As migrant populations seek employment, investment opportunities and new geographical spaces to enjoy better security and peaceful coexistence, the goal of building a global community that can work in harmony will remain a very significant phase of our lives this century.

China has for a long time invested much political and financial capital in Cameroon. After the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1971, the relationship has been dominated by the completion by Beijing of a handful of symbolic but visible projects and the regular exchange of delegations. As with many Sino-African economic partnerships, the Sino-Cameroonian one took off in the late 1990s and in the early 2000s. Today, China is one of Cameroon’s key partners in both trade and development and particularly, infrastructure projects (Cabestan, 2015). This delay could be accounted for as a result of the differences in culture.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS****Study area**

The study sites were Yaounde in the Centre Region and political capital of Cameroon then Bamenda the capital city of the North West region of Cameroon. We also collected data through review records from the Eastern, Littoral, South, South West and Northern regions of Cameroon.

**Bamenda**

Bamenda is located along latitude 05° 58' N and longitude 10° 11' E and covers an area of about 290 square

\*Corresponding Author: Kume Alfred Gimandze

kilometres at an altitude of 11,600 meters above sea level. Bamenda, also known as Abakwa and Mankon Town, is a city northwest of Cameroon and capital of the North West Region. The city had a population of about 800,000 people during the 2012 Cameroon Census, and its located 366 km (227 mi) north-west of the Cameroonian capital, Yaounde. Bamenda is known for its cool climate and strategic location showing its beautiful scenery of hills and vegetation. As the Regional capital of the North West Region, Bamenda is the melting pot of cultural groups from across the Region and beyond. Some of the streets are named after major tribal groups that inhabit the city, groups that provide diverse cultural animation through their associations and meetings. Community libraries, youth cultural centres, sports academy, museums, handicraft centres, royal palaces, ancient architectural structures make for a very friendly cultural atmosphere.

### **Yaounde**

Yaounde lies at the centre of the nation, with an altitude of about 600 – 1000 m above sea level. It is situated on latitude: 3° 52' 12 north and longitude: 11° 31' 12 east. It is estimated that Yaounde has a total of about 180 kilometre square surface area. The city first grew around the Mfoundi River. A network of hills make up its landscape such as Mounts Mbam Minkom (1295 m), Nkolodom (1221 m), Messa, Fébé, Akokdoué in the North and West, and Mount Eloumdem (1159 m) in the south. The rivers are the Mfoundi, Ekozoa, Biyeme, and Mefou. Today, Yaounde is the siege of power, the presidential palace, the house of parliament, all ministries and embassies.

## **DATA COLLECTION METHOD**

### **Focused population**

A number of focus group discussions were planned and held with some Cameroonian traders in Bamenda and Yaounde respectively, where the traders expressed their various view points and perceptions on the Cameroon-Asia business line. Their thoughts and challenges were all expressed in the course of these focus group discussions. A total of 85 informants were interviewed in this work, 57 males and 38 females, 10 Chinese, 5 Nigerians and 70 Cameroonian. Any trader dealing on the Cameroon-Asia business line that we were chanced to meet was made a potential informant and their viewpoints were some sort a representation of the viewpoints of all the traders who deal on this business line. There was a saturation point (85) where the information given by the informants was what has been said by the other informants. A good number of things and actions were observed directly during the field or data collection period. Following an observation checklist, we observed the goods and services offered in shops, supermarkets, hardware houses, ironmongers and some markets in Bamenda and Yaounde respectively. We equally observed the goods and services offered in some homes and public places such as Restaurants, schools and administrative offices to see and collect data

on the various goods and services found or displayed in such places and especially find out where those were fabricated. A reasonable number of construction sites were visited to observe the workers (their nationalities), the machinery they were using and to sum it, the various tools and construction materials they were using and the countries that fabricated the tools and materials.

### **Data collection and processing**

We carried out both in-depth and informal interviews with a good number of Cameroonian traders who are dealing on the Cameroon-Asia business line in Yaounde and Bamenda respectively. These techniques were also used to collect data from the other participants (household consumers, administrative personnel's, commercial motor bike riders and students). We used the narratives of our informants as the techniques to collect data on the informants' past experiences on how and when they started doing business. Many of these traders started by hawking perishable goods such as groundnuts and coconuts before getting on to non-perishable goods. Some started by pushing trucks in the various markets and warehouses while others started by working for some well-established business men and women who later settled them with enough capital to start off their own businesses. The reasons why they go to each other's country and the factors that pushes or pulls them to and from the various countries. This method also helped us to collect data on the attitudes or behaviours put up by the traders as they interact with each other and their perceptions concerning the presence of their counterparts in each other's country. Here we are equally talking of individual experiences, knowledge and testimonies. Some of the life histories concerning the traders were gotten from documents.

## **RESULTS**

It all needed that both the Chinese and Cameroonian governments to turn to cultural integration in or order to collaborate and work with each other. As of now, there is a Chinese Confucius Centre in Yaounde at the Cameroon's Institute of International Relations (IRIC), where the Chinese culture is taught and learned (Chinese language, dance, kung fu, Chinese traditional medicine and Chinese cutlery to name just a few). The 17<sup>th</sup> and last point of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) talks about partnership in order to attain the sustainable development goals. This can only be attained if there is a high degree of intercultural collaboration. It is very difficult for people with opposing cultures to collaborate, talk less of working together, thus intercultural relations are absolutely necessary for effective collaboration between the various countries in the world.

### **Education**

There are over 500 Cameroonian students studying in China through scholarships granted them by the Chinese government. Since the 1970s, China has been symbolically active in Cameroon's education,

offering every year a handful of scholarships or building on occasion a few primary schools (Cabestan 2015).

