

The Settlement of the Nomadic Population (Mbororo) of Cameroon and Their Deautochtonization: The Milestones to a New Theoretical Perspective

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Abstract

This article analyzes the link between the waves of the Nomadic populations settlement and *deautochtonization* basing our study on the indigenous Mbororo people of Cameroon. These waves of settlement, imposed by a combination of global and local factors, are accompanied by territorial and identity mutation and social renegotiations of access to political citizenship. From a legal status of indigenous people recognized by the UN, we are witnessing a process of *disindigenisation*. Based on the theory of coloniality and documentary analysis, the results reveal that the *deautochtonization* of the Mbororos is a consolidated and long-lasting trajectory. In this way, it establishes a new theoretical perspective on indigenous people.

Keywords

Settlement, Territorial and Identity mutation, Citizenship, Deautochtonization, Mbororo, Cameroon

1. Introduction

The waves of world settlement being witnessed among indigenous people (Read as an indication Sandron, 1998: pp. 63-77; Duhaime et al., 2001: p. 174; Ohayon, 2003: pp. 112-117; Ohayon, 2004: pp. 177-198; Barry, 2006; Soengas, 2012: pp. 167-192; Gente, 2013: pp. 16-17; Kamgne Kamwa & Tsalefack, 2020: pp. 155-166) do not spare Cameroon (Djida Danga, 1998-1999: pp. 21-25; Koussoumna, 2008; Robillard, 2010; Kamgne Kamwa & Tsalefack, 2020: pp. 156-166; Saidou, 2021:

pp. 525-547; Tchidje & Ibrahim, 2021: pp. 3197-3204; Assana, 2021a: pp. 177-200; Kaptue & Mbella Mbong, 2022: pp. 245-268). The act of settlement (with the exception of “spontaneous” settlement) implies: a more or less coercive action (whatever the means: political, economic, cultural, etc.) which must necessarily lead to an integration of the nomads into the national structure and reflect the loss of their specificity (Bourgeot, 1972: p. 85).

The first wave of settlement of the Mbororo population in Cameroon, the subject of this study, is a secular adventure that dates back to the end of the 19th century. It can be justified by the search for pastures¹ especially in the Adamawa and Western regions (Boutrais, 1984). The second wave of settlement began in 1950 and 1960. It is linked to several factors such as colonial policies² and the construction of the nation-state (Atsiga Essala, 1999: p. 164; Donfack Sokeng, 2001/2002: pp. 134-160). This is a settlement desired and encouraged by the colonists and the government. The third wave began between 1980 and 1990. It is explained by a combination of interlocking processes among which we will retain: globalization and the promotion of human rights. The interweaving of these processes opens the way to a new theoretical perspective on indigenous people.

Scientific production oscillates between three (3) currents of thought. The first tends to view the Mbororos as vulnerable, marginalized, dominated and endangered social category (see for example, Seignobos, 2011; Mimche & Pelican, 2012: pp. 145-167; Pelican, 2012; Droy & Bidou, 2014; Tidjani, 2015; Kamdem, 2016; Tidjani, 2018; Bone Mbang, 2005; Bone Mbang & Owona Ndounda, 2019: pp. 38-61; Mamoudou, 2021: pp. 579-602; Dada Petel & Vircoulon, 2021: pp. 1-27; Kaptue & Mbella Mbong, 2022: pp. 245-268; Pelican, Schumann, Plucken, & Drew, 2022: p. 21).

The second considers, the socio-political awakening, the awareness of the marginalization of this indigenous category in the movement of democratization, liberalization, decentralization, and even globalization (Davis, 1995: pp. 213-228; Bellier, 2006; Bellier, 2007: pp. 81-89; Pelican, 2008: pp. 540-560; Mouiche, 2012; Hebga Nyongo Meirad, 2019: pp. 1-16). The third studies settlement among the indigenous Mbororo peoples (Althabe, 1965; Guillerrou, 1992: pp. 75-85; Seitz, 1993; Piguet, 1998: pp. 263-283; Robillard, 2010; Soengas, 2012: pp. 167-192; Kamgne Kamwa & Tsalefac, 2020: pp. 156-166; Saidou, 2021: pp. 525-547; Assana, 2021a: pp. 177-200).

¹Pastoral activity is deeply dependent on pasture. The search for pasture has led some Mbororos to settle in certain regions of Cameroon. It should be noted in this regards that, the Adamawa plateaus (Doufissa, 1993) and the Grass fields are fertile areas-thanks to their pedological characteristics and vegetation cover. In the Bamiléké region, the latest waves of settlement are those of the Mbororos (Foulbés pastoralists) who, since 1910, have settled in several administrative districts of this region, including Bangangte, where they cohabit with the so-called “indigenous” populations (Mimche, 2007).

²Colonization is seen as a factor of modernity allowing the introduction of new ideas, of the state, of the modern economy, of new forms of solidarity. Jean-François Bayart (1985), paraphrasing Gramsci, accounts for the colonial moment as marking a hegemonic crisis, that is, in this case, the crisis born out of the encounter between tradition and modernity.

However, the analyses of indigenous peoples are often based on questionable theoretical frameworks. The first two currents suffer from a tendency to miserabilism³. The third trend, which brings together various publications dealing with the settlement of the Pygmies and the Mbororos, overlooks dynamic settlement, *i.e.*, the outcome of a nomadic society whose internal dynamism would lead to indigenization. The theoretical corollary or final stage of this process, which is *deautochtonisation*, is not taken into account by the abundant literature. The objective of this article is to lay the groundwork for a new theoretical perspective, by analyzing the link between the settlements of the Mbororos of Cameroon and the *deautochtonization* of indigenous people; with the understanding that transitional processes are of variable duration and types (Goujon, 2015: p. 51).

The choice of the Nomadic population (Mbororo) of Cameroon was made for three reasons: first, the settlement of the Mbororo people is widespread throughout Cameroon, as the rural world is going through a general crisis. Secondly, the settlement of the Mbororos of Cameroon constitutes a prototype of settlement that has led to an indigenization that “seems to last” or that one can hope “to see prolonged in time”. Thirdly, the Mbororos are recognized by the United Nations as indigenous people just Pygmies. Contrary to the Pygmies, their settlement seems to be gaining momentum among the Mbororos. The option is to move to towns close to the home areas of most of them, which are the North, Adamawa, West, North West and South West regions.

The Mbororos are a rural people belonging to the Fulani/Fulani group that the British called the *Fulani* or *Peuls* in French (Kamgne Kamwa & Tsalefac, 2020: p. 156). The ethnonym Mbororo is given in the sub-region to the “Fulani of the bush”, *i.e.* the Fulani who have remained faithful to pastoral nomadism, as opposed to the sedentarized Fulani who are called Fulanias (Bocquéché, 1986; Burnham, 1996: chap 5; Koussoumna, 2008: p. 169; Dada Petel & Vircoulon, 2021: p. 7). The key term used to characterize or to identify these people is cattle, that is, oxen⁴. The term “Mbororo” is therefore, as Dognin considers, a “cultural epithet” that refers to “sociological realities and varied lifestyles. They live in at least 18 African countries, including Nigeria, Niger, Guinea, Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Cameroon, etc. (Tchidje & Ibrahim, 2021: pp. 3197-3204).

