

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Legislative Elections of February 9th, 2020, the Electoral Defeat of the Ruling Party (CPDM) and the Return to Power of the Opposition (NUDP): An Analysis of an Electoral Instability in Cameroon

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Abstract

This article analyzes the determinants of electoral instability in Cameroon, the case of the February 20th, 2020 legislative elections in the Vina division in the Adamawa Region. Cameroon is committed to implementing the democratic process through the organization of regular (pluralist) elections with varying fortunes throughout the country, with the exception of the South-West and North-West regions. In this context, the Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement (CPDM), after three terms in office (2002/2007; 2007/2013; 2013/2020), was defeated by the opposition party the National Union for Democracy and Progress (NUDP) in the legislative elections. After winning the first-generation multiparty elections in 1992/1997 and 1997/2002, the NUDP was in political eclipse for three legislative terms. An analysis of the evolution of electoral structures over several elections reveals variations in electoral preferences. From one election to another, the distribution of votes oscillated between two major parties (CPDM and NUDP). Drawing from rational and deterministic choice theories and on empirical data collected in the field, this contribution aims, contrary to the dominant explanatory models that favour a divided approach to voting (identity-based voting on the one hand and rational voting on the other), to explain electoral instability, using a hybrid explanatory model that combines rational and deterministic theories.

Keywords: Community Voting, Electoral Instability, Investiture, Primary, Rational Voting, Vina Division (Cameroon).

1. Introduction

In contemporary democracies, the regular organization of free elections based on universal suffrage is an important criterion most often used in international relations¹, to assess the democratic character of a political regime (NUDP, 2005 cited by Pourtois, 2016: 411). As such, elections are held all over the world. As a result, the analysis of voting has taken a central stage in (Africanist) political science in recent years. In addition to the globalization of electoral

democracy (Laidi Zaki, 2001:72), there are at least two scientific interests in this topic. On one hand, the reappraisal of explanatory models that view voting as a disposition, widely present in African annals since the onset of “democratic transitions” in the 1990s (see Young, 1993: 300; Pizzorno, 1991: 343-354 cited by Engueleguele, 2004: 67-68) and the other, the concomitant observation of more or less assertive changes in electoral behavior, depending on national context and political configuration, manifested in

¹Elections are at the heart of democracy, and remain the principal means by which individuals can exercise their right to participate in public affairs.

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particular in the second series of polls organized in sub-Saharan African countries (Ibid). Theoretically, scientific production on the explanation of voting is abundant. It has mainly been considered from four (4) different analytical approaches. The first, inspired by deterministic or sociological approaches, emphasizes the influence of the weight of belonging groups (social position, identities) or interpersonal relations in the production of electoral mobilizations and preferences (See, for example, Yvan Issekin, 2020; Zambo Belinga, 2002: 29-64). The second, on the contrary, favors an explanation based on individual choices and postulates that, the electoral act is the result of an evaluation, or even a calculation, made by the voter according to his or her expectations and the offer proposed to him or her on the electoral scene (Menthong, 1998: 40-52; Jérôme Véronique-Speziari, Jérôme Bruno, 2002: 251-272; Zambo Belinga, 2000: 175-204; Blais, 2003, quoted by Farvaque and Paty, 2009: 23; Engueleguele, 2004: 67-104). The third analyzes voting as a space for civility and the domestication of physical violence (Rosanvalon, 1993; Deloye and Ihl, 1993; Sindjoun, 1999; Falna, 2010). The fourth, analyzes elections as a setting for incivility and physical violence (Toulabor, 2004: 185-206; Zambo Belinga, 2007: 29-63; Kraetzchmar and Cavatorta, 2010: 326-349; Merklen, 2012: 57-73; Giovinazzo Francesca, 2016; Catusse, 2012: 29-50; Assana, 2016: 83-101;).

As seen, reflections on electoral behavior have favored a cleaved explanatory model. The first two streams of idea, as interesting as they are, are flawed by a split reading of the vote: on the one hand, the identity vote, and on the other, the rational vote. The last two streams of idea establish a dichotomous reading of electoral behavior, which oscillates between electoral civility (the control of physical violence) and electoral incivility (the unleashing of physical violence). However, these approaches ignore the correlations between one and the other form of voting. The systematic dichotomy between identity voting and rational voting; and/or between electoral civility and the outpouring of physical violence needs to be

put into perspective. What's more, in the specific case of the legislative elections, few studies have brought together communitarian determinants and rational variables within the same explanatory model. Far from being mutually exclusive, the variables are correlated. The aim of this study is to analyze electoral instability through "an epistemology of entanglement" (Sindjoun, 2001), through the interweaving of communitarian and rational logic, based on the legislative elections of February 20th, 2020 in the electoral district of the Vina division (Adamawa region, Cameroon). These elections confirmed the defeat of the CPDM, after three terms in office (2002/2007; 2007/2013; 2013/2020), giving way to the National Union for Democracy and Progress (NUDP). The latter won the first-generation multi-party elections in 1992/1997 and 1997/2002, before going into political eclipse for three legislative years. The model we propose seeks to explain why voters, who are believed to be endowed with a stable faculty of judgment, over the time are sometimes led to re-elect the opposition party (NUDP) to defeat the political party (CPDM) in power. The choice of the electoral district of the Vina division as the setting for our study is not insignificant². In addition to its dual administrative status (capital of the Vina division and of the region of Adamawa), this division is the historic electoral stronghold of the NUDP opposition party. Moreover, the electoral instability observed in the legislative elections' contrasts with the electoral stability in the municipal elections³.

The transition from "no-choice elections" with plebiscitary results to competitive elections with sometimes contested transparency, constitutes a paradigmatic break in Cameroon's political life, and indeed in the post-colonial political trajectory⁴. Since then, Cameroon has been engaged in the implementation of the democratic process through more or less regular organization of elections (presidential, legislative, municipal, senatorial and regional councils) with varying fortunes throughout the country, with the exception of the South-West and North-West regions. The CPDM and NUDP alternate in the exercise of parliamentary mandates, as shown on the following table:

²According to the disposition of the electoral law, a division is an electoral district. Administratively, the Vina is made up of the sub divisions of of Bélel, Nganha, Nyambaka, Martap, Mbé, Ngaoundéré 1st, 2nd and 3rd, making a total of eight (8) sub divisions.

³An analysis of municipal election results since the installation of a multi-party system reveals that the NUPD has always monopolized communal space in the Vina division. In the first municipal elections, the party won in all the councils of the Vina division. The party's victory in the legislative elections of February 9th, 2020 was due to the occupation of its space in the councils. The NUDP's presence in the councils of Ngaoundéré 1st and 2nd was a factor in bringing its political elite closer to the population in general and the electorate in particular (Interview on 20/03/2021 in Ngaoundéré).

⁴In terms of analysis, we need to take political competition seriously, in order to grasp its "dynamics and constraints". "It refers to the competition between several actors and political enterprises to win political trophies: such as the posts of municipal councilor, deputy positions and President of the Republic, according to normative and pragmatic rules" (Sindjoun, 1999: 270).

Table 1. Changes in the partisan configuration of parliamentary mandates in the Vina electoral district.

Name	Legislature	electoral district	Political office	political party	Ethnic group
Bakoura Katche	1992/1997	Vina(center) Ngaoundere	parliamentarian	NUDP	Fulani/Muslim
Nana Baguirou		Vina (west) Mbé	parliamentarian	NUDP	Fulani/Muslim
Adji Marie Paul		Vina (East) Belel	parliamentarian	NUDP	Dii/christian
Mohamadou Abbo	1997/2002	Vina (center) Ngaoundere	parliamentarian	NUDP	Fulani/Muslim
Abbo Hamidou		Vina (west) Mbé	parliamentarian	NUDP	Fulani/Muslim
Adji Marie-paul		Vina (East) Bélel	parliamentarian	NUDP	Dii/Christian
Ali Bachir	2002 /2007	Vina (center) Ngaoundéré	parliamentarian	CPDM	Haoussa/Muslim
Hamatoukour		Vina (west) Mbé	parliamentarian	CPDM	Fulani/Muslim
Douna Dimtale Joël		Vina (East) Bélel	parliamentarian	CPDM	Dii/Christian
Ali Bachir	2007/2012	Vina (center) Ngaoundere	parliamentarian	CPDM	Haoussa/Muslim
Bobbo Hamatoukour		Vina (west)Mbé	parliamentarian	CPDM	Fulani/Muslim
Hamadama Djidjiwa		Vina (East)Bélel	parliamentarian	CPDM	Dii/Muslim
Ali Bachir	2012/2020	Vina (center) Ngaoundere	parliamentarian	CPDM	Haoussa/Muslim
Houma Koulsoumi		Vina (west) Mbé	parliamentarian	CPDM	Fulani/Muslime
Koulagna Abdou		Vina (East) Bélel	parliamentarian	CPDM	Dii/Muslim
Abba Alim	Since 2020		parliamentarian	NUDP	Fulani/Muslim
			parliamentarian	NUDP	
Adji Marie			parliamentarian	NUDP	Dii/Christian

The above table shows the evolution of the partisan configuration of parliamentary mandates in the Vina electoral district. In terms of the number of seats, this electoral district has three (3) seats, which were contested by several political parties. In addition to the four (4) political parties that took part in the first legislative elections, six (6) other political parties took part in this electoral competition. The Social Democratic Front (SDF), the Cameroon Democratic Union (CDU), the National Alliance for Democracy and Progress (NADP), the National Movement (NM), The Cameroon Union of Democratic Forces (CUDF), the Cameroon Peoples Union (CPU). Several legislative elections have been held in this electoral district. The NUDP and CPDM alternate in the exercise of parliamentary mandates in this constituency. The NUDP came out at the top in

the first-generation multi-party legislative elections of 1992/1997 and 1997/2002, before going into political eclipse for three terms. However, in the 2002/2007, 2007/2013 and 2013/2020 legislative elections, the CPDM won the elections⁵. In the legislative elections of February 9th, 2020, the NUDP was once again able to reclaim the local political field, winning all the seats in competition⁶.

