

# SCHOOL BANKRUPTCY AND YOUTH VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS IN CAMEROON

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**Abstract:** *The school which, in the past, as nowadays has always campaigned for social transformation through education and socialization for the promotion of republican values has for several decades been at the center of the controversy around its success or of his failure in society. Indeed, in a context marked by globalization, the Millennium Development Goal (MDG), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Goal 4 (Education for Sustainable Development (EDD), the perspective of education in 2030 as well as the end of the colonial agreements with France and the need to achieve emergence by 2035, one wonders if the school is playing or is still in the process. to play its role from time to time. Indeed, a look at current society, in particular on the excesses of young people with regard to the school institution in particular and the regulations in force in general, sufficiently shows that 'beyond a few undeniable positive aspects, the school for Cameroonian youth in general now has a taste of bitterness. This thesis is made legitimate through a certain number of situations of violence which today have started from remote areas school to settle within n our schools. Indeed, if the school is supposed to be the framework of civilization of the deviant behaviors as well as of the ambient delinquency, how to understand that it is also in this same school that we now find the different tendencies of deviance and delinquency which, today have an openness to crimes of various sizes? What did the school of a few decades ago have that today's school has lost? These are some of the avenues on which this article will focus.*

**Keywords:** *bankruptcy; school; violence; youth; Cameroon.*

## 1. Introduction

In a socio-political and economic context marked by slogans such as "the great ambitions", "the great achievements", "the emergence by 2035" or even, closer to us that of "living together", we can visibly read, the will of the State to promote social development through the highlighting of certain values such as education, (Yaro, 1995: 7). Work, the cult of effort, productivity to name a few. The operationalization of these values is moreover a fact for Cameroonian youth through the opening each year of recruitment competitions for the public service as well as the provision of several projects in the agricultural field to young people, breeding or education not to be exhaustive. These competitions and job opportunities, often within reach of young people who are truly prepared and trained for the cause, undoubtedly make it possible to systematically reduce the unemployment rate as well as the extreme poverty which is observed in families through a youth who, most of the time is educated and trained but which unfortunately despite the number, because it represents the largest part of the population, does not manage to integrate socially, which obviously undermines the process of social change in general. Indeed, as we can see through the ambient sociological reality in Cameroon, contrary to what can be read in the newspapers or

heard in the media, there is paradoxically and incisively a real, visible and indisputable situation of poverty.

Cameroonians in general and that of his youth in particular. This poverty, with irrefutable well-known causes such as the east wind and the effects that we have observed in terms of layoffs and return to unemployment, not to mention the devaluation of the CFA franc and the fall. drastic payroll in the civil service of the 1980s and 1990s, is increasingly reinforced today by the policy of everything for me and nothing for others, in other words the extremely selfish mentality of a tribalist society which has an openness deep on two diametrically opposed social classes, in particular, the class of those who have all the wealth and that Jean Marc Ela affectionately called the world "above" and those who have nothing, the poor or the endless low. To this reality, we can add the problem of social integration. Indeed, without being detached from the above-mentioned causes, the difficulty of finding a paid job in the public sector as in the private sector is a real headache for the Cameroonian youth, to such an extent that in the imagination as in the facts in some cases, finding a place in a large school or in a company is more part of the policy of strengthening the gaps between the two classes, rich and poor. Indeed, if the economic situation does not already allow the populations in their majority to eat their hunger and to flourish as they wish, let us specify that, access to a paid job without going through "small doors" is a luxury for the young Cameroonian, especially since what seems obvious is the social reproduction of the wealthy class, generally ensured by sponsorship and cooptation (Ela, J.M. (1990:36).

