

# CONTEXT OF THE REORGANIZATION OF CAMEROON FOOTBALL: BETWEEN POLITICO-LEGAL ORIENTATIONS AND COMMUNITY OF ACTORS, 1960-2010

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**Abstract:** *This research aims to highlight the context of the reorganization of Cameroonian football on the politico-legal level without forgetting to mention the community of actors. An inventory is necessary in order to understand the behavior of the players in the football system in Cameroon because it determines the continuities and breaks observed in the functioning of this sporting discipline. This research therefore involves taking stock of football news in terms of reforms, political and legal incentives initiated by the public authorities and international bodies in order to save Cameroonian football from its many faults. This is the place here to identify the importance of the organic texts founding a new posture of the players and attempting to limit negative consequences for the future of this football. To do this, this article analyzes these implications and suggests some possible solutions. The methodology of this article is based on a synchronic approach and validates a constructivist approach from which we observe the play of the actors. Therefore, it is permissible to dwell on the will of the public authorities to remain the masters of the football system and the consequences which are induced therefore constitute the central axis of this study.*

**Keywords:** Context; Orientations; Cameroonian Football; Community; Actors

A dive into the history of Cameroonian football shows a system marked by crises and scandals that have marred certain institutions and personalities. From the 1972 African Cup of Nations, to the coup de cœur in 1994, to the sale of tickets in 1998, passing the incredible journey of the indomitable lions in 2002 and the retention of bonuses from players and supervisors (Mvo'o 2020: 75) from 2003 to 2010 are illustrative examples. This cannot be ignored as the period of study chosen in this work conceals a cycle of crisis which ends up paralyzing the umbrella body of football. From 1960 to 2010, we witnessed an insane succession of leaders at the head of the Cameroon Football Federation (FECAFOOT), so much does it look like a political carnival. We thus went from the dismissal of presidents, their imprisonment, to the Provisional Management Committee to the Standardization Committee. This context of chaos has pushed the state on several occasions to take its responsibilities, thus establishing a right of imperialism, that is to say a form of interference, a right of scrutiny over the affairs of FECAFOOT. How did it come about politically and legally?

## **1. The main political and legal orientations**

The question of the reorganization of Cameroonian football necessarily involves the evaluation of the impacts of public sports policies. The analysis models that can be mobilized at this level raise the issue of taking into account the constantly renewed political and legal nature of the reforms. To do this, this part will address the definitional framework of the main principles that allowed the management of Cameroonian football from 1960 to 2010. In addition, we will address the importance of legal acts initiated in order to consider structural changes in the management of

Cameroonian football. It is therefore logical to observe the inseparability of politics and football in Cameroon.

### **1.1. The range of institutional foundations for football reorganization**

We start in theory from the mechanistic model which presupposes a de facto causal relationship between a variable understood here as football and a social model understood here as Cameroonian society. This postulate of analysis, far from being a simple metaphorical transposition is understandable if we stick to the Cameroonian sports model irreversibly and inevitably plagued by crisis phenomena. Examples of infrastructural decrepitude, carelessness in academic sports institutions, the lack of coordination between the various faculties and the field of sport are all elements that can be noted as proof of the need for football reform. Cameroonian.

FECAFOOT, founded in 1959 in accordance with Cameroonian legislation, appears to be an organization whose development is marked by the need to face crises of both governance and relationships. By relying on Vedel and Vitalis, we must recognize that: "the complex interrelationships between tool and context supply and use, technical and social" (Morisset & Zarrouck, 1977: 77) are at the center of the explanation of uses or relationships between structures. By joining FIFA in 1962 and CAF in 1963, the Cameroon Football Federation adopted statutes and regulations which by the principle of subsidiarity were subservient to the directives and decisions of these so-called tutelary international football organizations. To do this, it was necessary to summon the members of the football community to meetings which seem to be the founding point of the many palaver in competence between the players of Cameroonian football. We can thus evoke the birth of a culture of "chicanery" experienced here through either:

- The ordinary or extraordinary General Assembly of FECAFOOT;
- Conciliation meetings initiated within FECAFOOT or by the ministry in charge of sport;
- Informal consultations between Cameroonian football decision-makers,
- Bipartite or tripartite meetings between FECAFOOT and CAF, FECAFOOT and FIFA, FIFA-FECAFOOT-CAF. It goes without saying that the same applies to meetings between FECAFOOT and Cameroonian clubs, FECAFOOT and the ministry in charge of sports;
- Olympic conciliation missions between the National Olympic Committee of Cameroon and the various bodies in charge of football. At this level, let us recall the right of intervention of the CAS in sports governance in view of the principle of subsidiarity;
- The Cameroonian football general states held in 2010 (Morisset & Zarrouck, 1977: 78).