However, since the late 1990s and even more the mid-2000s, China has become much more active on these fronts, especially as an education donor. One of its most visible achievements has been the opening of Cameroon's Confucius Institute (CI) in 2007, two years after the inauguration of the first CI on the African continent in Nairobi. Housed by the Cameroon Institute of International Relations (Institut des Relations Internationales du Cameroun, IRIC), Cameroon's CI is part of the University of Yaounde II. In 2009, it also created a branch in Douala that organizes language classes in local schools and another one in Maroua's Ecole normale supérieure (Higher Teachers' Training School) that trained 10 new Chinese language teachers in 2012–2013 (Chimtom 2012).

Proposing language training to students (75%), civil servants (20%) and business people (5%), the Yaounde CI is based on a cooperation initiated in 1996 between the IRIC and Zhejiang Normal University, located in Jinhua, and hosting today China's largest Institute of African Studies. Run by a Cameroonian administrative coordinator, Etienne Songa, and a Chinese director, Ms Jiang Yulan, the CI teaches Chinese with the help of one local teacher, Pauline Zang Atangana, the first Cameroonian to have been specially trained in China with the support of a scholarship in 1998, and 25 Chinese volunteers hired and dispatched by Hanban, the Chinese Ministry of Education's National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (Cabestan 2015).

A Chinese Language Teaching Centre was created in Yaounde in 1997 and is jointly managed by the International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC) and the Chinese University of Zhejiang. The centre provides training for professionals from the diplomatic and foreign trade cycles and has attracted students from several countries in the Central African sub-region. Starting in 2004, the centre organises a Chinese language competition each year and the winners benefit a trip to China. This indicates that there are a good number of Chinese who live in Cameroon with the sole purpose of teaching the Chinese language and culture to interested Cameroonians in particular and Africans as a whole. In September 2005, cooperation between the education ministries in Cameroon and China gave birth to the Cameroon National Ballet with the assistance of two dance instructors from China (Sunday Aninpah and Francis Menjo 2008). From time to time, these Chinese professionals are being recycled making way for other Chinese to come and have a glimpse of the Cameroonian and African cultures put together.

Socio-cultural activities are organized in Cameroon yearly to mark or celebrate the Sino-Cameroon bilateral and trade cooperation. These

activities usually give room for non-resident Chinese to come to Cameroon for short visits and then return to China. During such events, the cultures of both countries are being demonstrated and at times, Cameroonians who have studied the Chinese language and culture have to express themselves in Chinese. Here we are making references to the Cameroon National Ballet team and the Members of the Kung Fu Association of the Confucius Institute, Yaounde.

Note should be taken of some infrastructural edifices constructed by the Chinese and their Cameroonian counterparts do not master their way of functioning so much such that innovations and repairs can only be done by the Chinese. Clear examples here include the Multipurpose Sports Complex and the Yaounde Conference Centre where repairs and innovations there are being carried out by the Chinese professionals and not the other way round. It would have been expected that these structures be put up by the Chinese with the active participation of some Cameroonian professionals or Technicians who can carry out repair works and innovations when need arises thereby transferring knowledge and or the technical know-how. If it is the Chinese who are doing everything from conception through realization, maintenance and repairs or innovations then a different type of partnership between Cameroon and China should be sorted out rather than talking of partnership when the other partner is just a mere spectator.

### **Health Care**

Health care provision is one of the greatest aspects where the Sino-Cameroon relation is greatly noticed. The Chinese have built and equipped the Mbalmayo hospital and the Gynaeco-Obstetric and Paediatric hospitals in the Ngousso neighbourhood in Yaounde and Douala respectively. They are so many resident Chinese medical experts working in the above mentioned hospitals under the expense of the Chinese government.

Since the early 2000s, China has increased its assistance to the construction of hospitals. Apart from the already mentioned construction of hospitals in Yaounde and Douala, Beijing also restored and modernized the Buea hospital in the English-speaking southwest region (3 billion CFA or \$6 million). For a long time, Chinese doctors have been attached to hospitals built by China. The numbers vary depending on the source but are probably between 10 and 30 per hospital. As an indication of their real number, it was reported in 2006 that 44 new Chinese doctors had arrived to take over from the team that had been there for 2 years (Cabestan 2015).

China has put on the market an antimalarial medicine which is a combination of injection (Artesunate) and tablet (Arsuamoon), derivatives of DihydroArtemisinin. Manufactured by Guilin Southern

Pharmaceuticals, a laboratory based in the Chinese city of Guilin (Guangxi), this medicine and this combination have been recommended by the World Health Organization since 2004. Efficient and cheap, this treatment has been welcomed by the Cameroonian public. In addition, at FOCAC 2006, China decided to donate to Cameroon a malaria research Centre (at a cost of \$0.4 million) housed by Yaounde's Gynaecologic, Obstetrics and Paediatrics hospital, which was also built by China for 5 billion CFA or \$10 million. This Centre was inaugurated in 2009. From this Centre, policies are formulated on how to best fight the malaria parasite in Cameroon. The awarding of scholarships to medical personnel for in-service training in China since 1985 also sets the stage for the copying of best medical practices in China.

Chinese medicine and clinics are becoming very popular in Cameroon. Many billboards are noticeable in towns indicating the location of clinics specialized in Chinese traditional medical practices like acupuncture, massage and many others. They do not only provide medical services, but equally supply all the Chinese-based drugs needed. Many Cameroonian hawkers can be seen moving from one household to another with Chinese medicines such as pain killers, essential balms, inhalers, bandages, rubs with so many funny names like the "makalati tutum", "njenseng" and the others.

Forty years ago, Cameroon and China embarked on South-south cooperation. Since then, positive statistics have been recorded at Cameroon's Ministry of Public Health. For instance, between 1965-2015, over one million Cameroonian have been treated by the Chinese and acupuncture successfully practiced on close to 250,000 people in the four major Chinese hospitals in Cameroon.

