

THE LEGITIMATION OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY AND INSTITUTIONS BY ETHNIC ASSOCIATIONS IN THE ADAMAWA REGION OF CAMEROON

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In the 1990s, sub-Saharan African states got engaged in a decompression process with some long expected effects such as competitive elections, freedom of speech, and the development of individual and collective rights such as freedom of association for a better expression of citizenship. This liberalization did not only come along with the expected effects as it equally produced some perverse effects. This atmosphere favored the liberation of public space and the involvement of new actors in the political arena manifested through the appearance of diverse social movements (Monga, 1994, Kenmogne, 2002, Oyono and Temple 2003). One of such movements is the 'Association'. In Cameroon, under the prism of the civil society, there is a wide range of associations and these associations vary from the religious to ethnic passing through community development associations with others mutating into pressure groups and political parties. Seen as representations of their different local communities (Gausset 2005), ethno-community associations have gradually imposed themselves in the political field to the extent of maintaining a stable and almost formal relationship with state authorities and institutions. While a number of authors see this existing relationship between the state and ethnic groups as an investment and a return on investment (Moluh, 2005, Posner 2005), others think that it is a one sided Instrumentalization from political entrepreneurs (Hogan and Feeney, 2013). Far from refuting these positions, this essay aim at demonstrating the role of associations in this political constituency which is that of the Adamawa region by insisting on the legitimation role of these ethnic associations. The instrumental approach used for this study of ethnic associations permits us to expose the different manners through which these associations are used as political instruments or tools. Generally, ethnic associations are objects of Instrumentalization, clientlists for the political usage by political entrepreneurs and

intellectuals. Looking at it from this angle, I argue that these associations act as step-stones for political actors and entrepreneurs for access to power positions - what Helen-Laure Menthong has called '*chances de puissances*' (Menthong, 1998). Associations have not only become locomotives used by ethnic groups to show them the direction, in order to negotiate with other similar structures and with the state but are equally a space for the invention and imposition of politics. They are elements of conjecture who in an environment of state Jacobinism, they develop particularism which paves the way to cultural and categorical claims. Above all, ethnic associations are important and indispensable elements of support for a political system.

Popular support for a political system is the essence of its consolidation, as such by voluntarily endorsing the rules that govern, citizens endow a regime with an elusive but indispensable quality: legitimacy (Bratton and Mattes 2000). Every system needs a pin of legitimacy in order to accomplish its projects. Before jumping in to the subject matter properly, it is important to give a try on what legitimacy is all about. It has been agreed by political scientists that legitimacy is a controversial and a multidimensional term. Its complexity comes from the fact of its contested nature and its link to power and perceptions which are constantly shifting. There therefore exist an abundant literature on what political legitimacy is all about depending on the type of regime and system. While some authors have orientated the debate towards international regimes (Chapman 2009, Frank 1990, Hurd 1999, Koehane 2011, Scholte, 2011) and non-governmental actors (Bernstein 2011), Another strand of literature deals with the legitimacy crisis of a welfare state (Booth and Seligson 2009). However today main research is focuses on legitimation in nation-states (Haldenwang 2016). It is in the sense of the evaluation of authorities in a democratic context that some authors identify legitimacy as an evaluative condition for democratization and ability of the political system to ensure that existing political institutions are the most appropriate for the society (Lipset 1960, Gilley 2009). In a more classic but contemporary view David Easton on his own part considers it as a strong inner conviction of the moral validity of the authority or regime thereby linking it to a system in form specific and diffused support (Easton 1965).

Today, legitimacy can be understood under the prism of representation with the political elite who tries to maintain its sovereignty (Kaplanova 2017) and this legitimacy in its new approach deals in accordance with norms, values, beliefs practices and procedures accepted by groups. This kind of legitimacy is two sided, on one hand we have citizens who legitimate authority

following certain criterion as studied by Honorata Mazepus in his essay on ‘what makes political authorities legitimate?’ (Mazepus 2017). On the other hand, we have authorities trying to convince citizens on their right to rule, a sort of legitimacy claim which authorities can formulate based on different sources of legitimacy (Weber 1978). Citizens can either accept these legitimation claims or reject them depending on the congruence of demand with their expectations. It is in this dynamics that this piece of work aim at studying the legitimation of political authorities by ethnic associations.

In a way, each society develops different considerations of what is fair, legitimate and moral. This equally varies throughout time and may even differ from one region to another. The people of the Adamawa region have decided to go above individual standards of vote to legitimate political authority and institutions in a collective way. They have adopted political participation to culture by creating associations. This essay is concerned with one main question which is not explicitly addressed by the body of literature but which needs much attention: *how do ethnic association in the Adamawa region legitimate political authority?* By authority here, we mean both the institutions which are part of the government which create, enforce and apply laws on one hand and the men in charge of them on the other. They include for example the president of the republic, the parliament, political parties, political entrepreneurs and incumbent local government members (Sall 2015).

Hypothesis 1: *I argue that in the Adamawa region, ethnic associations legitimate authority and institutions through specific inputs.* By specific inputs here I mean support and demands in direction of institutions and authorities through political participation modes such as political mobilization, vote, the writing of memorandums and motions of support. The choice of these precise modes of participation is motivated by the fact that they concern at least a group of persons and a community at large.