The corollary of all this is that the youth indulge in other activities, school for them no longer represents the way to salvation from time to time, especially in a modern world which offers many other possibilities for survival. This school, it must be said, has taken a serious blow in recent years to such an extent that the thought of Cameroonian youth is no longer only and automatically oriented towards them as a sine qua non of any social success, a necessity. , because the need is elsewhere, in particular in the activities and the practices which allow easy and quick access but not surely to the money, "sinews of war", without having to lose twenty years of its existence on the benches to have nothing at the end. In short, the inability for the school to open a path of salvation to Cameroonian youth has enabled them to create and set up other mechanisms of development which, over time and the obvious solutions that these The mechanisms contributing to the problems of young people have emerged as a real counterweight to school, thus reducing it to second or even third place and sometimes leading to excesses that cause violence in our school environments on the part of young people who still go there. This is also reinforced at the base by the resignation of the major pillar of the socialization of these young people, namely the family. The family has in fact abandoned its role at school which, faced with competition from activities and practices such as gambling, no longer convinces young people as in the past. It is in this arduous and hostile context of a school that no longer fulfills the youth that this reflection will emerge. What is the place of school in the imagination of young Cameroonians today? Isn't the openness of young people to so-called easy practices the consequence of school bankruptcy? How does this school failure open up to violence in our educational institutions?

## **2. School, a framework that no longer guarantees employment for young people**

The role of the school is access to culture and by extension to development in genera (Compaore, 1996: 17). This role is realized primarily through education and training. Indeed, in a context marked by globalization, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the perspective of education in 2030, the end of the colonial agreements with France and need to achieve emergence by 2035, a review of the content of teaching in the two English-speaking and French-speaking sub-systems is needed in order to produce competent Cameroonians through their know-how and their skills. In this regard, school has an important place because on the one hand it is a place of learning for young people and on the other hand it is a place of sociability, exchange and above all access to a better life by opening up to paid employment. This means that in addition to education and training, the value of the school also lies in its ability to offer young people, once training is completed, financial possibilities through employment stable in any area of public or private service, better still by self-employment through the creation of private companies (Entwistle, 1978: 26). It is, moreover, and it must be admitted, this possibility of finding a place socially or of being able to easily set up a business that has always motivated young people for many decades to take an interest in school. We can observe this motivation of young people in school from the 1960s to the 1980s, certainly because of the welfare state which manifested itself during this period by the granting of scholarships to young graduates, but also, these young people had easy access to employment after studies because of the less restrictive demographic factor (Compaore, 1996: 19).

We can also read this motivation of young people in school between the years 1980 to 2000, unfortunately, this period will be less favorable for them because of the economic recession which will affect several families not only by the devaluation of the CFA franc, but also by the dismissal of several workers in the private sector (Yaro, 1995:8). One of the factors favoring the interest of young people in school, and not the least here, also remains the poor popularization of the mass media as well as leisure activities as we have them today. Indeed, the absence or not very easy access to All these advantages of modernization and in this case the internet allowed the youth of this time to have only school as a fundamental center of interest, which obviously did not show the problem of the inefficiency of the school as it is presented today, especially since, as we noted above, the demography favoring, the various policies of insertion of the young people by the state during this period, especially from 1960 to 1980 are more effective. However, from the 2000s onwards, progress in science and technology offered young people more leisure and above all other avenues of access to money, a good for which they have always fought by going to school (Batiana, 2002: 3).

It is in this context that we will see little by little and gradually until the current situation, the devaluation of the school. Indeed, the majority of young people interviewed in the framework of this study were not asked to point the finger at the inability as well as the dropping out of school to fully play its role of facilitator for access to a better life through paid employment after graduation (Entwistle, 1978: 28). According to them, spending more than twenty years of one's existence on the benches should automatically be sanctioned by a paid job which would allow the young person in question to compensate for the physical, intellectual and financial efforts expended

