



MIGRANT FISHERMEN AND THEIR SOCIAL LIFE IN LONDJI PLAGE, SOUTHERN CAMEROON



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To my Mother Bouchourah Moussa

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ABBREVIATION AND GLOSSARY

MINEPIA: Ministry of livestock and Animal production

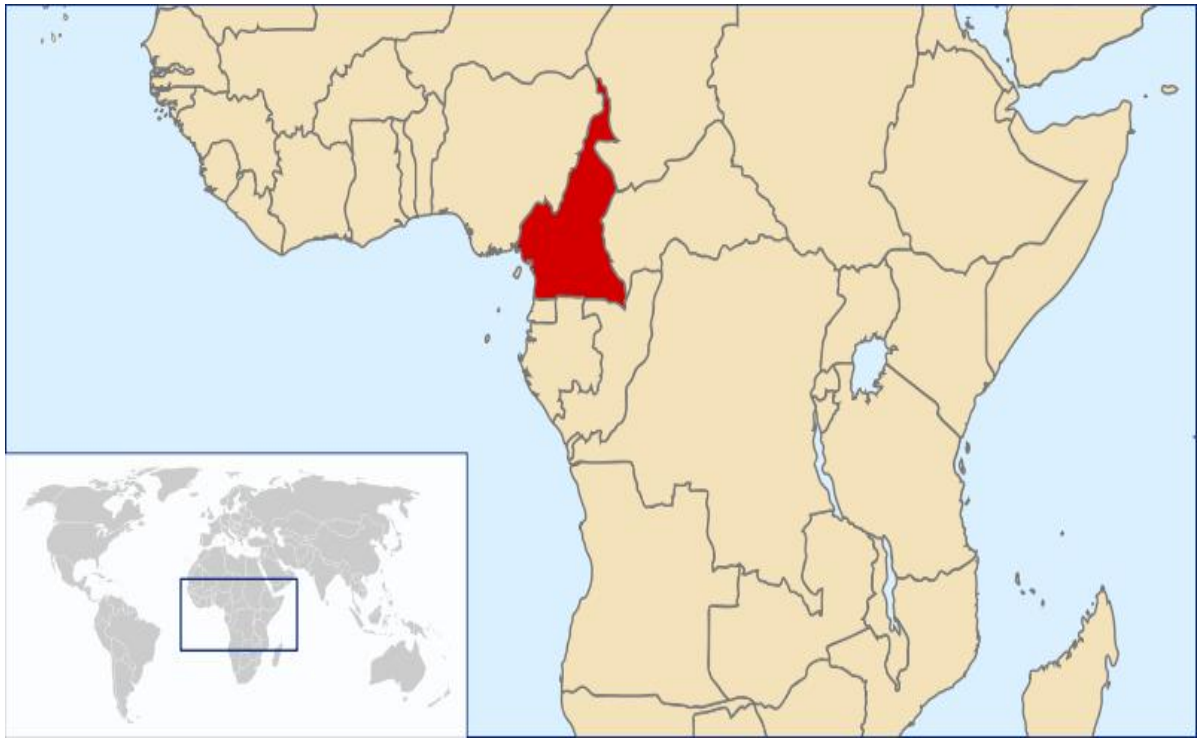
Boloman: people working at the beach (young boys)

Buyam sallam: women or men who buy fish

Wadjo: people from the North

Deuxième bureau: concubine

Mabang: fried fish



1. World Map December 2006



2. Location of Londji Plage: World map December 2006

ABSTRACT

I studied migrant fishermen and their social life in Londji Plage in South of Cameroon. It was to analyze how migrant fishermen integrated the life, how the commercialization of fish is organized, the migrant's careers, the role of canoe owner's wives and fishermen's wives in the economy and the relation between migrant and state bureaucracy.

The fishing activity is completely modernized by Nigerian fishermen; they brought new canoes, nets and out board motors. Canoe owners and fishermen are always in conflict, canoe owners accuse fishermen to steal the catch as we see in the film and fishermen also are complaining about the relation between canoe owners and buyers. It is a personal conflict between them. There are differentiation between Nigerians and fishermen from the North in their careers. Nigerians fishermen have an advantage to be canoe owners by inheritance and replacement in the fishing activity. Fishing is a way of livelihood for Nigerian migrant fishermen and has being their occupation for generations. It is difficult for fishermen from the North to be canoe owners because most of them become fishermen in Londji Plage but Hassan is one of the migrants from the North who has a canoe. Northerners can be canoe owners by saving money and collecting the fishing equipment. To integrate the local community migrant fishermen also use interethnic marriage. The wives of canoe owners and fishermen are also involved in the commercialization of fish particularly smoked fish, roasted fish and fried fish. They contribute to the economy of the family and household. In spite of their integration in the life, migrant fishermen from Nigeria are threatened by the police and they have to pay the resident permit each year. But to get access to the fish resource they negotiate with the representative of Minepia and the transaction is beneficial to each other.

Keywords: Migrant, fishermen, social field, actors, fishing activity.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

We encounter many ethnic groups in Londji Plage and the different kinds of cultures make it cosmopolitan. The local people are Batanga and known as “*peuple de l’eau*” (people of water) which means that they are fishermen and they live on the coastal area since many generations. Batanga have special days every year to commemorate their tradition and culture. Every 8th, 9th and 10th of May, Batanga believe that the Mermaids¹ come and dance at the beach. During the data collection I participated in cultural activities, dance and ritual. All Batanga people from Mboamanga, Londji Plage, and Lobe come to the sea for a ritual bath. This ritual is called “*Mayi*” in local language and it is an old tradition more than 90 years ago (Mpeke 2006). *Mayi* is an example of their connection to the sea.

Londji Plage was a fishing area before the arrival of migrant fishermen before the independence of Cameroon (1960). In this village, one finds other groups coming from Nigeria and from other parts of Cameroon. Among the Nigerian, we have Eladje, Kalaba and Idjo as main ethnic groups. From the North, we have Mafa, Toupouri, Guiziga, Bamileke and Bakoko. Fish is the main food and economic resource in the life of village. All people living in Londji Plage don’t have another activity as a substitute to the fishing.

In this text, I’m interested in migrant fishermen in their interaction within the society, how they interact in different fields and how they perceive their identities, how others perceive them and how they negotiate their presence in Londji Plage.

Geography, Demography and Climate conditions of Cameroon

Located in the heart of Central Africa in the Gulf of Guinea, Cameroon has an area of about 475,650 km². Located between the equator and the Tropic of Cancer, it stretches nearly 1240 km between the second and twelfth parallel north; the ninth and sixteenth degrees east longitude. This large triangle shares a long land border with Chad (1122km) in North, Central African Republic (822 km) to the East, Congo (520 km) Southeast, Gabon (298 km) and Equatorial Guinea (183km) South and then West Nigeria, with whom it also shares a maritime border. Cameroon opens the south-west over the Atlantic Ocean with a coastal front that stretches almost 402 km.

¹ Local beliefs in fish half human being.

The coastal area stretching from the high tide level to 60 km inland, includes beaches, dunes, mangroves, coastal plains, river deltas, estuaries and lagoons. The swamp continental boundary is indicated by a solid line linking the cities from North to South: Mundemba, Muyuka, Dibombari, Edea, Nyambessan. The climatic condition of this area is partially the same as the South-west coast and South (Folack et al. 1999). The natural resources of the coastal zone include minerals, hydrocarbons, diverse wildlife, mangroves and a dense coastal forest. This location justifies its ethnic diversity as it is a country located at the confluence of West Africa and Central Africa. Cameroon has 19.406 million inhabitants 1 January 2010.

The geographic location of Cameroon gives it a climate similar to that of all the countries of the Gulf of Guinea, influenced by the convergence of air masses from the Azores (North Atlantic) and Saint Helena (South Atlantic) at the equator. There are two main sets conditions:

- The equatorial field located in the southern part of the country offers a large rainfall with vegetation consisting of dense forest. This area hosts flies which are a limiting factor for ruminant livestock;

- The area located in the tropical northern region is characterized by a warm climate and low rainfall.

One finds a humid tropical climate in the South and dry in the North with an average of 25 ° C and 32 ° C South to North. In mountain areas to the West, the temperature varies with altitude and becomes cooler. The coastal climate is characterized by monsoon Guinea, predominantly from the Southwest. These winds generate humidity almost always at the saturation point. Two great season climate rhythm: a long rainy season of about 8 months (April-November) and a dry season which usually runs from November to April. The air temperature is high all year (above 25 ° C).

The coastline is the area that relies on the Gulf of Guinea and extending between the 2nd and 5th degree of latitude to the place where the Atlantic Ocean penetrates deeper into the land. This coastline is about 400 km long from North-western Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea in the Southwest. The estuary of the river Wouri which is the centerpiece sharing this coast in two approximately equal parts: 200 km North and 200 km South. The coastline has a coastal plain and mountains; the most popular and prominent being Mount Cameroon. The marine waters are characterized in places by the presence of narrow beaches interrupted by the mouths of

rivers or lagoons of which the Londji Plage is the centre of my field research. These ranges are defined by advanced rocky headlands form thus forming bays or coves lined with coconut trees. This maritime domain is divided into two parts: the continental shelf and marine waters.

Location and description of Londji Plage

The South is one of the ten administrative areas of Cameroon and Kribi is the administrative centre located in the South-West. Londji Plage is a small village located in South of Cameroon, 20 km to Kribi. The village is small when one considers only the beach where the majority of fishermen are found but with relatively larger population.

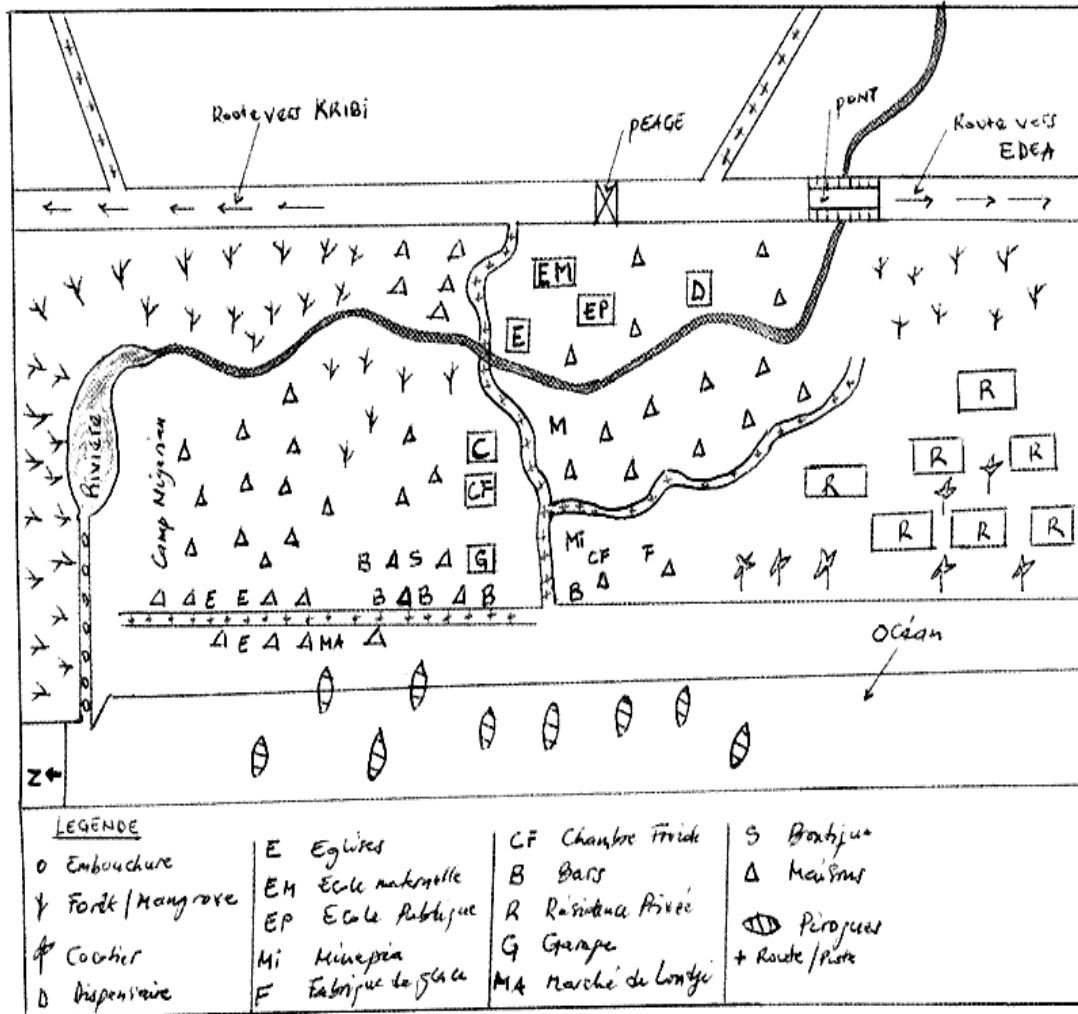
The distance from the main road to the beach where the fishing activity takes place, is about 2 Km. Along the road to the village are several houses and small river which one crosses before entering the village. The first point of contact and structure to indicate you are in Londji Plage are the cold room, ices factories, Hassan's house and Minepia² to the left. To the right, one finds the chieftdom, a drinking bar, a shed with wooding structure where canoe's outboards and motors are repaired. Along the main stress is Miki's shop which serves as the main shop of the village, another drinking spot and residential houses. At the centre of village is the main market where smoked fish normally sold by women on Monday's. Getting to the end of the village, one finds several other bars and main Nigerian quarter. At the end of the village one finds several houses and Churches. It is at this place that the river and the sea are joined together where fishermen keep their canoes during the high tide. The environment of Londji Plage is composed of forest and mangrove.

