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University of Turku

EDUCATIONAL POLICY BORROWING

Adoption and Adaptation of Bologna Process Ideas
in the Cameroonian Higher Education System

Elizabeth Agbor Eta



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To my mum, Catherine Manyi Orockakwa

(I had you in mind throughout this process)

&

To the women of the world who, like you, did/
do not have an education, but who value,
encourage, and give their all for its pursuit!

ABSTRACT

Although initially a European reform, the Bologna Process has had a spillover effect in other parts of the world. This study sought to contribute to the research and international debate on the transformations exerted by the Bologna Process outside the European higher education area, with a focus on the Cameroonian higher education system. Specifically, the dissertation uses policy borrowing as a theoretical framework to examine the adoption and adaptation of Bologna reforms in Cameroon. To this end, four original empirical studies were conducted that focus on aspects of the adoption (reasons for the adoption, introduction, dissemination and local response) and adaptation (local translation and implementation) stages of policy borrowing of Bologna objectives in Cameroon. The focus in Articles I and II is on adoption, while Articles III and IV concentrate on adaptation. This study also includes an introductory section in which the context, scope, theoretical and methodological choices, and main findings from the empirical studies are discussed.

Data for the analysis consisted of text documents and 62 semi-structured interviews conducted between October and December 2013. The interviewees were various stakeholders in higher education in Cameroon, including policy makers, university administrators and lecturers. The data were analysed mainly through thematic analysis (Articles I, II & IV), with thematic analysis and temporal analytical approaches combined for Article III.

The findings revealed that the reasons for adoption of Bologna Process ideas in the Cameroon higher education system emerged from the supposed 'globalness' of the Bologna Process and the desire to harmonise higher education in the Central African sub-region, of which Cameroon is a part, following this global trend. The findings also indicated that the need to apply international standards and the solution-oriented nature of the Bologna Process, combined with the internal challenges facing the Cameroon higher education system, especially in terms of harmonising the dual French and Anglo-Saxon systems of education in Cameroon, made the Bologna Process a good fit for Cameroon. The results provided insight into the different ways through which Bologna Process ideas were introduced and disseminated in Cameroon. The study showed that the adoption and adaptation of Bologna Process ideas in the Cameroon higher education system started from a cross-regional initiative to create the *Communauté Economique et Monétaire de L'Afrique Centrale* (CEMAC) space for higher education, research and professional training. Thus, its introduction in Cameroon was a political decision and an imposition by the state on the universities because of Cameroon's obligation to CEMAC. Its introduction also was viewed as a

theoretical (abstract principles of the Bologna Process), practical/realistic (successful in Europe with promise in Cameroon) and quick-fix (with insufficient regard for the dual sub-systems of higher education in Cameroon) decision.

The results showed that the main instruments for Bologna Process dissemination came through national and institutional texts guiding implementation and through conferences and seminars. As a borrowed model, this dissertation indicated that learning from the borrower (externalisation of the borrowing potential) took the form of Cameroonian experts traveling abroad and Bologna experts traveling to Cameroon to share their experiences with the Bologna Process. The study indicated that colonial history shaped the local response, i.e., public perceptions of Bologna adoption in Cameroon, highlighting tension and complexities in introducing a borrowed model in a dual educational system. The implementation of some of the Bologna objectives in Cameroon supported the notion that policy borrowing is always adapted based on contextual factors (in the case of the degree structure and credit system). Its implementation also highlighted the fact that sometimes, policy borrowing can be used only as a reference point to inspire local reforms and solutions (e.g., the employability agenda).

The present set of studies takes on new significance in the current context of policy borrowing, indicating the shift from the diverse reasons for cross-national attraction in a particular education system to a cross-regional attraction in a regional space with harmonisation as one of the main impulses for policy borrowing. Although this dissertation focuses on the Bologna Process' impact on Cameroon's higher education system as a single-country comparative design, the discussions presented herein also connect the national case to international and regional debates.

Keywords: Bologna Process, degree structure, credit system, employability, policy borrowing, higher education, Cameroon, CEMAC region, LMD system

TIIVISTELMÄ

Eurooppalaisena koulutusuudistuksena alun perin tunnetulla Bolognan prosessilla on ollut globaaleja heijastusvaikutuksia. Tämä väitöskirja pyrkii edistämään kansainvälistä tutkimusta ja keskustelua Bolognan prosessin vaikutuksista Euroopan korkeakoulualueen ulkopuolella keskittyen erityisesti Kamerunin korkeakoulujärjestelmään. Väitöskirja hyödyntää teoreettisena viitekehystenään politiikan lainaamista (policy borrowing) tarkastellessaan Bolognan uudistusten hyväksymistä (adoption) ja sopeuttamista (adaptation) osaksi Kamerunin korkeakoulujärjestelmää. Tutkimus koostuu neljästä Kamerunissa toteutetusta empiirisestä osatutkimuksesta ja se keskittyy Bolognan tavoitteiden hyväksymisen (adoption) vaiheisiin (perustelut, esittely, levitys ja paikallinen vastaus) ja sopeuttamisen (adaptation) vaiheisiin (paikallinen muuntuminen ja toteutuminen). Väitöskirjan artikkelit I ja II keskittyvät hyväksymisen (adoption) analyysiin, kun taas artikkelit III ja IV tarkastelevat sopeuttamista (adaptation). Väitöskirja sisältää myös johdannon, jossa esitellään tutkimuksen konteksti, tutkimuskohde, teoreettiset ja metodologiset valinnat sekä empiirisen tutkimuksen keskeisimmät tulokset.

Tutkimusaineisto koostuu dokumenteista ja 62 puolistrukturoidusta haastattelusta, jotka toteutettiin loka-marraskuussa 2013. Haastateltavat olivat Kamerunin korkeakoulutuksen sidosryhmiin kuuluvia poliitikkoja, yliopiston hallinnon edustajia ja yliopisto-opettajia. Tutkimusmenetelmiä olivat temaattinen analyysi (artikkelit I, II ja IV) ja yhdistetty temaattinen ja ajallinen analyysi (artikkeli III).

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että Bolognan prosessin leviämistä edistävä globaali luonne ja Keski-Afrikassa – jossa myös Kamerun sijaitsee – ilmenneet pyrkimykset korkeakoulutuksen harmonisointiin ovat keskeisiä syitä Bolognan prosessin ideoiden hyväksymiseen. Tulokset osoittavat myös, että tarve soveltaa kansainvälisiä standardeja, Bolognan prosessin ratkaisukeskeisyys sekä Kamerunin korkeakoulutuksen sisäiset haasteet, erityisesti ranskalaisen ja anglosaksisen koulutusjärjestelmän harmonisointiin liittyen, tekivät Bolognan prosessista sopivan Kamerunin kontekstiin. Tulokset tarjoavat näkökulmia siihen, kuinka eri tavoin Bolognan prosessin ideat esiteltiin ja kuinka ne levisivät Kamerunissa. Tutkimus osoitti, kuinka Bolognan prosessin ideoihin sopeutuminen alkoi alueiden välisestä pyrkimyksestä muodostaa Keski-Afrikan talous- ja rahayhteisön (Communaute Economique et Monétaire de L'Afrique Centrale, CEMAC) yhteyteen korkeakoulutuksen, tutkimuksen ja ammatillisen koulutuksen alue. Siten sen käyttöönotto oli valtion määräykseen pohjautuva poliittinen päätös, joka perustui

Kamerunin CEMAC-sitoumukseen. Bolognan prosessi nähtiin myös teoreettisena (Bolognan prosessin abstraktit periaatteet) ja käytännöllisenä/realistisena päätöksenä (onnistuminen Euroopassa antoi toivoa Kamerunissa) sekä nopeana ratkaisuna (riittämätön luottamus Kamerunin korkeakoulutuksen duaalijärjestelmää kohtaan).

Tulokset osoittavat, että Bolognan prosessin levittämisen keskeisimmät keinot olivat kansallisesti ja institutionaalisesti tekstien kautta ohjattu toimeenpano sekä kansainväliset konferenssit ja seminaarit. Tutkimuksessa havaittiin, että uudistusten, kuten tässä tapauksessa Bolognan mallin lainaaminen, tapahtui sekä lainaajalta oppimisen kautta (nk. lainaamispotentiaalin ulkoistaminen), kamerunilaisten asiantuntijoiden matkustaessa Eurooppaan, että Bologna-asiantuntijoiden matkustaessa Kameruniin jakamaan kokemuksiaan Bolognan prosessista. Tutkimus osoitti siirtomaa-ajan historian vaikuttavan Bolognan prosessin paikalliseen vastaanottoon, mikä ilmeni muun muassa lainatun mallin toimeenpanon aiheuttamissa jännitteissä ja ongelmakysymyksissä, jotka liittyivät mallin soveltamiseen Kamerunin korkeakoulutuksen duaalijärjestelmässä. Joidenkin Bolognan tavoitteiden toimeenpano Kamerunissa vahvisti käsitystä siitä, että kontekstuaaliset tekijät ratkaisevat, kuinka politiikan lainaaminen sopeutetaan paikallisella tasolla (kuten omaksuttaessa uusi tutkintorakenne ja opintosuoritusjärjestelmä). Tutkimus toi esiin myös näkökulman, että politiikan lainaaminen voi toimia kiintopisteenä innoittamassa paikallisia uudistuksia ja ratkaisuja (esim. työllistettävyyden agenda).

Tutkimus antaa uudenlaisen merkityksen politiikan lainaamisen tutkimukselle ilmentäessään siirtymää yhden koulutusjärjestelmän sisällä vaikuttavien maiden välisten vetovoimasuhteiden tarkastelusta alueiden välisten vetovoimasuhteiden tarkasteluun alueellisessa tilassa, missä harmonisointi toimii politiikan lainaamisen keskeisenä alkusysäyksenä. Vaikka väitöskirja keskittyykin Bolognan prosessin vaikutuksiin Kamerunin korkeakoulujärjestelmässä yhden maan vertailevana asetelmana, liittyvät tutkimuksessa esitetyt havainnot laajemmin kansainvälisiin ja alueellisiin kehityskulkuihin.

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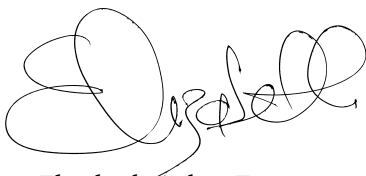
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Agbor Eta'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with large loops and a prominent initial 'E'.

Elizabeth Agbor Eta

At Educarium, Turku, on a snowy, cold day in January 2018.

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LIST OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

This dissertation is based on the following four studies, reported in four original publications.

1. Eta, E. A. (2015). Policy borrowing and transfer, and policy convergence: justifications for the adoption of the Bologna Process in the CEMAC region and the Cameroonian higher education system through the LMD reform. *Comparative Education*, 51(2), 161-178.

2. Eta, E. A, Kallo, J., & Rinne, R. (2017). Process of transfer and reception of Bologna Process ideas in the Cameroon higher education system. *European Educational Research Journal*, DOI: 10.1177/1474904117733376.

Eta contributed to the conception and design; data collection, analysis and interpretation; and the writing of the manuscript. Kallo contributed to the study design, data interpretation, selection of the journal and revision of the manuscript. Rinne contributed to the study design, writing of the manuscript and the revision of the manuscript.

3. Eta, E. A., & Vubo, E. Y. (2016). Global references, local translation: adaptation of the Bologna Process degree structure and credit system at universities in Cameroon. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 14(4), 492-512.

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4. Eta, E. A. (2017). Enhancing Graduate Employability in Cameroonian Universities within the Context of the Adoption of the Bologna Process Through License-Master-Doctorat Reform. *Higher Education Policy*, DOI: 10.1057/s41307-017-0055-7

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, public policy, including higher education policy, has been considered the nation-state's responsibility. Internal determinants -- such as political, economic and social conditions of the state were the main drivers for adopting new policies or programmes (Berry & Berry, 2007). However, globalisation has contributed to reshaping nation-states' exclusive authority in policy making because of increased movement, interaction, exposure and access to people, ideas and practices across borders, enabled through information and communication technology (Perry & Tor, 2009; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2008; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010), creating all kinds of interdependence – economic, social, political and cultural (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). In education, national policy is 'done in new locations, on different scales, by new actors and organisations' (Ball, 2012, p. 4) who interact at a global level, enabling national education policy making to be continuously linked to global educational agendas for legitimisation purposes. This raises the question of 'whether nation-states are losing the ability to control their educational systems' (Ball, 2012, p. 4). Although globalisation does not render nation-states totally 'impotent', it does, however, significantly influence their policy-making capacity (Dale, 1999, p. 2; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002). It also contributes to global education policy (Ball, 2012; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010) because of the global nature of education challenges that call for the creation of global knowledge and solutions to address those challenges (UNESCO, 2009).

Internationalisation, i.e., 'the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education' (Knight, 2008), is used to describe higher education institutions' response to globalisation. A major trend in higher education, elicited by internationalisation, is the high demand for international education, accompanied by a marked increase in the mobility of students, educational programmes and institutions (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Teichler, 2004). It also has elicited a fast-growing market for higher education and an increasingly competitive higher education environment in which countries and higher education institutions strive to be more attractive to compete internationally (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003). In this competitive higher education environment, developing countries are said to be at a disadvantage. Thus, international cooperation based on mutual interest is encouraged in higher education through the transfer of knowledge, especially from developed to developing countries, to help narrow the development gap (UNESCO, 2009).

Even though competition is the name of the game in the era of globalisation, and in as much as individual countries seek to be competitive globally, there also exists a high level of regional cooperation aimed at harmonising regional practices and increasing their attractiveness and competitiveness (Eta, 2015a). Such regional cooperation, termed *regionalisation*, is ‘the process of building closer collaboration and alignment among higher education actors and systems in a designated area or framework, called a region’ (Knight, 2013, p. 347). It involves the use of political instruments and mechanisms to organise higher education to foster cooperation and regional integration through a bottom-up process (Chou & Ravinet, 2015). It seeks a process of policy integration or convergence in higher education by bringing together diverse systems to create commonalities (Woldegiorgis, Jonck & Goujou, 2015). In recent decades, the world’s regions have become active players in the governance of higher education policies. This is due to the general renewal of regional cooperation in all areas, including higher education (Chou & Ravinet, 2015). Between 1947 and 1983, UNESCO championed regionalisation processes which led to the adoption of five regional conventions on the recognition of studies, diplomas and awards in Latin America and the Caribbean (1974), in the Arab States (1978), in Europe (1979), in Africa (1981) and in Asia and the Pacific (1983). As indicated by UNESCO (2009), regional cooperation is currently more pronounced in the areas of recognition of qualification, quality assurance, mobility, research and innovations, and teaching and learning.

The Bologna Process is an example of a regional initiative that embodies different areas of cooperation in higher education, and it is perhaps one of the most talked-about examples of regional cooperation in higher education in recent times, aiming to harmonise and strengthen the competitiveness and attractiveness of the European Higher education Area (EHEA). The Bologna Process is a European intergovernmental initiative that created the EHEA to promote ‘citizens’ mobility and employability’, achieve ‘greater compatibility and comparability of the systems of HE’ and increase ‘the international competitiveness of the European system of HE’, as well as its ‘worldwide degree of attraction’, vis-à-vis the rest of the world (Bologna Declaration, 1999). To achieve its aims, European ministers of higher education formulated different lines of action in the 1998 Sorbonne Declaration, the 1999 Bologna Declaration and the ministers’ follow-up biannual communiqués. The lines of action included the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, a system based on three cycles, a common system of credits, and the promotion of mobility and employability (see Chapter 2 for an overview of the process). The Bologna Process set in motion structural reforms that have transformed 48 higher

education systems in Europe. Although the Bologna Process initially was conceived as a solution to challenges facing European education systems, it nonetheless has had a spillover effect in other parts of the world, including Latin America, Asia and Africa (Crosier & Parveva, 2013; Knight, 2013; Vögtle & Martens, 2014; Zgaga, 2006).

World regions' involvement in contemporary higher education governance (such as the Bologna Process) and the transfer and implementation of agreed-upon goals to national contexts carry some implications for policy studies. It implies that policy adoption cannot be examined exclusively from traditional agenda setting, policy design, implementation and evaluation stages of the policy process (Verger, 2014). It also implies that policy adoption cannot be limited to the trans-sectoral focus in policy studies (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012), mostly evident in the transfer of business models to the field of education. Because of various kinds of interactions (cross-national/regional/global), national systems of education influence and are influenced by external forces. Such influences lead national education systems to learning and adopting policies from elsewhere. Thus, policy studies are increasingly taking a comparative approach, focusing on 'understanding the local policy contexts against the backdrop of larger transnational or global developments' (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012, p. 4).

In comparative policy studies, this practice is generally referred to as policy transfer, 'a process by which knowledge of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political system' (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000, p. 5). In comparative education, policy transfer is an umbrella concept that involves the lending and borrowing of policies, ideas and practices from elsewhere. While lending refers to the context from which an idea originates, borrowing refers to the context in which it is received (Waldow, 2012). Policy borrowing can be explicit (direct references to international agendas) or silent (unrecognised policy-transfer processes) (Waldow, 2009). In the era of globalisation, educational-policy borrowing is said to be the norm, not the exception (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014). Hence, there is an ongoing debate as to whether the borrowing of policies and practices from elsewhere has contributed to the convergence of systems of education worldwide (Dale, 1999; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2008).

In 2006, I was studying for the *Maîtrise* (a certificate issued two years after a bachelor's degree) at the University of Yaoundé I in Cameroon. At the time, there were rumors that we were the last batch of students to be issued that degree because the system was going to be reformed, which would lead to replacement of the *Maîtrise* (and other intermediate degrees) at French-inspired universities in Cameroon. At the time, I

thought it was a Cameroonian initiative to harmonise and tackle some of its challenges emerging from its dual French and Anglo-Saxon traditions in terms of degrees offered, which, as P. Doh (2007, 2008) observed, limited mobility from one sub-system to the other, particularly because of the difficulties in finding equivalents. When I enrolled as a PhD student in September 2011, I was interested in studying how the Cameroonian higher education system was responding to external/global influences. After reading the literature on global trends in higher education, the Bologna Process stood out as a major reform programme in higher education that also was impacting higher education reforms in Cameroon (Doh, P., 2007, 2008; Ngufor, 2009; Feudjio, 2009; Cameroon Ministry of Higher Education, 2010). My aim in this dissertation is to understand why a reform programme conceived in Europe and designed for higher education systems in Europe became attractive to Cameroon, how the ideas were introduced in Cameroon and how they were used for reform purposes.

Although the Bologna Process has influenced higher education reforms in Africa generally, and Cameroon particularly, there seems to be limited knowledge about what it means and what has changed following adoption. In 2008, the *University World News* observed that although the Bologna Process has been introduced in Cameroon, knowledge about what it entailed was very limited, and little research had been conducted on the topic. As noted by Ngufor (2009), most of the information available on the Bologna Process in Cameroon is contained in unscientific reports published in magazines by the Ministry of Higher Education and the universities themselves. A few scholarly works that have touched on the topic did not focus on Bologna Process adoption. For example, B. Doh (2015), in evaluating strategic objectives of Cameroonian higher education, identified the adoption of Bologna principles as one such strategic objective. P. Doh (2012) examined transformation processes in the higher education sector toward economic development and poverty reduction in Cameroon and discussed the degree structural reform and the new orientation toward professionalisation as part of such transformations. In his 2007, 2008 works, P. Doh examined the challenges of harmonising the French and British bicultural systems of higher education in Cameroon and concluded that the adoption of the Bologna Process could lead to such harmonisation. Studies by Ngufor (2009) and Feudjio (2009) entailed the Bologna implementation in Cameroon. However, Ngufor's study focused solely on Bologna implementation at the Anglo-Saxon university in Cameroon in terms of curriculum restructuring and the degree structure. Feudjio looked at the challenges of implementing the Bologna Process in Cameroon, arguing that although there is a political willingness to implement the reform program, its adoption is premature.

There is no extant research that examines the influence of the Bologna Process in Cameroon, a gap that this dissertation seeks to address. In this dissertation, I use implementation of Bologna Process objectives in the Cameroonian higher education system to examine an explicit case of policy borrowing. Specifically, the policy-borrowing approach is utilised to examine the restructuring of Cameroonian higher education in line with the Bologna Process' policy tools, with an emphasis on the process of adoption and adaptation.

1.1 Scope of Study

Although individual countries in Africa, such as Cameroon, are progressively shifting toward the Bologna model, these initiatives are positioned within sub-regional contexts, including the West African, Eastern African, Northern African, Southern African and Central African contexts. The influence of the Bologna Process on the Cameroon higher education system is examined in this dissertation as part of the Central African context, involving countries of the Communauté Economique et Monétaire de L' Afrique Centrale (CEMAC), known in English as the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (Figure 1 shows the CEMAC nations in Africa). In this sub-section, I focus on the Central African initiative because it presents the context and defines the scope of the study. In Chapter 2 (2.4), the other sub-regional initiatives are briefly discussed.



Figure 1: Locating CEMAC in Africa. Source: The Habari Network, 2012.

The CEMAC was established to promote cooperation and integration among its six member countries: Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon. Regional integration in this region goes back to the French colonial period, with the creation in 1919 of the Federation of Equatorial French Africa (AEF), consisting of Gabon, the middle Congo¹, Oubangui-Chari², Chad and Cameroon. The AEF's facilitated administration of these countries under French rule was dissolved in 1958 when the members gained semi-autonomy (CEMAC, 2017a).

To facilitate trade among member countries, in 1964, Cameroon, Gabon, the Central African Republic, Chad and the Republic of Congo-Brazzaville created the Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC). UDEAC became operational in 1966, and in 1984, Equatorial-Guinea joined the community. To achieve its goal, a customs union was created, which led to the harmonisation of taxes and duties, and the establishment of a common external tariff. The creation of the union also led to the harmonisation of national fiscal and customs systems, and encouraged regular meetings and cooperation among political leaders of the newly established states. Lack of commitment from members (financial insufficiency because of irregular payment of contributions and the economic crises of the 1980s, lack of communication and cooperation between members, and ineffective implementation of decisions and directives) posed challenges on the operational capacity of UDEAC, rendering it inactive (CEMAC, 2017b). To revive its activities and its continuous effort toward regional integration, in 1994, CEMAC was created to replace UDEAC, with the objective of converging and monitoring national economic policies to coordinate sectoral policies and progressively create a single market (CEMAC, 2017c).

The focus of the regional community was mostly trade-related activities. However, in 2005, this regional integration initiative explicitly was extended when the CEMAC heads of state signed the Libreville Declaration, which adopted Bologna Process ideas through the 'Licence-Master-Doctorat' (LMD) reform, aimed at creating the CEMAC Space for higher Education Research and Professional training (Libreville Declaration, 2005). According to the declaration, the LMD aims to promote student and staff mobility at the national, regional and international levels, facilitating the equivalences of certificates³; harmonisation of study programmes, qualifications and awards; attractiveness of higher education in the sub-region; integration of graduates

¹ Now known as the Republic of Congo

² Present-day Central African Republic.

³ Especially because of the multiplicity and intermediate degrees that existed in the Francophone African countries - Diplôme d'études Générales, Licence, Maîtrise, Diplôme d'études approfondies, Doctorat de troisième cycle, Doctorat unique and Doctorat d'Etat'. The LMD aimed to align these seven degrees to the three-tiered degrees.

into the regional and global labour market; and integration of the entire CEMAC region. According to the CEMAC Council of Ministers (2006), the LMD aims were to be achieved through:

- Adoption of a system in which certificates are readable and comparable at the national, sub-regional and international levels
- A system with two programmes: undergraduate and post-graduate and three degrees: bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees
- The introduction of a system of credit
- A focus on professionalisation of educational programmes

The CEMAC is one of the African sub-regions that directly emulated the Bologna Process independent of and without connection to other African harmonisation initiatives (Vögtle & Martens, 2014). Almost all countries in the CEMAC are at different stages of implementing Bologna principles under the LMD (Mohamedbhai, 2013). In this dissertation, I mainly focus on the case of Cameroon, examining the reasons for the adoption, its introduction and dissemination, local response in Cameroon, and local adaptation to some lines of action (degree, structure, credit system and employability agenda) in the four empirical studies. However, to a limited extent, the process of adoption and the justifications for the adoption in the CEMAC region are examined in Article I.