during the apprenticeship (Lange M-F, 1998: 15). However, by noting the increased unemployment of previous generations, most of whom have university degrees, but who despite everything find themselves trying day after day to find a place in the informal sector because they are not taken into account by the school in the sense of a stable job after their long and arduous studies, the youth for the most part prefers to proceed by small shortcuts, avoiding as much as doing this little of wasting time for what they affectionately call the long pencils, for good obviously talking about long studies. In this context, the school loses in the understanding of the young all its value for the benefit of military recruitment, the Normal School of General Education Teachers (ENIEG), nursing and state-certified nurses (IDE) for the most enduring, taximen motorcycles and other informal activities for the less delinquent, easy practices such as bet-football, card games, urban pari-mutuel, the sale of narcotics to name but a few examples, with everything what this has as a corollary for the most delinquent who unfortunately are the most numerous. It is therefore no longer a secret in Cameroon in particular, having a stable and well-paid job thanks to school remains an unattainable dream, especially for educated young people (Batiana, 2002:5). Indeed, according to the results of the surveys carried out, the unemployment rate increases with the level of education, and it is the poorly educated young people who generally have the chance of a stable job because they do not require much in terms of salary and the type of employment. In addition to being mostly those who tend to be self-employed, less educated young people are also opened to accepting lower wages, which is not the case with college graduates (Entwistle, 1978: 49).

For these graduates elsewhere, unemployment is a growing problem, because the supply of skilled labor exceeds the capacity of the modern economy to create the skilled jobs they need. Even in companies, bosses expect high levels of qualification from their recruits, but are still reluctant to hire young graduates citing their lack of technical and professional expertise. School is therefore no longer necessarily a framework where young people can abandon themselves by obtaining their diplomas with the certainty of finding a job commensurate with their intellectual background (Entwistle, 1978: 52). On the contrary, the young today has become an opportunist and no longer dreams of big but reduces his dream to the various competitions or to the opportunity that immediately opens itself to him and which allows him to leave the world of unemployment, and this even if it is an opportunity that only involves his primary school diploma even though he has a baccalaureate for example. It is this inability of the school to play one of its most determining role, namely to give employment to graduates that will create frustrations in young people which will have an impact on two levels: first, a disinterest in the school institution by the young and an openness to easy practices where he accesses money more quickly with all that this has as consequences; finally, delinquent behavior at school vis-à-vis the teacher who wants to try by all means to get him back.

### **3. The bankruptcy of the school as a cause and consequence of the popularization of easy practices**

Let us specify here, and this to avoid any definitional ambiguity that, by practices of facilities, we mean any activity or practice which contributes to the partial or definitive distraction of the young person, pushing him consciously or unconsciously

to abandon the path of learning school in order to access money more or less quickly, the sinews of war (Celis R. G. 1990: 15). Dropping out of school, it should be noted, here consists either of not going or going there but without conviction and therefore neglecting the actual attendance at lessons, or even worse, when he is present, to orchestrate disorder, robbery, fights. Indeed, as we quickly demonstrated in the first analyzes of this article, the social salvation of the majority of young people no longer passes through school. In this context, several other practices, all or most of them aiming at access to money at all costs and at all prices will influence the behavior of the young person, pushing the latter, when it is not taken back in hand, advised and supervised to definitely abandon the way to school. These practices include, among others: sports betting, urban mutual betting, drug breakdown, theft and organized crime (Celis R. G. 1990: 16).

These practices, which unfortunately should not be taken lightly because they have a serious impact on the future of young people in general, deserve a close look to understand them in order to better remedy their consequences. Let us take a particular interest in sports betting to understand how this practice manages to distract young people from school by sometimes causing them to behave violently not only towards their teachers, but also and above all towards society whole. Sports betting is indeed a game based on a risky bet in the field of sport. Indeed, if we can agree on the fact that punters, mostly young, are equally interested in motorcycle, horse and car racing, it remains indisputable that it is betting on football that dominates the universe punters. These bets are generally based on the majority of football matches being played in the various championships around the world (Lange M- F, 1998: 35). It is a question here for the young person, faithful follower of this easy and lazy practice, to choose, on a list of matches which the manager of the kiosk proposes to him according to the various championships, the combinations which seem to him at close range, combinations to which he associates scores for or against, depending on the teams he has chosen. The amount of the matches is staggered according to the different championships, which gives the player time to make his calculations and to bet.