This presentation bodes well for the fact that the historical development of the Cameroonian football system has not been easy. Several behaviors characterized the actors and gave birth to groups that became a social and technical system developing a specific mentality that is to say that the way of managing for example the national team in Cameroon allowed the vulgate of the street of self-realization namely "Cameroon is Cameroon". However, the existence of normative and legal texts in accordance with the general provisions of the Cameroon Sports Charter and the statutes of FECAFOOT would have made it possible to resolve this contradiction. It did

not happen and we then witnessed a graduation in the holding of the meetings when it came to football. We have thus gone from meetings within the umbrella body of Cameroonian football to those held at the Ministry of Sports and finally to those held at the Prime Minister or even at the Presidency of the Republic. Far from translating the simple involvement of the public authorities, all these meetings show the powerlessness of the players to build a consensual and coherent discourse on the common interest of football. Let us thus call upon the theory of the socio-technical system stipulated by Rojot who says that: "Sociotechnical analysis favors an organization based on autonomous or semi-autonomous work groups. It affirms the ability of employees to organize themselves into self-regulating groups, which take into account both the needs of individuals and those of production". (Rojot, 1989: 250). It should therefore be understood that the different groups that make up the eleven specialized, decentralized leagues and associations position themselves according to the interests of each corporation. They thus develop uses and practices which end up making any compromise impossible. We subscribe here to the theoretical point of view in action research or intervention research. Here, we are not trying to analyze the organic system of Cameroonian football from the outside but rather from the inside by revealing the obstacles created by these conflicts which, in the eyes of the public authorities, required reorganizations. How to understand that from 1960 to 2010, all the foundations listed by us, wanted by football players or imposed by the public authorities did not have the expected results. Several answers seem plausible to us.

First, the intelligibility of the structure of the Cameroonian football system; all the actors approached it from the angle of the various parameters such as its borders, its structure, its specialization, its distribution of power, its modes of coordination, the role of agents, its identity, its culture. This approach ensured that, in the FECAFOOT-Ministry of Sports relationship, the notion of borders was put into perspective, that of structure ignored, the specificity of football simply not being taken into account. This is why the public authorities have endeavored by giving the main political and legal orientations to break with the life cycle of crisis specific to an organization conceived as a living organism with all the existential problems that this underlies.

Second, the Cameroonian football community agrees on organizational change at each meeting. This is understandable because it is the only solution through which Cameroonian football can remain competitive. Moreover, let us remember that the need for this organizational change arises the day after each debacle of the national team. For example, we have the CAN of 1972, 1986, 1992, 1998, 2004 and 2010 as so many repositories. Crozier and Friedman judged the need for organizational change in these terms: "change: this ability to tolerate diversity, greater openness, inconsistency and to manage inevitable tensions and which allows men to conquer greater capacities". We can therefore conclude at this level that the players in the Cameroonian football system all seem stricken with amnesia because it is circumstances that dictate change and the theory sufficiently demonstrates that this cannot be chosen but learned (Crozier and Friedman, 1977: 87).

These two answers lead us to say that it is the debacles of national teams in international competitions that create the social, political and legal context for the reorganization of Cameroonian football. However, the main stake of these reorganization processes remains the appropriation of the major orientations desired by the public authorities. In fact, FECAFOOT decision-makers seem more inclined to

appropriateness as defined by Arrow (Arrow, 1962: 609-625). In other words, everyone implies texts in isolation or according to their interest group. If it is true that clan struggles were one of the causes of the decadence of Cameroonian football at the end of the 1980s, it is precisely because football decision-makers have moved away from the notion of appropriation which alone makes it possible to avoid point to isolate the cognitive processes of acquiring knowledge from the behavioral processes of using this knowledge. In a way, it is fair to leave football to the footballers in view of the knowledge acquired by them while taking into account the morals of those called upon to preside over the bodies of the system. A few players who have managed football clubs in Cameroon can be cited. We have in memory: Théophile Abéga, Emmanuel Mvé Elemva, Pierre Womé Nlend (Canon de Yaoundé), Joseph Antoine Bell (Plane du Nkam), Gérémi Sorel Njitap as leader of the National Union of Cameroonian Footballers (SYNAFOC) based in the city of Douala .

