

DRESS AND SUBCULTURE IDENTIFICATION IN CAMEROON

Ibrahim Aliloulay MOUNGANDE

&

BIKME Rick Constant

University of Yaoundé I

Faculty of Arts, Letters and Human sciences

Department of Arts and Archaeology

mia_moctar@yahoo.fr

Tel: 678370948

Abstract

Culture and cultural identity are predominant elements which mould the customs and beliefs of a group of people. Everyone identifies to a subcommunity respective or irrespective of the wider community in which they are. Different groups of people develop different norms and values regarding cultural, political and sexual matters. The sartorial trendiness is not at rest for that matter especially in Cameroon which is an amalgamation of many cultures. This brings up the problematic, which is the cultural clash in the sartorial fashion in Cameroon nowadays. In addition to this, how does dressing identify a subcultural group? The objective in this study is to ascertain the reasons how subcultural groups identify with the dress code in Cameroon. To attain this, a cultural studies approach using an ethnographic perspective will be used. We made use documentation, interviews, observation and filmography to support our arguments with the result that, the Cameroonian subculture dress codes emanate from societal leverage.

Keywords: *Fashion, sartorial, subculture, cultural studies, ethnography*

Introduction

From time immemorial, the garment has been a fundamental entity for human beings. The scientific evolution and religious creation might differ in the origin of man but the similarity amongst them is that, man had to cover himself his nudity with animal furs, tree shrubs or leaves. From organic materials fumbled into a piece of cloth to hide nudity, the garment evolved to become what we know today as a dress. The evolution of the dress was favoured by various reasons and one of the main reasons is the urge to give meaning to it as mentioned by Malcolm Barnard (2017: 23) "... people are familiar with the idea that the clothes they and others wear are meaningful. Clothes are selected for the purchase and for wearing, according to the meaning we believe them to have, or the message we believe them to send". In other words, the sartorial material which each individual or group of individuals wears depends on the locality in which he or she belongs. This brings up the notion of culture which is the fundamental backbone of individuals. One of the common characteristics of culture is that it is not universal. This means that what is true

to A can be false to B without either culture being bad. Thus, if one judges a culture based on another culture, we fall into ethnocentrism. The word culture has a broad and neutral sense. It designates a group of activities, beliefs and common practices of a society, community or group of individuals. This implies that culture is a wider conception of society and a morsel of culture, which is a division of a cultural group and is known as subculture. Subculture is a smaller group of individuals within a wider group who have developed their own conception of life and express their peculiarity in their lifestyle which is supported by (Holt,1997a), who defines lifestyle as “ a collective pattern of consumption patterns based on shared cultural frameworks that exist in social system ” Numerous subcultures congest the world and they are mostly recognisable by their way of dressing. For example, a gothic subculture will be identified through their morbid dark outfits, dark makeup, skulls and hellish-dead related imprints such as skulls, fire or coffins. The issue at stake is that, there is still an unresolved problem linking dress and subculture. In other words, what are the reasons which lead to such behaviours of segregation in the dress code? To contextualise it to a chosen geographical space, what are the different subcultures in Cameroon and how does that blending of assorted subcultures influence the dress fashion in Cameroon? Answers to these questions and more are attempted following a cultural studies approach with an ethnographic perspective. In order for us to proceed, it worth looking at some key terms used in this article.

I. Definition of terms and theoretical framework

The definitions of key words are solid foundations which strengthen the start of a scientific article. Consequently, an elaborate definition of essential terms is primordial for the continuation of this writing.

A. Fashion

Etymologically, fashion is derived from the Latin words *facere*, *factio* and old French *façon* which mean do, make. The concept of fashion is often misused and abusively affiliated to the dress and beauty industry. Fashion is not all about the beauty and dress sector it is also about how colour, shape and texture thought seemingly unremarkable can reveal where one stands socially. Nithyaprakash (2015) in his article Fashion Trends and its Impact on Society argues that “the impact is measured by the barometer of social

acceptance which in turn is driven by several motivational forces that underlines the people's values and behavioural traits". Nevertheless, Pragati Sharma constrains fashion as an individual cosmogony and not as a social statement, "*fashion is an individual statement of self-expression*". Though both definitions diverge, they converge with the fact that fashion is a matrix by individuals to express themselves and their provenance. . In this definition, we notice that there is the word popular which best describes fashion. Thus, fashion is what is made popular. A good example is the advent of smart phones in the past decades. Smart phones are fashionable because they are popular amongst a majority in society. Hence, we can define fashion as a popular trend which is accepted by a collective of individuals sharing a similar cultural background, identity and have an alike conception of reality. People easily recognize themselves and others through fashion and mostly through the dress which is one of the important aspects of a culture.