The results obtained at the end of the various matches in the championships concerned will then allow the young person to benefit from his gain if the quota of matches won is reached. What is interesting about this practice, and which undoubtedly contributes to the support of the majority of young people is that it is difficult to invest money in sports betting and lose all the stake. This assurance of not coming back empty-handed pushes young people today to spend more time in kiosks to reflect on the composition of the different combinations of matches that will be entered in their tickets, and of course, the immediate consequence is that these young people, since the majority of them are pupils and students leave classes before the end of the hour when they have gone there or do not even go (Gerard, 1997:11).

From the analyzes made of the data collected, the young people mainly evoke a reason linked to their observation, in particular that the school no longer brings them anything, it is ineffective to justify their withdrawal from this framework (Gerard, 1997:12). Indeed, everything seems to start in families and spread to society. The young people go from an observation which is that in their different families, and here we are talking about three quarters of these young people, several elders who were considered as models because having made long studies and having obtained university degrees, having stayed for long periods in the metropolises, practically all

return in a hat of great unemployment to settle in the parental home. This situation, which initially surprised more than one of them, quickly revealed its *raison d'être*, namely that the school no longer pays as they say. Why then invest in something that is wasting our time with no guarantee of tomorrow? This is the concern that drives young people to get involved outside of school. Easy practices and in this case sports betting, which seems to be the beginning of a solution to this problem, then appears to be a panacea. With the sports bet, the young person redirects his love for school and makes projections on his future, even if most often the latter loses sight of the fact that it is only a risky game that can make people smile so much than to cry because of the lack of guarantee that characterizes it. Add to this openness of young people to football the impact of time. Indeed, the time taken to reflect on the bet of a combination of games is likely to cost a day or even the time necessary for studies for a pupil or a student. The young people who thus engage in this practice of bet-football then find themselves sometimes leaving their houses with a real intention to go to school, but the lack of motivation helping, they find themselves passing all the time during the day or even for hours in gaming kiosks. These moments of abandonment of lessons are more intense during the periods of the UEFA cups, in particular the Champions League where practically all young punters are open to indulge in the game.

Sports betting, in addition to being a powerful factor in removing young people from school, also remains a motivating element in the violence of these young people, first in school but also in society. Indeed, school gives young people an open mind through knowledge, more possibilities to choose their professional path, more culture, therefore more conversation regardless of the person we have in front of us (Assogba .Y. 1984:12). The school also helps us to meet young people from different backgrounds. So, if we can agree that going to school isn't a commitment, not going can close many positive doors to open negative ones like drugs and organized crime. Access to knowledge makes it easy to form a personal opinion of the various problems but also of the difficulties that stand in our existence. In other words, going to school certainly reduces the risks of deviance and social delinquency among young people and, paradoxically, refusing to go is leaving a very important loophole in these social excesses.

Gambling in general and sports betting in particular, as a practice of ease, relative to the ineffectiveness of school today undoubtedly contributes to the social violence orchestrated by the youth. This is all the more true insofar as having taken stock of the unemployment rate and the great difficulty that there is in finding a place in the field of paid employment, whether it is in the public or private sectors, the vast majority of young people have resigned from long and painful studies to engage in what is realistic and obvious to them, namely games of chance. The consequence of this resignation is obvious here because, games of chance and specifically sports betting is played in kiosks, that is to say in confinement frames of ten, thirty or even a hundred of individuals often all young, the majority coming from different horizons and having different cultures. Indeed among these individuals we find cigarette and hemp smokers, drug takers, ex prisoners, assassins, in short, bandits and even highway criminals. Thus, in this catch-all that his game settings for betting-foot, the young student socializes in ways of doing, acting and thinking that were not his daily life, the continuous and extensive interactions with delinquents around him end up transforming him negatively and the consequences are felt and seen very quickly in

family, in society, but especially at school when, the latter, called in these beginnings to deceive the vigilance of his parents and friends is obliged from time to time to go there. Unfortunately, this time is often short for our young student, now delinquent because of the delinquent acts he will quickly commit (Yaro, 1995:11).