The management of paradoxes in a mode of rule of unstable conformism has prompted Cameroonian actors to practice immobility and resistance in the face of the will of the public authorities to move the lines within the system. We can ironically say that the Cameroonian political decision-maker seems to have forgotten that FECAFOOT like any organization has had successive leaders who have developed the capacity to learn, to value the knowledge acquired in order to perpetuate a system resistant to innovation. In fact, from 1960 to 2010 in the face of the government's desire to innovate, FECAFOOT remained an increasingly bureaucratic, regulated and apparently stable organization in anarchy. From then on, the problem for the state was to perpetually create an institutional framework that alone was empowered to ratify the resolutions taken. This was the role of the FECAFOOT General Assembly, which became the tribunal between the different factions. If we stick to the charter of physical and sporting activities as laid down by law n° 96/09 of August 5, 1996, FECAFOOT should be defined as a sports association. Which can only benefit from this label when it usually organizes, even incidentally, the practice of one or more disciplines or physical exercises. This leads us to read this institution as an actor who influences users, conditions and modifies their visions of football. We can at this level draw a parallel with the influence of technology on society from the point of view of technological determinism. In other words, the action of FECAFOOT is not neutral and aims to transform the Cameroonian football system at all levels. Nevertheless, the postures proposed from a legal point of view have made it possible to develop arguments which through texts, laws and decrees. These would have direct effects on the functioning of this federation.

### **1.2. The scope of the multiple organic texts on football in Cameroon**

The goals of the umbrella body of Cameroon football contained in sixteen points of its statute constitute the first code which governs the organic institutional environment of Cameroonian football. This is the set of possibilities that govern the membership, use and ownership of football by the players. But it must be recognized that the structuring capacity of FECAFOOT lies in a process of co-evolution between the external institutional environment and the organic environment. It seems in fact that there is a permanent interaction between the decrees, laws and ordinances of the State and the legal system put in place within FECAFOOT. The work of Robert Reix shows how social structures develop rules from the resources that determine the

action of actors, who design and interpret the environment (Reix, 2002: 67). What is the range of founding texts of the institutional environment of Cameroon?

This organic arsenal can be found on a double level. International texts of affiliation and internal texts of football ownership. With regard to international affiliation texts, these include the statutes of FIFA, CAF, the IOC, the Standard Collaboration Agreement adopted by the FIFA Executive Committee on October 29, 2007 in Zurich, FIFA prescriptions resulting from the MINJES-FIFA-FECAFOOT tripartite of November 5, 2004. These texts can be read at the level of adaptive structuring, that is to say the analysis made by Cameroonian decision-makers to appropriate at a double level the practice of football. At a first level are the de facto recognition of international football bodies and at a second level the use that Cameroon intends to make of this football. We start from the postulate of the theory of Desanctis and Poole who emphasize that the modes of appropriation can be a function of the culture or the history of a decision system (Desanctis & Poole, 1996: 76). For Cameroonian actors and decision-makers, it is about creating a socio-technical configuration to revitalize sport in general, physical education and football in particular. This was visible through the general objective of the States General of Sport and Physical Education. However, to understand these foundations, we must stick to the organic texts. These are of several kinds which should be listed in tabular form.

**Table 1: Some organic texts for the structuring of sport in Cameroon**

N°	TYPOLGY OF TEXTS	DATE	OBJECT
1	Law n°96/09	5 août 1996	Charter of physical and sports activities
2	Decree n°72/600	31 October 1972	Organization of the national football team
3	Decree n°76/459	11 octobre 1976	Addendum to Decree No. 72/600 on the organization of the national football team
4	Decree n°85/192	14 February 1985	Amending and supplementing Decree No. 72/600 on the organization of the national football team
5	Decision n°26/MJS/CAB	19 December 2000	Rules of procedure for national football teams

Source: Documentary compilation by us made on the basis of the private archives of Roger Milla, Michel Zoa.