Along the sea, you will see many canoes and in the left, there is another line of houses. Just close to the sea are found big and beautiful houses belonging to European or rich people coming from towns like Yaoundé³ and Douala⁴. These houses are rarely occupied because the owners only come to pass their week end or they stay a couple of months during their vacations. Their presence boosts economic activity especially the fishing business. A part from the fishing business some boys and elder's men serve as tours guide who also make economic gains. Londji Plage is a lovely beach; the visitors swim, walk along the beach and enjoy traditional foods.

² Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Production

³ Capital of Cameroon

⁴ Economic of Cameroon where the port is located



3. Londji Plage Map

Embouchure: Mouth

Forêt/mangrove: Mangrove swamp

Cocotier: coconut palm

Dispensaire: Health care centre

Eglises: Churches

Ecole Maternelle: Kindergarten

Ecole Publique: Primary school

Minépia: Ministry of fisheries

Fabrique de Glace: Ice factory

Chambre Froide: Cold room

Bars: Bars

Résidence Privée: Private house

Pirogues : Canoes

Piste: Caravan

Route: Main road

Océan: Ocean

Garage: Motor repair shop

Marché de Londji : Londji market

Boutique: Shop

Maisons: Houses

Camp Nigérien: Nigerian's quarter

First time as researcher in Londji Plage

I've been in this village for two weeks in 2009. It was my friend Hassan who invited me to visit him. I discovered this small place and the activities of fishing. Actually, Hassan has an ice factory and cold room, he is a canoe owner, a spokesman of people from the North and he also has a good relationship with people. During my field work, he was my main informant.

I was excited by the social life of Londji Plage and I decided to do my research there after I got a scholarship to study in Norway. Equipped by video camera, tapes and note books, I went to stay for several months in this village.

I chose this project for many reasons:

Personally, I wanted to discover how people live and exchange their cultures. I did a research before in my home area in Kousseri in the North of Cameroon⁵. I had a feeling to know everything about my topic before going on the field work. In fact I was influenced by prejudices. It seemed that I knew the answers to my questions I had addressed before entering the field. Doing Anthropology at home for me is doing research under pressure of prejudices. It was working inside my society and that means I could not see or visualize the social realities as a researcher who wanted to learn and to understand what's happening in the social field. There was a barrier between me and the knowledge I wanted to discover. I described what the realities and the living conditions of people should be, not how the social life is. To be an outsider has a considerable advantage to learn and to understand each situation in the field. I decided to change, to go from North to South Cameroon, to learn and to understand new society and social life.

Fishing as main activity

Fish is an economic resource for many ethnic groups: local and migrant. We can distinguish between two kinds of canoes: canoes motorized (with outboard motors) and rowing canoes used by fishermen. They are made of different dimensions such as canoes with outboard which are made by Nigerians. The crew is composed by two fishermen. The native people also have their canoes made by tree trunk they are very special and only used for subsistence fishing. The canoes made by Nigerian are bigger than the canoes made by local people. Nigerians use planks to build up their canoes and they are very appreciated by other people in Kribi. Everybody uses Nigerians canoes because they are used for large scale fishing. By using this kind of canoe, fishermen earn a lot of money which is the philosophy of Nigerian canoe owners and fishermen. The famous outboard motor used by canoe owners comes from

⁵ I had studied children begging from Koran School in their daily life in Kousseri.

Japan which is the Yamaha Enduro 15 model. It's less cheap in Nigeria compared to Cameroon because of the tax. Nigerian fishermen also use different kind of fishing nets.

Customers come from different areas to buy fish in Londji Plage. The commercialization of fresh fish is controlled by women called *Buyam sallam*. Canoe owners or fishermen wives smoke fish in Londji Plage. The roasting of fish is a preserve of women and young girls. Boys at the beach control the transportation of fish from the canoe to the land. These boys are referred to as *Bolomen*. They also clean and get ready the canoes for fishermen. The ice factories play an important role in fishing business because they supply fishermen with ice. The cold rooms stock ice and keep the fish fresh.

Migrant fishermen

Fishing activity attracts many people in Londji Plage and different fishermen come from Nigeria and Northern Cameroon.

- Nigerians

The first Nigerian arrived in Londji Plage around 1950. He was accepted by the local people and the chief of the village gave him a place to settle. Then, little by little others came from Nigeria to fish and then settle in this village. At the beginning, they started fishing and sharing their product with the local people. After that Nigerian created their camp, they call it *camp Nigerian*, which means Nigerian camp. The materials of the fishing were very traditional at the beginning, they came with small rowing canoes and they had only one kind of net called *fillet de Bonga*⁶. They came for the first time to capture a special fish called "*Bonga*". This fish can be consumed immediately fresh or smoked. But the majority of fish is smoked, at that time; they could not keep their fish fresh for long time because the ice factories didn't exist in the village.

A few years after, other Nigerian came with new method of fishing and they started to fish other kind of fish and built new canoe a little bit long than the first one. Now in Londji Plage Nigerian canoes dominate the fishing industry. The migrant canoes are used by everybody in this village and the majority of canoes belong to Nigerian. During my field work I observed the presence of several churches in Londji Plage. After few days I observed that only the local people went to pray in Catholic Church. In the Nigerian camp there are many other Churches such as Christ Church, Orthodox Church and Celestial Church. All these Churches belong to Nigerian and they are built in plank. When I asked one of my informants a question about religion, who is from celestial Church, he answered: "*I am a priest of the Church and you will*

⁶ Stable net

find the truth in it. We use water to solve all kind of problems we have. For example if you have a headache, we will give you water to heal it". That's to say people identify themselves by different Churches. In the village, everybody knows who belong to which Church. Certain Nigerian fishermen who married to Cameroonian women attract their wives to their Churches.

-Northern fishermen

For many years in Cameroon, there is the problem of unemployment and many people leave their homes to find jobs in towns like Yaoundé and Douala. Sometimes, most of the people are not able to find a job and continue their way through the fishing area. Some of them only learned to fish in Londji Plage. When fishermen from the North arrive in this village, they start by helping fishermen loading canoes and unloading fish. Then little by little, they go fishing as members of a crew. Today many Northerners are good fishermen and have a good reputation and experience in fishing. People say in Londji Plage: *"a good fisherman is a person who catches a lot of fish"*.

The film

In the film **"LONDJI PLAGÉ: A fishing community in Cameroon"** I chose to show some interaction of people in social life. This film is a documentary of living conditions of people in Londji Plage and gives a representation of life which differs from text. My main character is Hassan, shown in multiple fields and his relationship with other fishermen. He struggled to get back again in the fishing activity after he lost his fishing equipment twice because of trawlers which destroyed his nets in sea. We see also Hassan very preoccupied by the education of her daughter. When he is doing something like fixing the net or arranging his canoe, a group of young fishermen help him every time. This group of young fishermen is also very important in the film and represents the place of young fishermen within the society. The three young boys have a very good relationship, they are very connected to each other, they like rapping and dancing because they seem belonging to a category of young group called **"yor"**. They are fishermen and they are struggling to have a good life as well. They are always in conflict with canoe owners. In the film I also show how the buyers called *Buyam sallam* struggling to control the fresh fish market. They are very influential in this economic sector. There are many arguments between them, fishermen and canoe owners. The buyers from Yaoundé also give their opinion about Londji Plage and fishing activity. In the film, Israel migrant fisherman testifies the persecution of fishermen from Nigeria by the police. They are forced to pay each year the resident permit.

Research questions

My motivation was the idea of discovery. I was very impressed by the way of life, interactions and the organization of fishing activity by migrant fishermen.

My objective of this was to learn and to understand the situation of fishermen or migrant fishermen in Cameroonian coastal area. Identities of fishermen are a big factor to understand the complexity of the society. I wanted to show how identities are constructed in different scales between migrant and local, between migrant and migrant; and between Nigerian and State. It was to show strategy of integration of different migrant: Nigerian and fishermen from the North of Cameroon. I also focused on the migrant careers.

A. How is the socio-economic life connected to the migrant's fishing activity organized in Londji Plage?

This question concerns the fishing activity in the social life of people in Londji Plage. Fisheries existed before the arrival of migrant fishermen but Nigerian modernized the fishing equipment, they introduced new canoes, nets and outboard motor. They are very involved in this activity and have a great position in fish economy. The commerce of fish became very fruitful and the buyers come from big city to buy fish. I analyze how the Nigerian and migrant fishermen in general control the fishing activity, and how this fish is commercialized and the role of migrant women in the economy.

B. What are the migrant's career patterns, identities and what characterizes the interethnic collaboration in Londji Plage?

This second question focuses both on migrant fishermen from Nigeria and from the North of Cameroon. Here, I want to present how Nigerian fishermen arrived and why they left their home to settle in this village, the reason of their movement, how they are organized, and their relation with local people and State. Do Nigerian fishermen go back home? Or how they manage to integrate into the community? We have two categories of migrant and their careers are also different. It's important to know their different career patterns and how their different identities are constructed.

Outline

My text is structured in five parts. The first part deals with methodology aspect and theories. I used participant observation as a main tool; I worked with and without camera. I used also the focus group discussion, interview and Jean Rouch's method: cinéma-vérité. The choice of

informants and characters was a challenge for me to find the right way to collect data and to film. During two months I worked in the editing room to build up a film and it's important to discuss film and text in Anthropology of today. Many theoretical perspectives helped me to analyze my empirical material in part two. I had used interaction analysis. Part three presents migrant fishermen and their social organization. This chapter will analyze the modernization of the fishing activity by migrant fishermen and how they are organized in their community. I will describe the fishing activity through the different kinds of canoes, nets, outboards and fishing knowledge. I will also present the different categories of canoe owners by focusing on the migrant's career and identities. We have different actors working together and they have different motivations, strategies and different background. The relation between canoe owners and crew become an important tool of my analysis because of the conflict between them. We also have many example of relationship or interethnic collaboration between migrant/local and between migrant/migrant. The economic interest leads people to live together and collaborate. People create social network through the fishing activity. Marriage and the control of fishing activity illustrate the strategies of integration. Part four analyzes the commercialization of fish. In this chapter, I will analyze also the commercialization of fish through the canoe owners to buyers. We have different kind of fish: fresh fish, smoked fish, roasted fish and fried fish. Fresh fish is the target Buyam sallam who come from the towns to buy it. Smoked fish is a commerce reserved to canoe owner's wives or fishermen wives. Roasted fish is a young girl job. Through this analysis, we will see the role of women and young girls in the mechanism of socio- economic organization or social system of migrant fishermen in Londji Plage. Part five present the relation between migrant and State bureaucracy, Minepia, police and marine's army.

1. METHODOLOGY

Before I traveled, I asked myself about the security of my video camera. It belonged to University of Tromsø and I talked to my contact person on phone how to solve this matter. He told me that I could share his house and he promised me to secure my camera. This initiative of Hassan encouraged me to do my research there. I traveled by motorbike through a small road littered by holes and puddle. When I arrived in the afternoon, people looked at me as a tourist because some of the guys do not know who I am and I had three big bags like a tourist. My presence attracted attention of guys playing football near Hassan's house; they stopped playing and looked at me and two guys came to help me. Before the sunset, I did a quick round in the village to meet people who remembered me. After two hours it started raining and I had to join Hassan's house for the night.