These nomadic herders who came from Nigeria entered Cameroon through the northern region. Then, they migrated to other regions (East, North West) (Dada Petel & Vircoulin, 2021: p. 9). They represent between 10 and 13 percent of the Cameroonian population (Mouiche, 2012: pp. 151-171). They are present

³In this context, the debates often come to a halt and rarely escape two pitfalls. The first, well known in the social sciences when it comes to tackling sensitive subjects (Passeron, 1991 quoted by Assana, 2022: p. 33) is that of “miserabilism” which tends to describe the indigenous Mbororos and Pygmy peoples as mere passive victims to be defended. This drift is particularly present in the discourse of human rights NGOs, the international bodies of the UN, which tirelessly denounce the “enslavement of human beings”. If these NGOs are certainly in their role in condemning the exactions committed against the indigenous people, it means that one cannot help but questions the uniqueness of a discourse that relates only the most extreme facts of dependence (*Ibid*).

⁴In fact, cows constitute a criterion for differentiation between the different clans (Kamgne Kamwa & Tsalefac, 2020: p. 156).

throughout the Cameroonian territory, but are found in greater numbers in the West, East, Northwest, and Northern regions (Adamawa, North, and Far North). The number of the Mbororos in Cameroon is estimated at 1.85 million people (*Ibid*).

One of the specificities of the Mbororo population is the place they have historically given themselves in the bush (Burnham, 1996: chap 5; Bocquéné, 1986). They often live in inaccessible geographically isolated areas and suffer various forms of historical marginalization, both political and social. In general, the situation of pygmies and others around the world is more or less the same⁵ (Saugstad, 2001: p. 31). In the quest for their emancipation, international organizations⁶ have officially recognized and identified these nomadic Mbororo pastoralists alongside the “Pygmies” who are hunter-gatherers as “indigenous people” (see on these issues, *the report of the working group of experts of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights on indigenous populations and communities*, p. 102; see also Robillard, 2010: p. 127). According to the definition expressed in the World Bank’s operational manual:

The term “indigenous peoples” (...) describes social groups with a social and cultural identity that is different from that of the dominant groups in society and that makes them vulnerable in the development process. Many such groups have a status that limits their ability to defend their interests and rights to land and other productive resources, or that limits their ability to participate in and benefit from development (*Rapport du groupe de travail d’experts de la commission africaine des droits de l’homme et des peuples sur les populations autochtones/communautés autochtones*, 2005: p. 105).

This definition identifies five (5) criteria, which can be combined and are not exclusive, to identify indigenous peoples. The five criteria include cultural specificity, non-dominance, marginalization from an economic, political and socio-cultural point of view (although not necessarily numerical, as observed by Schulte-Tenckhoff, 1997: p. 7 cited by Mouangue Kobila, 2009: p. 37), low participation in development and the inability to defend their rights and interests. Contrary to the notions of minority that privilege numerical weakness (Pierré-Caps, 2008: p. 1028, cited by Mouangue Kobila, 2009: p. 37) or of “indigenous population” that are legitimized by the primo-settlement or historical anteriority of the settlement on a territory and the exclusive rights on the ancestral land (Read usefully Ngando sandje, 2013: p. 160; Mouiche, 2013: p. 289; Claire Médard, 2006: pp. 166-167 cited by Assana, 2022: p. 35), that of “indigenous people” incorporates socio-cultural specificities or ways of life. The notion of indigenous

⁵In the past, the Inuit of Canada, the Sami of Scandinavia and the pygmies of Central Africa had nomadic lifestyles, characterized by hunting and gathering. They would have undergone the same traumas from the socio-environmental transformations (loss of ancestral spaces, poaching, more or less forced settlement, discrimination and enslavement of all kinds).

⁶These include the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Population and international financial institutions such as the World Bank.

people refers to the so-called “traditional” ways of life that many are no longer able or willing to practise (Sepulveda, Glon, & Dumont, 2020). What is at stake here is the notion of legal personality, which the people have in international law and which gives access to the rule of law (Bellier, 2013: p. 25). It is within this general framework that the notion of “indigenous people” must be understood.

From when a UN dynamic was set up to deal with indigenous issues, it is important to note that with the end of the Cold War, we witnessed a resurgence of identity claims; first in Europe, then, in various regions of the world. The resulting tensions have forced States and international organizations to address the issue of minorities and indigenous people (Donfack Sonkeng, 2001/2002: p. 20). In Cameroon, the question of identity mainly re-emerged during the political movements of the 1990s, after a long period of hibernation imposed on the pretext of the principle of unity⁷. But the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People in 2007 gave the issue a particular tone.

The analysis focuses on the links between the settlement of the Mbororos of Cameroon and the deautochtonization of indigenous people. The novelty of the current process that we would like to report is the composition that is taking place on the status of the indigenous Mbororo people of Cameroon. How does settlement impact the ethnic status of the indigenous Mbororo people of Cameroon? To answer this question, we formulate the hypothesis that settlement consecrates the deautochtonization of the Mbororos of Cameroon. This is a way of deautochtonization that “seems to last” or that we can hope to “see prolonged over time” in the same way as democratization.

The methodology mobilized in this article is based on documentary analysis and fieldwork conducted on one part, on the Mbororos of the Adamawa region (Cameroon) in 2017 (as part of thesis study Assana, 2017) and in 2019 on the other hand (as part of an article). Our approach is based on the coloniality of power (Capucine & Fatima Hurtado, 2009; Quijano, 2007: pp. 111-118). Coloniality allows us to study the reforms that are taking place among or within the indigenous Mbororo people of Cameroon.

The discussion of the data collected has given rise to two sets of concern. The first analyzes the forced settlement of the Mbororos of Cameroon as a territorial and identity-based mutation (I). The second examines the forced settlement of the Mbororos as a modality of recomposition of political citizenship (II).

2. The Forced Settlement of the Mbororos of Cameroon as a Modality of Territorial and Identity Mutation

The inter-twining nature of the settlement processes of the Mbororos of Cameroon makes us to pay particular attention to the modalities of territorial and identity-based recomposition in order to account for new forms of appropriation of space and identity-based readjustment among the indigenous Mbororo

⁷For an overview of the claims movements, see Kamto, 1993: 215; Onana, 2002: 182 cited by Assana, 2022: p. 36.

people. These waves of settlement are reflected in the forced abandonment of nomadism in the bush (1) and the acculturation (2) of the Mbororos.

2.1. The Forced Abandonment of Nomadism

The forced abandonment of nomadism is an important modality⁸ for territorial mutation of the indigenous Mbororo people of Cameroon. The abandonment of nomadism in the bush is forced, and not voluntary. It is caused by external and constraining factors. The objective of this section is to study the factors that force the Mbororos to abandon nomadism in the bush. Two important factors⁹ will be privileged in the analysis of the factors of the deterritorialization of the Mbororos from the bush: global factors (1.1) and local factors (1.2).

2.1.1. The Global Factors

The global factors that account for the forced abandonment of nomadism by the Mbororos in the bush are made up of a combination of intertwined processes: globalization, the deployment of humanitarian NGOs, the tipping of certain territories and corridors under the growing control of transnational criminal groups (Saïbou, 2006: pp. 100-103) and human migration.

