

World Conference on "Integrated and Life-long Education of Modernity"

"Autopsy" of Violence in the Current Cameroonian School for the Emergence of a Peaceful School

Noumbi Nouwou Georges

University of Douala ENSET/ Department of Educational Sciences

Abstract. The “peaceful school” model is based on the promotion of cohesive human and social relations. He advocates not only tolerance, mutual respect but above all living together. However, in recent years, the rise of violence in schools has reached worrying proportions. This article aims to analyze the etiology of school violence and to propose theoretical-practical means for a pacification of the schools in Cameroon. Four levels of analysis have been identified, in particular those intra-individual, inter-individual and situational; positional and ideological. From this analysis, it appears that the problem of violence in the school environment may be due to the cerebral immaturity of adolescents, to emotional and cognitive disturbances as well as to instinctual activity. In addition, modelling, social contagion and comparison, school climate and environment, social representation of teaching and teacher are likely to lead to violent acts. That said, solutions have been addressed to public authorities, school leaders, teachers, parents, media and learners.

Key words: Autopsy, Violence, School environment, Peaceful school, Cameroon.

INTRODUCTION

Since school became a compulsory institution for all, it has been in search of an ideal (Crahay, 2012). For the student, it constitutes both a living environment and a learning environment. It is there that he learns, qualifies for his future life and learns to become a responsible citizen. However, for the student to achieve the triptych mentioned above, he needs an efficient and peaceful school.

The effective school is a space for the production of knowledge that aims to reduce inequalities of opportunity and improve school results, not only in the intellectual field, but also in that of the affective and social skills of students (Normand, 2006). . It would benefit from remaining peaceful in order to effectively fulfill its missions of instruction, qualification and socialization. Indeed, the “peaceful” school is one where harmonious social and human relations are lived daily. It is therefore a place of production of knowledge in which the interactions between students, teachers and staff members take place in a cohesive way. So the peaceful school is one that promotes tolerance, the ability to live in peace with others, mutual respect.

On the other hand, in recent years, the resurgence of violence within schools has reached worrying proportions. This violence can take two forms: a clearly perceptible form, because

it is physical, measurable, quantifiable, and experienced as a direct or indirect attack on the material integrity of others. It is manifested by punches, attacks with a weapon, strangulation, kidnapping, mutilation or degrading sexual attitudes. A less perceptible form, more complex, because moral or psychological, and experienced as a direct or indirect attack on the immaterial integrity of the other man, on human dignity. Such violence is manifested by attitudes consisting in keeping others in a situation of discomfort or inferiority. Among these attitudes, we have humiliation, denigration, intimidation, exploitation, rejection, isolation, harassment or blackmail.

In Cameroon, affronts, violence against teachers and even some students, the possession by students of cannabis within the premises of the establishment, smoking, are precisely facts that take place in schools. nowadays (Lambo Ebelle, 2022). By way of illustration, on Monday March 28, 2022, a video going viral on social networks shows the scene of an assault on a supervisor by a student at Nkol Eton High School (Mawel, 2022). In the same vein, on May 05, 2022, a tragedy took place at the Ebolowa Technical High School. A student was stabbed by his schoolmate (Eyenga, 2022). On September 13, 2022 at the Ambam Technical High School, a guidance counselor kicked a student in the abdomen, leading to the rupture of the spleen (Mvomo Essouma, 2022). From what precedes, we consider in this article violence under its aspect of the accomplished human action. In this sense, our goal is to analyze the etiology of violence in Cameroonian schools and to propose solutions for the pacification of the school. But where does this violence come from? What can educational agents do to avoid a complete degradation of the school fabric in Cameroon?

In addition, any therapy being a function of the etiology, it will be a question of examining the genesis of violence in the school environment. And finally, possible proposals will be made for the pacification of schools in Cameroon.

I. ETIOLOGY OF VIOLENCE IN CAMEROONIAN SCHOOLS

To explain the origin of violence at school, we use the analysis grid of Doise (1982). It is a model built to capture aspects of a reality. Let us specify right away that we are not talking about different levels of reality but about levels of analysis. This being so, Doise's analysis grid (1982) is structured into four levels: the intra-individual level, the inter-individual and situational level, the positional level and the ideological level.

1. School-based violence seen from an intra-individual angle

Violent behavior would be determined by processes: biological, cognitive and affective. The hormonal surge and puberty maturation generally induce, more or less visibly, a profound shaking of the psychic organization (Calin, 2014). Even if this destabilization is essential to the completion of the psychic construction, the fact remains that it undermines the adolescent's narcissism. This crisis would open the way to an investment of aggressive energies, of which only surpassing oneself would be able to restore it (Calin, 2014).

