



Analysis of Decree N°2020/111 of 02nd March 2020 on the Establishment, Organization and Functioning of the National School of Local Administration (NASLA)

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Abstract: The main purpose of this article is to come up with a critical analysis of the impact of presidential decree no 2020/11 of the 02nd March 2020 dedicated to the establishment of NASLA (National School on Local Administration) on the training of local public administration staff in Cameroon. This is done through a specific focus on the improvements of local public administration staff training as carried out by this decree whose main target aims at addressing the new challenges pouring over Cameroon's politics as far as the form of the state is concerned. As Cameroon strong central state pattern seems for ever to give up under irreversible and sounding growing calls for federalism or decentralization patterns, Cameroon's authorities during the two last decades have been forced to look for a specific school devoted to the forthcoming necessary bulkier local administration staff this revolution is calling for. Therefore, based on a diachronic paradigm which insists on the historical and feverish political background prior to the advent of NASLA, this article depicts the various and concrete improvements, in terms of university requirement, local councils needs and so on, carried out by decree no 2020/11 of the 02nd March 2020 dedicated to the establishment of NASLA (National School of Local Administration) before addressing the issue of the interactions between NASLA future curricula and the Cameroon multicultural diversity as well as the necessity of a peculiar local public administration theory.

Keywords: Local Public Administration Staff Training, Qualitative Tools, Legal Expertise, NASLA, CEFAM, Cameroon, University Standards and Requirements, Public Administration Theory

1. Introduction

It has been noticed by many observers and public administration theorists that local public administration through the concept of local governments plays an important role in the expansion of "direct democracy" [1]. Such a broad statement could be assessed through the analysis of the various levels of local governments both in mother countries where this concept was firstly implemented (Switzerland, Germany, United Kingdom, France, ...) as well as in the new laboratories of "decentralization", "regionalization" or "intercommunal bodies", new concepts arising within the history of local "direct democracy" or its equivalent "self government" [1, 2, 3] In such a wake, whereas it takes place through "monistic

local systems" [1] (UK) or "dualistic local systems" [1],¹ (in continental Europe Germany, Italy), paving the way for a bright local administration requires before all talented, abundant, diversified and well trained human resources to take place, while being at the same time a precondition for shining local public policies. The necessity of acquiring managerial skills, technocratic expertise, juridical competency and to an extent anthropological knowledge in a complex and changing globalization appears therefore to be a blatant corner stone for brighter local politics. The case is more sensitive in poor or high indebted countries like Cameroon facing at the same time

¹ According to WOLMANN, "dualistic local government" refers to traditional feature made up of a passive elected local council theoretically granted with decision-making process and an effective powerful executive dealing with effective power.

poor sanitary equipments, insufficient urban building and infrastructures as well as irreversible and increasing needs in due to both deep financial and budgetary constraints caused by international neoliberal pressures over times and a very fast growing population. Cameroon has been undoubtedly concerned with of such a dilemma for over three decades. Tremendous and antagonistic pressures towards better management of tiny financial resources under the context of growing populations needs have been questioning the poor records of the current light decentralization process for two decades. In fact, local development is being impeded in Cameroon by various limitations. Some of them arise from poor local public policies outputs to lack of technical expertise and training in new areas such as social services delivery or barely forestry. With poor inputs as far as social outcomes are concerned. For instance in the area of forestry, if well addressed, *“Community based forest management could (in Cameroon) generate substantial social and economic benefits”* [4] so as to *“contribute to sustainable development”* [4] according to the social scientist Peter MINANG.

The fact is that Cameroon has been involved in a very sluggish if not neglectful process as far as this issue of local public administration finances expertise is concerned. A very minor and local public administration staff has been trained till now by a very light and poor CEFAM², the former college dedicated to a kind of though superficial local staff training, until the government raised concerns for an effective modernization of this outdated local public administration school. CEFAM was in fact unable to meet current challenges pouring over Cameroon future local public administration due to many reasons. First of all, its legal design did not meet the requirements for effective and efficient training of the forthcoming autonomous as well as the question of a more independent local administration staff Cameroon shivering environment has been calling for. Secondly, in terms of curricula, financial means, high education and academic standards, CEFAM was far to pave the way for the advent of a modern and everlasting local public administration education in the country.