I collected data by observing, interviewing, filming and taking notes in my hand book. Data collected are qualitative and quantitative. I used different techniques and the main methodological tool is the participant observation, then other methods (focus group and interview) helped me to reach my goal in the field. I faced many challenges by working with and without video camera.

1.1 Methods used

Participant observation is a basic method in social science: "*Participant allows you to experience activities directly, to get the feel of what events are like, and to record your own perspectives*" (Spradley 1980: 51). To conduct a research, ethnographers must use this method which is situated in several levels. In the field I started observing step by step. At the beginning, I was outsider in the field and Spradley said: "*It is entirely possible to collect by observing alone*" (Spradley 1980: 59). I would simply observe the facts and how life was going around. Then I became more and more involved in the life. I became active helped by my main informant. Sometimes, I helped Hassan in the ice factory and cold room. I tried to do what people did during the day. According to Spradley again: "*Active participation begins with observation, but as knowledge of what others do grows, the ethnographer tries to learn the same behavior*" (1980: 60). Gradually I started to introduce my video Camera into the study process and became a participant and eyewitness. During my research I familiarized with the population and I tried to participate in their activities. Staying long on the field work is the basic method of research in anthropology. The time I spent in Londji Plage allowed me to collect different materials. I took notes and collected visual data. My participation in the social life was a key issue of the research even though I had my friend who helped me a lot to

enter there. Classic anthropologist as “*Malinowski and his students*” insisted on participant. They “*put very great emphasis on living among the people they studied. The purpose of this daily contact was to enable them to collect concrete evidence about their subjects’ lives*”. (Davies 1998, 2008: 79) It is a necessary approach to integrate into the life of people being studied which make confident by your presence in the field. My advantage was also the language. People spoke French even though each ethnic group had his own language. I’m a francophone and French was the language of communication. But I didn’t manage to go fish with fishermen for two reasons: the security of the video camera and my own security.

After few days living among the villagers, I was integrated as a member of the society and I got information that I needed. I used also other methods of investigation to get more information about the situation in Londji Plage.

Focus group consists of asking questions about a group of persons about their life or experience. It was useful for my project because I got different point of views at the same moment. I used the focus group in a way to quickly gather information and point of view. It allowed me to identify the main theme and also to make confrontation between canoe owners/fishermen and elders/younger. I used it several times during the market day or normal days to get different point of views. Each time, I introduced the topic of discussion. I asked many questions about fishing activity and social life in Londji Plage. I conducted many group discussions in which I was the moderator of all session.

Interview is a method of data collection which consists of establishing a relation between informant and researcher. I used this technique to get information from persons who had knowledge about activities, village or knowledge about people living in this area. I think this method gave a freedom of choice to answer to the questions addressed. I started by interviewing my main contact who was Hassan and from him I got a lot of information concerning life and the structure of the village. I interviewed many other people with the goal to get different information and to compare them. I interviewed also the young and elder fishermen separately. By the interview, I exchanged and communicated with different actors. The knowledge of the language has made easier my observation and my understanding of interaction, life and behavior of fishermen. By observation I saw “*what*” people in Londji Plage “*do*” and listened to “*what*” they said but it was not enough to understand everything. When I arrived in Londji Plage, I observed that fishermen from Nigeria lived separated from others. I got many ways which explain that fact. It is because they want to live in group, close

to water and to secure their canoes. For my research it was wise to approach them by interviewing, communicating and then comparing “*what they do*” and “*what they say*”. This is to find the sense of certain behavior and interaction. According to Spradley people sometime do not talk or express thing directly. We must observe and listening carefully “*what they do, what they say*” and which artifacts they use (1980: 11). Basically the structure type was used.

1.2 Doing research without camera

First I planned to start by observing without camera. I thought that it was not beneficial to start filming at the beginning of my field work. I should start to familiarize with the environment by observing people and how things are organized in the village. I went to MINEPIA office to meet the representative called Fredy. I presented myself as a student from university of Tromsø and I want to conduct a research about migrant fishermen. He gave me access with a few advices. He told me: «*you are welcome but there is something that the president does not want, there are something my minister does not want, there is something I do not want and so on...*” Then I went to meet the second person who was the chief of the village. He received me very well and I did the same presentation and he was very happy to meet me. He accepted my presence, he was very interested with my project; he encouraged me to do a good project. I did the same thing with the Nigerian chief. At the beginning I talked only to these three important people in Londji Plage. This situation gave me trust among the villagers. I talked about my project (the text and film) with anybody I met. During that time, my camera was in the bag. Every day in Londji Plage when I walked to observe people, situation and action, I seemed to be invisible. Nobody asked me who I am or what I did here. I felt as an inhabitant of the village. I think my complexion had played a big role in my entrance to them without camera and also my relation with Hassan helped me to grasp certain realities and difficulties in Londji Plage. Everybody knew that Hassan was my friend. People approach me, they knew I am a Cameroonian student and we spoke the same language to communicate. My strategy to approach them first without camera was beneficial. The Nigerian immigrant spoke “pigin” but everybody could speak French with me. After one month, I felt that I was a member of the village and I got information about the Nigerian establishment in this village, their social organization, I observed without any difficulties their interaction. I took notes at the end of the day.

1.3 Video camera in the field

I started to film with my camera from the 11th of May 2010. For me it seemed easier to find a main character and filmed him/her. The first day I tried to film only the sea, rocks, palm oil and canoes. When people saw my camera they asked a lot of questions and they seemed skeptical suddenly. I explained that, the film I am going to do is for my thesis; my master's degree. Some people asked if I worked for Canal 2 international or Crtv⁷. I was very surprised by their new reaction.

Sometimes the local channels come to cover events at the beach and end up showing awful scenes of the village. When I tried to film actions taking place at Hassan's cold room, I faced challenges because many people and buyers did not want to be filmed. I was very discouraged by the situation because the same people accepted me and discussed their life and activities with me just few days past. I immediately thought that these people refused the video camera for something. Maybe the problem was the local channel Canal 2 which showed the unpleasant scenes on television. That was my hypothesis about their behavior. I did not film when people refused the camera, I stopped and tried to talk, to convince them about my project but I lost important scenes at that moment. I was very surprised when I heard a young guy saying to a *buyam sallam* that: "*you refuse to be filmed because he is black. Why do you accept white?*" I imagined that within the context of superiority and inferiority but this situation was generalized. Each individual had his own perception and I could not know their reason.

The next day when I walked in the village to find who I am going to film. I met Israel a Nigerian fisherman who arranged his net in front of the beach. He spoke French like a Cameroonian. After the presentation of my project, he immediately started to talk about the problem of immigrants and the problem of fishermen in Londji Plage. He was very interested in the project but when I told him about the film and I asked if I could film him, he changed the conversation and I observed that he was skeptical about the video camera. I continued to converse with him about activity of fishing.

I went home without a concrete solution about who I am going to follow during the rest of my research. The idea of my film was about migrant fishermen in their daily activities. I planned to follow two migrant fishermen but I didn't find someone who accepted to be filmed.

After a few days, I decided to follow Hassan because of his background. He is a migrant like Nigerian and he came from the North of Cameroon. Hassan has different status and roles in Londji Plage. He is a general secretary to the chief, he is a representative of Cameroonian

⁷ Canal 2 international and Crtv (Cameroon radio television) are the local channels in Cameroun.

from North, he is a fisherman and he is also an icemaker as I presented him before. The different roles and statuses of Hassan gave me an idea to follow him. He has many friends among Nigerian fishermen. I could not wait a long time for my film because of time. I told Hassan about my decision and he accepted immediately. I asked to film him in different arenas when he is working in the factory, in the cold room and when he is arranging the net. Finally, I got access to film Hassan and I was very happy. I started filming and following him from May 24th.

When I filmed Hassan, people in Londji Plage started to ask question why I filmed Hassan only. At this moment, I realized that people became jealous of Hassan and they started to not avoid my camera. Then I started to film other people in different areas like market and bars. They came and asked me: "*please can you film me*". I could not realize that because few days ago, the villagers refused my video camera and now some started to fell comfortable in front of the camera but the acceptance was not general. Some people refused to be film until I left the field work. I never got their reasons because they just said: "*no don't film me*"

During my research, I found the method of Jean Rouch very useful. He invented cinema-vérité method to show another way to make film about realities. In the film *Chronicle of a summer 1960*, we see Rouch provoking people to talk about their life. Mari Lou one of the characters talked about his life, we see on her face the emotion and she was crying. It was a true history of this woman who came in Paris to find a good life. I used this method to provoke my characters to talk about their situation or their life in Londji Plage. I confronted fishermen and canoe owners about their conflict situation. This method allowed me to observe them during the argument and to get the real version of facts.

1.4 The choice of informants and characters

Concerning the choice of informants, I observed the situation and interaction between actors before indentifying the main informant I wanted to approach. I chose to ask first people having position in the village like the chief, the representative of ministry of fisheries, and the Nigerian representative. These people had a lot of information which help me to know the Nigerian situation in Londji Plage, the relation between local and migrant and the interaction between fishermen or canoe owners and the authorities. I thought that it was good to approach some old people, because they are supposed to know the history of the village and how they saw the life in Londji Plage in the past and now. All categories of people are concerned by my research. Many activities are connected to fishing and I was interested in all opinions of

people involved in the fishing activities particularly people in perpetual interaction like fishermen, canoes owners, buyers and young boys.

Before going for my research, I planned to choose two Migrant fishermen who work together in the same canoe and one migrant canoe owner who is the boss of the two fishermen. My film should show how fishery is organized in this area, knowledge about this activity and how Nigerian fishermen interact with their Boss, or with other fishermen and other Bosses. I should show how the daily life in Londji Plage. My film should also show the problem of Nigerian identity in this area.

I also followed my characters in multiple spheres: during the fishing activity, in the bar, in the village, at home, and during the market day. I mentioned that fishermen go fishing two times per week.

When I arrived in the village, the film idea I had in my project changed, I immediately found that there was another group of migrant fishermen from Northern Cameroon and they were very involved in the fishing activity. I chose Hassan as main character because of the difficulties I faced by working with the camera in the field. The young boys were relaxed in front of the camera and in the film they convey a lot of information about the situation in Londji Plage. I needed these actions and interaction in my film and the role of buyers (buyam sallam) to show how they are very influential in this activity. During the market day, there are a lot of people; the selling of fish is a situation where you can see how fishermen and buyers discuss and negotiate prices.

1.5 Editing process

It was a crucial step to show how the film would be structured and the text. I spent two months in the editing room accompanied by a filmmaker who was in charge to supervise my film. The first challenge was how to select good image and good sound. I had more than 1400 minutes at the beginning and I had to edit and reduce it to 30 minutes for the final film. We had three films seminars which assisted to build up an idea about the film and to get feedback from teachers and fellow students. Seminars were perfect and I got many responses which helped me to structure the idea of the film.

Ethnographic film is different from fiction (Hollywood films). By watching all my film material, I discovered many things which helped me to find the themes of my thesis. Many interviews I made with migrants and fishermen in general gave me more ideas about what I will do in my thesis. During the editing process I got the idea to focus precisely on migrant fishermen. I started first to select good images and good sounds, then I made small sequences

of 4 minutes maximum. The objective of the editing process is to reconstruct the social realities. It's not to cut and put together good image in logical way. I marked all the tapes I had made by date and name of the scene. My film supervisor told me that: "*editing is to make the reality much better because the film is made for an audience*". I asked myself why I had to choose a particular image and not the others and why I thought that this image is not important for the audience. My task was to be faithful to my film idea and represented the social realities of interaction between actors.

1.6 Film and text: complementary

From structural point of view, text and film are different in some way. What we can do with the text, we cannot do with the film and vice versa. The text respects certain values of anthropology like methodology, theories and analysis of empirical data. For example, my thesis gives an understanding of settlement of migrant fishermen in Londji Plage, their social organization through the different ethnic group which comprises the Nigerian community and migrant from the North; their strategies of integration and identities. "**LONDJI PLAGE: A fishing community in Cameroon**", is a visual representation of social realities and living conditions of people. In the film we see how actors expressing their opinion, emotion, joy and annoys. Visual media can be use to explore where anthropological writing has approach with some difficulty (MacDougall 2006). It's to say film and text are complementary. Image and text contribute to build up knowledge in social sciences.