In this dissertation, policy borrowing is considered to consist of two main stages, adoption and adaptation, as categorised by Phillips and Schweisfurth (2008). Policy adoption involves a complex process in the policy cycle, which begins with the identification of a problem, policy formulation and policy adoption. Policy adoption results from negotiations between policy makers for an acceptable solution to an identified problem. (Anderson, 2003) However, in policy borrowing, (and as used in this dissertation), the focus in the adoption stage is on investigating the reasons for the adoption of (global) policies (Bologna Process in Cameroon) and how the borrowed policy are introduced in the local context to start the process of change, rather than on the negotiations that led to the actual adoption. Adaptation, as used in this dissertation, refers to the local translation and modification of imported reforms at the local level. The articles included in this dissertation examine elements of both adoption (I & II) and adaptation (III & IV) of the Bologna Process in the Cameroon higher education system through the LMD system. In Article I, I examine the justifications for the adoption in the CEMAC region and in the Cameroonian higher education system. Article II focuses on its introduction and dissemination into

the national and institutional context of Cameroon, as well as the local response to the adoption. In terms of adaptation, there is the question of what happens to existing practices once a reform has been imported (Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006) and how the global model is used to influence and inspire local reforms and solutions (Forestier, Adamson, Han & Morris, 2016; Ochs, 2006). These issues are discussed in Article III (in relation to the degree structure and the credit system) and in Article IV (in relation to the employability agenda).

1.2 Cameroon: History, Higher education Policy Context and External Influences

This sub-section reflects on the factors that have shaped the Cameroonian education system into what it is today through a presentation of its history, national policy context and external influences.

Known officially as the Republic of Cameroon, it is a bilingual country, with French and English as its official languages. Cameroon owes its bilingualism to its colonial legacy, having been ruled simultaneously by France (80%) and Britain (20%) in separate territories after the defeat of Germany in World War I. With different colonial legacies, the two Cameroons formed a federal state in 1961 to guarantee 'equal partnership and preserving the cultural heritage and identity of each' (Konings, 1999, p. 290) by, for example, adopting English and French as the nation's official languages. In 1972, the federal state was transformed into a unitary state.

This cultural preservation also was extended to education, as Cameroon operates a bicultural French and Anglo-Saxon systems of education at all levels. Until 1993, Cameroon had one university, the University of Yaoundé, which started as a university centre in 1961 and eventually was transformed into a full-fledged university in 1962 (ADEA, 1999; Konings, 2009). The university was created to provide higher education tailored toward the needs and realities of the new nation (ADEA, 1999). Although the university was created to be a bilingual university, it was observed that the university operated as a Francophone institution, i.e., courses were taught mainly in French, to the detriment of English-speaking students (Doh, P., 2007; Konings, 2009). These language difficulties stemmed from the fact that although Cameroon is a bilingual country, a very small percentage of the population could speak both languages with functional fluency (Ayafor, 2005). This implies that teachers could express themselves only in one of the two official languages (Doh, P., 2007), which usually was French. This led to poor performance by students with English as a first language. The dominance of the French language was visible in almost all aspects

of public life, resulting in a feeling of marginalisation and assimilation among the English-speaking population (Anglophone minority) by the Francophone-dominated state (Konings, 1999). The situation became known as the 'Anglophone problem'. In the 1990s, following the political liberation of the country, the English-speaking elites started voicing their opposition to the subordinate position of Anglophones and demanded a return to the federal state. As Konings (1999) noted, such demands were bluntly refused by the government, pushing some Anglophone activist groups to adopt a secessionist stand. Since October 2016, there have been ongoing protests against Anglophone marginalisation (French dominance in Anglophone classrooms, courts and in most aspects of public life, as well as the dominance of Francophones in most positions of public life), with some activist groups calling for Cameroon to return to a federal state and others asking for secession.

Besides the dual French and Anglo-Saxon sub-systems of education, Cameroon also operates a binary system of traditional academic structures and professional schools (ADEA, 1999; Doh, P., 2012; Eta, 2017; Vubo, 2011). On one hand, the academic structures run a non-selective admission policy with academically oriented instruction. On the other hand, the professional schools are highly selective, based on competitive entrance examinations and focused on training for different professions (ADEA, 1999). Although trained human resources in the early days of university education in Cameroon were considered the 'privilege elite', trained to serve in different public sectors (Eta, 2017), the situation soon changed because of the economic crisis that hit the country in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as a massive increase in the student population.

By 1990, the lone university experienced an exponential rise in the student population, from just over 500 in 1962 to over 10,000 in 1982 and nearly 35,000 in 1990, resulting in overcrowded amphitheaters, poor student-teacher ratios, poor student performance and a reduction in the state's employment capacity (ADEA, 1999). There was no longer any employment guarantee for students from the academic structures. While graduates from the academic structures relied on the private sector or on occasional state recruitment for employment, graduates from the professional schools were readily employed by the government because admissions into professional schools were based on openings in the public sector (Vubo, 2011). This dual system presents one of the main challenges of higher education in Cameroon today: high levels of unemployment among university graduates (ADEA, 1999; Doh, P., 2012). This situation has been blamed on the concentration of professional training in professional schools away from the universities (Doh, P., 2012). To decongest the university, four university centres were created in 1977 in Buea, Douala, Dschang

and Ngaoundere. However, ADEA (1999) observed that the creation of these centres did not solve the congestion problem at the University of Yaoundé because of poor implementation and the very specialised nature of the centres. By 1991, the University of Yaoundé had nearly 45,000 students enrolled, on a campus designed for 5,000 (ADEA, 1999), or at most, 7,000 (Konings, 2009).

As a solution to these accumulating higher education problems, a presidential decree in 1993 launched a series of university reforms that created six universities in different parts of the country, with different governance structures and regulations (ADEA, 1999). These reforms aimed to widen access to higher education; broaden participation by different shareholders in the financing and management of higher education institutions; make universities more accessible to local, regional and international communities; and professionalise university studies. Of the six universities, four were bilingual (University of Yaoundé I, University of Yaoundé II, University of Douala and University of Dschang), with the remaining two, the University of Buea and the University of Ngaoundere, designed to be English- and French-speaking campuses, respectively (ADEA, 1999; Konings, 2001). With the creation of a university in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, the dualism in education was extended to the university level (Eta & Vubo, 2016). Today, Cameroon is home to eight state universities (two of which are in the Anglo-Saxon tradition) and more than 163 private institutions. The 1993 reforms, with their objectives to widen access and diversify financing of higher education, according to Fonkeng and Ntembe (2009), introduced some degree of privatisation of higher education in Cameroon. As advanced by the World Bank (1995), because of the decline of public spending in education worldwide, different sources of funding were required, including private funding either at private or publicly funded institutions. This probably contributed to the rapid expansion of private higher education institutions in Cameroon, and, as indicated by Abagi, Nzomo and Otieno (2002), public-private cost sharing became a guiding policy for investment in education through the World Bank under structural-adjustment programmes in Africa. The vast number of private higher education institutions in Cameroon notwithstanding, this study focuses solely on the nation's public universities because the inclusion of these private institutions would have broadened the study (increase the number of institutions covered) with a higher degree of abstraction in the discussion of research questions and concepts. The bases for admission into universities (public and private) is a high school qualification: a *Baccalaureat* for students from the French sub-system and a General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advance Levels for students from the

Anglo-Saxon sub-system. However, entry into the Anglo-Saxon university has an additional requirement: accumulated points on the GCE.

The co-existence of two systems of education ushered in two separate structures, programmes and examination systems (Tchombe, 1999). For example, while the French-modelled universities operated on a multiplicity of degrees such as '*Diplôme d'études Générales*' (DEUG), '*Licence*', '*Maîtrise*', '*Diplôme d'études approfondies*' (DEA), '*Doctorat de troisième cycle*' and '*Doctorat d'État*', the Anglo-Saxon university operated under the bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree structure (Doh, P., 2008; Eta, 2015b; Eta & Vubo, 2016; Ngufor, 2009), in addition to issuing a postgraduate diploma (Eta & Vubo, 2016). In terms of grading systems, while universities modelled after the French tradition operated under a system of modules and grade averages, the Anglo-Saxon university functioned via the United States' course-credit system (Doh, P., 2008; Eta, 2015b; Eta & Vubo, 2016; Ngufor, 2009). The existence of a dual degree structure and grading system in Cameroon posed challenges in terms of finding degree equivalents, especially for mobility purposes from one sub-system to the other (Eta & Vubo, 2016; Doh, P., 2008).

In terms of governance, universities in Cameroon are centrally managed by the state (Doh, B., 2015; Konings, 2009; Ministry of Higher Education, 2010). Higher education in Cameroon is regulated by the 1993 reforms and the 2001 orientation law of higher education (Ministry of Higher Education, 2010). According to a 2001 higher education orientation law, higher education is a national priority that the state organises and controls (Ministry of Higher Education, 2001) through the Ministry of Higher Education, which is in charge of defining higher education policies in Cameroon. According to B. Doh (2015), many have contested such position of the state. As interviewees in this current study explained, such policies are usually political decisions made without consultations with the institutions (universities and other higher education institutions) that directly implement them. The formation of new objectives, goals and organisational arrangements in higher education in Cameroon usually is a response to a crisis, i.e., intended to fix immediate system problems (Doh, B., 2015). Their formation also is influenced by external forces, including international organisations and regional and global trends in education (as highlighted also in empirical studies).

The Cameroon higher education system has been influenced greatly by its colonial history. Since its conception, higher education was influenced by the French system (ADEA, 1999; Konings, 2009; Doh, P., 2007; Doh, B., 2015), constructed with assistance from the French government (ADEA, 1999) and modelled after the French tradition in terms of organisational arrangements (Konings, 2009). The two sub-

systems (Anglo-Saxon and French) in higher education, born out of the 1993 reforms, also were tied to colonial influence, i.e., the need to preserve both cultural heritages. The division of higher education into academic structures and professional schools in Cameroon was influenced by the French system. Besides Cameroon's colonial history, higher education in the nation also has been influenced by international organisations (World Bank, UNESCO and the African Development Bank), especially because of Cameroon's aid-dependent status (Doh, P., 2012). For example, the financing of other sectors of education in Cameroon was prioritised by the World Bank and other funding agencies to the detriment of higher education (Doh, P., 2012). The 1993 reforms in Cameroon that created more universities was done against the World Bank's recommendation for expanding the tertiary sector during a period of structural adjustment (Konings, 2009; ADEA, 1999). The World Bank designed a cost-saving model that eliminated state bursaries to students and instituted annual tuition fees of FCFA 50,000 (Konings, 2009). However, higher education in Cameroon is considered tuition-free, with the contention that the 50,000 FCFA Cameroonian currency is a registration fee. Higher education in Cameroon still operates under this model, until recently within the framework of the LMD system, when professional programmes were introduced at universities with fees ranging from 300 to 600 FCFA (Eta, 2017).

Higher education policy in Cameroon also is influenced by regional integration tendencies and global trends (Doh, B., 2015; Doh, P., 2012). A good case in point is the CEMAC integration initiative for creating the CEMAC space for higher education research and professional training, using the Bologna model, launched under the 2005 Libreville Declaration. In Cameroon, the Bologna Process is referred to as the LMD at Francophone universities and Bachelor's-Master's-PhD (BMP) at the Anglo-Saxon universities. It should be noted that the difference in names is not only related to language (French or English). Some interviewees, especially from the Anglo-Saxon university, as summarised by one university administrator/lecturer, said the name difference aims to stress the fact that one 'is the real thing and the other is an adapted version' regarding implementation of the Bologna Process degree structure and credit system. Cameroon's LMD/BMP system became operational as of the 2007-2008 academic year (Ministry of Higher Education, 2007, 2010). Although earlier attempts have been made to harmonise the dual-degree structure in Cameroon in favour of the BMP structure, such initiatives were resisted because of concerns related to certification demands tied to dropouts and the fact that the structure was more academic-oriented. Thus, the adoption of the Bologna Process had the advantage of harmonising the dual sub-system of education, especially in terms of the degree structure. (Doh, P., 2007, 2008) According to interviewees in this study (Article 2),

the Bologna Process was considered to be a global trend that Cameroon responded to through its adoption with other CEMAC countries.

In the following chapters of this introduction, I discuss the Bologna Process as a tool for higher education harmonisation in Europe and in Africa, which is relevant to this dissertation (Chapter 2), and I review the key theoretical underpinnings, with a focus on the transnational flow of global ideas as discussed in comparative policy studies (Chapter 3). In Chapter 4, I focus on the research task and methodology. Chapter 5 presents an overview of the empirical studies, with the main findings and discussions provided in Chapter 6.

2. THE BOLOGNA PROCESS: A TOOL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION HARMONISATION IN EUROPE AND ITS ATTRACTIVENESS IN AFRICA

This chapter maps the development of the Bologna Process and the lines of action that were geared toward harmonisation of higher education in Europe by identifying some key moments in the process that contributed to shaping what became known as the Bologna Process and the EHEA. Because two of the articles in this dissertation focus on how the Bologna Process was used to influence higher education reforms in Cameroon regarding degree structure, as well as the credit system and employability agenda, attention also has been paid to the development of these lines of action in the Bologna Process. This chapter ends with a discussion of the Bologna Process' external dimension, with an emphasis on Africa.

2.1 The Bologna Process and the Creation of the European Higher Education Area

Noticeable in its name, the Bologna Process is a process, signalling the progressive formation of its lines of action and evaluation of its achievements from the Sorbonne (1998) and the Bologna (1999) Declarations to the follow-up biannual communiqués. The Bologna Process and the creation of the EHEA:

[R]eflect a search of a common European answer to common European problems. The process originates from the recognition that in spite of their valuable differences, European HE systems are facing common internal and external challenges related to the growth and diversification of HE, the employability of graduates, the shortage of skills in key areas, the expansion of private and transnational education, etc. (Confederation of European Union Rectors' Conferences and the Association of European Universities, 2000).

It is widely known that this quest started in 1998 with a joint declaration on 'the harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system' (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998). The declaration was signed by the higher education ministers of France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. The declaration was initiated by the French minister of education, Claude Allègre, who invited his colleagues from Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom to the 1998 Sorbonne conference, marking the 800th anniversary of the University of Paris. However, what is less visible in the

literature about the Bologna Process is that prior to the Sorbonne conference, the French minister had commissioned an analysis (led by the French economist Jacques Attali) of the French tertiary system of education within the international context for proposed measures to increase its effectiveness and competitiveness (Štech, 2011; Witte, 2006) in relation to ensuring the employability of graduates and fostering mobility from the universities and the grandes écoles⁴ (Štech, 2011). A summary of the report was presented to the three ministers of education. Like the French minister, they were all dissatisfied with the low competitiveness level of higher education systems in Europe and because European universities were not attracting many Asian students (Štech, 2011). In the Sorbonne Declaration, the four ministers pledged their commitment to creating the EHEA, recognising that ‘Europe is not only that of the euro, of the banks and the economy: It must be a Europe of knowledge as well, which, to a large extent, can be shaped by its universities (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998). The ministers established the core principles by committing themselves to a common qualification framework to foster mobility and employability, two main cycles of study and the use of credits such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). They invited other European countries to join the process to consolidate Europe’s position in the world (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998).

This commitment was stretched out the following year, in June 1999, when higher education ministers from 29 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK) signed the Bologna Declaration (Bologna Declaration, 1999). The aim was to contribute toward the creation of the EHEA, in keeping with the spirit of Sorbonne ‘to promote citizens’ mobility and employability’, achieve ‘greater compatibility and comparability of the systems of HE’ and increase ‘the international competitiveness of the European system of HE’, as well as its ‘worldwide degree of attraction’ (Bologna Declaration, 1999). To achieve its objectives, the Bologna Declaration adopted six lines of action⁵:

- (1) A system of easily readable and comparable degrees, also through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement to promote European citizens’

⁴ The French system comprises universities and grandes écoles. While access to the universities is guaranteed to every secondary school graduate, access to the grandes écoles is highly selective (Štech, 2011; Witte, 2006). A similar system exists in Cameroon because of the French colonial legacy, as discussed in the introduction to this dissertation.

⁵ Some of the objectives already were included in the Sorbonne Declaration, but were made clearer and further developed in the Bologna Declaration.

employability and to promote the European higher education system's international competitiveness

- (2) A system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate, with the first cycle lasting a minimum of three years remaining relevant to the European labour market. The second cycle should lead to a master's and/or a doctorate degree
- (3) A system of credits—such as in the ECTS system---to promote student mobility
- (4) Promotion of mobility for students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff
- (5) Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance, with a view toward developing comparable criteria and methodologies
- (6) Promotion of the European dimension in higher education regarding curricular development, inter-institutional cooperation, mobility schemes, and integrated programmes of study, training and research.

In 2001, two years after the signing of the Bologna Declaration, European ministers of education met in Prague to assess their progress and to set future directions and priorities for the coming years to achieve objectives toward creating the EHEA by 2010 (Prague Communiqué, 2001). At this conference, Liechtenstein, Croatia, Cyprus and Turkey joined the process, increasing the group's size to 33 members. Three more lines of action were put forward:

- (7) Lifelong learning to tackle the challenges of competitiveness and the use of new technologies, and to improve social cohesion, equal opportunities and quality of life
- (8) The involvement of universities, other higher education institutions and students as competent partners in the process of shaping the European Higher Education Area
- (9) Making the European Higher Education Area more attractive to prospective European students and others worldwide by enhancing global readability and comparability of European higher education degrees

In September 2003, the ministers from the 33 signatory countries met in Berlin and admitted seven more countries---Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, and the former Yugoslav Republic of

Macedonia, bringing the number of signatory countries to 40 (Berlin Communiqué, 2003). The focus was more on assessing the progress made and how to strengthen measures to achieve the lines of action already adopted with respect to issues of quality assurance at the institutional, national and European levels; the recognition of degrees and periods of studies (diploma supplement); a European framework of qualifications; and the creation of synergies between EHEA and the European Research Area. Although the EHEA's competitiveness was important, the ministers stressed the social dimension of the process to strengthen social cohesion and reduce social and gender inequalities, reaffirming the idea that higher education is a public good and a public responsibility. One new action line was adopted at the Berlin conference:

(10) The inclusion of the doctoral level as the third cycle in the Bologna Process.

In 2005, the 40 signatory countries met in Bergen, Norway, for 'a mid-term review⁶ and setting goals and priorities towards 2010' (Bergen Communiqué, 2005). Five more countries were admitted: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, for a total of 45 signatory countries. The ministers acknowledged the need to eliminate 'obstacles to access between cycles' and 'increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications' and 'the possibility for intermediate qualifications' between cycles. The need to improve synergy between the EHEA and the European Research Area also was emphasised. The conference also stressed the social dimension of the process and adopted standards and guidelines for quality assurance elaborated in the national qualification framework and in the award and recognition of joint degrees.

In the London Communiqué of 2007, the Republic of Montenegro became a member, for a total of 46 members. It was emphasised at this conference that the development of EHEA was 'based on institutional autonomy, academic freedom, equal opportunities and democratic principles that will facilitate mobility, increase employability and strengthen Europe's attractiveness and competitiveness. There was an increasing awareness that a significant outcome of the process will be a move towards student-centred higher education and away from teacher-driven provisions' (London Communiqué, 2007).

From the 2007 ministerial conferences onward, the focus was on assessing and emphasising the full implementation of the objectives already outlined to achieve the EHEA by 2010 (London Communiqué, 2007). At the 2009 Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve conference, the creation of the EHEA was extended to 2020. The ministers emphasised social dimension, lifelong learning, employability, student-

⁶ That is, five years to 2010, the year that was set for the creation of the EHEA

centred learning and the teaching mission of universities, international openness, mobility, research and innovation, data collection, funding of higher education and multidimensional transparency tools as the main working areas for the next decade (Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009). In 2010, the ministers met in Budapest and Vienna to officially launch the EHEA. They recognised that action lines from the Bologna Process, such as 'degree and curriculum reform, quality assurance, recognition, mobility and the social dimension are implemented to varying degrees', as well as the fact that there have been protests in some countries, demonstrated that the Bologna Process' aims have not been well-explained and -implemented (Budapest-Vienna Declaration, 2010). In terms of a common European framework for higher education, that objective set in the Bologna Declaration was accomplished, but not all the objectives agreed upon had been achieved. In line with the 2009 Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, in the 2010 Budapest-Vienna Declaration, the ministers committed to the implementation of objectives in the process until 2020 (Budapest-Vienna Declaration, 2010).

After 2010, the ministers met in 2012 in Bucharest, Romania, and in 2015 in Yerevan, Armenia. In the Bucharest Communiqué, especially in the face of the economic and financial crises, the ministers agreed to concentrate on three main goals: providing quality higher education to more students, better equipping students with employable skills and increasing student mobility (Bucharest Communiqué, 2012). In the 2015 Yerevan Communiqué, the ministers reaffirmed their determination to achieve the EHEA by 2020, when common goals will be implemented in member countries by focusing on enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching, fostering the employability of graduates throughout their working lives, making the systems more inclusive and implementing agreed-upon structural reforms (Yerevan Communiqué, 2015). The next ministerial conferences have been scheduled to take place in 2018 and 2020. Currently, there are 48 signatory countries, with Kazakhstan and Belarus having joined the initiative in 2010 and 2015, respectively. All EU countries are members of the EHEA, and the others, although not EU members, are signatories to the European Cultural Convention⁷.

Although a voluntary process, European countries felt compelled to adopt and align their national systems and policies to Bologna objectives. The reason for this sense of obligation has to do with special interest (using it as leverage to justify

⁷ As adopted in the 2003 Berlin Communiqué, eligibility for membership in the EHEA was open to countries party to the European Cultural Convention who declare their willingness to implement (and how they will implement) the objectives of the Bologna Process in their higher education systems. The European Cultural Convention was signed in Paris in December 1954 with the aim of facilitating cultural cooperation in Europe by promoting the mobility and exchange of people, as well as cultural goods.

reforms at home) (Ravinet, 2008). Another reason entails the need to feel a sense of European belongingness, especially for non-EU countries, as the Bologna Process emphasised shared European values (Kushnir, 2016). A further reason is the need to gain legitimacy at the international level, as the Bologna Process suddenly became the universal educational model and the new benchmark (Fulge, Bieber & Martens, 2016). The Bologna Process gradually evolved from 'voluntary participation to monitored coordination' (Ravinet, 2008, p. 353) and from a non-binding to a binding agreement enabled through soft laws, such as the Bologna follow-up group, evaluations of national and stocktaking reports (Brøgger, 2014).

The adoption of Bologna Process reforms by the various signatory countries has obligated national governments to develop 'policies that fit the European agenda towards converging systems of higher education' (Huisman & Wende, 2004, p. 355). However, critical studies are questioning the extent to which the adoption of Bologna reforms has led to such convergence (Huisman & Wende, 2004; Heinze & Knill, 2008; Witte, 2006). According to Huisman and Wende (2004), divergences exist between European countries regarding process approaches and outcomes. Heinze & Knill's (2008, pp. 499-500) analysis shows that these divergences can be accounted for by the fact that 'the more dissimilar the cultural, institutional and socioeconomic characteristics of countries, the less convergence between these countries can be expected under the influence of the Bologna Process'. In comparing the degrees of policy change to the national systems in Germany, England, France and the Netherlands in line with the Bologna Process, Witte (2006) concluded that the Netherlands had the highest degree of policy change, followed by Germany and France, then England.

