

Cross-Border Exchanges and Political Identity Cleavages in Kyé-Ossi, Cameroon

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Structured Abstract

Article Type: Research Paper

Purpose—The purpose of this study is to explore the potential and dynamics of politics among heterogeneous populations of cross-border territories. Kyé-Ossi is at the crossroad of trade between Cameroon (host), Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. For that reason, it has attracted people from different ethnic and national backgrounds. However, political cleavage is strong between Ntounmou (indigenes) and Bamoun (settlers or non-indigenes).

Design, Methodology, Approach—Data obtained from participant observation and semi-structured interviews indicate that while the voting behavior of the indigenous Ntounmou is determined by ethno-regional identification with the Cameroon Peoples' Democratic Movement (CPDM) party, some Bamoun settlers have also decided to support the same party as a means to survive outside their home constituency.

Findings—Some indigenous people living in cross-border territories do not always take a positive view of a political behavior against their chosen political leader or party in their “own” constituency.

Practical implications—In cross-border territories, deeply held ethnic attachment to a party is not a political behavior observed among non-indigenous people or settlers. Beyond the correlation between ethnicity and voting behavior (observed among the host population), settlers are compelled to support a locally based party.

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Originality, value—The study explores how patterns of geographical and ethnic partisanship influence political dynamics in border territories.

Keywords: Cameroon, cross-border, Kyé-Ossi, margins, political identity *cleavages*

I. Introduction

Studies in border zones are necessarily multidisciplinary. They are not only historical, but also geographic, demographic, legal, military and, obviously, and above all, political.¹ It is from this last angle that the present study is focused although other perspectives are explored. Moreover, it is not so much the border itself in the physical sense of the term that constitutes an object of scientific investigation in the present case. It is also about the representations that individuals make of it and in particular, the ability of political actors to take advantage of the political opportunities it offers. Cross-border constituencies are particularly interesting when investigated to determine the factors responsible for the political behavior of multi-ethnic and diverse groups therein. Posner, for example, explores how cultural differences can become politically salient in border territories and concludes that beyond such differences, the size of the population has a fundamental role to play in voting behavior.² On his part, McCauley argues that distinctiveness in geographic “boundedness” of identity types inspires differences in the goods that different members seek under ethnic and religious contexts and that changes in political behavior are a consequence not necessarily of the size of the group but most especially the policy preference at an individual level.³ Much of the literature on ethnicity and politics in Africa also concludes that incumbents will use the power of the state to reward their core constituency, thereby reinforcing patterns of ethnic partisanship in politics.⁴ It is clear from these studies that ethnic identification appears to be the major determinant of political behavior and that other determinants are more or less intervening variables. To say the least, individuals who self-identify most strongly as members of the local ethnic group, as opposed to their religious or other groups are more likely to support a political party with a local base, owing to a longstanding pattern of patronage distribution that has made the political party salient there.⁵

Kyé-Ossi is a multi-ethnic geographical entity that contains more than one dimension of cleavage. Its inhabitants, both the indigenous population and settlers, are divided by religion, ethnic and tribal belonging, and most importantly, cleavages based on region of origin, country of origin, language of communication and socio-economic and political activity. However, it appears that while the voting behavior of the indigenous Ntounou population is predominantly determined by ethnic considerations, some Bamoun settlers have not always been able to overtly express support for the Cameroon Democratic Union (CDU)—their home-based party in Kyé-Ossi (foreign) constituency. The Ntounous’s support for the Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement (CPDM) might be a way of expressing an ethnic identity

given that the party's leader is of that constituency—but it might not be the case with Bamoun support for the CPDM, which is more or less perceived as a means to survive in a “foreign land.” People can view supporting a regional champion as a way of expressing an ethnic identity.⁶ Settlers can express support for the same regional champion as a way to survive in a “foreign land/constituency.” These considerations lead to some questions: What could be the nature of the relationship between the indigenous people and several other settlers or immigrant groups? How does ethnic diversity in border constituencies affect the political attitudes and behavior of the various groups? Which of the groups between the indigenous ethnic group (Ntoumou) and the settler group (Bamoun) can claim political domination and why? Why are these two groups more engaged politically than others? From another perspective, what makes the cross-border trade in Kyé-Ossi so special, and how can it be viewed through the prism of economic and diplomatic cost and benefits? In an attempt to discover answers to these questions, semi-structured interviews and participant observations, as well as documentary analysis, were used as instruments to collect data. This study reveals evidence of links between ethnic identification and party support and non-ethnic/geographical identification and party support. The need for socioeconomic survival influenced non-ethnic identification among Bamoun settler population.

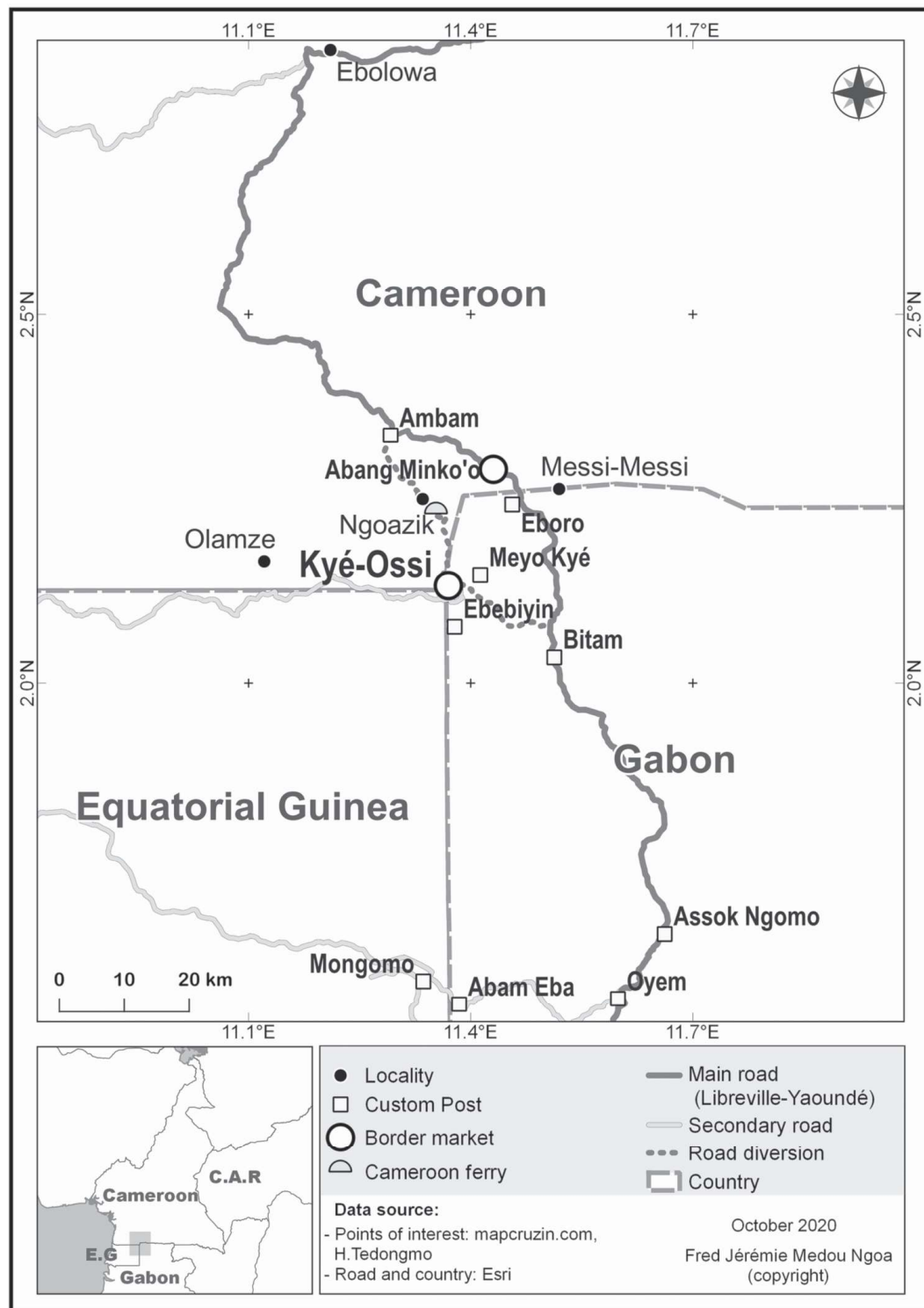
The paper explores the conditions under which forms of ethnic, socioeconomic and geographical cleavages become politically salient in border territories. It focuses on the political instrumentalism of cleavages linked to indigenous people and settlers and argues that the large size of settler population represents a political resource for home-based politicians in border territories. The paper begins with a description of the location and composition of Kyé-Ossi, with a focus on what makes it attractive; and then a description of the political identity cleavages with a focus on indigenous Ntoumou and Bamoun settlers as they struggle for political power.