B. Sartorial

Sartorial is derived from the Latin words, *sarcire, sartor* which mean *to patch, tailor* respectively. Other common synonyms of sartorial are dress, clothes, garment. A dress is not just an assembling of cloth, needle and thread but the emblem of a given culture as emphasised by Laver in his book *Dandies (Pageant of History)*, who expressed that "Clothes are never a frivolity, they are an expression of the fundamental social and economic pressures of the time". Clothes and fashion go hand in glove and are indissociable. Twinning the concepts of fashion and clothes, it will be defined "as the prevailing style of dress or behaviour at any given time, with the strong implication that fashion is characterized by change" Valery Steele (1999). Different cultures have different conceptions of dress starting from the textile's nature (cotton, nylon, satin, wool) to the designs (long and mini-skirts, gowns, suits, trousers, pants) decorative details (pearls, flowers, feathers) and even fabric pattern (Africitude, conventional colours, Arabic, Indian, Chinese motives) are some of the particularities which distinguish people. For example, in a conservative Islam society, it is a taboo for men to wear red satin clothes whereas in a western modern context it is à la mode. Therefore, a dress can be defined as a piece of garment whose primordial function is to hide one's nudity.

C. Subculture

It is impossible to talk about subculture without mentioning culture. Subculture bi-word is made up of the prefix sub and the suffix culture. Sub is a word which is put at the beginning of an adjective to describe someone or something which is inferior, small or subaltern. Sub is a part of a whole. Culture on its part is a concept which bites around the bush but (Williams, 1976) defined it as a "...particular way of life which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning, but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour". Hall and Jefferson go in line with it by saying in *Resistance through Rituals* (1976) that "culture is that level at which social groups develop distinct patterns of life and give expressive form to their social and material... experience".

Handling with kid gloves, subculture is the extraction of a petty group within a wider group who have their own lifestyle and concept which might be as a result of various reasons. Subcultures are uncountable and every day, some see the light. Good examples of subcultures are Rastafarians, punks, hipsters. It is to be noted that subculture is not a resolution of a social tension towards a dictatorial hegemony, but is a blending of different styles, materials, available culture to create a relative independent segmented order out of the dominant class. Dick Hebdige, in his book *The Meaning of Style* (1979) denotes the terms *conjunction* and *specificity*. In other words, subcultural groups have their essence on a mixture of cultures then reappropriate it to form their peculiarity, their difference. They express their raw material through music, lifestyle and clothing. They are usually born as a result of an unsettled problem, accustom, heritage and are mediated through school, work, home.

D. Ethnography

Work in cultural studies centres on three kinds of approach: ethnography, textual approaches and reception studies. Ethnography which is our concern has often been linked with culturalist approaches and a focus on lived experiences. Ethnography has tried to "represent the subjective meanings, feelings and cultures of others" (Willis, 1980:91). Ethnography is an empirical and theoretical approach inherited from anthropology which seeks a detailed holistic description and analysis of cultures based on intensive field work which relies on participant observation. Participant observation is what Herbert (2000: 551) in his article considers as "a methodology whereby the researcher spends

considerable time observing and interacting with a social group” This will include the unspoken and taken-for-granted assumptions that operate within cultural life. Ethnography concentrates on the details of local life while connecting them to wider social processes. Ethnography will be the guard which will help us to better understand the subcultures chosen. Since we are dealing with the Cameroonian society, we cannot treat Cameroon as a subculture because it is relatively ambiguous. Having established the definitions of the key vocabulary words, it is now practicable to commence the analysis of the theoretical framework which is cultural studies with an ethnographic perspective.