2.2 Focus on Degree Structure, Credit System and Employability Agenda

In this sub-section, I focus on the development of three lines of action under the Bologna Process: degree structure, credit system and employability agenda. The focus on them in the empirical section was informed by interview data in which these objectives, in addition to mobility, were considered important elements for Cameroon as interviewees explained the LMD in terms of these objectives. To understand how these issues have been taken up in Cameroon and how they have influenced reforms in those areas, it is important to examine how they were conceived in the Bologna Process.

The division of higher education programmes into three cycles---first, second and third (with each cycle leading to three main degrees: bachelor's, master's and doctorate), the use of credits⁸ and employability were some of the main foci of the Bologna Process. The idea of cycles of study came up in the Sorbonne Declaration when it was stated that 'a system, in which two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate, should be recognised for international comparison and equivalence, seems to emerge' (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998). According to Witte (2006), the concept of cycles originated from the French system, in which higher education was conceptualised in cycles (DEUG, maîtrise, DESS/DEA and doctoral studies). Following the Attali report, which was used as the basis of the Sorbonne conference, the intention to move from a three- to a two-cycle structure had been presented to the French audience with the potential of solving its higher education problems (Witte, 2006). The concept of cycles generally was supported by the three participating countries at the Sorbonne conference because:

[T]he German federal ministry in charge of HE was preparing a major overhaul of the national framework act for HE that, among other things, was to allow for the introduction of Bachelor and Master's programmes in addition to the traditional German degrees. In England, a tiered system with Honours and Master's Degrees was already traditional. Finally, the Italian minister also saw the potential for a two-cycle structure to address a range of problems in the national HE system (Witte, 2006, pp. 125-126).

According to the Sorbonne Declaration (1999), 'undergraduates should have access to a diversity of programmes', while in the graduate cycle, 'there would be a choice between a shorter master's degree and a longer doctor's degree, with possibilities to transfer from one to the other'. Although the Sorbonne Declaration talked about the cycle of studies, and the use of credits, it did not mention the duration of each cycle. Witte (2006) observed that there is a misconception that the Sorbonne Declaration formulated the 3+5+8 model. This misconception stemmed from the fact that the Attali report had proposed 'the idea to restructure French HE into two cycles, following a 3/5/8-structure (i.e., licence, followed either by a master's or a doctoral phase)' (Witte, 2006, p. 127).

The Bologna Declaration (1999) built on the ideas already expressed in the Sorbonne Declaration, that of adopting 'a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate', with three years as the minimum duration

⁸ The credit system was first introduced in Europe 'in 1989 as a pilot scheme within the framework of the Erasmus programme ... to facilitate the recognition of study periods undertaken abroad by mobile students' (Directorate General for Education and Culture, 2005).

for completing first-cycle studies. While the duration for the second cycle was not defined, the declaration stated that ‘the second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree’. In the 2003 Berlin Communiqué, the doctoral level was added as the third cycle in the Bologna Process. The ministers emphasised the need for the elaboration of a comparable and compatible framework that describes ‘qualification in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile’ and asked the Bologna follow-up to explore the option of a shorter higher education period linked to the first cycle. A diploma supplement that describes ‘the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed’ by a student was adopted ‘to provide sufficient independent data to improve the international transparency and fair academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates, etc.)’ (Directorate General for Education and Culture, 2005, p. 36).

The use of credits also was one of the pillars of the Bologna Declaration, to establish ‘a system of credits---such as the ECTS system---as a proper means of promoting the most widespread mobility’ (Bologna Declaration, 1999). The credit system also helps in ‘valuing, measuring and comparing learning achievements’, expressing the ‘volume of learning based on the achievement of the learning outcome and their associated workload’ and supporting ‘flexibility within education systems’ to improve ‘recognition and transparency’ (Bologna Working Group, 2005, p. 43).

Although the declarations and communiqués were not explicit on the duration of the different cycles, the suggestions in the Attali report for the 3/5/8 model were mistaken as the norm in Europe (Witte, 2006). However, research indicated diverse degree structures in many European countries⁹, with the need for a common reference. According to Haug (1999), a hard-line model, such as the 3-5-8 model, was not achievable in Europe. Thus, in the 1999 report ‘Trends in Learning Structures in Higher Education’, Haug (1999) proposed the following common, but broad and flexible frame, considering national variations, with an emphasis on the number of academic credits needed to be successfully completed to reach the corresponding level, rather than focusing on length of studies:

- sub-degree level (certificate, diploma): one to two years’ worth of ECTS credits
- first degree level (bachelor’s, honours, other first degree): no less than three and no more than four years’ worth of ECTS credits

⁹ The first degree took three to four years in the UK; four years in Scotland; three years in Denmark and Finland (but not in all fields); three to four years in Ireland, Malta, Iceland, Czech Republic and Slovakia; and four years in Romania, Bulgaria and Switzerland (see Haug, 1999).

- master’s level: about five years’ worth of ECTS credits, of which at least 12 months’ worth are master’s-level credits
- doctoral level: variable (roughly seven or eight years in total).

In 2005, in the Bergen Communique, the ministers adopted a ‘framework for the qualifications in the EHEA’ consisting of three cycles and stressing the ‘possibility of intermediate qualifications’ within the cycles (Bergen Communiqué, 2005). The adopted framework emphasised ‘learning outcomes and competences’ and allowed for ‘credit ranges in the first and second cycles’, with the workload in the third cycle corresponding to three to four years of full-time studies. According to the Bologna Working Group (2005), the qualification framework consisted of the following:

- First cycle (higher education) qualifications, typically including or represented by 180 to 240 ECTS credits
- Within the first cycle, shorter-cycle higher education qualifications typically including or represented by approximately 120 ECTS credits
- Second cycle (higher education) qualifications, typically including or represented by 90-120 ECTS credits beyond the first cycle, with a minimum of 60 credits at the level of the second cycle
- Third cycle (higher education) qualifications. No proposal has been made for associating credits with third-cycle qualifications

Drawing from the 1999 trend report, the 2005 Bologna working group on qualifications framework report, and a review of literature by Witte (2006) and Croché and Charlier (2012), the qualification framework for the EHEA can be summarised in Table I.

Table 1: Qualification framework for the EHEA

Cycle of study	Years needed for completion	ECTS required (60 ECTS per year)
Short cycle	1-2	120
First cycle	3-4	180-240
Second cycle	5 (1, 1½ or 2)	60-120
Third cycle	3-4	Not specified

Another important feature related to the credit system is the number of hours required to obtain a credit, which was, however, not included in the declarations and communiqué. Nonetheless, the ECTS user guide provided details on the number of hours required to obtain a credit. The ECTS is based on workload (quantity of

work) that a student is required to put in to 'achieve the objectives of a programme of study [...] based on the principle that 60 credits measure the workload of a full-time student during one academic year', with the workload ranging between 1,500 and 1,800 hours per year, in which one credit requires roughly 25 to 30 working hours (Directorate General for Education and Culture, 2005, p. 4). As noted in the user guide, the workload consists of lectures, seminars, independent and private study, preparation of projects and examinations.

European citizens' employability also was an important feature of the Bologna Process, explicitly stated in the Bologna Declaration (1999). Employability, as one of the motivations behind the Bologna Process, stemmed from employers' observation that 'the current education systems of many European countries provide students with insufficient preparation for the labour market' (Directorate General for Education and Culture, 2005, p. 23). In adopting the two cycle studies, the Bologna Declaration drew attention to the relevance of the degrees, stating that 'the degrees awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification' (Bologna Declaration, 1999). The establishment of a system of credits and quality-assurance systems also was meant to facilitate students' access to the European labour market and, thus, employability (Prague Communiqué, 2001). The Berlin Communiqué (2003) emphasised the need to remove 'obstacles to access between cycles' and to 'increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications, including posts within the public service'.

Sin and Neave (2016, p. 1453) observed that until 2007, employability was a loose and abstract concept of the Bologna Process, seen as a 'high-level goal and driver for ideological reform'. However, in the 2007 London Communiqué, the ministers moved a step further and asked the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) to carefully consider how to improve employability in relation to the cycles and also within the context of lifelong learning. The communiqué highlighted the need for more communication between governments and higher education institutions with employers and other stakeholders, urging institutions to partner and cooperate with employers on curriculum innovations grounded on learning outcomes. Employability became a clearer objective in the Bologna Process during the 2009 Leuven and Louvain Communiqué, with the ministers noting that 'higher education should equip students with the advanced knowledge, skills and competences they need throughout their professional lives', encouraging 'work placements embedded in the study programmes as well as on-the-job learning', urging cooperation between governments, higher education institutions, social partners and students. This cooperation will 'allow institutions to be more responsive to employers, and employers to better understand

the educational perspective' (Leuven and Louvain Communiqué, 2009). In the Bucharest Communiqué (2012), the need to 'combine transversal, multidisciplinary and innovation skills and competences' with 'subject-specific knowledge' that will 'enhance the employability and professional development of graduates throughout their careers' was emphasised. In addition, the need to increase not only graduates' employment opportunities, but also self-employment through diverse measures such as fostering 'dialogue between higher education and employers, implementing programmes with a good balance between theoretical and practical components' and 'fostering entrepreneurship' (Yerevan Communiqué, 2015) also was emphasised.

2.3 Attractiveness of the Bologna Process Beyond Europe

The Bologna Process has been described as the 'most extensive and successful example of policy transfer in education ever' (Dale & Robertson, 2012, p. 21) and a 'global phenomenon' (ELSLR, 2008) to illustrate the extent of its diffusion and attractiveness in other global regions. Before 2005, the EHEA's attractiveness was an inwardly focused goal. From the beginning, 'the international recognition and attractive potential' of the European system were stressed (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998). The Bologna Declaration (1999) explicitly stated that the objective was to increase the 'international competitiveness of the European system of higher education', which will 'ensure that the European higher education system acquires a worldwide degree of attraction equal to the extraordinary cultural and scientific traditions'. Attracting students to Europe and within Europe was a major factor that could allow for supposed competition with other regions, enacted through the European Commission's Erasmus Programme (Croché & Charlier, 2012). This was vividly echoed in the Prague Communiqué (2001) when it noted 'the importance of enhancing the attractiveness of European higher education to students from Europe and other parts of the world', as well as in the Berlin Communiqué (2003), which confirmed ministers' preparedness to develop scholarship schemes for students from the Third World. This continuing effort to attract students was stressed because, as noted in the Bologna Declaration (1999), the appeal that a culture has on others says much about the strength of that culture. The quality of education and research carried out in Europe also was viewed as one of the ways to make higher education and research in the region attractive and competitive (Prague Communiqué, 2001).

As reported by Croché & Charlier (2012), Australia's request for membership in the Bologna Process in 2001 forced the need for a clarification on the leaders and followers of the process. The Berlin Communiqué (2003) highlighted the need

for cooperation with other regions and the need to open up Bologna seminars and conferences to these regions and other European countries that were not yet part of the process. At the Berlin conference, for example, there were representatives from the follow-up committee of the European Union and from the Latin American and Caribbean regions' higher education institutions. The external dimension of the Bologna Process, in terms of the extension of the process to other regions, was stronger, more explicit and outward looking in the 2005 Bergen Communique under the title 'The attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world' (Bergen Communique, 2005). This Communique emphasised that the EHEA is 'a partner of higher education systems in other regions of the world, stimulating balanced student and staff exchange and cooperation between higher education institutions'. The communique outlines some of its goals to enhance understanding of the process on other continents through the sharing of reform experiences, through discussions on topics of mutual interest, and through the identification of partner regions to share ideas and experiences (Bergen Communique, 2005).

This outward-looking approach, especially the need to further stretch the influence of the Bologna model to other parts of the world, also was a topic at the London Communique (2007), discussed under the sub-heading 'The European Higher Education Area in a global context'. The communiqué highlighted the interest shown by other parts of the world in the Bologna reforms and acknowledged the effort made by other countries from different regions to align their systems with the Bologna framework. In this communiqué, the ministers adopted a strategy known as the 'European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting', which aimed to improve information sharing, promote the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA, strengthen cooperation, intensify policy dialogue and improve recognition. The follow-up conference at Leuven and Louven (2009) emphasised the 'international openness' of the Bologna Process through collaboration with other global regions, especially through its organisation of 'Bologna Fora'. The 2009 Bologna Fora welcomed participants from Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Tunisia and the U.S., as well as the International Association of Universities.

Besides emphasising the external dimension of the Bologna Process, as highlighted in related Bologna documents, international organisations also have assisted with publicising and 'subtle marketing' of the Bologna Process. For example, the European Commission financed a study in 2005 on 'the image of European education in the rest of the world', which tried to include the 'needs and preferences of potential users' (Croché & Charlier, 2012, p. 461). As early as 2000, Croché & Charlier

(2012, p. 459) observed that ‘powerful allies,’ such as the European Commission, Council of Europe, World Bank and UNESCO, presented the Bologna model ‘as a valid reference for all countries’. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Bologna Process has received much attention and has influenced reforms in other parts of the world.

2.4 The Bologna Process in Africa

Although the African version of the Bologna Process is known as the LMD (Khelifaoui, 2009), especially common in French-speaking Africa (Croché & Charlier, 2012), Gaél (2008) calls it ‘pure imitation and a copy’ of the degree framework at Western universities. The use of the title LMD, rather than outright use of the Bologna Process, according to Khelifaoui (2009, p. 28), is an attempt to conceal the fact that it is a case of ‘emulation or blind political conformity’.

There have been ongoing regional and sub-regional attempts to harmonise higher education in Africa using the Bologna model. Reforms are also underway in almost all African nations, as universities and other higher education institutions feel obliged to adopt the Bologna Process (Sall & Ndjaye, 2008). Oyewole (2011) has referred to this process as the ‘African-Bologna Movement’. It is worth stating here that, although the Bologna Process has influenced African higher education harmonisation processes, there had been harmonisation efforts on the continent since the 1960s¹⁰, including the UNESCO 1981 convention for the African region on the recognition of studies and certificates, popularly known as the Arusha Convention (UNESCO, 1981). However, initial attempts at higher education harmonisation, especially the Arusha convention, confronted technical and structural challenges¹¹ (Oyewole, 2011), ranging from a lack of political commitment to poor coordination, lack of ownership of the programme and external dependence for funding---initiated and funded by UNESCO without sufficient engagement from higher education institutions in Africa (Woldegiorgis, Jonck & Goujon, 2015). The African regional harmonisation initiative notwithstanding, sub-regional harmonisation processes also exist (independent of regional efforts), some of which starting as early as 2003 (countries of the Maghreb) and 2005 (CEMAC countries). The sub-regional harmonisation efforts include the

¹⁰ Such initiatives include the regional conference of university leaders held in 1960 in Khartoum, Sudan (which led to the development of a document on inter-African cooperation in higher education development); the 1961 and 1962 Addis Ababa and Madagascar conferences of African ministers of education (which led to the 20-year higher education development plan for Africa); and the 1967 conference by the African Ministry of Higher Education and university leaders in Rabat, Morocco (which led to the creation of the Association of African universities).

¹¹ This explains why to date, only 19 African countries have ratified the convention.

CEMAC initiative (discussed in Chapter 1) and the Western, Eastern, Northern and Southern African initiatives.

The West African initiative is made up of countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), comprising 15 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo) (Mohamedbhai, 2013). The educational systems in this sub-region vary widely, based on former colonial systems (French, British and Portuguese). For example, in the English-speaking countries, the bachelor's degree is awarded after four years, while in the French-speaking countries, it is awarded after three years, punctuated by intermediate diplomas. According to Mohamedbhai (2013), aspects of the Bologna Process have been adopted in West Africa due to continuous links between these countries and European countries. The English-speaking countries already used the Bologna Process' bachelor's-master's model, which followed the British system. Lusophone countries, e.g., Cape Verde, revised their degree structure to the Bologna Process framework, facilitated by the association of Portuguese-speaking universities. In addition to the different approaches adopted, based on their colonial past, ECOWAS has adopted a convention on the recognition and equivalence of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other qualifications in the sub-region (Hoosen, Butcher & Khamati, 2009).

The East African framework is made up of five countries: Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi. While Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda operate on an Anglo-Saxon system, Rwanda and Burundi operate on the French model, but are currently changing to the Anglo-Saxon model (Mohamedbhai, 2013). However, while a bachelor's degree takes four years in Kenya, the same degree takes at least three years in Uganda and Tanzania, as well as in Rwanda and Burundi. The differences in the education systems limited the possibility of exchange within the region. For example, public universities in Uganda require that Kenyan candidates undergo advanced secondary (A-level) studies for two years, while the private universities insist on a six- to nine-month bridging course before the candidates can join the institutions. Furthermore, in Tanzania, Kenyan and Ugandan students are required to sit for the matriculation examination, which resulted in fewer foreign students studying in Tanzania (Nabawanuka, 2010). The inter-university council of East Africa, an intergovernmental organisation of the East African Community, has identified the establishment of the East African Qualification Framework as one of its intervention strategies to facilitate the harmonisation of education and training in the region (Mohamedbhai, 2013), as well as the mobility of students and staff in the region (Hoosen et al., 2009).

The Northern African initiative includes eight countries: Algeria, Egypt, Liberia, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia and the Western Sahara. Universities in North Africa have been influenced largely by developments in European and Arab countries due to their proximity to these regions. Most universities in North Africa are members of the Association of Arab Universities, as well as the League of Arab States, whose membership extends beyond North Africa. Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia are French-speaking countries and are members of the Association of Francophone Universities, with membership worldwide. These universities adopted Bologna principles in 2003 (MacGregor, 2008) through the LMD and started implementation in the 2004/2005 academic year on an experimental basis, which led to the 2008 Orientation Act, which formally introduced the LMD cycles for studies and degrees (Hoosen et al., 2009, p. 10). Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Libya are five of the 23 countries that make up the Community of Sahel-Saharan States, a region recognised in 2000 by the African Union as a Regional Economic Community, and which has, as one of its goals, the harmonisation of educational, pedagogical and cultural systems of the various cycles of education (Mohamedbhai, 2013; Hoosen et al., 2009). Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Libya are participants in the European Union's Tempus programme, which exposed them to Bologna Process reforms, and the 'Bologna quality-assurance programme' has been promoted among the North African countries involved with the Tempus programme (Hoosen et al., 2009).

Finally, the Southern African Framework, involving the Southern African Development Community (SADC), contains 15 countries: Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Protocol on Education and Training was established to enhance the harmonisation of education and training in this region to maintain acceptable standards at all levels of education through the implementation of a regional quality framework, adopted in 2011 (Mohamedbhai, 2013; Hoosen et al., 2009; Oyewole, 2011). The SADC Protocol addresses, as one of its main issues, the comparability, equivalence and standardisation of the region's educational systems. Besides the regional-qualification framework, there also have been attempts to enhance national regulatory agencies. For example, while South Africa, Namibia and Mauritius have a fully developed national quality-assurance system with national agencies responsible for coordination (Mohamedbhai, 2013; Hoosen et al., 2009; Oyewole, 2011), Angola and Mozambique are associated with the SADC qualification framework and are being guided by South Africa in modernising their education and training systems (Oyewole, 2011).

The African continental initiative inspired by the Bologna Process started in 2007, when the African Union launched a framework to harmonise higher education in Africa, titled the 'Harmonisation of Higher Education Programmes in Africa: A Strategy for the African Union' (African Union, 2007). The strategy aimed to promote international, continental and regional cooperation; create and support synergy between agencies, initiatives and programmes; facilitate comparability of qualifications awarded across the continent; drive quality assurance; enhance intra-regional mobility; and foster information sharing and greater reliance on African expertise (African Union, 2007). Four major instruments have been designed to propel the Africa harmonisation strategy: the Nyerere Mobility Programme (which facilitates intra-African mobility of students and the retention of African human resources); the African Quality Rating Mechanism and Accreditation (for self-evaluation of institutions and programmes, benchmark progress in quality development and helping African universities meet international standards, thereby making them competitive in the global knowledge economy); Pan-African University (which promotes research and innovation in science and technology and contributes to creating world-class human resources at the master's and PhD levels); and Tuning Africa (to enhance international comparability of standards in terms of methods of curriculum integration, degrees, credit accumulation, transfer systems, student/graduate mobility and employment (Woldetensae, 2013). On a broader level, the harmonisation strategy developed by the African Union was said to have the potential to create 'a common African higher education and research space (AHERS)' (African Union, 2007, p. 3), similar to the EHEA. The creation of AHERS aimed to facilitate a systematic approach to counteract the challenges of dealing with individual institutions and countries (Zgaga, 2006).

2.5 Perceptions of Adopting the Bologna Process in Africa

Based on a review of literature, Eta (2015a) discussed the perceptions of Bologna Process adoption in Africa under five themes: harmonisation of higher education in the region, Bologna as a case of policy borrowing, adoption influenced by ex-colonial ties, common problems and solutions, and mobility vs. the brain-drain dilemma. In this sub-section, I mainly focus on the perceived reasons and consequences for Bologna adoption in Africa, as a detailed discussion is impossible here.

One of the reasons for the adoption was to harmonise the different systems of higher education in Africa---differences elicited by the diverse systems of education in the region (discussed in sub-section 2.4), which introduced challenges such as limited student mobility within the continent (Hoosen et al., 2009), employability

and skill shortages (Teferra, 2005). European universities faced similar challenges, and through the Bologna Process, they aimed to resolve these challenges. This argument is supported by the premise that launching the Bologna Process was one of the ways to resolve the structural differences and challenges of higher education in Europe, such as issues related to duration of study programmes, levels of degrees and entry requirements (Teichler, 2004). Thus, the extension of the Bologna model to Africa is due to its efficacy as a policy tool for Africa (Zgaga, 2006), especially in terms of harmonising the continent's diverse educational systems. For some scholars, adoption also indicates a lack of experience in effective national policy making or a lack of alternative solutions (Mundy et al., 2016) to challenges facing African higher education. Thus, in the view of Teferra (2005), the efficacy of the Bologna Process in providing common solutions to European problems indicated that it was a framework from which African universities could learn. One of the goals of the African continental harmonisation effort and the creation of AHERS was to harmonise the diverse educational systems in the region, as well as bring together all the sub-regional harmonisation processes under the AHERS umbrella.

Another reason advanced for the adoption of the Bologna Process in Africa that cuts across the literature is related to the colonial relation that existed between Europe and Africa and which continued after independence. In his article, Khelifaoui (2009) perceived adoption as colonisation in disguise because adoption has been influenced by former colonial countries. Although it has been argued that before the Bologna Process, academic mobility mostly took place within ex-colonial networks, with the Bologna Process shifting toward a global network (Doh, P., 2012), the adoption of the Bologna Process in Africa has continued to follow ex-colonial ties (MacGregor, 2008). In this discussion, France is often seen as the main actor, expressing its wishes and, in some cases, providing financial support for former colonies to align their systems to the Bologna Process (Sall & Ndjaye, 2007). Croché and Charlier (2012) hold that the version of the Bologna Process adopted in (French) Africa is the French-assimilated version of the Bologna Process, which has been presented to former colonies as higher education reforms. Because of such external influence, Khelifaoui (2009, p. 23) describes it as a 'new paradigm of domination' that prevents African states from developing their own policies.

The main consequences of Bologna adoption in Africa involve competition, brain-drain and the commodification of education. Since enhancing mobility is one of the Bologna Process' goals, the question is whether Africa can compete in this domain. Africa is said to be on the losing side compared with its European counterparts in competing for and attracting students to the continent (Khelifaoui,

2009; Petsa, 2011; Shawa, 2008; Teferra, 2005). Although international mobility is highlighted in the African initiatives, these authors see only a one-way flow---the best students spotted and recruited by European universities, thereby leading to brain drain in Africa, a situation that Shewa (2008, p. 97) describes as 'European gain', but 'Africa's development demise'. As posited by Petsa (2011), African countries are at a disadvantage in this competition to attract students, noting that within the EHEA, the issue of mobility is appealing and one of the successes of the Bologna Process. However, in Africa, the result is an 'unprecedented brain drain'.