To promote efficient local development in Cameroon, a decree was signed on the 20th of March 2020 so as to come up with a technical pedagogical and academic design for a National School for Public Administration of Cameroon (NASLA), the new outlet aiming at filling the gap. The objective of this article is to assess the impact of this decree on the betterment of local public administration staff training in Cameroon. Since the betterment of local administration executives skills, profiles, morality and payroll is tantamount to more shining local self government performances, thus to local development itself. In the wake of Cameroon

multicultural challenges prospects, this will be done through a peculiar focus on councils staff training improvement and curriculum philosophy or arrangement. Our sight shall pay attention to the different patterns impacted by this decree through which the creation of the newly National School of Local Administration (NASLA) aims at paving the way for efficient local councils and regions in Cameroon.

This paper is divided into three sections. The first section deals with the background of decentralization in Cameroon as well as with the road leading to the creation of NASLA. The second section presents the main components arising within the legal framework of decree n°2020/111 of 02nd March 2020 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the National School of Local Administration (NASLA). The third section looks at the contributions of this decree to the improvement of local public staff training in terms of innovative pedagogical patterns while addressing at the same time the sensitive issue of ne curricula design which are to be set up the future.

To come up with this analysis of decree n° 2020/111 of 02nd March 2020 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the National School of Local Administration (NASLA), we had to rely of course on a juridical analysis of the concerned decree as well as on previous research papers carried out by previous social scientists emanating from Law or public administration theory written on topics similar to ours. Many observations got on the field also drove our analysis. Our analysis is how ever conversely mostly qualitative as it involves a work evolving at the crossroad of both juridical analysis and public administration theory. To understand the context surrounding the creation of this NASLA in Cameroon, one may be firstly remembered the background of local public administration in Cameroon.

2. A Difficult and Risky Road Paved by a Tumultuous Process of Decentralization

In 1974, after a tumultuous and very controversial reunification process [5], President Ahmadou AHIDJO (1924-1989), right wing political leader very close to French imperial neocolonial rule and NATO, enacted various laws on decentralization in Cameroon which were followed by an array of amendments [6]. In fact, the corner stone to the foundation of decentralization or local governments in Cameroon appears to be the 1996 Constitution. In its article 55, law no 96-06 of the 18th January of 1996 to amend the Constitution of 1972 clearly states that *“Regional and local authorities of the Republic shall comprise Regions and councils”*. Embarked on a *“tantalizing process of democratization”* [7] equivalent to popular unressts, riots and dissent in the 1990, Cameroon leadership under Paul BIYA, new incumbent at the time failing to implement his *“New Deal”* policy since AHIDJO resignation in 1982, was forced to undermine the monopolistic and monolithic Gaullist powerful state inherited from French colonialism [7]. So as to push towards the enhancement of a kind though very

² CEFAM, as popularly well known and referred to in Cameroon politics, is the French acronym for Centre de Formation de l' Administration Municipale. Its English acronym is LGTC, deriving from its official label, Local Government Training Centre. In Cameroon, contrary to constitutional provisions which account for a strict equality of both official languages in public service practices, French acronyms tend to dominate their English counterparts in administrative daily life, thus in politics and in local daily practices and culture.

controlled civil society independence coupled with a very relative autonomy of local and regional powers, something was to be done. That is why among other political patterns shaping its advent, the 1996's Constitution was voted in Cameroon Parliament. This founding stone of local public administration in Cameroon clearly insists on its provisions dedicated to decentralized organs, especially in its article 55, 56 and 57 which call on "*Regional authorities*"³ to be set up. This was to be done according to 1996's constitution through specific bodies such as "*Regional*" and "*Local Councils*"⁴ with "*administrative and financial autonomy*"⁵ related to "*economic, social, health, educational and cultural development*"⁶. Such a blatant avow for more local autonomy in Cameroon was however impeded at the times by some inertia as it took some times firstly to take place and secondly to be addressed financially. It took anyway until the new millennium for any effective transfer of financial resources to be granted to local entities, namely "*local councils*". In fact through FEICOM⁷, its financial arm dedicated to financial support to these local councils, Cameroonian elites at the times exerted tough control over the recent local authorities. As far as the issue of local public administration staff training or qualifications was concerned, one may notice that there was a vacuum since only central organs staffs could benefit from training at ENAM⁸, the local college in charge of training top public administration executives of government bodies. Indeed, local councils executives in charge of councils treasury, management or administrative tasks were at the time transferred from central or government public services after optional short internships through CEFAM-LGTC, the specific body created in 1977 for such a purpose. There was not at the time any specific training for senior executives appointed by Cameroon government at local councils organs. Anyway, when CEFAM was created, Cameroon was far from meeting the requirements of modern local public staff training, the country being then evolving under a very strong monopolistic and authoritarian Central State with few concerns for large patterns of effective decentralization. Nor could the issue of a specific training for senior local public administration chief officers appear as a target for a voracious shuddery conservative state stemming