2. PERSPECTIVE THEORIES

Before entering the field, I had defined three theories which could help to collect data by focusing on their analytical concepts. I chose Goffman, Barth and Grønhaug theories respectively by the concepts of *interaction*, *social organization*, *ethnicity and social field*. During the research, I realized that I needed another theory to get more focus on migrant fishermen who were the point of my interest from the departure. I added to these theories two approaches defined by Cordell, Gregory and Piché for the study of migration in West Africa: *Microindividual models and household models*. The aim of the choice of these theories is: data collection and the analysis of empirical material. They are different in methodological point of view but there is a common point between them. It is the study of *interactions* in social life. By these theories I will analyze the empirical data from the low level i.e. interaction between two actors (Goffman 1973) to a high level: the social fields studied by Grønhaug. All these theories are complementary because in their analyses they occupied by interactions in social life but in multiples circumstances.

2.1 Goffman

Goffman was occupied by interaction between two actors in micro level within the society. He considers the interactions as the games where actors behave like strategies, calculating person who manipulate the information to reach their goals (Goffman 1973). For example this theory helps to understand the interaction between canoe owners and fishermen. Here each actor uses different strategies to maintain his position or his status. By the interaction between these actors, I found that fishermen and canoe owners are always in conflict. We observe the same situation between buyers and canoe owners and fishermen. The micro analysis of Goffman show how each action has its meaning when two actors are interact and the perception each has from the other.

2.2 Fredrick Barth

Barth used “*generative modeling*” to identify the empirical processes that, in their “*aggregate, shape social and cultural forms*”. He analyzes theoretical foundations on “*strategy*” and “*choice*”. Here I want to grasp the interactions between different actors who have different statuses and roles in society. Barth tried to show how within a society, actors have statuses and roles that each actor tries to make choice and uses strategy to preserve position. His basic point was that anthropologist need to “*study processes, not merely*

patterns”, and construct “*generative models*” that can explain how social forms come about, rather than simply summarize and characterized such forms (Barth 1981). In *Models of organization* (Barth 1981), writes that a generative model seeks to identify a set of factors that, through specified operations, will produce a determined output. This output can usefully be compared with descriptions of the empirical forms of a society to test our understanding of the systems and the empirical processes than sustain them. This generative model tries to identify sets of regular events, processes, which lead toward the emergence of such observed form in a local or regional system. The status is the position occupied by an individual or an actor in the social life. The social areas are multiple and statuses are also. A man can be a husband, father, football player, and hunter. An individual is thus defined horizontally relative to his peers (his colleagues for example) and vertically by its place in a hierarchy (professional). Each status has its specific rights and obligations. The rights and obligations assigned to a status materialize in social roles that individual behaviors are expected by a group in a social situation.



1. In this picture we see different people around the fish: buyers and fishermen in interaction.

Londji Plage is a local community where fishing is a principal activity. The analysis of Barth can help me to understand the relation between actors in different arenas and how the fishing activity generates a kind of social organization. The situation taking place at the beach between fishermen, canoe owners, *bolomen*, buyers and ice makers is such that each actor has statuses and roles which allow the operation of the fishing activity as a social system. Each actor plays his role whilst canoe owners use different strategies to keep the control as bosses.

Barth study also ethnic group and their boundaries, he wrote that an ethnic group: *“has a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order”* (Barth 1969:11). Nigerian migrant are seen as an ethnic group, it’s the same thing for the fishermen from the North of Cameroon who constitute one group. But inside each group we find different ethnics. That is the vision of local people. If we consider Nigerian fishermen as an ethnic group, Barth in his analysis tries to define ethnic groups and their boundaries. Here I want to analyze the interactions between the members of Nigerian community, how they are organized and how they interact with local people. Inside Nigerian community people identify themselves by ethnic groups (Eladje, Kalaba and Idjo) and each group has its own local language. It’s important to understand how they maintain their relation to each other. The national feeling allow Nigerians to live very closely. The interactions between migrant and locals will help me to know how they interact and collaborate. Fishing is an activity which put together the different actors in a situation where each group gets his goal by interaction. The study of migrant career patterns becomes very important to indentify the different careers for both Nigerian and fishermen from the North. How they identify themselves in front of local people. In spite of their integration Nigerian fishermen are still identified by the locals as foreigners.

2.3 Grønhaug

He uses the concept of social field to describe the life of peasants in interaction with other people and how the interaction between different people leads to a complex society. He sees *“the individuals in society as social actors who make choice, pursue goals, and maximize values. This view raises a series of problems pertaining to the collective reality of which individuals are part”*. (1975:2)

Grønhaug in describing the social system says values and forms of meanings are socially created. At the same time this “socially” created, serve as constraints to which men submit when they act vis-a-vis each other. According to Grønhaug *“field”* is a system constituted by series of interrelated elements of multiple individuals, interaction and communication (1975: 3). During my research, I discovered three social fields in Londji Plage. The first one is the fishing; the second is the commercialization of fish and the third is the relation between migrant and State bureaucracy. All these social fields are interconnected, but can be distinguish from each other for analysis purpose.

2.4 Theory of migration

Cordell, Gregory and Piché (1996) define three models and theoretical approaches for the study of migration in West Africa.

- “*Microindividual models*”

- “*Household models*”

- “*Historical-structural models*”

For my text I interested to Microindividual models and household models.

1. In their approach of *micro individual models*, Cordell, Gregory and Piché defined three variants. The first one is when the migrant return home. Some fishermen from Nigeria return home but I don't have data, the exact number of fishermen who return and their motivation. According to Cordell et al. “the migrant fishermen returns home to the village after realizing her or his monetary objectives, at least in part because she or he is deeply attached to the village life and social institutions (1996: 14). In Londji Plage, one finds fishermen coming from urban areas and this migration is not like *rural-urban* or *rural-rural* as define in the book *Hoe and Wage* but it is *urban-rural*. The second variant concern the lone migrate who decide whether or not to migrate. Here I think it's the case of migrant from the North. They migrate alone; some of them seek an employment and finally arrive in Londji Plage. This is because of the Cameroonian economic situation. People leave their homes in towns like Maroua⁸, Garoua⁹ to the village. Hassan and other fishermen from the North are a concrete example. The third variant focuses on mobility of migrant to change their destination each time. They follow money and try to find where they can earn that money. It's difficult to find this case in Londji Plage because the majority of fishermen are stable.

2. The *household models* concern the control of household heads, marriage arrangements, lands distribution, herds and kinds of prestige goods (Cordell and all. 1996: 17). Here, in this perspective, I will try to see how the household of migrant is composed and how they are organized in Londji Plage compare to others. The family is composed by father, mother, children and other members. The number is also the force of household. The head of the family transmits the fishing knowledge to other generation. In Londji Plage, marriage doesn't have a limit because there are many interethnic marriages.

⁸ Head of administrative area in the Far North Cameroon

⁹ Head of administrative area in the North Cameroon

3. MIGRANT FISHERMEN

Nigerian fishermen living in Londji Plage belong to Yoruba's tribe which is the larger group shared between three countries Nigeria, Benin and Ghana. The migrant fishermen come from the South-West of Nigeria from different areas like Kwara, Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Ondo and Lagos. Inside Yoruba tribe, there are many subgroups which have their own languages Eladje are principal marine fishermen of Nigeria (Annet Ijff 1991, 255). Thereby one finds two main Nigerian ethnic groups in Londji Plage: Eladje and Idjo. Fishing is the main economic activity and food for both contrary to migrant fishermen in Guinée Conakry who have other activity during the period where fish becomes scarce. During the labor period, canoes are removed from water and all people are mobilized for the farming (Bouju 1999). These ethnic groups (Eladje, Kalaba and Idjo), moved in certain time of their history to find a place along the coastal area. By oar canoe, they travelled by different short-stop and arrived in Cameroonian coastal area. The origin of that migration is the search for new area with full of fish, the free access to the artisanal fisheries; the lack of boundaries surveillance and the access to socio-economic integration. In this chapter, I want to present the modernization of artisanal fishery by Nigerian and their social organization through the conception of the family, association, and the households. The relation between migrant and local will show how they are perceived in Londji Plage. Migrant fishermen from the North constitute another category of actors with different origin of migration. It's important to describe the migrant career patterns and the strategy of integration of those fishermen.

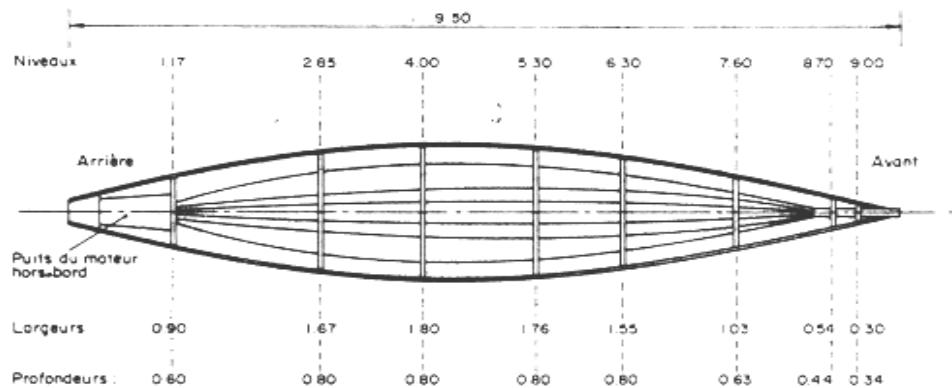
3.1 Modernization of artisanal fishery

The migrant fishermen arrived in Londji Plage with small canoe made of boards without outboard motor and they used oar to sail. Today, many things have changed and migrant fishermen found the importance of fish economic. They introduced the outboard motor in fishing activity in 1974 but the canoe was still small. The size varied from 7 to 9.5 meters (Olorunwa¹⁰).

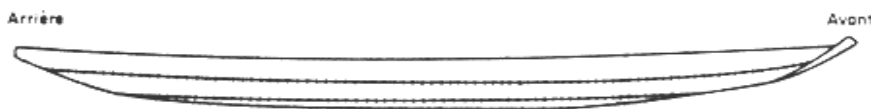
It was made entirely of boards, generally rectangular shape for the sides of the boat and triangular ends. The timbers are joined by countless nails where are lines on the sides under construction; the boards are shaped using several clamps. The shape is characterized, in front, by the presence of a bow together the edges of both sides. The canoe is propelled by an engine

¹⁰ Olorunwa is the chief of Nigerian fishermen; he was born in 1952 in Londji. He belongs to Eladje ethnic group and he has 4 canoes.

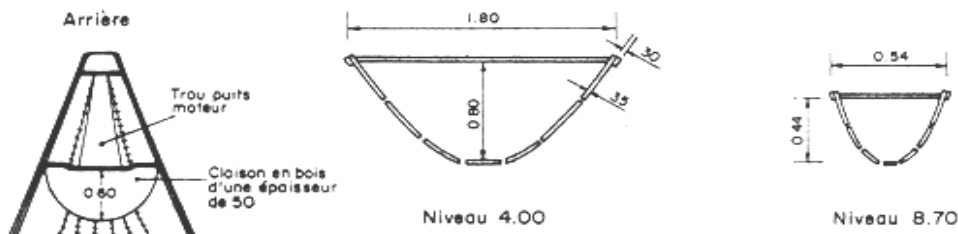
on board, installed in a well (a kind of hole); smaller units can advance to the veil. Among Nigerian fishermen, Kalaba are specialized in canoe construction and nobody else can build a canoe in Londji Plage. The other Nigerian groups are specialized only in fisheries.



Vue de dessus



Vue de profil



Vues en coupe

1. Nigerian canoe: FAO 1987

This map show canoe made by Nigerian from 1973 after their settlement in Londji Plage. They started using outboard motor from France with a power of 4 Ch¹¹ but this model was not performing, and then a few years later, they changed it to Yamaha from Japan. Actually, they use Yamaha Enduro 15 with a power of 40 Ch. Today the fishing activity has an impact in economic and daily life of Cameroonian; and the demand for fish increase each year. The new canoe varies from 8 to 11 meters; it's a bit long than the old one. It allows fishermen to go

¹¹ 4 Ch means the power of the motor.

fishing far away, this canoe takes on board two fishermen with a big fish box which is able to contain 500 kilos. Londji Plage counts on more than 100 canoes with outboard motor and more than 80 of the canoes belong to Nigerian fishermen.