Hypothesis 2: *I argue that these specific inputs are accompanied by some legal traditional provisions.* These legal provisions are the different laws governing the existence of ethnic associations and those framing the role of traditional chiefs in Cameroon. The choice for the law on traditional chiefdoms is influenced by the fact they play a great intermediary role between local constituency represented by associations and the central government. The legitimation dimension of ethnic Associations gets its origin from the legitimation role played by associations in democratic societies, role in the construction of public space and above all a

means to help the neediest (Tocqueville). These ethnic based community associations are either at the village level or at the regional level (Gausset 2005). It is therefore important to give a detail analysis on ethnic associations, in other words bring out their morphology.

THE MORPHOLOGY OF ASSOCIATIONS

Motivated and framed by law No 90/053 of 19th of December 1990 on freedom of association there exist a multitude of ethnic groups in Cameroun in general and in the Adamawa region in particular which can be classified following a certain criterion. At the level of community associations, one can note three main types of community based associations; village based community organization, rural-urban community organizations and ethnic based community associations. These ethnic based community associations are either at the village level or at the regional level (Gausset 2005). Under the different types of associations, there is an existing dichotomy on ethnic groups made up of indigenous or native people, called '*autochthones*' and on the other hand we have stranger groups made up of strangers known as '*allogene*' (Nyamnjuh and Roland 1998). Far from ignoring the characteristics given by the United Nations Organisation, by Native ethnic groups here we mean these people who have been the first to establish in the region and who are animated by the 'son of the soil' syndrome. In the Adamawa region, these ethnic communities have come to understand the importance of coming together as one for the development of the region there by forming a multitude of ethnic associations. Among these associations, we have the MOINAM of the Gbaya, the TAG-DAGA of the Dir or Dourou, the DYNAMIC CULTURELLE MBOUM of the Mboum, the MBOSCUDA of the Mbororo, L'AMAKWADE of the Tikar and Mambila, YA KAMATA of the Haoussa, the Association des Ressortissant se L'Adamaoua ARA in which the Peuhl constitute 85percent, ADEM made up of the Wawa, Peuhl, Kwanja, Mambila, Tikar. The other typology of ethnic groups concerns associations representing communities which are not from the regions. As indicated above, there is a multitude of these associations in the Adamawa region coming from the nine other regions of the country. They are simply a representation of their community of origin. Their presence in the region portrays the diversified nature of the Cameroonian society and the dynamic nature of politico-cultural nature of activities in the region. In order to make analysis easier for the study I have decided to choose the most active in the political field. NOWEDA made-up of all the tribes of the northwest region of the country for example the Kambe, Bansa, Batibo, Pinyin, Bali, Bavwoum, etc . We equally have the

LAAKAM which is the highest instance regrouping all the Bamileke of the West region for example the Bafang, Bagangte, Bafoussam, Baham, Dschang, Badjoun etc .KINDI of the Bamoun from the Noun division, SWEDCA for those of the southwest region made of the Bayangui, Bakweri, Bakossi, Bangwa , Bakundu etc ,the Ngondo of the Sawa in the Littoral region including the Douala, Bassa, Mbo'o, Bakoko, Ewodi tribes. ARLEN of those of the center region precisely from the Lekie etc. The presence of these associations and their implication in the political field presents a certain configuration of the constituency in which they have their activities.

THE CONFIGURATION AND THE DYNAMICS OF LOCAL POLITICAL CONSTITUENCY INFLUENCED BY THE PRESENCE OF ASSOCIATIONS

The mobilisation of ethnic associations in the political field is observed with acuity in local political stronghold. Local political strongholds constituted by political actors and political dynamics are marked by ethnic associations which stand-up as real protagonists of political life and of political activity. As such, political strongholds constituted at the local level by local collective actors in general and ethnic associations in particular are determined by a precise political structure and by a particular political dynamics which once associated leads to a certain political representation and obviously to certain political participation modes (Founier and Reuchamps, 2008). Political strongholds are constituted of community attachment or ethno-community allegiance which is constantly in competition with legal-rational allegiance in plural societies (Ndock, 2016). The population is mobilised in the political field through the densification of the life of ethnic associations and are structured by action logics coupled to the perception of autochthone /allogen in politics. Therefore associations which constitute the political gear of support and legitimation for political actors and protagonists who operate in electoral circumscriptions, constitute themselves under autochthones/allogen reasons (Ndock, 2009-2010). The dual connotation of autochthones/allogen is constantly used in the daily life of associations operating in the Adamawa region in particular. For example in Mbe sub-division, one can find a multitude of ethno-cultural associations with the most commonly known as Dag-daga and the Kinni de Mbe , la Dynamique Culturelle Mboum and even the Moinam .The presence of these associations in the political arena clearly portrays the

autochthones/allogene constitution; while the Moinam, Dynamique culturelle Mboum, represent strangers, Tag- daga and Kinni represents natives which are Dir and Dourou

Still, a good number of councillors of Mbe municipal council are members of ethnic associations and they attest the fact that these associations greatly contribute in helping them stabilise their electoral baseⁱ. These associations equally help in mobilising voters of the locality for political parties to which they belong

