The story of houses in the grassfields: mobility, belonging and hierarchies in urbanising North-West Cameroon

Tegomoh Ngwaelung, E.

2. Methodologies

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on different research methods that were employed to gather data for this thesis. Since my subject matter dwelled on mobility and the materiality of the society, I used several methods to achieve my objectives. It structured as follows: Multi-Sited and Connectivity; Visuals (photographs and videos); Life Histories and Interviews and Observations. The film involving the process of production will be handled in chapter seven. Working with the visual system of the Papiakum people, this chapter on methodology would be an independent but integral part of the thesis elaborating more on the reflexivity and subjectivity of the central problem. De Bruijn, Nyamnjoh and Angwafo (2010) demonstrate how communities in the western Cameroonian Grassfields have always been mobile and migratory and this has been facilitated over the years by innovations in information and communication technologies (ICT). The authors bring to light how rural areas have become gradually more linked to mobile phone networks and the costs of telephony have decreased. Their article explores the appropriation of the phone by different social groups related to age and status in rural and urban settings. The directions of social change linked to the mobile phone show a wide variety of forms of social connectivity. Of particular significance is the creativity brought to bear in social relations by those with and without mobile phones, which is making power relations simultaneously hierarchical and horizontal, concentrated and diffused, in ways that challenge conventional theories of social sciences and differentiation in structural terms. Similarly, the populations of the Grassfields can simultaneously shape as well as be shaped by the mobile phone, and can recognize and capitalize on its possibilities while being critical of its inconveniences.

Before choosing Baba I on the Ndop plain as my case study for this research project, a recognisance trip was undertaken. This village found along the ring road of Cameroon looked always quiet whenever we drove by as students going to boarding school in Nso. The visit into the village turned out to be intriguing as the village laid on an undulating topography with connecting network of roads. These roads linked families and quarters through landed infrastructures (houses and farms) on the landscape. Visiting some of these structures expanded my fields of study to various urban centres in Cameroon where the owners were resident. Thus, the methods below acted as guiding steps in the process of data collection for this research.

2.2 Multi-Sited and Connectivity Methods

Though my case study is Baba I, I employed the multi-sited ethnography approach which is free to track the movement of, or connections between, people, stories, objects, conflicts, and cultural meanings across multiple sites and potentially across historical periods as I travelled to various urban centres to meet my research partners. Multi-sited ethnography is a methodological approach first described by anthropologist Marcus (1995) that has become widely used and invoked in studies of geographically dispersed phenomena such as capital and labour market flows, commodity chains, international institutions, migration, and communications media. Although the term multi-sited ethnography usually refers to the practice of an ethnographer undertaking research in, and between, several physical locations

as part of a single study, it is also sometimes used to describe investigation of a single location that is explicitly conceived of as part of a larger context that exceeds the boundaries of the field site. By expatiating on this approach, Marcus portrayed multi-sited ethnography as an emergent strand of anthropological research that challenged the conventional ethnographic focus on a single field. Most critics of multi-sited ethnography Alloatti (2019) have focused on its ontological premise, risks of holism and, most importantly, methodological applications (Hage, 2005). These topics have been further developed by adherents to a multi-sited approach, mostly through empirical examples (Falzon, 2009; Colermand and Hellerman, 2011).

Working with Papiakum people of Baba I, fieldwork had to deal with connectivity (De Bruijn, 2014), because of the informed category or choice of informants. Getting engaged with bushfallers who had invested in the village but were living in the urban centres of Cameroon, travelling around the country became imperative. Though cumbersome and expensive given the transport network system in Cameroon, it was an interesting, rich and exciting experience. Thus, from the village where the houses are located, to the urbanites (resident Ndop, Bamenda, Bafoussam, Foumban, Douala, Limbe, Buea, Kumba and Yaounde) following their different mobility trajectories, one became a mobile person and a bushfaller with many specific hunting grounds but no fixed residence or home seeking knowledge and making notes wherever. Connections became a life wire for this work to progress as it made it possible also for me to gain access to varied resources. This would fall in line with what De Bruijn and van Dijk (2012) elucidate that the rapid increase in adoption of modern 'connective' technologies like the mobile phone, has reshaped the social landscape of Africa. Their book examines the myriad possibilities that the post-global moment offers African societies to develop and to relate, offering profound new insights into the networking of people.