Moreover, 17,800 women have had safe deliveries and hundreds of thousands more successfully operated by Chinese medics for illnesses such as growths, fibroid, ectopic pregnancies, urinary tract infections, amongst others. Talking to reporters about this form of cooperation with China, Cameroon's Minister for Public Health, Andre Mama Fouda remarked that; "Since 1975, close to 582 medical personnel from China amounting to 17 medical missions have been to Cameroon and dispatched to Chinese constructed hospitals in Mbalmayo, Yaounde and Guider."

Located 49 km from Yaounde, the Mbalmayo District Hospital is the first health institution constructed by the Chinese in Cameroon. In an interview granted Cameroon Tribune (8 June 2015), following the commemoration of 40 years of fruitful cooperation between Cameroon and China in the domain of public health the Director of the hospital, Dr. Michael Tsoungui Ako, says; "We currently have 12 specialists from China. They are very competent and always available."

Dr. Wang Qing Yun, Gynaecologist of the 17th Chinese medical mission at the Mbalmayo District Hospital, reveals that; "Before coming to Cameroon, I read that many women died while giving birth in this part of the country. So, my mission here is to reduce this phenomenon."

For this reason, Mama Fouda is unequivocal on promoting this bilateral relation: "Health cooperation with China is fruitful and full of success stories. Most importantly, we are thrilled, because, this form of cooperation has led to the sharing of professional experiences between medical doctors from China and Cameroon. Some Cameroonian physicians are now able to skilfully practice acupuncture and other medical procedures which are deeply rooted in Chinese culture." Cameroon Tribune 8th June 2015.

### Infrastructure Projects

This is clearly the area where Chinese companies have been most successful and competitive in Cameroon, as they have in the rest of Africa. Their spectacular capacity to bid for and win large contracts aimed at completing structural projects has been well reported. In addition to the projects financed by the Exim Bank without tender (in Cameroon as elsewhere), Chinese infrastructure companies, both public and private, have been able to get funding from the African Development Bank and the World Bank, especially for road projects.

It is impossible to present all the infrastructure projects which Chinese companies have been engaged in. As indicated above, Chinese companies have won the lion's share of infrastructure projects because, as elsewhere in Africa and the developing world, they propose a low price (which is seen by their competitors as a dumping strategy) and they are able to complete the project at great speed. Further, the Chinese are able to help fund the projects. However, as the number of projects funded by China increases, so does Cameroon's external debt, significantly increasing its burden in the mid-term future. The table below is a summary of some of the major infrastructural projects that have been carried out, ongoing and or are at their completion phases.

However note should be taken of some gigantic projects in Cameroon which are not realized with funds borrowed from China but are being realized or have been realized by Chinese companies. A very perfect example in this light is the Lom Pangar Hydropower Project in the East region of Cameroon. The project was realized by funds borrowed from the African Development Bank to the tune of US\$71.1million in November 2011 and the World Bank with the sum of US\$132million in March 2012. The project was realized by the China International Water and Electric Corporation. The management of the

project upon completion was officially handed to the Cameroonian authorities on the 30th June 2017.

In the various Chinese construction sites in Cameroon, there is always the problem of language barrier for both the Chinese and the Cameroonian labourers as the few recruited translators cannot be everywhere to translate/interpret. As such, the Chinese have developed a simplified means of expression through figure and mouth movements and broken French and English respectively. For example; if a Chinese wishes to inform his immediate Cameroonian work that he will be travelling to Douala the following day and that the said worker shall be working with his colleague during his absence, this is how they usually say it to their Cameroonian workers "*tomorrow me go to Douala, you work with my colleague till after tomorrow*". In French they will say; « *demain moi partir à Douala, toi travail avec mon collègue là-bas* ». This is often said accompanied with the fingers or hand pointing for the other person to quickly understand what the Boss is trying to explain. At times the pronunciations don't come out correctly but since the Cameroonian and Chinese are getting used to one another, comprehension is made simple.

### **Trade**

Trade is considered as a major point of concern in the Sino- Cameroon intercultural relations because; through trade both partners live, experience, practice and consume one another's culture. Many Cameroonian are living and consuming Chinese cultures right here in Cameroon; from textile through food, construction materials and electronics just to names these few.

Trade between Cameroon and China, is a domain that needs not be introduced any longer to any Cameroonian as we see, feel and observe it on a daily basis. The signing of bilateral and trade cooperation between Cameroon and China witnessed the steady and later on rapid installation of Chinese traders in some Cameroonian towns and cities with the Chinese shops being filled with goods and services manufactured in China. Cameroonian traders were already going to China to purchase goods and services but the signing of the trade agreements accelerated the process as more and more Cameroonian traders could now go to China while some Cameroonian citizens took up residence in some Chinese cities for business ventures. Since the late 2000s, China has become Cameroon's first trade partner. In 2012, Sino-Cameroonian trade represented 12.3% of Cameroon's foreign trade, against 4% in 2005, elevating trade with China to about the same level as that with France and three times that with the US (3.8%), although China has remained behind the European Union (41.4%). When the EU is excluded, Beijing is identified in 2012 as Cameroon's top bilateral customer (15.3% of its exports), surpassing Portugal (11.8%), the Netherlands (11.3%, buying 70% of Cameroon's cocoa), Spain (11.2%) and France (8.6%). This is significant, as in

2012 China was only its third supplier with a 10.4% share, behind Nigeria at 17.8% (which does not include refined oil and consumer goods which are reportedly smuggled from this neighbour), and France (National Institute of Statistics 2005).

Owing to the weakness of Cameroon's customs and statistical instruments, one is often confronted with conflicting figures. If we use Chinese data, Sino-Cameroonian bilateral trade has been more robust (Cabestan 2015).