These different texts show the investment of public authorities in the structuring of a set of strategies with specific objectives. These can revolve around the organization of Olympic and Paralympic football sports disciplines, the financing and partnership of the Cameroonian football system, the training and professionalization of actors and the establishment of a model agreement between different instances. In other words, the organic normative framework aims to remedy the existential weaknesses in the football system. Said weaknesses being of the order of: inadequate organization charts, non-application of existing ones, absence of seats for regional, departmental and district leagues, ignorance of administrative procedures, insufficient financial resources, the mediocre quality of the appropriate infrastructure, the low

media coverage of sporting events except those concerning national teams (Morisset and Zarrouck, 1977: 79).

In this case, it can be recognized that the general objective of the multiple organic texts has been to govern the relationship between FECAFOOT and the Ministry of Sports, mainly with regard to the national football team. This therefore leads to a relativity of the normative framework which does not integrate at this level the recurrence of conflicts between the umbrella structures and their branches in view of the multiple conflicts between FECAFOOT and the general leagues concerning intermediate competitions with access to the level. Superior. The conflict between Bamboutos de Mbouda and FECAFOOT in 2010 is a perfect illustration of this. Then, the organic texts do not take into account the new "slave trade" which is made by the uncontrolled exodus of sports talents to the outside. To avoid customs, some Cameroonian football players are sheltering behind the regulations governing the statutes and the transfer of FIFA players. This posture justifies the low technical level of the local championship and the regular disappointments of Cameroonian clubs since 1981 in continental sports competitions. Added to these first two defects a fanciful programming of sports competitions, the lack of technical supervisors or qualified coaches, the non-compliance with ministerial instructions by the various branches of FECAFOOT and we come to a laconic conclusion: FECAFOOT with a minimum right. In other words, there is a "no man sland", that is to say a non-existence of legal instruments at a certain level which allow the vagueness of governance. The disciplinary code of this federation at this level could not overcome the initial problem that of the inadequate training of those involved in the management of the federal structure.

What is the interest of this normative framework if not the fact that it has the merit of existing and of establishing some rigidities which tend to overestimate the power of the actors while neglecting the effective strategies of their supervision? The resulting complex interactions lead on the one hand to say that the law here is a logic of supply which allows Cameroonian representativeness at the level of football diplomacy but also a logic of use because configures the Cameroonian football system of a certain way. All in all, these laws are recognized by the Cameroonian National Olympic Committee (CNOC) which exercises its attributions in accordance with the missions assigned to it by the IOC. Institutional change is thus conceived as the meeting between law, lawlessness and the national political context. In the aftermath of the debacles of the Cameroonian national team in international competitions, he wants to be the bearer of a modulated organizational design to make room for a new legal context, new management methods, and changes of people. Is this not the model of the seamless canvas desired by Hugues in order to explain the "development produced in the tangle of different technical, socio-economic elements" (Hugues and Thomas, 1983: 128)? This question allows a relationship to be established between the political world and the football world. Although it must be recognized that this posture has been the subject of many proposals and research to better understand the joints. The fact remains that debacles have an influence on the system because they require organizational designs in terms of the development of a discourse, the appropriation of methods, and institutional reorganization. Thus, the football players adapt themselves according to the circumstances just like the normative framework. It is therefore a law / circumstances dialectic that must be grasped in order to identify the

contributions of the texts, their constraints both on the relations between actors and on the institutional and organizational structures. Therefore, it makes sense to interpret and understand the community of football players through the prism of their repositioning in the wake of the unsuccessful competitions of the national team.