This little anecdote will illustrate this on a personal level (researcher) how this work also opened up access to get other things done. As I was struggling in Yaounde with my documents for the payment of my salary, it dawned on me that I could use the powers of one of the directors in the Ministry of Finance who happens to be one of my research partners after so many frustrating days in Yaounde trying to trace the papers needed. After hours of persistence on phone, I finally got through to him. I explained my situation and got an appointment. With an appointment, access to his office which was made easy with a note from him to a subordinate, I saw things falling into place rapidly as my salary was re-instated. My access to authority spared me the agony of a long wait and frustrations but landed someone in trouble who had manipulated the file with the hope of getting tips. Just as I had benefited from privileged access in Yaounde, so too did I witness several cases how persons in high authority in Baba I 'strongly influence who benefits from the resource in question'. Mobile Telephones became an imperative research tool used to set up appointments, plan activities/visits, communicate and share findings and carried out/review interviews.

We experienced a lot of virtual mobility through networking with urbanites in the various urban centres. This takes us to a concrete example by De Bruijn (2014) who worked with a Papiakum family illustrating how African family histories and personal lives are full of connecting with those who have left. Her article explores how the development of connecting technology has changed the social dynamics of African mobile communities and focuses on the changes in (old and new) social hierarchies that are related to possibilities of accessing mobility and connecting technologies. Through the use of these new ICTs we (my research partners, families and I) stayed connected between the various centres where we

worked and the village. Connectivity was thus facilitated via ICTs which also made it possible to collect life histories of members of the community. Using these connecting technologies (email, mobile telephone) during data collection, I stayed interlinked with those in Baba I and in the various urban centres of Cameroon. I was therefore intrinsically interwoven especially through mobile phone as I strived to appreciate the changes unfolding within this landscape.

2.3 Visual Research Method

Having always had a fascination with things and their complex interwoven relations with persons owning or using them, there was therefore no doubt that visuals of these houses and infrastructure would serve as my entry point into the village and link with my research partners. Like a fly on the wall with camera in hand I went across and over hills, valleys and streams to absorb in my mind's eye the architectural landscape of the village. Having mapped out the landscape with hundreds of pictures and regrouped the pictures into the different quarters, these were then brought along to the different urban centres in which their owners are currently living and working. With these pictures and camera in hand the various urban centres of Ndop, Bamenda, Bafoussam, Yaounde, Douala, Mutegene, Limbe, Buea, Muyuka and Kumba were visited to meet and hear the stories of these Bushfallers. These pictures serve as facilitators as they helped open up conversations easily. Some of these encounters through these pictures were very emotional to say the least. For some of these Bushfallers, they were seeing the development and/or current state of their houses after a long time through these pictures. While for some others they were seeing their investments at home for the first time as their presence and contributions during the construction process had been only through virtual means like telephones and wireless money transfers.

> "Images are 'everywhere'. They permeate our academic work, everyday lives, conversations and dreams (…). They are inextricably interwoven with our personal identities, narratives, lifestyles, cultures and societies, as well as with definitions of history, space and truth. Ethnographic research is likewise intertwined with visual images and metaphors. When ethnographers produce photographs or video, these visual texts, as well as the experience of producing and discussing them, become part of their ethnographic knowledge" (Pink 2001:17).

Figure 2.1: Pictures of some structures from different quarters

Source: Photo by Author

We cannot talk of visual supports as a research method within delving into our understanding of visual anthropology and its place in this work. Visual Anthropology (VA) is a sub-discipline within anthropology which is a representational process, engaged in an activity of cultural translation and interpretation involving the use of still and moving images/motion pictures. VA is also regarded as being multi disciplinary as it includes 'the production and analysis of still and moving photos, the study of art and material culture, and the investigation of gestures, facial expressions and spatial aspects of behavior and interaction (Jacknins 1994:33).

Just as Murphy and Banks (1997:21) would argue, it is focused however on the whole process of anthropology, from the recording of data, through its analysis to the dissemination of the results of research. Visual Anthropology is central to anthropology because of its reflexive nature. In other words, it helps us appreciate the positioning of all actors (anthropologists, informants, and media people).