2 and 3. Canoes used in Londji Plage



4. Out board

- We have net called *Drift net* which captures big fish. This net captures big Fish as big Bar, captain, pike, big carp. The net called *filet de Bonga/alloge* or *filet de surface/filet de friture* is used only for small fish and medium like *Bonga* and bar.

- Long line for big carps.



5. *Drift net*

These nets are used underwater in canoes using outboard 40 Ch for night fishing from October to December to capture captains, bars, catfish, red carp and sharks. Fishermen also use this net to harvest big fish around 15 kilos to 30 kilos.



6. Net for medium fish (two young fishermen fixing stable net)

These nets are used in canoes made of boards (8 m) with outboard motor (8 Ch.) for afternoon fishing to catch fish called *Bonga*.

<p>Kind of nets or material used to fish</p>	<p>-Drift net: for big fish</p> <p>-Stable net: for small fish</p> <p>-Long line: for medium fish</p> <p>-Filet friture: for small fish</p>
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These nets are brought by migrant fishermen particularly Nigerian. They are the main actors in the development of artisanal marine fishery in Londji Plage. Their objective was for large scale economy of fishing and they left their home to earn money to reinvest in fishing industry because they don't have another alternative economic activity.

Fish species	Bars, Captain, Cat fish, Carp, <i>Bonga</i> , Pike, <i>Carangue</i> , Willow, Whellfish, Skate, Dolphin, Turtle, Snail, Oyster, Mule, <i>Bossu</i>
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7. Medium Bar

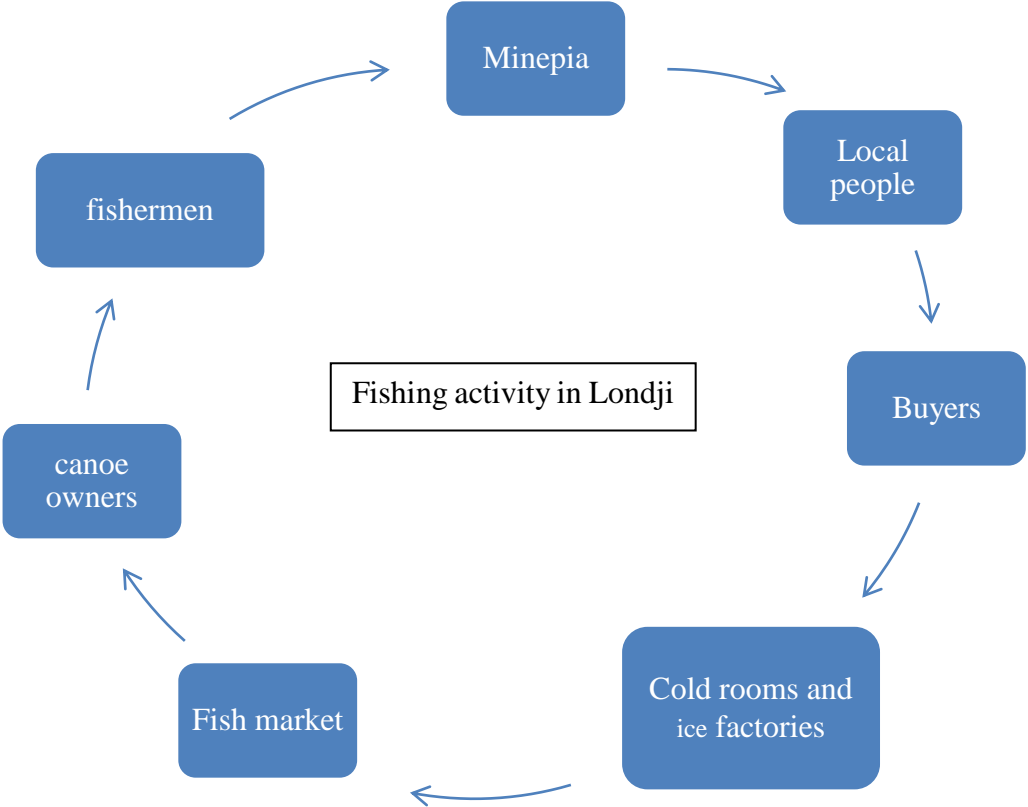


8.Pike

These fish in the pictures above are the best which is consumed by many customers. The price depends on the availability in the market.

The boss or canoe owner gives canoe, engine, rack and food to fishermen. In Londji Plage, we have different bosses from different ethnic groups; it is the same thing for the fishermen. The boss does not go fish; he stays outside and waits for the fishermen come back from the sea. There are two fishermen operating one canoe who goes fishing two times per week. They go on Monday and back on Wednesday, and then go on Thursday and back on Saturday. The payment of fishermen depends on the quantity of fish harvested. Fish is shared into four portions: canoe, engine, net, and two fishermen. It means that a canoe owner gets 75% and the crew (2 fishermen) shares 25%.

Fishermen from the North of Cameroon have a special role in the social life in Londji Plage. They are not canoe owner like Nigerian because among them, we find only one canoe owner who is Hassan. There are 21 Northern fishermen, some of them have experience in fisheries because eleven come from Lagdo¹² and Maga¹³, these areas are known as fisheries zones in Cameroon. The rest of the migrants learned fishery in this village because they were looking for job and their arrival was haphazard. By learning fishing, they became a very important work force in this domain.



2. System of interconnection between social actors and institution

Everything is connected to the fishing activity and many people from different statuses are interconnected. There are many interactions between actors in the social life in Londji Plage and this interconnection creates power, interdependence and collaboration (Barth 1981). Through the fishing activity, each actor plays a role in this social system. On the diagram above, each category is specific and composed of different statuses as we observe. Their interaction maintains the fishing activity and the economy of fish. To earn money, the social actors use many strategies like relationship, interethnic collaboration, marriage, and identities.

¹² Fishing area located in the North of Cameroon. It is a small village on the Benoué river.

¹³ It's a fishing area located in Far North.

3.2 Migrant social organization

Nigerians are stationed between the ocean and the river and as I mentioned it before they chose this place to secure their fishing equipment. The Nigerian camp is exclusively for people from Nigeria and the houses are very close to each other. Life there is similarly to their home country because inside the camp they speak their own language but when they are outside, the common language is French. The Nigerian camp is a kind of home town or home village; foods they eat are brought from Nigeria. In spite of their settlement in this village, they have the home feeling. The social life is organized around the family (we need to clarify the meaning of that because family means father, mother, children, cousins and other members of family (Chauveau, Jul-Larsen and Chaboud 2000: 55)). The three main ethnic groups (Eladje, Kalaba and Idjo) have a chief who represent them in local system in Londji Plage and in other spheres. That is the significant of their unity because they need a leadership to represent them. Olorunwa is the representative of Nigerian community in this village; he plays a crucial role between local authority and the migrants. He has a good relationship and he was born in this village. When a litigious situation presented to him, he found immediately the solution by collaborating with the local chief of Londji Plage.

Migrant fishermen don't have an association as ARB¹⁴ in Pointe Noire in Congo (Jul-Larsen 2000) which deals with the problem of migrant fishermen. Some fishermen are organized in small association of five or ten people. They associated in the *Tontine*¹⁵ which helps them to save a lot of money and then to reinvest by buying new fishing equipment. Each participant gives the same amount at the end of week. One participant gets money after a month and they continue to do that until the entire participants receive their money. This is the main role of the Tontine.

In Londji Plage migrant are organized by families and households that need to be defined clearly.

"In human context, a family (from Latin: familiare) is a group of people affiliated by consanguinity, affinity, or co-residence. In most societies it is the principal institution for the socialization of children. Extended from the human "family unit" by biological-cultural affinity, marriage, economy, culture, tradition, honour, and friendship are concepts of family that are physical and metaphorical, or that grow increasingly inclusive extending to community, village, city, region, nationhood, global village and humanism. A family group

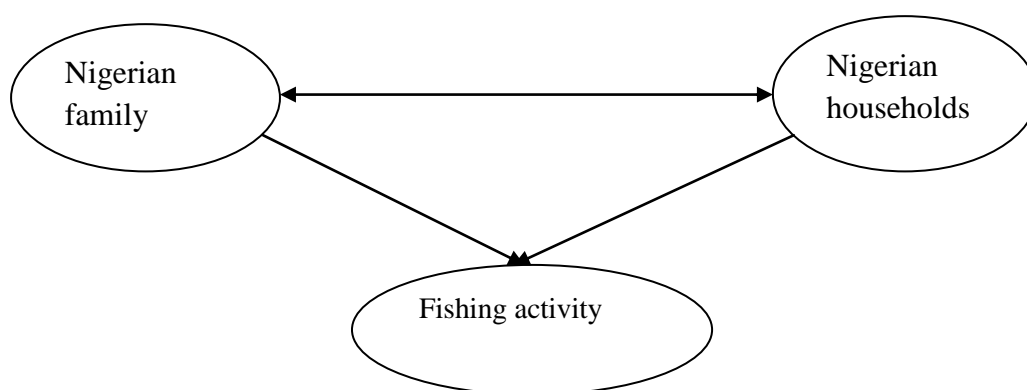
¹⁴ It's the name of fishermen from Benin. ARB means association of Beninois and in French *association des ressortissants Beninois*

¹⁵ It's a local organization not formal because it plays a role of bank but not recognized by the government. It's not paid the tax for government.

consisting of a father, mother and their children is called a nuclear family. This term can be contrasted with an extended family” (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. 2011, s.v. “Family”)

Migrant fishermen are organized around the family (father, mother and their children) and households which comprised by the link of family, relationship and ethnic group belonging. That is to say family in Londji Plage refers to “*kinship*” and households refer to “*propinquity or common residence*” (Yanagisako 1979, 162). Usually, the chief of the family in Nigerian camp is the father; he can be a canoe owner, fishermen or works as a member of the crew. Almost each family has a small canoe (8 meters) which is used sometimes to fish *Bonga*¹⁶. This strategy is used by many canoe owners to supply their other big canoes (9.5 to 11 meters) which are used principally for large scale fishing and investment. The small canoe is used by the head of family to go fish and their children participate in this trip which takes two or three hours per day. Children learn how to fish and the aim of the head of family is to transmit the knowledge and the love of the fishing activity. He prepares the children for the future. The fishing activity is transmitted from generation to generation.

The household is comprised by people belonging to an ethnic group, kinship or relationship. For example one fisherman will come from Nigeria and share the house with his or her family member before he becomes independent. After the marriage, he will create a new household for the new comers. Migrant from the North also use Hassan household as a transition place. Hassan house is particularly comprised by men only. Many guys passed by this house. For Example Mana and Bouba



3. Nigerian social organization in Londji Plage

¹⁶ It is a special fish that is smoked by women in Londji.

3.3 From canoe owner to the crew

One finds different actors involved in the fishing activity in Londji Plage. Here I'm concerned with canoe owners and the crew. They occupy a very important place, the owners buy all equipments: canoe, motor, nets, oil and food for the trip. They spend a lot of money to get those equipments. To have a very good canoe and gear, a canoe owner spends around 2.500.000F. Nigerian fishermen came with their objective to earn money in fishing industry. They exploit the fish resource for economy not only for subsistence as local people.

Fishermen or the crew have no materials belonging to them but they have their experiences and knowledge. Fishermen are not the same in Londji Plage and they don't have the same statuses. We distinguish them by their experience in fishing or by the quantity of fish brought from sea. If you are a good fisherman, you would be much in demand by canoe owners. Fishermen from the North of Cameroon are good in fishing but in this village people say that they drink much alcohol and when they are drunk, they cannot go fishing. I observed many discussions between a crew and their boss about this case. Hamidou is a good fisherman but he is always drunk. He has problem with his Boss Israel about alcohol.

When fishermen go fishing, the canoe owner stays in land and waits for their return. These two actors work together for a good results because they need money. The crew goes fish two time per week Monday and Saturday and always stays two nights minimum out of sea. Every Monday, canoe owner buy oil for outboard motor, ices to keep fish fresh and gives money for food (3000 F to each member of crew) because the crew will stay two nights. The boss spends something around 30 000 F and this depend on the distance where the crew will go.

From 2 pm, canoes start to move after the *boloman* are putting all the materials in the canoes. The job of *boloman* consists to get ready the canoe for the crew. *Boloman* are employed by the fishermen; they do this job when the crew wants to go fishing and when the crew comes back. They unload the fish brought and after their job, they get some kilos of fish, the quantity depends on the fish captured. That's how they are paid in Londji Plage.