II. Kyé-Ossi: Between Attractiveness, Diversity and Issues of Cross-Border Exchanges

To understand Kyé-Ossi it is imperative to locate the area and describe how it stands alone as hub of trade and commerce and source of attraction with diplomatic cost and benefits. Particular attention is given to the heterogeneous character of the inhabitants.

2.1 The Territorial and Socio-Political Constitution of Kyé-Ossi

Kyé-Ossi covers a surface area of 710 km² and is made up of 21 villages, 21 3rd class chiefdoms and two 2nd class chiefdoms found in Ebengon and Meyo-Nkoulou. Kyé-Ossi is bounded to the north by Ambam, a locality in Cameroon, to the south by Equatorial Guinea, to the east by Gabon and to the west by the Olamze local council area,⁷ also in Cameroon.



Located around the east coast of the Gulf of Guinea in Africa, Kyé-Ossi was once considered part of Equatorial Guinea and then Gabon before it was returned to Cameroon in 1972. It takes its name from the Kyé River which in the local language is called “Si” and literally translates into “Bas-Kyé” (lower Kyé) and was given the administrative status of a district on April 24, 2007.⁸

As earlier mentioned, Kyé-Ossi is located in Cameroon, a country in a strategic position within the Central African sub-region and beyond. This strategic position has attracted a range of cross-border activities and in particular cross-border trade. However, the most important border localities in terms of number of exchanges are those of Mbaiboum, Ndélélé and Bogdibo in the North Region and those of Kyé-Ossi, Campo Beach, Menguikon and Abang Minko’o in the South Region.⁹

The markets in the border areas of Mbaiboum and Kyé-Ossi have always stood out for their role as a platform for cross-border trade. However, it has a competitive advantage over other cross-border localities in the sense that it is located at the intersection between three countries namely: Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.¹⁰ From this perspective, the ethnic composition of Kyé-Ossi is multiple and diverse.

Kyé-Ossi has an estimated population of 45,000 inhabitants according to official statistics.¹¹ The population is essentially heterogeneous. It is representative of most Cameroonian ethnic groups. However, in terms of numbers, the most important ones are the Bamoun, the Bamiléké, the Boulou, and the Ntoundou.¹² Among these four dominant ethnic groups, the Ntoundou make up the indigenous population. Ethnic groups from other neighboring countries also make up part of the people living and doing business in Kyé-Ossi. Ethnic diversity is also reflected in the numerous local and official languages used as medium of communication. French is the dominant language in the midst of several other local languages. These considerations represent significant cultural and linguistic diversity upon which politics have to be played out.

On a religious note, Islam is dominant in the town of Kyé-Ossi due to the demographic size of the Bamoun, who are largely Muslim. Alongside this religious denomination, we also note the presence of Catholics and Protestants who are for the most part the Ntoundou and Boulou.

According to some informants, Kyé-Ossi is very much like a state within a state. Unlike Ambam, a neighboring city, it is a mixture of three countries (Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and Cameroon). It is obvious from this consideration to think of Kyé-Ossi as a hub of ethnic cleavage and diversity. Although the dominant local language is Fang, Cameroonians speak French, a language introduced by the “colonial State,” and Equatorial Guineans speak Spanish, another linguistic legacy from Spain. Thus, to know the basis of the ethnic identity of the populations in Kyé-Ossi, one should pay attention to the fact that the individual speaks Fang added either to French for Cameroonians, or to French with a different accent for Gabonese, or in Spanish for Equatorial Guineans. This state of affairs reinforces the hybrid nature of identity although it provides the basis for people to learn other languages and be able to use them to integrate the socio-political fabric of Kyé-Ossi. Thus, one can observe that

some Bamoun speak Fang and have the Gabonese accent, which facilitates business transactions with the Gabonese and Equato-Guineans counterparts.