Another observation in the extant literature is that the Bologna Process enables the introduction of neo-liberal changes in higher education, facilitating the marketisation and commodification of education at universities traditionally perceived as institutions of knowledge (Štech, 2011, p. 263; Czarniawska & Genell, 2002). This economic approach to education has been advanced by the World Trade Organisation (WTO), especially with its General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). The WTO regulates and promotes the liberalisation of trade, and the GATS applies these trade principles to education. The GATS is considered the global context of the Bologna Process (Lorenze, 2006; Štech, 2011), challenging the concept of knowledge (Stiwne & Alves, 2010) as a product (Czarniawska & Genell, 2002). Thus, education is viewed as a commodity, universities as an industry and students as consumers (Gumport, 2000). In the African context, this shifting paradigm is also a cause for concern. There are concerns that the market approach to education redefines the role of universities, contributes to the decline of democratised higher education and opens up higher education only to those who can afford it (Sall & Ndjaye, 2007). This shifting paradigm to the market approach in higher education regarding the adoption of the Bologna Process in Cameroon is examined in Article IV.

Despite the reasons for the Bologna adoption and its consequences for Africa, learning from the European experience in creating the AHERS means enabling the development of a higher education system that can help the continent 'produce, seek and adapt knowledge to overcome its developmental challenges' and be 'locally relevant and globally attractive and competitive' (Mohamedbhai, 2013, p. 6)¹². This

¹² This process started in 2009 and was first identified by the UNESCO-ADEA work force as one of the strategic orientations for higher education in Africa in its preparation for the 2009 UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE). The creation of the AHERS was later emphasised in the UNESCO 2009 Communique of the WCHE. The communique was followed by an exploration of the concept of creating the AHERS by the ADEA working group, which convened a brainstorming workshop in 2010 in Accra, Ghana, with support from the African Union; it was hosted by the Association of African Universities. The report acknowledged that, although Africa shares similar drivers for educational reforms (e.g., disparate higher education systems, insufficient academic mobility, diverse providers, a multitude of languages, non-uniformity in quality provision, expansion of higher education, employability, globalisation and skills shortage), differences still exist (see

entails that Africa not 'simply adopt the Bologna Process...but rather adapt the approaches used to fit the African context' (Mohamedbhai, 2013, p. 40). Africa also should consider, in its harmonisation strategies, whether it is creating its own system or simply aligning with the Bologna Process (Hoosen et al., 2009).

3. TOWARD A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON TRANSNATIONAL FLOW OF GLOBAL IDEAS

This chapter discusses the theoretical underpinning guiding this dissertation. First, I discuss the changing patterns of higher education governance that are influenced by the global environment. Second, I indicate how the global environment presents new perspectives in comparative education studies, with an emphasis on the convergence/divergence and the global/local nexus in comparative education. Third, I focus on policy borrowing as the theoretical framework used. In this discussion, I situate policy borrowing within the field of comparative education, discuss what and why borrowing occurs, and examine the temporal dimension and adaptive and selective nature of policy borrowing. This is followed by an overview of policy borrowing as an analytical framework. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of the applicability and suitability of the policy borrowing framework applied in this dissertation.

3.1 Starting Point: Changing Patterns of Higher Education Governance

Research has demonstrated the different patterns of how higher education policies have been analysed to locate the role of various actors in decision-making. The basic question has been: Who defines the needs and functions of higher education? The state and market are accepted as two fundamental actors whose combined activities inform and influence the coordination and direction that national higher education takes. On one hand, the state plays the role of guardian (Neave, 2003) to ensure the autonomy of higher education and protect institutions from external influences (Ferlie, Musselin & Andresani, 2008; Neave, 2003). Through its regulatory powers, the state steers decisions and actions based on government objectives and shapes the direction that higher education takes through its funding schemes (Clark, 1983; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). The state also uses its authority to justify policy and legitimise its authority (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). On the other hand, the market, as an actor in higher education governance, supposes that higher education functions better when operated as an economic enterprise. It is believed that market policies strengthen students' choices and increase the quality of services offered (Jongbloed, 2003).

The triangle of coordination (Clark, 1983), put forth by US sociologist Burton Clark, has been used extensively in analysing and comparing the coordination of higher education systems and the role of different actors in higher education governance. Clark's triangle of coordination illustrates that higher education is coordinated

from three internal sources: state authority, the market and the academic oligarchy. These sources combine to provide different dimensions to examine national systems, indicating the directions along which they move. Clark positioned different countries within the triangle to show the extent to which different systems are coordinated by the state, academics or the market. Despite Clark's contribution to research in advancing our understanding of national higher education coordination, recent developments in higher education show that the higher education system is influenced not only by internal forces, but also by the global environment (Brannan, 2010; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012; Verger, 2014), which Clark's typology cannot address. It should be noted that Clark was writing at a time when globalisation had not yet taken its current form.

Contemporary developments---competition, accountability, marketisation, increased external stakeholders' involvement and globalisation---have elicited new challenges for higher education (Kearney & Huisman, 2007; Gornitzka & Maassen, 2000; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). External stakeholders, such as international organisations (World Bank, UNESCO) and intergovernmental/regional actors in higher education governance, also influence and shape national policy. These developments create a global context for national higher education reforms and encourage national policy makers to pursue national policy issues that align with global trends (Cloete et al., 2004). These developments bring new perspectives and debates into the study of comparative education, including the global-local and convergence-divergence problematics.

3.2 Convergence/Divergence and Global/Local Debate in Comparative Education

The changing patterns of higher education governance have contributed to the spread of similar reforms around the world, and increasing debate over whether education systems worldwide are converging toward a global model (Dale, 1999; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012; Verger, 2014) as a result. Convergence, as used here, refers to the movement from 'different positions towards some common point' and a tendency or process of 'becoming more alike' (Bennett, 1991, p. 219). In comparative education, the transnational flow of global ideas can be/has been studied using different theoretical approaches, with world culture and policy borrowing being the most common (Verger, 2014). While world culture theory focuses on the macro level, policy borrowing centres on the micro level (Verger, 2014). While convergence is a central topic in macro studies, divergences have been registered by scholars who focus on the micro

level, examining the local enactment of these global policies (Carney, Rappleye & Silova, 2012; Verger, 2014; Steiner-Khamsi, 2014).

From a world culture perspective, the convergence of educational systems entails the universalistic and global nature of education (Meyer & Ramirez, 2000) and the culturally embedded nature of the modern nation-state (Meyer, Boli, Thomas & Ramirez, 1997). The argument is that educational standardisation around the world 'lies in the characteristics of the contemporary world system', not particularly as a response to the political, economic and social characteristics of individual nation-states (Meyer, Ramirez, Rubinson & Boli-Bennet, 1977, p. 255). The world-society models are said to define, legitimise and shape the identities, structures and behaviours of nation-states, which also react to change in a similar manner (Meyer et al., 1997). In the view of world culture theorists, the adoption of similar policies, which are mostly seen as Western values of modernity, resulted from the legitimisation pressures on national governments to demonstrate to the world that they are building a modern state (Meyer et al., 1997). Convergence has been enabled and 'institutionalised in concrete organisations such as the World Bank, UNESCO and other parts of the UN system, the OECD, other world and regional organisations, and the multitude of proliferating international governmental and non-governmental organisations' (Meyer & Ramirez, 2000, p. 117). The result is a supposed 'global sameness' (Silova & Rappleye, 2015) in terms of policies and even practices among countries with different national attributes (Chabbot & Ramirez, 2000).

From a macro standpoint, the global spread and adoption of Bologna Process reforms by 48 signatory countries, plus its adoption by non-signatory countries, including Cameroon, signal that educational systems are converging because the 'semantics of reform' (Schriewer, 2000) points to this global sameness. However, as Steiner-Khamsi (2012) and Dale (1999) have emphasised, it is important to ask what is converging – whether it is the idea, the policy or the practice (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). The answer can be provided if these global models are studied at local levels to elicit actual effects and degrees of influence from global models on local systems. The global is interpreted as ideas and norms that are presented as spreading worldwide, whether real or imagined (Anderson-Levitt, 2012; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). What counts as local, according to Anderson-Levitt (2012), refers to the regular interaction of people in particular places. The regular interaction can be at the regional level, a nation-state, an entire university or a department of the university. Marginson and Rhoades (2002) coined the term 'glonocal' (global + national + local) to suggest that in higher education, institutions and human agents participate through a complex interconnection at three levels of action

simultaneously. This model demonstrates how the national and the local define, challenge and adapt alternatives to global pressures.

Educational policy borrowing also has been used to study the flow of global ideas and partly explain the convergence of education systems (Steiner-Khamsi, 2002), especially in name (Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006). Macro approaches to the study of global ideas, such as world culture theory, on one hand attribute local variations or divergence to the concept of loose coupling, signaling that, 'although elements are responsive to one another, they can retain some degree of independence' (Carney, Rappleye & Silova, 2012, p. 367). On the other hand, policy-borrowing researchers focus on the micro level, (local context), examining local reasons for the appeal of global models and highlighting divergences in the implementation of global policies. These divergences are accounted for by the fact that as global policies move, they morph (Cowen, 2009), and they are locally adapted, influenced by contextual factors (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012; Verger, 2014; Takayama, 2012).

3.3 Educational Policy Borrowing in Focus

In comparative education, different terms have been used to describe the transnational flow, movement and spread of policies and practices (Dale 1999; Dale & Roberston, 2012; Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004) across borders. These terms include policy learning, policy mobility, policy borrowing (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004) imitation, emulation, copying (cited in Dale, 1999) appropriation, assimilation or importation (Phillips & Ochs, 2003). Despite the wide range of terms, policy borrowing (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012, 2014; Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2008; Waldow, 2012) has been used widely to describe the deliberate and conscious adaptation of policies from elsewhere (Phillips & Ochs, 2004) or to describe, on a general level, the transnational flow of global policies (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012; Verger, 2014). I use the term policy borrowing in this dissertation because it continues to dominate the literature, despite some criticisms. For example, Phillips (2005) argues that 'borrowing is an unfortunate term' because of its inadequacy to linguistically describe the processes involved. Other scholars have criticised the term on the basis that its literal meaning signifies that what is borrowed will be returned after use (Bray, 2007; Dale, 1999), which, with policy borrowing, is not the case. As noted by Steiner-Khamsi (2012), no single term can adequately capture the different meanings and processes entrenched in the phenomenon. However, policy borrowing (and lending) seems to be the most appropriate term. The reasons she presents, besides being a widely used term in comparative education, entail the neutrality of the term concerning its

purpose and supposed outcome, and the avoidance of some pitfalls that a term like policy learning denotes, e.g., an excessively positive connotation.

I use policy borrowing as a theoretical framework in this dissertation to study local actors' engagement with global policy (the Bologna Process in the Cameroon higher education system). The strength of policy borrowing lies in the fact that it goes beyond the convergence/divergence discourse to examine why and how borrowing occurs at the local level, the processes involved, and how borrowed models are translated/modified and implemented in the local context. Policy borrowing, based on the notion that it is a deliberate and conscious adoption from elsewhere (Phillips & Ochs, 2003), highlights the fact that policy makers are not passive recipients (victims) of global policies, but rather active in this process, as they have the power to select what they borrow, as well as how they use what they selectively borrow (Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006; Verger, 2014).

3.3.1 Educational Policy Borrowing and Comparative Education

As indicated in the introduction, policy borrowing is an aspect of policy transfer that deals with the transnational flow of global policies, with a focus on the local context in which a borrowed policy is introduced. Studies on educational policy borrowing or policy transfer generally are comparative in nature and a fundamental theme in comparative education (Beech, 2006; Bray, Adamson & Mason, 2007; Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012; Nóvoa & Yariv-Mashal, 2003). Educational policy-borrowing studies have contributed to legitimising and establishing the field of comparative education (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014) in the last few decades, both as a method of inquiry and as a frame for analysis. This recognition came about after a long period of being blacklisted for its inability to 'distinguish itself as a sound intellectual project' (Nóvoa & Yariv-Mashal, 2003, p. 424). With the spread of similar educational reforms around the world, there is a question of whether policy transfer has escalated because of globalisation (Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012). This implies that educational transfer as a phenomenon is not new, although studies in comparative education have undergone significant changes in their methods of inquiry and analysis.

Nóvoa and Yariv-Mashal (2003) traced a chronological development in the field of comparative education, starting from the 1880s. The authors noted that the 1880s was a period of 'knowing the other' when 'the transfer and circulation of ideas, in relation to the worldwide diffusion of mass schooling, created a curiosity *to know* other countries and educational processes', which will assist 'national reformers in their efforts to build national systems of education' (p. 424). In the 1920s, according to these authors, the focus was on 'understanding the other' after World War I because

of the need for international cooperation. In the 1960s, the post-colonial period, the focus was on ‘constructing the other’ in terms of building educational systems in these new countries. This was done by exporting educational solutions to different countries and regions based on works that were carried out by international agencies, supported by the development of a ‘scientific approach’ for comparative studies. Finally, these authors identified the 2000s as a period of ‘measuring the other’ because of the ‘need to create international tools and comparative indicators to measure the “efficiency” and the “quality” of education’. These studies mostly are carried out by international organisations whose recommendations shape policy debates and influence national policy-making.

Marc-Antoine Jullien’s work in 1817, titled *‘Esquisse d’un ouvrage sur l’éducation comparée’* (*Plan for a Work on Comparative Education*) witnessed the birth of comparative education studies (Beech, 2006; Bray, 2007; Fan, 2007; Phillips, 1989). The work highlighted the need to collect systematic data and for a comparative method of inquiry in identifying best practices with the intent of transferring them to other systems (Bray, 2007; Phillips, 1989). Jullien’s work marked the first phase in comparative education studies and was termed the period of ‘borrowing’ (Bray, 2007) because the main motivation to study other systems was the ‘desire to “borrow” ideas that might be successfully imported into the home system...and from Jullien onwards, “borrowing” became a common, if often unrealistic, aim of much investigative work of a comparative nature’ (Phillips, 2005, p. 23). Jullien’s aim was to establish a set of principles that could be applied to improve education in most contexts (Beech, 2006). Despite his contributions to the field, Jullien has been criticised because of his view that education can be analysed independently and separately from its socio-historical context (Beech, 2006).

The second phase of studies in comparative education was represented by the work of Sir Michael Sadler in 1900 (Bray, 2007), who stressed that educational systems are linked to their society--and warned against selective borrowing (Bray, 2007; Steiner-Khamsi, 2002). The title of his conference talk in 1900, ‘How Far Can We Learn Anything of Practical Value From the Study of Foreign Systems of Education’, emphasised that context is important (cited in Beech, 2006; Steiner-Khamsi, 2002). As cited in Beech (2006, p. 5), unlike Jullien, Sadler noted that in studying other systems of education, ‘we must not keep our eyes on the brick-and-mortar institutions, nor on the teachers and pupils only’; rather, the focus should be on the ‘intangible, impalpable, spiritual force’ upholding the system. This implies that:

In studying foreign systems of education, we should not forget that the things outside the school matter even more than the things inside the schools, and

govern and interpret the things inside. We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant. A national system of education is a living thing, the outcome of forgotten struggles and difficulties, and of battles long ago. It has in it some of the secret working of national life (Sadler, cited in Beech 2006, p. 6).

For Sadler, the benefits of studying other systems of education are about better understanding one's own system, and not necessarily to borrow, because the idea of a universal educational model does not exist (Beech, 2006).

Among the early comparativists, Victor Cousin is considered one of the most fervent supporters of educational borrowing (Steiner-Khamsi, 2002). According to Beech (2006, p. 3), in one of Cousin's reports on the 'State of Public Instruction in Prussia', Cousin ended with a request for a transfer to take place. Unlike Jullien, who wanted to create a science of education that could be transferred to most contexts, Cousin was interested in using knowledge from elsewhere to improve and develop the French system. Cousin's work has been acknowledged for 'advancing scientific credibility' in the field through his survey of educational systems as a 'preliminary step, at a later stage, to justify educational borrowing from one system to another' (Steiner-Khamsi, 2002, p. 58). Cousin proposed a three-step process in educational borrowing, starting with studying the 'local problem and needs of an educational system', searching for 'educational systems that had resolved similar problems and faced similar needs' and finally recommending 'borrowing of solutions from these educational systems' (Steiner-Khamsi, 2002, p. 58). For example:

- Country A is an economic basket case (high levels of unemployment and low levels of economic growth), which is portrayed as largely the result of an educational system that is not producing workers with appropriate skills.
- Country B is economically successful (low levels of unemployment and high levels of economic growth), which is attributed to a well-educated workforce.
- Therefore, if A adopts some aspects of B's educational system, it will improve the state of Country A's economy (Morris, cited in Ochs and Phillips, 2004, p. 7).

The above example---besides highlighting the fact that policy borrowing is a rational process whereby policy makers first consider the problem, seek alternative solutions and select the best alternative (Rui, 2007) ---also suggests a one-way dimension of policy borrowing in which mostly developing countries borrow models from advanced

economies, but hardly the other way around. According to Bray (2007), this one-way directional borrowing is tied to perceptions of hierarchy, i.e., less-developed countries borrow from more-developed countries, and more-developed countries borrow from similarly advanced countries. The search also can be influenced by language (i.e., countries that speak the same language commonly borrow from each other) and political linkages (i.e., sharing among countries within the same political association) (Bray, 2007).

Research on policy borrowing has evolved over time, leading to an expansion of what constitutes borrowing and how borrowing occurs. According to Steiner-Khamsi (2012), the concepts have been adjusted, refined and expanded to incorporate new trends in the field. For example, she observes that there has been a shift from concrete lessons learned from an educational system to a general discourse on international standards by policy makers in justifying reasons for cross-national attraction in education. This shift points to the fact that policy borrowing cannot be defined solely in terms of 'learning and understanding what is happening elsewhere in education' (Phillips, 2000, p. 299), with the intention of solving similar problems or improving and developing provisions in other systems (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). The focus on lessons learned from an educational system suggests a bilateral frame that currently is being replaced by an international frame (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). In addition, harmonisation is also accepted as one form of borrowing, as recent studies focus on the creation of regional spaces of education, with harmonisation being a motive for policy borrowing. Considering recent developments in the field, in this dissertation, policy borrowing is used not just to refer to concrete lessons from a particular educational system, i.e., it is acknowledged that 'all global reforms qualify as traveling policies' (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012, p. 11), regardless of their origins or driving factors.

Educational borrowing research has branched out into two broad categories: normative and analytical (Steiner-Khamsi, 2013, 2016). The kinds of questions asked and the purpose determine the results obtained and how the results are used. For example, studies that fall within the normative branch often advocate borrowing, and the research that is carried out facilitates borrowing, as the aim is to identify the best educational systems to learn from and the best practices that can be transferred from one system to another (ibid). This was the intention of early comparativists, such as Jullien and Cousin. This is also the intention of international organisations, which, besides carrying out standardised comparisons to determine best practices, also use the results as indicators to ascertain global benchmarks. Unlike research that focuses on the normative strand, studies that fall within the analytical branch lie in understanding why, when and how policy borrowing occurs and the impact that such borrowed policies have on existing policies and/or practices (Steiner-Khamsi, 2016).

Research on the analytical strand has shown that policy borrowing is often used selectively, always locally adapted/modified and hardly replacing existing practices. This dissertation seeks to contribute to research on the analytical strand of studies on policy borrowing as it attempts to analyse the adoption and adaptation of Bologna Process ideas in Cameroon.

3.3.2 Policy Borrowing: What Is Borrowed and Why?

Our understanding of why borrowing occurs can be facilitated by looking into what is actually borrowed. A review of the literature suggests that almost everything can be borrowed and transferred from one system to another. According to Phillips and Ochs (2003, 2004), borrowing items may include guiding philosophy, ambitions/goals, strategies, enabling structures, processes and techniques. In their discussion on policy transfer, Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) identified eight categories: policy goals, policy content, policy instruments, policy programmes, institutions, ideologies, ideas and attitudes, and negative lessons. A distinction can be made between 'soft' and 'hard' borrowing items. Examples of hard borrowing items include policy instruments, policy programmes and institutions, while soft items include ideas and ideologies (Benson & Jordan, 2011). Ball's (1994) classification of policy into text and discourse can be used to narrow the broad categorisation of borrowing items. Text and discourse also constitute hard and soft borrowing, respectively. The borrowing of policy discourse implies that there is no intention to domesticate the foreign example, while the borrowing of text will lead to the domestication of the foreign example (Ochs, 2006). The borrowing of text could be used to inspire policy reforms that might lead to the termination of existing practices and also can converge with global educational initiatives (Ochs, 2006), such as Bologna Process ideas. Both the soft- and hard-borrowing items co-exist and can be borrowed concurrently (Stone, 2010).

A fundamental question in the research area of policy borrowing is why borrowing occurs. Among the reasons is the need to address a home-based problem (internal impulses). Studies by Phillips and Ochs (2003, 2004) have focused on this issue, as they examined the reasons for the British attraction to the German educational system over a period of 200 years. The reasons for this cross-national attraction included, among other things, internal dissatisfaction (by parents, teachers and inspectors), systematic collapse (inadequacy of educational provisions at home) and negative external evaluation (by international organisations or other widely reported and influential research about an educational system). International assessment studies, particularly the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

(OECD), have contributed a great deal toward borrowing because of negative external evaluations by participating countries who rank below PISA's average. Finland has become a global leader in education because of its top PISA position (Chung, 2010), and it has attracted other countries that want to know Finland's techniques (best practices) that have led to its PISA success to improve their own systems. Early comparativists, like Cousin, also advocated a process of policy borrowing that began from the home-based problem, which is identifying local needs first (Beech, 2006; Steiner-Khamsi, 2002). Often under pressure to solve these home-based problems, without any recognisable solutions at home, politicians look elsewhere for solutions (Halpin & Troyna, 1995). In this case, looking elsewhere aims to improve the local system because successful education policy abroad can be potentially beneficial to the local system (Phillips & Schewisfurth, 2006).

Besides the local-needs factor, certain political and economic (externalisation) reasons drive policy borrowing. References to techniques elsewhere and the political motive for policy borrowing also can be used by local governments to give authority and legitimise highly contested or controversial domestic reforms (Steiner-Khamsi, 2002; Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Ochs, 2006; Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000), such as reforms related to privatisation, standardisation of student assessment and outcome-based educational reforms (Steiner-Khamsi, 2002). The political discourse associated with policy borrowing also involves the need to meet international standards (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014). The international-standard motive can be used by global players to impose their best practices on national governments, as well as to monitor developments at the national level (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). National governments use this motive out of fear of being left behind (Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006) especially with the notion (whether real or imagined) that the Bologna Process is a global process. This motive appears to have influenced African universities' decision to adopt the Bologna Process. The argument is that African interests in these reforms are a direct consequence of the fact that higher education in this region copies European countries through their colonial relationship and that not adapting to the system risked the region 'being disconnected from the northern universities and from the world system' (Croché & Charlier, 2012, p. 462). In this case, African countries felt compelled to voluntarily adopt Bologna Process reforms (Eta, 2015a) due to the need to meet international standards and gain credibility by using global policy language.

Externalisation can be used only as a reference (a discourse to justify policy decisions), in which no actual policy is borrowed; rather, the supposed foreign idea is used to influence and inspire local reforms and solutions (Forestier et al., 2016; Ochs, 2006). And sometimes, externalisation, as a reference, is used to glorify practices in the

local system (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). These are typical situations in which borrowing is limited to policy discourse (Ochs, 2006). In as much as educational systems learn and borrow ideas from elsewhere, and make references to international experiences and practices for legitimation, it has been observed that ideas are not borrowed because they are good or because they depict best practices (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). Rather, policy borrowing has ‘much more to do with legitimating other related policies’ (Halpin & Troyna, 1995, p. 304) and giving authority to domestic reforms (Steiner-Khamsi, 2002).