The analysis of the evolution of electoral structures over several elections, reveals the electoral instability or volatility⁷. This refers to variations in the expression of partisan preferences between several elections. From one election to another, the distribution of votes oscillates between the two main political parties (CPDM and NUDP). This phenomenon is reflected in the growing proportion of voters who, between two consecutive elections, switched from one party

⁵In 2007, the CPDM won the elections with 32,813 votes, a percentage of 56.19, to the detriment of the NUDP, which won only 2,581 votes, a percentage of 43.81. In fact, in the legislative elections of June 30th, 2002, in which the UDC MDR ANR RCPD SDF won the Vina constituency, which had been dominated by the NUDP for three (3) legislatures, the CPDM won 2,045 votes, i.e. 53.42% of valid votes cast, against 40.56% for the NUDP.

⁶However, these elections were characterized by a high abstention rate. The rate was 54.90%, meaning that more than half the electorate abstained from voting. The highest rate was recorded in the Ngaoundéré 3rd council, at 69.80%. More than half the electorate turned out to vote in the councils of Bélel and Ngan-Ha. In Bélel, the turnout was 55.54%, and 54.95% in the Ngan-Ha council. In the councils of Mbé and Bélel, the CPDM won with absolute majority, with 65.21% and 52.34% respectively.

⁷The notion of "electoral volatility" was in use since the 1970s by political scientists, particularly in Great Britain and the United States, to point out and study the growing phenomena of voting instability (Grunberg, 2007).

to the other. The analysis of electoral volatility has developed considerably. Nevertheless, it raises the problem of interpretation.

What are the factors justifying the electoral victory of the opposition party (NUDP) over the ruling party (CPDM), which had already established itself in this local political arena for three terms (2002/2007; 2007/2013; 2013/2020)? To answer this question, we hypothesize that NUDP's return to the local political arena after its absence for three terms is part of the electoral instability that has resulted from the increasing complexity of local politics in the Vina electoral district.

In this article, we mobilize a hybrid explanatory model: rational choice theory in its two aspects (retrospective and perspective voting) (Campbell (A) et al: 1960; Mayer, 2002) and deterministic theory (Lazarsfeld, 1948; Von Beyne, 1985: 293; Baudouin, 1991: 64; Lazarsfeld et al, 1978: 201 cited by Mouiche, 2000: 60). Rational choice theory will enable us to study the logic that determines the electoral behavior of the local population in the Vina electoral district. As for deterministic theory, it will enable us to study the influence of variables such as ethnicity and religion. This hybrid explanatory model is ideal, suitable to analyze the increasing complexity of local politics.

Table 2. Distribution of votes per party for the February 20th, 2020 legislative election in the Vina electoral district.

councils	Registered	Voters	AB ¹	TP ²	SVE ³	BN ⁴	SVEPP ⁵		
							UNIVERSITY	NUDP	CPDM
Bélel	16131	8959	7172	55,54 %	8755	204	147 (1,68%)	4026 (45,99%)	4582 (52,34%)
Martap	16493	7808	8685	47, 34%	7659	149	201 (2,62%)	4207(54,93%)	3251 (42,45%)
Mbé	15037	6686	8351	44, 46%	6516	170	319 (4,90%)	194(29,90%)	4249 (65,21%)
Ngan-Ha	14999	8242	6757	54, 95%	8076	166	174 (2,15%)	40009 (49,64%)	3893 (48,20%)
Ngaoundéré 1	51909	22821	29088	43, 96%	22404	417	739 (3,30%)	16588 (74,04%)	5077 (22,66%)
Ngaoundéré 2	51409	23390	28019	45, 50%	23021	369	724 (3,14%)	16004 (69,52%)	6293 (27,34%)
Ngaoundéré 3	21444	6691	14753	31, 20%	6570	121	771 (11,74%)	3303 (50,27)%	2496 (37,99%)
Nyambaka	15964	7139	8825	44,72 %	6985	154	334 (4,78%)	4399 (62,98%)	2252 (32,24%)
	203386	91736	111650	45, 10%	89986	1750	4399 (3,79%)	54484 (60,55%)	32093 (35,66%)

This table shows the distribution of votes among three political parties (CPDM, NUDP and UNIVERS) in the February 20th, 2020 legislative elections in the Vina electoral district. Out of a total of 89986 votes cast, the CPDM won 4582 votes (52.34%) in the Bélel constituency, 3251 votes (42.45%) in the Martap constituency, 4249 votes (65.21%) in the Mbé constituency, 3893 votes (48.20%) in the

⁸AB denotes abstention rate

⁹TP is the percentage rate.

¹⁰SVE refers to the number of votes validly cast.

¹¹BN denotes invalid ballot.

¹²SVEPP stands for validly cast votes per party.

To test this hypothesis, data were collected through documentary research, a series of interviews (semi-directive and semi-participatory) with four categories of actors: administrative, political, religious and traditional authorities, Cameroon election officials (ELECAM) and ordinary activists. The survey was carried out from March 1, 2021 to May 30, 2024 in the towns of Ngaoundéré (1st, 2nd and 3rd), Nyambaka, Belel, and Minip Martap. The choice of these towns was motivated by the concentration of the electoral population. Discussion of the data collected gave rise to two areas of concern-electoral instability in the February 20th, 2020 legislative elections in the Vina electoral district as a reflection of structural and political determinants (I) on the one hand, and inter-party competition (II) on the other.

1.1 Electoral Instability in the 2020 Legislative Election in the Vina Electoral District: A Reflection of Structural and Political Determinants

The organization of the legislative elections on February 20th, 2020 marks the return of the NUDP to the local political arena, as shown on the table below.

Ngan-Ha constituency, 5077 votes (22.66%) in the Ngaoundéré 1st constituency ; 6293 votes (27.34%) in the Ngaoundéré 2nd electoral district, 2496 votes (37.99%) in the Ngaoundéré 3rd electoral district and 2252 votes (32.24%) in the Nyambaka electoral district, compared to 4026 votes (45, 99%) in the Bélel electoral district, 4207 votes (54, 93%) in the Martap electoral district, 194 votes (29.9%) in the

Mbé electoral district, 40009 (49, 64%) lanes in the Ngan-Ha electoral district, 16588 votes (74, 04%) in the Ngaoundéré 1st electoral district, 16004 votes (69,52%) votes in the Ngaoundéré 2nd electoral district, 3303 votes (50,27%) in the Ngaoundéré 3rd electoral district, 4399 votes (62, 98%) in the Nyambaka electoral district for the NUDP; and 147 votes (1.68%) in the Bélel electoral district, 201 votes (2.62%) in the Martap electoral district, 319 votes (4.90%) in the Mbé electoral district, 174 votes (2.15%) in the Ngan-Ha electoral district, 739 votes (3,30%) in the electoral district of Ngaoundéré 1st, 724 votes (3.14%) in the electoral district of Ngaoundéré 2nd, 771 votes (11.74%) in the electoral district of Ngaoundéré 3rd and 334 votes (4.78%) in the electoral district of Nyambaka for UNIVERS party. Our analysis reveals two major determinants: structural determinants (A) and political determinants (B).

2. Structural Determinants

The structural determinants are two-fold: the deterioration of the environmental infrastructure (1) and the rise in insecurity (2).

2.1 Deteriorating Environmental Infrastructure

Infrastructural environment refers to health, economic, schooling and road facilities available in a region or town. In this respect, the Adamawa region is generally the poorest compared to other regions of Cameroon. This paper focuses on the study of political language and slogans used during election campaigns¹³. According to field survey, issues relating to the infrastructural environment were the focus of opposition political parties' campaign themes. Indeed, for political actors, an election campaign is a framework for bringing certain public issues to the political agenda (Belley, Lavigne and Quesnel, 2014). Thus, the advanced deterioration of road infrastructure was brought to the attention of the local electorate. According to field survey, this phenomenon is «the consequence of contracts not executed or poorly executed by certain locally elected officials and CPDM parliamentarians»¹⁴. Their functions as representatives of the people expose them to heavy demands from citizens. To meet these demands, some members of parliament engage in income-generating activities, sometimes becoming service providers. While this business is intended to provide services and generate profits, it is clear that

it has contributed to the deterioration of relationships between voters and elected representatives. In fact, by winning public contracts, MPs would like people to believe that they are involved in infrastructural development. However, in Cameroon, the provision of services is not immediately followed by payment of the invoices¹⁵. If it is responsible for carrying out public contracts, it is also responsible for failing to do so. However, in popular imagery, these are acts of embezzlement.

According to field survey, the public contract for the reconstruction of the Ngaoundéré urban road network (carrefour-Tignère, carrefour-Aéroport and Carrefour Marhaba) was won by Ali Bachir. However, they were not completed. The first two contracts were terminated by the Minister of Works for slow execution and the second was abandoned. The negative record of the Government Delegate of the Ngaoundéré urban council has also tarnished the image of the CPDM, the political label through which the candidates for deputation were invested. All in all, the list of Ali Bachir, Koulagna Abdou and Zoubainatou failed giving way to the NUDP list led by Abba Alim, which strengthened its presence on the local political scene (Interview of 03/26/2024 in Ngaoundéré). Similarly, «the deterioration of road infrastructure in the Vina division is perceived as the consequence of the corruption that plagues the public contract sector and is nurtured at the highest levels of the State by the governing class»; «the degradation of road infrastructure is the manifestation of the divorce between the central power and the Adamawa region, due to its propensity for opposition». Equally «the degradation of road infrastructure is part of the central power's desire to delay the development of the Adamawa region, due to its propensity for opposition». In this perspective, Antoine Socpa observes that, in a political context where the development of certain localities, notably in the Littoral region, has been delayed due to their adherence to the opposition, political links with the ruling party offer the best guarantee for defending their local interests and capturing development rents etc. (Socpa, 2000: 91-108 quoted by Assana, 2021:177-200). In this context, some citizens, dissatisfied with the advanced degradation of road infrastructure, simply opt to reject the CPDM and the State.