VA therefore dwell on the place of the 'visual' and visual systems from a cross-cultural point of view looking into how anthropology through the Analysis of art and material culture can contribute to gain insight into cultural forms and values (the analysis of visual forms of representations). VA explore how images, forms or art, maps, pictures, ethnographic film, the body, gender, adornments to name a few, are constructed in societies across the globe. By linking visual systems to wider economic and socio-political processes, the understanding of the different social categories and meanings of 'seeing' more is achieved. Seeing here must be contextualised through the eyes of people for better comprehension. This is so because our vision is culturally and socially constructed. Thus people see the world through a combination of systems such as perspective, illusion and distortion. Visual anthropology therefore collects two kinds of data: visual recordings and material culture which are core elements of this thesis. This includes: rituals, performances, photography, painting, sculpture, film, sign and body language, aesthetics, maps, body modifications, wrapping, written language, objects and artifacts, architecture, landscape.

The use of Visual Research Method (VRM) as coined by Rose (2016) was therefore chosen as one of the methods for data collection. VRM can use already made images from mass media, by the researcher and those under study (2016:15-16). The film produced uses both still and moving images. Images here are approached as representation (2016:24-26) as Rose argues all images do have four potential sites of analysis: (i) the site of production, where images are made in relation to other objects (ii) the site of the image itself, visual content (iii) the site of circulation, where images travelled to and (iv) the site of the

audience, encountering its spectators and users. These sites each have three different aspects that can critically contribute in the understanding of images (i) technology, how the image was made (ii) composition, its materiality and (iii) social, ways of seeing – its socio-economical and political relations. The sites of analysis were crucial since most of the research partners were living in various urban towns. Various methods and techniques were used; Photo-Essay; Photo-Elicitation; Reflective Photography and Photo-Voice to analysis still images and videography for moving or dynamic images. The video analysis will be handled in-depth in Chapter Seven devoted to the film which is a complementary part of this thesis.

2.3.1 Photography

> '..Ethnographic photography can potentially construct continuities between the visual culture of an academic discipline and that of the subjects or collaborators in the research. Thus ethnographers can hope to create photographic representations that refer to 'local' visual cultures and simultaneously respond to the interest of academic disciplines. To do so involves a certain amount of research into uses and understandings of photography in the culture and society of the fieldwork location. … However, researchers may often find that the photographic dimension of the culture they are working in has been virtually undocumented,' (Pink 2001:5).

In concordance with Rodrigues (2018:58), Photo-Essay, is considered as a participatory technique or visual strategy to obtain opinions, ways of thinking or feelings of the participant, based on a set of photographs collected, analyzed and commented on by the participant in conjunction with the researcher. This technique was used to analyze and understand phenomena in depth, mainly as a complement to the other methods of collecting information, textual or visual, depending on the research objectives. This method is also very much associated to Visual Anthropology because of the use of classic photographic essays (Lyon, 1971). This method helped in creating a convivial atmosphere for discussion with my researcher partners as it was more relaxing and free flowing as contributions were taken without restrictions.

The main contributors towards the recognition of Photo-Elicitation as a visual method are Banks (2001) and Harper (2002). The technique as explained is based on the simple idea of applying and conducting an interview using photographs as a stimulus or as icebreakers. In fact, photographs (more than words) evoke deeper elements of human consciousness. Harper (2002) attempts a definition of photo elicitation and a history of its development in anthropology and sociology based on a number of studies that have taken place. He demonstrates how photo elicitation enlarges the possibilities of conventional empirical research. He also argues that photo elicitation produces a different kind of information. It evokes information, feelings, and memories that are due to the photograph's particular form of representation. This was really of essence in the process of data collection as it gradually paved way for discussions with those informants who were reluctant and reticent to participate. As observed on the field, photo elicitation stimulated life histories from research partner very easily.

Reflexive-Photography, which is considered also as a participatory and self-reflexive visual method or strategy to obtain participants' opinions, ways of thinking and feelings could be done based a set of photographs done by the participants themselves or the researcher (Cahyanto, Pennington-Gray& Thapa, 2009; Rodrigues (2018). A case in point by participants themselves is the study carried out with a sample of college freshmen at the University of Southern Indiana by Harrington & Lindy (1999). They were given a 27-

exposure disposable camera to take pictures that would illustrate their impression of the university or help to describe their impressions. The participants were also asked to record their thoughts while taking the pictures, participate in a structured photo elicitation interview, and participate in a focus-group interview. Some primary themes emerged during the exercise and discussions that included their perceptions on the university's physical environment, interactions with faculty/other students, student support services, and career counselling which portrayed both positive and negative aspects of the university experience cited. The other technique based on a set of photographs collected, analysed and commented on by the participant in conjunction with the researcher. Brand & Mcmurray (2009) study on a group of first-year Nursing students' exposure to clinical placements with older adults is instrumental in helping them adopt positive attitudes toward care of that population is an illustration of the use of this technique. Their qualitative pilot study analysed perceptions and expectations of these students made use of the photo-elicitation technique that engaged in viewing of realistic photographs of older adults being cared for, to help students clarify expectations. Involving them with images of older adults encouraged students to anticipate their clinical placement in an aged care setting in a more meaningful, reflective way than they may have done without prior exposure. This technique worked beautifully for me when I used it at the urban centres where the Papiakum elites were during their regular get together on Sundays. It provoked lively discussions on how they viewed their community as well as their future goals.