Policy borrowing also occurs for economic reasons. The economic rationale for policy borrowing refers to a situation in which policy adoption is aid-dependent, i.e., a ‘precondition for receiving aid’ from donor agencies and international organisations. Implementation of such borrowed policies may only last if there is external funding (Steiner-Khamsi, 2013). The economic rationale for policy borrowing is said to be common among developing countries (see Samoff, 2001; Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008; Vavrus, 2004) that depend on aid. Regarding adoption of the Bologna Process in Africa, the Nyerere Mobility Programme and the Tuning Africa project, an AUC-EU partnership to support the harmonisation of HE programmes in Africa, is heavily funded by the European Union. Similarly, the UNESCO Education for All programme also was widely implemented in Africa because it was aid-dependent, a condition for debt cancellation. Policy borrowing motivated by political and economic rationale indicates that policy borrowing occurs regardless of whether home-based problems exist. It highlights the fact that the adoption begins from a global solution before the identification of the local problem that fits the existing global solution (Steiner-Khamsi, 2013). It illustrates that policy borrowing is not a rational and linear process (Ball, 1998), whereby policy makers consider the problem and alternative solutions, then select the best alternative (Rui, 2007) to solve the home-based problem.

The political and economic rationale for policy borrowing introduces the question of whether policy borrowing can be strictly voluntary, as stipulated by Phillips and Ochs (2003). Voluntary adoption is driven by a perceived need (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000), such as the need to meet international standards and gain international recognition. It can be driven by a country’s specific needs (internal impulses), such as those described by Phillips and Ochs (2004) and early comparativists, such as Cousin, in which policy borrowing begins from identification of local problems before examining solutions in foreign systems. Policy borrowing also can be coercive, implying that adoption is externally induced or imposed by donor agencies, international organisations and colonisers (Perry & Tor, 2008; Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000). Extant literature emphasises that the adoption of the Bologna Process in Africa

is coercive, imposed on African universities by their European counterparts through former colonial countries (MacGregor, 2008; Sall & Ndjaye, 2007; Khelfaoui, 2009) as discussed in sub-section 2.5.

However, it is also worth noting that policy borrowing or transfer generally can be a combination of both voluntary decisions and coercive pressure (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000) in which the adoption of a policy becomes obligatory because of countries' memberships in international organisations. In addition, harmonisation tendencies, such as the Bologna Process (Steiner-Khamsi (2012), also are accelerating coercive adoption. For example, although participation in the Bologna Process is considered voluntary, it also could be viewed as coercive, as EU member countries feel obligated to adopt the measures merely because of their EU membership. Policy borrowing that occurs because of international agreements is interpreted as both voluntary and coercive.

3.3.3 Temporal Dimension and the Adaptive and Selective Nature of Policy Borrowing

Recent developments in educational borrowing suggest that diffusion of innovation studies and social network analysis (Steiner-Khamsi (2014, 2016) have been influencing the field, introducing different frames of analysis. Diffusion of innovation (Rogers, 2003) and social network analysis (Watts, 2003) have attempted to explain the rate at which ideas and innovation spread over time. Thus, in these studies, time is the unit of analysis. Of importance to this study is the temporal dimension (Steiner-Khamsi, 2016) of diffusion that differentiates between early and late adopters of an innovation (Rogers, 2003; Watts, 2003). As Rogers (2003, p. 23) notes, 'when the number of individuals adopting a new idea is plotted on a cumulative frequency basis over time, the resulting distribution is an S-shaped curve.' Figure 2 shows the diffusion and adoption of the Bologna Process by different European countries from 1998-2015. The data used to plot the curve were extracted from the Bologna Process website,¹³ which shows the years of adoption by different European countries.

In the beginning, a few countries adopted the new idea (the innovators), and the curve starts climbing as more countries adopt. With fewer members of the social system still left to adopt, the curve starts to level off and finally gets to a straight-line point, leading to the end of the diffusion process (Rogers, 2003).

¹³ The website can be accessed at <http://www.ehea.info/pid34250/members.html>

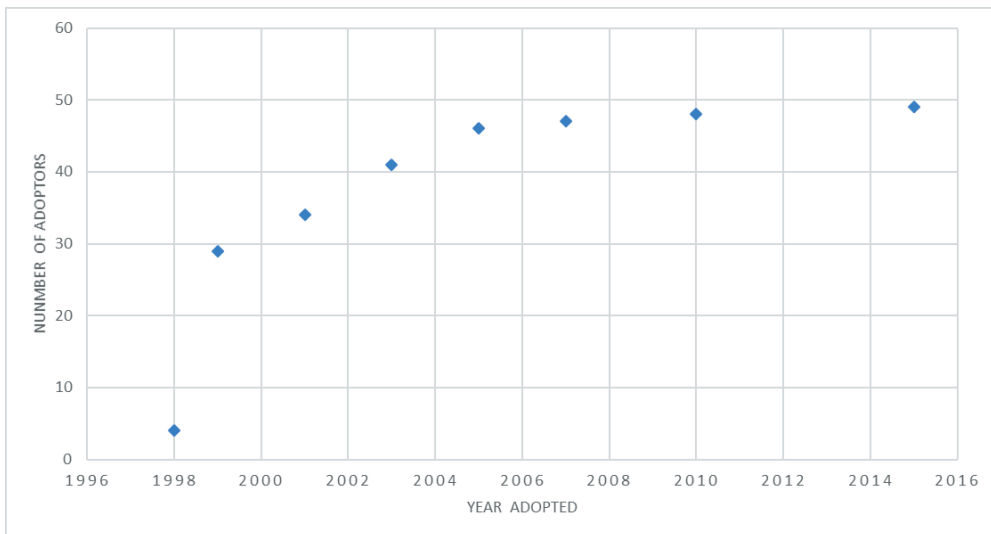


Figure 2: Adoption of the Bologna Process in Europe 1998-2015

Watts (2003, p. 172) has categorised this process into slow-growth, explosive and burnout phases. As discussed in Chapter 2 and as shown in Figure 2, between 1998 and 2015, 48 European countries adopted the Bologna Process, expressing their intentions to restructure their educational systems along common aims. France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy can be viewed as the innovators when they signed the Sorbonne Declaration in 1998, then invited other countries to join the process, which led to the signing of the Bologna Declaration in 1999 by 29 European countries (early adopters). The year 1999 can be identified as the explosive-growth phase, when the number of adopters grew from four to 29. Since 2003, fewer countries adopted the Bologna Process, as the curve begins to level out. The curve starts to follow a straight line from 2005 toward the burnout stage. All the countries that adopted since 2003 can be viewed as late adopters, including the CEMAC countries (of which Cameroon is a part of), which adopted in 2005.

As Steiner-Khamsi (2006, p. 666) observed, late adopters (e.g., Cameroon) adopted global reform at the burnout stage, when the reforms have been ‘de-territorialised, making it difficult to map the education system that served as an exemplar for emulation’. Off course, in situations like the diffusion of the Bologna Process, the origin of the discourse can be traced, but in terms of the actual practices that are borrowed, it becomes difficult to pinpoint any particular country. This is because at this stage, it has become ‘everybody’s and nobody’s’ reform (Steiner-Khamsi, 2006, p. 666). This difficulty could be compounded further by the fact that the Bologna Process is, first and foremost, a European harmonisation reform, agreed

upon at the regional level before being transferred to different European national contexts. During the process of transfer, the reforms are locally adapted, and the meanings reconstructed based on local beliefs and resources (Anderson-Levitt, 2012), leading to local variations (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008). This implies that (in the extreme case) there may be as many as 48 different versions of reform under Bologna. Other systems of education (outside the EHEA) that use different national contexts as their points of reference adopt the adapted approaches, which are further adapted into their own local contexts. As interviewees in this study indicated (see Article II), lessons were sought from countries such as France, the UK, Germany, Sweden and Belgium, leading to a hybrid of lessons learned, although what was adopted at the national level was said to be French-inspired.

Besides the question of local adaptation, policy borrowing always is selective and never wholesale (Steiner-Khamsi, 2016). Using the metaphor of the octopus, Steiner-Khamsi illustrates how local actors engage in policy borrowing by grabbing the octopus arms closest to their own agendas and attaching local meanings to them. A review of the literature on Bologna adoption in Africa can be used to illustrate this point. The title LMD, adopted in French-speaking Africa, in itself is an illustration of selective borrowing. Referring to French-speaking Africa, Croché and Charlier (2012) hold that the version of the Bologna Process adopted is the French-assimilated version, known as the LMD, which has been presented to former colonies as higher education reforms, notwithstanding the versions implemented in other European countries. The selective nature of policy borrowing is also visible in the content borrowed. In the African context, what is mostly emphasised is the conversion to two semesters, three-cycle studies and the division of curricula into credits (Sall & Ndjaye, 2007) and mobility (Zmas, 2015). In the Cameroonian context, as explained by interviewees in this study, the emphasis mostly was on the degree structure, credit system, employability and mobility, some of which were interpreted differently by the French- and Anglo-Saxon-modelled universities (Article III). Because of the adaptive and selective nature, Rappleye (2012, p. 125) describes policy borrowing as a political production to illustrate the idea that borrowing is like stagecraft, in which 'political players write their own scripts based on preexisting ideological convictions, then act out the drama of attraction and borrowing with the hope of producing particular effects'.

This discussion on the adaptive and selective nature of policy borrowing takes us back to the question of convergence. Because of local variations, convergence might be more visible in name rather than in actual practices (Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006), a phenomenon that Gudbjörg and Lindberg (2005) refer to as isonymism.

However, Zmas (2015) notes that the variations in national implementation may fade over time, leading the Bologna Process model to strengthen the similarities of the diverse national practices. Therefore, this implies that it is also possible for actual practices to converge, a process referred to as isopraxism (Gudbjörg & Lindberg, 2005).

3.3.4 Educational Policy Borrowing: An Analytical Framework

In the introduction, policy borrowing was categorised into two key stages, adoption and adaptation, and the difference in focus between the two was established. As an analytical framework, these two key stages can be further broken down into distinct stages, as presented by Phillips and Ochs (2003, 2004). These authors describe a circular and sequential model as a process of four stages, i.e., the cross-national attraction, decision, implementation and internalisation/indigenisation stages of educational borrowing, as illustrated in Figure 3. This model is based on Phillips and Ochs' analysis of the German influence on the English system.

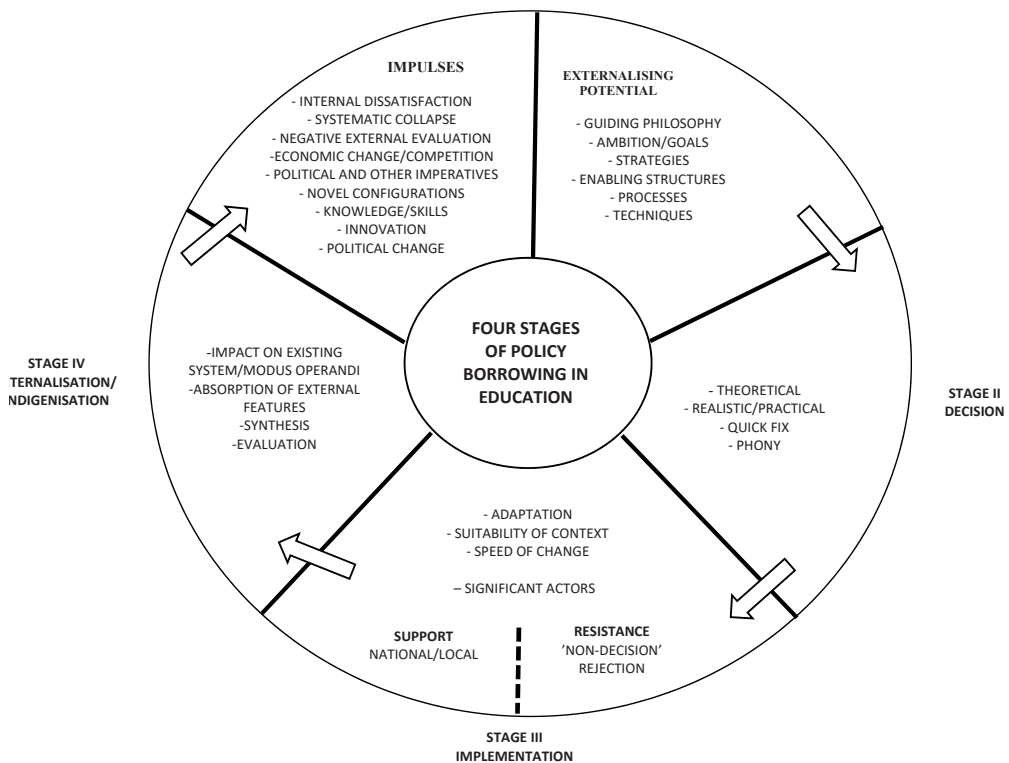


Figure 3: Four stages in educational policy borrowing: composite model. Source: Phillips and Ochs (2003, 2004)

Stage I, the cross-national attraction stage, consists of two phases: 'impulses' and 'externalising potential'. Impulses refer to the (internal) factors and conditions at home that spark the search for ideas, best practices, policies and models abroad (externalising potential) that can be borrowed to solve similar and existing home problems. The externalising potentials are the 'borrowable' elements from an educational system, including guiding philosophy, ambitions/goals, strategies, enabling structures, processes and techniques.

Stage II, the decision stage, indicates when educational systems decide to change and refers to the ways in which governments introduce these new ideas, policies and models into the local context to start the process of change. The authors describe four different ways through which the decision can be introduced into the local context: theoretical (decision based on an abstract idea), realistic/practical (ideas that have proven successful elsewhere), quick fix (quick decisions made to solve urgent problems without sufficient regard for essential infrastructure and contextual factors) and phony (introducing ideas that appeal to the electorate, but with no intention of implementation).

Stage III, the implementation stage, considers the 'contextual conditions of the borrower country' to enable implementation (p. 780). With implementation, the focus is on the adaptation of what is borrowed and the suitability of the context that will determine the speed of change. The attitudes of significant actors (people/institutions) who can either support or resist are determined by the speed of change. Resistance takes the form of either indecision or complete rejection of the borrowed policy.

Stage IV, internalisation/indigenisation, involves a four-step process, including assessing the impact on the existing system, in which motives and objectives are examined in relation to the existing system; absorption of external features to understand the extent to which borrowed features have been adopted; synthesis, when borrowed policy/practice becomes part of the borrower country's strategy; and evaluation, a review to determine whether borrowing has been successful, which can lead to the start of the borrowing process again.

The cyclical process of policy borrowing in this model indicates that policy borrowing is not a one-time but a continuous process---from the cross-national attraction stage to the internalisation stage---which can lead to another borrowing process. Besides the four stages of policy borrowing, Ochs and Phillips (2004) describe four filters involved in the policy-borrowing process: interpretation, transmission, reception and implementation. Interpretation highlights that educational actors' experiences influence the way they understand and interpret educational occurrences

and practices. After interpreting them, educational actors ‘filter the policy through the lens of their own agenda’ (p. 17), a process known as transmission. Reception, as the authors explained, is the stage at which the policy has passed from those who initially interpreted it (at the interpretation stage) and filtered it at the transmission stage. At the reception stage, the already filtered policy is filtered again by individuals and institutions with regard to their own purposes. At the implementation stage, the authors note that the policy still can be filtered, further distorting the original version. The four filters of borrowing indicate that the policy that is implemented in the receiving country can be very different from what was borrowed from the source (as discussed in 3.3.3).

3.3.5 Framework Suitability and Applicability

Although Phillips and Ochs’ four-stage model of policy borrowing described in subsection 3.3.4 provides an analytical tool for the study of policy borrowing, the model has, nonetheless, been criticised, grounded in the argument that ‘it is unclear when one stage begins and another one ends, or that there might be a “reverse” direction, where a later phase of the borrowing process could be a catalyst for cross-national attraction’ (Ochs, 2006, p. 612). In the application of the model in this dissertation, as seen in the focus of the empirical studies, especially in Articles II, III & IV, this challenge was observed. For example, although in Article II, the focus was on the second stage, i.e., on the decision stage, aspects of cross-national attraction (reasons for adoption and externalisation of the borrowing potential) also were considered. Regarding adaptation, although the focus was on Stage III, i.e., the implementation stage, which examines the local adaptation of borrowed models, aspects of Stage IV, the internalisation stage, were examined with an emphasis on Bologna’s impact on existing practices.

A key issue with most comparative studies, as Steiner-Khamsi (2006) observed, is that they are biased toward developed countries, with limited relevance to developing countries. This criticism highlights the fact that the reasons for policy borrowing and the processes involved in developing countries might be different from the ones described in Phillips and Ochs’ model. On one hand, it could be argued that if the reasons for borrowing begin with a local need, the possibility for policy borrowing to follow this model is stronger. On the other hand, if the motivation to borrow is sparked by political or economic factors (externally induced), there is a possibility that borrowing might not follow this sequence.

Another criticism is that its sequential structure gives the false impression that the policy process is linear and rational, whereas in practice, the policy process can be

random, with decisions based on the viewpoints and incentives of the multiple actors involved (Chow, 2014). Phillips and Ochs (2004, p. 781) also acknowledge that the model can be misleading and ‘impede the investigation of complex issues by trapping an analysis within what appears to be a limited framework of analysis.’

These criticisms notwithstanding, the model is useful in this study, as it pays attention to the ‘processes of educational policy borrowing and the context of educational reforms’ (Phillips & Ochs, 2004, p. 781). It provides ‘clear sequential stages for analysis’, suggests ‘factors to be investigated within each stage’, ‘establishes the notion of a circularity of process’ and underlines ‘the importance of context’ in such studies (Phillips, 2006, p. 313). The model suggests that a study of policy borrowing should focus not only on the content, but also, and most importantly, on the context, as different authors have warned. The difference between the two is that a focus on the content of transfer will certainly highlight commonalities, but ‘if we choose to bring the local context to the fore, direct our attention to agencies of lending and borrowing, and ask why some idea or discourse has been transferred, we gain a completely different understanding of transfer’ (Steiner-Khamsi, 2000, p. 158).

As applied in this dissertation, adoption as a key stage in policy borrowing includes the cross-national attraction stage (motivation to adopt, plus externalising potentials) and the decision stage (introduction of the borrowed model in the local setting, plus measures taken to start the process of change (Articles I & II)). My examination of the motivation for cross-national attraction acknowledges the fact that different driving forces can propel policy borrowing, including political and economic factors that are externally motivated, other than internal impulses, as described in Phillips and Ochs’ model, which can be viewed as a shortcoming of the model. The analysis of the empirical data on the motivation for adopting Bologna Process objectives in Cameroon reveals that there were external and internal reasons. My interpretation of adaptation, as the second stage of policy borrowing, includes the implementation and internalisation stages in Phillips and Ochs’ model. Based on my initial understanding, the plan was to focus only on the implementation stage within the adaptation stage and to leave out the internalisation stage. The decision at the time (while formulating interview questions and conducting the interviews) was based on the idea that universities in Cameroon were still in the early stages of implementation. However, in my analysis, aspects of the implementation and internalisation stages were analysed (Articles III & IV), with respect to degree structure, credit system and employability agenda, highlighting the changes that have been elicited as a result.

Because of the criticism of the model, especially that it is difficult to locate where one stage begins and ends and that the processes described might be irrelevant

for developing countries (such as Cameroon), in Chapter 6, which contains research findings and discussions, I present a framework that explains the processes involved in the adoption and adaptation of Bologna Process objectives in Cameroon.

4. RESEARCH TASK AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the aims of the dissertation and research questions are presented first, then the methodological choices are discussed in relation to the paradigmatic thinking, selection of cases, data-collection methods and analysis, along with elaboration on ethical and validity issues.

4.1 Research Task

This dissertation seeks to contribute to the international debate on the transformations exerted by the Bologna Process through the LMD reforms on higher education systems in the CEMAC sub-region, with a focus on the Cameroon higher education system. The aim of this dissertation is to use policy borrowing as a theoretical framework to examine the restructuring of the Cameroon HE system in line with the policy tools of the Bologna Process by focusing on the process of adoption and adaptation. This research is guided by the following three questions:

1. What are the reasons for the use of Bologna Process ideas as a tool for higher education reforms in Cameroon?
2. How were these ideas introduced and disseminated to start the process of change in Cameroon, and what has been the local response to the adoption?
3. How have some of the lines of action in the Bologna Process been implemented in Cameroon, and what do they reveal about the use of borrowed policies at the local level?

The research questions addressed in this dissertation are related to the two key stages---adoption (Articles I & II) and adaptation (Articles III & IV) ---addressed in policy-borrowing research and discussed in Chapter 3. By positioning this dissertation within both stages, the aim is to contribute to debates on policy borrowing concerning why local systems borrow policies and practices from elsewhere, how they introduce them into their local contexts and the local response to the adoption of borrowed models. The aim also is to contribute to research on how borrowed models are locally adapted and the factors that influence such adaptation. By examining these issues within the context of Cameroon, this dissertation contributes to generating context-specific knowledge/data and interpretations about the adoption and adaptation of the Bologna Process in Cameroon, which could be used as a basis for a comparative study among other CEMAC countries

in particular, and African countries in general, which are aligning their systems of education to Bologna Process reforms.

4.2 Research Methodology

A research methodology helps make visible not only the product, but also the process of scientific inquiry (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In this and the subsequent sub-sections, I discuss decisions made throughout the research process in terms of the method of inquiry, selection of cases, and methods of data collection and analysis to answer the questions outlined in the previous section.

A qualitative approach was adopted to gain an in-depth understanding of the adoption and adaptation of Bologna Process ideas in the Cameroonian higher education system. Addressing the specific aim and research questions guiding this dissertation required the perspectives and views of different actors involved in the process. Qualitative research is rooted in the constructivist paradigm (Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Kezer, 2006), which holds that 'there is no single knowable reality that we can access since all understanding is filtered through human beings, but that people construct and interpret knowledge, and therefore knowledge is relative and specific' (Kezer, 2006, p. 343). Individuals develop subjective and varied meanings of phenomena, and it is the role of the researcher to uncover these complexities in views. Thus, the qualitative researcher depends on study participants' views to find meaning in the phenomenon being studied through interactive processes (Creswell, 2009). This highlights the fact that reality is a social construct that relies on individuals' subjective views, which are influenced and shaped by historical and social factors, as well as individuals' personal experiences. The qualitative approach, grounded in the constructivist worldview, was suitable for examining the views of policy makers, university administrators and lecturers as to why Bologna Process objectives were adopted, how the ideas were introduced and disseminated in Cameroon, the local response to the adoption and how the ideas were used to reform the Cameroon higher education system. The views were gathered through text documents (see 4.5.1) and open-ended, semi-structured interviews (see 4.5.2).

4.3 Single-Country Comparative Research Design

In comparative study, debates have centred around how many cases need to be included in a study for it to be considered comparative. While for some scholars, this should include more than one country, for others, single-country studies also can be

comparative (Landman, 2008; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2008). In line with Landman's (2008, p. 28) argument, I consider this dissertation a single-country (Cameroon) comparative study because 'it uses concepts that are applicable to other countries' and it 'seeks to make a larger inference that stretches beyond the original country used in the study'. This study also can be considered comparative because it focuses on policy borrowing, i.e., on the transnational flow of a supposed global reform, the Bologna Process, in the Cameroon higher education system.

The approach adopted for this study is what Phillips and Schweisfurth (2008) refer to as an intra-country comparative study. With intra-country comparative studies, 'the nation-state provides the framework of a common ground, while the subunits of the state in question provide for the basis for a study of similarities and contrasts' (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2008, p. 21). Cameroon is a good example of what Phillips and Schweisfurth (2008, p. 21) refer to as 'a complex nation-state' due to its colonial history, which led to the adoption of English and French as its official languages and a dual education structure in line with the French and Anglo-Saxon traditions. With policy borrowing, emphasis is usually placed on what happens in the national/local policy context (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012; Phillips, 2006). The local policy context, in the case of Cameroon, is the unit of analysis, and the universities are the subunits of analysis. As a complex nation-state, Cameroon lends itself to comparisons between the subunits, not only in terms of reception of these ideas, but also in terms of translation of what is borrowed and how it is implemented. Therefore, the two subunits allow for a comparison of LMD system adaptation (degree structure and credit system) at the universities, as seen in Article III.