¹³Campaign periods are moments when political parties present their political offers to voters in the form of programs. These campaigns are structured around political slogans: flyers, posters and postcards for the population to see.

¹⁴It is important to point out that the functions of female deputies are enshrined in Cameroon's fundamental law. They are elected by the people and represent them. They vote on laws in the National Assembly and monitor government action through parliamentary inquiries.

¹⁵This delay is due to the economic difficulties Cameroon is experiencing and to the administrative slowness that characterizes Cameroon's bureaucracy.

The above considerations highlight the importance that local populations attach to the development of road infrastructure. In a context of deteriorating infrastructure, the relevance of rationalizing electoral behavior can be put forward. The theory of rational voting in its two aspects, perspective and retrospective rational voting: prospective, because voting for the NUDP is a promise and a guarantee for the future; retrospective, because voters sanction the CPDM by voting against it. In addition to the deterioration of road infrastructures, the rise in insecurity is another factor determining electoral behavior in the Vina department.

2.2 The Rise of Insecurity

Insecurity is an important variable influencing electoral behavior in the Adamawa region (Cameroon) 2013¹⁶. This mainly affects the countryside, rural and semi-urban areas (Saibou, 2006: 120; Mamoudou, 2021: 591). To analyze the implications of rising insecurity on electoral behavior, it is important to study the extent of the damage caused by this phenomenon before it is taken up by spokespersons of the community.

Analysis of the extent of damage to the pastoral population caused by cross-border insecurity is based on the "objectivist conception" of a problem. It is based on the idea that problems are objective facts, and therefore directly measurable using scientific tools (statistics in particular)¹⁷. This damage is perceptible in both human and economic terms.

In human terms, in addition to widespread psychosis, insecurity mainly affects pastoral population and traditional chiefs.

With regards to the pastoral population, it is important to point out that Adamawa is a pastoral region. A large proportion of the electorate are herdsmen. In this way, cross-border crime has profoundly affected the agro-pastoral world, destroying the rural landscape

and restructuring the local ethno-demographic map (Mamoudou, 2021: 579-602). Thus, between 2015-2018, 311 people were abducted, 70 were killed, 212 were kidnapped and released after payment of ransoms (*Rapport réunion de sécurité Région de l'Adamawa*, January 2018). The kidnapping of men and women for ransom in the Adamawa region has driven the threatened or surviving residents to flee either to urban centers or to Nigeria, sometimes abandoning fields and livestock, houses and harvests¹⁸. In the Vina division, the phenomenon is even more worrisome. The eight (8) subdivisions of the Vina division have witnessed several attacks by kidnappers, resulting in the kidnapping of people, particularly the Mbororo nationals considered wealthy¹⁹. Even traditional authorities are not spared by this phenomenon.

Talking about traditional authorities, their abduction has polarized the most public attention due to their political weight²⁰. By way of illustration, we can mention the kidnapping of Mohamadou Maroufou, Chief of the village of Yokotondou in the Nganha subdivision who was abducted in the night of December 24th to 25th, 2018 by unidentified individuals (*Ibid*). His release, obtained after 81 days of captivity, followed the payment of an undisclosed ransom (*Ibid*). In Faro et Deo division, Chiefs Hamadicko Ngnako, Bourlé and Bouba Yero of Mayo-poutchou in the Tignère subdivision were abducted on February 3rd and 4th, 2019 respectively, despite the presence of the territorial administration Minister Atanga Nji Paul, who had come to Adamawa to enquire about the situation of insecurity in the region.²¹

On the economic front, figures collected and cross-checked with informants, estimated that between 2016 and 2017, 3086 oxen were decimated or sold off in Martap; 5666 in Nyambaka; 1290 in Belel; 799 in Nganha; 2958 in Ngaoundéré and 170 in Mbé (*Ibid*). The economic implications are enormous. Cross-

¹⁶On the history and changes in insecurity in the Adamawa region (Cameroon), we refer readers to (Saibou, 2006 :119-146).

¹⁷The "objectivist" conception of problems is based on a positivist view of social problems (Parsons, 1995:92-96 cited by Cléfai, 1996: 43-66.), which originated with the social reformers of the late 19th century (such as Charles Booth in England). This conception of problems is found in the functionalist approach, which establishes a close link between social problems and dysfunction in society. From this perspective, problems can be clearly identified by their effects on overall social functioning, *Ibid*.

¹⁸This is the case for example of Bobbo Ibrahim, who fled from his village Beka-Modibbo, since November 2018 in the Belel sub division, to take refuge in Ngaoundéré, Young farmer and owner of a herd of cattle, Bobbo Ibrahim escaped kidnapping on November 18th, 2018. He fled at night, leaving everything behind to find himself in the Mbamyanga district of Ngaoundéré, morally despondent and materially destitute (Mamoudou, 2021: 591).

¹⁹The villages of Assom, Mandorou and Martap in the Martap sub division, the villages of Gado, Lawre, Foulougou and the localities of Belel, Tello, Bakari-Bata, Mayo-Badji and Nganha are the victims of repeated, skilfully planned attacks by criminal hordes from the Central Africa Republic (CAR), helped by internal accomplices recruited from among Cameroonians attracted by easy gain.

²⁰The political weight of traditional chiefs can be explained by the nature of the State. The state in Cameroon is "a state of chaotic nature, or the Janus state, which integrates two contradictory orders of domination: rational legal domination and traditional domination". This state transgresses the watertight boundaries artificially erected between tradition and modernity. On the two types of domination, read Weber, 1971, pp.226-243; Sindjoun, 2002, p.77; Alawadi Zelao, 2017: 355-376 cited by Assana, 2021: 177-200).

²¹The hostage-taking of the two traditional chiefs of Adamawa during the tour of the Minister, emissary of the Head of State in the region, was perceived by many informants as a challenge to the State (*Ibid*).

border crime has caused major economic damage to the pastoral population of Adamawa region of Cameroon. This has forced this category of Fulani to join the banking sector (Saibou, 2006: 30).

According to the data collected on the field, the rise in insecurity is perceived in different ways: “the inability of the governing class to ensure the security of the people and their property”; “a resignation of the State from its regalia mission of defending the territorial integrity and the security of the citizens and their property within national territory”; “the failure of the State”; “the deterioration of the security situation is the result of the failure and incompetence of the governing class mostly vested by the members of CPDM”. These apprehensions overlap with the concepts of state failure²². In Albert Breton’s theory of representative democracy, the government is identified with the party that controls the parliament. This party has an objective function that depends on its probability of being re-elected and on “variables such as personal pecuniary gain, personal power, its own vision of history, the pursuit of high personal ideals, its personal vision of the public good (Breton, 1974 cited by Farvaque, Paty, 2009:74). It should also be pointed out that cross-border crime is a factor in electoral demobilization. Indeed, according to informant:

Cross-border crime has forced the electoral population to migrate from their electoral registrations centers, particularly to the Ngaoundéré subdivision. For example, insecurity prompted voters in the Minip Martap district to migrate to the town of Ngaoundéré. With the electoral registration renewal operation,, most voters have not re-registered. So-much such that the second kit (the machine that registers) in this subdivision has been relocated to Ngaoundéré (Interview of April 31, 2024 with Laurent Aboubakar, ELECAM manager in Ngaoundéré).

However, the tradition of the sociology of public problems envisages the conversion of a social problem into a public problem not only because of the

accumulated number of social annoyance, but above all, because of the labeling process that contributes in its construction (Cefai, 1996; Neveu, 1999) by a spokespersons of the community.

The great novelty of the democratization context is the appearance of community spokespersons and ethno regional representatives²³. It is important to point out that setting the agenda also depends on the expected political benefits (electoral, symbolic and strategic). A public policy issue is politicized and put forward by one (or more) political actors in order to strengthen his (or their) position in the political field²⁴. (Hassenteufel, 2010: 52). The idea is that many phenomena, such as insecurity, can be considered as social problems, but these only become public if there are cognitive *framing* activities and processes aimed at mobilizing public resources, drawing the attention of the population and decision-makers to them²⁵.

The Mayor of Belel has taken advantage of the lack of official investment by the administrative authorities in the issue of insecurity to present himself as an entrepreneur of the security cause. To build a cause, one need to shape it and make it visible. As noted by American sociologists William Gamson and D. Meyer (1996, pp.275-291), it involves constructing a framework of injustice within which individuals can apprehend their situations as unacceptable and give meaning to their claims and reactions. It is significant to note that the theme of insecurity resonates strongly with the local electorate. While the candidate has to demonstrate that he/she is a member of the community, that he/she is at the service of the community, and that his/her value on the local scene lies in the fact that he/she can accredit the idea that he/she can give concrete political expression to the wishes of his/her constituents²⁶. The Mayor’s statements to the effect that villages were being emptied of their population due to the kidnapping of herdsmen, broadcast on CRTV Adamawa and in the columns of the written press, backed up by a television report by *la Vision 4 television* channel, had given rise to a lively controversy between the mayor and the Governor

²²The state in Africa is analyzed as "soft", "shaky", "weak", "underdeveloped", "phantom"; it's not a state like any other. It is out of step with "the Western model" of the state, which is linked to realism (Sindjoun, 1999: 151-152 cited by Sindjoun, 2001: 10). It is therefore easy to agree that a "fragile state" (Clapham, 1996, Ibid.), a "weak state", a "quasi-state" (Jackson, 1993, Ibid) is what we have.