Globalization is seen here as a vehicle for economic, political, social and cultural transformation at the local level, and as a context for linking people and ideas (Bellier, 2006: pp. 81-95; Bellier, 2007: pp. 9-11). The dynamics of the international indigenous people's movement is a prism for analyzing globalization, as it is a good example of institutionalized dialogue between actors of such different status as States, international organizations, indigenous associations, developmental or human rights organizations. This relationship has been structured over a period coinciding with the rise of (the reflection on globalization). Since the 1980s, there have been changes in the field of human rights¹⁰. For example, democratization, liberalization, and decentralization have blown through the post-colonial states of Black Africa (Goujon, 2015).

The tipping of certain territories and corridors under the growing control of transnational criminals, it is also an important factor in the dynamics of the process of abandoning Mbororo nomadism in the bush. This is a reason often given by the Mbororos who have been victims of the horrors of war and kidnappings in certain regions of Cameroon (Kaptue & Mbella Mbong, 2022: p. 252). These include the Mbororos from the northern part of Cameroon who are vic-

⁸In fact, the relationship with land, territory and natural resources is central in the political discourse of indigenous people, from an economic perspective and because it is the bearer of distinct cosmovisions (Bellier, 2007: p. 83).

⁹To speak of a factor "is to appeal to a strong determinant of social change. A factor is in fact an element of a given situation which, by the mere fact of its existence or by the action it exerts, brings about or produces a change" (Rocher, 1968: 25 cited by Assana, 2021a: p. 181).

¹⁰During the 1990s, the notions of governance and the rule of law became commonplace, with international institutions making them the leitmotiv of their recommendations (Bellier, 2007: p. 83). Indigenous peoples have built their political "capacities" by relying on the United Nations, and these changes are concomitant with intellectual, political and legal developments on notions that aim at redefining the political space and the role of the State.

tims of the war against Boko Haram in the Far North; cattle rustling with kidnappings in the Adamawa region of Cameroon (Saibou, 2006; Mamoudou, 2021: p. 588; Kaptue & Mbella Mbong, 2022: p. 252) and those in the Northwest and Southwest Cameroon that are plagued by the Anglophone crisis¹¹ (Dada Petel & Vircoulon, 2021: p. 25).

It is worth mentioning that the phenomenon of cross-border crime is much more prevalent in the Adamawa region of Cameroon. This phenomenon will literally spread to four of the five divisions of the region, causing terror and death among the pastoral populations. These are precisely the Vina, Mbéré, Faro and Deo and Djerem (Mamoudou, 2021: p. 595). In the Faro and Deo division, statistics on kidnappings indicate that for the period from 2015 to 2019, 182 people were abducted; 53 were released after payment of ransom; 16 were murdered; and more than 600 million CFA francs were collected by criminal entrepreneurs (*Ibid.*: 586-587). In the Mbéré division, another epicenter of kidnappings of herdsmen and traditional chiefs, the kidnapping has led to the migration of people. It is estimated that nearly 10,000 people have been displaced. Localities such as Gnaboula, Assoura, Tapawa, Balel, and Dole have lost most of their Fulani inhabitants (*Ibid.*: 595).

At the economic level, the damage is exorbitant. The figures collected and cross-checked estimated that between 2016 and 2017, 3086 cattle were decimated or sold in Martap; 5666 in Nyambaka; 1209 in Belel; 799 in Nganha; 2958 in Ngaoundéré and 170 in Mbé. Cumulative figures estimated that nearly two billion CFA francs in ransom was paid to kidnappers between 2017 and 2019, who scour the pastures of Adamawa (*Ibid.*: 597-599). The increase in poverty among indigenous communities due to the dwindling number of cattle rearers is in itself a real problem for the mental equilibrium of the Fulani and for the economic health of a region with a pastoral vocation (*Ibid.*). In this way, the bandits have succeeded in doing what the authorities have not been able to achieve through the promotion of ranching; namely to force the Mbororos to settle down (Assana, 2021a: p. 183). This supports the thesis of the forced abandonment of nomadism. In addition to global factors, there are local factors.

2.1.2. Local Factors

Local factors include the geographical (attractiveness of grazing land), historical and security.

Geographical (climate, relief) and ecological factors refer to the attraction of pastureland, especially in the Adamawa and Western regions of Cameroon). They were looking for pasture or a place where they could graze their herds. According to Jean Boutrais (1994: pp. 175-196), it was around 1870 or 1872 that the first Mbororo (djafoun) settled on the Adamawa plateau, under the leadership of

¹¹The Anglophone crisis has forced many Mbororos to seek refuge in the urban centers of the Northwest (Bamenda, Menchum, Bui, Momo, Donga Mantum), in the more stable regions (the Centre, Littoral, Adamaoua and West regions) and in Nigeria. Several thousands of people have been displaced from Nwa to the country's urban centers...

Ardo Manyà, of the *Gos'en* lineage¹². Geographical and ecological factors played an important role, but it is not sufficient to account for their settlement. It is necessary to consider historical factors as well.

The historical factors are linked to colonial policy and the construction of the nation-state. Engelbert Mveng (1963) has already pointed out that it was around the 1950s that Cameroon began its policy of settling the pygmies and the Mbororos along the road in order to integrate them into the modern life of the country (cited by Robillard, 2010). Cameroon thus justified its policy of settlement through projects, to take a census of the occupants of its territory and to plan development activities (*Ibid*) refers instead to the economic reasons that led the Cameroonian state to dispossess the pygmies of forest areas. This is mainly due to the exploitation of forest resources (wood, minerals, etc.), land (creation of agro-industrial plantations) and territories (policy of development of protected areas and implementation of chiefdoms). The accession to independence, transformed the social relations of formerly colonized countries (Bourgeot, 1972: p. 88). In addition to the reasons mentioned above, many other reasons can be given to justify the involvement of the Cameroonian state in the care for indigenous peoples. These include the development of the areas where these populations are settled, the implementation of the social justice policy, the realization of the national population policy, etc. (Atsiga Essala, 1999: p. 164). The same policy was continued in the post-colonial period by the developmental policies of the Cameroonian state and its international financial partners.

Among local factors we have insecurity. The settlement of the Mbororos in the district of Ngaoui is an alternative to the friction with the Foulbes. Faced with the hostility of the Foulbes in the localities of Ngaoundere, Banyo or Tibati, and the friction with the agricultural populations, the Mbororos have modified their livestock practices¹³. In the case of the Mbororos, it is not only in the north, but also in the south, that they have been forced to leave their homes to live in the bushes. From this perspective, Koussoumna Libaa (2008: pp. 174-175) it shows that the settlement of nomadic people in the Northern Cameroon is the consequence of fiscal, financial, political, legal and physical insecurity. For this author, the settlement of pastoralist families is justified by the desire to better integrate into the socio-economic life of this region and to guarantee their supply of cereals by cultivating them (Sougnabe, 2013: pp. 1-11). In addition to territorial mutation, identity mutation can also be observed.

¹²This migration, known as *Peerol Manyà*, allowed some families to leave the Yola region where the Djafoun had reconstituted their herds after an eventful stay in Bornou.

¹³Three periods follow one another in the conflictual relationship that the Mbororos have had with the Foulbes in the Adamaoua region of Cameroon: coexistence, the payment of a pastoral rent (1900-1930), the containment of the Mbororo on the outskirts of the lamidat (1930-1960), and the complete expulsion and repeated repression (Dognin, 1981: pp. 139-157). Thus, the 1920s and 1930s were marked by the dispersion of the Djafoun, either to Bamenda or to the east of Adamawa: Ngaoundéré and especially Meiganga in the Mbéré division. The Mbororos of the plateau thus had to deal with two historical constraints: the need to have a "natron" source and the need to benefit from protection (*Ibid*).