4.4 Case Selection: Country and Universities

The selection of a country in a case study can be based on the researcher's familiarity with the country (Lor, 2011; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2008). As a Cameroonian, I was inclined naturally to study this phenomenon within the Cameroonian context because of my familiarity with the terrain, making access easier. Despite familiarity with the terrain, access was a constant process of negotiation and adjustment (Vuban and Eta, Forthcoming). Besides my familiarity, Cameroon presents an interesting case among the CEMAC countries, being the only country in the region that had dual French and British colonial rule, with an education system modelled after both the French and Anglo-Saxon systems. As such, a study of the adoption and adaptation of Bologna Process in the two sub-systems of higher education in Cameroon is bound

to bring to light complexities that might be nonexistent in a one-system country. It is like studying two countries in one.

At the institutional level, five universities were selected for this study: the Universities of Buea, Yaoundé I, Yaoundé II, Douala and Dschang. Two factors informed the choices: (1) including only universities in Cameroon that were in existence before the adoption of the LMD system in 2005, as these universities were the ones transitioning to the LMD system (all five universities selected fit this profile), and (2) because Cameroon operates two sub-systems of education (Anglo-Saxon and French) based on its colonial history, the second factor was to include universities from both sub-systems. The University of Buea was the lone Anglo-Saxon university in Cameroon prior to the adoption. The other universities---the University of Yaoundé I, Yaoundé II, Douala and Dschang---were conceived as bilingual universities, but are more French-oriented in terms of structure and organisation.

4.5 Methods of Data Collection and Analysis: Documents and Interviews

Qualitative studies rely on multiple sources of data, which assist in triangulation to get a better understanding of the phenomenon studied (Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Yin, 1989). These sources may include documents, archival records, interviews and observations. The empirical data for this study are based essentially on documents and semi-structured interviews.

4.5.1 Document Review Process

To understand the context and process of adoption and adaptation of Bologna Process ideas in the Cameroon higher education system, this study began by reviewing some Bologna Process-related documents from 1998 to 2013,¹⁴ with the aim of understanding the general philosophy behind the process and how the lines of action were developed (see Chapter 2). This context was important because to claim that borrowing has taken place, we should be able to trace what we are studying 'to a model already in existence elsewhere' (Phillips & Ochs, 2004).

Given that the LMD reform in the Cameroon higher education system was part of a regional commitment by CEMAC member countries, CEMAC documents on the LMD system from 2004 to 2006 (those that were available online) were reviewed, with the primary focus being to understand what was being adopted from the Bologna Process and how, why there was a regional commitment to that system, the actors involved in the process, and how the system was to be implemented. These documents

¹⁴ The year that interviews for this study were conducted

included a declaration (2005), a recommendation (2005) and two directives (2006a & 2006b). Third, documents produced by the Cameroonian Ministry of Higher Education from 2006 to 2010 also were studied, with the objective of getting a general understanding of what the LMD system was about for Cameroon, as well as the universities' mapping of the implementation process. The documents comprised the 2007 and 2010 bilingual quarterly reviews of higher education, published in *SUP INFOS*, the main journal of the Cameroon HE system. In addition, the 1999 Ministry of HE *arrête* also was examined to spotlight the conditions of teaching programmes and evaluations at these universities prior to the LMD. Finally, documents produced at the institutional level, i.e., at the universities, also were studied, including the 2007 and 2008 *BUN Newsletter*, produced by the University of Buea, and explanatory notes on the different concepts related to the LMD, produced by University of Yaoundé I. This first¹⁵ document-review process was essential in developing an initial understanding of the overall process. The documents were explicit on the rationale for adoption in the CEMAC region, including Cameroon, and were used as research material in Article I. More documents (such as samples of students' transcripts and the Ministry of Higher Education guidelines on the introduction of the LMD in universities in Cameroon) were collected during the interview process and were used in subsequent articles.

The documents were useful, not only in terms of their content, but also because they provided access to information from people who otherwise would be inaccessible or difficult to access (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007) because of administrative bottlenecks, time and cost. For example, during my field trip to Cameroon, all attempts to interview the universities' vice chancellors were unsuccessful, mostly because of administrative bottlenecks. However, I gained access to these people through the documents' content, which included editorials and interviews from top higher education officials, including the Cameroon Minister of Higher Education and some vice chancellors and top officials of Universities. As useful (in terms of rich content) as the documents were, they were limited concerning whose voices were represented (mostly top officials). The documents mostly described the benefits of the reforms, what was expected to change with the LMD and how. Because of the huge disparity that can exist between policy talk, policy action and policy implementation (Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006), the documents were treated as clues, rather than definitive evidence (Yin, 1989). Given that this study's focus goes beyond an analysis of the reasons for adoption to include examining how the LMD was introduced

¹⁵ The second document-collection and review process took place during the interview phase, when more documents were collected and analysed in subsequent publications (Articles II, III & IV).

in Cameroon, the processes involved that led to the actual implementation at the universities and the changes elicited as a result of such implementation, the documents were complemented with semi-structured interviews.

4.5.2 Interview Process

In all, 62 interviews were conducted between October and December 2013 with policy makers at the Cameroon Ministry of HE, university administrators and lecturers from the five state universities selected for this study. Of the 62 officials, 33 participated in their capacity as university administrators, while 29 took part as lecturers. Of the 33 administrators, three came from the Ministry of HE, while 30 came from the five state universities. Two of the three policy makers also were university lecturers; thus, they participated both in their capacities as policy makers and as lecturers. Out of the 30 administrators from the universities, 24 participated as both university administrators and lecturers, while six only served in administrative roles. Table 2 is a summary of the total number of participants distributed, according to institutions and status as administrators and lecturers.

Table 2: Distribution of participants by institution

Institutions	Administrators	lecturers
University of Buea	9	12
University of Yaoundé I	7	7
University of Yaoundé II	2	3
University of Douala	7	3
University of Dschang	5	4
Ministry of Higher Education	3	-
Sub Total	33	29
Grand Total	62	

Of the 30 university administrators, 11 were from the central administration of universities, 15 were faculty, and four came from departments, as illustrated in Table 3. Participants' specific universities have been designated with the numbers 1-5 for anonymity purposes.

Table 3: Distribution of administrators by level, positions and university

Position	University
Level: Central administration	
1. Former/Vice chancellor	1
2. Chief of programmes	1
3. Head of admissions and records	1
4. Director of academic affairs	1
5. Deputy vice chancellor	1
6. Director of academic affairs	2
7. Administrative assistant	2
8. Chief of programmes	4
9. Vice rector in charge of cooperation	5
10. Director of academic affairs	5
11. Vice rector in charge of teaching and professionalisation	5
Level: Faculty	
12. Dean	4
13. Former dean	1
14. Vice dean of studies and student affairs	1
15. Head of classroom activities	3
16. Representative for students' welfare	5
17. Vice dean of research and cooperation	1
18. Vice dean of academic affairs	2
19. Guidance counsellor	2
20. Head of programmes and certificates	2
21. Vice dean student affairs	4
22. Vice dean student affairs	4
23. Vice dean academic activities	4
24. Vice dean admissions and students' affairs	4
25. Head of translation, admission office	3
26. Administrative assistant	3
Level: Department	
27. Head of department	1
28. Head of department	2
29. Head of department	4
30. Head of department	5

A combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques (Neuman, 2004) were employed in the selection of individual participants. Purposive sampling is a technique whereby individuals to be included in a study are selected by the researcher based on participants' knowledge of the research issue, and their capacity and willingness to participate (Oliver, 2006). Interviewees included in this study were selected based on their knowledge of the LMD system and the system prior to the LMD, as well as their willingness to share their understanding and perceptions of the adoption and adaptation of the LMD system. The snowball sampling technique, on the other hand,

requires the identification of an initial participant, who is then used to identify other participants (Atkinson and Flint, 2004; Newman, 2004).

Some interviewees for the study were selected based on an initial study of text documents related to the LMD in the Cameroon higher education system (Article I). These documents carried the names of those who had written them and those involved in discussions related to the LMD. I contacted those whose email addresses I could find, informing them about the study and my willingness to interview them. As a graduate from the University of Yaoundé I in Cameroon, I knew administrators and lecturers who have witnessed and experienced both systems. In addition to contacting prospective interviewees directly, I asked a field assistant, an old friend, who has studied in both sub-systems (and who was doing his PhD at one of the universities) to contact more participants. While some of the participants whom we contacted agreed to be interviewed, others declined, and some put us in contact with other potential interviewees.

The interviews were conducted with the aim of clarifying certain aspects that were unclear or lacking in document analysis; understanding the decision-making process, perceptions and local responses to the adoption; and gaining an understanding of how universities in Cameroon were implementing some LMD objectives. The theoretical framework (policy borrowing discussed in Chapter 3) was part of the methodology, as the interview questions were formulated to capture aspects of the two key stages of policy borrowing, considering the sub-division of those stages as presented by Phillips and Ochs (2003, 2004). Interview questions were formulated along four themes¹⁶: (1) adoption of the LMD and external influences, (2) introduction and dissemination, (3) implementation and (4) general perceptions. Questions under the first three themes covered aspects of the different stages of policy borrowing, while questions under the fourth theme were constructed to capture interviewees' experiences and perceptions of the adoption, introduction and implementation of the LMD, informed by a review of the literature on perceptions regarding the adoption of the LMD in Africa (Eta, 2015a). The questions under each theme were formulated such that there was room for follow-up questions depending on interviewees' responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Kvale, 2007). Interviewees' responses shaped the focus of the empirical section. For example, in one of the questions, interviewees were asked to identify features of the LMD that were considered important for Cameroon and why. Degree structure, credit system, professionalisation and mobility were the four recurrent features that were identified. Hence, Articles III and IV, which deal with actual implementation (adaptation), focus on degree structure, credit system and employability agenda.

¹⁶ The interview questions are included in the appendix at the end of this dissertation.

Because interviewees were drawn from both the ministry and universities, and based on the premise that their positions and roles in policy formulation and implementation differ, two sets of interview questions were formulated, one for interviewees at the ministry and the other for interviewees at the universities (administrators and lecturers). Interviews lasted between 46 minutes and two hours and seven minutes for policymakers and university administrators, and between 26 minutes and 68 minutes for lecturers. All participants whose interviews were recorded gave their permission to be recorded, with three interviewees (two administrators and one lecturer) not recorded by request, as they feared any possible direct or indirect sanctions for criticising the system, should their anonymity somehow get compromised. The non-recorded interviews lasted between 77 minutes and two hours and seven minutes. The time spent on the interviews depended on how much time the interviewees had, how much knowledge they had on the themes covered and how much information they were willing to provide. Before the interviews, interviewees were informed about the general aim of the study and about confidentiality issues. For interviewees' protection, all interviews were anonymous. Permission to use verbatim quotes also was requested from all interviewees and was granted.

4.6 Data Analysis

A thematic analytical approach was the main method employed for data analysis in all articles except Article III, in which a combination of thematic and temporal-comparison approaches was utilised. Thematic analysis is a fundamental and widely used method of analysis in qualitative research for 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). It goes beyond word or phrase counting by 'identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas' (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012, p. 10). The role of the researcher is to make sense of the data and organise the data into suitable categories or themes that represent the data (Creswell, 2009).

Thematic analysis is suitable for studies grounded in the constructivist paradigm to unravel how individuals create meaning out of the world around them and construct their own reality (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It was a useful tool for capturing complexities of meaning (Guest, et al., 2012), as well as interviewees' perceptions about the adoption and adaptation of Bologna Process ideas in Cameroon. Its strength also lies in its flexibility, allowing for both inductive/data-driven and deductive/theory driven analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest et al., 2012). With inductive/data-driven analysis, the themes identified are linked strongly to the data, without trying to fit

them into any extant frame. With deductive/theory-driven analysis, the identified themes are based on the researcher's theoretical framework or analytical interest (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest, et al., 2012). This study makes use of both approaches, though in varying degrees.

The first step in the analysis of the individual studies was to reduce the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest, et al., 2012; Namey, Guest, Thairu & Johnson, 2008) from the corpus (all data collected for the project) into a data set (data from the corpus to be used for particular analysis) (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to answer particular research questions. The data set included aspects from the corpus to which the different topics examined in the articles were referred. Through a coding process, initial themes were identified (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest et al., 2012). Recurrent themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006) with enough supporting evidence were retained, in which a theme was measured in terms of the frequency of its occurrence across the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Namey et al., 2008). There were two theme levels identified: the semantic/explicit (the surface meaning of the data, which is very descriptive) and the latent/interpretive (the underlying meaning that shaped the semantic content and its implications) levels (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Quotations from documents and interviews were used to support the themes discussed because they represent a trend across the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Time is a consistent variable discussed in comparative studies generally (Cowen, 2002), and policy borrowing research particularly. However, Cowen (2002, p. 413) notes that the concept of time, though a central issue in comparative education, has been undertheorised. In Cowen's view, time has been treated more like a 'historical perspective to see the origin of things', differentiating between global and local time and showing a linear progression and diffusion of world models around the world. Cowen's argument is that there is a 'variety of times' (p. 424), including contextual time---cultural, biographical and political---which often is ignored in comparative analysis. This criticism notwithstanding, Chapter 2 (sub-sections 2.1 and 2.2) and Chapter 3 (sub-sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.3) of this dissertation use time in relation to the origin of the Bologna Process and its diffusion as a historical and chronological process because the aim was to show the development of a process that has influenced the Cameroonian higher education system. Similarly, the temporal-comparison approach that was applied in Article III was very basic and historically situated and contextualised. Time was used as a unit of comparison to examine 'changes in education policy regimes that follow each other' (Kallo, 2012, p. 211) in the local context of Cameroon. The focus was on the adaptation of the degree structure and the

credit system at universities in Cameroon. As such, through temporal comparison, I describe changes in the degree structure and grading systems in French and Anglo-Saxon universities in Cameroon before and after adoption of the Bologna Process through the LMD system.

4.7 Validity and Research Ethics

Research validity is the demonstration that a supposed instrument measures what it intends to measure in a study and takes many forms: honesty, depth and scope of the data collected; the participants involved; degree of triangulation; and researcher objectivity (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Research ethics refer to the code of conduct in the collection, analysis and reporting of information about research participants (Cohen et al., 2007), as well as consideration of how the data will be stored (Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity, [TENK] 2009).

Validity can be achieved through triangulation. This study uses two data sources---text documents and interviews---to support my interpretations of adoption and adaptation of Bologna Process in Cameroon. However, Article I relied solely on text documents as research material. One of the limitations of policy documents is that they are said to be mere policy talk because action and implementation may be very different (Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006). The 62 interviews from different higher education stakeholders, including universities from the two sub-systems and interviewees from the different linguistic backgrounds, were an attempt to achieve fairness, i.e., ‘a complete and balanced representation of the multiple realities’ (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 136) in the context being studied. Although interviews also can ‘talk the talk’, interviews nonetheless provide room for further explanation, which increases credibility.

Triangulation of investigators (Cohen et al., 2007), also called consensual validity (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007), i.e., the use of multiple researchers, also has been used to increase the validity of this study and reduce any bias that interpretation by a single researcher can bring to a study. The co-authorship in Articles II and III was a conscious effort to validate not just the data and its interpretations, but also the theoretical framework in terms of the different perspectives and understandings that the various co-authors bring to the issues examined. Peer-debriefing---a kind of external evaluation in which other people (Cohen et al., 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007), called debriefers, evaluate the research and pose questions about its procedures, interpretations and conclusions (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007)---also was used to enhance the study’s validity. This

was done through peer reading and discussions of the various articles, as well as presentations to other PhD candidates, staff and supervisors of content during certain phases of the research process at annual seminars organised by education faculty. All the articles included in this dissertation were presented at both national and international conferences to diverse audiences. In addition, the four articles included in this dissertation have undergone rigorous, autonomous peer reviews. The questions and feedback received from these various forums provided new insights that greatly helped improve and strengthen the general introduction, analysis and conclusions arrived at in this dissertation.

The application of prescribed ethics is one way through which research can be considered valid or reliable (TENK, 2012). TENK rules require researchers to abide by and conform to research principles approved by the scientific community. One such ethical principle is informed consent. Interviewees decided to grant or not grant interviews after the study's aims were explained to them. Some potential interviewees refused to be interviewed because they thought the topic had political undertones and that they were not in a position to discuss such topics. Others who refused cited lack of time and insufficient knowledge on the topic. Permission to record the interviews also was requested, and as mentioned earlier, three interviews were not recorded because the interviewees feared the recordings may get into the wrong hands and implicate them in some way. The three interviews that were not recorded followed the same format as the recorded ones, except that the researcher took notes. After the interviews, the notes were read back to the interviewees for confirmation, clarification and validation (Cohen et al., 2007). However, for the recorded interviews, although some interviewees listened to their interviews for validation, the opportunity for the interviewees to add further information and clarification was very limited because of the time-consuming nature of the process. There were questions as to whether informed consent should be documented in writing or verbally (Hyde & Wali, 2006; Mollet, 2011). Before data collection, consent forms were prepared for interviewees to sign, but the first few interviewees refused to sign the forms on grounds that it contradicted the principle of anonymity and confidentiality. Most participants said agreeing to be interviewed implicitly provides consent and does not need any written documentation.

Conscious efforts were made to ensure interviewees' anonymity (TENK, 2009, 2012) by removing names when attributing direct quotations and removing names, subjects taught and their universities within quotations, as seen in Articles II, III and IV. However, six interviewees wanted to be identified in this study by their real names. To allow for consistency in the way interviewees are referred to, and to conform with

the principle of research ethics, especially that of ensuring participants' anonymity and confidentiality, all interviewees have been anonymised. In Articles II, III and IV, in which I used interview data, all participants are referred to by their generic titles with (in some cases) their universities, such as policy maker or policy maker/lecturer (for policy makers who also were lecturers), university administrator or university administrator/lecturer (for administrators who also were lecturers) or just lecturers (Article III). In some cases, the universities were not mentioned, only the interviewees' general titles (Article IV). In Article II, only the interviewees' positions and the institutions (represented with numbers) were mentioned. These variations were a constant effort to anonymise the interviewees as much as possible, especially after one of the first articles I wrote using interview data was rejected partly on grounds that 'when you refer to your interview data, you have been very specific, to the point where the individuals who spoke to you could be identifiable. This would be in breach of commonly understood ethical standards' (anonymous peer reviewer). Although I do not agree with that statement because the interviewees were anonymised as indicated above, I did, however, become more conscious of how I identify interviewees. In Article I, in which I relied solely on text documents, 'the real names and positions of participants were retained because the documents are public documents that can be accessed by everyone' (Eta, 2015b).

As required by TENK, necessary research permits should be obtained prior to data collection. Research permit letters were posted in June of 2013 to the Cameroon Ministry of Higher Education and to the five state universities used in this study. Another set of letters was submitted by my field-assistant friend to the various universities and to the Cameroon Ministry of Higher Education. After three months of waiting for the letters of authorisation without any response, I travelled to Cameroon in hopes of getting the permits personally. While in Cameroon, another set of letters was distributed (see appendixes). I was told to carry on with the research (interviews and document collection) and that the permits would be posted to my home institution. Some of those responsible for drafting the letters of authorisation were interviewed, and they helped identify other interviewees. After returning to Finland, only one out of six research permits was received. In this study, I accepted verbal consent from policy makers and university administrators to carry on with the interviews with policy makers, university administrators and lecturers. I do not in any way claim that verbal permission should replace written consent, but that it can be used in countries such as Cameroon, where bureaucratic bottlenecks prevail, where no clear research procedures exist, and where there exists a huge information gap as to who does what, when and how. In other words, universal ethical guidelines should be

adjusted to consider culturally diverse contexts (Marshall, 2008; Upvall & Hashwani, 2001).

Another ethical concern that can pose a challenge to validity is the researcher's role in the research process. This role also is emphasised in the constructivist worldview, which calls on researchers to recognise how 'their own background shapes their interpretation' (Creswell, 2009). It requires that researchers question their own assumptions through a process of reflection so that they understand their own perspectives and strive to reduce their influence on the research (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2008). The positionality of the researcher may facilitate or inhibit access, as well as facilitate or inhibit interaction between the researcher and participants. As a Cameroonian, it was easy to access participants due to my understanding of the country's cultural, historical, political and social contexts. As a University of Yaoundé I graduate, I maintained a network of friends and lecturers who facilitated access. Presenting myself as a Cameroonian and as a former student was enough to gain access to participants and institutions. However, being an Anglophone Cameroonian who is more proficient in English than in French inhibited access to French-only speaking interviewees, some of whom told me to 'take my English somewhere else'. Aware of this challenge, in this study, I made a conscious effort to include Francophones who are bilingual, i.e., who could communicate fluently in English. Again, in line with my low proficiency in French, and given that all the CEMAC documents on the LMD and most of those produced by the Cameroon Ministry of Higher Education were written in French, I used the services of a professional Cameroonian translator to ensure maximum accuracy during data analysis. My position as a Cameroonian enrolled in a European university facilitated access, though sometimes, it worked against me. Some interviewees saw me as a spy who had come to evaluate the implementation of the LMD in Cameroon. This limited my access to data because some participants were more comfortable narrating what was stated in the policy documents and what was required of them, rather than sharing their experiences and perceptions of what was obtained in practice (for me on this discussion, see Vuban and Eta, Forthcoming). The use of multiple data sources analysed via thematic analysis to capture patterns within the data set was an attempt to represent interviewees' views, distance myself from the analyses and maintain objectivity.

To allow for any possible verification of findings from the data and possible future use (TENK, 2009), the data were anonymised and stored on my computer. Stored data will be used for research purposes only. In case of future use by a secondary user,

because of anonymisation, the secondary user will not be able to identify individual participants.

Finally, one way to achieve validity is by being honest throughout the research process (Cohen et al., 2007). I have described the research process from data collection to analysis and have reported findings as thoroughly as I possibly could.

5. OVERVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

This dissertation includes four articles that investigate and deepen our understanding of the transnational flow of Bologna Process beyond Europe by examining the process of adoption and adaptation in the CEMAC region, with an emphasis on the Cameroonian higher education system. This chapter summarises each article.

Article I: Eta, E. A. (2015). Policy borrowing and transfer, and policy convergence: justifications for the adoption of the Bologna Process in the CEMAC region and the Cameroonian higher education system through the LMD reform. *Comparative Education*, 51(2), 161-178.

Examining the reasons why educational systems adopt/borrow policies and ideas from elsewhere to implement them in their local contexts is a major focus in comparative education research and constitutes an aspect within the adoption stage of policy borrowing.

The main aim of this article was to investigate why Bologna Process ideas were adopted and justified in the CEMAC region and in the Cameroonian higher education system. The emphasis on justifications for adoption was premised on the observation that borrowed models or reforms generally can be resisted by significant actors in the field (Phillips & Ochs, 2003). As such, policy makers always are under pressure to justify reforms (Steiner-Khamsi, 2002). The focus on justifications for adoption contains two levels, the CEMAC sub-regional level and the Cameroon national level, because Bologna Process ideas were first adopted at the CEMAC sub-regional level under the title 'LMD system' before being transferred to the Cameroon national context. Therefore, it was important to find out how the adoption was justified at different levels.

Data for the analysis were based on text documents. For the analysis at the CEMAC sub-regional level, the data comprised official text documents from CEMAC heads of state (Libreville Declaration, adopted in 2005) and the CEMAC Council of Ministers (2006a and 2006b). At the Cameroon national level, the documents comprised publications provided by the Ministry of Higher Education, universities and from a literature review. The contents of the publications provided by the ministry and the universities included editorials, articles and interviews on the LMD system. The editorials were written by the minister of higher education and a former vice chancellor of one of the universities. The individual interviews were granted by senior administrators at the ministry (senior academic inspectors), vice chancellors and deans at the universities. In addition, included in those publications (university

publications) was one focus-group interview on perceptions of the adoption and implementation of the LMD system.