²³In the language of sociology, it's the representative spokesperson who makes the group, in that of politics, it's the group that gives itself a representative (Le Bart, 2004: 101).

²⁴While this type of agenda-setting is most obvious during election campaigns, it is not limited to them.

²⁵This is in fact an analytical tradition marked by two conceptual frameworks: on the one hand, the approach in terms of agenda setting, which scrutinizes the dynamics from which themes of debate impose themselves on public opinion or public action (Cobb and Elder, 1972; Baumgartner and Jones, 2009 cited by Keutcheu, 2015: 511) and, on the other hand, the constructivist approach that questions the collective making of the social problems that public authorities are called upon to address (Blumer, 1971; Spector and Kitsuse 1977; Gusfield, 2009; Cefai and Terzi, 2012, Ibid).

²⁶Projection into the various facets of a "role" that is supposed to adjust to voters' expectations underlines the complexity of the proximity/distance game (Cf Cochart, 1991:33).

of Adamawa. The latter denied the existence of the phenomenon of kidnapping in his district in a letter (Correspondence N° 001/L/H//SDG/SP dated January 3, 2019), so as not to create a psychosis. In fact, it is in the confrontation between citizens and interested social groups through their authorized intermediaries (political parties, pressure groups, intellectuals, the media, etc.) that social phenomena became politicized (Onana, 2009: 27). The phenomenon of the kidnapping of herdsmen in the Adamawa region finally took on a political cachet, thanks to the recuperation of the issue by the Mayor of Bélel. The President of the Republic, who on January 18, 2019, at the graduation ceremony of the 36^{ème} graduating class of the *École Militaire Interarmées* (EMIA) in Yaoundé, said:

The situation on our eastern border, particularly in the Adamawa region, also requires our attention. Our population, and in particular our herdsmen, are victims of criminal groups specialized in kidnapping for ransom. I have given firm instructions to our defense and security forces to put an end to these reprehensible acts (Mamoudou, 2021: 591).

The handling of the case of kidnappings by the Mayor of Bélel prompted an action on the part of the Supreme Chief of the Armed Forces. He ordered the detachment of 130 elements of the polyvalent intervention group of the National Gendarmerie (GPIGN) on January 30, 2019. The Minister of Territorial Administration also visited the Adamawa region to convey the Head of State's message of peace and support²⁷. In addition to deteriorating road infrastructure and rising insecurity, electoral instability is also due to regional frustrations.

3. Regional Frustrations

Political liberalization seems to have opened up a window of opportunities for political and social actors to draw attention to the issues of political marginalization (Assana, 2014). The consolidation of ethno-regional cleavages in the context of political liberalization can be understood through the use of the sociology of mobilization (Sindjoun, 2018). In Ted Gurr's (1970) perspective. There is a direct causal link between the individual's situation and his

commitment to action: it is the individual's frustration, his dissatisfaction that motivates him to join collective actions²⁸. The Adamawa protests reached a high level of visibility in the memoranda. One of the strong points of these memoranda is the contrast between the demographic and economic weight of the Adamawa region and its political under-representation (1) and the marginalization in government and public enterprises (2).

3.1 The Contrast Between Adamawa's Electoral and Economic Potential and its Political Under-Representation

The memoranda express Adamawa's problems in terms of the contrast between electoral and economic potential and political under-representation.

The claims of the Adamawa region in the aftermath of the presidential election of October 09, 2011 and the formation of the government on December 09 of the same year are posed in terms of the contrast between economic potential in the fields of intercity land transport, trade, agro-industry, demography, electoral contribution and the socio-political situation. This political under-representation contrasts with the demographic and economic potential of this region and the dynamism of its population (Assana, 2017). The memoranda highlight the region's economic assets. Apart from certain subsoil natural resources (Bauxite from Minim-Martap and Ngaoundal), with which the region is endowed, Adamawa occupies undisputed first place in cattle breeding with around 2 (two) million herds, i.e. a third of the country's livestock²⁹ (*Le point N°158 du mardi 1^{er} novembre 2016: 10*).

In the sector of intercity transport of goods by land there are several companies: *Sociétés des transports du Cameroun* (SODETRACAM), specialized in the transportation of petroleum products and wood; Omais Selecta; Transport Omais Kassim; *Alliance Voyage*; *Narral Voyage*, *Woila voyage* operating and *Touristique Voyage* in intercity transportation of persons. This list is not exhaustive, as there are many other medium-sized economic operators in that sector (*Le point N0158 du mardi 1^{er} novembre 2016: 10*).

²⁷But before these public interventions, mistrust between the population, the police and local elected representatives had already set in. This mistrust was justified, moreover, by the simple fact that the parliamentarians of the Vina electoral district had not publicly spoken out on the subject. This mistrust was reinforced during the election campaign.

²⁸This frustration is in fact relative, i.e. it's the discrepancy between the way the individual feels about his present situation, on the one hand, and his expectations of his current and future situation, on the other, that explains his decision to participate.

²⁹Adamawa has 28% of the national cattle herd, 5% of the national sheep herd and 2.3% of the national goat herd, despite representing only 4% of the country's total population. It contributes 24% of national production and 38% of national beef production. Beef production in the region is estimated at around 6085 tones, with 60% coming from the vina division and 16% from the Mbéré division. This production generated resources of nearly 12,169,950,000 FCFA (Tsapi, 2014: 224).

In trade, SOACAM is the undisputed leader in the distribution of basic foodstuffs (sugar, oil, rice, wheat flour, tomatoes, salt, etc.)³⁰.

In the agro-industrial sector, the companies are many and varied: Société Azur, Number one in soap production and Number two in the production of vegetable oil ; Société NOSUCA (sugar production); Société Maiscam (maize cultivation and processing, with an annual production of about 8,000 tonnes); Société Camerounaise de transformation des céréales (SCTC); Société Camerounaise des Moulins du Cameroun (SCMC); Société des Moulins de l'Afrique (SMA); Société Sel Cameroun (salt production); Cameroon Packing Company (CPC); (*Ibid*: 10). In addition to the tax paid to the Treasury, these companies provide jobs to thousands of Cameroonians.

According to figures from the latest general population census (RGPH) published in 2010, Adamawa has 1015622 (one million fifteen thousand six hundred and twenty-two) inhabitants, far ahead of the East region (801,968). This trend is also observed in terms of votes cast for the elected President of the Republic (*Ibid*). According to the results of the October 9, 2011 presidential election, the Adamawa region came in with 265,368 (Two hundred and fifty thousand eight hundred and sixty) votes and the East 226,287 (Two hundred and twenty-six thousand two hundred and eighty-seven) votes. Despite these assets, this region remains neglected on the national political scene and marginalized in terms of the participation of its natives in the management of the country's key affairs according to the memorandum. One of the highlights of these memoranda is the number of the positions held by its own people (Assana, 2017).

In the distribution of parliamentarians per region, Adamawa has 10 deputies for 101562 (one hundred and one thousand five hundred and sixty two) inhabitants, i.e. a ratio of one deputy for 101,562 (one hundred and one thousand one hundred and sixty-two) inhabitants. The South region with 692,142 (six hundred and ninety-two thousand one hundred and forty-two) inhabitants has 12 deputies, i.e. one deputy for 57,678 (fifty-seven thousand six hundred and seventy-eight) inhabitants; the East with 801,968 (eight hundred and one thousand nine hundred and sixty-eight), has 11 deputies, i.e. one deputy for

72,906 (seventy-two thousand nine hundred and six) inhabitants (Assana, 2017).

From the above, we observe that the allocation of parliamentarians to each region is not proportional to demographic weight, but rather based on political considerations. This generates regional frustrations. In addition to political under-representation in elective office, in the memoranda, the entrepreneurs of the cause describe Adamawa's problems in terms of the contrast between its electoral and economic potential and its poor representation in government and the state apparatus.

3.2 The Contrast Between Electoral Potential, Marginalization in Government and Public Enterprises

It is under the generic label of "*handicapped development and frustrated hopes*"³¹ «, that the memorandum from the elites of Adamawa (Cameroon) addressed to the Head of State and made public on October 4th raised the problem of the contrast between electoral and economic potential and marginalization in government and public enterprises. The memorandum aimed to draw the attention of the President of the Republic to the policy of discrimination against Adamawa region, demonstrating the mechanisms, manifestations and consequences.

According to this memorandum, marginalization is reflected in the contrast between electoral contribution and marginalization in public administration of this region (read *the point* N0158 of Tuesday 1st November 2016 :10). The above-mentioned memorandum from the elites of the Adamawa province³² showed the exclusion of this region in educational, economic, social and infrastructural terms, as well as politico-administrative as seen from low representation within the State. One of the highlights of these memoranda is the number of the administrative positions held by people of this region. "9 (nine) subdivisional officers out of 520; (two) divisional officers out of 49, 1 (one) provincial delegate out of 300, 0 (zero) provincial secretary general out of 10, secretary general of ministries 1 out of 30; managing director of parapublic enterprise, director of central administration 5 out of 300" (C₃, 1992: 281).

As can be seen, the mobilization of ethno-regionalism has constantly evolved along the "rhetoric of

³⁰Its caravans criss-cross the country's major cities, supporting the government in its fight against the high cost of living and food price inflation.