As mentioned earlier, the Bamoun represent a significant settler population in Kyé-Ossi along with the Ntoumou, who are indigenes, yet, some Bamoun people have been able to impose themselves as the dominant group. The questions now become: what could have pushed and still pushes the Bamoun to occupy a dominant position in such ethno-demographic condition of diversity and what can be the impact of such a presence for politics? Why have the Bamoun been able to secure a strong political base in Kyé-Ossi despite the fact that they are perceived as strangers in that land? A potential response to some of these questions is rooted in the trading capability of the Bamoun people as well as the history of migration and settlement. An informant on the issue had this to say:

Kyé-Ossi is a city of exchanges, of commerce. It is the second city of the Bamoun after Foumban [the home city]. All the Bamoun seek to come to Kyé-Ossi, thinking that this is their El Dorado. His brother who is leaving Kyé-Ossi praises the said city once in the Noun.¹³ These are the first [immigrant] inhabitants to have come to this territory. The Bamoun were the first people to settle here. They worked with the indigenes and bought land. They were mostly farmers.¹⁴ In order to see the size of the Bamoun population you have to look around the city by 7 a.m. when they go about their daily business and at 5 p.m. when they return.¹⁵

Testimonies on Bamoun people as pioneer settlers in Kyé-Ossi abound. What follows has the particularity not only to focus attention on the utilitarian dimension of the border, but also to highlight the dynamics of the process by which the Bamoun people settled in the area. Below is another testimony:

I would have learned when I got here that the part called Kyé-Ossi might still be unoccupied. One of the political leaders, a Bamoun sultan, is said to have asked former President Ahidjo if he could bring his brothers to settle in this part of the territory with the indigenous Fang. When they got to Kyé-Ossi, they saw that the city was strategic, that exchanges with neighbouring countries were done in a fluid manner, and this is how they developed a taste for business and decided to make out a life here.¹⁶

It should be noted that the Bamoun people arrived in Kyé-Ossi and discovered that it was sparsely occupied. This can partly be explained by the fact that some indigenous people had migrated to Gabon and Equatorial Guinea in search of better living conditions. At the heart of this decision to migrate was the oil boom in these two countries. According to another informant:

The majority of Bamoun now see Kyé-Ossi as their hometown. They have acquired land property and others have built houses.¹⁷ The Bamoun ancestors first settled with us in Ebengon. Nowadays, if there are ten people in Kyé-Ossi, two or three would be indigenes, seven or eight would be non-indigenes, mostly Bamoun.¹⁸

One of the indicators of the strong presence of the Bamoun in the border town of Kyé-Ossi or of the attractiveness of this population from the West of the country to

this town in the South is the opportunity to convert this demographic advantage into a political resource. Among others:

The 3rd class chief of Akombang village is a Bamoun. The Bamoun are the first foreigners to have occupied Kyé-Ossi.¹⁹ It is since 1984 that Pouefoma Amadou, born around 1938 in Fentain, became 3rd class chief of Akombang village, replacing his uncle Njiawouo Isaac, who died in November 1983. The latter thus became village chief following consultations, customary practice and elections organized for this purpose by the then chief of Olamze. The election was won with an overwhelming majority by Pouenfoma Amadou, non-indigene (Bamoun), against Zue Nkoulou Laurent (Ntoumou, indigene). From then on, he assumed office as head of the community, albeit unofficially until 2004, when his Majesty the Sultan Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya, King of the Bamoun, on the inauguration of the central mosque of Akombang, built by the Bamoun, officially designated him as his representative in Kyé-Ossi.²⁰

Kyé-Ossi, therefore, has a historical attraction for the Bamoun and particularly for all the populations who migrate there because of the socioeconomic and political opportunities it offers as a border town. It should be remembered, however, that “border entrepreneurs” have multiple faces.²¹ Border towns have potential for profitability and, as such, attract individuals with various profiles and skills who come to bet or try their luck. Game, risk and profitability are the lot of border margins.²² The foregoing considerations show that in Kyé-Ossi too, cosmopolitanism is linked to ethnic diversity and to the phenomena of cultural and economic hybridization that occur there.²³ Karine Bennafla notes more widely that in Central Africa, a host of economic actors, men and women interact to exploit border town opportunities. Many of them are traders, transporters, freight forwarders, couriers, currency changers, guides, interpreters, handlers in addition to a floating population of restaurateurs, hairdressers and other service providers present in the marketplaces, and sometimes, some, such as shoemakers, prostitutes, etc., come from distant countries.²⁴

2.2 Economic and Diplomatic Costs and Benefits in Cross-Border Exchanges in Kyé-Ossi

The emergence of commercial centers on the borders of national territories reflects a type of informal business dynamism that seems to have taken modern States aback. They are finding it difficult to control and manage the emergence of cross-border spaces.²⁵ Cross-border trade is therefore not considered only in terms of the benefits that it can procure, but also in terms of the cost, as States have to deploy time, energy and money for effective control. That is why States are sometimes compelled to shut down borders, even though this decision might be a unilateral one. At the very least, there is no consensus or joint agreement among border States over the management of borders—such as when it can be closed and opened. This unilateral action toward the management of borders has often been a source of strained diplomatic relations between Cameroon and its neighbors. According to an informant:

There are not enough border closures on the Gabon side. It was not until 1998 that the border was closed for the last time. But Equatorial Guineans are capricious. They spontaneously close the borders without any reasonable explanation. Even now as I speak it is hardly accessible. Prior to their Independence Day which is every October 12, Equatorial Guinea closes its borders for a week or two. However, it is possible that their President is not always aware of these arbitrary closures and most of the time; it does not come from the authorities given that no official statement has been released to that effect.²⁶

Although it is often for security reasons²⁷ that borders are closed, it is important to note that the closure too represents significant economic and diplomatic challenges. When the border is shut down for two weeks or more, economic activities come to a standstill, and clandestine and criminal activities take over.

Moreover, complexes linked to the clash of culture are also a phenomenon observed when borders are shutdown. For example, claims of different colonial identities often exacerbate diplomatic tension and make it hard for a consensus to be reached over the management of the border. The fact that Gabon is a former French colony, Equatorial Guinea a former Spanish colony and Cameroon a former Franco-British mandated/trusteeship territory is a source of discord among these three countries. For one interviewee: "It was the French who colonized the Gabonese, we have almost the same cultures [with Cameroon]. However, the Guineans were colonized by the Spanish."²⁸ This differentiated colonial legacy has created a feeling among the inhabitants from these countries that they have different cultural backgrounds, thereby making living together challenging. There is a feeling of mutual suspicion between Cameroonians and Equatorial Guineans. Equatorial Guineans sometimes suspect Cameroonians of coming to their country to take their resources. That is why Cameroonians have often been rejected and in extreme cases, were deported back to their country. However, to survive the situation, some Cameroonians without papers (relevant identification requirements) have bought their way through. Others try to speak Fang (the native language of people of Equatorial Guinea), as way to deceive border officers and to get through into Equatorial Guinea. And this state of affairs weakens the relation between the two countries so that Equatorial Guineans now prefer Gabonese to Cameroonians to enter Guinea.²⁹

Pick-pocketing³⁰ is another informal activity resulting from the closure of borders and from which lots of benefits are derived. However, apart from illegal and illicit activities, there is regulated trade based on import and export between the Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea that generates some benefits for both countries.

Cameroon exports fresh food, household furniture (such as beds, wardrobes, tables and benches), household appliances (TV sets, fridges, irons, and cell phones), etc., to Equatorial Guinea. What enters Cameroon from Guinea are drinks and beverages. There are four dominant varieties: 1—liqueurs (whiskeys); 2—table wine (red wine); 3—beer; 4—sweet drinks (juice). Cameroon also imports canned food (sardines, hams, sausages); vegetable oils, building materials; cosmetics (body lotions, toilet milks, deodorants, perfumes); and used cars. The importation of used cars into Cameroon was easier when oil prices dropped in the world market.³¹ The auto-

mobile sector was affected so that the sale of used vehicles to Cameroon became a parallel activity.