Examining the justifications for adoption at the CEMAC sub-regional level revealed the intentions and benefits of adoption to the region, especially that of harmonisation, as well as the benefits of relating better internationally, especially with the European system. At the Cameroon national level, justifications for the various lines of action were examined (degree structure, credit system, curriculum renewal, mobility and professionalisation). These different lines of action were justified in terms of the challenges faced by the Cameroon higher education system; thus, adoption was a way of resolving those challenges, some of which also were visible at the international level.

Because the analysis in this article was based solely on text documents and was limited in scope, it elicited further questions, especially because policy borrowing consists of different stages, and this article is situated within the first stage. Thus, an analysis of the other stages was conducted to examine how Bologna Process objectives through the LMD were introduced in Cameroon (Article II) and how some of the lines of action were locally adapted and implemented in Cameroon (Articles III and IV).

Article II: Eta, E. A., Kallo, J., & Rinne, R. (2017). Process of transfer and reception of Bologna Process ideas in the Cameroon higher education system. *European Educational Research Journal*. DOI: 10.1177/1474904117733376.

The focus of the second stage of policy borrowing within the adoption stage in the Phillips and Ochs model is the decision-making stage, which examines the different ways through which a borrowed model is introduced into the local setting to start the process of change. Given that Bologna Process ideas were first adopted at the CEMAC level, this article had two objectives. The first was to analyse the process of transferring Bologna Process ideas through the LMD system from the CEMAC sub-regional level and their introduction into the national and institutional context of Cameroon. The second objective was to examine local responses to the adoption in Cameroon. By examining the process of transfer and introduction, as well as the local response to Bologna Process ideas in the Cameroonian higher education system, this article seeks to improve knowledge at the adoption stage of policy borrowing.

Data for the article consisted of text documents and 62 semi-structured interviews conducted with stakeholders of higher education in Cameroon, including policy makers, university administrators and lecturers on the various aspects of the LMD system, as discussed in the methodology chapter. Data were analysed through

thematic analysis to identify and capture patterns with the data set, which was reduced to reflect only the parts of the interviews that dealt with adoption and transfer to Cameroon, introduction at universities, and perceptions of the adoption and transfer process.

The article revealed that in Cameroon, the question was not about adoption of the LMD system, as the decision already had been made at the CEMAC sub-regional level through the signing of the Libreville Declaration by heads of state, but rather on disseminating the ideas and preparing the universities for their implementation. We identified the different ways through which the LMD was introduced in Cameroon, how the ideas were disseminated, the actors involved, and the process of examining externalisation of the borrowing potential. Regarding local responses to the adoption of the LMD system and its transfer to Cameroon, this article highlights the tensions and complexities of adopting a borrowed model in a dual system of education because of the history of higher education in Cameroon and the country's colonial past.

Article III: Eta, E. A., & Vubo, E. Y. (2016). Global references, local translation: adaptation of the Bologna Process degree structure and credit system at universities in Cameroon. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 14(4), 492-512.

Implementation is the third stage in the Phillips and Ochs model, constituting an aspect of the adaptation stage of policy borrowing. The focus in this stage is on what happens to educational ideas as they travel, what happens to existing practices once borrowed models are introduced and how borrowed models are used at the local level. It has been observed that policy makers are not passive; rather, they are active agents in the borrowing process, as they engage in selective borrowing and modification of what they borrow (Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006). These questions are taken up in this article and in Article IV.

The aim of Article III was to examine (1) the adaptation of the degree structure and credit system in the Anglo-Saxon and French systems of education in Cameroon and (2) the factors that informed the adaptation. The focus on the degree structure and credit system was informed by the interview data, in which interviewees identified them as important aspects of the LMD for Cameroon. The article adopts a comparative approach to compare the implementation of the degree structure and the credit system in the two sub-systems of education, as well as to compare practices within each subsystem before and after LMD.

Data for the analysis of the first objective, i.e., degree structure, comprised three documents, all produced by the Cameroon Ministry of Higher Education. The data used in relation to the grading system comprised official transcripts issued

by universities in Cameroon pre-LMD (1999–2006) and post-LMD (since 2008). A temporal-comparison approach was applied in which time was used as the unit of analysis (Kallo, 2012) to examine changes in the degree structure and grading system pre- and post-LMD. Both text documents and interview data were used for the second objective. The interview data were drawn from the same source in Article II. Through thematic analysis, the data were reduced to reflect only the parts of the interviews in which the degree structure, credit system, and perceptions of the factors that influenced their adaptation were discussed.

The results suggest that the adoption and implementation of Bologna Process ideas led to changes in the degree structure and grading system in the Anglo-Saxon and French sub-systems of education in Cameroon, though to varying degrees. Because the adaptation was more evident in the French-inspired universities than in the Anglo-Saxon university, the factors that influenced the adaptation are discussed in relation to implementation in the French-inspired universities.

Article IV: Eta, E. A. (2017). Enhancing Graduate Employability in Cameroonian Universities Through Professionalisation in the Context of the ‘Licence-Master-Doctorate’ Reform. *Higher Education Policy*, DOI: 10.1057/s41307-017-0055-7.

This article focuses on one of the central aims of the Bologna Process: enhancing graduate employability. The Bologna Process is said to be an ‘attention gatherer for employability’ (Sin & Neave, 2014, p. 1447), not only in Europe, but also in Cameroon, with the adoption of Bologna Process through the LMD system. With the LMD system, enhancing graduate employability is a top priority of the Cameroon government, captured in the slogan: ‘One student=one job opportunity, one student=one business enterprise’ (Ministry of Higher Education, 2010a, p. 7). It also was evident from the interviews, as interviewees indicated that graduate employability also was one of the most important objectives of the LMD system for Cameroon. Employability is examined in this article as a global policy objective for higher education that has been reemphasised with the Bologna Process.

The aim of Article IV was, therefore, to examine how graduate employability is enhanced at universities in Cameroon by focusing on the conceptualisation of employability as a policy objective, its translation into practice through the different operational strategies adopted, and the implications of conceptualisation and operational strategies.

Data for this article were obtained through text documents and interviews. The documents comprised the Ministry of Higher Education 2007, 2010a and 2010b directives and guidelines. Just like in Articles II and III, interview data for this article

were extracted from the 62 interviews conducted for the overall study. The extracted interviews focused on interviewees' understandings of employability, including employability strategies, and perceptions of the employability agenda. This study uses 33 out of the 62 interviews collected for the entire project because these interviewees were explicit not only in discussing professionalisation as a policy objective, but also in their criticisms of the strategies adopted and the professionalisation agenda in general. The 33 participants included the three policy makers at the Ministry of Higher Education and 30 university administrators at different levels. Data were analysed using thematic analyses.

The results reveal that graduate employability is enhanced at Cameroonian universities through different strategies under the catchword 'professionalisation', which was conceived not as a specific programme, but as a general culture at universities to be achieved through different strategies. Based on conceptualisation and operational strategies, mismatches between the intended objective and actual outcome were identified.

6. MAIN FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter discusses the overall aim of the dissertation, presents the main findings from the empirical studies and some implications, and ends with a discussion on considerations for future research.

The aim of this dissertation was to examine the restructuring of the Cameroon higher education system with Bologna Process policy tools, focusing on adoption and adaptation in Cameroon. The research questions focused on:

1. Reasons for the adoption in Cameroon
2. The introduction, dissemination and local response to the adoption in Cameroon
3. Implementation of some of the lines of action in Cameroon and what they reveal about the use of borrowed policies at the local level

The theoretical framework essentially was based on policy borrowing, which provided a tool to examine the adoption and adaptation of Bologna Process in Cameroon. Phillips and Ochs' (2003) stages of policy borrowing that further divided the two key stages, adoption and adaptation, into four manageable stages (cross-national attraction, decision, implementation and internalisation) provided clear stages for the analysis and the aspects to focus on at each stage. In other words, policy borrowing, as a theoretical framework, provided an approach that enabled me to break down the complex processes involved in borrowing. To achieve the general aim of this dissertation and answer the specific questions guiding this research, four studies were conducted, using data from text documents and interviews. The data were analysed mainly through thematic analysis, except in Article III, in which thematic analysis was supplemented with temporal comparison.

Regarding the reasons for the adoption of Bologna Process ideas in Cameroon, the findings from Articles I and II reveal that Bologna Process ideas were used as a tool for higher education reforms in Cameroon as an obligation to the CEMAC sub-regional harmonisation initiative, which used Bologna Process ideas to construct the CEMAC space for higher education, research and professional training through the LMD system, making LMD's transfer to Cameroon coercive (Articles I and II), as supported by previous research (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). LMD's adoption in Cameroon also was justified in terms of the global status of the Bologna reforms (which Cameroon and the other CEMAC countries wanted to be a part of) and the need to meet international standards, especially in terms

of the degrees offered. The international standard motive (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014; Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000) is related to the political discourse associated with policy borrowing, especially that of the ‘fear of “falling behind” internationally’ (Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe, 2006, p. 14). Such a reason for adoption implies that the ‘global’ solution was first adopted before the construction of the problem. As this study indicates, the global solution fit well with the local problem, as adoption was seen as having the potential to resolve higher education challenges in Cameroon, such as legitimising the harmonisation of the dual Anglo-Saxon and French systems of education in terms of the degree structure and grading system that will, in turn, enhance inter-university mobility and enhance graduate employability (Articles I and II). This reveals that the adoption was not solely coercive, but that there were voluntary elements as well.

The results in Article II demonstrated that the LMD was introduced in Cameroon through a political decision by the head of state, as the decision was not discussed with the university community prior to its adoption in 2005. This study provided evidence that the introduction of the LMD in Cameroonian universities was an imposition by the government on the universities, a finding that has been highlighted in relation to the introduction of the LMD in Africa (see Khelfoui, 2009). As discussed in Chapter 1, and as highlighted by B. Doh (2015, p. 76), this implies that higher education in Cameroon is ‘a prerogative of the state, and policy for state universities (is) directly designed by the government in a top-down approach’.

Grounded in the decision stage of Phillips and Ochs’ (2003) model of policy borrowing, Article II also indicated that the introduction of the LMD in Cameroon was a combination of theoretical, realistic/practical and quick-fix decisions. As a theoretical decision, this study demonstrated that the goals of the Bologna Process, including mobility, employability, readability, comparability of degrees and harmonisation, are abstract and theoretical concepts that were used as the basis for the formulation of the LMD implementation guide in Cameroon. As a realistic decision, it indicated that the Bologna Process was viewed as successful in transforming higher education systems in Europe, which also had the potential to resolve higher education challenges in Cameroon (also see Article I). Regarding the quick-fix decisions, this study highlighted that despite the Bologna Process’ solution-oriented nature in resolving higher education challenges in Cameroon, its introduction in Cameroon was rushed without sufficient regard to contextual factors, such as issues related to infrastructure, human resources, and the dual French and Anglo-Saxon systems of higher education in Cameroon.

Because in Cameroon, the question was not about adoption, as that already had taken place at the CEMAC level. The focus was on disseminating the LMD in preparation for universities' implementation. This study shows that the formulated text documents to guide the implementation and organisation of conferences and seminars were the main tools used in disseminating the LMD. For example, in one of the conferences, two Bologna experts were invited to share their experiences with the Bologna Process (Article II). These conferences contributed to enhancing interaction among different actors, as well as circulating and legitimising (Chisholm, 2007) the Bologna Process as a global process, with Cameroon as part of that process (Article II).

Concerning the local response to adoption, the findings in Article II illustrated that there were diverse perceptions about adoption. While some interviewees viewed adoption as imposed or externally influenced by France (because the LMD also was used in France to refer to the Bologna Process reforms there), others saw it as voluntary (to harmonise higher education in the area), and some were even uncertain whether it was voluntary or imposed. The lack of involvement by participants in the adoption process could explain the variation in perceptions, which mainly were based on assumptions. As a tool for higher education reforms in Cameroon, the LMD was highly supported (60 out of 62 interviewees would have voted for its adoption had they been consulted prior to adoption) because of the numerous benefits from LMD on Cameroon, highlighted in Articles I and II. However, Article II also demonstrated that there were sceptics of the approaches adopted, which were said to be aligning more with prior practices of the French-modelled universities in Cameroon, and Universities in France, despite the operation of the dual French and Anglo-Saxon systems of education in Cameroon. Thus, Cameroon's dual colonial legacy conditioned the ways in which aspects of the Bologna Process were received (Article II) and implemented (Article III).

On the question of how Bologna Process ideas have been used in Cameroon for reform purposes, the focus was on implementation of the degree structure and credit system in the two sub-systems of education in Cameroon, Anglo-Saxon and French, and on the employability agenda. The results suggested that the adoption of Bologna Process ideas did not change the degree structure at the Anglo-Saxon university significantly because the Anglo-Saxon university in Cameroon operated on the bachelor's, master's and PhD degree system since its conception in 1993. Thus, the adoption was used to reinforce the degree structure at the Anglo-Saxon university, which limited its degrees to these three degrees by eliminating the Postgraduate Diploma, which acted, in some cases, as an intermediary between

bachelor's and master's degrees, as well as movement between two related disciplines. At the French-inspired universities, the LMD degree structure did not completely replace the existing structure (see Article I for the degree structure pre-LMD in both sub-systems); rather, the structure was modified to incorporate elements of both the old and new systems. The adoption of the credit system reinforced practices at the Anglo-Saxon university in terms of number of credits as the university operated on an earlier (but lesser number of credits at the different degree levels) version of the credit system. Thus, the number of credits moved from 96 credits and 126 credits to 180 and 240 credits for bachelor's and double bachelor's degrees, respectively. At the master's level, it moved from 42 to 120 credits and from 90 to 180 credits at the PhD level. At the French-inspired universities, the credit system was introduced, but was modified to accommodate the module and average system that was previously in place. Article III highlighted the factors that led to adaptation of the degree structure and the credit system at the French-inspired universities, factors that indicated that adaptation was influenced by the context of Cameroon, such as labour-market requirements, the need to accommodate unemployed graduates and CEMAC recommendations.

The adaptation shows that borrowed models hardly replace existing practices (Steiner-Khamsi 2012b), especially in the case of French-inspired universities. Although there were differences in the implementation of different sub-systems, the adoption and implementation of the LMD degree structure and credit system at the Anglo-Saxon university (Articles II & III) were used to glorify (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004) existing practices in the sub-system (II & III), while in the French-inspired university, it was used for legitimisation purposes (Halpa & Troyna, 1995; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Ochs, 2006), as earlier attempts at harmonisation were highly contested, especially by French policy makers in Cameroon (Doh, P., 2008). Concerning the implementation of the employability agenda, Article IV demonstrated that the adoption of the Bologna Process was used as an 'attention gatherer for employability' (Sin & Neave, 2014, p. 1447), endorsed by universities and supported by employers and industries as main players to enhance employability. However, regarding its conceptualisation as professionalisation and operational strategies, especially through the creation of professional degree programmes, focusing on teaching for specific professions, this study in line with Forestier et al., (2016), Ochs (2006) indicated that policy borrowing was used more as a reference, in which the adoption was used to inspire local reforms and solutions that already were embedded within the system.

6.1 Adoption and Adaptation of Bologna Process ideas in Cameroon

Based on the results from the four empirical studies, the process of adoption and adaptation of Bologna Process in Cameroon has been summarised in Figure 4. As illustrated in Figure 4, the adoption and adaptation of Bologna Process ideas in the Cameroonian higher education system started from a cross-regional initiative to create the CEMAC space for higher education, research and professional training through the LMD system as adopted in the Libreville Declaration. As discussed in Article I, the signing of the Libreville Declaration by the CEMAC head of states was a result of a recommendation in 2004 by the Conference of Rectors and Officials of Research organisations of CEMAC to adopt the LMD. On 7 February, the CEMAC council of ministers recommended the creation of a technical unit to oversee implementation of the LMD, which officially was adopted in 2005 by the CEMAC head of states, of which Cameroon is a part. As stipulated in the Libreville Declaration and as discussed in Articles I & II, the main reasons for the adoption were to harmonise higher education, research and professional training in the CEMAC region (to enhance mobility of students and staff in the region) and for the CEMAC region to converge with the European system to facilitate collaboration between regions. On the instruction of the CEMAC head of states, the Council of Ministers in 2006 defined the means of constructing the CEMAC space, which was to be achieved with the adoption of the LMD degree structure and credit system to enhance mobility and professionalisation of studies. These borrowable aspects (externalisation potential) focused on the Bologna Process' guiding philosophy and goals.

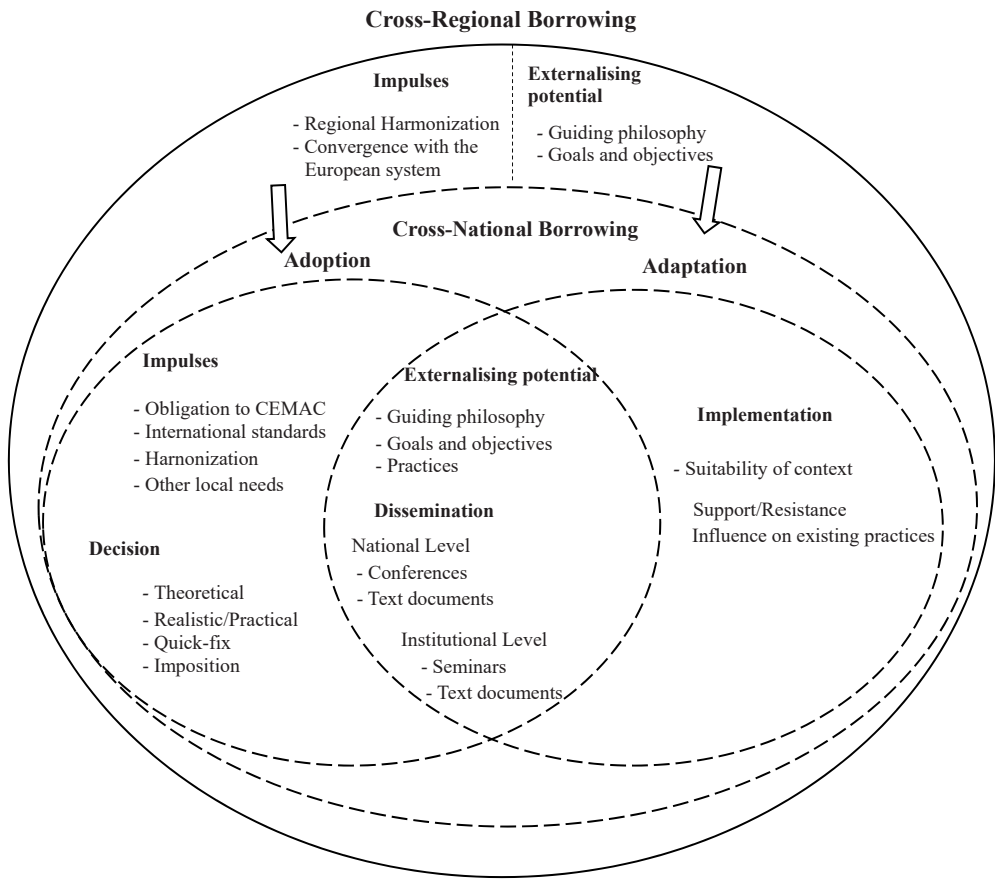


Figure 4: Stages of Policy Borrowing of Bologna Process in Cameroon

Given that implementation is carried out at the national level, these borrowable aspects were introduced in the Cameroonian higher education system as examined in Article II. Because it was difficult to locate where one stage begins and ends in the Phillips and Ochs model, in this dissertation, I have grouped those sub-stages into adoption and adaptation, focusing on the aspects that were examined in the empirical studies. Within the cross-national borrowing stage, I have used dotted lines to illustrate that what was transferred and implemented in Cameroon was informed by what was adopted at the CEMAC cross-regional stage. This study provides evidence to suggest that at the Cameroon national level, the adoption and adaptation of Bologna ideas was an interconnected process. Cameroon’s reasons for adoption were influenced by the country’s obligation to the CEMAC and the need to meet international standards, harmonise the dual Anglo-Saxon and French degree structures and grading systems, and provide solutions to other higher education challenges in Cameroon, discussed in Articles I & II.

The decision to introduce the LMD in Cameroon, as discussed in Article II, was based on theoretical, realistic/practical and quick-fix decisions. As indicated by interviewees, the decision also was an imposition on the universities by the government, through the Ministry of Higher Education, as universities were not consulted prior to adoption at the CEMAC level. Because adoption was done out of Cameroon, there was a need to disseminate (at the national and institutional levels) the ideas and pave the way for implementation. Dissemination was a continuous process that took place both at the adoption and adaptation stages. At the national level, this was done through conferences and the production of text documents to guide implementation. The conferences at the national level mostly were to educate university officials, who will then lead implementation at the institutional level, where dissemination started with the creation of implementation committees, leading to the production of more text documents (informed by national texts) and the organisation of seminars to educate the university communities about the LMD. The text documents prepared by the universities were based on their understanding and interpretation of the national documents and by the traditions of the Anglo-Saxon and French educational sub-systems. This informed the way aspects of the LMD (degree structure and credit system) were locally adapted and implemented in the sub-systems (Article III).

The externalisation of the borrowing potential also took place, both at the adoption and adaptation stages. At the adoption stage, the externalising potential (guiding philosophy and goals) borrowed from the Bologna Process at the CEMAC level was introduced in Cameroon. At the adaptation stage in Cameroon, the externalising potential mostly involved learning about concrete lessons/practices from different European countries and educational systems implementing the Bologna Process. At the adaptation stage, the context (Anglo-Saxon and French sub-systems) influenced what was implemented, the extent to which the LMD was supported or resisted, and the influence it had on existing practices.

6.2 Implications from Study

Investigating local systems' motivations for educational policy borrowing and the processes involved are central issues in comparative education. The present set of studies carries implications for current theoretical understandings of policy borrowing. This work provides evidence to support the fact that the reasons for policy borrowing in the local context can be complex and multifaceted. The empirical studies (Articles I & II) show that the reasons for the borrowing of Bologna Process ideas in Cameroon ranged from harmonisation initiatives to create the CEMAC sub-

regional space for higher education, to the need to catch up with a global trend and meet international standards. Harmonisation as a motive for implementing Bologna Process ideas in the Cameroonian higher education system illustrates a shift from a cross-national attraction (in which adoption is based on a country's interest in another country's system) to a cross-regional attraction (in which adoption is based on an entire region or sub-region's interest in another region). The harmonisation motive for policy borrowing challenges the voluntary nature of policy borrowing, as harmonisation indicates that policy borrowing is coercive, an obligation of a country due to its membership in an organisation, whose agreement that country is bound to respect (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012).

The cross-regional nature of the adoption of Bologna principles in Cameroon also has some implications for the processes involved in policy borrowing to start the process of change. The present work challenges the sequential order of the processes involved in policy borrowing as presented by Phillips and Ochs (2003, 2004). Their sequential model includes the cross-national attraction stage (impulses and externalising potential), decision stage, implementation stage and internalisation stage. This study provides evidence to suggest that the process of borrowing started with a cross-regional attraction (impulses and externalising potential), followed by another process of borrowing at the national level, discussed in this dissertation as adoption and adaptation because of the interconnected nature of the processes involved, as illustrated in Figure 4 and as discussed in sub-section 6.1. The aspect of dissemination has been introduced within both the adoption and adaptation stages in this dissertation to show how the ideas flow and how local actors engage and prepare for implementation. Like dissemination, the externalisation of the borrowing potential also happens both at the adoption and adaptation stages, with different foci on the borrowable items. At the adoption stage, the borrowable items constitute a guiding philosophy and goals and objectives, while at the adaptation stage, they constitute more practical lessons. This double process of externalisation of borrowing potential is probably because of the cross-regional nature of adoption, in which externalisation of the borrowing potential already took place prior to its introduction in Cameroon. Thus, the present paper attempts to contribute to theory development on the processes involved in policy borrowing.