Finally, Photo-Voice is a process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique, based on the production of knowledge that has three main goals: (i) to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns, (ii) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion of photographs, and (iii) to reach policymakers (Wang & Burris 1997). Just like Wang (2006) who used Photo-voice with a group of youths on mobilization for community change, the implementation of this technique was effective as a participatory action research strategy during BACUDA meetings where the urbanites discussed their on-going developmental projects. It served as an opportunity for those who had not been home for long to see and appreciate the projects to which they are contributors. It was interesting to see how my collection of photographs on the various projects spurred up discussions which bind with the assertion of Sutton-Brown (2014) that using ethnographic techniques that combine photography, critical dialogue, and experiential knowledge, participants reflect on and communicate their community's concerns to represent their culture, to expose social problems, and to ignite social change. Photo-voice has been successfully used in the fields of education, disability studies, public health, and refugees, indicating its vast applicability. This methodology provides a culturally grounded and contextually situated site for reflection on visual images, associated meanings, and social action.

Photographic practice is complex, that is, built in a series of perceptions about memory (recalls past images), about time (capturing fleeting moments), about science (it is an accurate reflection of reality) and accuracy (it captures details). Ethnographic Photography is different from other types of photography because it is determined by discourse (anthropological discourses e.g. reflexivity, context) and content. Anthropologists use ethnographic photography to gain useful and meaningful information through the various techniques above. The viewer of ethnographic photography determines and defines its content. A photograph appears ethnographic to the viewer because the viewer already

has classifications of what is an 'anthropological reality', or how this reality should look like.

Photographs therefore can have different meanings, sometimes even contradictory meanings. One photograph can invest different context with a meaning that is implied by the viewer. Ethnographers need to negotiate the meaning people invest pictures with, and maintain a sense that ethnographic photography is a continuous dialogue –rather than just a 'take-and-go-and-present' with the viewer, the discipline and its subjects. As such photographs can move in and out of anthropology and acquire different meanings, intended or not. As Pink points out: 'a photograph [taken during fieldwork] had no single meaning, but it was re-appropriated and given new significance and uses in each context' (2001:51).

2.3.2 Documentary Film - Videography

> 'Since all films are cultural artefacts, many can tell us as much about the societies that produced them as about these they purport to describe'. (David McDougall, 1978:405)

Film here represents an alternative method of gathering and presenting data that opens up discussion for everyone to read/interpret and appreciate. MacDougall has suggested that scholars look for a 'greater parity amongst modes of expression' by turning to 'the visual, auditory and textual modes of expression found in film' (2005: 60). This offers a way of thinking about written and other texts in relation to each other. Thus ethnographers need to account for the role of written narratives in making crucial connections between, on the one hand, alternative representations of knowing and arguments based on emplaced experience and, on the other, existing strands in scholarly and applied disciplines, (Pink 2009:132-154) (Accessed 09 June 2018).

As Knoblauch, Tuma and Schnettler (2014) will argue one of the major cultural changes with long-lasting effects on our way of life that can be witnessed in recent years is, indisputably, the massive visualization of our culture. Still and moving images are literally pervading our everyday and our professional life worlds; they are increasingly employed to operate in much of our communicative exchange and our knowledge production. They have invaded educational processes, and are even reshaping our self-representation. They continue that while visual studies have been focusing mainly on the role of 'images', the cultural dynamics of video are still widely neglected. Video is a technology that allows the recording, storage and repeated viewing of visual and acoustic data. Videography constitutes a fundamental technique for constituting die corpora of data for analysis, as well as an important mean of rendering research results, such as in documentary films or multimedia presentations.