It should also be noted that economic downturn upsets the use of labor as well. Petty trades are being carried out by the Guineans themselves (household workers), which was not so in the past. They now learn mechanics and enter the bush themselves to look for wood, a situation that was not done during the heyday of the oil boom. Now, the quest for money and the need to survive under economic hardship has gained precedence over pride and they are now compelled to do some of the odd jobs reserved for people of other nationalities. This has somewhat balanced the nature of the relationship between Equatorial Guineans and Cameroonians and Gabonese since complexities have reduced. This recession could also explain why free movement across the border of member States of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) became operational only in 2017 while the text was adopted in 2013. However, one thing remains certain; the fall in fuel prices has weakened the economy of the two countries in relation to the decrease in imports and exports.

Cameroon also exports fresh food, plantains, sweet bananas, cassava, potatoes, maize, and beans to Gabon, from Kyé-Ossi and Abang Minko'o. Cameroon also exports livestock to Gabon. These include oxen and sheep, mostly in high demand by the Muslim community. However, producers from northern Cameroon and not from Kyé-Ossi control livestock sectors. On the other hand, Cameroon imports from Gabon include pasta, dry fish (herring), milk, poultry, smuggled frozen foods, table oil, sardines, and rice.

Border security agents are a little more careful of goods and persons entering Gabon. In spite of attempts to find a common migration policy among the countries of ECCAS, and in spite of the joint decision to lessen borders for the movement of goods and persons from member countries, evidence on the ground shows that each country still defines its migration policy. That is why Gabon has developed a stricter migration policy in addition to the fact that they do not want "foreign" domination. In extreme cases, they have repatriated some foreigners *en masse* particularly those who have irregular or incomplete residence papers, or those that are not up to date. The Cameroon government has also had to denounce, on one or two occasions, the arbitrary repatriation of some Cameroonians by Gabon. Contrary to what some people may think; if the free movement of goods and persons is allowed, the control is likely to intensify.

Many people think that during the days of President Omar Bongo Odimba, second President of the Republic of Gabon, the Gabonese people became lazy. Most of them were not seen to be involved in agriculture and related activities. In Meyo-Kyé and Bitam, for example, you could not find a cultivated field in the strictest sense of the term. This situation could have also fostered the feeling of suspicion and wariness about "hardworking" foreigners who desire to live and work in Gabon, hence the strict migration policy.

Whatever the case, in this context, it is important to note that in general, Cameroon exports more than the other two countries. This is the case with food

crops, market gardens and even products such as fertilizers and pesticides. Imports to Kyé-Ossi are primarily from Equatorial Guinea (drinks). The Guineans obtain much more from Kyé-Ossi, while the Gabonese do so not only from Kyé-Ossi, but especially from Abang Minko'o.

Sometimes, to overturn and escape payment of regular custom dues, traders are compelled to identify and use bush roads where there is little or no control. In the border area with Guinea, there are bush markets, such as Medikoum, Ebengoan, Meyo Biboulou, Olamze. Toward Gabon it is a bit difficult, except at a place called Mefoup, where there is a bush road. Smuggling of goods with the use of bush paths suggests that States of those border areas are losing a lot of money from custom dues. It is only on periodic market days that some income can be generated via custom service. Unfortunately, too, the periodic nature of the market operation (though certainly for security reasons), reduces the ability of States to generate revenue from customs activities. Toward Gabon, there is only one market day, Wednesday. Market days with Guineans are Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The Kyé-Ossi market is therefore periodic and it is on market days that there are lively exchanges of goods and services between Cameroonians, Equatorial Guineans and Gabonese.

As major economic operators in the locality, Bamoun traders get supplies from Douala, the economic capital of Cameroon, but also from Santa in the northwest, and their hometowns of Foubot and Fouban. Cameroon can export at least 15 to 20 tonnes of plantains from Kyé-Ossi to neighboring countries per week.

Sometimes the difficulty associated with becoming a regular businessman has caused many to resort to clandestine trading activities. Administrative and police bottlenecks are part of a hallmark to regular business. According to information from the field, many think life is difficult in Kyé-Ossi because of the difficulties that foreign traders encounter at the border.

The abuses of the police in business transactions along the border have indirectly led to the emergence of transnational organized crime. In an attempt to circumvent the police, traders and other city dwellers tend to become involved in illegal and illicit activities such as contraband, smuggling, drug trafficking and other forms of black-market activities including organized crime. According to Mr. Youmo, vice-president of the CPDM sub-section of Kyé-Ossi, two cases of crime-related business transactions that led to death have been reported on the bush market roads.³² According to an informant on the field:

In Cameroon there are too many controls compared to neighbouring countries who also imitate what we are doing. For example, when the governor raids the field, he prohibits or reduces the number of checkpoints, but after two weeks everything is back in place. There are at least eight controls namely: customs, border police, phytosanitary, town hall, gendarmerie, and territorial security, transport office (BGFT), trade. It does not facilitate the entry of Guineans and Gabonese. When they come to buy, on their way back, they have to "settle" customs and pay all the taxes in the various checkpoints. All this makes cross-border trade difficult. But on the Gabon side, the controls are few, with at most three checkpoints. So the foreigner who comes to Cameroon must pay customs first in Cameroon before doing so again in Guinea although the product had already

been cleared in Douala. If a Guinean comes to pay a basket of tomato at 8000 F CFA [12.5 USD] in Kyé-Ossi, before arriving in Ebebiyin, the first town in Guinea, two kilometres from, he finds himself in the expenses of 13,000 F CFA a basket. So, he would have added an extra 5,000 FCFA [7.5 USD] for a basket that initially cost 8,000 F CFA. This makes life expensive in Guinea, even more so in Bata, the economic capital. Other buyers even prefer not to come to Cameroon to buy because of the cost, which makes life harder in Kyé-Ossi as well. But free movement can make things easier if they respect it, but in the field it is up to the men in uniform.³³

Kyé-Ossi is a melting pot of businesses and businessmen from various backgrounds and identities. The Bamoun people are the major traders in that border locality. However, to survive economically may not be enough—partisan engagement in politics adds to the conditions of survival in border territory of Kyé-Ossi.

III. Political Identity Cleavages in Kye-Ossi

To talk about political identity cleavages in Kyé-Ossi is to investigate how power is conquered and kept at the local but also at the central levels. At the heart of the quest for power and identity also lies the challenge of “living together,” a concept introduced by politicians to promote social harmony and minimize the effects of the political instrumentalization of ethnic differences in multi-ethnic and diversified Cameroon.