3. The Acculturation of the Mbororos

Settlement poses the problem of assimilation, acculturation or cultural alienation, which are indicators of identity recomposition within the Mbororo communities¹⁴. The objective of this section is to analyze the modalities of identity recomposition following the settlement of the Mbororos in a new territory. We share Fredrik Barth's (1995: pp. 203-249) interactionist thesis, for whom co-ethnics adjust the definition of their identity to situations that bring them into contact with members of other groups¹⁵. The single, stable identity is a myth¹⁶. The acculturation of the Mbororos is perceptible at the socio-cultural (1) and economic (2) levels.

3.1. At the Socio-Cultural Level

Socio-culturally speaking, the settlement of the Mbororos brings with it, various challenges: the emergence of new ways of constituting families and the kinshipnetwork, the evolution of women's status, the socialization of children, the involvement of the Mbororo herdsman in social and cultural life, the organization of the Mbororos into GICs and associations, and the improvement of their habitat.

The family institution is the place where negotiations take place about the values to be adopted for the integration of the Mbororos. It is the place of a double survival: "since it ensures both the renewal of generations and, through education, the continuation of societal values" (Roussel, 1995: p. 140). The new forms of residence between family members or between spouses, and the evolution of family status, tend more and more to be understood as a way of institutionalization of new forms of family (Mimche, 2007). Mbororo immigration to the Grass fields, for example, underwent enormous changes from the 1960s onwards, with a shift from pastoral, mainly male, migration to family immigration. Amongst the factors of change in family structures are: the development of education (schooling), the decline of social control in the face of the emergence of other areas of socialization (school, media, associations, the street, places of leisure, etc.). Practices such as: the emergence of pre-marital births, single-parent families, the phenomenon of women as heads of households, and voluntary birth control. New forms of conjugality and residence are taking shape and becoming formalized in society. Marital and family decohabitation confronts the contemporary family with new challenges (single parenthood, reproductive health of adoles-

¹⁴The direct and prolonged contacts between two different cultures that result in the modification or transformation of one or both cultures are called acculturation (see Thomas et al., 1975 cited by Abega, 2007: pp. 122-123). Between what was before and what is re-composed, there is an underlying process that can be described by means of the prefix *of*: de-construction, de-composition, de-writing of the referents constructed under deterritorialization having itself decomposed and reconstructed what was before (Wanda Dressler, 2001: p. 6).

¹⁵By highlighting the links between the modes of identity recomposition and the nature of the transformations of the social and political world, the attempt made here facilitates the apprehension of what changes and how it changes.

¹⁶Indeed, there are multiple identities, shifting identities that are never identical, identities that are always being recomposed (Boni, 2001: pp. 149-164).

cents, education of children) (Mimche, 2009).

In another register, if in retrospect, schooling was not on their agenda, it is clear that they are now particularly interested in it. The Mbororo herdsmen enrol their children in both secular and Koranic schools. This is part of a concern to combine both Western and Muslim cultures (Kaptue & Mbella Mbong, 2022: p. 262). The women in charge of the children, who are assiduous in the health centers for the vaccination campaigns, refuse to go on transhumance. They now influence the choice of the form of transhumance¹⁷.

In order to better integrate into Cameroon, the Mbororos form associations to carry out actions of interest, that is, actions that are beneficial to them and to the indigenous population. These associations contribute to the cohesion and exchange with the indigenous population. They aim at promoting the Mbororo culture, mutual aid, encourage education, fight against early marriage, and facilitate access to employment (Assana, 2017: chap. 2). There are also cases of marriage between the Mbororos and the sedentary population. The MBOSCUDA association also works to promote living together by organizing exchange platforms between the Mbororos and cultural associations for cultural mix (Mbebi Ndema & Raymond Marcien, 2015; Kaptue & Mbella Mbong, 2022: p. 263).

The merger of the Mbororo associations in the sub-region reveals the organizational capacities of this ethnic group. As an example, we can cite the Mbororo associations in West African countries such as the “*Fédération Nationale des Éleveurs du Niger*” (FNEN) and Pastoral Resolve (*PARE*) in Nigeria (Bello and Sahabo, 2005: 19 cited by Saidou, 2021: pp. 545-546). This is also the case of the Mbororo associations in Central Africa, such as the “*Association des Femmes Peuls Autochtones du Tchad*” (AFPAT) and the “*Association pour l’Intégration et le Développement Social des Peuls de Centrafrique*” (AIDSPC) (*Ibid*). These groups work to improve livestock conditions in different countries and to resolve recurrent conflicts between farmers and herdsmen. All of these Mbororo associations meet regularly within the framework of the *international Tabital Pulaaku*, a festival for the promotion and safeguarding of Fulani cultures from around the world (*Ibid*). In addition, at the continental level, the *Confederation of Traditional Herdsmen in Africa* (CORET) is a true African network of herdsmen (*Ibid*). Through the pooling of their national resources, the Mbororos want to preserve their cultural specificity and contribute to the development of pastoralism, which is their main economic activity (Abdoul-Bagui, 2019: p. 13 cited by Saidou, 2021: pp. 545-546).

The abandonment of nomadism has also enabled the Mbororos to improve their habitat by using durable materials. The habitat, formerly made up of traditional huts using an architecture of ancient origin, is gradually being modelled on the architecture of modern Christian buildings (mud bricks, cinder blocks, metal sheets, windows...) (Hamadou, 2014: pp. 82-83). This fixation on the ter-

¹⁷However, they were particularly active in the historical companionship of the shepherds to the pastures in the dry season.

ritory not only allows for the acquisition of land and political rights, but also for the integration into the socio-economic life in Cameroon. It also allows for a more pleasant living environment: boreholes, wells, schools within the village, and health centers nearby. Some herdsmen have begun to buy land and buildings that they rent out in the villages of Djohong, Ngaoui, Meiganga, Ngaoundéré, etc. in the Adamawa region of Cameroon (Assana, 2021a: pp. 177-200). The sedentary nature of this process has made the authorities to officially recognize the herdsmen's camps, which are made up of "hard" dwellings, by giving them the official status of villages (Kenmoe Tchidje & Mimche, 2021: p. 3200). The re-composition of identity is also perceptible at the economic level.

3.2. In the Economic Domain

In the economic domain, the mutation of identity is manifested through the association with livestock farming of their economic activities (agricultural commitment¹⁸, the opening to trade and the adoption of small businesses).

Research conducted on the economic activities of Mbororo herdsmen in Cameroon demonstrates that they adapt and integrate by engaging in a variety of activities. Like the Mbororos of the Horn of Africa (Boutrais, 1994: p. 188), they are engaged in a variety of activities such as trade and intercity transport. And, through these activities, Mbororo traders contribute to the development of their families by sending their children and others of their community to school; contributing to the various developmental activities of the locality via financial means (*Ibid*) In the same way, settlement brings herdsmen closer to the places where animal products are sold: the livestock markets (Ngong, Adoumri) in the northern region (Koussoumna, Dugue, & Torquebiau, 2010: pp. 60-67). This has forced this category of Fulani to become affiliated to banking structures (Saibou, 2006: p. 30).