This trade is very much modelled on the North-South structure, as China buys raw materials and sells manufacturing and consumption products. Its imports have been mainly driven by a rapid increase in oil purchases, especially since 2008 (62% of Chinese imports in 2012). Cameroon's oil exports increase caused a trade deficit for China in 2006 and 2008, but this has since been reversed. Chinese exports to Cameroon are mainly electrical appliance, textiles, footwear, vehicles such as motorbikes and tractors, mechanical and electrical products, and cement. There was also a period of rapid increase of imports of food products from China, but since 2003 Cameroonian purchases of Chinese grains have gone down while the share of manufactured goods and machineries has gone up. In other words, China has replaced Cameroon's traditional suppliers in these areas. Cameroonian complain about their widening trade deficit with China (\$174 million in 2012 according to Chinese sources) and about the fact that some Chinese imports, such as ceramics or shoes, compete with local products. The smuggling of fake drugs (pharmaceutical products) from China and India coming through Nigeria has also been mentioned as a growing concern.

The activity attracting the bulk of Chinese into Cameroon nowadays is the retailing of assorted goods imported from China like electronic appliances, textiles, travel goods, footwear, clothing and many others. Chinese retail shops are found on almost every street in urban settlements in the country. They are relatively small-sized businesses, generally owned and managed by Chinese families. Local retailers are facing stiff competition from the Chinese, even though they equally import from China (Aninpah and Menjo 2008).

### **Sports and Culture**

There is much to be said about the Sino-Cameroon relation insofar as sports and culture are concerned. A good number of Cameroonian students are now learning the Chinese language. Some Cameroonian have been recruited as translators in the various construction sites by the Chinese. There is a Chinese artist who composed and sang in the Douala (Sawa) language of Cameroon.

As you move across the various quarters in some of the towns and cities of Cameroon, you can see

Chinese Restaurants spotted left and right offering the Cameroonian public a taste of the Chinese foods. Cameroon-China cooperation in the domains of sports and culture has been increasing over the years.

China, just like with many other major infrastructure projects in Cameroon, has constructed a number of sports and culture-related facilities of international standing. These include the Yaounde multipurpose Sports Complex at Warda Junction worth about 17 billion FCFA, which was inaugurated on June 19, 2009. Others are the Limbe Omnisports Stadium with a capacity of 20,000 seats which was built by the China National Machinery and Equipment Import and Export Corporation, CMEC. It was handed over to government in January 2016. The facility hosted the 2016 African Women's Cup of Nations, AFCON. Meanwhile the government has awarded a 4.4 billion CFA contract to Chinese company Tianyuan Construction Group, to rehabilitate the Limbe training stadia. The Bafooussam Omnisports Stadium being constructed by CMEC is almost ready. The 190 million Yuan (9.1billion FCFA) 20,000-seat facility will also host international matches (Ndukong 2018).

On December 27th, 2017, papers were signed and the foundation stone laid for the construction of a table tennis centre inside the Yaounde Multipurpose Sports Complex. The documents were signed by the Minister of Sports and Physical Education, Bidoung Mkaptt and the Chargé d'Affaires in the Chinese Embassy, Sun Wei. The contract was awarded to Shanxi Construction and Engineering. The table tennis court covers 110 square metres and comprises a hall of 300 to 400 seats, two dressing rooms and two offices. Construction of the table tennis centre began on December 27, 2017 ended in May 2018.

On the other hand, artistic and cultural exchanges between Cameroon and China have been expanding. In March 2016, a song and dance group from Liaong Province performed in Cameroon to mark the 45th anniversary of the Sino-Cameroon diplomatic relations. The Chinese vice Minister of Culture, Ding Wei and Cameroon Minister for Arts and Culture, Prof. Narcisse Mouelle Kombi, signed a Memorandum of Understanding, MOU on cultural cooperation from 2017 to 2020. The Chinese government on the occasion donated 400,000 Yuan (about 33.6million FCFA) to the Ministry of Arts and Culture. The MOU covers amongst others training in artistic, cultural, radio and television, press, communication, cinema, painting, museum management and musical aspects.

During the 2017 National Day celebration in the Chinese capital, Beijing, a Cameroonian dance group thrilled guests, including Chinese officials. The reception hall was decorated with the conspicuous works of Chinese oil painter and businessman, Huang Jianbing, who has lived in Akwa, Douala since 2003. Also present

at the National day celebration in Beijing was former Indomitable Lions Captain Stéphane Mbia, who now plays professional football in China just like several other Cameroonian male and female football players. In 2016, Huang Jianbing published "Unusual Impression", an 80-paged glossy book with hard cover in Chinese and English. The work which is the first of a two-part series contains 47 of his paintings -39 of them on Cameroon. Jianbing held his first painting exhibition in Cameroon. The Confucius Centre of Yaounde now counts more than ten thousand Chinese language learners as more and more Cameroonian Youths are engaged in learning the Chinese language in particular and the Chinese educational system as a hold.

The Confucius Centre in Cameroon offers language courses like Chinese major undergraduate course, Chinese as an optional course for university, secondary, and primary students, Chinese course for government officials, and Chinese training program for managers. Meanwhile, various Chinese cultural training courses, including Taijiquan, calligraphy, paper-cutting, Chinese painting, traditional Chinese opera and skills of traditional Chinese massaging are available.

Cameroon is referred to as "Africa in Miniature" largely because of its representative geographical landscape and their natural endowment. Also, the country's rich mélange of cultures, arts and craft justifies this appellation. In order to sell the nation's touristic potentials, Cameroonian leaders have over the years offered gifts to foreigners that depict the country's unique cultural heritage.