The crew is composed of two fishermen and one is the boss. He is responsible for the canoe, drives and knows where to go fishing. The second fisherman helps the boss to control and pull up the net. Interaction between these fishermen shows how their collaboration is important to succeed out of sea. (Barth: 1981). When they arrive at the place where they supposed to fish, the two fishermen throw the net into water. After they finished throwing the net around 6 pm, they start to count and the net stays 4 hours in the water. During this time, they have their food in the small box; they eat if they are hungry. Sometime they are discuss and joke. One of

the fishermen told me that: *“you cannot go fish with your enemy because it is dangerous; you are only two in the canoe, nobody around you. If you go with your enemy, he will kill you! You have to choose a good collaborator, your friend may be”* (Samuel). After 4 hours the crew work together to pull up the net and put the fish in the box. They repeat the same thing each 4 hours and during the time of waiting, one of the fishermen can sleep and the second stays to control the net. Sometime when it's raining, the crew use plastic bag to cover and protect their skins. Each canoe has a **Boloman** (young boy working at the beach as canoe loader) who helps fishermen to transport the fish from canoe to the land. Fishermen must open the fix boxes at the presence of canoe owners. The old freezer is used as box to keep fish fresh. These freezers are not working; they use it to keep the piece of ices to keep fish in good quality. They put a big plastic bag on the ground and one of the fishermen picks fish by species. The fish called **Bar** is the first. When the bolomen finish their job, they get immediately their payment. They work under command of fishermen and they get two or three kilos of Bar.

The catch

The main fish harvested is Bar, buyers prefer it first to others fish species. The price depends of the availability in the market. The price varies from 2000F to 2500F that is from January to August. From September to November the price can go below 2000F until 1500F. One canoe can bring in average 40 kilos of fish but others can bring more than 100 kilos. For example if the crew and the canoe owner sell the fish and earn 200.000F, they take out the expenditure on maintenance (money spent by the canoe owner to buy oil for outboard motor and foods). This is an example of how money is shared.

$200.000 - 30.000 = 170.000F$ (that is when they earn 200.000F, 30.000F is taking out as expenditure)

They divide the rest in four parts:

$170000/4= 34000F$

The crew gets 68000F (34000 each fisherman)

Canoe owner gets 102000F

Canoe owner and fishermen sell their fish in the village. They do not want to smoke the fish or travel to sell it. They share money after selling the fish. If the boss works with good

fishermen, he can pay back the price of materials within 18 months. A canoe owner can earn 400 000F per month.

3.4 Conflict between canoe owners and fishermen

The relation between canoe owners and fishermen is a struggle for personal interest. Sometimes the canoe owners accuse fishermen stealing the fish and are not serious. Fishermen say that the canoe owners exploit them because they have to do the hard job, they stay in the sea under the rain for two nights and when they come back the canoe owner decides the price as he wants. In the film you see Bouba, Mana and Samuel complaining about canoe owners. They do not get the consent of fishermen to give the price. The fish harvested, belongs to fishermen and canoe owner. Fishermen say that canoe owners have particular relation with buyers.

One Saturday during the market day, Hassan and other guys sat around the table, they drank beer and ate fish. They discuss about life in Londji Plage and fishing activity. The discussion started by this question I had asked: *why fishermen and canoe owner are not in harmony?* This question excited everybody and the discussion immediately became very hot; it was like a lawsuit between Bouba and Sebastian. Bouba is Sebastian's fisherman he said that his salary is not enough and Sebastian was not agreeing with him. He said that Bouba is not serious because the payment depends on the fish brought and everybody finds his living in this activity. The problem is the money and fishermen are not agreeing that canoe owner get 75% of the money. That is the main problem between them. Fishermen think that canoe owners are not suffering; they stay at home and earn a lot of money. Also, the price of the fish is decided by the canoe owner and that makes fishermen unhappy. They accuse canoe owners to go out with *buyam sallam* because they negotiate the price of the fish only with the buyers.

3.5 Fishermen careers

In this part I will try to show different careers of fishermen. There are different backgrounds and identities among the fishermen and the young boys in Londji Plage. We have fishermen who have their parents doing this activity of fishing and others who started to learn fishing in Londji Plage at their arrival. Nigerians and fishermen from the North of Cameroon have different careers. It's important to analyze and compare them.

Israel: a fisherman and canoe owner

He is a man of 43 years old, born in Cameroon, his father and his mother came from Nigeria. Israel's father is a fisherman and the fishing is an activity of his family. His father came to

Cameroon around 1958. Israel went to school when he was a child, he studied in primary school of Londji Plage and he went to Kribi to continue the secondary school. During the holidays, Israel came back in village to learn how to fish with his father and then little by little he became a good fisherman. He studied in secondary for 6 years. He came back definitively when his father died. There was no body to take care of his father's canoe. Israel has one brother but he was also a child. Israel decided to stay permanently in Londji Plage, he took a Cameroonian wife, and with her he has 7 children. He married another wife from Nigeria, he got a child with her but they divorce earlier. Now he lives with her wife (Batanga) and their children study in school in Londji Plage.

Today Israel is a canoe owner, he has three canoes and he employs 4 fishermen. Everyday Israel goes fishing with his small canoe except Sundays, Saturdays and Wednesdays. He uses his small canoe to go fishing with his children not far away from the village. He harvests a small fish called *Bonga* for his wife. He teaches his children how to fish because fishing activity is an important inheritance of their family. His children must continue to fish after him, this is his thought and his goal. Israel fish for her wife, she smokes the fish and when she gets much, she sells it in market every Monday. This fish sold by Israel's wife help them to support their family, school of children and foods. The money from other Israel's canoes serves to renew nets and to buy new canoe as well. Fishery is the life of Israel; he does not have another job. The interaction between Israel and his children show the role of the head of family and the need of continuity of the fishing by the future generation.

Children either don't go to school or abandon their education earlier. They want to earn money and the fishing activity is the only job available in Londji Plage. Children are sent to primary school but their parents don't control and take care of their education. The parents themselves did not further their education to high level and they think that their children don't need to do so to earn money because they have the fishing activity in the village. Children can get experience without studying at school. The boys from 14 years to 22 years prefer to abandon their education to work as Boloman. They pass their time at the beach arranging the nets, loading ice in the canoe and transporting the fish from canoe to the land. They get 3 or 4 kilos of fish. They sell the fish to buyam sallam and get 5000F or 10 000F. This is the life of young people in this village. They use money to drink or to go out with girls. That is the sense of the life for them but the origin of that behavior is from their parents because they want to perpetuate fishing activity from generation to another generation. This activity is a part of their way of living which is a series of knowledge, beliefs and practices transmitted by socialization. An individual interact with other actors within the society to be

happy to adhere to the value of the community and respect the norms. This behavior works as social cohesion and individual integration (Montoussé and Renouard 1997). That is to say the young boys are very connected to their land and the knowledge of fishing.

Hassan

Hassan is a man (30 years old) from northern Cameroon from Mokolo. He grew up in Garoua and he has many sisters and brothers. He was a student at the University of Schang. After many difficulties in his life, he was not able to continue his education. He lives in Londji Plage for 12 years now when he came to find a job. He got many positions in different activities in the village. He became a fisherman by working at the beach and helping fishermen when they were back from fishing. He became a canoe owner after purchasing little by little fishing equipment. He spent almost 18 months to complete his fishing equipment. He is the first in his family to be a fisherman and a canoe owner because he comes from a farming family. He is also responsible for the ice factory (manager) and he is a representative of people coming from the North of Cameroon. His role as general secretary gives him a power to take decision in high level of village. The different statuses and roles give Hassan a good position among the villagers. He is now a member of the village. He has a good relationship with many fishermen and canoe owners in Londji Plage. He was married to the daughter of ex-chief of the village and he has a daughter but now he is divorced and lives alone.

The young boys

Fishermen and their dreams: Samuel, Mana and Benjamin and Bouba

They are friends and shared many things like staying together all the day when they do not work, drinking alcohol and joking. They have different origins and background. Their friendship shows us the relation between ethnic groups in Londji Plage.



9. Picture of Samuel, Mana and Bouba

Samuel

He is a guy of 27 years old, fair in complexion, very masculine and he is 1.75 meters tall. He was born in Londji Plage, his father is Nigerian and his mother is Cameroonian as he presents himself in the film. He is a friendly guy; he works in his father's canoe as the first member of the crew. He speaks French, English and Spanish. He learnt French at school and he stopped studying very earlier to fish in his father's canoe. He does not have any diploma but he speaks three languages. He speaks English because he is 50% Nigerian and he lives in Nigerian camp and people living there speak *Pigin or Creole* they use many English words. He traveled a lot; he has been in Equatorial Guinea for many years before he came back home when he learned Spanish. When he was a child, he learned how to fish and how to build up a canoe. He has double careers as fisherman and carpenter.

When he does not go fish, he fixes damaged canoes to earn some money. He told me that: his father is a carpenter and canoe owner. I observed that in Londji Plage all canoe owners prepare their sons to replace them in their job. Samuel now lives near his father's house in a small room. He left his father's house because he is an adult now and he wants to live alone. Like other fishermen he has a girlfriend with a child but she lives with her family. He has not decided to share the house with her. Samuel works in his father's canoe and does not have the same position like other fishermen because he is doing anything he wants with this canoe. He works as a boss; his father gave him all the responsibility of the canoe. He goes fish, come back and sells the fish. His father does not ask him anything about money he gets. He brings money each week to his father.

Mana

He is a young boy of 24 years old. He is from the North of Cameroon precisely from Mokolo. He lives in Londji Plage since two years. He was Muslim but now he has stopped praying. He is a traveler, he was born and grew up in Garoua and stopped his education in secondary

school. He stayed at home long time without doing anything. He told me that: *“I made friendship with some bad boys; I smoked and stole in the quarters. I left my father house at 20 years old and I went to live in Douala. Younouss before I came here my life was very bad”*. When he lived in Douala, he joined a gang; he stole cars and brought them to Chad. Now he is in Londji Plage, he restarted a new life. In the film he said: *“we are happy to live in this small village”*. When he came to the village, he had no fishing knowledge. He begun as *boloman* by helping fishermen at the beach and little by little he joined a crew. Each young boy in Londji Plage starts as *boloman* before going fishing. He started to work with Samuel as second member of the crew. He has just one year experience. It’s not enough to be a very good fisherman but he was working to improve his skills.

Benjamin

He is a Nigerian born in Londji Plage. He belongs to Eladje Nigerian ethnic group. Benjamin has never gone to school; he spent all his childhood at the beach. His father died when he was child and his mother took his father’s canoe and became owner. Now Benjamin works with this canoe but he works as the first member of the crew. His mother is the canoe owner but no women can go fishing, he represents his mother. He learned how to fish since he was a child. The canoe seems belonging to him because it’s belonging to his mother. Some fishermen called him boss because he controls the canoe.

Samuel and Benjamin are friends since many years. They grew up together and they are also “brother” because in African language when you belong to a same ethnic group, you are brother. Mana joined the group one month ago before I started my research. He joined the group because the other guys recognized him as a good French rapper and they became good friends. It is Samuel who called Mana and taught him how go fishing. Samuel had a good experience in fishing and he took Mana as a second member of the crew.

They identify them as “**yor**”; they are doing things different from other guys in the village. They have their own special words (Jargon) to speak together. They are doing the same things as the Hip hop rapper from USA or from France. They told me that they are very happy to be fishermen because by this activity they earn money for food, drink and clothes.

In Cameroon, the young people have difficulties to get the job but in Londji Plage fishing activity creates a lot of opportunity for them. They told me that the money they get in one month is higher than the salary of people who work as civil workers. A fisherman can get more than 300 000F per month during the season of catch but a civil worker in Cameroon get only 180 000F. They see the difference between them and civil workers. They are happy even

though they live in village. That is way the fishermen in Londji Plage are very famous and they are loved by the girls. Samuel, Benjamin and Mana are always together. They drink and smoke together but they have difficulties to save money and spend all their money.

Bouba the “traveler”

Born in Garoua, a big town in northern Cameroon, Bouba is 23 years old and belongs to Guizga ethnic group. He left his family at 12 years old. I asked Bouba the reason of his escape. I analyze this situation as an escape because he was child but he did not give me a real answer to my question. He started to live in Ngaoundere¹⁷ with the guys coming from the same area as him. Then he took the train and arrived in Yaoundé. He started to work in a restaurant. He stayed many years in Yaoundé in Briketri quarter.