#### **4. From facilitating practices to violence in schools**

As we noted above, the school remains and remains, alongside the family, associations, and peer groups a popular framework for socialization and education, it is also undoubtedly the most frequented setting and the most active today after the unfortunate observation of an increasingly accentuated resignation of the family in the role of education (Bommier and Shapiro 2001: 22). It transforms minds from early childhood to reflected consciousness through the maturity of our reason. This means that the young person who gets attached to it is supposed to exhibit a behavior and a way of reasoning that differentiates him from the one who has stayed at home without going there. To play this decisive role, the educational institution surrounds itself with a certain number of men and women who constitute what are commonly called actors of the school system. These people, devoted to the cause for the majority, often have only one goal, to make everyone into citizens. We can clearly see that their role is to bring all the young people who come to them to understand why they are there and for what purpose. Unfortunately, and paradoxically, it is this goal and the desire to achieve it at all costs that is the main cause of violence in schools. How to justify this thesis? Indeed, once he begins to undergo counter socialization at school, our young student, because of his frequency in games of chance and his rapprochement with his new delinquent companions as we have noted above, confuses henceforth the two settings, that of the school and that of the game. He wants to behave in the same way in one as in the other (Bommier and Shapiro 2001: 25).

The banditry that has become his new companion tends to manifest itself even in the classroom, and since it offers him financial opportunities to better make his bets, buy his cigarettes and afford his drugs, the classroom becomes the plantation where he performs his harvest by flying. Indeed, in class, his classmates have books, computers, pocket money and many other goods favorable to his cause, so he steals these goods to meet his personal needs (Cherkaoui, 1999:18). This confusion of framework also means that our young delinquent sometimes finds himself taking drugs or smoking within the school grounds and since he sometimes smokes beyond cigarettes, he can sometimes lose his lucidity and to relieve, which henceforth reduces him to an unconscious being and by extension to a violent animal. It is in this situation, it should be specified that we enter the most dangerous phase of this young student's misguidance because, the teacher or any other person, actor of the school system alerted to his condition must avoid rushing him even less brutalize him otherwise we inevitably find ourselves in a situation of violence, because the latter has totally lost his mind. This is to say that violence in schools is caused by the departure of the young person from school for the simple reason that it has become ineffective, then, it is linked to the encounter of several other cultures different from the school, finally it is the fact of the confusion between the school framework and the play environment as manifested by the young people who engage in these hazardous practices (Yaro, 1995: 21).

This work on school bankruptcy and violence against young people in schools is not a thesis per se, but an outline for presenting a social fact in broad outline. It translates, after analysis of several direct and participating observations and at the end of several analyzes of the data collected in a field that is familiar to us, the behavior of a youth who today sinks into complacency and ease under the pretext of his disappointment with the school, which according to her no longer fully plays its role. It explains in an understandable way how upstream, a situation of disinterestedness in school can become downstream and this under our gaze, at the origin of certain violence that we observe and experience in our schools and universities. It even goes beyond the simple presentation to touch on certain cases of violence that regularly appear before our eyes and gives us the necessary weapons to be able to remedy it. By referring to games of chance in general and to sports betting commonly called pari-football in particular, this work finally attempts to lay bare a societal problem which becomes serious as the years pass, that of the desertion by the youth of school and university enclosures for the benefit of easy practices. In this sense, it is a form of questioning the State in general and administrators in particular in order to avoid finding ourselves very soon in a society of delinquency and violence.

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