## **2. Critical study of the community of football players**

The community of football players is at the heart of all the changes concerning this sporting discipline. It is understood in a society as a whole with its organizations, institutions and interactions that are constantly changing. It is therefore a concert of non-monolithic actors who act through a code, a kind of language that only they understand. By relying on linguistic determinism, we know that language is not just a neutral tool but much more that it modifies the conceptions and ways of thinking of individuals. In other words, any new player in the Cameroonian football community adopts a method of thinking, a way of acting similar to that of his predecessors faced with an environment of crises. Understanding the logic of these actors in an environment that is constantly changing and therefore changes are recurrent is the problem of this section. To do this, we will analyze the conflict dynamics of the relationships between formal actors at the level of the mechanistic model and then we will observe the dynamics of other actors in the reform era.

### **2.1. The issue of relations between formal football players in Cameroon**

The theory of structuring shows that the laws and devices on which the players in football rely are left to the appreciation of everyone. As a result, we are witnessing multiple interpretations that give rise to controversy and conflicts with regard to the distribution of powers. This is aptly reminiscent of this vision according to which in Cameroon: “the laws in force are repeated and overlapped, neither the vigilante nor the litigant are immune from error” (Atenga, 2010: 36). This leads us to consider that by being part of a permanent reorganization process linked to a circumstantial environment, the Cameroonian public authorities characterize the football system by a logic of interaction patterns. It means by a process by which the structural properties are found created and recreated in a space-time by the means of the rules and the virtual realities advocated by the politician. In fact, by getting involved in this process, the public authorities, far from adapting the normative framework through breakthrough innovations, are adopting the same laws and adapting them to the new context. For example, article 2 of the statutes of the Cameroonian Football Federation, which deals with relations with the public authorities, did not experience significant and differentiated grooming from 1972 to 2010. By making a historical digression, we observe that the texts observed by the Extraordinary General Assembly of this body of October 10, 2018 are almost identical to those of the football general states and to those resulting from the multiple meetings of consultation and reorganization of FECAFOOT.

There remain several ambiguities. First, the financial co-supervision of FECAFOOT with the State. That is to say, the Cameroonian state and decentralized territorial communities continue to provide grants to FECAFOOT. The logic of the resulting tip was highlighted in November 2010 when during the Estates General, football players recognized the inadequacy of the federations' self-financing mechanisms; the weak involvement of companies in the financing of sport;

mismanagement of funds by federation managers. This observation leads us to see the strengthening of the logic of subordination of the umbrella body of Cameroonian football to the public authorities, which is contrary to the spirit of the texts of FIFA and CAF. They appear here: "FECAFOOT's accounting documents relating to subsidies allocated by the State are presented without travel, upon all requisitions from the minister in charge of sports and the minister in charge of finance". Second, the players in the Cameroonian football system, by accepting technical support from the State for the sports movement, fail to consider the divergence of objectives between the public authorities and FECAFOOT. The former blame the latter for the non-existence of coercive measures vis-à-vis players, sports players; the inadequacy of deontological, ethical and moral codes in football. The public authorities are not wrong when we remember the clashes between some top players in the Cameroon team in 1990. Who can forget that in 1998, Jacques Songo'o then doorman of the Spanish team of Deportivo de la Coruna had lost his post of titular guardian on the instructions of Minister Owona Joseph (Anafak, 2010: 150). It emerges as follows: Cameroon, beaten in a context of scandal in 1994, qualifies again for the 1998 World Cup in France. This edition is special since it is played with the former colonizer. Cameroon, as usual, approach the competition ill-prepared. The African Nations Cup (...) in Burkina Faso revealed serious shortcomings in the team's physical, tactical and organizational preparation. Cameroon had been eliminated... Fans furious at the mistake of goalkeeper and team captain Jacques Songo'o in the game against Guinea Conakry demanded that he be sidelined. He had been replaced on the instructions of the Minister of Sports, after injunctions from the authorities in Yaoundé, in order to contain the discontent of the supporters. Second goalkeeper Vincent Ongandzi defended the goals against the advice of coach Jean Manga Onguéné (Anafak, 2010: 150).