from a bloody civil war in former French Cameroon as well as a quest of hegemony over the former English speaking Southern Cameroon. Despite its juridical and financial autonomy guaranteed by a decree since its inception⁹, CEFAM was therefore a minor college devoted to low grade and respectful local public agents or minor executives to be attached later to minor positions in very waifish local councils bodies. This option for a skinny and light corpse of local public agents impacted heavily CEFAM general system of training as it was not open to university degrees recipients but restricted to holders of secondary school certificates, be it the former british General Certificate of "A" or "O" Education Level ("A" or "O") or the oldstyle classical french "*BEPC*", "*Probatoire*" or "*Baccalauréat*"¹⁰.

To prepare public opinion to the advent of stronger and heavier local public administration, in 2004, Cameroon government tabled three bills in the Parliament so as to implement the principles devoted to a large local and effective decentralization process in Cameroon [6]. Prior to this date, a special consideration was given to local councils in decree no 2002/216 of the 24th of August 2002 through the creation of a Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization while local councils were granted the opportunity to set up unions so as to promote their own interests. In the aftermath of this decree, UCCC (Unions of Councils and Cities of Cameroon) appeared in Cameroon's political and administrative landscape in 2003 so as to fill the gap.

Within such a trend, the need to address the issue of specific, autonomous and well trained senior staffs for local councils turned to be urgent so as to fill the gap in terms of local staff education. Thus, on the 02nd March of 2020 through a presidential decree¹¹, namely decree no 2020/111 on the establishment, organization and functioning of National School of Local Decentralization, NASLA was created to replace the deficient and slim CEFAM. The purpose of the government was officially, as exposed in its lineaments, to "*assess training needs in local administration*"¹² by "*liaising with Regional and local authorities, their establishments, trade unions or associations*"¹³. This is the outcome of a very timid process common to Cameroon Government reform trends in various sectors.

The road towards the policy of promotion of high quality staff for local public administration took a long time before

³ Article 55 of Law No. 96-06 of 18 January 1996 to amend the Constitution of 2 June 1972 available at <http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/Cameroon.pdf> (accessed the 23/09/20 at 8 pm)

⁴ Article 55 of Law No. 96-06 of 18 January 1996 to amend the Constitution of 2 June 1972 available at <http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/Cameroon.pdf> (accessed the 23/09/20 at 8 pm)

⁵ Article 55 of Law No. 96-06 of 18 January 1996 to amend the Constitution of 2 June 1972 available at <http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/Cameroon.pdf> (accessed the 23/09/20 at 8 pm)

⁶ Article 57 of Law No. 96-06 of 18 January 1996 to amend the Constitution of 2 June 1972.

⁷ FEICOM (Fonds Spécial d'Équipement et d'Intervention Intercommunale) is the national institution devoted to financing some local councils specific duties such as roads, councils markets and other social amenities within the French public law pattern of decentralization. Its English acronym is SCSFMA (Special Council Support Fund for Mutual Assistance).

⁸ ENAM (Ecole Nationale d'Administration et de Magistrature) is the official French acronym for National School of Administration and Magistracy (NSAM)

⁹ Decree no 77-494 on the creation, organization of the Local Government Training Centre available at the following url <http://www.cvuc-uccc.com/minat/textes/100.pdf> (accessed on the 01/10/2020 at 8 pm)

¹⁰ Article 13 Decree no 77-494 on the creation, organization of the Local Government Training Centre.

¹¹ This decree is available at the website of the Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon at the following url <https://www.prc.cm/en/multimedia/documents/8195-decree-n-2020-111-of-02-02-2020>. This decree as well as most of Cameroon legislature can be accessed through this website.