The National Museum of China, NMC, for example boasts amongst its masterpieces, collections from Cameroon. Chinese leaders have a tradition of keeping artefact-gifts in the NMC. Amongst these present are Bamoun bronze masks and several wood carvings from other parts of the country offered by various Cameroonian leaders (Cameroun24.net) consulted on the 10th May 2019.

On the third floor of the five-storey building of the NMC is Gallery 8 where about 600 sculptures from Africa are exhibited. They include the seated chieftain and wife wood sculpture from Bangwa people in Libialem Division of the South West Region and the helmet-style mask with leather surface from Ekoe people in the same region. There is also the 123-centimetre-high carved wooden throne with flower decorations from Oku in Bui Division of the North West Region. The largest artefact in the gallery is unarguably the High Queen wood statue from Bangwaland, holding two children, the colossal 210-centimetre-high sculpture is accompanied by two smaller high king and queen statues from Bangwaland. Gallery 8 also contains a rich collection of other unnamed sculptures from Cameroon.

## **Cameroon, Economic, Industrial and Commercial Days in China**

Before the Chinese could come in their mass to invest in public, Para public and private sector businesses in Cameroon, something must have taken place in their home country China that caught their mind-sets and attention to come and invest in Cameroon. You usually have trade fares such as POMOTE held every two years that show case the various domains where foreign partners can invest in. There is equally the Forum on China- Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). From the 9th to the 15th October 2017, was organized in Beijing the political capital of China, the Cameroon's economic, industrial and commercial days in China abbreviated as JEICAC. During those seven days, Cameroon's agriculture-breeding-fishing-commerce-transport-tourism-water and energy-construction-industry-information and communication technology-arts and culture-sports were projected for the Chinese to discover the various domains of interest where they can invest in Cameroon (Bodomo 2015).

Speeches were made or written by some top government officials of both countries and we named them as the main actors. The actors described the event as the “winning-winning partnership”. (Cameroon Tribune 2015) Beginning with the Chinese President;

*China supports the efforts of Cameroon for autonomous development and sustainable development. I thank Cameroon for its continuous support to the one-China policy, expressing the wish to see the two parties combine their development and expand cooperation in the areas such as industry, agriculture, energy, regional aviation, infrastructure and human resources. Our two countries should continue to strengthen exchanges with each other to deepen mutual understanding and to strengthen friendship between young people, women, experts, academics and the media. China and African countries constitute a community that is confronted with the same development mission.* Xi Jinping, President of the people's republic of China.

*China is a major partner of Cameroon and would eventually become a strategic partner towards our emergence. The frequency and cordial contacts are there to show for themselves. In Cameroon, numerous achievements such as the Conference Hall, the Gynaecological Obstetric and Paediatric hospital, Sports Complex and many more are there to attest.* Paul Biya President of the republic of Cameroon.

*China is eager to consolidate its relations with Cameroon and to expand cooperation in the areas of productive capacity, including agriculture, iron ore and the construction of hydroelectric power stations and infrastructure.* Li Keqiang Chinese Prime Minister.

*Cameroon's minister of Commerce said; “diversifying our trading partners and improving our trade balance thereby intensifying our exports so as to*

*maximise foreign direct investments.”* Luc Magloire Mbarga Antangana, Cameroon's Minister of Commerce.

*“The law on investing in the country has been improved to encourage foreign investors. The economic law henceforth protects all foreign investors who do not need to be afraid to come and invest for the development of their enterprises and our country.”* Laurent Serge Etoundi Ngoa Cameroon's Minister of Small and Medium Size Enterprises (Cameroon Tribune 2015).

*Cameroon is a very good old friend and important partner of China in Africa. Strengthening solidarity and the Sino-Cameroon cooperation corresponds to the fundamental interest of our two countries. China intends to work with Cameroon and take the friendship cooperation to a higher level to the wellbeing of the two people. Our trade and economic cooperation policy has brought new fruits to Cameroon. Cameroon has become the second largest Africa's beneficiary of Chinese financial aid.* The Chinese Ambassador to Cameroon Wei Wenhua(Cameroon Tribune 2015).

*Cameroonians arriving China are surprised that they are preceded by a reputation some of our compatriots have built. This is the case footballers who have amazed the whole world, including millions of Chinese. They will always talk to you about Roger Milla whom they call in China Milla Chouchou. Whenever you present yourself as a Cameroonian, the image that comes back to the head of the Chinese is that of Cameroonian football. A Chinese is always curious to know who you are so that he or she can easily adopt you. The Chinese miracle is based on hard work. An example that Cameroonian reputed workers must explore, experiment and copy for our development hence one of objectives of the JEICAC.* Mpana Martin Cameroon's Ambassador in China.

## **Objectives of Cameroon, Economic, Industrial and Commercial Days in China**

Following the governments of the two countries (Cameroon Tribune 2015). , the objectives of the JEICAC are;

- Bringing together the Chinese and Cameroonian private sectors
- Enable Cameroonian companies to visit, learn and appreciate the Chinese know-how
- Celebrating a rich and plural Sino-Cameroon friendship
- Promote the emergence of a true symbiosis of peoples and cultures
- Presenting Cameroonian products to Chinese consumers
- Accelerating the industrialization of Cameroon through Chinese input
- Negotiating and concluding joint ventures and technology transfer

- Facilitate exchanges between Chinese and Cameroonian small and medium size enterprises.

## DISCUSSION

Our results revealed that acculturation, adaptation and culture change have taken place in the intercultural relations between Cameroon and China.

### Acculturation

An outstanding development in Anthropology during the years has been the growing interest in the study of people whose modes of life are undergoing or have undergone, extensive change as a result of ascertainable historic contacts with alien cultures. (Herskovits 1937) sees acculturation as; comprehending those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups.