E-Cultural studies.

Morphologically in cultural and studies, there is the word culture which is the salient point. “Culture” etymologically, comes from the Latin *cultura* which means “cultivate”. Edward B. Tyler (1871:22) defines culture as “that complex whole which comprises knowledge, beliefs, arts, values, laws, customs and all other habits and capacities acquired by man as a member of the society”. In an anthropological and sociological sense, the word culture has a broad and neutral sense. It designates a group of activities, beliefs and common practices of a society, community or group of individuals. Culture came to be a theory which is known as cultural studies. Cultural study is aimed at the criticism of forms of hegemonic cultural life. This is a transdisciplinary perspectives from different disciplines can be selectively drawn on to examine the relations of culture and power (Bennett, 1998). As such, it considers hybrids inherent in cultural products. Richard Hoggart (2008) is a very important figure in this cumbersome literary theory. His principal contribution to cultural studies was the difference between popular culture and mass culture. In the anthropological sense of the word, culture is defined as the whole way of life of a particular society (Kuper and Kuper, 1985:27). In other words, culture is applicable to everyone in each society. A saying goes that no man is an island, which is relevant to this definition of Cultural studies which is the different ways in which culture creates, bounds and transforms individual experiences, daily routines, relationship and power. Cultural studies is the study of the who, why, what and how certain things are considered low and high in a given society. In this article, cultural studies is used as a methodology with the ethnographic school of thought. We will tackle the cultural significance of dresses supported by the ethnographical perspective to emphasizes on the

contextualisation in which these clothes are being analysed. How each dress pertains to a group of people, the history behind it and the codified meaning and symbols behind it. Using the dissection method of analysis by Ann Ubersfeld (1977), each element which constitute a dress will be analysed and given a cultural denomination.

II. Dress Subcultural identities in Cameroon

There is a nuance of subsets of culture such as popular culture, subculture, high culture and counterculture. They can also be called subcultures and can be defined as unique culture shared by a smaller group of people who are also a part of a larger culture. The Cameroonian cultural universe is made up of diverse cultural element. The different cultures developed different lifestyles proper to them which identified them. Each of these subcultures developed lifestyles which suited them. By lifestyle, we also mean clothing. In past and present civilizations, people have always attributed meaning to the garment. Barthes (1967) in *The Fashion System* assumes that there is a Lexicon and a syntax. The idea here is that the dress which is the signifier is given a meaning through a code which can only be understood by a group of people who know the code. A dress in its constitution is made up of different elements such as the cloth, textile, fabric pattern, details and the design which according to Barthes are denotation. The meaning derived from the garment like its use is what we call connotation. In Cameroon, some subcultural groups developed their dress codes with each of these stated elements, giving them peculiarity.

A. Fabric as a method of subcultural identification

Fabric, also known as Textile, is etymologically derived from the Latin word *textilis* which means woven. The origin of fabrics can be retraced to the Stone Age where men covered their nudity with leaves, backs of trees and animal furs. As time went on, fabrics became sophisticated as many other materials were added like silk, velour, cotton, nylon. A fabric is the plian material made by creating an interlocking network of yarns and threads, which are produced by spinning raw fibres. Fabrics are thereby made by weaving, knitting, braiding these yarns together.

In Cameroon, the *Obom* is a fabric which is highly appreciated by the fashion sector nationally and at the international level because of its durability



Figure 13 Intronization of an Ewondo Chief by Fly Boy

The Obom (figure 1) is a traditional textile extracted, created and designed from the backs of trees. It is used amongst the traditional Beti elites like chiefs and notables. The Obom originates from the Eton tribe. It is extracted from a tree which grows in the equatorial forest and the tree's name varies according to the different languages in the Fang-Beti. *Aloa* to the Beti, *Andom* to the Bulu, *Nloi* to the Bafia, the Obom is still rudimentarily extracted and woven (Charly Ngon, Aulech, 2017). In its traditional context, the Mvog-Ebode subcultural clan still conserves the Obom as a royal, ancestral and sacred symbol. It is used during specific occasions like the enthronement of a new chief and feast. The Beti in general are identified with the Obom as it is a specific textile proper to them. For them, it is a perfect demonstration of their superiority, their identity and culture. Nowadays, the Obom is used by various fashion designers to create various clothes, accessories and objects. Some might use it aesthetically as details on dresses. In addition to this, the advent of modern weaving machines and technology have made the Obom textile capable of being washed with water, something which was not possible before. It is more comfortable when put on than the traditional hand-made textile.