This illustrative example shows that the behavior of some players at the stadium during the Indomitable Lions campaigns had an impact on the sporting public and prompted political involvement. Failing to see some players being sanctioned, the public became a judge and did not hesitate in 2005 to ransack the house of Pierre Womé Nlend in Yaoundé, in 2006 to demand the head of sports minister Philippe Mbarga Mboa. The public authorities also argue that FECAFOOT is insufficient in terms of adequate monitoring of the organization and promotion of football activities. The second (FECAFOOT) argue that adequate funding is unavailable; the non-application of law 74/22 of December 5, 1974 and that n° 96/05 of August 5, 1996. Regarding the second law, it is very explicit in several ways. In its Article 3 of Title 1, it is said: The State is responsible for the teaching of physical education and sports. As such, the school or university programs adopted by the minister responsible for national education, as the case may be, the minister in charge of higher education include, on the proposal of the minister in charge of sports in conjunction with all interested parties, compulsory physical education and sports lessons.

On observation, FECAFOOT is not involved in defining the educational framework necessary for the emergence of football coaches and technicians. This is how we observe the lack of a partnership between INJS, CENAJES and FECAFOOT. This is detrimental to the need to achieve optimal vocational training objectives. Neither in terms of admission nor in terms of training, has FECAFOOT found itself through its clubs forced to use products from these schools. Article 4 also reinforces this anachronistic system by stipulating that: "the State contributes to the promotion of

physical and sporting activities as well as high-level sport in conjunction with local communities, legal persons governed by public law or under private law, sports federations or associations and social and / or educational institutions”. However, this state will is contradictory with the practice on the ground. In fact, with regard to the Cameroonian football system, we are witnessing a horizontal structuring with the creation of a permanent intersectoral consultation framework involving the partner institutions of the Ministry of Sports, namely the Ministry of the Economy and Development of the Territory (MINEPAT), the Ministry of Finance (MINFI), the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform (MINFOPRA), the Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUB), the Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC), the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MINEFOP), the Ministry of Higher Education (MINESUP). This symmetry is contrary to the principle of subsidiarity, which would mean that it is the verticality of the partnership that allows better use of graduates from these professional schools in the field of sport. Hence the legal and administrative controversy between FECAFOOT and the institutional partnership created by the ministry in charge of sports. The latter stands out as the central actor and taking into account the actor-network theory, we can say that at the base of the process of institutional construction of Cameroonian football is the controversy between the actors of the network. It is therefore necessary that between MINSEP and FECAFOOT take place a series of negotiations in order to produce a convergence of the interests of the network, that is to say to build a consensual point of view.

What then to say at this level if it is not that the various sports ministers who have followed one another with more or less success have never ceased to make FECAFOOT's membership in international sporting bodies a means of Cameroon to assert its existence vis-à-vis the international community. The emblematic figures that are Joseph Fofé, Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya, Joseph Marie Bipoum Oum, Joseph Owona, Pierre Ismaël Bidoung Mkp watt and Philippe Mbarga Mboa have embodied until caricature what Mbengalack had already denounced by saying: “the (football) is wanted to be a practical tool which was to make it possible to achieve a coherent policy in the struggle against imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism” (Mbengalack, 1993: 469). In this scheme of interpretative flexibility, the interests of FECAFOOT cannot be consolidated in the public sphere and are found to be contradictory to the role of the state, which expects political dividends. We are in the David vs. Goliath pattern where the 'misery' of a federation with some corrupt players pushing officials to willingly delegate their powers to the state. Therefore, the objective of the Cameroonian Football Federation is to survive by avoiding any iconoclasy, that is to say by being a complementary whole arranged and obedient to the hierarchy. The accountability of football is therefore at the heart of the issue between the Cameroonian state and FECAFOOT.

The soothing discourse served to the public is therefore going to be that “all is well” (Mutations, 2002: 08). This optimism, which provides decision-makers with comfort during sporting performances, cannot remain in force during poor performances. From the federation to the ministry, everyone returns the ball to the causes of the failures. In Cameroon, we only perpetuate victory and since defeats always lead to reforms, we need heads to “sacrifice”. The logic of passionate about football leads us to know that despite the modesty of resources on a global scale, Cameroon wants through football to secure its image, restore its prestige and attract

investors. As such, the strategic challenge imposed by professional football leads the two main formal players to be in permanent conflict.