Acculturation is defined as the change in the cultural behaviour and thinking of person or group of people through contact with another culture. Another definition of acculturation is the cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture. One can also talk of the merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact. The Merriam Webster dictionary defines acculturation as the process by which a human being acquires the culture of a particular society from infancy. Acculturation is the processes of change in artefacts, customs, and beliefs that result from the contact of two or more cultures. The transfer of values and customs from one group to another is also known as acculturation. A perfect example of acculturation is Cameroonian being dressed like Chinese. It is equally the process (Berry 1986) by which a culture is transformed due to the massive adoption of cultural traits from another society - it is what happens to a culture when alien traits diffuse in on a large scale and substantially replace traditional cultural patterns. (Grunland and Mayers 1988), distinguishes acculturation from assimilation in that; within the context of acculturation, a person adapts to the degree of his effectiveness within the context of the new. He assumes he will leave or the new culture will leave while he returns to his culture of birth or origin. He is a fully accepted and respected member of the new yet in essence has a dual identity. Assimilation is the more extreme process. It comes from the realization that one will never return to the society or culture of origin. So one takes on the entire lifeway of the new culture. The process is more thorough, all-encompassing, and likely lengthier. One visiting from outside would not really know if one had been born within or not. First generation immigrants may achieve a high degree of adaptation. Second generation people most likely reach a high degree of assimilation (some Anthropologists do not distinguish between acculturation and assimilation. They speak of this difference in intensity of response in other ways).

According to the Britannic.com of 30th April 2019, acculturation is the process of change in artefacts, customs, and beliefs that result from the contact of two or more cultures and that the term is also used to refer to the results of such changes. Anthropologists' contribution to the study of cultural change is urgent in light of the increasing number of people of different backgrounds who are migrating around the globe and settling in new communities and the opportunities and challenges that come along with that process (Redfield and al. 1936). Two types of acculturation, incorporation and directed change, may be distinguished on the basis of the conditions under which cultural contact and change take place.

Incorporation refers to the free borrowing and modification of cultural elements and occurs when people of different cultures maintain contact as well as political and social self-determination. Because incorporation is a product of free choice, the changes it engenders are often retained over a very long term or period.

In contrast, directed change occurs when one group establishes dominance over another through military conquest or political control. Like incorporation, directed change involves the selection and modification of cultural characteristics. However, these processes are more varied and the results more complex because they are derived from the interference in one cultural system by members of another. The processes that operate under conditions of directed change include forced assimilation- the complete replacement of one culture by another – and resistance against aspects of the dominant culture. Because directed change is imposed upon the members of the recipient culture, often quite harshly, the changes it engenders are less likely to be maintained over the long term. Both incorporation and direct change are taking place in Cameroon as a result of the Sino-Cameroon bilateral and trade cooperation. The Cameroonian and the Chinese alike are borrowing cultural values from one another such as language, dance, arts (artefacts), therapeutic methods or practices, cuisines and architecture just to name these few. But on the other way round, the Chinese are dominating or imposing their material cultures to their Cameroonian counterparts. This is somehow favoured by their industrial and technological development that makes them to think that they are superior over the Cameroonian.

The use of the "Franaglais" by many Cameroonian today is one of the many examples of some cultures coming into contact (acculturation) with one another for a very long period of time enabling or permitting the borrowing and or the diffusion of cultural norms and values from one group to another. English and French languages have come in contact in Cameroon for over 70 years now and the end result has been the effective process of acculturation taking place.

Acculturation studies should embrace comparative methods, especially in situations where multiple groups are entering the same social context and responding in diverse ways. This approach is particularly needed as globalization often results in the convergence of several cultures.

### Culture change

All cultures change through time. No culture is static. However, most cultures are basically conservative in that they tend to resist change. Some resist more than others by enacting laws for the preservation and protection of traditional cultural patterns while putting up barriers to alien ideas and things. Culture change is a change that occurs over time to shared way of life of a group. As earlier mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, that there are many aspects through which culture change can occur; we shall present some of those aspects in respect to the Sino-Cameroon bilateral and trade cooperation and some of the general patterns through which change can occur in a community or society and the world at large.

### Economy (Economic systems and conditions)

A nation that has a growing middle class may experience an enrichment of culture as people have the economic security to pursue happiness. For example, a nation with a large middle class typically has a significant pool of talent who are pursuing creative careers in areas such as architecture, design, music, art, literature and entertainment.

In a domain like architecture, many young Cameroonian architects have studied in China and many other Western countries and have changed the housing systems in Cameroon so much such that it is very rare to find those long bungalows with six, seven or eight rooms nowadays. Even the paintings and decoration of houses have all witnessed major changes as result of the creativity of the young architects together with the contacts they have had with other cultures. There are a lot of variations in the painting of houses today so much such that a particular building can have more than four colours as compared to the past where a building would have one colour throughout.

The same thing applies to design where talented designers now blend Cameroonian fabrics with foreign fabrics and come out with something completely new and adorable by all (both Cameroonians and foreigners). As for music, the changes cannot be over emphasized as we see it on a daily basis. A Chinese artist once composed and sang in the Sawa (Douala) language of Cameroon. After watching Cameroonians singing and dancing Makossa, this Chinese artist discovered taste, value and flavour in makossa. He decided to give it a try which is not exactly the same as the Sawa people dance but the Chinese had to twist and wind their small waist and buttocks to the tune of the music, so it's a new culture

that has seen the light of day. Young Cameroonian artists now blend a host of cultures, designs and languages to come out with interesting and lovable songs by all as compared to the days of old when Makossa was being sung by the Sawa people only and Bikutsi by the Beti people only.

### Globalization

The process of exchange and integration that occurs between nations. This is a long term process that has been underway for centuries but has accelerated due to advancements in communication, transportation, peace and cooperation (Dăianu, Dana-Codruța Dudă 2009). Globalization results in the pizza effect whereby cultures copy each other. These copies are always imperfect resulting in new culture.