B. Design as a method of subcultural identification.

When we talk about dress, we are projected on the design of the garment. This is mostly significant with subcultures which demarcate themselves with the shape, form or style of the dress which is a common fashion to them. According to Niinimaki (2010: 6), "fashion is also a dynamic social process that creates cultural meanings and interaction". Design as a fashion element is a tool for cultural belonging as Kaiser (1990) argues that fashion is a symbolic production. The design in the fashion sense of the word is the art of conceiving and implementing how something will look according to the sensibility of the

Dress and subculture identification in Cameroon

creator. In line with this, design and fashion go hand in glove because it is a proof of the creativity and aestheticism of the designer. In Cameroon, there are various dress designs and some of these are significant to the people like the Kaba ngondo. The Kaba Ngondo is a design which is a cultural strand of the Sawa women in Cameroon.



Figure 14 Collection Etoile Bleu by Perles Blanche, The FaceArt Fashion Show Edition 2 by Fly Boy

The Kaba Ngondo is a traditional gown originally worn by Sawa women of the Coastal regions. The creator of this gown is Helene Saker, Alfred Saker's wife during the colonial period (Moungande, 2013). The purpose for the creation of such dress was to cover the womanly attributes of her Sawa servants. It is a large, long and evasive gown with four entries: hands, neck and feet (figure 2). This dress in the past was a work uniform with no glamour attached to it. It was relegated to the servants of Helene Saker then, spreading like bush fire, other colonial officers adopted the Kaba Ngondo as a work attire for their Sawa servants. As time evolved, colonisation was abolished but the Kaba Ngondo became a hegemony for the Sawa coastal women who transposed it from a colonised servant dress to a prestigious dress. Though the attire has spread all over the country but for the Sawa women, it is more than just a comfortable booboo. The Kaba Ngondo is a symbol of elegance and emancipation for the Sawa women.

The Kaba Ngondo can be sewed with any textile material depending on the taste of each client. This is a clear interpretation of the dynamics of culture. What is relinquished as degrading today can be upraised tomorrow as magnificent. With modernism, the Kaba

Dress and subculture identification in Cameroon

Ngondo has gone through some modifications as many fashion designers give it different forms. We have;

- *the Kaba Mukuku for funeral ceremonies and associations,*
- *Kaba Nisadi for conventional feasts*
- *And Kaba Ngondo for daily wears (Kaba Ngondo chez les Sawa, fr.vikidia.org)*

For the Sawa women, the Kaba is their sartorial identification and they use it in all ceremonies. The fact that it is worn by all women of different classes like queens, notables, elites and even servants, it is a symbol of feminine solidarity and honour.

C. The identical code in fabric pattern

The originality of a dress emanates from the fabric, the form and most especially from the patterns. Fabric patterns are decorative motives, drawings and chromatic expressions present on them. In other words, they are redundant elements or motives used to create a unique decoration on fabrics. Fabric pattern is a cultural symbol and sign through which different people can identify themselves. Civilizations have developed their fabric patterns, so too did the people of the Grassfield in Cameroon with the Toghu and the Ndop (Figure 3).



Figure 3 Collection Melara Eyen Melara by Suza Crea 2020 by Fly Boy

The Toghu is a cloth which has its origin from the North-West Region of Cameroon. Originally worn by chiefs and notables, it is made of a large velour on which various geometric drawings and abstract shapes are embroidered with orange, red, white, green, etc., thread. This was equally worn by the natives during festive periods. (www.pagnific.com). Principally worn by notables and dignitaries, the utilization of this

Dress and subculture identification in Cameroon

cloth has become more dynamic since everybody can afford it. Nowadays, due to high temperatures and globalization of the Toghu, its constitution has changed. It is no longer a large velour but a cloth with printed geometrical figures. Wax cloth is cheaper than velour and lighter due to the equatorial climate in Cameroon which is relatively hot.