¹² Article 6 of decree no 2020/111 of available at <https://www.prc.cm/en/multimedia/documents/8195-decree-n-2020-111-of-02-02-2020>. This decree is also available in the governmental daily bilingual news paper Cameroon Tribune. Cf. Cameroon Tribune no 12046 of 04th March 2020, pp. 12-13.

¹³ Article 6 of decree no 2020/111 on the establishment, organization and functioning of National School of Local Decentralization

being effective in 2004, when Cameroon public authorities tabled three bills at the Parliament to promote effective local public administration in Cameroon administrative and institutional framework. Moreover, in 2018, a presidential decree, namely decree no 2018/191 of the 03 March 2018 reshuffling the Government of the Republic of Cameroon, appointed for the first time in the History of Cameroon a Minister in charge of Decentralization and Local Development¹⁴, hereby represented by Mr. OBAM ELANG, experimented top executive very well acquainted to various positions within the previous BIYA's governments, who took over in this area to implement the new BIYA's vision of local public administration. This decree was signed the same day with another one organizing the government so as to allow the creation of a Ministry in Charge of Decentralization and Local Development in Cameroon¹⁵. In December 2019, a law, namely with regards to its official design, "*Law no 2019/024-Bill to institute a General Code of Regional and Local Authorities*" was voted in the Parliament¹⁶ before the official increase of government subventions to local authorities in the 2019/2020 budget by a 15% was effective. In fact, all the elements necessary to an effective process of decentralization were gradually though very sluggishly implemented before the advent of this Decree no 2020/111 on the establishment, organization and functioning of National School of Local Decentralization was signed so as to provide NASLA with key improvements in terms of high education requirements as well as a well elaborated philosophy of local public administration.

3. High Profile Education Training System, High University Standards and Satisfaction of Local Councils Needs

Through NASLA, Cameroon's authorities were interested in promoting university standards for talented top executives local staffs as well as satisfaction of local needs in the area of local public staff training.

3.1. University Standards for Talented Top Executives Local Staffs

Decree n°2020/111 of 02nd march 2020 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the national school of local administration (NASLA) comprises many units. Part I deals with the general provisions while Part II is

dedicated to the organization and functioning of NASLA. Part III and IV are devoted respectively to non- teaching staff and teaching staff, Part V to the general system of training, Part VI and VII address the issues of Consultative bodies as well as financial provision. While Part VIII deals with monitoring management and control, Part IX concerns miscellaneous, transitional and final provisions.

Part I and Part V of this decree are much more linked to specific provisions dedicated to the improvements of general training systems as well as to the question of liaison with local needs which are the main contributions of this decree to Cameroon local staff training. Such improvements range from pure academic outlines such as high profile academics and training to concrete purposes in terms of satisfaction of local needs through vocational training and so on.

NASLA as a more efficient local public administration training framework in terms of high profile careers, university requirements and innovative research for a new policy of local staff training:

Incepted to repeal and replace an obsolete CEFAM outdated by the shivering current trend of modern decentralization, NASLA is featured by decree n°2020/111 of 02nd march 2020 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the national school of local administration (NASLA) so as to come up with high standard training for forthcoming autonomous local staff liaised to local councils peculiarities. Furthermore, as far as public administration theory is concerned, NASLA could come up with unexpected outcomes for Cameroon bicultural public administration theory.

NASLA differs first of all largely from CEFAM as it puts the delivery of high profile executives training at the core of its main mission. NASLA general system, its main innovation undoubtedly, focuses on a specific training cycle for "*senior executives for local administrations*" who are to evolve at the top of local councils ladder so as to come up with thorough day- to- day management of local councils affairs. Made up of holders of university degrees as stipulated by article 34 of decree no 2020/111 on the establishment, organization and functioning of National School of Local Decentralization, these "*senior executives for local administrations*", as designated in the so said decree, are to be submitted to an intensive two years training session before they can share their rigorous university expertise on the field once being transferred to their forthcoming various local councils. To mark the solemnity of this new skills, "*senior executives for local councils*", are granted diplomas issued by the Minister in charge of Regional and Local authorities¹⁷, making these certificates as valuable as those awarded to top state central officers issued by ENAM¹⁸, a common kelsenian feature for institutions evolving at the same stage of legal or administrative feature Cameroon got from its French