³¹Read the Adamawa Memorandum of April 30th, 2013 addressed to the Head of State by the Cercle de Réflexion des Elites de l'Adamawa (CREA); See the Adamawa Memorandum of July 31th, 2016, for the Cercle de Réflexion des Elites de l'Adamawa, Abbo Hamadjouldé (Assana, 2014: 213-246).

³²The term province was changed to region in 2008.

deprivation and discontentment” (Sindjoun, 1998:16). Indeed, when the government was formed on December 09th 2011, the Head of State appointed 60 members, including a Prime Minister, Head of Government, a Deputy Prime Minister, two Ministers of State, Ministers, Ministers in charge of missions, Minister Delegates, and Secretaries of State³³. The Adamawa region was represented in this government by only two Minister Delegates (one of whom holds a portfolio) and one Secretary of State³⁴.

Based on a summary of the documents processed, the following statistics give an approximate idea of the level of political representation in this region: At the Command level, 9 sub divisional officers out of 920; 1 Secretary General of a Ministry out of 30; 5 Directors of central administration out of 300³⁵; 1 Director General of public enterprise³⁶ out of 97; 198 employees of public-owned companies out of 30,000; 3 Senior Super intendant of Police out of 93 in the *Delegation Generale de la Surete Nationale* (DGSN); at the level of Defense Forces 1 out of 37 General Officers; the Government formed on 09/12/2011 and reorganized in 2015³⁷, Adamawa has 03 out of 70 ministers. In the big schools (*Ecole Nationale d'Administration et de Magistrature (ENAM)*, *Ecole Militaire Inter Armee (EMIA)*, *Polytechnic*, *Institut des Relations Internationales du Cameroun (IRIC)*...), recruitments organized over the last 03 years have established that barely 1% of Adamawa natives have been admitted³⁸. This political under-representation contrasts sharply with the region's electoral potential and the dynamism of its local population. Hence the conclusion that «frustration is being felt among the population, as the sons and daughters feel *left out*...” (Ibid.). (Ibid). From the summary of the documents used, the following statistics give an approximate picture of the professional representation rate in the Adamawa region. Less than 0.5% of Adamawa natives are employed in state-owned enterprises, and around

16% in the civil service, where managers of the rank of Director are virtually absent.

The objectivization of the above analyses allows us to highlight that the increase in the “protest potential” (Barnes and Kaase, 1979) of this region has played in favor of the NUDP. This manifests itself in political demands and the acquisition of a culture of interpellation, which no longer takes place only within the national framework, but in a transnational space, recognized and legitimized by the international community. Memoranda are an important means of desacralizing and trivializing administrative authorities (Assana, 2014). In the theoretical perspective of Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba, democratic culture is part of the evolution of political culture. It can be broken down into three types: parochial political culture, linked to traditional structures; political culture of subjection, linked to centralized and authoritarian structures; and political culture of participation, specific to democratic regimes (Almond, Verba, 1963 cited by Assana, 2017: 202). We can see that protest movements did have an influence on the electoral behavior of local populations in the Vina division during the 2018 legislative elections. Indeed, a trend emerges: the more voters adhere to protest movements, the less, they give their vote to the ruling party (the CPDM) during presidential elections, which is indeed logical. On the opposite side, the more voters participate in protest movements, the more they vote for the opposition candidate. From the work on social and crowd psychology (Tarde, 1989; Le Bon, 2003; Olson, 1987 cited by Dormagen and Mouchard, 2011: 214), we observed that the participation of the natives of the Vina division in the mobilization is part of an emotional and imitative dynamic³⁹.

In the Adamawa region of Cameroon, questioning leaders or their representatives has become a kind of normal form of political engagement. They are addressed to those in power to inform them of the

³³Add to this the Secretary Generals of the Presidency and the Prime Minister's Office and their deputies, the Minister Director of the Civil Cabinet, and the Special Advisers to the Head of State, and Cameroon has 70 ministers.

³⁴According to the memoranda, what do these three government members represent when we know that a Minister Delegate or a Secretary of State is merely a collaborator of the Head of Department, as attested by article 3 paragraphs 3 and 4 of decree n°2011/408 of December 9th, 2011, on government organization in Cameroon which states that: "Ministers Delegate, placed under Ministers, assist them as necessary in their tasks and may be entrusted by the President of the Republic under their authority with the management of particular sectors". This provision is repeated in extenso for Secretaries of State.

³⁵See Collectif "changer le Cameroun". *Le Cameroun éclaté? Anthropologie commentée des revendications ethniques*, Edition C3, 1992: 281.

³⁶This company, which is virtually bankrupt due to a lack of resources, has capital of 375 million FCFA. State subsidies are delaying its bankruptcy.

³⁷to which must be added the Secretary Generals of the Presidency and the Prime Minister's departments and their deputies, the Cabinet Director and his deputy

³⁸See the Adamawa Memorandum of July 31st, 2016, for the cercle de Réflexion des Elites de l'Adamawa, Abbo Hamadjouldé; See also the Adamawa Memorandum of April 30th, 2013 addressed to the Head of State by the cercle de réflexion des Elites de l'Adamawa (CREA) (Assana, 2017).

³⁹Analysis of the ethno-religious management of government recruitment of Adamawa natives in the democratic context of 1992-2015 shows a trend towards a quasi-monopoly exercised by the Islamo-peuls over the Kirdi of Adamawa (Assana, 2017). Consequently, the frustrations relating to the governmental marginalization of Adamawa are felt more keenly by the Islamo-peuls.

problems experienced by the ethnic and religious communities on whose behalf they are written. What matters is access to visibility⁴⁰. In addition to structural determinants and regional frustrations, electoral instability during the legislative elections of February 20th, 2020 can also be explained by inter-party competition.

3.3 Electoral Instability in the 2020 Legislative Elections in the Vina Constituency as a Consequence of Inter-Party Competition

Drawing on the work of Palfrey and Rosenthal, who modelled the decisive role played by competition between political parties on voter turnout (Palfrey and Rosenthal, 1983 and 1985 cited by Farvaque, Paty, 2009:22), the CPDM's political defeat in the Vina electoral district could be explained by competition between two political parties: the CPDM and the NUDP⁴¹. This competition is an incentive to vote, as members and supporters of one party will wish to prevent the rival party (or parties) from winning the elections. Analysis reveals a challenge to the central functioning of the CPDM (A), on the one hand, and the political charm of the NUDP (B), on the other.

4.A-Challenging the Centralist Functioning of the CPDM

The CPDM's electoral defeat is part of the challenge to its centralist functioning. The functioning of the CPDM is governed by its basic texts⁴². The party's highest governing bodies are the Political Bureau and the Central Committee⁴³. Paragraph 1 of article 23 of the party's statute stipulates that "the Central Committee is the body responsible for managing the party". Paragraph 5 specifies that "the Central

⁴⁰It's hard to understand the liberalization of the ethno-regional distribution of political power in the Adamawa region without taking into account the gradual schooling of the region's ethnic groups.

⁴¹Thanks to the decree of December 19, 1990, on the freedom to create political parties, several political parties have established themselves in the Mayo-Rey division. However, two political parties dominate the Touboro district. The Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), born of the dissolution of the defunct Cameroonian National Union (CNU) once a single party which came into existence at the Bamenda congress held from March 21st to 24, 1985; its ideology is communal liberalism, and the President of the Republic of Cameroon, Mr. Paul Biya, has been the party's President since its birth. In addition to the CPDM, the National Union for Democracy and progress (NUDP) is another influential political party. The NUDP is one of the opposition political parties created at the time of the restoration of multiparty politics in Cameroon. It is led by a Peul prince Bello Bouba Maigari from Bascheo (near Garoua) in the North region of Cameroon. He was accused of being nostalgic for the past and the standard-bearer of the Islamo-Peul group in North region of Cameroon (Ahmadou, 2019: 29 cited by Assana, 2017).

⁴²The basic texts of the CPDM are ...

⁴³While the Political Bureau is "the body responsible for assisting the National President in the conduct of Party business outside Central Committee meetings" (see Basic Texts of the Rassemblement Démocratique du Peuple Camerounais, 1999: 102), the Central Committee, as "the permanent national organ of the Party", is responsible for the general direction of the party. It is made up of titular and substitute members.

⁴⁴Nomination is "the discretionary selection of candidates by the party's higher authorities" (Kuate, 2002: 31).

⁴⁵"This phenomenon prevailed at one time in the context of a single party, where a veritable dictatorship of the party and the phenomenon of co-optation reigned

Grassroots activists had a duty to respect the decisions of the party hierarchy, which itself resisted any hint of criticism. But the selection of candidates from within the party has changed considerably in recent years. by principle, the choices made by the hierarchy should not be of any problems, since it is the guarantor of the smooth running of the party. In practice, however, some members of the hierarchy put their own personal interests first. What's more, the top, not always familiar with local realities, sometimes appoints people who do not reflect the aspirations of the grassroots. This usually leads to discontentment at the grassroots level. Similarly, this option fosters corruption in political parties, in the sense that people with financial means will deploy them to secure the party's nomination. It is also subjective. Faced with this situation, grassroots activists feel frustrated (...) (Kuate, 2002: 31-32)".

⁴⁶That said, militancy is necessary resource for the presentation of candidacies. An economy of political exchanges within the CPDM during electoral conjunctures (internal and external) reveals the party's local life as a succession of sequences of rivalry between militants (Cf Tchingangong Yanou, 2016: 3).