The Ndop originates from Nigeria more specifically from the Gongola state (Animbom, 2018: 9). The Ndop has been adopted as the traditional cloth of the grassfield akin to the Toghu. The Ndop, just like the Toghu, was meant for honorific figures of the society and it was equally used during ritual ceremonies. The Ndop is made up of an indigo cotton textile with figures drawn in white “a hand-wooven cotton cloth decorated with bold designs on an indigo background. It belongs to a wider family of cloths, all decorated by means of resist dye techniques, which are found over much of West Africa”(Venice and Alastair Lamp, 1981:19-20 as cited in Animbom, 2018). Equally appreciated by the fashion sector in Cameroon as it can be seen on the image above for the Collection Melara Eyen Melara by Suza Crea, a Cameroonian fashion designer whose main creativity rotates around afro-patterns of which the Ndop falls.

Though these two fabric patterns originate from two different ethnic groups, they have something in common which is the drawing patterns, motifs and colours which make them specific. The patterns can have geometric forms, some might represent the flora and the fauna. Some families or groups might embroider their own signs and symbols to which they give their specific meanings, but the form is not denatured. There are various forms or shapes with different characteristics which give different meaning according to the cultural background of the beholder; after all it is man who gives meanings based on his cultural perspective. On the Toghu and Ndop we realise that there are specific geometric shapes which repeat themselves. Some of which are straight lines, circles, spirals, and curves. The circular pattern also be relegated to the life cycle. This goes in line with the first interpretation of the straight lines. The life cycle like in biology in which everything has a stage- a start, development, decline and the end which is the order of things.

Lines are what the hand draws and what the eyes sees, a magical convergence (Tversky, 2013:44). Straight lines on the fabrics symbolizes order and control. There is order in nature and this order cannot be interrupted by any force. The order here akin to the order

of the life. To die you have to live and living implies death. Everything which lives must die. It is an order which no living and non-living things can hide from. In addition to this, since these fabrics were meant for notables and royalties, the order on the fabrics might be interpreted as the order which the law makers set for the smooth functioning of the society.

The cyclical or circular pattern on these cloths can be interpreted as the spherical nature of the earth. The circle is also significant to life from the maternal point of view, that is pregnancy. When a woman is pregnant, her belly is perfectly round because there is life nesting in it. Just like the earth which is spherical because there is life breeding in it. Culturally, circles have been used for generations to represent unity. The wedding band for example is a worldwide symbol for commitment for marriage which is the legal institution for family and procreation (O'Connor, 2019).

The next interpretation will be the geometric shapes of the triangle. From a religion perspective, the triangle is significant to the Holy trinity- the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Lewis 1952). This connotes a religious and spiritual in the triangular shape. In African spirituality and especially in the Grassfield region, triangles connotes the three faces of communication with the divine. We have the ancestors, the gods and the Supreme being in descending order. When Africans pray it is alike to that of Christians. They pray to their ancestors, who will intercede to the gods who in turn will intercede to the Supreme Being. On a cultural strand, the triangle when balanced is the symbol for justice, science and religion (O'Connor, 2019).

After a morsel interpretation of the different signs, an analysis will be given to these patterns. The fabric pattern drawing on the Ndop and Toghu is an aesthetic graphical representation of the principle in life. The equilibrium in which our planet and society relies on that is Order, Procreation and spirituality. These are the fundamentals which we sorted out in the interpretation of our chosen signs.

III. Dressing cultural clash on the Yaounde Youth subculture.

Social sciences have been instituting theories about subcultures and most of them came to the unanimity that a subculture is an isolated group who have developed their lifestyles within a larger group. In this movement, came the youth subculture. Youth subcultures

are groups of young (adolescents) people who have something in common (a problem, interest, habit, custom) that distinguishes them from members of other social groups (Thorton, 1997). The term youth subculture is a subculture pertaining to a specific behaviour by young people, their tendency towards certain values, preferences, acceptance or repulsion of certain norms, and a lifestyle reflecting their condition.