¹⁴ Article 1 of decree no 2018/191 organizing and reshuffling the Government of The Republic Of Cameroon at the following url <https://www.prc.cm/fr/multimedia/documents/6306-decret-n-2018-191-du-2-3-2018-gouvernement>

¹⁵ Article 4 of Decree no 2018/190 modifying certain provisions of decree no 2011/408 of the 09th December 2018 organizing the Government Of The Republic Of Cameroon available at <https://www.prc.cm/fr/multimedia/documents/6305-decret-n-2018-190-du-2-3-2018-organisation-gouvernement>

¹⁶ Available at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_ixLxXsFN7fIOLPJpe6JBWHh7gsUrV7d/view

¹⁷ article 34 of decree n°2020/111 of 02nd march 2020 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the national school of local administration (NASLA)

¹⁸ See article 26 of decree no 2018/240 of the 09th April 2018 reorganizing the NSAM (ENAM)

administrative theory legacy¹⁹. Was the government firmly and expressly showing its relentlessly commitment towards a real autonomous general system of training for local administrator education through this pattern ? Anyway, no doubt that, in term of tempting wages as well as alluring career expectations very soon attached to this legal design, NASLA looks more attractive to talented and ambitious bachelor degrees holders in the next years.

Beside this main innovation, NASLA did not give up in its traditional mission, providing training for minor local public administration executives. According to article 34 of decree no 2020/111 on the establishment, organization and functioning of National School of Local Decentralization, there are two training cycles, namely "Cycle "B"" and "Cycle "C"" for such purposes²⁰. Indeed, in the wake of CEFAM design, NASLA remains concerned with the opportunity of training "mid level staff of local decentralization" or "specialized workers of local decentralization", both holders of secondary school certificates. At the end of their due two years training session, such local administrators are to walk on the track of "senior executives for local administration" as far as day to day implementation of local public policies are concerned on the field²¹. This decree

Secondly, NASLA appears to be paying more attention to university requirements as far as local public administration training is concerned. Another major innovation carried out by this presidential decree is the creation of a "pedagogic council" whose main purpose shall be according to article 44, to "issue opinions and recommendations on the pedagogic activities of NASLA, especially on training issues".²² This "pedagogic council" is a "consultative body" made up of a significant number of members, among which a majority are statutory ones designated by local governments as well as NASLA teaching staff, so as to promote astounding training for Cameroon local public officers in the forthcoming years. Its main concerns as depicted by article 44 include "the curricula and their implementation modalities", "the systems, organization programme and methods of assessment" of NASLA academic activities, "the evaluation of the school academies performances", "the definition of teachers profiles", "the appointment of permanent teachers and recruitment of part time teachers" as well as research activities carried out by NASLA. This prominent role attached to university

requirements through the creation of a "pedagogic council" within NASLA walks in the wake of Cameroon academia legal practices and habits, which put the assessment of Higher Education curricula and training at the core of each university or high college mission. For instance, according to article 32 of Law no 2001/005 of 16th April to organize the Ministry of Higher Education, "Higher education (in Cameroon) shall be submitted to mandatory periodical evaluation". This article clearly states the purposes of such target consisting in "creating a culture and a practice of evaluation", "improving quality, pertinence and efficiency of high education system, which are very useful practices established in Cameroon and in the world. In Cameroon, based on their anglosaxon university cultural feature, the University of Buea (UB)²³ and the University of Bamenda (UBa)²⁴ had for example a long time ago met this legal purpose since their respective creation in 1993 and in 2011, their famous "Senates" being highest institutions or organs devoted to academic purposes in due conformity with the law. Elsewhere in Cameroon, despite an official bicultural nature, other universities are implementing such a requirement through "University Councils", in the aftermath of French classical academia legacy²⁵. Anyway, when it comes to NASLA, matters run by the "pedagogic council" go far beyond its direct competency to include "opinions on all issues raised by the Director general and the Board of Directors"²⁶