‘We the leaders of the CPDM party work in collaboration with members of Association for a better mobilisation. In our culture in general we know that information goes faster through women, as such we deal women through the Woman Network Association. Through their president information is passed and instructions given’ⁱⁱ

The presence of this association shows the sufficient link which exists between political field and associations. These two fields meet-up in some kind of confusion which makes that ethnic associations become indispensable for the construction of political carriers and the constitution of political life. The field of local politics is not a theatre whereby only native associations express themselves. The Haoussa and the Mboum, Gbaya, other southern tribes or far north tribes which are considered as allogens or strangers in Mbe for example are represented in the Mbe municipal council. Their presence in the council is equally influenced by the political activity of allogens ethnic associations precisely the Dynamique culturelle Mboum which is considered as an instance of political mobilisation and an instance of repercussion of political interest of Mboum in Mbe has played a role for the few Mboums to be represented in the council. The same phenomenon takes place in Djerem sub-division whereby the Haoussa are represented in the council with the support of the YA KAMATA. The constitution of ethnic groups in localities of the Adamawa region is partly linked to ethnic groups which have associations as their representations what Quentin Gausset calls ‘les organisations communautaire de migrants en milieu urbain’ (Gausset 2009). In the localities of the region, these associations mobilise strangers either to grant support to designated natives through their political parties or to vote in favour of strangers whom they consider as their brothers to the extent of becoming the modus operandi of ethnic associations during both local and national elections. This aspect could be illustrated by the situation in the Mayo Banyo sub-division

where the Moundang and Mafa ethnic associations are constantly implicated in the activities of the UNDP party which is commonly known to be a Peuhl oriented partyⁱⁱⁱ. During the 2020 electoral period in preparation for the February 9th double scrutiny, the selection of candidates in the Mbere division precisely in the Dii municipality went on through their respective associations thereby obliging political parties to refer to associations for the choice of different candidates. One can therefore witness a real political dynamic which mobilises both native and stranger associations alongside political actors and institutions. This dynamics portrays a double legitimation. On one hand we have political parties and entrepreneurs which legitimate the presence of ethnic associations by accepting them and giving them the authority to decide on such crucial issues as the choice of candidates. On the other hand, we have associations which accept a collaboration with political parties through a written note sent by representatives of ethnic groups to the different political parties in competition in the municipality.

THE LEGITIMATION OF INSTITUTIONS THROUGH LEGAL TRADITIONAL PROVISIONS

By Political institutions we mean the formal rules, regulations and policies that structure social and political interactions. It is important to make mention of the fact that institutions greatly influence the position and decision of political parties on the salience of a chosen cleavage (Posner 2005) as such ,ethnic associations are one of the plat forms where some of these institutional rules are expressed. The blooming of ethnic associations in public space and in the political field as observed with acuity since the return of political pluralism in the 1990s is not a new fact and this could be justified by the fact that the least opportunity of political decompression or liberalisation in Cameroon has always led to the flourishing of associations. Apart from the Ngondo, the year 1947 Cameroon saw the birth of many other associations such as Association Amicale de la Sanaga Maritime, the Kumze, L'Union Bamileke, la Solidarité Babimbi to name just these. The northern regions in general and the Adamawa in particular have not been left out of this dynamic of the construction of ethnic associations in the 1940s far before the return of political pluralism in the 1990s. The dynamic nature of the Union des Population du Cameroon in the southern regions frightened colonial authorities and to counter the activities of this party in the northern part of Cameroon, they had to promote the creation of ethnic associations. It is in this Movement that APSEN (*Association pour le progrès social et économique de la subdivision de Ngaoundéré*), APRONORD (*Association pour le progrès*

et l'évolution du Margui-Wandala) and ASSAMA (*Association Amicale des Musulmans de Maroua*). Favoured by the law N° 90/053 of 19th of December 1990 recently modified by law N° 2020/009 of 20th July 2020 modifying and completing certain dispositions of the former law.

LEGAL PROVISIONS ON TRADITIONAL CHIEFDOMS

The legislation organizing traditional chiefdoms in Cameroon is a serious tool used by political entrepreneurs of ethnic associations during their deployment in the political field. Most traditional rulers lean on the 1977 decree to legitimate the existing relationship between them and ethnic associations which are supposed to represent the natives of their villages. By this, we argue that most often, certain traditional rulers are honorable members in ethnic associations and are equally custom and traditional guarantee for these ethnic associations. The implication of traditional leaders in ethnic associations is based on the interpretation made by these rulers of texts on traditional chiefdoms. These text designate them as authorities of traditional commandment and village representatives of concerned communities. It is due to this acquired authority that during electoral consultations they give voting instructions there by influencing voting attitudes. Chiefs who openly show their electoral preferences and political belonging often succeed in influencing the political choices of members of these ethnic associations in which they are honorable members. A typical example can be taken from the Toupouri leaders who even though established in Tchad, gives voting instructions during electoral periods even to those in Cameroon and these voting instructions are given through ethnic associations who pay allegiance to him^{iv}. This synergy between traditional and modern institutions should be most strongly perceived by individual who see traditional rulers as legitimate. We argue with Chloubla that Chiefs should be seen as the main actors to begin with for if a chief is not seen as important for local governance, then the link from local constituent to central government is broken (Chloubla 2019), thereby leading to a lost in legitimacy for the central system. One can equally observe the role of Lamidos in the conduct and direction of ethnic associations in the Adamawa region of Cameroon. The *Association des Femmes ET Filles de l'Adamaoua* (AFFADA) is an illustration of the relationship that exists between chiefdoms and associations in the Adamawa region. Members of these association are elders in lamidats of the region. This double position gives these women the opportunity to better articulate the existing relation or the link between these ethnic association and traditional