This thesis is accompanied with a documentary film on the subject matter of changing landscape in Baba1on the Ndop Plain. This documentary film will be complementary to the thesis but both will stand out as independent entities. In reflexive anthropology the ethnographer makes visible the dialogue, improvisations, learning processes, negotiations from which the work emerges and how is dealt with as part of the ethnographic information. McDougall reiterates, 'no ethnographic film is merely a record of another society: it is always a record of a meeting between a film maker and that society. Illustrative ethnographic films make use of images either as data to be elucidated by means of a spoken commentary or as visual support for verbal statements', (1978:413). The process of anthropological filmmaking therefore binds the dimensions of time and space where the actors (subject of research) are portrayed in their temporality. Hence, the contingencies for the subjects' actions can be visualised. It is my hope that through this film

I will be able to share and disseminate knowledge gained and learned through lived experiences to a wider audience especially the non-literate Papiakum people. They offered me enormous support as they watched and wondered what I was really going around doing on foot and motor bike with cameras and bag holding my recorder, note pad/pen/pencils amongst others draped around the neck and back. It will be very important to bring this end product of changing landscape to the populace through this documentary that will serve as a new reservoir of knowledge.

2.4 Biographies/Life Histories and Social Change

This study employed the use of life histories to get in-depth information of the various processes taking place in Baba I. As field work, data analysis and reflections evolved, I came to the conclusion that there was a better way to get in the time dimension which will better explain the different processes. Life histories are therefore one of the methodologies chosen to give answers to core questions of this study that had been phrased and rephrased. The 'narrative' element of the stories refers to the subjective. The focus is not on the factual accuracy of the story constructed, but on the meaning it has for the respondent. In this regard, the approach is also 'constructivistic' since the story is a composition of construed meanings and self-representations. The self-concept is not a monolithic entity but rather collection of different types of self-representations. Since one never has access to the complete set of representations of oneself because it is ''a continually shifting array of accessible self-knowledge''. There is no formula for representing the configuration in a particular life, only the interests and point of view of the researcher. Researchers achieve this configuration by crossing disciplinary boundaries, allowing a number of disciplines to converge, while each discipline maintains its own integrity Dhunpath, (2000:545).

By so doing I came closer to my research partners. Listening to peoples life histories served as an icebreaker creating a certain level of conviviality, trust, empathy and confidence needed for the success of this study. In order to achieve this I had to spend quite some time building relations that made research partners comfortable to talk about their personal story. In building these relationships I had to join them in good and bad times when it came to events, I contributed my own quota. Through these social interactions, a lot of barriers were broken. It should be noted as Dhunpath would emphasise that in a narrative discourse, events are always presented in their context. Context that refers to the physical, institutional environment as well as the social, cultural, and interpersonal environment includes significant others such as parents, mentors, colleagues, and peers, (2000:546). Dwelling within the different context with my research partners made the bonds stronger and communication better. Trust had been ascertained and confidence gained that their stories were important and thus would not be handled in a trivial and disrespectful manner. Audio/video recordings became crucial element that permitted me to work through the stories to generate more discussions especially as video is focused on the material world.

2.5 Ethnography of the Present: Interviews, Participation and Observation

According to Qu and Dumay (2019), research interview, is one of the most important qualitative data collection methods that have been widely used in conducting field studies and ethnographic research. Given the wide application of interviews in research, there has been an extensive literature on the interview method focusing on a range of topics and issues, including different types of interviews (Goldman and McDonald, 1987; McCracken, 1988), strengths and limitations of the method, and various techniques and general advice in conducting "effective" interviews (Douglas, 1985; Fontana and Frey, 1998; Kvale, 2007).

I am not here to attempt a literature review but illustrate how I used the interview method to collect data and analysis them. Adhering to Qu and Dumay (2011) the qualitative research interview as a "construction site of knowledge" must be understood in terms of five features of post-modern knowledge: as conversation, as narrative, as language, as context and as inter-relational, existing in the relationship between people and the world. The interviewer seeks to understand central themes in the life of the interviewee that will open accounts of specific experiences in the subject's life world.

'Interview as conversation characterizes everyday life by developing a methodological awareness of forms of questioning, focusing on what is said during the dyadic interplay between interviewer and interviewee', Qu and Dumay (2011:242). Therefore interviews did not only serve as a methodological tool. They were an essential necessity to gain access into the community, enlighten an understanding of the processes being observed. Interviews usually started off as casual conversations done mainly in English or pidgin with some interfaces in French. For those in the village pidgin, the lingua franca was mostly used while English was the norm in the urban centres. All were fully recorded semi-structured interviews with field notes which served as follow up questions and topics. Interviews were mainly carried out in various homes, job and business sites depending on what worked best for the interviewee.