3.1 Kyé-Ossi as a Stronghold of Political Power Struggles and “Living Together”

The origin of the modern State in Africa is recent, with poorly rooted notions of nation and citizenship.³⁴ Democratic transitions in Central Africa have been marked by ethno-identity cleavages,³⁵ even if such ethnicity politics followed different trajectories.³⁶ The conquest of political power in Kyé-Ossi constituency is played out between two predominantly influential parties, the ruling Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement (CPDM) and the opposition CDU.³⁷ The leaders of both parties are respectively from Bulu and Bamoun origins of the South and West Regions of Cameroon. Politics cannot be understood in this border constituency without reference to these two parties. However:

[Although] with the multiparty system in Cameroon, everyone can become a member of any political party, it might not be the same freedom in rural constituencies, such as Kyé-Ossi. When you are with people, you have to accept to dance to their tune lest in the end it will create problems for you. This understanding looks as an assumption, but it is the reality. When you are foreigner or stranger, you are vulnerable, and this makes you an eventual loser in everything. Living together cannot be achieved without challenges though. Linguistic differences, differences in custom and habits and above all the heterogeneous nature of the people living there are not always considered as asset or facilitators of “living

together.” In such a context, it is impossible to avoid problems related to coexistence.³⁸

If the significant presence of the Bamoun people in Kyé-Ossi explains the existence of the opposition CDU party in this constituency of Cameroon, it does not mean that all Bamoun people are militants and sympathizers of that party whose leader, Adamu Ndam Njoya³⁹ is of their ethnic background, nor does it mean that all Ntounmou indigenes support and sympathize with the ruling CPDM, whose chairman, Paul Biya, who also doubles as President of the Republic, and of the same ethnic background. What matters in such a context is not necessarily the expression of partisan support based on ethnic feelings and sympathies. Rather, people will go for the party that stands the greatest chance of winning irrespective of the ethnic origin of the party's leader. There are indeed Bamoun who are members of the CPDM, as there are in Foumban and elsewhere, and Ntounmou who are members of the CDU, Social Democratic Front (SDF), etc. Although the idea of political stronghold is still very strong, which means that a party's leader origin is considered acquired to that party and consequently dominant, people are interested in supporting the party that can best protect and enhance their interests. This can explain why we find Bamoun people supporting the CPDM, the ruling party or “government party,” in spite of the presence of the CDU and other opposition parties more or less closer to their ethnic origin. In any case, how can we understand that in spite of the presence of the CDU and CPDM, the ethno-demographic variable has hardly ever been mobilized as a political instrument, let alone used efficiently? These parties have the social capital potential to mobilize political support along ethnic lines: with CDU mobilizing support from among the Bamoun people and CPDM mobilizing the same among Ntounmou. Let us follow the explanation of the Section president of the CDU party of the Ntem Valley Division:

It was during Minister Adamou Ndam Njoya's time at the Ministry of National Education that everything happened. It's as if the Bamoun have come to corrupt people! When you join the CDU you are drawn by the party's ideology. With the advent of the multiparty system, there is a man named Ela Mbo who went as far as Foumban to seek the CDU, because of Ndam Njoya's brilliant record at the Ministry of Education. His passage in these places left a positive image because he raised the level of the students. How else would we get to know him from here? After Ela Mbo's death, Master Ebo Essono, former civil servant, teacher and former secretary general of the section presidency of the CPDM in the Ntem Valley took up from there. Before his recent disappearance, he was head of the 2013 municipal election list. I, who speak to you, Mvondo Alexandre, was then an advisor on his list. Once his post became vacant, the party comrades made me to replace him by heading not only the list in Kyé-Ossi but also those of Ma'an, Ambam and Olamzé, who accepted to host me at the departmental coordination of the CDU in the Ntem Valley.⁴⁰

In terms of the conquest and preservation of central political power, it is not advisable to lose sight of the fact that Kyé-Ossi is part of the territories that Zambo Belinga (2005)⁴¹ described as “so-called acquired localities” to the CPDM. This can

be explained by at least two reasons. The first is geographic, natural and cultural. Indeed, for the indigenous populations, Kyé-Ossi is located in the southern region to which the head of state belongs, and in turn belongs to the large Pahouin group,⁴² like his neighbors in Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Congo. Therefore, losing presidential elections, in particular in Kyé-Ossi, means opening up this geopolitical and economic-cultural flank to the opposition, largely made of the populations of western Cameroon, majority of who are Bamoun.

The second reason why Kyé-Ossi is considered acquired by the CPDM is related to the elites of the southern regions and their determination to keep Kyé-Ossi as a stronghold of the national ruling party. They will not accept that another party might win elections in Kyé-Ossi and are capable of going the extra mile to ensure that the CPDM continues to dominate in politics. They believe that to maintain their elective, nominative and governmental positions, the CPDM *must* win in all elections in the South Region, including Kyé-Ossi. If an opposition party is to win elections in Kyé-Ossi, then, they would have failed in their political mission and the consequence would be that they would lose their central power position and the advantages that come with it. That is why they act as campaign specialists and overseers of the electoral framework to the point that, in some cases, they engage in the abuse of power to safeguard the CPDM. One of their political and electoral strategies has been to offer power generators to the people of Kyé-Ossi particularly during election time. It should be noted that since Cameroon became independent in 1960, this border territory has not been electrified. According to an informant:

There is political dictatorship. Example: when you want to sympathize with a party that is not the ruling CPDM, you are intimidated by internal and external elites who are party officials of the CPDM. So in reality there is one party system in Kyé-Ossi and to which even foreigners are compelled to adhere. This party is the CPDM that is also the national ruling party. These elite do not want another party.⁴³

Here people behave as if we were still in the days of the one party. They do not want to realize that we are in a multiparty system in which people are free to belong to a party of their choice. Once they dare to join a party different from the CPDM, the CPDM elites who are also decision makers in central government will threaten those parents by promising hard times for their children seeking jobs and education.⁴⁴

Living together in Kyé-Ossi is another important determinant of the political dynamics of border territories. Living together is determined by anthropological, cultural and political factors. Overall, living together is circumstantial. At one moment, the people speak in one voice and at others there are conflicts linked to cultural, political and anthropological differences. A summary is provided in the excerpt below:

Natives and non-natives have very good relations. However, sometimes tensions arise between them. There is theft. At the Equatorial Guinea front, some rob the Guineans and when you arrive in Guinea if they know you are Cameroonian, the Equatorial Guineans take revenge. They all take you for Cameroonians. Even

though they ask to move the goods, they ask for more. Others pass through bush paths. Faced with this banditry, locals sometimes worry and sometimes even start talking because locals and Equatorial Guineans are the same family. It is as if we are just stealing someone who speaks the same dialect as you in front of you, it makes you think. Yet when you arrive in Foumban they are considered good people, but when they arrive in Kyé-Ossi it is a total change.⁴⁵