Committee chooses the party's nominees for national or local elections". The regulations are even clearer and more explicit in article 58 of the internal regulations, which stipulates that: "(1) without prejudice to the provisions of article 27 of the article of association (specific to the election of the National President), the Central Committee chooses the party's nominees for various elections. It may nominate one or more party candidates for the same seat, or present one or more lists. (2) However, for local elections, the Central Committee may, under its supervision, empower the Basic Organs of the Cameroon Peoples's Democratic Movement to choose investiture to one or more party candidates for the same seat or to one or more lists" (Touo, 2016: 248). These bodies always have the reflex of wanting to designate the candidates themselves. Faced with such situations, the local population of the Vina division did not show passivity or resignation in the name of party discipline. On analysis, the CPDM's electoral defeat was, on the one hand, the revenge of the local electorate against the nominees (1) and, on the other hand, a punishment vote (2).

4.1 The Revenge of the Local Electorate Against Investitures

From our observations on the field, we noted that the electoral defeat of the CPDM giving way to the NUDP in the legislative elections of February 20th, 2020 is part of the revenge of the local electorate against the candidacies imposed at grassroots level through the channel of investitures⁴⁴. This is a political phenomenon that can be observed in all political parties in Cameroon⁴⁵ political parties nominate candidates⁴⁶. Although this choice is based on the party's basic texts, its reception by the partisan

base is relatively cautious. They see as the hegemonic aim of the center. However, the option is not new. In 1997, the party had already resorted to it; in 2002 and until 2007, candidate selection procedures were based on the primary test. In both cases, the lists of municipal councilors and parliamentarians reflected the positions of responsibility held by candidates in local party bodies⁴⁷.

It should be noted that the nomination of candidates did not meet with the approval of the rank and file. Some candidates used their relations with certain members of the CPDM's higher rank (Central Committee and Political Bureau), notably the economic operator and member of the Political Bureau Alhadji Mohammadou Abbo Ousmanou, to be imposed as a candidate on the rank and files⁴⁸. Such is the case of Ali Bachir. Indeed, his nomination as head of the CPDM list for the February 20th, 2020 legislative elections was not welcomed locally⁴⁹. However, history has not repeated itself. In the 2013/2017 legislature, for example, El Hadj Hamadou Abbo threw his weight behind Ali Bachir's list in the Vina division. According to one CPDM activist: "*Ali Bachir was imposed on us by Aladji Abbo, the CPDM political bureau member. We already had enough of him*". Hence the use of the political slogan '*o djipan tan*' to express the discontentment of the local population (Interview of 05/23/2024 in Ngaoundéré). This political slogan is the result of a political import, as illustrated below:

This political slogan was originally created and mobilized in Nigeria, and more specifically in the city of Kano. The city's lamido, a doctor of economics, was impeached by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Mohamadou Bouari. Throughout his reign, he was known for his political arrogance, not attending government meetings, preferring instead to send his representative. In the Kano state governor elections,

there were two candidates: Gandoudjé and Abba Guida Guida. The first candidate was backed by the impeached lamido, while the second was sponsored by President Bouari. At the closing of the political meeting of the campaign, President Bouari endorsed Abba Guida Guida as his candidate. At the end of the elections, Gandoudje was declared the winner. This is how Gandoudje came up with the political slogan "*o djipan tan*"⁵⁰ despite the support of the President of the Republic. By political mimicry, the bike riders that run the Cameroon-Nigeria high way and grappling with Ali Bachir, imported this political slogan from Nigeria. The bike riders appropriated this political slogan to the point of popularizing it in the Vina division (Interview of May 24th, 2024 with Hamidou Malam (Cadre à la commune de Ngaoundéré 1st).

From the above, we can see that the importation of the political slogan "*o djipan tan*" is the result of a combination of factors. This is what one informant made us to know:

The CPDM is the victim of a political casting error. This is the major cause of the CPDM's failure in the Vina division. It is a way of expressing the dissatisfaction of the militant base with the CPDM's governing bodies (the Political Bureau, the Central Committee and the CPDM's permanent divisional delegation). Dissension persists between the base and the top in the candidate selection process. This is illustrated by the case of certain sub divisions, such as Ganha, which stood up as one man. In the context of the 2020 municipal elections, activists felt that the candidates nominated by the CPDM's higher authorities were not candidates designated by the grassroots. And the rank and file rose up to storm Baba Hamadou's home to contest certain candidacies⁵¹. They demanded that their choice be taken into account and ended up imposing their candidates. As for the legislative elections, there

⁴⁷The game of figuring on the lists for the various elections was based on the ability of militants to impose themselves at grassroots level, i.e. at the level of the cell, the base committee, the sub-section bureau or the section bureau. It was thus closely linked to the game for access to positions of partisan responsibility in the district. The dependence of the stakes gave the partisan base authority in the composition and recomposition of the local political chessboard. Candidate selection by nomination dilutes this grassroots resource. Activists were more likely to expect the renewal of local party leaders, as was previously the case. Investiture thus appears to be a process over which the grassroots have relative control" (Tchingankong Yanou, 2016: 5).

⁴⁸In Cameroon's Adamawa region, large-scale traders and economic entrepreneurs are playing an important role in the transition process. Particularly, their financial support for the various parties. This category includes economic entrepreneurs, traders and herders (Source: interview with informant in Ngaoundéré, 2020). The economic weight of the Islamo-Peuls is an observable fact. Unlike Kirdi ethnic groups, El Hadj Mohamadou Abbo Ousmanou is a breeder, farmer and economic operator. In addition to the agro-food industry, El Hadj Mohammadou Abbo owns a large herd of over 8,000 cattle on the AMAO ranch created in 1980 at Magang in the Balewa region, 65 km east of the city (Kemfack, 2000: 94 cited by Assana, 2017).

⁴⁹It's important to point out that ranking on the candidate list by numerical order is very important, given Cameroon's mixed electoral system. The higher a candidate's position on the list, the greater his or her chances of being elected. In the event of an absolute majority, the entire list is elected; on the other hand, if a relative majority is obtained, then half the list is elected. Similarly, in the application of the proportional system, some candidates may have a chance of being elected. These are the candidates who immediately follow the last name on the previously elected first half. Returning to the case of the Vina division, the numerical order on the list in the 2002/2007 legislature was as follows: Ali Bachir, head of the list and candidate for Vina (Centre); followed by Koulagna, 2nd candidate, representing Vina Est; and Kalchoumi Katché, 3rd candidate on the list and candidate representing Mbéré Centre.

⁵⁰In Fulani language meaning step down only.

⁵¹He is a resource person for the CPDM. He has served in turn as Chargé de Mission at the Presidency, Minister of Tourism and Senator.

were a series of claims and grievances against Ali Bachir in the Vina division. Here again, there was dissension between the top and the bottom. Despite several attempts by the rank and file to oust Ali Bachir from the nominations, the CPDM leadership imposed his appointment. What's more, alerts were issued by the press, on the understanding that militants had promised to react with a sanction vote. Dissension was also observed in Bélel, where militants disagreed with Abbo's candidacy in the municipal elections, and in Ganha and Mbé with Koulagna's candidacy. In Ganha, during the renewal of the political boxspring (the grassroots bodies), militants drew up a petition denouncing the imposition of candidacies at grassroots level. As a result, some districts went over to the opposition. These include: Nyambaka, Ngaoundéré 1st, Ngaoundéré 2nd, Ngaoundéré 3rd. It is important to mention the suspicions of corruption hanging over the CPDM leadership in the process of nominating candidates for the elections (Interview on May 24 2024 with Hamidou Malam (Cadre a la commune de Ngaoundéré 1^{er})).

It should also be pointed out that the revenge of the base on the top is reflected in the use of the sanction vote.

5. A Punishment Vote

By cross-checking our field observations and interviews, we were able to establish that the CPDM's electoral defeat in the Vina constituency was part of a vote-sanction, particularly from the grassroots against political centralism at the top. The electoral behavior of the local population depends on the behavior of elected representatives and political party leaders. More specifically, when there is dissension between the top and the bottom in the candidate selection process, voters tend to sanction the incumbent when their demands are not taken into account. According to an informant, the CPDM's electoral defeat in the 2018 legislative elections in the Vina division can be explained by Ali Bachir's (the CPDM's head of list) attitude namely political arrogance and communicational clumsiness towards bike riders According to an informant:

Ali Bachir's political popularity has eroded over the years. Throughout his parliamentary mandates, he has displayed an attitude of political arrogance and the hobgoblinization of certain militants. Numerous complaints about his inaccessibility have been recorded at grassroots level. Contrary to popular

⁵²Bike riders come from all age groups in the Cameroonian society. The 15 to 30 years age group accounts for 70%; the 35 to 40 age group for 20%; and the 45 to 50 age group 10%. They are generally excluded from the educational system, with no professional qualifications. The Islamo-Peuls are 70% dominant (Interview of 05/16/2023 with the president of the bike riders in Ngaoundéré).

belief, the majority of militants and the bike riders that accompany him on his political tours do not always benefit from the financial spin-offs. What's more, the Adamawa region is pastoral in nature. But cross-border insecurity, manifested among other things by the kidnapping of herdsmen, is recurrent. He has never brought the problem to the attention of the government as part of his parliamentary activities. Mayor Abbo of Bélel, who is a security entrepreneur at odds with the Governor of the Adamawa Region, was re-elected for the CPDM in the Bélel constituency. This testifies to the fact that the local population is attentive to these issues. Moreover, during the election campaigns, his political clumsiness led him to label bike riders as delinquents, irresponsible citizens who do not have voter's card, bike riders registered massively and responded with a sanction vote (Interview of 05/21/2021 with Mr. Bachirou, bike riders in Ngaoundéré).