In every society, there are youths who usually develop a lifestyle which is different from that of the established standard. Cameroon, an African country found in central Africa, has a population of about 27 million habitants based on the World meter elaboration of the United Nations done in May 2021 (www.worldmeters.info). Cameroon has a youthful population, with the working age (15-25) concentrated in big, industrialized cities, Yaoundé and Douala. In Cameroon and in most parts of the world, a youth is a person aged from 15 to 35 (USAID, West Africa, Cameroon: demographic, characteristics). Though the youthful population is relatively larger than the matured aged populace, youths are marginalized. There are ageist discriminations in Cameroon which negatively affects Cameroonian youths. Some of these setbacks are unemployment, rural exodus, juvenile delinquency, promiscuity. In Cameroon, resources are managed by the older generation. The problem with the older generation is that most of them are not opened to change. They do not or sluggishly realise that the world is changing at a fast rate and many are reluctant to adapt their standards and politics to the changing world. The consequence is that there is a slow development rate and those who are directly affected are the marginalized youths. A handful of old dying people are deciding on the fate of the majority of youths without the participation of those concerned. Thus, the marginalization and precarious state in which the Cameroonian youth find themselves are what brings them together to create a subculture proper to them.

The Cameroonian youth subculture has created their own lifestyles, essence and habits. An example is the creation of the "*francanglais*". This is an informal language used by youths in Cameroon. A mixture of French, English, pidgin English and invented words which they understand within their subculture. Not only have they developed a lingua-franca, they equally have their dress which identifies their subculture.

A. **Cameroonian Youth subculture dress identification**

Youth subculture is present in every society in the world and Cameroon is not an exception to the rule. Cameroonian youths have developed their own dressing habits, fashion trends which determine their taste and identify their subculture belonging. Their dress identification will be elaborated in the following lines.

1. **Sagging Fashion**

A dress can have a primary function, but its essential usage can be distorted. It is easy to identify a youth through his youth skin, but it is easier to classify them with their dressing and the trend of the trouser beneath the buttocks which is known as sagging. This is done by majority of young men who are known as sagger. Commonly known in French as “*taille base*”, young boys and men put their trouser underneath the buttocks which will show their underwear. According to the BBC... this practice of wearing sagging trousers originated from the US penitentiaries. This is for the simple reason that there was an absence of belts to avoid suicides and an unavailability of proper outfits for the prisoners. Later on, this fashion later became trendy in the 1990’s with the influence of rappers like Lil Wayne, Jay-Z and fashion houses like Phat Farm. Equally, sagging also has a sexual connotation in prison. “those who pulled their pants down the lowest and showed their behind a little more raw, that was an invitation” (Margena A. Christian) The question which rises is, why do young Cameroonian boys want to expose their undies? After an observation, we concluded that it is by imitation. Most Cameroonian young boys living in the Yaoundé city are more inclined to copy from abroad. They copy and get influence by a more dominant culture. This dress was copied from the African American youth subculture which flourished from the different gangs. Nevertheless, this was not the origin of this trend. It later on became a symbol of freedom and riot simply because the conservatives are annoyed by this style which they consider dirty and immoral.

2. **“DVD” dressing**

“DVD” is a Cameroonian francophone acronym for “*dos et ventre dehors*” which is literally translated as “back and tommy outside”. It can be likened to hippie dressing which is classified as a counterculture “...the given culture has turned against the dominant culture” (Smolik, 2010:68) The DVD is a popular culture in Cameroon amongst young girls and some adults who desire to look sexy. Just like the trouser beneath the

bottom, the DVD dressing is trendy because of mass media. It is to be noted that the Cameroonian youth subculture is part of what we call the generation Z. Generation Z is a nicknamed digital native (an individual brought up during the High-Tech era and acquainted to internet from a tender age), just because they can simultaneously create a document, edit it, post a photo on social media and talk on the phone.

B- Remedials to the effects of the cultural clash encountered by the youth subculture

The Cameroonian government in hand with cultural promoters have adopted a new cultural politic that they affectionately baptized as *Made in Cameroon*. The Made in Cameroon is a new social agenda established by the government to produce goods and services, manufactured, distributed and most especially, consumed by Cameroonians. In minimalist words, made in Cameroon is the product of the people, by the people and for the people without any external influence. With this motto set, the government has put in place various tools for the proliferation of Cameroonian products on the Cameroonian soil and abroad.