The Mbororos are integrated into the urban economy by operating in a variety of occupations. They are merchants, coffee owners, drivers, guards, veterinarians, computer specialists, and soldiers, among others (Kaptue & Mbella Mbong, 2022: p. 256). They engage in activities that are not directly related to livestock production. These activities demonstrate their dynamism in integrating economically into the cities of Bafoussam and Dschang (Kamgne Kamwa & Tsalefac, 2020: p. 160). In the town of Boromo for example, the Fulani is engaged in activities such as trade and crafts. However, they are not all grouped in the informal sector. Indeed, a few are employed in the administration as teachers and nurses (Barry, 2006), and because of the opportunities for employment and schooling, the cities have a strong attraction for these semi-nomadic people (Boutrais, 1994: p. 188). The main obstacles encountered by the Mbororos in the process of integrating into the urban economy are education, finances, the lack of professional qualifications and language barrier. In Bafoussam and Dschang,

¹⁸When these mbororos arrived in Cameroon, they did not know how to work the land. They had only "contempt for hoe-welders" (Boutrais, 1994: p. 188).

they are found in both the informal sector (trade, security, sewing, cafeteria, etc.) and the formal sector (medicine, teaching, army, etc.) (Kamgne Kamwa & Tsalefac, 2020: p. 163). The rural economy should no longer be based solely on agriculture and livestock farming, but it should also be based on in other activities such as trade and transport etc. In order to gain access to secondary occupations, they resort to entrepreneurship and family networks (Zouiten, 1995; Maveva, 2003, cited by Kamgne Kamwa & Tsalefac, 2020: p. 163). In addition to the territorial and identity-based recompositions, settlement also causes recomposition of political citizenship among the Mbororos of Cameroon.

4. The Settlement of the Mbororos of Cameroon as a Modality for Mutation of Political Citizenship

One of the three forms of citizenship identified by British sociologist Thomas Humphrey Marshall in political citizenship, is “the right to participate in the exercise of power, either as a member of an institution invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of that institution” (Marshall, 1980). Similarly, French sociologist and political scientist Dominique Schnapper bases political citizenship on political participation, which includes the right to vote, the right to stand for election and the right to hold certain public offices (Schnapper, 2000: p. 10). The mutation of citizenship is manifested through: the acquisition of electoral culture (1), and the facilitating factors should be analyzed (2).

4.1. Acquisition of Cultural Culture

Settlements are intense moments of social renegotiation of access to political citizenship. The Mbororos renegotiate their access to political citizenship through a set of variables: involvement in political parties (1) and integration into institutions invested with political authority (2).

4.1.1. Engagement in Political Parties

It is important to note that in Cameroon, the National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP) and the Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement (CPDM) are the political parties most represented among the Mbororos. Indeed, under the one party system in Cameroon, (1966-1990/91), the Mbororos had always maintained a distance from the Cameroonian state: their contact with the administration had always been limited to the payment of tax on livestock, because nomadic livestock farming did not allow them time to go into politics. Apart from this fiscal gesture, the Cameroonian state did not need the Mbororos and the Mbororos did not need the state either (Davis, 1995: p. 220).

However, with their settlement, which came along side the return to a multi-party system in 1990, the alibi of electoral competition and the quest for electoral votes brought them to the forefront of the political scene, in contrast with the period of the one party system, when it was difficult for them to even take part in the vote. In a context of change, including the effects of a new legal and institu-

tional framework¹⁹ (the 1996 Constitution), the consequences of competition between political parties since 1990, and mobilization outside of political parties in an association for the promotion of ethnic interests since 1992 (MBOSCUDA), there has been a certain political “awakening” of the Mbororos (*Ibid*). Similarly, another fact that testifies the access of the Mbororos to electoral citizenship is the acquisition of voter’s cards, which should allow them to express their opinion on the choice of leaders.

For ethno-religious reasons, the Mbororos initially identified themselves with the National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP). In the local popular conception, the National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP) was seen as the political party of Muslims, while the CPDM was projected as the party of “Christians” and “unbelievers” (Assana, 2021a: p. 191). As a result, when they were called to vote in the 1992 presidential election, they opted for the former party, (the National Union for Democracy and Progress UNDP) whose leader was Bouba Bello Maigari, of Fulany ethnicity. In the North-West region of Cameroon, the Mbororos have always been critical of the Anglophone issue, which they see as a risk of political exclusion. They have never supported the *Social Democratic Front* (SDF) founded by John Fru Ndi, who was for a long time the standard-bearer of the Anglophones. With multiparty politics in the 1990s, the SDF was the first opposition party. It had strong popular support in the Anglophone regions and in Douala—the economic capital (Dada Petel & Vircoulin, 2021: p. 21). But for the Mbororos, the SDF was only the party of the local people of the Northwest (its leader was born in the Santa district near Bamenda), and so they have always suspected the SDF of being the promoter of pro-indigenous land policy. But because of the undisputed dominance of President Paul Biya’s party (Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement, CPDM) and for strategic reasons²⁰, they moved closer to it and have even had some well-placed personalities

¹⁹Through its collaboration with international development agencies, the movement has created links with transnational human rights and minority organizations such as Amnesty International, *Survival International*, *Minority Rights Group International* and the World Intellectual Property Organization (Mouiche, 2012). This international support attests to the vitality of the challenge to violations of Mbororo rights that may be perpetrated by state agents. In addition, and, in line with the UN’s proclamation of the decade of “indigenous peoples” (1995-2004), the MBOSCUDA movement has promoted the Mbororo as an “indigenous minority” whose cultural survival must be protected (*Ibid*). Thanks to the active lobbying of these associations, the Mbororos are recognized by the state of Cameroon and by international organizations, including the UN, as an indigenous (native) ethnic group, a minority and a vulnerable one. This international status gives the Mbororo several advantages such as international protection, development, integration into the state apparatus, and international aid and subsidies. This has allowed the MBOSCUDA leaders to be integrated into government programs for the development of indigenous and native peoples in Cameroon. In 2005, the United Nations Economic and Social Council granted MBOSCUDA special consultative status (Pelican, 2008: pp. 550-551).

²⁰In a political context where the development of certain localities has been delayed because of their membership in the opposition, in this case in the Littoral region (see Socpa, 2000: 91-108 cited by Assana, 2021a: p. 191), the Mbororo populations have quickly understood the advantages of joining the CPDM, the political party with majority. The political to the ruling party offers the best guarantee for defending their local interests: the protection of land rights, the reclassification of the status of their chieftaincies, the access of development rents, etc. In addition, the CPDM has an “incomparable capacity for redistribution” (Loada, 2006: 25 cited by Tchingangkong Yanou, 2017: p. 65) compared to other political parties, both in the country and abroad.

within that political party for example, Manou Djadji Guidado, a member of the party's Central Committee (*Ibid*: 20). In order to do this, they have invested in grassroots cells and the local leadership of this political party, in order to make visible to the central government a certain number of claims in terms of access to basic health and educational infrastructures, but above all to preserve their local political leadership. In addition to involvement in political parties, the Mbororos are renegotiating their access to political citizenship through integration into institutions with political authority.

4.1.2. Integration into Institutions with Political Authority

It is important to study mbororos' integration into institutions with political authority in municipal executives, the municipal council before the traditional chieftaincies.