The preceding considerations make it possible to establish a correlation between the behavior of elected officials and the behavior of voters. From the 1990s onwards, the evaluation of the leadership qualities of candidates or parties contesting elections became significant in voters' choice of vote (McAllister, 1996; Dalton, 2002). Kramer and Fair's two sets of results therefore suggest that, voters vote by considering the past, sanction the incumbent on the basis of what has been done, rather than what could be done. Another way of doing this has been proposed by models with "competence signals" (Rogoff, Sibert, 1998; Rogoff, 1990 cited by Farvaque, Sonia Paty, 2009: 32). In these models, agents' votes are derived from their assessments of the incumbent candidate's competence, which is assessed by comparing the achievements without any economic policy intervention. The authors assume that the competence signal is sufficiently durable. In other words, prospective voters can compare future achievements with contemporary successes, and then decide whether or not to support the outgoing candidate.

Moreover, through their "*arts de faire*" (de Certeau, 1980), bike riders influence the electoral behavior of the local population in the Vina division. The number of bike riders identified in the Vina division stands at 22,800⁵². The public highway provides bike riders with a mobilization framework in which to exert socio-political pressure. Bike riders are in a situation of defiance vis-a-vis the ruling CPDM party and in

a relationship of connection with society. However, contrary to the challenge to the centralist functioning of the CPDM, the NUDP is developing political seduction operations to win over the local electorate.

6. Nudp's Political Seduction Operations

Several political seduction operations developed by the NUDP explain the electoral defeat of the CPDM at the legislative elections of February 09th, 2020. These include proximity politics, the recuperation of frustrated CPDM politicians and the political use of Public Investment Budget (P.I.B.) (1) on the one hand, and the political use of ethnicity and religion (2) on the other.

6.1 The Use of Political Proximity, the Recuperation of Frustrated CPDM Politicians and the Political Use of the P.I.B.⁵³

It is important to analyze in turn: the politics of proximity, the recuperation of frustrated CPDM members and the political use of the Public Investment Budget (BIP).

Talking about proximity, it means: a counterweight to the inevitability of the elected official's "natural" remoteness: geographical remoteness (from the central places of political decision-making: regional capital (...), technocratic remoteness (decision-making is based on global perceptions and rationalizing approaches, studies, statistics, etc.), social remoteness (frequenting the economic, political or cultural elites would be a distorting prism for perceiving "the" or "the" realities (Leroux, 91-102).

In view of the above, grassroots politics is part of a strategy to enhance political ties between constituents and representatives⁵⁴. Unlike certain CPDM elected representatives who derive their political legitimacy from the summit, i.e. from the upper rank of political parties rather than from the grassroots, and who display an attitude of political arrogance, NUDP's practice of proximity politics is part of a pragmatic policy. The «rituals of proximity» (cf. Restier-Melleray, 2002: 29), such as market visits, children's christenings, weddings, wine reception and more or less informal meetings, have the ostentatious function of symbolically and momentarily lowering the elected

official from his or her pedestal⁵⁵. Local politics is a high point of democracy. Contact with the electorate is seen as testimony to the elected official's debt to his or her constituents, and the total availability of the elected official on the campaign trail bears witness to a «personal gift» to the territory and its inhabitants (Pierre Leroux, 91-102). Local relational work in the Vina division can be observed on the field. According to Prosper Nkou Mvondo, an influential member of the opposition party (UNIVERS) and former CPDM activist

NUDP activists work on the bodies. They go into people's homes to register them to vote, especially their brothers, friends and neighbors. They pick them up and encourage them to vote. They organize to put them in the car on voting day. They arrange to let them know about the polling stations well in advance. They drive their voters to the polling stations and tell them what color of ballots they should choose. The CPDM doesn't do this, because it considers itself a hegemonic political party. Very often, the NUDP prepares its list of candidates well in advance (2 or 3 years) of electoral dates. If you know you're a candidate, you'll be politically active with conviction and determination, first and foremost for yourself (as a candidate) and for your party. This is not the case with the ruling party (CPDM), where political centralism means that no-one can be sure of being invested as a candidate. Decisions come from Yaoundé, in the sense that there is always a Mission manager, mandated by the ruling bodies of the CPDM (the Political Bureau and the Central Committee), who impose candidates on the grassroots, under the pretext of Party discipline, with the grassroots having no voice. As a result, this Mission manager, who does not always master the realities on the field or who ignores popular candidates, imposes unpopular candidates. What's more, not being sure of being appointed as a candidate, some militants prefer to play it safe, refraining from getting involved in the field or waiting to work when they are sure of being appointed as a candidate. As a result, on election day, it's late for the CPDM to mobilize potential voters to register, pick up their electoral cards or show them where the polling stations are (Interview of 03/26/2024 in Ngaoundéré).

⁵³BIP stands for Budget d'Investissement Publique (Public Investment Budget).

⁵⁴Proximity is a recurring concept in political discourse. Proximity has become a magic word and an omnipresent watchword. It is through proximity that social and political ties are called upon to be based, and that representative democracy is invited to recharge its batteries. It is also through proximity that public action is called upon to renew its legitimacy, and that decision-making and problem-solving processes must be profoundly modified (...) the gap between citizens and elected representatives has widened: calls for greater proximity are multiplying (...)" (Le Bart and Lefebvre, 2005: 11-30).

⁵⁵The territorial anchoring of elected representatives stems from the very territorial modes of representation, and is inseparable from with the modern form of political practice (Phelippeau, 2002).

In view of the above, NUDP's proximity policy is part of a policy of strategic anticipation of the electoral calendar in Cameroon. NUDP's proximity policy contrasts with the current political centralism of the CPDM. The latter freezes potential candidates in political immobility and uncertainty while they wait to be invested as candidates. In addition to the policy of proximity, there is also the recuperation of frustrated CPDM members.

As for NUDP's recuperation of frustrated CPDM members, this is part of a political strategy developed by the NUDP. Indeed, the CPDM electoral market is highly saturated, in the sense that political demand outstrips political supply⁵⁶. The most exemplary case is that of Mr Bruno, the First Vice-President of the Regional Council, a native of Bankim in the Mayo-Banyo division. He is an engineer by training and an employee of the national Participatory Development Program (PNDP). A former militant of the ruling CPDM party, he sought to be appointed as a candidate in the 2020 regional elections. However, he failed to win political support from the top. He fell back into the NUDP and was politically recuperated and invested as one of NUDP candidates for the regional elections. In this sense: the option taken by CPDM militants to resign is an attitude incorporated during the candidate appointment process. The practice has generated an oppositional attitude among activists who subjectively assigned themselves a predominant place in the local political game. They perceive the disqualification as a disapproval of the hierarchical elite in charge of managing the candidate selection process. The decision to select candidates by investiture has contributed to the perception of the heads of central bodies as political locks who decide whether or not militants from the partisan base will rise to the top. The opportunistic departure of militants from their party at election time constitutes here, an option to assert elsewhere a leadership whose imposing capacity has not prevailed and even, could not occur at a qualified moment decisive for the individual career (Tchingankong Yanou, 2016: 12-13).

Concerning political benefits from local achievements under the Public Investment Budget (BIP), this is also part of a maneuver of political seduction mobilized by local elected representatives invested by the NUDP. The volume of this political party's investments in the

Vina division is indeed enormous, as we were able to see for ourselves. These local achievements were reported by an informant. These achievements cover all sectors of social life, from health to education and religious infrastructures. These include the construction of thirty bridges in the following districts: *sapeur-pompier*, *haut plateau*, *Mbi deng*, *Burkina*, *the Bamyanga/Marza axes*, Mandjin, the new Marma Kantalan road, national road no. 14, the HYSACAM intercession, Matari, Wakwa, Mabanga/Djalingo, the Belel road; the construction of municipal houses for the poor in the Mabanga district; the construction of about twenty boreholes in the flagship councils of Ngaoundere 1st and Ngaoundere 2nd considered as the flagship councils of the Vina division (2013/2020); the construction of elementary school (each year, two (2) schools benefit from two (2) classrooms; the construction of a complete academic cycle in Kantalang after Wakwa; the construction of a health center in the Bamyanga Hamadjangui district (Interview of 03/26/2024 with Abdoul Wabi, in charge of revenue and the technical office of the council of Ngaoundéré 1st in Ngaoundéré).

These stories reveal the importance of NUDP's contribution to local development. Indeed, voters are becoming increasingly politically aware. They are aware that, every year, councils are allocated a Public Investment Budget (BIP) to boost local development. A comparison of the data collected from voters on the field shows that NUDP's electoral victory can be justified by its contribution to local development. In other words, voters judge the competence of local elected officials from their ability to implement the Public Investment Budget. Unlike CPDM local councilors, whose image has been tarnished by scandals involving corruption, embezzlement and unaccomplished or poorly executed public contracts, NUDP-invested local councilors are enhanced by local achievements. According to field surveyors

To promote local development, locally elected representatives have been asked to use their own resources and subsidies to carry out local projects. However, local tax revenues are reduced by a policy of tax discrimination. In fact, most farmers do not pay taxes. They make up for it with funding from political parties. These are investments in search of tax exemptions. As a result, when it comes to collecting

⁵⁶From the perspective of Joseph Schumpeter's work (1954), and more specifically that of Anthony Down (1957), the political field becomes the equivalent of a "market" in which political parties are likened to "entrepreneurs", exchanging specific "products" (more or less abstract programs, promises that are more or less respected) in exchange for "cash" of a particular kind (electoral votes, party memberships, donations), with a view to conquering and, if possible, accumulating "political capital" (elective mandates, positions of political responsibility, public employment, etc.). (quoted by Mouiche, 2000: 60).

taxes, local officials, acting on instructions from municipal magistrates, exert fiscal pressure on farmers who do not support their political party. As a result, they are forced to fall back on the achievements made under the Public Investment Budget (BIP) to justify their mandate. As part of the maintenance and paving of certain tertiary roads in the city of Ngaoundéré, local elected officials were asked to propose the roads along which these projects would be implemented. The choices were strategically oriented towards the opposition's electoral strongholds and areas of electoral promises. Similarly, the implementation of these projects by locally elected officials carried out under the leadership of the opposition party (NUDP). (Interview on April 1^{er} 2024 in Ngaoundéré).