Indeed, the accomplishment of the act is the response of a subject confronted with a test whose crossing would require him an imposing work of thought. However, thought fails him (Kammerer, 2006). Because of the inseparability of the affective and the cognitive, the inability of learners or teachers to regulate their emotions could explain the emergence of violence in the school context. The high school learner, usually a teenager or young adult, has a myelinating brain. It will be necessary to wait for the complete maturation of the brain, and more particularly that of the prefrontal cortex, around the age of 25 (Fradin, 2008), for the cerebral capacities necessary for their complete development to be available to the individual. This cerebral immaturity would be at the origin of certain cases of inability to control oneself. In fact, the amygdala makes us react instantaneously while the neocortex, slower and better

informed, deploys an elaborate plan of reaction.

By way of illustration, after a frustration, an injustice, a lack of respect, a humiliation, the sympathetic system of the individual acts via the intermediary of the nerves crossing by the spinal cord and releases at the level of the nerve endings of the neurotransmitters that are: adrenaline and noradrenaline (Lieury, 2004). This sympathetic adrenergic axis releases energy reserves from the liver, increases heart rate and dilates blood vessels to prepare the body for action in seconds. When anger drags on, emotional reactions can produce aggression. The reactions corresponding to this aggressiveness are: attack and combat.

Notwithstanding this neurobiological analysis, violent action can have various intrapsychic origins. It may be due to porosity of the subject's superego bars. The adolescent wants to enjoy without limit and by all means: his impulses are coprophilic or cannibalistic, he can become an exhibitionist or a voyeur, enjoys sadistic or masochistic games (Tricot, 2008). From this point of view, the origin of acts of violence is instinctual. It would be the result of a projection of thanatos on the wrong object, a frustrating object. That said, the etiology of the violence is found in the childhood history of the subject. A subject who grew up in a conflicting family environment runs the risk of constructing a "violent" ego ideal by modeling, developing violent behavior and becoming aggressive. Thereby, the subject is at risk of becoming violent because he will grow up in a risky home. Moreover, human beings are naturally aggressive (Lorenz, 1969). This aggressiveness is most often expressed in adolescence, a period of "militant enthusiasm".

2. Interindividual and situational analysis of violence at school

Puberty, a critical period characterized by a libidinal explosion, imposes a great destabilization on the adolescent. She subjects him to new ways of looking at his body, which force him to see himself henceforth as an actor and potential object of romantic and sexual relations (Kammerer, 2006). This self-representation leads him to a need for self-affirmation which would be a source of tension in the face of possible obstacles. For example, following humiliation during school interactions, a pubescent student would be torn between feelings of shame and narcissistic rage. Subjected to the gaze of others, he is anxious to see his narcissistic image collapse. The gap observed between the image he would like to give them of himself and the one that reveals him to be incapable, belittled, leads him towards a desire for self-affirmation. This desire to preserve or improve his reputation would lead to the emergence of his violent behaviors. In this momentum, the feeling of injustice in relation to the school sanction system can transform the tense school climate into an aggressive one.

The family, as a key link in the socialization of children, tends to abandon the responsibility for education to the school administration. However, this education would benefit from being a co-responsibility. In the past, the child who was dominated by his parents, who had to obey without explanation, would today be a "king" child who imposes himself and will flourish at the expense of the environment. That being said, parents sometimes finding themselves in a situation of "burnout", seem to be overwhelmed. During interviews, it emerged that several parents of violent students complained of being "overwhelmed, despite the many efforts made"; "tired (...)"; "(...) I'm already tired, I don't know, I can't count the number of times they've been summoned (...)". These expressions are usually followed by abandonment, guilt and refer to signs of exhaustion. This exhaustion would have as a consequence, the non-follow-up, at home, of the advice orientation instructions aimed at remedying the violent acts of the learners: hence the recidivism.

The advent of social media and their addictive use by adolescents occupy a prominent place in the redoubled violence in the Cameroonian school context. Two phenomena will facilitate

this repetition during certain periods: social imitation and social contagion. The dissemination of acts of violence committed within certain establishments for the purpose of raising awareness could have a boomerang effect. Because, this one seems generally aroused the modeling and the mimicry of the other learners.