The Bamoun are traders. When traders go on strike, the Bamouns are accused, whereas it is caused by a problem affecting all traders irrespective of where they come from. The strike derives from an old grudge between the traders and border authorities. In the border posts located on the Guinean side, numerous controls prevent Guinean and Gabonese buyers from getting supplies at Kyé-Ossi. That was the cause of the strike! There was a protest march to win over the attention and appeal of the state; on what is happening in Kyé-Ossi and caused by challenges linked to doing business. We live here thanks to business. When the strike took place, the authorities changed the story and reported something else because they knew they were to blame for it. In spite of the efforts the matter was not settled. Instead, the Bamoun was blamed for the strike. They were accused of organising to protest the stolen victory of the CDU in municipal and parliamentary elections. What is it that is killing the Kyé-Ossi market and causing this strike? It is the fact that traders from Kyé-Ossi leave the city and travel long distances to go into the bush in Olamze, to the market of Mendikoum and to the market of Meyo Biboulou all in the district of Olamze. In addition, the excess transaction charges we pay increases our expenses and reduces our purchasing power.⁴⁶

Again,

During the strike, uniform men of the Mobile Intervention Unit (GMI) of Ebolowa arrested and whipped the municipal councillors. They whipped them thinking that they were CDU protesters whereas they were CPDM councillors. In fact, they were two CPDM Bamoun advisers. So far, they are not happy.⁴⁷

These facts undermine the guarantee of the interests that political activism in favor of the ruling party can procure, even if it should be recognized that the narratives of the informant may not be reflecting the true story of what happened.

At first and still within the context of living together in Kyé-Ossi, the cleavage between Ntounmou and Bamoun has left sad memories among the populations. Indeed:

There was a gendarme called Ibrahim. He was a warrant officer and had taken on a Bamoun mechanic after an accident. He thought he was a “moto taximan” and began beating him up. People intervened and moto taxi drivers barricaded the road at the level of the central mosque number 1. Mintsia Ndong Hyacinthe, a Ntounmou native came to remove the barricade and clashes ensued with Bamoun boys. Clearly there was a fight between the Ntounmou and the Bamoun boys. The Ntounmou decided that the Bamoun should no longer live here and that they should go back to their hometown [Foumban]. The Governor of the South Region, Bernard Wongolo came to Kyé-Ossi in the company of the general delegate for national security Edgar Alain Mebe Ngo. The latter gave money to the two communities so that they could sit down and make peace. The Bamoun

decided to give the Ntougou ¾ of this money and took just ¼. The Bamoun boys used the money to buy a new motorcycle for Ndam Mama to replace the one burnt by Ntougou. All the money was received by the village chief.⁴⁸

There is another version of this story thus:

There was a fight here in Kyé-Ossi. When the major road of the city was tarred, many motorcycle taxis arrived, more than two hundred of them. This opened the door to many accidents. For example, more than 25 cases of accidents could be recorded per week, from Akonagui village to border areas. Entrance to these areas has been declared as dangerous, or accident prone. So the Ntougou got angry. Ambam's State prosecutor joined us in support of the Ntougou. The Bamoun went to the State prosecutor of the Ntem Valley Division and insulted him. So there was a fight between the Ntougou and the Bamoun. The Bamoun were motorcycle taximen and after this fight the number of accidents reduced.⁴⁹

"Living together" in Kyé-Ossi is often punctuated with spontaneous incidents of clashes between the indigenes and non-indigenes. In the political field however, non-indigenes seem to follow a partisan pattern systematically defined by the indigenous politicians.

3.2 The Kyé-Ossi Council as a Sociologically Conditioned Political Trophy

The political field is one of competition for power between social actors and once power is conquered, the right to speak and act on behalf of a party or of all is achieved.⁵⁰ But, everywhere in Africa, democratization seems to unleash a real obsession with local identities, expressed in terms of indigenes and the exclusion of "aliens."⁵¹ In this vein, the town hall of Kyé-Ossi is an issue of political struggles. As a rule, the people of Kyé-Ossi believe that they are entitled to control the town hall. This belief has led some politicians to make remarks:

The Bamoun are nothing in the council.⁵² A Bamoun mayor is a bit difficult. If you see the Bamoun here, it is for business. They are always behind the natives. Even in the list of Kyé-Ossi municipal councillors, you will only find two Bamoun appearing there. If the CDU has to take the council, an indigenous person will always be at the top of the list. The Bamoun are behind them. Being mayor here is not easy now, maybe in the future. It is like at home in Foumbot, Foumban, there is no alien at the top of the list, unless the Bamoun decide otherwise. Here we cannot decide unless they decide.⁵³

The council of Kyé-Ossi therefore stands as a major political trophy, but sociologically conditioned by at least autochthony (being an indigene). This state of affairs is at odds with democratic standards according to which political competition should be without discrimination as to one's place of origin. In the words of Mr. Bikoro Eneme Alain Didier, then CPDM mayor of Kyé-Ossi:

This is our town hall. Those who have come have come for business and nothing else. In spite of the populations found here, the town belongs to the Ntougou, who welcome everyone. Unfortunately, no one can leave his home to come and be mayor in Kyé-Ossi. Have you seen a Beti take control of a town hall out of

his/her hometown? There are town halls everywhere; anyone who wants to be mayor can become one in his/her home constituency.⁵⁴

Generally, such statements are not unknown to the CDU, the main opposition party in Kyé-Ossi, let alone its leader. For the president of the CDU of the Ntem Valley, “if the CDU wins an election, it prefers that an indigenous person be put forward. His problem is the party.”⁵⁵ Thus, to make sense in this local political market, he felt that participation in the political game is effective when an indigene remains at the helm of any electoral framework, and in particular municipal elections in Kyé-Ossi. This practice is common among the people of Noun where the Bamoun come from in West Cameroon. This tradition seems to have been imported. Taking into account these local realities, the sociological composition of the CDU list in the 2013 municipal elections in Kyé-Ossi is indicative of the need to play realistic politics. Although the Bamoun constitute the majority in Kyé-Ossi, the native Ntounmou are the ones who mostly apply to control the council. Usually, the ratio is 17:8 as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: The CDU list of candidates for the 2013 municipal elections in Kye-ossi (compiled by the author, 2019)

INDIGENES	ALIENS	CHRISTIANS	MUSLIMS
17	08	17	08

Total number of candidates: 25

The political elite of the South Region are, in fact, not ready to accept any list of candidates for elections in which indigenes of the area are not overwhelmingly represented no matter the political party, as the table indicates. Many have seen this as political corruption and intimidation. According to Mr. Ndo, a phytosanitary agent at the police station, “during the electoral contests, one can wonder if it is really clean, better still transparent. That the ballot boxes should speak for themselves is what we cannot expect to see here.”⁵⁶ This is a way to say that the ballot boxes speak to the extent that the political elite of the South want.⁵⁷ According to another informant:

There is a problem that arises here in Kyé-Ossi, it is always the Bikoro Antoine family who take over the council. This Bikoro was mayor in Olamze and is mayor in Kyé-Ossi. When the decentralization was instaured, because he cannot accumulate functions, he left the post of mayor to his uncle in Kyé-Ossi. After all the latter is his nephew. Here I do not see any party that can win the election apart from the CDU. When there is an election there is an arrangement to determine the winner. The votes of the voters do not work, only fraud!⁵⁸

For the president of the CDU of Ntem Valley:

The 2013 election campaign was funded. But if we organize a transparent election in Kyé-Ossi the CPDM cannot have 30%. After the municipal elections, the

CPDM was at 35% while the CDU was at 65%. If we did not succeed to complain to the Constitutional Council, it was because our hands were tied. The fault at one point was ours. The people who were sent to the municipal commission to represent us took money there. Our representative signed the minutes. They betrayed us. In 2018, the CDU will fight like a wounded lion. We will watch, the CDU has people who are ready to sacrifice themselves. We are not always going to leave things like this. If we are really in the Republic, whoever wins an election should be in power. People have to change their mentality.⁵⁹

Figures provided by the president of the CDU of Ntem Valley, however, do not correspond to the official figures giving the CPDM the winner at the end of this electoral competition. This is a significant indicator of the CPDM/CDU partisan divide in Kyé-Ossi. The said figures are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of municipal election results of 2013 In Kyé-Ossi (compiled by the author, 2019)

POLLING STATIONS	REGISTERED VOTERS	ACTUAL VOTERS	ABSTENTIONS	EMPTY BALLOTS	VALID	CPDM	CDU	CPDM	CDU	DECISION
					VOTES CAST					
42	9882	6968	2914	150	6819	4252	2567	62.36	37.64	CPDM

On these electoral issues, local public opinion remains equally divided. Thus, for Mr. Evina Gaston, phytosanitary agent in Kyé-Ossi cited elsewhere:

If the higher political authorities did not hit the hand on the table, the Bamoun would have taken control of the council of Kyé-Ossi. We often tell them that you are at home we do not refuse, but for the management of the council, leave it to the indigenes. If we left the elections free, honestly the Bamoun would have taken the council. A Bamoun would have been mayor here. And this is one aspect of politics that compels them to retract, to accept what they are told in spite of themselves. These are very difficult situations during elections. However, there is a link between the council and the market, it is the market that makes the council work and vice versa, whereas, people complain about the mayor.⁶⁰

The freedom in the electoral process referred to by this informant may initially refer to transparency in the conduct of elections. Secondly, this freedom is indirectly part of the right to compete politically in all places without discrimination based on regional or even parochial origin. The fact is that the council of Kyé-Ossi is a political trophy conditioned by ethnic belonging. According to the leader of the Bamoun community in Kyé-Ossi, Mr. Mbemoun Dayirou:

Of course, people said to the Bamoun: you have the trade, the cars, leave us the politics, but the CDU has no reason to complain about the 2013 election for the simple reason that since we have been organizing elections in Kyé-Ossi, that of 2013 was the most transparent. CDU representative Mahamat Tawat, a member of the council commission, sat with us on the commission and signed the minutes. There were 42 polling stations in Kyé-Ossi constituency, we did the count together.⁶¹

Despite these remarks made by the leader of the Bamoun community of Kyé-Ossi and a member of ELECAM,⁶² local public opinion considers that the significant demographic presence of the Bamoun in Kyé-Ossi is almost a relevant indicator of the strength of the CDU during electoral competition.

Three factors can help to explain this hypothesis: first, the two-sided militancy which consists of duplicating political identity; second, the strong mobilization of the militants of CDU; third, the non-indifference of the political elite of the CPDM to the dynamism of the CDU in Kyé-Ossi. These three factors are clarified in the following remarks:

People are looking for their interests. You can see someone in CPDM outfit, but is that proof enough that they are genuine CPDM activists? They protect their interests. During the CDU rally of 2013 elections, we could see that thousands of people had gathered. Ndam Njoya (the party's chair) was in Kyé-Ossi, the mobilization was general. And when we see that how can we think that the people will not win elections and take control of the council? The Fame Ndongo were there! During the CPDM meeting, trucks were sent to the bush to bring people from other areas such as Abang Minko'o to come and animate the gallery. It is really a very delicate problem here.⁶³

IV. Conclusion

This study showed that cross-border territories are veritable agents of sociopolitical mobilization. They are melting pots of individuals from various backgrounds (indigenes, and non-indigenes, foreigners and nationals). If man is a political animal in Aristotle's sense, from an interactionist perspective, it appears that in a context of political competition the issues turn out to be focused primarily from an identity perspective, especially in cross-border localities with a high sense of ethnic diversity. The indigenous people (urban, local political elites, populations) support the national ruling CPDM, not only because the party's chairman who is also the President of the Republic is of their ethnic background but also because the party is seen as the best able to preserve their political interests. They do so by making sure that this party wins in all elections (presidential, legislative and municipal), in spite of the political threats from the presence of Bamoun non-indigenes who are numerically dominant. The Bamoun non-indigenes are also poised to give support to the CPDM, in spite of the presence of the CDU whose leader is drawn from their ethnic background, because they too want to protect their business interests. Politics in Kyé-Ossi reveals therefore a strong tendency of partisan support driven by rational calculations on potential gains by political actors rather than feelings of ethnic attachment in the anthropological sense of the term.⁶⁴ Non-indigenous people will prefer to support a locally based party for the sake of survival in spite of the presence of other parties. For the case of the Bamoun, identity motivation is playing no significant role in determining their support for a party. Rather, constraints linked to socioeconomic survival and "living together" typically explains why they have not

been able to support as a bloc their own home-based CDU party. This implies that deeply held ethnic attachment to a party is seemingly not a political behavior observed among non-indigenous people in the border constituency of Kyé-Ossi. The study observes that voting behavior is not only determined by ethno-regional identification but also by the place where you live particularly among non-indigenes. Thus, patterns of geographical partisanship are sensitive to political dynamics in border territories in the sense that where a voter lives can significantly predict how he/she votes. This pattern was also discovered in Malawi following Malawi's first three elections under democracy of 1994, 1999 and 2004.⁶⁵