chiefdoms which give them the guarantee and legitimacy^v. During Colonial period, the position of traditional rulers depended on the colonial master and after independence, new leaders had to decide on the place to be given to them. If before today the role of traditional rulers was merely figurative and instrumental in political affairs, they are now permanent and recognized actors of the state apparatus at the regional level guaranteed to them by law No 2019/024 of 24th December 2019 Bill to institute the general code for local and regional authorities in its article 275 (1). The collaboration between traditional rulers and government has not always been automatic .it is only when noose got tight around traditional chiefs then one after the other they began giving their support to the government of Yaoundé through different manners: interventions over the television, memorandums, and all sorts of threat. Some even went on to visit the president and his prime ministers one after the other. This was the case with former Prime Ministers Sadou Hayatou and Simon Achidi Achu. In the same line, the chefs from the west region called on president Biya on the 14th August 1992 to organize an anticipated presidential election and to present himself as a candidate. Despite this habitual collaboration, there exist some dissident cases. This could be illustrated by some cases like those of Mr. Tatang Robert a traditional chief from the west region precisely a Bamileke who got elected as a parliamentarian and vice president of UNDP in 1992. Chief Douala Manga Bell of the Sawa people openly militated in favor of the SDF John Fru Ndi who happened to be the most serious opposition leader and opponent of President Paul Biya during the 1992 presidential election. The political participation of traditional chiefs as legitimated by ethnic associations in Cameroon operates in the context of environmental mutation of the 1990s.

LEGAL PROVISIONS ON ETHNIC ASSOCIATIONS

Law No 2020/009 of 20th July 2020 modifying and completing certain dispositions of Law No 90/053 of 19th of December 1990 on freedom of association gave room for the creation of every kind of association among which the ethno-cultural association. Ethnic associations created in Cameroon are therefore based on this specific legislation. They exist in all legality since they have systematically obtained an acceptance slip or authorization from the administration^{vi}. Though this law is clear and precise about the apolitical nature of association, one can notice how these associations invest directly or indirectly the political field in practice. That is how associations like « more women in politics », « *un monde a avenir* » and the movement « *onze millions de citoyens* » are quiet active in the political field by participating

in the electoral process. These associations call on citizens to register on electoral lists, presents candidates who are part of their associations and part of observers during voting. An example of these associations who have presented a candidate is ‘*Onze millions de citoyens*’ which first presented honorable Cabral Libil under the hospices of UNIVERS political party in the 2018 presidential elections. Ethnic associations are not left aside in this wave which like an avalanche spreads on the political field as such, they work in the mobilization of the population for the registration on electoral lists and the effective participation during organized electoral consultations. Members of the association AFFADA went on using the door to door system in order to encourage women to register on electoral lists during the October 2018 presidential election.

‘the women of AFFADA have taken upon them as a challenge to bring out more women to participate in the development of the Adamawa region. our presence in the lamidats of Ngaoundere and Banyo today shows that thoughts about the place of the woman in society hsve changed. We are out to motivate women to join this noble fight^{vii}

LEGITIMATION THROUGH SPECIFIC INPUTS

The daily political practices through which one can observe the deployment of ethnic associations helps to understand them as legitimation instruments for institutions and the political system as a whole. Ethnic associations contribute in the reinforcement and the legitimation of the ethno-political system and ethno-political participation (Ndock, 2016) in which the ethnic variable is a criteria for legitimacy and validity. This process of crystallization of political activity around institutionalized ethnic considerations could be observed through a certain number of practical inputs and through certain constitutional and legal dispositions which legitimate the ethnicization of political institutions.

A good number of inputs impulse by the civil society fuel and reinforce legitimacy, what some authors call “*legitimité ethno-politique du regime ethnicisé de representation politique et de participation politique*” (Ndock 2016). These inputs equally emanate from ethnic associations which are part of the civil society. Ethnic associations are present in the four corners of the Cameroonian society, they carry and crystallize the socio-political aspirations of many Cameroonians through values of solidarity, sharing and promotion of culture which they

galvanize. Nowadays, ethnic associations are instruments of political legitimation through the practice of motions of support and memorandums which they constantly send in direction of the governing apparatus. Motions of support and memorandums therefore appear here as inputs or diffuse support in direction of the political system whose structural system is based on certain consideration.

It is equally important to note that ethnic associations are the instances which use memorandums and motions of support for political claims on ethnic labels. In urban centres one can equally notice both indigenous and stranger chieftaincy entrepreneurs, and “*representants des chefferies diasporiques*” (Ndock, 2016). Memorandums for sure are legitimation instruments for the ethnic structure of most political parties in Cameroon but they are specific and different from motions of support in that they are political and social claims addressed to those who possess politico-administrative power. Equally, the mobilisation of support through ethnic vote is another form of participation practiced by association for the legitimation of institutions and actors. Therefore to understand in a complete manner the forms and the figures of the legitimation process, it is important to analyse the role of ethnic vote, political mobilization, motions of support, and memorandums in the Cameroonian political environment.