3. The positional origin of school violence

This level of analysis explicitly brings into the explanations the difference in social positions. As Débarbieux (2005) argues, social disorganization is the daughter of violence in schools. Today's society has become more permissive, less intransigent with respect to radical respect for law or morality. Behavior, such as insulting or threatening, will be sanctioned inside an establishment; while outside, no pursuit will be made. Indeed, the current Cameroonian school is a reflection of the total functioning of its social system. The social link seems to be in crisis in Cameroon. Violence seems to be omnipresent and the life exposed to it can facilitate violent action.

In reality, following the perspective of Gottfredson (2001), we admit that the structure and size of the establishment could lead to maladaptive behaviors. Because relationships are less individualized. Thus, the overstaffing in establishments in Cameroon can generate vandalism of learners. This is why, with regard to current events, the thresholds of violence would be higher in urban areas than in rural areas.

4. School violence, an ideological problem

Each society develops ideologies, coherent systems of beliefs and representations, evaluations and norms which must justify and maintain an established order of social relations. Indeed, the social representation of the teacher in Cameroonian society could arouse learners' contempt towards them. At the end of a survey on the social representation of teachers in Cameroon, it appears that "the teacher nowadays is trivialized. Teachers are marginalized", "teaching is the last resort when you have lost everything", "when you teach, you cannot brag in front of people", "the teacher is not paid enough, it's a job for the poor", "the teacher is a martyr", "in terms of treatment, the teacher is relegated to the last position in the funding plans", "the treatment reserved for teachers by the rulers is likely to cause social discredit of teachers". It is no doubt because of these perceptions that teachers are often "abused" and "intimidated" on campus by certain law enforcement officers. Faced with these stereotypes, learners could only develop disrespect, and therefore violent acts.

Furthermore, the social representation of "violent students" is not to be outdone. Usually delinquent students generally seem to be liked by girl students. This pushes them to adopt behaviors, repressed by the rules of procedure, to benefit from the favors of these girls. As a result, their sexual curiosity arises. However, the use of sex would lead to an increase in violence. Take the example of a teacher who submits to the demands of a student to benefit from sexual favors. This student could sometimes use verbal abuse to make herself heard, despite the location not being indicated.

Moreover, some violent acts could be committed for the sake of conformity in Cameroonian schools. Some learners, sometimes forming a band, would like to establish and share carelessness as a unifying element of group membership. This standard, once popularized, would constitute the base of the culture of the group and would justify the violent action of certain Cameroonian learners.

The genesis of violence in Cameroonian schools being elucidated, what desirable solutions for a pacification of schools in Cameroon?

II. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FOR SCHOOL PACIFICATION IN CAMEROON

In view of the analyzes carried out above, it is important to make suggestions to educational agents and Cameroonian learners to fight against violence in the school environment.

1. To public authorities

We propose :

- The design of training modules on emotional intelligence in the various Ecoles Normales Supérieures (ENS and ENSET) to train teachers in managing their feelings;
- A need to move from the training of professional guidance counselors to psychological guidance counsellors;
- The valorization among young people of artistic sublimation or sporting competition which allows natural aggressiveness to be evacuated. It therefore seems important to rethink the FENASCO games.
- The construction of fences around schools, because the pacification of the school requires a safe and efficient school;
- The holding of general meetings on education in order to adapt the principles of our education system to current circumstances;
- The revaluation of the status of the teacher or the application of the legal text governing the particular status of this teacher, in order to improve his image within society;
- The increase in teaching hours in civic and ethical education, and the allocation of their teaching to specialists in the field: philosophers.

2. Sensitization of school heads

To the heads of establishments in Cameroon, we propose to rethink their respective schools through the establishment of didactics of emotions and a so-called "positive" pedagogy. Speaking of the didactics of emotions, it is a question of training teachers a few weeks before the start of classes, to speak with ease about emotional life. From the organization of the seminars, they must bring the teachers to go beyond their traditional mission to stimulate the emotional intelligence of the learners and to develop good capacities of self-control.

Speaking of the didactics of emotions, it is a question of training teachers a few weeks before the start of classes, to speak with ease about emotional life. From the organization of seminars, they should lead teachers to go beyond their traditional mission to stimulate the emotional intelligence of learners and develop good capacities for self-control.

When it comes to positive pedagogy, it's about focusing on what works rather than what doesn't in learning. Basically, it is a question of helping teachers to become "coaches" offering unfailing support to the process that the student will have set himself. Thus, in accordance with the requirements of the Pedagogical Approach by Skills in force in primary and secondary schools in Cameroon, there is no longer an authoritarian relationship and judgments but encouragement and advice.