In our article, it is true that we are discussing on the government measures in the promotion of locally made goods, but we are revising on the government tools established in other to promote a visibility amongst the Cameroonian youth subculture. This is treated as such because the Cameroonian youth subculture is at crossroads with identity crisis. In addition to this, the youthful population is the highest in number, so a potential client for the promotion of made in Cameroon dresses. Some of these few measures will be seen below.

1- Grant of incentives.

One of the most decisive and workable measures adopted by the government is the granting of incentives and loans to local designers. Under the patronage of concerned ministries like the Ministry of Arts and Culture, the Ministry of Youth and Civic education or the Ministry of small and medium size enterprises, the government has put in place some reforms and facilities which can enable the production of locally made goods for consumption by the Cameroonian youth subculture. The government grants loans and incentives depending on the potentials of the project and its profitability. To target and attain its goal, these incentives are given to youths at the crippling stage which

will enable them to foster made in Cameroon dresses amongst the Cameroonian youths. They likely follow the trends set by a semblance, that is a youth like them than an old or matured person. The government is not the only one to be engaged in locally made products for the youths but equally some NGO's have joined the government to make this philosophy come true.

2-Festivals, Fairs and Awards.

Another valuable measure adopted by the government and cultural promoters is the creation and implementation of cultural fairs, festivals and awards in relation to dress. Compensation and recognition is always encouraging and gratifying for who receives it. It equally encourages others to work harder and revives the admiration of potential designers who are youths. Multiple fairs are organised by government bodies such as the Ministry of Arts and Culture (MINAC), individuals and most of them have the fashion and dress sectors where every local youths' artisan come and expose their know how for the promotion of their works. Other festivals like The Rentrée Culturelle et Artistique Nationale (RECAN) established in 2012 under the patronage of the Ministry of Arts and Culture, has the category Fashion and style which awards the best local designers. This is true for other festivals and fairs like KAB'ATTITUDE, Mboti Fashion, Le Forum Des Metiers De la Mode et du Design, Annual Show.

3-Good Marketing Orientation

Fashion attracts, it is an undeniable fact. People will always be triggered to possess the latest brand clothe, car, movie which is in vogue. When we talk about vogue, we mention fashion, glamour and celebrities. Celebrities here are the marketing tools which are used for marketing. Youth subcultures and specifically Cameroonian Youth subcultures have a pop star culture. One of their basic interest surrounds the world of entertainment like music, cinema, football, public figures, just to name a few. Most of these youths look at celebrities and public figures as idols to whom they identify themselves. In other to attain this, they do not hesitate in copying them and cultural promoters, marketers and sociologist have noticed that. These cultural agents will use the subliminal smart tool of celebrities to promote the consumption of locally made dresses among youths. Celebrities will wear these local dresses, thus inciting their fans in copying them and through this, make the Made in Cameroon impacting on the youths. An example in our contemporary

society is seen with the use of textile produce by Cotonnière Industrielle du Cameroun (CICAM). Wax textiles produced by CICAM have always been appreciated by the mature age group who don't have the numerical majority. If celebrities start wearing dresses made out of these local cloths like the Ndop, there is a great probability that youths subculture will follow the trend and wear local dresses because they identified not with the dress or material in question but with the celebrity who is an agent of cultural identity.

Conclusion

Coming to the end of our study, we focused on the cultural clash which the dress culture in Cameroon undergoes. We have come across ambiguous concepts like fashion, garment and subculture. Though fashion and garment are intrinsically linked, they are different from one another in that, fashion is the umbrella covering dress. We have use the cultural studies approach with an ethnography perspective to analyse the dress and subcultural identification in certain localities in Cameroon. Through the dissecting of garments, we have treated the fabric, design and fabric pattern as denotations codes of these specified localities in Cameroon as an identification. We have equally seen the Cameroonian youth subcultural dress identification as a clash of culture opposing the custodian local creations and the western influence. In addition to this, we tackled on effects and impacts of such bewildering associations of local and foreign cultures on the Cameroonian youth subculture. Such remedies are the granting of loans and incentives by the government, organisation of festivals and awards and the use of celebrities in the promotion of local dresses to influence the youth subculture. Adopting a stand, each subculture has a dress code through which it identifies itself but mostly it is done by individuals. Thus, it will be subjective to relegate fashion and identity as a global matter without thinking about the individual who brings his or her originality to the dress. This opens another debate which is the individual and dress identification.