THE LEGITIMATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES THROUGH THE MOBILISATION OF ETHNIC ASSOCIATIONS.

Political parties are the principal actors in the electoral field. The January 1996 constitutional law designates them as the only formal actors who contribute to the expression of universal suffrage. The role of political parties is important to the consolidation of young democracies and democratic systems. This well-known importance has led Philippe Schmitter in synthesising a series of roles and functions accomplished by politically specialise social organisations. Political parties have essentially four roles; In the first place they have to structure the electoral process by designating candidates, recruiting people who participate actively to electoral campaigns by offering alternatives to citizens among many leaders. Furthermore, they offer to voters a corpus of ideas and symbols which reinforce their attachment to democratic values. This symbolic integration role permits citizens to feel their implication in decision-making. Again, once declared winner, political parties become the

managers of government but above all, political parties aggregate the interest and the passion of citizens by canalising their expectations by creating programs relative to that (Schmitter, 2002; Waele, Gueroquivera and souare 2002). This formal and exclusive recognition of political parties as an actor in the political field is far from being the reality on ground. Democratic life is equally animated by a plethora of civil society organisations which contribute to political formation, to political mobilisation and to the effective political participation of citizens. Among the multitude of associations which take part in the electoral process, we can equally find ethnic associations, they have an accreditation and equally a pass to participate in the observation of elections.

The political mobilisation of associations in the Adamawa region is of capital importance for the legitimisation of political parties which operate in the region. Political mobilisation here is understood as the process of initiating citizens in to a desired political action by focusing on their greatest political needs and expectation (Nwoye, 2009) or a group activity designed to raise political awareness and consciousness in a desired political direction (winkler, 2011). Ethnic associations are mobilised during electoral campaigns in order to put the electorate in action in favour of a candidate or to valorise an electoral list of candidates . Political parties work in collaboration with many ethnic associations in order to set up a stable electoral base, making them indispensable in the electoral game and as such we argue that in all big cities every ethnic group has its cultural associations which harbours a political coloration. Considering interview data collected in Mayo Banyo, the above insinuation could be justified. In fact during the past February 2020 municipal electoral session, the CPDM party began losing its political stability due to a quarrel in different ethnic associations. The Haoussa feeling discriminated in the constitution of electoral list which was taken place in the different associations. For that reason they decided to give their support to the UNDP party. It proves that the stability of most political parties greatly depends on associations^{viii}. Members of ARLEN openly associate to the CPDM party as they often wear the t-shirts of the party during their occasion visits to members of the association or when attending a political campaign meeting. In so doing it signifies two things, on one hand we have a community that is thanking the president of the republic for his confidence and recognition and the other hand, this act legitimizes the president of the republic because he is openly accepted as head of state^{ix}. During campaign meetings, one can observe a great and important mobilisation of ethnic associations which come to fill the crowd and to sing praises for political parties or candidates in lists for

electoral consultations. Ethnic associations which are mobilized during electoral meetings present themselves with sine boards, harboring cloths carrying the effigy of party candidates and many other party gadgets. Ethnic mobilization is also witnessed during ethnic vote. Concerning this aspect, some voters maintain that ethnicity is a strong predictor of vote choice in multi-ethnic and nascent democracies while others conclude that one of the aims of ethnic mobilisation is the orientation of votes (Martiniello, 1995). Existing studies highlight two broad channels that may link ethnicity and voting behaviour; strong assertion of identity and expectations of patronage or policy favouritism (Hoffman and Long, 2013). Voting is a complex phenomenon and personal act but it is equally an act that could be registered under the collective action of cultures and traditions. Ethnicity is a very important determinant of vote as means for political participation. Being Conscious of this importance, political actors and entrepreneurs play the ethnic card. Community vote (Menthong, 1998) is most often realised by political entrepreneurs or by voters who are carried over by ethnic associations to which they belong and through which they present themselves as real cultural militants. The implication of ethnic associations in vote is effective since one can observe in reality how ethnic associations are deployed during electoral campaigns in order to influence people to vote following ethnic considerations. The quality of literature on electoral behaviour reinforces this perception of the voter who identifies to political parties basing on ethnic resorts (Tansey and Jackson, 2008). To show concern and support to these candidates who happen to be their co-ethnics, members of associations write motions of support. The Adamawa region is a fertile area for such practices because there is an existing competition with other regions which happen to have got more members in government than her. As such native associations are forced to double efforts so that their voices could be heard^x

MOTIONS OF SUPPORT OR ‘A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE’