Notes

1. Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, "Frontières Africaines et mondialisation," *Histoire@Politique* 2(17) (2012), p. 151, <https://doi.org/10.3917/hp.017.0149>.
2. Daniel Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbakas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," *American Political Science Review* 98(4) (2004), pp. 529–545, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055404041334>.
3. John McCauley, "The Political Mobilization of Ethnic and Religious Identities in Africa," *The American Political Science Review* 108(4) (2014), pp. 801–816, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055414000410>.
4. Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (Indiana University Press, 1999), p. 15; Daniel Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 3, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511808661>.
5. Karen Ferree and Jeremy Horowitz, "Ties That Bind? the Rise and Decline of Ethno-Regional Partisanship in Malawi, 1994–2009," *Democratization* 17(3) (2010), pp. 534–563, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510341003700394>.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Promouvoir Compétences, "Citie: by Kyé-Ossi (Vallee du Ntem-Sud)" March 24, 2019. <https://promouvoircompetences.com/ville-286-kye-ossi-fr.html>, accessed 12 September 2020.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Cameroon National Institute of Statistics, "Enquête sur les échanges transfrontaliers de marchandises au Cameroun: Bilan méthodologique et résultats," September 2014, p. 19.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Promouvoir Compétences, "Citie: Kyé-Ossi (Vallee du Ntem-Sud)," *op. cit.*
12. Idelette Dugast, *Inventaire ethnique du Sud-Cameroun, memoires de L'Institut Français D'Afrique Noire* (Centre du Cameroun). Série: Populations no. 1 (1949), pp. 76–79.
13. Noun here is the administrative Division of the Bamoun people and the headquarters is Foumban.
14. Interview with M.X. in Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
15. Interview with M.Y., phytosanitary engineer from Gabon. Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
16. Interview with in Kyé-Ossi with M.N., an agricultural engineer from Gabon, about 30 years, November 2017.
17. Interview with M. Jafarou, security guard at Elecam Kyé-Ossi, Bamoun, about 30 years, November 2017.
18. Interview with M.X., about 50 years, Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
19. Interview with M. Youmo, CPDM sub-section vice-president of Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
20. Mbemoun Dayirou Epara, "La communauté Bamoun de Kye-Ossi perd son chef Mbemoun Dayirou Epara," *Royaumbemoun*, September 19, 2012, <http://www.royaumbemoun.com/fr/bnnews.php?nid=8850>, accessed 5 February 2018.
21. Karine Bennafla, *Pour une géographie des bordures à l'heure globale: Frontières et espaces d'activités informelles* (Université of Paris Ouest-Nanterre la Défense, 2012), p. 64.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
25. Karine Bennafla, "La fin des territoires nationaux? État et commerce frontalier en Afrique Centrale," *Politique Africaine*, 73 (1999), p. 31, <https://doi.org/10.3917/polaf.073.0025>.
26. Interview with M.Y., Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
27. The attempted coup d'état perpetrated on the night of December 27 to 28, 2017, against Equatorial Guinean President Obiang Nguema, could have been used to justify the closure of borders.
28. Interview with M.X., Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
29. Interview with M. N, phytosanitary controller, November 2017.
30. This is a form of thievery found to be common in business-charged border towns and cities by which (un)armed robbers and other thieves identify, track, follow, aggress and seize the money or booty of people who have come to purchase goods at the border.
31. Equatorial Guinea is an oil producing country. It produces 244,000,000 barrels per day of oil, as of 2016 ranking 34th in the world. Every year, it produces an amount equivalent to 8.1% of its total proven reserve.
32. Interview, Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
33. Interview, Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
34. Karie Bennafla, "Les Frontières Africaines: Nouvelles significations, nouveaux enjeux," *Bulletin de l'Association de Géographes Français*, 79(2) (2002), p. 140. See also Karine Bennafla, "La fin des territoires nationaux? État et commerce frontalier en Afrique Centrale," *Politique Africaine* 73 (1999), pp. 25–49, <https://doi.org/10.3917/polaf.073.0025>.
35. Jean Didier Boukongou, "Préface," "Ethnicité, identité et citoyenneté en Afrique Centrale," *Cahier Africain des droits de l'homme*, no. 6–7 (2002), p. 14.
36. Antoine Socpa, *Démocratisation et autochtonie au Cameroun. Trajectoires régionales divergentes* (Munster: LIT VERLAG, 2003), pp. 1–135.
37. Cameroon Democratic Union.
38. Interview with M.N., phytosanitary controller, in his thirties, Kyé-Ossi, Gabon front, November 2017.
39. Of late memory since 2020.
40. Interview, Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
41. Joseph-Marie Zambo Belinga, *Les élections au Cameroun, contribution à l'explication du vote dans les localités dites "acquises" au Rassemblement Démocratique du Peuple Camerounais (RDPC) et au Social Democratic Front (SDF)* (University of Yaoundé I, 2005), pp. 1–623.
42. Pierre Alexandre and Jacques Binet, *Le groupe dit pahouin (fang-boulou-beti)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005), pp. 1–152.
43. Interview with M.X., Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
44. Interview with the president of the CDU of Ntem Valley, Kyé-Ossi, *op. cit.*
45. Interview with M. N, *op. cit.*
46. Interview in Kyé-Ossi, November 2017 with Mr. X, trader, Bamoun, in his forties.
47. Interview with the president of the UDC of the Vallée Du Ntem, Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
48. Interview with the head of the Bamoun community in Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
49. Interview with Mr. X., in his fifties, Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
50. See Pierre Bourdieu, "La représentation politique: Elément pour une théorie du champ politique," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 36(37) (1981), p. 13, <https://doi.org/10.3406/arss.1981.2105>; *Propos sur le champ politique* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2000), p. 16.
51. See Antoine Socpa, *Démocratisation et autochtonie au Cameroun. Trajectoires régionales divergentes* (Munster: LIT VERLAG, 2003), pp. 1–315.
52. Interview with Mr. X, trader, Bamoun, quarantine, Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
53. Interview with Mr. Jafarou, guard at ELECAM Kyé-Ossi, November 2017, Bamoun, in his thirties.
54. Interview, Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
55. Interview, Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
56. Interview, Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
57. Hélène-Laure Menthong, "Vote et communautarisme au Cameroun: Un vote de cœur, de sang et de raison," *Politique Africaine* 69 (1998), pp. 40–52.

58. Interview in Kyé-Ossi, November 2017 with Mr. X, trader, Bamoun, in his forties.
59. Interview, Kyé-Ossi, November 2017 with the president of the CDU of Ntem Valley.
60. Interview, Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
61. Interview, Kyé-Ossi, November 2017.
62. Elections Cameroon.
63. Interview with Mr. Evina Gaston, officer at the Kyé-Ossi phytosanitary police station, in his fifties, November 2017.
64. See Fred Jérémie Medou Ngoa, "Transformations socio-politiques et citoyenneté au Cameroun: La relation à l'autre ethno-regional, à l'Etat et au pouvoir," *Échanges: Revue de philosophie, littérature et sciences humaines* (Ethnicité et citoyenneté en Afrique), 012 (2019), pp. 171–175.
65. See Ferree and Horowitz, *op. cit.*

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