At last, a major innovation carried out by decree no 2020/111 of 02nd march 2020 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the National School of Local administration (NASLA) consists in the ability for NASLA to carry out research on any topic linked to decentralization, or its subsequent subfields, local development, local affairs. This is clearly stated in article 37 which openly stipulates that "As part of diploma initial or in-service training, NASLA may implement applied research projects or organize colloquia, seminars or conferences on issues related to the implementation of decentralization to promote local development"²⁷. This new mission devoted specifically to Cameroon new innovative local staff training standards requires the approval of the pedagogic council to be delivered before being implemented²⁸. As to article 5 of this decree, it provides NASLA with a large

¹⁹ For a brilliant analysis of Kelsen theory of normative order, see SCHMILL, U. (2000). The dynamic order of Norms, Empowerment and Related Concepts. *Philosophy and Law: Kelsen, authority and competence*. 19 (2). pp. 283-310,

²⁰ "Cycle "A"" being reserved to "senior executives for local councils". See article 34 of. decree n°2020/111 of 02nd march 2020 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the national school of local administration (NASLA)

²¹ See articles 34, 39 and 74 which determines the hierarchy and the distribution of power and administrative duties between the three official ranks or grades promoted by NASLA trainings.

²² Article 44 of decree n°2020/111 of 02nd march 2020 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the national school of local administration (NASLA)

²³ See for example articles 14 and article 15 of decree no93/034 of January 19, 1993to organize the University of Buea.

²⁴ Articles 14 and article 15 of decree no2011/045 of march 2011 to organize the University of Bamenda

²⁵ See for example article 44 of decree no 93/030 devoted to the administrative and academic organization of the University of Douala or article 43of decree no 93/036 devoted to the administrative and academic organization of the University of YAOUNDE I.

²⁶ Article 44 of the decree n°2020/111 of 02nd march 2020 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the National School Of Local Administration (NASLA)

²⁷ Article 37 decree n°2020/111 of 02nd march 2020 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the National School Of Local Administration (NASLA)

²⁸ Article 37 decree n°2020/111 of 02nd march 2020 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the National School Of Local Administration (NASLA)

opportunity to carry out “*applied research on the management of Regional and Local authorities*”²⁹

Other aspects of NASLA one may not insist on since they were already met by former CEFAM education features concern general admission requirements³⁰, organization of session trainings³¹ and teaching staff³².

3.2. NASLA and the Satisfaction of Local and Regional Interests

Of course, the decree laying down the legal founding stone of NASLA could not limit itself to university or academic improvements. One of its main contribution to local public administration training in Cameroon deals with its practical design in term of vocational training devoted to regional or local development. This decree is clear when it comes to the NASLA programs by straightly linking it to local councils and regional needs, as well as to those of their establishments, trade unions or associations³³. Article 6 of decree no 2020/111 of 02 March 2020 on the establishment and functioning of the National School of Local Administration posits local public training at the core of local government political will as it clearly states that “*National School of Local Administration shall liaise with Regional Local And Authorities, their establishments and trade unions or associations to assess training needs in local administration. It shall there prepare training plans*”³⁴

Regional and local councils are not only statutory members of NASLA “*pedagogical council*”, they are also officially and overtly given the opportunity to impact local public administration skills through vocational courses so as to meet their concrete local needs. Article 45 of this decree openly enrich this political will locally by allowing “*anyone*”³⁵, that is to say, “*especially Presidents of Professional Orders of courses taught at NASLA*” so as to “*take part in deliberations of the (pedagogic) councils in an advisory capacity*”. Shall this legal provision for specific vocational training lead to greater opportunities for maritime councils or those neighboring forestry riches or mineral deposits in term of administrative autonomy and local enrichment? It is still early to answer at a time when power distribution as well as legal competencies between the state

and the growing local organs are still to be addressed by Cameroon legislator under a relentless development of Cameroon decentralization.

Anyway, the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities therefore had already acted for the sake of such a political will as it comprises a whole Chapter II³⁶ luring at, as entitled in chapter II of Part I of its Book One, granting local governments with “*human and material resources inherent to the devolution of powers*”. Article II of the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities in Cameroon clearly for example states that “*Local Authorities shall freely recruit and manage the staff needed for the purposes of their mandates, in accordance with the laws and decrees in force*”³⁷.

More than those legal aspects, the most interesting output of NASLA one may say, and as far as the subfield of public administration training is concerned as a form of new knowledge or education design, is NASLA contribution to public administration theory. Could NASLA in the next years or decades promote either through its curricula or its research activities a kind of Cameroonian local public administration theory?