3. Teacher awareness

The programs are already overloaded and some teachers are reluctant to rail against the time spent on basic subjects to create a new course. According to Goleman (2014), the trend is therefore to integrate emotional education into the disciplines already taught. Thus, we suggest that teachers do lessons with emotional stimulation.

Currently, the State of Cameroon prohibits humiliating and degrading punishments of

learners. It is therefore imperative that school administrators and teachers coordinate and apply them because avoiding humiliating and degrading punishments would remedy certain emotional disturbances, a source of dissonance and violence. The guidance counselors with a view to eradicating this violence should associate teachers, parents and the administration for a comprehensive follow-up.

4. Parent-school co-responsibility

The family being the first place of socialization of any individual, we believe that parents have an important role to play in emotional education. For this purpose, parents should train their children in self-discipline. Because it is the keystone of emotional management in Africa (Same Kollo, 2014). Parents should control the associations of their children in order to keep them from bad company; and they would benefit from being models of respect for republican rules and moral law for their children. Thus, they should absolutely respond to the various summons to the guidance counselor or the general supervisor of their child's establishment and should not hide the facts of the latter to preserve their image.

5. To the media

The dissemination of violent messages or images often leading to contagion and imitation of learners, we suggest that the media reduce it and limit themselves to advertisements. The media should invite specialists in Education and Social Sciences to analyze educational issues instead of politicians.

6. To learners

We suggest that learners respect the rules of procedure, participate in school life, especially extracurricular activities, post-school activities to strengthen their citizenship. They would do well to consult guidance counselors in case of adjustment difficulties. Also, they should have a professional project and develop, with the support of teachers, good self-control.

CONCLUSION

In short, our concern focused on an analysis of violence in Cameroonian schools in order to consider a pacification of schools in Cameroon. Using the Doise's analysis grid (1982), four axes have made it possible to highlight the etiology of this violence: the intrapsychic axis; interindividual and situational; positional and ideological. From these analytical axes, it appeared that the problem of violence in the Cameroonian school environment may be due to the cerebral immaturity of adolescents, to emotional disturbances, to cognitive dissonances and to instinctual activity. In addition, modelling, contagion and social comparison, the climate and the school environment were questioned to discern their possibility of causing violent acts in the Cameroonian learner. In the same vein,

Consequently, these analyzes have aroused in us the urgency of formulating theoretical and practical solutions capable of pacifying this school. These solutions have been addressed to public authorities, headteachers, teachers, parents, media and learners.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

1. Calin, D. (2014). Psychogenesis of aggression. <https://isidore.science>
2. Crahay, M. (2012). Can school be fair and effective? DeBoeck.
3. Débarbieux, E. (2005). School violence, a global challenge? Armand Collin.
4. Doise, W. (1982). explanation in social psychology. PUF.
5. Eyenga, L. (05/05/2022). School violence: a student stabs his classmate at the Ebolowa technical school. <https://www.237actu.com.php>

6. Fradin, J. (2008). Stress intelligence. Eyrolles.
7. Goleman, D. (2014). Integral emotional intelligence: Analyzing and controlling one's feelings and emotions, and those of others. I read.
8. Gottfredson, DC (2001). Delinquency and schools. Cambridge University.
9. Kammerer, P. (2006). Violence and adolescents: place and function of violence against adolescents. LE COQ-HERON, 184, 136-140.
10. Lambo Ebelle, D. (2022-02-16). Cameroon: Bipindi High School, administrative staff armed against deviance in Cameroon. <https://www.camer.be>
11. Lieury, A. (2004). Cognitive psychology: Courses and exercises. Dunod.
12. Lorenz, K. (1969). Aggression, a natural history of evil. Flammarion.
13. Mawel, A. (30/03/2022). Cameroon: aggression of a supervisor at the Bilingual High School of Nkol Eton, the warning of Minister Nalova Lyonga. <https://www.journalducameroon.com>
14. Mvomo Essomba, B. (18/09/2022). Incident at Ambam High School: Minesec on the ground. <https://www.cameroon-tribune.cm>
15. Normand, R. (2006). The efficient school or the horizon of the world as a laboratory. Journal of Educational Sciences, 32(1), 53-70. <https://doi.org/10.7202/013476ar>
16. Same Kollé, S. (2014). Emotional intelligence and intellectual acquisitions: Intercultural and comparative approach. Ubimior, n°8. ISSN 2283-348X.
17. Tricot, M. (2008). Malaise in civilization: the dark work of the death drive. CHE VOUI? 1, 29, 31-40.