In 2008, Bouba heard about Londji Plage and the fishing activity and decided to leave Yaoundé because the job was not profitable. He arrived in Londji Plage; he met Hassan because he is the representative of people coming from northern Cameroon and Hassan took Bouba to stay with him. Bouba started to help fishermen to fix the net and after he worked as canoe loader at the beach, he helped to unload fish from the canoe to the land.

After a few months, he started to go fishing with fishermen as a second member of the crew. He learnt a lot and during this time Bouba lived in Hassan’s house. In the beginning of 2010, Bouba started to fish as the first member of the crew. He became a good fisherman because every time he brought a lot of fish. In Londji Plage every canoe owner wants Bouba to fish in his canoe. When Bouba realized that he had enough money, he decided to take care of himself. He left Hassan’s house and rented a room.

Since 11 years Bouba never go back to meet her mother or father and his family does not know where Bouba lives. In the village Bouba became famous and he found a beautiful girlfriend. Good life in Londji Plage means that you go fishing to earn money, drink beer and go out with girlfriends.

¹⁷ Big cosmopolitan city in Cameroon and head of administrative area (Adamawa)



10. Picture of the rappers

Throughout the description of different actors I found out different migrant careers. Israel has different statuses in the social life and he is at the same time a canoe owner and a fisherman because he has canoes and sometime he goes fishing for his wife. That is to say in Londji Plage, the majority of Nigerians are fishermen and canoe owners because they started their childhoods by learning how to fish and then became canoe owners. But we find some Nigerian fishermen who are not canoe owners, they are only fishermen. These fishermen are new comers in Londji Plage, they are not born in the village and they don't have their parents there. They came to find job as fishermen.

Hassan is the only migrant from the North who is canoe owner. He learned fishing but actually he is an ice maker, canoe owner and general secretary of the chiefdom.

3.6 Interethnic collaboration

Hassan/ Rene

Rene is a man of 40 years old; he started to sell ices in a small store and he had been helped by Hassan from 1998 to 2003. Then he built an ice factory and cold room. Now he is not living in Londji Plage, he has Hassan as manager and he comes one time per week to collect money. He lives in Douala doing another job. The relation between Hassan and his boss (Bamileke guy) is an example of interethnic collaboration. Their relation is based on trust and profitability of the ice factory. Hassan told me that his boss earned a lot of money because of him and Rene cannot manage to work without him. Rene's factory is the best in Londji Plage. The good relationship of Hassan gives him best position in the selling of ice. Hassan uses many strategies to get many customers. He makes friendship and sometimes he gives ice to canoe owners on credit. He trusts customers and he deals to keep good relation with them.

Hassan has also a good relationship with Nigerian. Israel and Sebastian (Nigerian head) are Hassan's friends.

Selling ice at the factory

The ice factory and the cold room are connected to the commercialization of fish. Hassan work every day in the ice factory. It is a small room of 6 by 2 meters, very difficult to work easily and it's hot inside the room. My main informant work there two times per day. Water in the tanks becomes solid after 10 hours. Hassan removes the ice from the mold after 10 hours, and put new water inside the tanks. He is helped by two other guys Arnaud and Fabian. When two persons work inside the factory, the removal takes one hour and the third guy transports ice at the cold room. This action takes place two times per day and in the whole week. It was the only ice factory working when I conducted my field work. Fishermen needed ices to go fishing and the customers also use it to keep their fish fresh until the final destination.



11. Hassan working in the ice factory, checking the pieces of ice

When Hassan does not work in the ice factory, he transports the ice bars to the cold room. He works inside the cold room without any warm clothes; he stacks up the ice inside the cold room. The cold room is a container of 20 feet, very small room to stack the ices and to keep the fish. Hassan sells ice to canoe owners every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. A bar of ice costs 1000F but he sells it by bag¹⁸, it costs 2500F. Hassan can sell 100 bags of ice per day. During the market day, buyers come to the cold room where they discuss the price and fishermen weigh the fish.

Hassan and the young boys

When Hassan has time, he works on his fishing materials. He had two canoes two years ago but he lost them because of the trawlers. The trouble of migrant fishermen begun with the arrival of Chinese fishermen, stationed on the high seas. *“There is a little over five years; the Chinese have invaded the coast of Cameroon. We saw them arrive first in small groups of*

¹⁸ People call it *un sac de glace*. It means a bag of ice which contain 2 ½ bar of ice.

four or five. Then, whole families were deported here. These fishermen are stationed on the high seas; they have motor boats, real boats capable of carrying tons of fish. Next to these behemoths, migrant fishermen do not make the weight” said Hassan. Now he came back again in fishing activity. In the film we see Hassan and the young boys working on the canoe. He bought a second hand canoe in Kribi at 100 000 F and two packages of nets. He knew how to put the floats and the leads on the nets. He did this job in front of his house, while he discussed with people around him. I observed the movement of his hand when he fixed the nets. He was very concentrated and he was very serious to get a new material for fishing. Hassan’s canoe is a second hand material and he changed some planks and put the tar to hold the space between the planks. It was a hard job and Hassan is helped by the young boys: Bouba, Samuel, Mana and Manguelle. During the work, he bought foods and drinks for the guys. They discussed and joked during the work.

3.7 Relation migrant/local

The identity of people in Londji Plage depends on statuses and roles play by the protagonists in the arenas. The interethnic marriage modifies the basic structure of the local society. When **Eladje, Idjo** or somebody from another ethnic group get married to a local girl, they get a new link with Batanga. At this moment their statuses change. The new kinship gives them a new relation and new position in the village. Children coming from interethnic marriage give new position to their fathers and the socialization becomes heterogeneous. The child will get two lines of culture and this situation transforms the relationship between migrant and local. The perception of people change about mix children, they are at the same time local and foreigners. Some Nigerians get married to local to more integrate the local life but others prefer to get spouse in Londji Plage because going back to their home village takes time and they will spend a lot of money. The interethnic marriage is beneficial to Nigerians who want to consolidate their relationship with local people and they feel living at home as Cameroonians. Migrants are considered as rich people in Londji Plage because they have the majority of canoes. When you have one canoe in Londji Plage your status changes and you become important in the villager’s eyes. Hassan is a good example, his ex-wife struggles to come back to him but he refuses. He told me that: *“here in Londji Plage, money is the only power. Look now she wants to live with me again”*

Many identities are constructed in Londji Plage. The first identity is based on nationality (Cameroonian, Nigerian and others); the second identity is based on ethnic groups (Batanga, Eladje, Idjo and Kalaba), the third is the belonging to the area you come from. For example

people coming from the North of Cameroon identify themselves to their area not to their different ethnic groups. This identity is a consolidation between those guys from the North because they are not many and consider themselves as a compact and a homogenous group. People call them “*Wadjo*” it’s the name of all people coming from the North. The last identity is based on status or job. This makes a differentiation between canoe owner and fishermen, ice maker and Bolomen, buyers and villagers. This differentiation is a kind of social stratification.

Nigerian fishermen brought with them new knowledge of fishing activity, they make nice canoes and they have the majority of fishing fleet. They fish a lot and create a lot of job for all people living in Londji Plage. Local will benefit because they will learn new methods and fishing knowledge. The village became a fish market because of the presence of Nigerian fishermen. The fishing activity is a part of the livelihood of many ethnic groups; they considered it as a school of life and that’s why the parents want to transmit that knowledge to their children.

To sum up, Nigerians and migrant fishermen from the North have different careers. Nigerian fishermen have chance to be canoe owners by inheritance, through the socio-economic organization and their parents prepare them to continue in this activity. Contrary to migrant fishermen from the North who came in Londji Plage looking for job, it’s the case of young boys like Boubou and Mana who learned fishing in this village. Some migrants from the North are only fishermen at their arrival; they did not come with their fishing equipment as Nigerians. It’s difficult to be canoe owner as the Nigerian. But their chance to be canoe owners is to save money and buy little by little their fishing gears like Hassan.

4. COMMERCIALIZATION OF FISH AND MIGRANT WOMEN ROLE IN THE ECONOMY

4.1 Relationship between canoe owners and buyers

The fish harvested by fishermen is bought by women or men coming from towns like Yaoundé and Douala. Many women do this job but we have also few men doing it.

4.1.1 Fresh fish

Londji Plage is the fishing area for fresh fish and also smoked fish market. The buyers come from different parts of Cameroon and the demand for fresh fish is very high in Town. When buyam sallam buy fish at 2500F, they resell it to the fish store at 2800F in Yaoundé or Douala. Each *buyam sallam* can buy 500 kilos and they come every Saturday and Wednesday in Londji Plage to buy fish. The buyam sallam earn a lot of money with this business.

Women *Buyam sallam* choose Londji Plage to buy fish because of the availability and the price. They arrive in the village one day before the return of fishermen from the sea. They chose to come earlier because it is very important to find which canoes went in sea to fish and start earlier to negotiate with the canoe owners. But they negotiate first with the fish store in town because they have to know which stores need fish.

Fishermen come back Saturday and Wednesday morning. All the transaction and interaction took place at the beach. The fishermen were surrounded by the canoe owners, buyam sallam who had negotiate to buy the fish, canoe owner's wife, fishermen girlfriends and other people came to look the catch. The fisherman started to weigh the fish and the buyam sallam controlled him and was vigilant because sometimes the fisherman didn't weigh it well and the buyers lost some kilos. She has to be attentive and good in counting. Canoe owner get his money after the fisherman finished with the weighing of fish. Buyam sallam proceeds like that during all the day.

Buyam sallam have a particular relationship with canoe owners and fishermen accuse their bosses to go out with those women as I wrote before. In Cameroon, people use the word "*deuxième bureau*" to qualify men who are married and have another relation with women from outside. When people say this man has a *deuxième bureau* that means he has a concubine or mistress. This interaction is beneficial both for canoe owners and buyam sallam because they gain something from this relation. Canoe owners prove their masculinity and buyam sallam control the fresh fish market.



12. Fishermen weighing fish and surrounded by Buyam sallam and other people.

4.1.2 Smoked fish

Monday is the day of smoked fish market. Women from Londji Plage bring their fish there and other women from areas like Loukoundje and Mbebamwé come to this market to sell their smoked fish. No man smoke fish; there are only women who sell the fish in this market. Smoked fish is reserved for women. When the canoe come back with the fish, the smaller fishes and fish damaged by the net are sold to canoe owners or fishermen wives. It is a rule establish by fishermen and canoe owners. The designated fish for canoe owner's wives and fishermen's wives is sold at 20 fishes for 1000F when it is fresh. When the women finish collecting the small and damaged fish, they smoke and sell them on market every Monday. This activity helps women to earn money to buy food and other staff for the house.



13. Smoked fish

The main smoked fish is *Bonga* in Nigerian word, *Bifaga* is Cameroonian word but it's the same fish. Women sell 3 fish for 200F. Market is very animated; women discuss and joke

with each other. The customers are almost women coming from towns but we have some men who come to buy that fish.

4.1.3 Roasted fish

During Saturdays and Wednesdays, people come from cities to eat fresh fish at the beach. These people stay at the beach under the coconut trees all the day. There are many places where women roast fish in Londji Plage. The village is animated by music coming from all corners. Customers buy fresh fish and bring it to women who roast.



14. Roasted fish

In Londji Plage everybody likes to eat fish from Suzanne's place. She is a good roaster of fish and she has many customers coming from Kribi who eat fish roasted by her. All fishermen are present during the days of market, everybody wears his nice clothes and come to the beach to eat fish and drink beer. The beautiful girls come also to join fishermen at the party. People are found discussing, joking and drinking alcohol all the days and we hear lovely music coming from different bars.

4.1.4 Fried fish

This job is particularly for young girls around 16 to 20 years old. They get fish when the fishermen come back from sea. They also buy small fish of all species at cheap prices. After collecting the fish, they go back home and fry it and put hot pepper on it. People call this fish **Mabang** in local Batanga language. The young girls sell this in the village. At the entrance of Londji Plage, there is a snack bar where all villagers come each Saturday to dance. At the night, this place is very animated. It is also a place where boys and girls meet themselves. All the night, people dance, eat fried fish and drink alcohol.

4.2 Women careers

Women are also involved in the economy of fish particularly in the three categories of fish: roasted, smoked and fried as I mentioned above. They have different careers that I will present some of them.