In a radio announcement (wide distribution) N° C27/CR/H/SDG/SG/DAESC of March 04, 2024, the Governor denounced what would appear to be a political deceit. The Governor asserted his role as coordinator of administrative action at regional level. In any case, the determinants of CPDM's electoral defeat giving way to the NUDP in the legislative elections of February 20th, 2020 in the Vina electoral district can only be fully grasped in conjunction with the political uses of ethnicity and religion.

6.2 Political Use of Ethnicity and Religion

All the testimonies concur in confirming the centrality of the political use of ethnicity and Islamic religion in NUDP's victory in the February 20th, 2020 legislative elections in the Vina electoral district. Ethnicity and religion remain important determinants of voting in this division⁵⁷. From the perspective of (instrumentalist and mobilizationist) theories (Poutignat, 1997), ethnicity and religion are the resources that can be mobilized to win and retain political power. In this respect, the Fulani/Kirdi dualism opens the door to the politicization of ethnicity in the religious and political fields⁵⁸. The politicization of ethnicity

acquires political significance, and it can only be done through the work of local actors. Indeed, Adamawa appears on Cameroon's administrative map as a very special region, owing to its singular name and its strong Islamic influence⁵⁹. This region does not derive its name from the first occupants of the area, notably the Mboum, who settled here over a century ago and could therefore be considered as genuine indigenous populations, but from a Fulani conqueror (Assana, 2017). Consequently, it conveys the historical vestiges linked to the epic of jihad in this region. Religion plays the role of "identity marker or instance of legitimization/discrimination (...)" (Maud, 2006: 161) in the Adamawa region⁶⁰. As can be seen, the political field is caught in the trap of the politics of affection, as a regime of discourse and action dominated by the mobilization of (and reference to) the ethnic or linguistic community (Sindjoun, 1998).

In the shared opinion of a large number of informants, the political use of ethnicity and religion are reflected in the progressive monopoly of political and elective representation of the parliamentary seats allocated to the Vina division by the Islamo-Fulanis. The power to speak and act on behalf of the Vina division is to some extent confiscated by the Islamo-Fulanis elites, who have considerable economic and political resources at their disposal. In popular imagery, the political use of ethnicity and religion are part of the politics of affinity, as one informant testifies

It's much easier for a Muslim candidate to go to the mosque and mobilize his Muslim co-believers to register to vote. A Muslim candidate's relationship with the Muslim electorate is different from his or her relationship with the Christian electorate. Voters vote for Muslim candidates because, once elected, they will go home. Voting is identity-based in the sense that voters sometimes identify with the candidates' ethno-religious affiliations. They are not always concerned with their political programs. However,

⁵⁷To avoid the trap of the identity illusion (Bayart, 1996), it is important to specify that: "ethnicity in itself means nothing; it is the investments and uses to which it is put that give it its importance in the socio-political field, given that these uses lead to the objectivity of ethnicity" (Sindjoun, 1998: 5). Hence, the rejection of the primordialist approach (Poutignat and Streiff-Fenart, 1997).

⁵⁸The human configuration of North Cameroon requires a distinction to be made between the Kirdi (Habe), who are non-Islamized, and the Islamo-peul. Indeed, Kirdi is an Arab choa word meaning un-Islamized, with a contemptuous and pejorative connotation. This concept was born of the encounter between the Arab choa breeders from Lake Chad and the non-Islamized populations of the Mandara Mountains, notably those living in the cantons of Kolofata, Limani, Bounderi, Magdeme, in Mayo-Sava and Koza in Mayo-Tsanaga. In Fulani, the equivalent of the word Kirdi is Kado, with the same contemptuous and pejorative meaning (Hamadou, 1999; Fendjougue, 2006). In the socio-historical logic of the bipolar construction of ethnicity in North Cameroon around a dominant and a dominated social group, the Kirdis are presented as a homogeneous social group. This homogeneity is generally built around certain common elements shared by the population: dominant religious affiliation, social organization and the process of controlling space (Bigombe Logo, 1999). The cliché of the pagan ethnic bloc is accompanied by systematic opposition to the Islamo-Peul group.

⁵⁹Historically, Adamawa is linked to the southeastern part of the Sokoto empire, founded by Ousmane Dan Fodio. The Foulbé referred to this southern part as "Fombina". The word Adamawa therefore seems to derive from Adama, the name of the man chosen by Ousman Dan Fodio to head Fombina. We can therefore consider Sokoto as a state whose southern province was Adamawa, with Yola (on the banks of the Benoue) as its capital. Today, Yola is a Nigerian city (Taguem Fah, 2014).

⁶⁰This religion is presented by the Peuls, Haoussa, Mandara and Kanouri as their own.

beyond their affinity (ethnic and religious), they hope for a briber. For a voter who doesn't speak the official languages (French and English), it's easier to turn to his Muslim brother if he becomes Mayor, Senator, Member of Parliament or Town Councilor, if he needs a service. This is the thought of some voters. Very often, they come up with the following rhetoric: "If I'm going anywhere, it's for you. You're a member of parliament, senator, mayor or local councilor. But what about me? I want 1000F or 2000F to go around. Why should I walk 500 m or 2 km to get to the polling station? What is in it for me?" (Interview on 26/03/2024 in Ngaoundéré).

The objectivization of the above points permit us to understand the interweaving of communitarian and rational logic, in the explanation of electoral instability. The political uses of ethnicity and religion are part of a strategy to build party loyalty. The vote or election of a brother does not exclude the pursuit of interests. A brother's vote can be a pledge of community interests. From the elections held in 1991 to those of 2020, the electoral sociology of this division shows that candidates invested by the NUDP always score best in their subdivision of origin and, more broadly, in the areas where their ethnolinguistic communities are based. The other sociological factor on which voting depends is religion. For ethnic-religious reasons, voters in this division initially identified with the Union National Union for Democracy and Progress (NUDP), the party of Fulani Bouba Bello Maigari⁶¹.

Field surveys show a polarization of the identity-based vote in the Vina division, particularly in the subdivisions of Ngaoundéré 1st, 2nd, Nyambaka, Minim Martap etc. In 2018, the NUDP obtained its best scores in the subdivisions with a strong Islamo-Foulani coloration in the Vina division, areas where Islamo-Fulani population (Fulani, Haoussa, Kanouri) are settled. In Ngaoundéré 1st, out of a total of 22,821 votes casted, the NUDP obtained 16,588, or 74.04%, against 5077 votes for the CPDM, or 22.66%; in Ngaoundéré 2^c, out of a total of 23,390 votes validly cast, the NUDP obtained 16,004, or 69.53%, against 6293 votes for the CPDM, or 27.34%; in the Ngaoundéré 3rd subdivision, out of a validly expressed vote of 23,390, the NUDP won 3,303 votes, i.e. 50.27%, against 2,496 votes for the CPDM,

i.e. 37.99%; in the Nyambaka subdivision, out of a validly expressed vote of 7,139, the NUDP won 4,399 votes, i.e. 62.98%, against 2,252 votes for the CPDM, i.e. 32.24%; in the Ngan-ha district, out of a validly expressed vote of 8242, the NUDP won 4009 votes or 49, 64% against 3893 votes or 48, 20% for the CPDM; in the Martap district, out of a validly expressed vote of 7808, the NUDP won 4207 votes or 54, 93% against 3251 votes or 42, 45% for the CPDM; in the Bélel district, out of a validly expressed vote of 8959, the CPDM won 4582 votes (52.34%) against 4026 votes (45.99%); in the Mbé district, out of a validly expressed vote of 6686, the CPDM won 4249 votes (65.21%) against 1948 votes (29.90%) for the NUDP. On the other hand, in the highly christian district of Mbé, NUDP's rejection was scathing, as it obtained only 11.08% of the votes casted, compared with 75% for Koulagna, a candidate from this district.

7. Conclusion

At the end of this analysis, it is clear that the electoral instability of the vote in the Vina electoral district can be explained by a combination of factors. The articulation of variables such as the political, infrastructural and security environment, underdevelopment, religion and ethnicity are the major determinants of CPDM's decline in the Vina division. Electoral instability in the Vina political constituency can be explained by structural, political and inter-party competition factors. However, it would be reductive to analyze electoral instability through a split approach. Here, as elsewhere, we must avoid explanatory monism⁶² in favor of an «epistemology of the middle ground or crossbreeding» (Sindjoun, 2001: 8). Far from being mutually exclusive, the variables are correlated. Electoral instability can be explained by the interweaving of communitarian and rational logics. In other words, the correlation between identity voting and rational voting explains the partisan loyalty of local population to the NUDP. This makes it possible to reassess the dominant explanatory models. Voters continue to wield power: the power to choose their elected representatives⁶³. All in all, the electoral diktat has prevailed over the CPDM's dirigiste and economic diktat.

⁶¹In the local popular imagination, the National Union for Democracy and Progress (NUDP) was seen as the political party of Muslims, while the CPDM was projected as the party of "Christians" and unbelievers".

⁶²The analysis of traditional political societies has long suffered from the stubbornness of explanatory monism (read usefully) and linear evolutionism (Joya, 1996, p. 1).

⁶³The February 20th, 2020 elections were marked by a high abstention rate in the electoral district. More than half the electorate did not take part in the elections.

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