References

- Animbon, P., N., (2018). "Communicating Multiculturalism through Arts: A Case Study of the 'UBa town Crier' Monument" in *The University of Bamenda, Journal of Theatre and Media Studies (JOTAMS)*, pp1-12.
- Barnard, M., (2017) *Fashion statements: communication and culture*, Loughborough University, Uk
- Barthes, R, (1967) *The Fashion System*, University of California Press

Dress and subculture identification in Cameroon

- Bennett, M. J, (1998) *Intercultural Communication : A Current Perspective*, Yarmouth, ME : Intercultural Press
- Gelder, K, Thorton, S, (1997) *The Subcultures Reader*, London New York: Routledge.
- Hall, S. Jefferson, T. (1975) *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, Routledge.
- Hedige, D, (1979). *Subculture: The meaning of style*. London: Routledge.
- Herbert, S.(2000). *Progress in Human Geography: For Ethnography*, New York: SAGE publication.
- Holt (1997a). “Psychoanalysis and the philosophy of science: The collected papers of Benjamin, B. Rubenstein & Madison”, in *Psychological issues, Monograph*, N°. 62/63.
- Kaiser, S.(1990). “The Social Psychology of Clothing. Symbolic Appearances” in *Contexts*, 2nd Edition, New York: Macmillan.
- Kuper, A and Kuper. J,(1985). *The Social science Encyclopedia*, London: Routledge and Keagan Paul.
- Laver, J, (1968). *Dandies*. United Kingdom: Littlehampton book.
- Lewis, C.S, (1952). *Mere Christianity*. London: MacMillan Publishing Company.
- Mary Ellen R.H., James B.E., (1992): *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, Dress and Identity*, SAGE.
- Mougande, I.A., (2013). « *De la pratique rituelle au spectacle vivant: une approche sémio-anthropologique du Nguon et du Ngondo au Cameroun* », Thèse de doctorat , Université Libre de Bruxelles sous la direction de Helbo, A., Information et la Communication.
- Ngon, C., (2017). « Tradition et légendes : A la découverte de l’Obom, un tissu à base de fibres d’écorces », (www.auletech.com).
- Ninimaki, K., (2010). “Eco-clothing, consumer identity and ideology”, in John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., *Sustainable Development*, vol. 18(3), pp150-162.
- Nithyaprakash.V, (Sept 2015) *Fashion Trends and its impact on society*, Academia.edu
- Phyllis, G.T., (2014): *History and development of fashion*, https://www.iaminteligenciaemmoda.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Bloomsbury_-HISTORY-AND-DEVELOPMENT-OF-FASHION.pdf.
- Hoggart, R., (2008), *Richard Hoggart and the cultural studies*, England: Palgrave, 2008.
- Sahoo, B.H, (2018). *Concept of Clothes*, The Law Brigade (publishing) group, <https://thelawbrigade.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Himadri-Bhushan.pdf>.
- Smolik J., *Youth Subcultural and Social Pedagogy*, Mendel University in Brno, (<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321880696>)
- Steele, V, (1999). *Paris Fashion: A Cultural History*, London: Revised ed. Oxford.
- Thorton, S, (1996) *Club Cultures: Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital*, England: University Press of New England.
- Tversky, B(2013) *Lines, Shapes and Meaning*, ResearchGate

Dress and subculture identification in Cameroon

- Tylor, E B, (2012) *Primitive Culture*, London: Cambridge University Press.
- Ubersfeld, A., (1999). *Reading Theatre*, Translated version, Canada: University of Toronto Press Incorporated.
- Vernice and Alastair L., (1981). *Au Cameroun. Weaving – Tissage*, Cameroun: *ELF SEREPCA*. Willis, P., (2002). *The Ethnographic Imagination*, England: SAGE.