4. Building a Relevant Public Administration Theory in a Emerging Area

Normally, in the wake of public administration theory or philosophy, Public administration schools appear to be buoyant cradles necessary for the advent of each local public administration theory for each country. Anyway, such a broad principle can lead to unexpected outcomes in terms of public administration training curricula, general systems of training and culture for each context.

4.1. From a Theoretical Principle

German Professor of Public administration Thurid HURSTED defines “*public administration*” [8] as a discipline which refers constantly to “*academic research and teaching*” and which “*considers Public administration as its object of study*”. As to him, turkish public administration theorist Murat ONDER posits “*Public administration*” [9] as a “*combination of different theories and practices*” stemming from a context whereby “*normative knowledge provides essential direction and inherent obligations for practices*”. Public administration research, theory or knowledge according to him is intrinsically tied to a surrounding environment since “*both practitioners and academics (are to contribute) to the development and evolution of public administration theory*” [9]

Has Cameroon decided to walk within the tracks of such public administration theory tenets? In each country, according to many public administration authors, the creation of any

²⁹ Article 5 decree n°2020/111 of 02nd march 2020 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the National School Of Local Administration (NASLA)

³⁰ See Section I of Part V of decree n°2020/111 of 02nd march 2020 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the national school of local administration (NASLA) on the admission requirements

³¹ See Section II of Part V of decree n°2020/111 of 02nd march 2020 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the national school of local administration (NASLA) dedicated to the general system of training.

³² See Section II, Part VI, “The Teacher’s Council” of decree n°2020/111 of 02nd march 2020 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the national school of Local Administration (NASLA).

³³ See article 2 of this decree.

³⁴ Article 6 of decree no 2020/111 of 02 March 2020 on the establishment and functioning of the National School Of Local Administration.

³⁵ Article 45.

³⁶ Chapter II, Part I of the General Code of Decentralization And Local Authorities In Cameroon

³⁷ Article 22, Chapter II, Part One of the General Code.

peculiar school dedicated to the training of local public administration staff may promote obvious clues for the measurement of the emergence of classical public administration theory [2, 8, 9]³⁸ through the formulation of principles of public administration such as “*efficiency*”, “*effectiveness*” and “*public values*”, the final purpose being “*the formulation, the implementation, evaluation and modification of laws, public policies and programs*” [2] In Cameroon, it seems to be early to answer such a question at the time NASLA programmes and curricula are still to be sorted out³⁹. Anyway, NASLA should come up with unexpected outcomes in terms of curricula, programs and pedagogies.

4.2. To Unexpected Outcomes

There are obvious interactions between each local public administration school and its environment. For each local public administration school reflects each national culture as far as the development of local public administration is concerned. Many African countries have so far embarked on such an exciting process. In fact, Cameroon seems not to be the only country running on this uncertain road towards the promotion of a specific local staff training adapted to a very peculiar specific experience and culture. Others African countries such as Ghana and Nigeria are also facing the same challenge [2]. To meet the criterion of contemporary local public administration so as to implement satisfactory participation in local public policies, Nigeria for example created in 2009 the Public Service Institute of Nigeria, following the creation in 1973 of the Administrative Staff College [2]. There are intrinsic interactions between culture, national and subnational cultures and the design of each experience. Public administration in general cannot arise in a vacuum. It is undoubtedly impacted by its environment. According to EWOH, “*public administration programs are usually created to produce broad based knowledge of democratic ethos, accountability and skills required for the delivery of public services and the execution of government policies in their respective environments*” [2]. This is also true for local public administration staff, especially in Cameroon. The fact is that, following such theoretical statements, and above all in accordance with the outcomes of the context prior to the advent of local public staff in Cameroon as depicted in the previous words, Cameroon experience of local public staff training is linking quest for democracy and good local governance to local needs, self government and liability for the roots to modern local public administration in the mind of Cameroon authorities nurture the basis of local democratic patterns.