Globalization including political, social and economic processes is frequently associated with multinational companies and investment, international trade and regionalism, global finance and money. While globalization process reduced activity and control of national governments on their economy and trade their place is substituted by international companies. The national economies on the other hand try to keep pace with the change in economic system by deregulating their international trade barriers via regional trade agreements and economic integrations (Bairoch and Kozul-Wright 1965) and (Ahmet 2015).

One of the widespread definitions of globalization takes it as an irreversible force, which is being imposed upon the world by some countries and institutions through which an increasingly free flow of ideas, people, goods, services, and capital leads to the integration of economies and societies (IMF 2002). Economic aspect of the phenomenon refers to the increasing interdependence of world economies as a result of the growing scale of cross-border trade of commodities and services, flow of international capital and wide and rapid spread of technologies. It reflects the continuing expansion and mutual integration of market frontiers, and is an irreversible trend for the economic development in the whole world at the turn of the millennium (Shangquan 2000).

### Health and culture change

Health can have a significant impact on culture. Illnesses or diseases have some cultural constructions. In other words, some illnesses or diseases can only be diagnosed following cultural or ethnic belonging of the patient in question. In such cases, being in good health means strictly abiding to the rules and regulations governing that community. When one violates the rules and regulations governing that society, then the individual is said to be in a state of ill health or sick.

Health is one of the major areas or aspect in human live where many cultural practices blend and interact with one another. Today in Cameroon, the

following therapeutic methods are being used; Traditional therapies, Allopathy, Integrative Medicine, Acupuncture, Mediation, Massage, Yoga, Movement therapy, Guided imagery and Food. All these methods can be applied to a particular patient one after the other or mixed at the same time.

When illness starts with a Cameroonian, the first thing that is done is the traditional first aid therapy where people mix some traditional concoctions and drink while praying at the same time. If it persists, the next step is to buy some drugs or tablets from the road side vendors while prayers and food therapies accompany the tablets. If it does not subside, hospital consultation comes in the third position. In some cases after the hospital, traditional healers come into play and men of God for mediation. So it is a blend of cultures that come in contact and interact with one another. Traditional therapy is the type that is practiced by the Africans, Allopathy is standard or conventional medicine that originated from the Western world, Acupuncture originated from China, Yoga from India, Mediation (prayers) from the Westerners while food is from the various cultures the world over. All these methods are very instrumental cultural change to take place in a given community or society. When a particular therapeutic method is used and found to be effective and less cost full in terms of finances, many people would adopt that method though safe guarding the other methods for future use when the right moment comes.

#### **Adaptation**

Adaptation is the core concept of any ecological studies in anthropology. It is not even a new idea and its scope is not limited to climate change studies. Human adaptation studies began long ago when the earlier scholars wanted to understand the differences between various human populations and explain human variability. (Herodotus 484- 425 B. C) and restated by (Shafie 2017), explains human variability as a result of adaptation to different environments and considers culture as a modifier. In this light, culture is thus the tool that helps human beings to adapt to any new environment (physical, social and mental or psychological environments).

One informant said;

*In most Cameroonian shops and supermarkets nowadays, more than 80 percent of the goods and services found there are of Chinese origin and we know that most of the goods and services from China do not last. Most of us the Cameroonian household consumers had to look for the means or strategies to adapt to this new way of living. Instead of buying some few clothes and pairs of shoes that will last longer, we now buy as many dresses as possible since most of them are imported from China and we know that most of the things from China do not last longer, it is thus necessary to adapt to that system by buying more with the intention that*

*when one gets bad you throw it and go to the next one. Even if you like or do not like Chinese goods and services, you are now obliged to use them since you cannot find most of the goods and services of different origins in our Cameroonian shops and supermarkets.*

Most of the Chinese expatriates in Cameroon, know that bribery and corruption are normal things or ways of life in Cameroon. Hence they have to adapt to this new way of life by bribing and corrupting the forces of law and order and the administrative authorities so as to gain access to all the places, have and do what they want, how they want and whenever they want. The bribery and corrupt practices of the Cameroonian (civil servants) started as a form of adaptation which we can be named or termed “negative adaptation”.

## **CONCLUSION**

Cameroon is Africa in miniature; hence if people from the other continents of the world visit Cameroon, they will experience the geographic physical features likewise the social, cultural and psychological features of Africa. Many Chinese in particular and the Asians in general after visiting and interacting with Cameroon, they find it easier to better deal with the rest of the African continent. Intercultural relations are very important in the present global world as nobody lives alone; nobody survives alone, nobody self-sufficient in terms of meeting our daily human needs. We will always need the services of one another (the under developed, the emerging and the industrialized), and for all these to be materialized, we should not look at other cultures from our own world view (that is being too judgmental or criticizing when we do not understand their own perception of the world from their own view point).

We should be able to study or look at other cultures from a beneficial mirror; that is what is good about this particular cultural practice? How can other people benefit or gain from it? What lessons or positive conclusions can be drawn from it? How has their environment influenced them adopt and adapt to such cultures and what help or contribution you the outsider can bring in to help them progress to another level in their technological development.

Intercultural relations are very important in that they create cultures of cooperation. People with different cultures can only work together if there is any means of cooperation; cultures are therefore very vital ingredients for creating the much needed cooperation between ethnic groups, societies, nations, races and all the continents of the earth planet.

#### **Acknowledgments**

I wish to thank all the informants who facilitated this research with vital information and the various libraries and research institutions that gave me

access to their books, article, newspapers, reports and journals.