Motions of support are practices through which individual or collective actors openly portray their loyalty to an authority. Through the use of motions of support, declared or real representatives of ethnic communities recall to the president their “unfailing support”. Traditional rulers and the representatives of ethnic associations are included in the list of signatories of this document. Illustration could be made by the motion of support of 22th of March 2020 in which the ELhadj Hamodou Bello, lamido of DJerem division gives a verbal motion of support to president Paul Biya for haven chosen honourable Ali Salihou as secretary

at the CPDM National assembly bureau These elites equally engage in mobilising support from their ethnic community members in favour of the ruling party during next coming electoral consultations. Many motions of support have been written and made public by elites of the Adamawa region with the help of ethnic associations, thereby granting some sort of collective and representative caution to such actions towards the public powers or administrative authorities. On 29 June 2019 under the coordination of Abba Sardou minister and elite of the Adamawa region, elites of Manyo Banyo division grouped themselves and produced a support motion in favour of the head of states president Paul Biya after manifestations at Geneva in Switzerland against him by certain activists grouped under a collective brigade known as “Brigade anti sardinards”. Through this participation mode, there is a triple level of legitimation. To begin, it is the occasion to show support to the whole political community that is pay allegiance to the national level. Furthermore they are actions favourable to the political regime in place and then it is a means of support to authorities, those have a role to play in the regime (Assana, 2020). It is a confirmation of ethno-regional satisfaction with political, social, economic and cultural policies adopted and put to place by the president of the republic. In other words, it is taking stands in relation to public debates and stakes both at the national and international levels with the aim of legitimating the position of the authority to whom it is destined. For the regime in place, it is an efficient manner to evaluate the degree of attention paid to political authorities by citizens.

MEMORANDUMS

These are practices which describe the revolts of social, economic and politically dominated groups in a society. In the perspective of David Easton memorandums can be seen as inputs; that is ethno-regional pressures and demands which help fuel the political system (Easton, 1965). Practices on the production and institutionalisation of memorandums can be registered in public agenda as a modality of legitimation of the political system organised around ethnic considerations. The use of memorandums has stood-up as a real political participation mode on one hand and as a political Instrumentalization mode on the other (Assana, 2014), in fact it is a *montage politique* (Legendre 1998). Even though the origin of memorandums in Cameroon can be traced back in 1967-1968 with the memorandum of Baka Pigmies, It is important to note that before the 1990s, during the president Ahidjo’s administration from 1960-1982 the use of ethnicity as expression modes for identities was forbidden since the regime’s official

policy was to prone national unity in order to federate divers' centrifugal forces which constituted a risk for the disaggregation for the young Cameroonian state. For that reason Ahidjo's government had to put forward the politics of regional balance based on the quotas system of provincial representation (Saibou Issa, 2005). The use of memorandums accentuated once again under president Biya's regime. The legitimation role of these memorandums under Paul Biya's regime can be seen in his perpetration on power (Assana 2020). Memorandums do translate ethnic aspirations and they are generally addressed to the president of the republic, ministers and other administrative authorities. It sometimes happen that these memorandums touches all these authorities at once. In the Adamawa region for example it is mostly carried out by the Mboum through the Dynamic Culturelle Mboum and the Mbororos through the MBOSCUDA, two ethnic groups which have highly suffered under Peuhl hegemony around the 19th century .An illustration could be made with the memorandum published by Mboum traditional rulers and elites on the 9th April 2011 addressed to his Excellency Mr Paul Biya, president of the republic S/c Prime minister, S/c Minister of Territorial administration, S/c Governor of the Adamawa province. This type of political participation seduces by its operational dimension for it symbolises something concrete and local. It brings out the difference with classic political participation modes which are centralised, abstract and bureaucratic in nature. The diversification and multiplication of actors of public policy and their protestors render inadequate the distinction between insiders and outsiders, between protestors and elites and more generally between the civil society and the state to think of the elaboration of public action policies. In this perspective memorandums permits to an ethnic group in a marginal position to express directly its desiderata without going through the mediation of institutional and political filters. We argue that the propulsion of the Mboum in the use of memoranda has its origin from the civilizational crisis which has resulted from their contact with conquerors. It is the contrary for other Kirdi ethnic groups such as the Tikar, Dii and most especially the Gbaya who have made themselves politically visible in the Mbere subdivision. The Mboum are overshadowed on the socio-political plan by the politico-economic visibility of the peuhl in the Vina division which is materialised by their monopolisation of strategic post in the CPDM party (Assana, 2014). One can therefore notice that just like other Cameroonians, the people of the Adamawa region through ethnic associations do participate through the production of memorandums to claim politico-administrative posts and socio economic equipment which could help the region to develop It

is in this sense that the cycle for reflection of Adamawa elites CREA produced a memorandum to the head of state on 30th April 2013 denouncing the marginalisation of the Adamawa region. In substance it is précised in this document that the Adamawa region chateau d'eau du Cameroun contributes to the economic development of the country through its agro-pastoral activities and equally through the dynamism of its business men involved in transportation and industrial activities. No matter their dynamism, elites of the Adamawa are not always involved in the management of state affairs. This can be illustrated with the letter below ;

Le décret numéro 2011/408 du 09/12/2011 portant organisation du gouvernement, fixe en son article 4 le nombre de départements ministériels qui s'élève à 37 (...) Des 37 départements ministériels, 1 SEUL, celui des Marchés publics, est dirigé par monsieur Abba Sadou, ressortissant de l'Adamaoua, soit un taux de représentation de 2%. De même, parmi les secrétaires généraux de ces départements ministériels, figure 1 SEUL ressortissant de la région de l'Adamaoua, M Nyonweng Joseph, secrétaire général du ministère de la Forêt et la Faune.