The need to meet international standards as a reason for implementing Bologna principles in Cameroon supports the observation in the literature that there is an increasing 'shift from bilateral to international reference frames' (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012, p. 9). This suggests that policy borrowing may not start with local needs. Rather, as illustrated in this study, the adoption of Bologna Process ideas in the Cameroon

higher education system started from what Steiner-Khamsi (2013) calls the global solution before the identification of the local problem to fit the existing solution. However, this work also provides evidence to suggest that the global solution can be a good fit for the local problem. For example, the empirical section (Articles I & II) shows that the adoption of Bologna Process ideas in the Cameroon higher education system also was justified in terms of its potential for tackling higher education challenges in Cameroon. This evidence suggests that although harmonisation and international-standards motives may be a stronger reason for policy borrowing, emphasising local needs provides room for more local support and less resistance for policy borrowing, as illustrated in Article II. As seen in Article II, although the introduction of Bologna Process ideas was viewed as an imposition on universities, most of the interviewees (60 out of 62) would have voted for adoption had their opinions been sought prior to adoption because of the solution-oriented nature of the reforms to tackle higher education challenges in Cameroon.

Research has shown that it is easier to explicitly interpret the reference society when the attraction is cross-national. For example, when Phillips and Ochs (2004) interpreted the British interest in the German educational system, Ochs (2006) illustrated how the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham implemented practices from Switzerland and Germany, and more recently, studies have focused on Finland as a reference society due to the country's PISA success. The harmonization and international-standards motives and the cross-regional focus of policy borrowing may blur the reference society, in which concrete lessons are learned, given that attention is mostly paid on international discourse or practice. However, focusing on the process of transfer of Bologna Process principles through the LMD from the CEMAC sub-regional level to the national context of Cameroon makes it possible to probe into and make sense of the search for the externalisation of the borrowing potential, i.e., on how and where concrete lessons are learned and why. This study illustrates two ways through which this search is carried out. The first is Cameroonian officials visiting countries in Europe that are implementing the Bologna Process, and the second is Bologna Process experts visiting Cameroon. In line with Bray (2007), this study shows how language influenced the country, in which Bologna Process lessons are drawn as French universities' officials visited mostly French-speaking countries while English-speaking university officials visited mostly English-speaking countries. This study also suggested that Cameroon's dual colonial legacy conditioned the ways in which Bologna Process principles were received and viewed, which, in turn, creates tensions because the adopted approaches at the national level were said to be more French-driven.

Finally, there was the conception in the literature that the adoption of Bologna Process ideas in the Cameroon higher education system may contribute to the harmonisation of the dual French and Anglo-Saxon degree structure (Doh, P., 2007, 2008; Eta, 2015b), which would, in turn, enhance inter-university mobility. This work suggested that there is an increasing harmonisation in name and, to an extent, in terms of practice. For example, harmonisation in name is achieved in terms of issuing common degrees and using the same credit system at all universities under the two sub-systems. However, in terms of practice, there are still differences in the actual operationalisation of the degree structure and the credit system (Article III). The differences in the application of the degree structure and credit system are deeply rooted in the dual systems of education in Cameroon, as each sub-system seeks to preserve its cultural heritage. Thus, it seems that there always will be barriers to the harmonisation of higher education practices because the two cultures have to co-exist (Tchombe, 1999) for fear that harmonisation may lead to assimilation and subsequent extinction of one sub-system (Ngalim, 2014). This reasoning probably contributed to the Ministry of Higher Education's press release in the *Cameroon Tribune* (2016), which said, 'The specificities of the Anglophone sub-system of education will have to be respected as prescribed by the Law. The Universities of Buea and Bamenda will, therefore, harmonise their curricula among themselves without necessarily conforming to the Francophone model'.

6.3 Directions for Future Research

The studies that comprise this dissertation present an interesting case of policy borrowing, drawing our attention to the restructuring of the Cameroonian higher education system according to Bologna Process policy tools. By focusing on the case of Cameroon, examining the adoption (justifications for the adoption, introduction, dissemination and local response) and adaptation and implementation of the degree structure, credit system and employability agenda, this dissertation seeks to contribute to the international debate on the transformations of the higher education systems in Central Africa and the global influence exerted by the Bologna Process. Although the CEMAC sub-regional sphere consists of six countries, the main focus of this dissertation was on the case of Cameroon. Single-country studies on these issues in the other CEMAC countries would deepen our understanding of the impact of the Bologna Process in the sub-region. Further research also can take a comparative approach with the six CEMAC countries, or selected countries within the CEMAC sub-region and/or with other sub-regional initiatives. The findings in this single-

country case study have provided the essential data and interpretations on which such comparisons can be based and broadened.

At the national level, this study included policy makers' perceptions through the Cameroon Ministry of Higher Education, university administrators and lecturers from five state universities. Research on these processes in the private sector certainly will shed light and bring in another perspective on the restructuring of the Cameroon higher education system more broadly. As highlighted in Article IV, and as pointed out in previous studies (Doh, P., 2012; Doh, B., 2015), enhancing graduate employability requires that universities partner with employers and professionals. The employability agenda of the LMD that was examined in Article IV was limited to the conceptualisation, operational strategies and their implications, focusing solely on the perceptions of higher education stakeholders. Further research is needed on employers to examine their role and perception in preparing students for the job market. Furthermore, because the goal is to enhance graduates' employability, there is a need for research that considers the perceptions of students and examines their employment situations after graduation. There also is a need to examine how the employability agenda is shaping the role and function of universities.

The studies that comprise this dissertation represent initial work in Cameroon that examines the Bologna Process through the policy-borrowing framework. Policy borrowing/transfer is a broad phenomenon, and possible topics for research are endless. This study provided evidence of why and how policy borrowing of Bologna Process ideas occurred in Cameroon, highlighting what Steiner-Khamsi (2016, p. 382) refers to as the 'problems the borrowed policy supposedly pretends to solve', such as the need to enhance employability and mobility, and for the harmonisation of the dual systems of education in Cameroon (Article I). Further research on the actual outcomes of these issues, especially the issues of mobility and employability, is needed. Although this work touched on the aspects of support and resistance to Bologna Process ideas in Cameroon (II), more research is needed for a deeper understanding of the different levels of resistance and support and their manifestations. Another issue regarding the theoretical framework is the use of Phillips and Ochs' stages of policy borrowing. The focus in this study was on its application in the case of Cameroon, which led to the model illustrated in Figure 4. Further research also can attempt to apply this model in studies of other CEMAC countries to further develop the CEMAC model on borrowing Bologna Process objectives.

The economic dimension of policy borrowing is said to be common with developing countries, in which adoption is aid-dependent and only runs for the duration of the funding. One of the autonomous peer reviewers of one of the articles

included in this dissertation noted that ‘in the Southern African context, where similar processes of regional borrowing have been explored, evidence has been provided of donor involvement, and in some cases, policy adoption being a conditionality of funding’, which, according to the reviewer, was missing in my analysis. The data used for the analysis in this dissertation did not support the reviewer’s concern. Thus, future research can look more closely into the economic dimension of the CEMAC sub-regional borrowing of the Bologna Process and their transfer and implementation in individual countries if adoption and implementation are aid-dependent.

Finally, the findings in Articles I and II discuss the binary issue of voluntary and coercive borrowing, with most interviewees’ opinion that adoption in the CEMAC region was an imposition or influence by France because of former colonial relations. However, the inability of this study to conclude whether the adoption was purely voluntary or coercive reveals a limitation in the methodology, which focuses more on the perceptions of policy makers at the national and institutional levels in Cameroon. As the evidence suggests, adoption was a political decision by CEMAC member countries at a conference. It would be interesting to probe this further and go beyond the perceptions of whether this was imposed by former colonial countries to see whether there was any pressure.

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8. APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview Guide for Officials at the Ministry of Higher Education

My name is Elizabeth Eta, and I am a Cameroonian PhD candidate in the Department of Education, University of Turku, Finland. I am conducting interviews on the 'adoption and implementation of the License-Master-Doctorate (LMD) system in Cameroon' for dissertation data. The interviews will focus on the following thematic areas:

- Adoption of the LMD and external influences
- Introduction and diffusion of the LMD in Cameroon
- Implementation of the LMD
- General perceptions of the LMD

Each interview will last about an hour, be recorded and transcribed, then used for research purposes ONLY. Transcribed interviews will be anonymised, and direct quotations will be used strictly for research. Thank you for your time and willingness to participate in this study.

Adoption of the LMD and external influences

1. Please introduce yourself, your position and your role in the adoption/formulation/implementation of the LMD.
2. Please explain what the LMD is all about, as well as its origin.
3. What are the reasons for Cameroon's adoption of the LMD?
4. Who were the key actors (individuals/countries/international [donor] organisations) involved in the adoption of the LMD? How and why were they involved?
5. The Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) directive (2005) states that CEMAC member countries should learn about the LMD in North American and European universities and that university lecturers in the CEMAC zone also should be trained by experts from North American and European universities.
 - Which countries have influenced Cameroon the most, i.e., from which countries has Cameroon learned about the LMD and why? How and when were training and learning sessions organised?

6. In your opinion, was adoption of the LMD in the CEMAC region, of which Cameroon is a member, voluntary or imposed (and by whom)? Why and how?

Introduction and diffusion of the LMD in Cameroon

7. Given the origin of the LMD system (adopted at the CEMAC level), can you describe the process of its introduction in Cameroon and what problems the LMD was meant to solve?
8. Which features of the LMD adopted at CEMAC were considered important for Cameroon and why? Were all the features considered and of equal importance?
9. What measures were implemented to disseminate and sensitise the higher education community about the changes that were expected from the LMD?
10. Can you describe how universities' transition to the LMD was planned?

LMD system implementation

11. I understand that the ministry prepared a guide for universities' implementation of the LMD. How was this guide developed? Who was involved in the preparation? What were the main factors considered?
12. How involved was the ministry in implementing the LMD at the universities? What resources has the ministry put in place to facilitate implementation at the universities?
13. Please explain how the conceptualisation of the following in the implementation guide differs from what the universities practiced earlier:
 - Degree structure
 - Grading system
14. Are there differences in universities' implementation of the degree structure and credit system, and what factors do you think account for these differences?
15. Professionalisation is an LMD objective that is emphasised in text documents. How was this objective conceptualised? What measures have been implemented to ensure that this objective is realised? What factors enable or hinder its realisation?
16. What provisions have been implemented for university lecturers to acquire knowledge and skills that the LMD requires of them?

17. What are the challenges of implementing the LMD in Cameroon?

General perceptions of the LMD

18. How prepared/ready was the Cameroon higher education system and its universities for LMD reform when it was introduced and implemented?
19. What has been the response (supportive/resistant) of universities and the higher education community as a whole toward adoption and implementation of the LMD?
20. Given that the LMD was adopted by the CEMAC head of states, would you have voted for adoption had your consent been sought prior to adoption? Why?
21. Are there any final remarks/clarifications/comments you would like to make/add about the adoption, introduction and implementation of the LMD system in Cameroon?

Appendix II: Interview Guide for University Administrators and Lecturers

My name is Elizabeth Eta. I am a Cameroonian PhD candidate at the Department of Education, University of Turku, Finland. I am conducting interviews on the 'adoption and implementation of the LMD system in Cameroon' for dissertation data. The interviews will focus on the following thematic areas:

- Adoption of the LMD and external influences
- Introduction and diffusion of the LMD in Cameroon
- Implementation of the LMD
- General perceptions of the LMD

Each interview will last about an hour, be recorded and transcribed, then used for research purposes ONLY. Transcribed interviews will be anonymised, and direct quotations will be used strictly for research. Thank you for your time and willingness to participate in this study.

Adoption of the LMD and external influences

1. Please introduce yourself, your position and your role in the adoption/formulation/implementation of the LMD system.
2. What is the origin of the LMD, and what is it all about?
3. What are the reasons for Cameroon's adoption of the LMD?
4. Who are the key actors (individuals/countries/international (donor) organisations) involved in the adoption of the LMD? How and why were they involved?
5. In formulating the LMD at your university, which countries influenced you the most, i.e., which countries acted as model countries for you? How and what did you learn from these countries and why these countries?
6. In your opinion, was adoption of the LMD within the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) region, of which Cameroon is a member, voluntary or imposed (by whom)? Why and how?

Introduction and diffusion of the LMD system

7. Can you describe how the LMD was introduced at your university, the actors involved and their roles? What role did you play in this process?
8. How was the LMD formulated at your university? Which objectives were considered important and why? Who determined their importance?
9. Which LMD objectives do you consider important and why?

10. What measures were implemented to disseminate and sensitise the university community about the LMD and the changes that were expected?
11. Can you describe how your university transitioned from the old system to the LMD system?

LMD system implementation

12. Does your university have an implementation guide? How was this guide developed? What factors were considered in the guide?
13. Which LMD objectives already have been implemented at your university? How do you incorporate these objectives in your everyday practices? How are they different from the practices in the old system?
14. Please explain how implementation of the following differs from what your university practiced earlier:
 - Degree structure
 - Grading system
15. Professionalisation is an LMD objective that is emphasised in text documents. What is your understanding of professionalisation? What strategies have been implemented to translate this objective into practice? How did you translate this into practice?
16. How involved was the ministry/other countries/organisations in implementing the LMD at your university?
17. What challenges does your university face in implementing the LMD?

General perceptions of the LMD

18. How prepared/ready was your university for LMD reform when it was introduced and implemented?
19. What has been the response (supportive/resistant) of your university community toward the adoption and implementation of the LMD?
20. Given that the LMD was adopted by the CEMAC head of states, would you have voted for adoption had your consent been sought prior to adoption? Why?
21. Are there any final remarks/clarification/comments that you would like to add about the adoption, introduction and implementation of the LMD system in Cameroon?

Appendix III: Request for Authorization to Conduct Research at the Cameroon Ministry of Higher Education



His Excellency the Minister of Higher Education, Cameroon.

Sir,

Subject: Research on Policy Formulation and Implementation in Cameroonian Higher Education

It is our pleasure to contact you on the above subject. We are of the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning and Education (CELE), Department of Education, University of Turku, Finland. CELE carries out multidisciplinary research on learning and education and educational policy at the national and international comparative levels and provides postgraduate training in these areas. It has been of interest to us to understand how and why ideas in one system inform reforms in other systems. Given that Cameroon is a member of the CEMAC region implementing the LMD system; it is of interest to us to understand the process of policy formulation and implementation. The study will serve to inform policy as well as recommendations for improvement. The study involves interviews and document reviews and would be conducted by our Cameroonian researcher, Elizabeth Agbor Eta for data required for her doctoral dissertation. The interviews and document reviews aim at obtaining interpretations of:

1. The different actors involved and their role in the process of policy formulation and implementation of the LMD system in the Cameroonian Higher Education System
2. The role of each actor in the process of policy formulation and implementation
3. Actors' perception on the implementation of the LMD system
4. The changes that the new system entail and factors that facilitate or constrain them

Our target respondents are staff at the conceptual and implementation levels of the Cameroon higher education system: the Ministry of Higher education, the central administration of State Universities and academics. The interviews would be conducted in October 2013 to December 2013. On grounds of the interest we and the higher education research community attach to the relevance of such research projects in informing policy, we would appreciate if you would kindly authorise and provide the necessary assistance to enable Elizabeth Eta undertake the research.

Sincerely

Risto Rinne 10 June, 2013

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Appendix IV: Request for Authorization to Conduct Research at the University of Yaoundé I



The Rector
University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon

Sir,

Subject: Research on Policy Formulation and Implementation in Cameroonian Higher Education

It is our pleasure to contact you on the above subject. We are of the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning and Education (CELE), Department of Education, University of Turku, Finland. CELE carries out multidisciplinary research on learning and education and educational policy at the national and international comparative levels and provides postgraduate training in these areas. We would like to carry out a qualitative study involving interviews and document reviews at your university. The study involves interviews and document reviews and would be conducted by our Cameroonian researcher, Elizabeth Agbor Eta for data required for her doctoral dissertation. The interviews and document reviews would focus on the following topics:

1. The different actors involved and their role in the process of policy formulation and implementation of the LMD system in the Cameroonian Higher Education System
2. The Process of policy formulation and implementation of the of the LMD system
3. Actors' perception on the implementation of the LMD system
4. The changes that the new system entail and factors that facilitate or constrain them

Our target respondents are officials at the conceptual and implementation levels of the university and academic blocs. The interviews would be conducted in October 2013 to December 2013. On grounds of the interest we and the higher education research community attach to the relevance of such research projects in informing policy, we would appreciate if you would kindly provide the necessary assistance to enable Elizabeth Eta undertake the research.

Sincerely

 10 June, 2013
Prof. Risto Rinne
Director of Centre (Supervisor)
Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning and Education
University of Turku
Assistentinkatu 5, 20014 University of Turku, FINLAND
Tel: +358 2 333 8811,
Fax: +358 2 333 8830,
Email: ktl@lists.utu.fi
http://www.edu.utu.fi/tiedostot/ktl/cele/index_engl.htm

Appendix V: Approval of Request to Conduct Research at the University of Yaoundé I

RÉPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix - Travail - Patrie

UNIVERSITÉ DE YAOUNDÉ I
B.P. 337 Tél./Fax : 222 13 20
e-mail : uyi@uycdc.uninet.cm

**Direction des Affaires Académiques et de la
Coopération**

Division de la Coopération Universitaire

Service de la Coopération Extra-Africaine

Bureau de la Coopération Multilatérale

N° 708 / 13 / UYT/RRCRME/DAAC/D/UY/CEA/BCM



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace - Work - Fatherland

THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

**Department of Academic Affairs and
Cooperation**

**Sub-Department of University
Cooperation**

Extra-African Cooperation Service

Bureau of the Multilateral Cooperation

Yaounde, November 25th, 2013

Mrs Elizabeth AGBOR ETA
c/o
Prof. Risto Rinne
Director of Centre (Supervisor)
**Centre for Research on Lifelong
Learning and Education**
University of Turku
Assistentinkatu 5,20014 University of Turku, FINLAND

Madam,

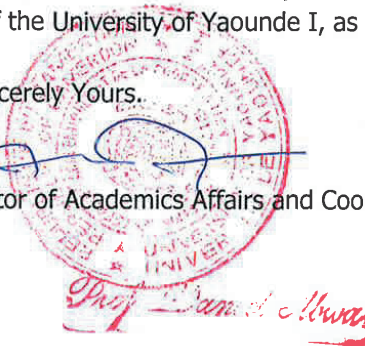
Subject: *Research on Policy Formulation and
Implementation in Cameroon Higher Education*

This is to acknowledge receipt of the letter whose subject is mentioned above.

I am very glad to know that you are interested in the Cameroonian Higher Education System. I do authorize you to make research in the various faculties and schools of the University of Yaounde I, as scheduled.

Sincerely Yours.

The Director of Academics Affairs and Cooperation



Copies: Rector, Deans of faculties, directors of schools (UYI)

Appendix VI: Request for Authorization to Conduct Research at the University of Douala



The Rector
University of Douala, Cameroon

Sir,

Subject: Research on Policy Formulation and Implementation in Cameroonian Higher Education

It is our pleasure to contact you on the above subject. We are of the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning and Education (CELE), Department of Education, University of Turku, Finland. CELE carries out multidisciplinary research on learning and education and educational policy at the national and international comparative levels and provides postgraduate training in these areas. We would like to carry out a qualitative study involving interviews and document reviews at your university. The study involves interviews and document reviews and would be conducted by our Cameroonian researcher, Elizabeth Agbor Eta for data required for her doctoral dissertation. The interviews and document reviews would focus on the following topics:

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3. Actors' perception on the implementation of the LMD system
4. The changes that the new system entail and factors that facilitate or constrain them

Our target respondents are officials at the conceptual and implementation levels of the university and academic blocs. The interviews would be conducted in October 2013 to December 2013. On grounds of the interest we and the higher education research community attach to the relevance of such research projects in informing policy, we would appreciate if you would kindly provide the necessary assistance to enable Elizabeth Eta undertake the research.

Sincerely

 10 June, 2013
Prof. Risto Rinne
Director of Centre (Supervisor)
Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning and Education
University of Turku
Assistentinkatu 5, 20014 University of Turku, FINLAND
Tel: +358 2 333 8811,
Fax: +358 2 333 8830,
Email: kti@lists.utu.fi
http://www.edu.utu.fi/tiedostot/kti/cele/index_engl.htm

Appendix VII: Request for Authorization to Conduct Research at the University of Dschang



The Rector
University of Dschang, Cameroon

Sir,

Subject: Research on Policy Formulation and Implementation in Cameroonian Higher Education

It is our pleasure to contact you on the above subject. We are of the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning and Education (CELE), Department of Education, University of Turku, Finland. CELE carries out multidisciplinary research on learning and education and educational policy at the national and international comparative levels and provides postgraduate training in these areas. We would like to carry out a qualitative study involving interviews and document reviews at your university. The study involves interviews and document reviews and would be conducted by our Cameroonian researcher, Elizabeth Agbor Eta for data required for her doctoral dissertation. The interviews and document reviews would focus on the following topics:

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Our target respondents are officials at the conceptual and implementation levels of the university and academic blocs. The interviews would be conducted in October 2013 to December 2013. On grounds of the interest we and the higher education research community attach to the relevance of such research projects in informing policy, we would appreciate if you would kindly provide the necessary assistance to enable Elizabeth Eta undertake the research.

Sincerely

R. Rinne 10 June, 2013

Prof. Risto Rinne
Director of Centre (Supervisor)
Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning and Education
University of Turku
Assistentinkatu 5, 20014 University of Turku, FINLAND
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Email: ktl@lists.utu.fi
http://www.edu.utu.fi/tiedostot/ktl/cele/index_engl.htm

Appendix VIII: Request for Authorization to Conduct Research at the University of Buea



The Vice-Chancellor
University of Buea, Cameroon

Madam,


Subject: Research on Policy Formulation and Implementation in Cameroonian Higher Education

It is our pleasure to contact you on the above subject. We are of the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning and Education (CELE), Department of Education, University of Turku, Finland. CELE carries out multidisciplinary research on learning and education and educational policy at the national and international comparative levels and provides postgraduate training in these areas. We would like to carry out a qualitative study involving interviews and document reviews at your university. The study involves interviews and document reviews and would be conducted by our Cameroonian researcher, Elizabeth Agbor Eta for data required for her doctoral dissertation. The interviews and document reviews would focus on the following topics:

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Our target respondents are officials at the conceptual and implementation levels of the university and academic blocs. The interviews would be conducted in October 2013 to December 2013. On grounds of the interest we and the higher education research community attach to the relevance of such research projects in informing policy, we would appreciate if you would kindly provide the necessary assistance to enable Elizabeth Eta undertake the research.

Sincerely


Prof. Risto Rinne
Director of Centre (Supervisor)
Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning and Education
University of Turku
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10 June, 2013

Appendix IX: Request for Authorization to Conduct Research at the University of Yaoundé II



The Rector
University of Yaoundé II, Cameroon

Sir,

Subject: Research on Policy Formulation and Implementation in Cameroonian Higher Education

It is our pleasure to contact you on the above subject. We are of the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning and Education (CELE), Department of Education, University of Turku, Finland. CELE carries out multidisciplinary research on learning and education and educational policy at the national and international comparative levels and provides postgraduate training in these areas. We would like to carry out a qualitative study involving interviews and document reviews at your university. The study involves interviews and document reviews and would be conducted by our Cameroonian researcher, Elizabeth Agbor Eta for data required for her doctoral dissertation. The interviews and document reviews would focus on the following topics:

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Sincerely

Risto Rinne 10 June, 2013
 Prof. Risto Rinne
 Director of Centre (Supervisor)
 Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning and Education
 University of Turku
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