In the case of the municipal executives and the municipal council, it is significant to note that in the western region of Cameroon, the Mbororos have not yet succeeded in imposing their political domination on the sedentary population. They have not conquered the region, but rather have infiltrated as a result of colonial peace²¹. In this region, the Mbororos renegotiate their access to citizenship through membership in the various political parties in which they hold elective positions, as in the case of Mr. Hassan, who holds the position of municipal councillor in the council of Bagangte (Kaptue & Mbella Mbong, 2022: p. 264). According to Ibrahim Mouiche (2011: pp. 71-97), the sedentary Mbororos are involved in political parties in the Western region. And today, through the Mbororo Social and Cultural Development (MBOSCUDA), they have gained political acceptance and have made demands that they have their brothers in government, in town halls. And they have been given the right to vote and to participate in the political life of Cameroon. The sedentary Mbororos are involved at the political level. This reinforces their settlement and the development of their locality. They are not left out of the decision-making process; they are part of the population. These people, once considered as foreigners, are becoming more and more an undeniable and unavoidable link in the life of the society.

On the contrary, in the Adamawa region of Cameroon, and more specifically in the Ngaoui sub-division which is considered as the capital of the Mbororos in this region, they have integrated the institutions fully and are invested with political authority as they have consolidated and have established themselves as a dominant group (Assana, 2021a: p. 199). The rural council of Ngaoui was created in 1996. Prior to this date, the Ngaoui village was part of Djohong rural council. The Mbororos were represented by six municipal councillors in this sub-division. However, since the creation of the council of Ngaoui in 1996, the Mbororos have managed to take control of the executive of the Ngaoui municipality by retaining

²¹The "indigenous" farmers consider that the pastures continue to belong to them. The chiefs impose their decisions on the herdsmen, whom the local population persists in calling foreigners.

the position of mayor since 2002²². The Ngaoui council is made up of 25 municipal councillors²³. In addition to controlling the executive of the Ngaoui municipality, the Mbororos also hold the presidency of the CPDM section of Ngaoui²⁴. It is also important to analyze the dynamics of the mutation of citizenship among the Mbororos through the traditional authority.

The settlement of the Mbororos has had an impact on their socio-political organization, in that it has led to the regularization of their administrative status and the stabilization of traditional power. Indeed, in terms of the structuring of traditional power²⁵, Mbororo society has not historically had a sufficiently solid socio-political organization compared to the other sedentary Fulani factions (the Foulbe), because it is too dynamic and in constant flux²⁶ (Assana, 2021a: p. 187). It is only recently, with the dynamics of settlement that political power has stabilized (Boutrais, 1984: p. 225).

In the Western region of Cameroon, the Mbororo society has had two successive models of organization in Bamoun country, where the Mbororos of the West are essentially concentrated (Mouiche, 2012). The first model (1915-1962), which is by far the best structure, and also the most powerful, was created by Sultan Njoya, when he made Yerima Bouba the lamido (chief with highly centralized authority among the Fulani) of all the Mbororos of the Noun division, with residence in Didango, a village still considered today as the capital of the Mbororos of Noun. He had, to some extent, the characteristics of the Fulani lamidats of the North of Cameroon. Lamido Bouba's only superior authorities were Sultan Njoya and the representative of the Cameroonian administration for the West, based in Dschang. He maintained exemplary relations with the latter (Mouiche, 2011: pp. 71-97). Lamido Moussa, who was to succeed him later in 1936, had preserved the quality of this model for a long time. The second model is the one we know today. It is the consequence of the splitting up of the first by the ad-

²²The only exception comes from the very first mandate (1996 to 2002), when the Foulbé led the municipal executive of this council for one term through Abdoulaye Beiladji (Assana, 2021a: p. 190).

²³To achieve such a feat, the Mbororos had to secure a sufficient majority of 13 of the 25 councillors to elect the municipal executive, with or without consensus, with or without the will of the other ethnic components (*Ibid*).

²⁴This section was created after the break-up in 2008 of the large Mbéré-Est (Djohong) Section. In the local CPDM structures of the Ngaoui District, the Mayor (Mbororo), Abdourame Labi, was elected President of the CPDM Section of Ngaoui in 2002, against the Foulbé candidate, Beladji Abdoulaye. Abdourame Labi was re-elected in 2007, 2012, and 2020 (*Ibid*).

²⁵It is significant to note that the traditional chief is an important actor in the national political arena in Cameroon. Cameroon is a "chaotic state or Janus state that integrates two contradictory orders of domination, namely rational legal domination and traditional domination" (Weber 1971: 226-243) quoted by Sindjoun, 2002: p. 77. The chaotic State or patchwork State harbors a plurality of registers of enunciation of political domination, a diversity of modalities for framing the dialectic of command-obedience: it is a State that manages the disorder of the formulas of imperium. The chaotic State transgresses the watertight borders artificially erected between "tradition" and "modernity". (Gusfield, 1971: pp. 15-26, Sindjoun, 2002: p. 77). The distinction between these two notions has only didactic value. The political arena, here as elsewhere, has only didactic value. (See also Alawadi, 2017: pp. 365-376, suppress *Ibid*).

²⁶This situation generally led them to build their society on the basis of small social units, as shown in the ethnological and monographic sketches elaborated by Bocquene, 1986.

ministration, which did not want another structure at the divisional level, parallel to the Bamoun sultanate (*Ibid*). The North-West region has 7 (seven) divisions and in each of the divisions there are 20 (twenty) to 30 (thirty) *ArDOS*, that is; Fulani tribal chiefs (*Message to the International Community from the ANDC*). In the Adamawa region of Cameroon, the sedentary Mbororo population has several third class chieftaincies. At the head of these chieftaincies are chiefs (*ardo*), who are consulted when making decisions about the functioning of their locality²⁷. The Mbororos hold traditional power in the capital of the Ngaoui District through their ardo. Out of a total number of seventeen (17) third class chieftaincies listed in the Ngaoui district in the Adamawa region (Cameroon), the Mbororos have seven (7) traditional third class chieftaincies (*Assana, 2021a: p. 187*). As nationals, “the indigenous people have the legal possibility to make claims. These claims are exercised through the national” (*Fenet, 1993: p. 79*). We observe the rise of potential protest²⁸.

The rise of “potential protest” was manifested by the claims of reclassification of the chieftaincies into first and second class chiefs. In fact, the claims for the reclassification of the Mbororo chieftaincies from third class to second class at the Ngaoui district by the Mbororos in the democratic movement are certainly the most obvious illustration of the mutation of the form of citizenship. In a request dated July 17, 2016, signed by 23 traditional chiefs and addressed to the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, the Mbororos requested for the reclassification of the third class chieftaincy to second class in the chiefdoms of Cameroon (*Ibid*). The political reasons for this reclassification of the traditional chieftaincy are several-fold: first, this reclassification aims at consecrating the autonomy of the chieftaincy of the Mbororo community of Ngaoui with respect to the tutelage of the chieftaincies of the sedentary Gbaya ethnic group, and thus the fullness of *Ardo's* jurisdiction over the entire territory of this district. Secondly, it aims at increasing the possibility of the *Ardo* of Ngaoui with the hope of obtaining an audience with the head of state. This is because in practice, only traditional chiefs of the 1st and 2nd classes are entitled to audiences granted by the head of state during regional tours. These claims also arise in a political context in which decentralization will contribute to the re-evaluation of traditional chieftaincy through the inclusion of chieftaincies in the transferred

²⁷They are organized around a community leader called the *Ardo* and in a plurality of pastoral villages. The village (*wuro*) is the smallest traditional administrative unit headed by the *Ardo*, the equivalent of the village chief.