Prior to the interview dates a lot of negotiations were made via phone to fix appointments and agree on any other modality. After a transcription of the interviews, for the informants that were difficult to meet again, the interviews continued through the telephone. Bernard (2017:261-264) opines that telephone is an important research tool as telephone interviews are becoming common place. Through this tool, interviewers and interviewees stay connected virtually as work progressed.

During the interviews, focus was on the collection of the various life histories. I started off by being intrigued and wanting to understand the complexities around the various land investments of these bushfallers. Thus far, I discovered these urbanites are brokers and entrepreneurs who really change the world back home. Choosing to work through life histories therefore brought in the time dimension that would facilitate the discussion of the various processes taking place in the village. That is, not only changing the architectural landscape but also influencing and affecting the everyday interactions of the people through creating new webs of negotiations and re-negotiations. Delving into the past became crucial to understanding the various social processes in the society thereby facilitating the choice of the main theoretical perspectives; material culture; mobility and urbanisation as they are all time based.

Joining workers and family members in mud pits to mix mortar for bricks and plastering, collecting stones for foundation, chipping a little amount of money for the purchase of bags of cement, sand and tiles and organising food also during the decking of houses which was a community activity were the various methods used in participating in the construction processes of some of the houses and public infrastructure. By so doing not only was the traditional anthropological method of participatory observation was employed but also participatory learning and action (PLA) to gain the perspectives of local people.

Bernard (2017:343-44) pointed out that participant observation is one of those strategic methods that puts the researcher where the action is and make it possible to collect any kind of data. This method was very valuable as it permitted me to take field notes about things seen and heard in natural settings; photographs of landscapes, houses and of the content of people's houses; audio recordings of people telling folktales; videotapes of

people in varied social interactions of everyday life. Going out and staying out and experiencing the lives of the Papiakum people, as opines by Bernard, I got in the door so as to collect life histories, attend rituals, celebrations and talk to people about sensitive topics. Participant observation therefore paved the path for me to establishing rapport and learning to act so that people go about their business as usual thus immersing myself in a new culture.

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is another type of qualitative research, which can be used to gain an in-depth understanding of a community or situation. It is widely used in work involving local communities. PLA is a participatory methodology, and should always be conducted with the full and active participation of community members. The main purpose of PLA is to support people within communities to analyse their own situation, rather than have it analysed by outsiders, and to ensure that any learning is then translated into action (Gosling and Edwards 2003). PLA is located within a broader field of participatory approaches, which can be described as a "family of approaches, methods, attitudes and behaviours to enable and empower people to share, analyse and enhance their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan, act, monitor, evaluate and reflect" (Chambers 2008:88). Napier and Simister (2017) says in its pure form, PLA is a philosophy which emphasises the need for outsiders to learn about situations from insiders. This philosophy seeks to reverse power relations between communities and outsiders.

Using PLA on the field therefore enabled people to communicate their experiences in ways they felt comfortable through exercises such as mapping and the use of pictures for example to draw attention and make people listen to others. This method was also important for its four main characteristic guideposts: It is Contractile, (ensuring informants to take part), Consultative (taking opinions from the locals), Collaborative (getting into the processes with the locals concerning the project), and Collegiate (working as colleagues with different skills). This method ensured that the control of information and knowledge was not in the hands of a group or person but served as a means of promoting shared knowledge. Thus participating in various everyday activities and celebrations/festivals I gradually immersed myself in the community and could easily connect with the urbanites whose investments at home were changing the landscape.

2.6 Conclusion

In the process of acquiring more knowledge about the Papiakum people, the various methods of data collection were brought to light. Priority was not given only to written text but the use of other mediums was employed to be better informed. The encompassing qualitative research method made it possible to use various interconnecting methods to delve into the Papiakum community. The above methods employed illustrated how interwoven they are making it possible to engage in in-depth discussion. Photography had the possibilities to open up interviews that led to the recounting of life histories and by so doing connecting research partners to different places with varied emotions attached. The above choices of data collection methods were the essential wires in the provision for material to use for the discussions and analysis in the upcoming chapters of this study. Exploring the different key concepts with the aid of these methods and empirical examples will illuminate my analysis on investing in material culture at home by mobile people in Anglophone Cameroon. The next chapter will take us home to ethnographic history of Papiakum people of Baba I and their changing socio-economic and political landscape in their mobility.