Le Gouvernement formé le 09/12/2011 et réaménagé en 2015 compte 60 membres auxquels il faut ajouter les secrétaires généraux de la Présidence et des services du Premier Ministre et leurs adjoints, le directeur du Cabinet Civil et son adjoint, soit au total 70 ministres. L'Adamaoua ne compte que 3 membres du gouvernement, d'ailleurs placés derniers dans l'ordre protocolaire (1 ministre délégué à la Présidence chargé des Marchés Publics, Monsieur Abba Sadou, un ministre délégué auprès du ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et du Développement durable, Monsieur Nana Aboubakar Djallo et 1 secrétaire d'État auprès du ministre des Forêts et de la Faune, Mme Koulsoumi Alhadji Épouse Boukar. Entreprises Cette marginalisation s'observe davantage au niveau des entreprises publiques. Sur 97 entreprises publiques dont les dirigeants sont nommés par le chef de l'État, un seul, le directeur général de la SODEPA, Monsieur Koulagna Koutou Denis est ressortissant de l'Adamaoua. Cette entreprise en quasi-faillite, faute de moyens, dispose d'un capital social de 375 millions de FCFA. Son dépôt de bilan est retardé grâce aux subventions de l'État.....''

The legitimacy through memorandums in quest for political, administrative and economic representation by the people of the Adamawa region is carried out by ethnic associations or associations who are out to defend the plural representation interests of sons and daughters of the Adamawa region. This legitimacy is not only based on a number of political activities

commonly accepted by both individuals and political entrepreneurs but it is equally framed by institutional and legal disposition with an ethnic connotation.

EMPIRICAL STRATEGY AND DATA COLLECTION

In order to shed more light on the hypotheses above, I have constructed a map to stratify at the level of the region, rural-urban areas and the constituency. These constituencies include the five divisions of the Adamawa region namely Vina, Mbere, Faro et Deo, Djerem, Mayo-Banyo and their different sub-divisions. For documentation, I have examined the historical materials held by different associations and political parties in their archives, this in order to cross validate information obtained from other sources. I proceeded with interviews with a number of persons ranging from common citizens, members of associations, political entrepreneurs and state authorities. The most strategic interviewed persons will be mentioned in the end notes below.

CONCLUSION

The success of every democratic system also depends on its legitimacy and this legitimacy passes through the participation of citizens to public affairs. In Cameroon, citizens have developed alternative means of participation alongside classic modes which they use in instilling the system. On one hand, legitimation of the system is carried out through specific inputs which can be regrouped under demands and support and on the other hand, the practice is framed by some legal ethnic provisions. These specific inputs include memorandums, motions of support, mobilization, vote etc. Today, in a political context which is characterized by a crisis on representation institutions and where government has limited access for the people, elements of the civil society are greatly used as a platform for political participation. In fact ethno-regional and community associations are well determined means for the manifestation of support and the return on investment for many political entrepreneurs. Used as alternative mode for political participation, motions of support, memorandums, call for candidatures, mobilisations are regulation modalities between the government and the governed. conscious of the different roles played by these modes in a system, we argue that the used of these alternative participation modes are a means to legitimate both political institutions and actors in the region.

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NOTES

1. An association is a group of social beings related to one another by the fact that they possess or have instituted in common an organization with a view to securing specific ends.
2. According to Martiniello, there exist two types of ethnic vote; 'individual vote' where by an individual decides to vote for a candidate of his choice. One can equally mention 'Group vote'. Group vote means that individuals of a certain origin decide to grant their support to a candidate who might not be of the same origin with them. This can equally be considered as ethnic vote.
3. An abundant literature treats mobilization close to elections. Steven Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen in their book entitled *Mobilization, Participation and Democracy in America*, Oxford University Press, 1993 argue that political mobilization in this traditional sense consist in those actions that elites undertake to gather growing groups of supporters and persuade them to express their affinity through the ballot box.
4. The Mboum claim native right over the town of Ngoundere . This ethnic group is vast and is constituted in many clans. The most common are the Mann which have part of their population in Touboro in Cameroun and the other in center African republic. The Mboum KO , Mboum Pana based in the localities of ngoundere and Mbaimboum. The Mboum Mbidoi mostly found in ngoundere and Nganha , the Mbouo, the Mboum Mbere localized in Touboro and Meiganga . the Mboum Kran equally based in Touboro. Mboum Ndjack, les Mbai, Mvona , Sapou and the Mboum Kari based in the centre african republic. However two of these groups make a difference by their dynamism; the Mboum Pana and the Mboum Mbere. Couple to the fact that they are very strong and combatif, they are demographically many, the most instructed and Christians. They are concentrated in the vina division. At the period of the creation of the lamidat of ngoundere in 1930, the mboum people have faced a lot of problems which still have repercussions today. The mboum Mbere who accepted islam have been treated with much more dignity than the others who decided to stick to Christianity. Cf. Assana Assasa, « Memoranda et démocratisation dans l'Adamaoua : Mutations des modes de participation politique ou entreprise d'instrumentalisation ? », *Revue Droit et cultures*, 2014, P.213-246.
5. The Dir and the Dourou in reality are part of a same ethnic community. They have the same anthropological and cultural background. In fact they are a same people which have different community component designations. These denominations are linked to the geographical locations of the different persons with which these people interact. In Lagdo –northern region of Cameroon, they are known as Dourou and in the Adamawa they are called Dir. .
6. It is the case with a fraction of the NOWEDA which promised to grant support to the MCNC under Franklin Ndifor during the 2018 electoral period. Interview of Friday 6th September 2019 with the

president and the former president of the association. Mr Mohfenka peter and Mr Ngomenwing at the regional delegation of secondary education of the Adamawa region.