²⁸In 1979, S. Barnes and M. Kaase published the results of a large empirical survey on “mass political participation” in five countries (Germany, England, the Netherlands, the United States, Austria). By questioning samples of individuals on their approval of unconventional forms of political action, (ranging from petitions to violent action, including demonstrations, boycotts, occupations, etc.). In particular, they seek to measure the “protest potential” of the populations studied (i.e., their acceptance of the legitimacy of the various types of protest action). In this respect, the *Political action* survey reveals the existence of a significant protest potential (the individuals interviewed, however, rejecting violent actions in their great majority), and highlights a typical sociological profile of the “protesting” individuals: young, educated, politicized, occupying a relatively high social position (salariat middle class), and carrying values (See, Barnes, & Kaase, 1979 cited by *Assana, 2022: p. 39*).

powers and their representation in the Senate and regional councils²⁹. The objective is also to increase the possibility of eligibility for the electoral college of senators. It should also be noted that the recomposition of citizenship is facilitated by a combination of factors.

5. Facilitating Factors

A number of factors related to political opportunity structures justify the mutation of the form of citizenship among the Mbororos of Cameroon: average level of education and demographic power in certain districts (1), the economic power and activism of MBOSCUA (2).

5.1. Average Level of Education of the Mbororos and Demographic Power in Some Localities

It is important to study the importance of average level of education before that of economic power.

Minimum level of education of the Mbororos is an important resource in the process of social renegotiations of access to political citizenship³⁰. Several studies analyze the link between access to education, the reduction of illiteracy and the increase in political participation (Stromquist, 2006). Indeed, unlike their Pigmy counterparts, the Mbororos are increasingly interested in education (Barry, 2006).

Average level of education of the Mbororos is correlated with their relative conversion to Christianity. This conversion is part of the decision to evangelize this Fulani faction, as expressed by the Norwegian missionaries (Kare, 1990: p. 10). The strategic objective was not only to get the Mbororos out of the spiritual ghetto in which they found themselves, but also to block the way to the expansion of Islam towards the south of Cameroon (Bone Mbang Sodéa & Owona Ndounda, 2019: p. 42). Indeed, before 1958, the decision to evangelize these people had already been introduced in Adamawa for three (3) decades. In the area of evangelization and in a subtle way, the missionaries made contact with the Mbororos in the localities of Meiganga, Fada and Djohong in Mbéré division. The missionary campaigns of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (EEC) towards the Mbororos in the Adamawa region lasted almost half a century. As part of the religious enterprise of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (ELC), the promotion of educational and health infrastructures is a charming policy that the missionaries used and still use to evangelize the Mbororos.

The missionaries believed that they could easily evangelize the Mbororos

²⁹But these claims for the reclassification of the Mbororo chiefdom of Ngaoui in 2nd class do not yet seem to have a favorable response from the administrative authorities. The Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MINADT) reacted through the correspondence of December 22, 2016 re-iterating by the Ministerial decision suspending the reorganization of chieftancies.

³⁰There is a consensus that education is a key factor in the development of political work in representative bodies. In addition, it is an added value for accessing party lists, because at election time, parties look for competent people to include on their lists.

through education. The first schools were built in Meiganga and Djohong in the early 1960s (Kare, 1990: p. 205). In addition to the contribution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (EELC), the state and international agencies also played an important role. The *Danish Refugee Council* and the Lutheran *World Federation* promoted the education in the Mbororo community (Assana, 2021a: pp. 186-187). Although the Mbororo people have become aware of the importance and benefits of education, a portion of their population, particularly girls, still remains uneducated (Kamgne Kamwa & Tsalefac, 2020: p. 162). In addition to the individual actions of Mbororo scholars, associations such as the Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association (MBOSCUDA) also play an important role. The Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association (MBOSCUDA) and the Society for the Development of Livestock and Commerce (SODELCO) contribute at the level of education and the right to justice. MBOSCUDA has made the education of Mbororo children a priority issue for their association. Thus, they have undertaken a sensitization campaign to make traditional authorities and religious leaders fight against ignorance³¹. In the Northwest region, Jabiru Muhammadou Amadou (2017: pp. 49-50) noted the contribution of MBOSCUDA to the local development of the Mbororo community in these terms:

MBOSCUDA created Anglo-Arabic schools in remote areas for children of all ethnic and religious backgrounds, funded the construction of classrooms for five schools in Nyang, Akweto, Chako, Ndop and Mbam. In collaboration with CAMUAUW (Cameroon Association of University Women), MBOSCUDA facilitated the award of five scholarships to Fulani girls from poor backgrounds in secondary schools (...). MBOSCUDA was in contact with government services, and the services of some international organizations such as SIRDEP, HPI, HELVETAS, Plan Cameroon, and Netherlands Centre for Indigenous Affairs Denmark, Survival International UK, Amnesty International Village AID UK and Voluntary Service Overseas (V.S.O). These development agencies helped in financing development projects in Fulani communities through MBOSCUDA. These projects were mostly in the domain of education and agro-pastoral activities with the aim of improving the lifestyle of the Fulani at the local level in the villages and divisions. The organization has also been handling adult literacy programs for Fulanis and training them to be industrious and self-employed in economic activities such as the production of detergents like soap, production of cheese, butter and milk. The offering of scholarships to Fulani children in schools, especially female children has been a booster in their integration process (...)

The promotion of education allows them to become aware of their right to justice. Concerning right to justice, MBOSCUDA has also undertaken a relent-

³¹In three decades, the results of their social actions are laudable in the sense that the education rate of the Mbororos is very appreciable in the regions of *North West*, *South West*, *West*, *East*, *Adamawa*, *North* and *Far North* (Assana, 2022: p. 50).

less battle against the traditional authorities of northern Cameroon who were accused of abusing the rights of pastors. This action is supported by numerous lawyers who direct cases to the judicial authorities to ensure that justice is rendered (Saidou, 2021: p. 540). This is the case of the Mbororos in the northern region, particularly in the localities of Ngong, Gouna, Tchebowa, Bibemi, Lagdo, Figuil and Rey-Bouba, where they only return during the dry season to feed their livestock (Koussoumna, 2008: pp. 173-186). In the same way, MBOSCUDA provides assistance and facilitates the recording of abuses committed against the Mbororos in order to inform international organizations and the National Human Rights Commission. In the Grassfields, through the actions of MBOSCUDA, the rights of the Mbororos are respected at the national and international levels, hence the birth of the term “indigenous or minority”. This makes their neighbors respect their land titles and the government to protect their rights; in so doing, they become aware of their existence. In the face of adversity, the solidarity reflex operates within the community despite its divisions and constitutes the most effective protective mechanism (Dada Petel & Vircoulon, 2021: p. 25; see also Pelican, 2008: pp. 540-560; Kaptue & Mbella Mbong, 2022: p. 263).