## REFERENCES

1. Thomas, A., Kinast, E. U., & Schroll-Machl, S. (2010). *Handbook of intercultural communication and cooperation: Basics and areas of application*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
2. Bairoch, P., & Kozul-Wright, R. (1998). Globalization myths: some historical reflections on integration, industrialization and growth in the world economy. In *Transnational corporations and the global economy* (pp. 37-68). Palgrave Macmillan, London.
3. Berry J. W., (1986), "The Acculturation Process and Refugee Behaviour." In Refugee Mental Health in Resettlement Countries eds. C. I. Williams and J. Westermeyer. New York.
4. Bill Hathaway 2015. How can we create a Culture of Cooperation? Arts & Culture, Behaviour Change, Yale.
5. Bodomo A., (2015), African Soft Power in China. Department of African Studies and
6. Global African Diaspora Studies. Research Platform University of Vienna.
7. Dăianu, Dana-Codruța Dudă 2009, 'The Impact of Globalization through International Trade. Annals Economic Science Series. International Conference. The Knowledge Society in
8. The Space of United Europe, May 29th -30th 2009, Vol. XV/2009, pp. 211- 215.
9. IMF, 2002 'Globalization: A Framework for IMF Involvement 02/01,
10. <https://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/ib/2002/031502.htm>.
11. Incekara Ahmet, (2015), 'The Effect of Globalization on International Trade: The Black Sea
12. Economic Cooperation Case. Istanbul University Turkey.
13. Li Jiao 2013, Chinese 'Container Hospitals' Ready to Deploy in Africa SciDev.Net
14. Locatelli B., Ellison D., Morris, Ce, 2017 Ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change
15. Sheil D., Cohen J. and Mourdiyars D, What role for policy-makers, society and Scientists?
16. Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change.
17. Mark Herkenrath, (2007) The Regional and Local Shaping of World Society. World Society
18. Foundation Zurich.
19. Marius-Razvan Surugiu, (2015), International Trade, Globalization and Economic
20. Interdependence between European countries: Implication for Businesses and
21. Marketing Framework; Cross Market Bucharest.
22. Melville Herskovits 1937, The Significance of the Study of Acculturation for Anthropology.
23. Published by Wiley on behalf of the American Anthropological Association. New series, Vol. 39, no. 2 (Apr, - Jun., 1937), PP. 259-264
24. Cameroun24.net consulted on the 10th May 2019.
25. Cameroon Tribune N° 11132/7331 of Friday 8th July 2015
26. Daniel Flynn, (2013), Jobs Clamour Grows over China's Investments BDlive.
27. Daouda Cissé, (2013), South – South Migration and Trade: African Traders in China. Centre for Chinese Studies. Stellenbosch University.
28. Denis Requiers - Desjardins, (2008), L'Alimentation en Afrique : Manger ce qu'on peut Produire. L'exemple de la consommation en Côte d'Ivoire. Éd. Karthala: Paris.
29. Donald H. Hendon, and Paul Herbig (1996), Cross – Cultural Business Negotiations. Library of Rebecca A. Hendon Congress Texas.
30. Emmanuel, Kendemeh, (2011), China, Cameroon envisages cooperation. Inter Press Service Africa.
31. Ephraim Okoro and Philemon Oyewole, (2011), A Cost-Benefit Analysis of China's Trade Relations with Sub- Saharan Africa. Howard University, Washington DC.
32. Fay Patel, Mingsheng Li and Prahalad Sooknanan, 2011: Intercultural Communication Building a Global Community. SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd, New Delhi.
33. Jean-Pierre Cabestan, (2015), China – Cameroon Relations: Fortunes and Limits of an Old Political Complicity, South African Journal of International Affairs DO10.1080/10220461.2015.1014930
34. Michael G. Harvey David A. Griffith, 2002: Developing Effective Intercultural Relationships: The Importance of Communication Strategies. Thunderbird International Business Review.
35. Momo Ngomba Juliana, (2017), How China's Confucius Centre affects Cameroon's and Guo Chenggang Culture. International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences. Vol. 7, No. 2; February 2017 146. College of Liberal Arts, Shanghai University
36. National Institute of Statistics, 2006, Report of Cameroon's business statistics with Asian countries.
37. Robert Redfield 1936, Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation
38. Roberto Castillo 2014, Feeling at Home in the "Chocolate City": An Exploration of place-
39. Making practices and Structures of belonging among Africans in Guangzhou. Inter-Asia Cultural Studies.
40. Shangquan Gao 2000, "Economic Globalization: Trends, Risks and Risk Prevention".
41. Economic and Social Affairs, CDP Background Paper N0, 1, ST/ESA/2000/CDP/1,
42. United Nations.
43. Shanta Devarajan 2009, Africa can End Poverty: Why Aid must Increase.
44. Soubbotina Tatyana P., (2000), Beyond Economic Growth an Introduction to Sustainable Development, The World Bank Washington DC.

52. Stephen A. Grunland and Marvin K. Mayers, 1988, Enculturation and Acculturation. A
53. Reading for Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective. Zondervan.
54. Sunday Aninpah Khan and Francis Menjo Baye 2008 'The Impact of China – Africa Trade Relations: Case Study Cameroon. Department of Economics and Management, University of Yaounde II.
55. Terence McNamee, (2012), Africa in their words. A Study of Chinese Traders in South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Zambia and Angola. Published by the Brent Hurst Foundation.
56. Ute Röschenhaller and Antoine Socpa, (2017), The China Challenge: Cameroonian Between
57. Discontent and Popular Admiration. Young-Chan Kim (ed.), China and Africa, The
58. Palgrave Macmillan Asian Business Series.
59. Ute Röschenhaller and Alessandro Jedlowski, (2017), Mobility between Africa, Asia and Latin America: Economic Networks and Cultural Interactions ZED Books London.
60. Zahidul Islam and Hasan Shafie 2017, Anthropology of Climate Change: Culture and Adaptation in Bangladesh, University of Dhaka.