7. Declaration of Touboro of 29 December 2011 ; Touboro youth collective, kidnapped and maltreated by the lamido's illegale militia at Rey Bouba on 29th of february 2012 ; memorandum from Adamawa elites of 30 JULY 2012 , memorandum of Ngaoundere of 9th APRIL 2011 , memorandum of the Mboum.
8. It should be noted that some of these traditional leaders also seem to be sustained or be propped up by political leaders and therefore, instrumental to the construction of local politics .As such, these traditional leaders at times seem malleable to the desires of political leaders from their communities.
9. Interview of 20th September 2019 with Mrs Abbe Marie, president of the Association des femmes et filles de L' Adamaoua (AFFADA) and active member of the CPDM party
10. Le Septentrion Infos No 81 from 7 to 13 September 2013; L'œil du Sahel No 339 of 27 July 2009.
11. Interview of 25th September 2020 with Senator Haman Paul of the Social Democratic force at his office at the Evangelic Lutheran Church Cameroon, Regional Branch Ngaoundéré.
12. Interview of 18th September 2020 with Mr. Mohamadou Awalou , mayor of Nganha in the vina division. At the Nganha city hall.
13. Interview of 18th November with Madna Bertrand , member of the Toupouri community of Ngaoundere and participant of the 'Chicken Festival' at his job side at the Gare Marchandise .
14. The 'chicken Festival' is a festival is a moment of celebration to thank the gods of the Toupouri land. A way to manifest the people's recognition for the good harvest and plead with the gods for the next planting season. This celebration which normally takes place in October marks the beginning of the New Year in toupouri land. The chicken is the symbolic animal used for sacrifice to demonstrate the people's joy and recognition to the great 'Wanglu', the greatest of gods. In its manifestation, some few days before the official ceremony, no member of the Toupouri land is allowed to eat a chicken until the official sacrifice ritual carried out by the 'Wandore'. At this point and time, every family is free to eat chicken accompanied with the traditional drink common known as Bilbil.
15. Interview of 1st October 2019 in Ngaoundere with Mrs Adda Kano Bell, assistant mayor of Mbe and president of Kinni association.
16. Interview of 2nd December with Mr. Baba in Banyo at his residence in administrative quarters.
17. Interview of 16th September 2020 with Mr. Christophe Maigari. President of CPDM youths in Mbe subdivision.
18. Interview of 13th December 2019 with Senator Djafarou of the UNDP at his residence at Carrefour Moulin Ngaoundere.
19. Interview of 22th April 2020 with Mr. Aboubakar kombo , Mayor of Meinganga, at a Coffee shop.
20. Interview of 17 may 2020 with Mr. Mohamadou Dalailou , Militant and municipal councilor in Ngaoundal in the Djerem subdivision. At his residence in Ngaoundere , Carrefour Ministre .
21. Interview with of 12th July 2020 with Mr. Fritz Dikosso Seme, Senior Divisional Officer of Vina sub-division at his office at the administrative headquarters.
22. Interview of 17th November 2019 with senator Baba Amadou at his residence beside the marching ground in Ngaoundere.

23. Cameroon People's Democratic Party- CPDM the ruling party in Cameroon, this party saw day light as a continuation to the Union Nationale Camerounaise UNC in 1985.
24. DCM- Dynamique Culturelle Mboum
25. MOINAM- Mouvement D'integration et D'assistance Mutuelle
26. ARLEN- Association des Ressortissants de la Lekie.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Interview of 1st October 2019 in Ngoundere with Mrs Adda Kano Bell, assistant mayor of Mbe and President of the Association Kinni de Mbe , one of the most influential associations in the locality..

ⁱⁱ Interview of 16th September 2020 with Mr. Christophe Maigari. President of CPDM youths in Mbe subdivision

ⁱⁱⁱ Interview of 2nd September 2020 with Mr. Garba Soule, Mayor of Banyo Municipal council and member of the Union Nationale pour la Democratie et le Progres.

^{iv} Interview of 18th November with Madna Bertrand , member of the Toupouri community of Ngaoundere and participant of the 'Chicken Festival'.

^v Interview of 20th September 2019 with Mrs Abbe Marie, president of the Association des femmes et filles de L' Adamaoua (AFFADA) and active member of the CPDM party

^{vi} Interview with of 12th July 2020 with Mr. Fritz Dikosso Seme, Senior Divisional Officer of Vina sub-division.

^{vii} Interview of 20th September 2019 with Mrs Abbe Marie, president of the Association des femmes et filles de L' Adamaoua (AFFADA) and active member of the CPDM party.

^{viii} Interview of 2nd December with Mr. Baba in Banyo at his residence in administrative quarters.

^{ix} Interview of 9th March 2019 with Mr. Evarist Onana , secretary general of ARLEN association at his residence at Baladji 2.

^x Interview of 17th November 2019 with senator Baba Amadou at his residence beside the marching ground in Ngoundere.