As far as quality public administration staff is concerned, NASLA is given large autonomy so as to define and set up its

curricula and any other pedagogic output tied to it. Shall Cameroon follow its traditional dominant French cultural legacy of public administration education based on French public law or shall it mix it with anglosaxon public administration model in accordance with the new local political impetus calling for a bilingual political culture? What about promoting a unique experience aiming at dealing firstly with native or current Cameroon's local culture? It is really hard to answer such questions since NASLA has not yet set up any curricula as it is supposed to be effective in the forthcoming years. Anyway, addressing this issue of linking curricula to local environment is a huge task with sometimes unexpected outcomes.

This is a common concern for local public administration staffs training all over the world. According to EWOH, after implementing a different very broad and unsatisfactory pattern in the 1980s based on the anglosaxon university academia, Nigeria has decided as depicted above to launch its States colleges dedicated to public administration staff training, especially since the advent of local public administration institutions in the last two decades [2]. One may notice that Turkey according to another public administration researcher has recently embarked on the same phenomenon with a singular process differing largely from the original american pattern of public administration education from which it got its tenets and principles [2]. To meet its local political culture, Turkey had to mix anglosaxon principles of public administration education, derived from America and England experiences, to continental -mostly French and Spanish - latin ones. This was done through a peculiar focus based on the history of public administration, human resources and new public management theories [9]. No doubt that Cameroon is to come up very soon with a specific trajectory for local public administration training.

5. Conclusion

One may have noticed that there is general and irreversible trend towards the modernization of local staff training in Cameroon as shown above. With the creation of NASLA, Cameroon has definitely decided to link local staff training to regional and local councils' needs and desires. It may appears to be the obvious outcome of the recent turmoil generated by the Anglophone crisis and the subsequent political forum held in YAOUNDE during which national and local elites called for less authoritarian centralization through federalism or more decentralization outcomes. It may also appear to reflect a prior though very thin movement toward more powerful local councils. Anyway, this new legal trend toward local needs stands for long as it paved the way toward effective decentralization in the past. In 2009 for example, Cameroon Government had already allowed local councils the ability to freely recruit executives for the purpose of running their own affairs.⁴⁰ This raises many concerns.

³⁸ Such a methodological focus was well developed by EWOH in this article focusing on the training of local public administration in Nigeria where this author sorted it out with many facts and examples. Similar views have been very well depicted by HURSTID and ONDER in their respective cases

³⁹ See article 38 of decree n°2020/111 of 02nd march 2020 on the establishment, organization and functioning of the national school of local administration (NASLA) which calls for a ministerial decree to define NASLA programs

⁴⁰ See Order no 000/136/1/MINATD/DCTD of the 24 August 2009 signed by the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization to legally enforce the standard list of councils jobs.

At the end of this study, there are improvements to be inserted in this decree or in the future ministerial decrees under which NASLA is supposed to evolve. The forthcoming ministerial decrees to be set up by the Minister in charge of Regional and Local Authorities should prioritize more attention to Local and Regional councils deliberative powers within NASLA's pedagogic councils in terms of reviving their deliberative powers so as to keep alive and firm the so-said political will driven initially by the decree creating NASLA. For this new local public administration school to contribute to effective decentralization, its pedagogical council must remain more independent from central state, especially in the area of curricula design and research activities.

Secondly, there should more provisions in the forthcoming ministerial decree to render NASLA research activities if not superior at least equal to its training mission, that is, for NASLA to interact more than ever with Cameroon local authorities environment. Thus, it is important for the sake of a country facing many dangers among which remain the threats over national unity and cohesion.

Then, as third improvement, NASLA should take into consideration Cameroon cultural specificities, colonial ones derived from its bicultural diversity but also and above all natives' ones. Such a priority may not neglect the constraints, threats and challenges raised up by a modern and buoyant globalization process such as speedy demography and its possible consequences such as ethnic clashes and other social evils, growing international pressure or violence, ecological pressure and so on. Such a statement is undoubtedly linked to the question of the emergence of Cameroonian local public administration theory capable of dealing with such issues.

Could Cameroon experience of local public administration education be able to deal with national diversity? What are the flaws potentially threatening such innovative and very unique pattern shaped by a bi cultural antagonistic colonial legacy and at the same time a very pluralistic diverse ethnic culture? To conclude, there is no doubt that, local public administration education in Cameroon is at the crossroads of

uncertainty as well as a bright future. The outputs of such a conjunction shall depend on the records NASLA shall provide local societies with in terms of efficient and practical outputs.

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