The sports ministry, which has established itself as a central player, is therefore the conductor, the one who keeps the merry-go-round; the boss who controls, handles and imposes. Gary Tribaux notes: "In this exposed environment of professional sport, coaching, motivation, presence must guide the manager's action. The diversity of characters and profiles, if possible different from those of the manager, must constitute an asset for the sports institution" (Bekombo, 2002: 04). In this case, the relationship between the different FECAFOOT and the ministers in charge of sports generally alternated between enmities and distancing. It is difficult in the history of Cameroonian football to find a peaceful, rationed and reasoned relationship that has allowed the Cameroonian sports movement to give its full potential. We are still in the pattern of frontal opposition which becomes a burden to the internal and external dynamics of revival of the Cameroonian sports movement. Claude Bekombo Jabéa emphasizes that this is what forces these decision-makers to structure informal meetings and resolve problems through the palaver tree (Dermitt, Tribou, 2016: 9). He puts forward as recommendations that the operational scope of the change, the conception of sport and its perception should be taken in a synergistic manner in order to ensure an interactive order between the two bodies. This is the main challenge for the development of football in Cameroon. We must therefore move away from the sports corporatism defended by FECFOOT and MINSEP, each at its own level to establish a sports partnership. It goes without saying that such a development cannot be achieved by excluding the state from the center of the network. This is undoubtedly what FIFA understood from the Zurich consensus which established an agreement between the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Cameroonian Football Federation on December 18, 2000. It must therefore be recognized that the players in Cameroonian football have been characterized by their political, legal and managerial opposition. However, the reforms initiated following the various early eliminations from international competitions have enabled the players to reposition themselves in relation to each other. Understanding these trajectories seems wise in the reflective section that follows.

## **2.2. New positioning of other actors in the era of necessary reforms**

The Cameroonian football community by its heterogeneity is generally positioned to face the challenges that concern Cameroonian football. It is therefore not surprising to find that journalists, supporters and other stakeholders interact within the framework of the dialogues initiated by the public authorities in order to reform Cameroonian football. The speeches formulated by them, the actions carried out by them provide a glimpse of the possible success or failure of the initiatives put in place to give new impetus to the football system. We must see here the establishment of a utilitarian ethic often blurred by remnants of the associative ethics of clubs and of the umbrella body. In fact, it appears that the orientations and policies undertaken are confronted with the opposition of certain club leaders who play on two registers, namely: that of Cameroonian football as an amateur sport. At this level, it helps to minimize the salary treatment of players who are seen here as volunteers. In other words, they have no health coverage, no proper treatment, and sometimes they don't even have a contract. This amounts to saying that the players are paid by the task, the

victory bonus serving as salary. The issue of the inevitable professionalization desired by the public authorities in order to restore the image of Cameroonian football, this initiative meets the hostility of part of the Cameroonian football community. It was for the public authorities to transform the clubs into a commercial sports enterprise capable of raising capital in the financial markets. At this level, the spectator, sentimentally attached to his club, becomes a public financier. These two points show the ideological incompatibility between certain players in the football community and the public authorities. Thus, by professionalizing the championship, we must necessarily witness the creation of public limited companies with international influence but also sports entertainment companies. Antoine Dépadoux Essomba Eyenga's experience with the TKC SAOS in 2008 is an illustrative example, as is the legal battle that would oppose him to the other leaders of the "original" TKC. This example leads us to formulate this principle: the club which wins sportingly is the one which is best managed economically. We can thus make a comparison of the existential advantages between professionalization of football and the maintenance of amateurism at the club level. Also, we wonder what are the advantages of an amateur club compared to a professional club. We summarize this in the table below:

**Table 2:** The competitive advantages of the amateur club compared to the professional club

Avantages	
Image of disinterestedness provided by the associative label	Counter-image of amateurism (in the sense of a lack of professionalism)
Gains in competitiveness due to: - reduced costs (volunteering); - public subsidies; - The absence of profits to distribute.	Difficult management of human resources made up of volunteers and employees, and consequences on the quality of services Limited external funding

Source : P-E. Tixier, 2002 :13.

This table underlines that the associative ethics and utilitarian ethics practiced by Cameroonian football players do not make it possible to derive substantial benefits that could lead to the development of the club. The logic that drives some club presidents in Cameroon is the conservation of the initial legal form or even the management of the club in a family way. However, the transition to a corporate status for a club has the effect of allowing the arrival of interested external funding. Partners provide capital in exchange for a profit share. However, in the case of species, we are in what the Cameroonian philosopher Hubert Mono Ndjana called "mapartism".