The demographic power of the Mbororos makes them an electoral force in some localities in Cameroon, particularly in the Ngaoui district. Indeed, this Fulani faction is a social group with high demographic potential. In fact, the available literature is sorely lacking in figures on the ethnic composition of the population of this district, on its origins at the present, and on the demographic evolution of the migration of the Mbororos to this locality. Demographic statistics are not very accurate. Nevertheless, cross-checking administrative data allows us to fill this gap³². In essence, the locality of Ngaoui accounts for more than two-third of the population of this administrative division. The demographic power structure of the Mbororos is linked to a high rate of immigration, settlement and a high birth rate. According to Emile Durkheim, the general idea here is that a large population has sufficient moral density and electorate to play a subsequent political role. Similarly, the alibi of electoral competition makes political parties to rely primarily on majority ethnic groups. The structural assimilation of political parties refers to the proportional distribution of ethnic groups in party structures and appointments (Mouiche, 2011: p. 22; Mouiche, 2012). This is the reason why these groups are increasingly making their way into electoral contests and even into the sphere of deliberation. In examining the profile of candidates for municipal and legislative elections in Cameroon, we notice a tendency for political parties to consolidate an electoral niche (Assana, 2021a: pp. 101-117). The increase in political participation is also justified by their economic weight and the activism of MBOSCUDA.

³²According to the census, out of a total population estimated in 2016 at 40,000 inhabitants, the distribution of ethnic groups is as follows: Mbororo (50%), Gbaya (40%), Foulbés (5%), Mboum-Mbére (3%), Arab-Choa, Haoussa, Kanouri or Bornouan, Toupouri, Kotoko, Laka, Kari, etc. (2%) (Read usefully *the Ngaoui Communal Development Plan 2016* cited by Assana, 2021a: p. 192).

5.2. The Economic Weight and Activism of Mboros

The economic weight of the Mboros is another explanatory variable for the increase in their political participation³³. The cattle herds in Cameroon are essentially controlled by the Mbororo pastoralists who were once located in the northern part of Cameroon (Kaptue & Mbella Mbong, 2022: p. 266). The Mboros generate wealth through livestock trade, the taxes that are paid to the “*Centre Zootechnique et Vétérinaire*” (CZV), and the significant revenues that they generate³⁴. Livestock fulfills or plays two simultaneous functions: as a means of production and as a consumer good (Bourgeot, 1972: p. 90). In addition to their social organization, which values the spirit of entrepreneurship, the economic dynamism of the Fulani is also due to Islamic principle which valorizes material progress³⁵. In this district, they have the advantage of having significant economic power given by their pastoral and commercial activities.

This financial influence makes them real local political interlocutors with whom the central government must deal. This is the case in the district of Ngaoui. Among the changes affecting the structure of the national and local political scenes, we note the entry of businessmen into the political arena³⁶. This makes political leaders to court economic operators-financial means being necessary for the life of any political initiative (Tsana Nguengang, 2015: p. 819). The economic weight of the Mboros is noticeable during the financing of political activities in certain districts. Several Mbororo economic operators have contributed to financing UNDP and CPDM political activities in this district³⁷. It is important to note that lobbying for the protection of one’s activity, and therefore one’s income, is a permanent quest in our democracy. On this basis, Grossman and Helpman have developed a model that puts the motive of influence at the heart of the decision to contribute or not to a candidate’s campaign or to the financing of a party’s political activities (cited by Farvaque, & Paty, 2009: 92 cited by Assana, 2021b: p. 193).

6. Conclusion

At the end of this analysis, it is clear that settlement and *deautochtonization*

³³The Mboros do not recognize themselves in the criteria of marginality and poverty established by the UN to define indigenous people. In the universe of social representation, the Mboros do not see themselves as disadvantaged or economically vulnerable social group. On the contrary, they see themselves as an affluent group (Assana, 2022: pp. 33-55).

³⁴Acceptance of taxes is inherent to citizenship, as evidenced by Article 14 of the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. It is, in Gambetta’s words, “the last resort of free people” (Saunier, 1993: pp. 33-34).

³⁵Poverty is seen in two ways in the Qur’an. It is seen as a curse. Instead, the Qur’an encourages the pursuit of prosperity, wealth (Surahs 2:60, 201). However, this wealth must not be based on the exploitation of the poor (Sura 2: 276).

³⁶It should be noted that the traditional form of political party financing, namely the exclusive or almost exclusive use of membership fees, is no longer viable for most political parties in contemporary democracies (see *Financing of Political Parties and Electoral Campaigns, Guidelines*, drafted as part of the Council of Europe’s Integrated Project on Democratic Institutions in Action, 2003: 13).

³⁷We can cite among others: Bouba Labi, Abdourame Labi, Alhadji Idrissou, Alhadji Namali, Alhadji Bassoro, Alhadji Kaka Kilbou, Alhadji Awane Adoum, Alhadji Salihou Midjiya (Assana, 2021a: p. 193).

have a very close relationship. We have analyzed the relationship between these two concepts not from a partisan point of view, but from an objective stand point. Indeed, these waves of settlement imposed by global factors (colonial policies, government programs, globalization, democratization, transnational mobilization of human rights, human migration), local factors (geographic, ecological, the quest for security, poverty) and state policy have a significant impact on the status of indigenous Mbororo people. They are a culmination of a nomadic society whose internal dynamics, combined with external factors, are leading to territorial and identity-based mutation and to the form of political citizenship. This type of nomadic society contains in its driving force, the tendency *to deautochtonize*. The analysis of the facilitating factors of settlement among the Mbororos reveals the importance of analyzing the processes *of deautochtonization* while taking into account the specificities in which they take place. The *deautochtonization* acquires depth and legitimacy among the Mbororos. From then on, we observe a trajectory of settlement and deautochtonization that is long lasting.

In view of the way of *deautochtonization*, which seems to last over time in Mbororo communities, it becomes important for theoretical analysis to integrate not only the sequential approach to sedentarization (distinctions between different stages of settlement), but above all the final stage that is *deautochtonization*. Transitional processes vary in duration and types (Goujon, 2015: p. 51) among indigenous peoples; hence, the importance of conducting a comparative analysis of the various ways *of deautochtonization* between the Mbororos and Pigmy populations of Cameroon (Assana, *draft article*). The sequencing of the different stages of settlement is an important theoretical dimension. In the same way as democratization with its three stages (Coming out of authoritarianism, Transition and Consolidation) (O'donnell, Schmitter, & Whitehead, 1986: p. 37; Goujon, 2015: pp. 51-52), we could distinguish three stages: first, the sedentary transition, which takes place through the deterritorialization of indigenous people from their ancestral lands or the abandonment of ancestral lands (this is the case of the Pygmies) or the forced abandonment of nomadism in the bush (the case of the Mbororos). This stage is accompanied by territorial and identity recomposition and opens the way to social renegotiations of access to citizenship; then, it continues with sedentary consolidation (in terms of the acquisition of sedentary culture, access to socio-educational infrastructure, recomposition of the form of citizenship), with the understanding that once the dynamic of transition to settlement has begun, the challenge of sedentary consolidation intervenes in the same way as the democratic transition, and finally, at the final stage which is the *deautochtonization*. At this stage, it is important to revisit the definitional and identifying criteria for indigenous peoples and above all to integrate the paradigm shift on them. In this light, these waves of settlement of the Mbororos of Cameroon open the way to a new theoretical perspective on indigenous people.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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