The reforms initiated by the public authorities although rejected by the actors aim to build professionalism. The objectives assigned to the clubs are undoubtedly aimed at increasing their turnover. So to speak, clubs such as Coton Sport de Garoua, Canon de Yaoundé, Union de Douala, Racing de Bafoussam, and Tonnerre Kalara Club de Yaounde, however mythical they may have had to get out of the rut of ethnic or personal management in order to fit into the scheme of the creation of commercial enterprises. This presupposes the search for three main sources of income: income related to ticketing, media rights and marketing rights.

In the era of globalization, this means having a presence on social networks in order to communicate information, share photos, promote the image of players, in short to interact with their communities of supporters. With this new positioning, Cameroonian clubs can open doors that were previously difficult to access.

Nevertheless, it must be taken into account that the public sector constitutes a formidable competitor for the development of clubs. Indeed, by keeping the upper hand over infrastructure, the public authorities in Cameroon condition the typology of the show and cap the income of clubs. Indeed, the quality of the infrastructure determines the attendance of the public and the sums collected are generally low in view of the quality of the lawn. How can we understand that we can encourage players to professionalize without establishing a real football-business strategy?

Sports marketing appears to be non-existent in the era of the necessary reforms in Cameroonian football. No player in the Cameroonian sports community seems to be able to drive products and services to consumers of football on the one hand, to bring consumers to the products and services of their clubs on the other side. The responsibility of the State and of FECAFOOT should be noted at this level. Indeed, what if in the 1970s and 1980s the Canon-TKC, Union-Dynamo derbies filled up the stadiums in Yaoundé and Douala? It appears that since the 1990s, these generate little attraction for fans and investors. On analysis, the state appears to be the driving force behind this inconsistency in public policies. Thus, it appears that: High-level sport as provided for in Title 2 of this law is a factor of emulation. It is a source of social recognition for players and athletes. In this regard, the high-level athlete, through his performances and his contribution plays a leading social and cultural role. The Minister responsible for sports is kept informed of the organization of international sports competitions or events. This principle stated here leads to highlighting the typology of the constraints facing these football players in the era of professionalization.

First, an internal constraint of profitability and ethical purpose. At this level, it is for managers to put in place a balanced governance of revenue and expenditure. In fact, the history of Cameroonian football sufficiently shows the interventions of the elites to see the State in order to bail out certain clubs, to finance their trips to international competitions. Second, Cameroonian clubs are under the seal of an external constraint. It is about meeting the demand of supporters, fans, members who by paying their dues, expect results. This is the place to understand the dismay of some in view of the sloppy performances of Cameroonian clubs since 1981 in African continental competitions. The supporters are all the more demanding as they expect quality infrastructure, great services, and participation at the highest level from their clubs. It is within the framework of professionalization, the emergence of a certain level of requirements understood here as the report, quality of the spectacle, sporting results of the teams. Third, another obstacle stems from the financial environment. Commercial sponsors such as Orange, MTN, Brasseries du Cameroun, the ministry in charge of sports, local and regional government administrations also have expectations! These are articulated in terms of visibility and image on the continental scene. Hence the conflict between the expectations of members, state sports diplomacy, the ethics of the general interest of local communities and the ambitions of sponsors. Fourth, there is a competitive constraint between the various Cameroonian clubs engaged in international competition. Far from proceeding by synergy in terms of friendlies and solidarity, they are instead running a race towards commercial and public sports companies. All this leads us to carry out an analysis of the sports services market.

The objective of this article was to present the context of the reorganization of football in Cameroon on the political, legal and above all organizational levels. An

inventory was necessary in order to understand the behavior of players in the football system in Cameroon with a view to determining the continuities and breaks observed in the functioning of this sporting discipline. Said research took stock of football news in terms of reforms, political and legal incentives initiated by the public authorities to prevent football from falling into uncontrollable ways. This is the place here to identify the importance of the organic texts founding a new posture of the players and attempting to limit negative consequences for the future of this football. We had to evoke these implications and project some possible solutions. The will of the public authorities has remained the masters of the football system and the consequences which are induced have therefore constituted the central axis of this study.

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