Mary

She is a women of 25 years old, born in Londji Plage and belong to Eladje Nigerian ethnic group. She married Prince (30 years old) who is Nigerian (in 2004) and he is canoe owner. They have three children (two boys and one girl). Mary plays an important role in the economy of family. Every day from 5.pm her husband goes fishing with his small canoe to catch for her. The catch is smoked by Mary and she sells it in market day which takes place every Monday. The money earned by Mary is used to buy food and other stuffs for the household. She also roasts fish each Wednesday and Saturday. The money she will earn is his for her and she is free to use or not for the family.

Rachelle

She is 30 years old, from the North of Cameroon; she is also Hassan's big sister. She is married to Cameroonian from the North and she has four children. Her husband is not fisherman; he is a housekeeper of one of the private house¹⁹ in Londji Plage. Rachelle was not involved in the fishing business at beginning. She became interested in this activity when Hassan got back into fishing. As I mentioned before, Hassan live alone now, he divorced and do not have someone to smoke the small fish catch by his canoe. Rachelle and Hassan do not live in the same house but they are very connected. After selling the smoked fish, she takes 50 per cent of the money. That is how she earns money from this fishing industry. One day Rachelle told me that: *"I'm happy that my brother got back into this business and now I smoke and I have all the control of his canoe. He is your friend, can you tell him to not marry another girl"*. As in the film we see Rachelle very happy and bless Hassan's canoe. Rachelle interacts and uses strategy to keep her personal interest because if Hassan takes a new wife, she will lose the control of all the canoe.

¹⁹ House I describe in my introduction. It belong to European women from Italy

Angeline

She is Batanga 18 years old, she was a wife (girlfriend) of another fisherman²⁰ and she has a child of 2 years old. Now she is Mana's girlfriend and she was pregnant when I left the village. Mana is complaining because he does not have enough money to take care of the child that she will give soon. Angeline lives with her family (mother and father) and Mana lives with his cousin Hassan. Nobody helps Angeline to take care of his child. Sometimes she got fish from Mana; she fried and sold it in the village. When she has nothing from her boyfriend, she helps women who roast fish at the beach. From that job she earns money to buy foods and other stuff for her and his child. That is the situation of young girls coping in the social life. Now, nobody knows if Mana is living with her. Life of the young girls is a kind of drama; they are not stable with fishermen and they make many children with different boys.

In Londji Plage women are involved in economic activity and the smoked fish is a job principally reserve to wives of canoe owners. They earn a lot of money and help their husband in the economy of household or family. They also roast fish for their personal interest. Fishermen wives do not have control of the canoes in which their husbands work but sometimes they get fish. The case of Rachelle is particular because she has the control of the fish because of the status of Hassan (single). The young girls as Angeline survive between her boyfriend and coping with women who roast fish.

²⁰ He is Nigerian fisherman. When his girlfriend gave birth, he stayed a few moments with her and then leaves for new girlfriend. This situation is always happen in Londji Plage.

5. MIGRANT FISHERMEN AND STATE BUREAUCRACY

This part will analyze the relation between migrant and State bureaucracy; it's to see how Nigerian migrant fishermen are interacting with the local authority to get access to fish resource in Londji Plage. Also, it is important to know how migrants deal with the police and marine's army. I will compare the situation both migrant from Nigeria and from northern Cameroon.

5.1 Situation of migrant fishermen in Londji Plage

Cameroon is a country which receives migrant each year because of its political stability. It's a country chosen by migrant in general and particularly migrant fishermen because of the fish resource and its free access. The community of Nigerian in Cameroon is very large from the North to the South. Even though, many of them are born in Cameroon, they have to pay each year the resident permit. Since 2006 they are threatened to go back home, maybe because of the conflicts boundaries between Cameroon and Nigeria. Many of them wanted to go back home because the price of resident permit was increased from 80.000 to 130.000 F²¹. That is the situation of all migrant living in Cameroon. At the bridge between West Africa and Central Africa, peace and stability prevailing in this country make it the focal point for excellence in various flows. Some sources report more than three million Nigerians and 80,000 Malians (Pekoua 1994). But it is difficult to determine accurately the number of foreigners, because of the lack of reliable data and illegal migration. Some Cameroonians are aware identifying foreigners who are undocumented or not, sometimes pay dearly for their status.

In Bakassi, where the two countries have conflict over boundaries, the situation is totally different. This area has an abundance of natural resources like petrol, forest and fish. Bakassi is occupied mostly by Nigerian fishermen and they lived there several years before the conflict started. The international court of justice gave ruling in favor of Cameroon and Bakassi became part of Cameroon but the population living there refused and said that they don't have anywhere to go, Bakassi is their home. The Cameroonian authorities have problem to deal with this case. Nigerian created a movement called "*mouvement pour l'autodétermination*"²² to proclaim their independence. They do not believe that Bakassi is

²¹ De la terre à la une, Cameroun: les immigrés nigériens poussés au retour, Info sud, *Belgique Agence de presse*, samedi 23 septembre 2006

² *Le messenger* 11 August 2008

²² Movement for independence

part of Cameroon. That's why the price of resident permit increased since 2006. Until now this conflict oppose authorities to this population.

In fact, Londji Plage is a village where migrant and local lives in "peace". There is no conflict between them about fish resource and they choose to collaborate. The main problem of Nigerian fishermen in this village is the resident permit. This politic is beneficial to Cameroon because many Nigerians decided voluntary to go back home. Fishermen are complaining about the price of resident permit even though the relation between native people and migrants is good. There are many interethnic marriages between them but they don't have solution to this matter.

5.2 Minepia

Cameroonian fishing, despite the many strategies to be implemented by the Government through the Ministry of livestock (MINEPIA), suffers a thousand ills. "*Fishing plays a large role in creating national wealth of Cameroon through the foreign exchange earned from the exploitation of fishery products especially to the European market*" (Minepia 2003). But because of the non-export of its products on the international market, Cameroon loses each year 10 billion CFA francs (Dorine Dekwe 2011).

In addition, one of the handicaps of the Cameroonian fishing is that it is controlled, more than 80% by foreigners, whether artisanal or industrial. In 2008 MINEPIA announced in the management of Fisheries that 25.000 fishermen are listed in this production sector, Cameroonians are only 16.5% of the workforce, largely behind the Nigerians who control 68% of jobs in the fishing sector in Cameroon. Other communities found there are Benin 8%, Ghanaians 6% and the table is completed by the Liberians, Malians, Senegalese and Sierra Leone (Kingue 2008). I don't have exact number of fishermen in marine waters in Cameroon. This statistic just shows how Cameroon receives a large number of fishermen. In Londji Plage the number of migrant fishermen is largely higher than the local people. Canoe owners are more than 70 people and the number of fishermen is also dominated by migrants.

The representative of Minepia controls fishing devices and he takes care of natural resources. He delivers the fishing certificate to fishermen. Before they start fishing, all fishermen must have the agreement of the representative and show their equipment particularly the nets. The ministry of fisheries has established rules to control the fish resources in Cameroon. In each fishing area, Minepia sent a representative to control the catch of fish species. He is supposed to control the different kind of nets used by migrant fishermen in Londji Plage. According to my observation and interview I conducted, the representative of Minepia interacts with

fishermen to earn money because he didn't respect the rules established by the ministry and used his own regulations which helped him to control canoes in this village. Fishermen use all kind of nets and after selling their catch, they paid something to the representative of Minepia. One of my informants said that: *"you see this guy is here to earn money not to do his job as he supposed to do"*. This situation shows us that the transaction is beneficial for both fishermen and the representative of Minepia but the corruption destroys fish species. If this situation continues for long time, fishermen will be the first to suffer of fish scarce.

5.3 Police and migrant fishermen

The life of Nigerian fishermen is threatened by the police. There is confusion in Cameroonian administration between the police and the representative of the government (administrative office). In my film Israel was complaining about their statuses as immigrants. He wants to be a Cameroonian because he was born in Londji Plage but he pays the resident permit every year. *"I am tired"* he told me. He has his birth certificate; he went to see the administrative officer about his situation and he told him to go to the police station to get a national identity card. When he met the police superintendent, he argued that: *"you are not eligible to get a national identity card"*. Now Israel is very confused, he does not know what to do to solve the problem. One of the fishermen, Maruis told me: *"We suffer a lot of abuses of certain officers of the Police Service. Once they find during a routine check that you are a Nigerian, they simply seize your pieces and threaten to take you. Just as you give them money so they hand them to you and everything is settled "*. That is an example of how Nigerians are annoyed in this village. Many fishermen struggle to pay the resident permit each year but that is not enough because when the police come in Londji Plage, they arrest all Nigerians even though they are in a legal situation. They have to pay something before the police let them free. For someone who has valid paper, he just pays some Francs but the situation will be very serious for the guys who do not have legal documents. The police will bring him to the police station and they would be detained several days. When this situation is presented in Londji Plage, the chief of Nigerians goes to Kribi to the police station to negotiate for the release of fishermen. That is a long negotiation with the officer. The chief told me that: *"I have to negotiate their release each time when the police arrest fishermen from Nigeria. I pay a lot of money if not the police will threat to send them to Nigeria. Sometimes, fishermen don't have money to pay 75000F to the police. What we do is to borrow money from other fishermen and I will make sure that money is paid back by the fishermen arrested. "*

Migrant fishermen have to do that to solve the problem. The migrants in general constitute an economic resource for some policemen. Cameroon is a country where corruption becoming part of the life of the people. The NGO (non-governmental organization) Transparency international put in 2010 Cameroon in rank 32nd of countries where corruption is higher. Sometimes policemen come to Londji Plage without any mission to extort money from fishermen. Migrant don't have another solution, they run away when the police comes into the village.

But some Nigerians in the village are known as natives because they were born in this village. They have good relationship with the police administration in Kribi and they are not extorted when they have the valid resident permit. It's the case of Israel and the chief of Nigerians that I have presented before.

The role of the marine's army in Londji Plage is to protect the population living in coastal area. Since the end of the boundary conflict between Cameroon and Nigeria, fishermen around the coast are threatened by the pirates who come sometime and terrorize fishermen. But fishermen particularly migrants from Nigeria are complaining about the attitude of marine army. The soldiers play the role of the police and extort money from the fishermen. One migrant said that: *"the soldiers threat us and say that we are pirates because we are not Cameroonian"*.

5.4 Migrant from the North

The northern community living in Londji Plage doesn't have the same problem like Nigerian fishermen. They are Cameroonian and that is their advantage, they are not paying the resident permit and are not threatened to go back home. The police consider them as local people. Among the migrants from the North, Hassan plays an important role at the ice factory. He makes ice and also negotiates the consumption of the electricity with the company called AES SONEL which distributes the electricity in Kribi and Londji Plage. The problem is the factory which uses much electricity to produce ice and the bills are very higher at the end of every month. The boss of Hassan cannot pay and the factory is threatened to close down. The role of Hassan is to negotiate with the manager of the company to give them electricity at lower price and each week he sent fish to the manager in Kribi.

CONCLUSION

My topic “*Migrant fishermen and their social life in Londji Plage, Southern Cameroon*” focused on Nigerian fishermen and migrants from the North of Cameroon. Along my analysis, I presented the fishing activity which was modernized by the Nigerian fishermen, migrant social organization, the careers of different migrant fishermen, the commercialization of fish through the relation between canoe owners and the buyers (*Buyam sallam*), the role of migrant women and the interaction between migrants and the State bureaucracy.

Londji Plage is a village which belongs to Batanga. This people live off fish since many generations but the fishing is used just for subsistence and the equipment used is traditional. They used only small canoe with oar as I mentioned before. The arrival of migrant fishermen transformed social life in Londji Plage and the village became cosmopolitan because of the presence of many ethnic groups and the economic activity of fishing. They modernized the fishing equipment. New canoes were built and different nets were used for a big catch.

Canoe owners and fishermen are always in conflict. Their interaction (Barth 1981, Goffman 1973) show that each actor deals to preserve his position and control the situation and know that his role in the fishing is important. The goal of different parties is to seek of money that they will get after their catch. The interethnic marriage modified the basic social structure of the local society. When **Eladje, Idjo** or migrant fishermen get married to native women, they get a good connection with the locals. Because of this situation their integration becomes easier.

Due to the situation of unemployment in Cameroon, the fishing activity in Londji Plage has now generated a lot of employment for young people to fight against poverty. This activity interconnects different actors from different statuses. Through my analysis, I found that Nigerian used fish for foods and for economic purpose and that is why they modernized this fishing activity. Many Nigerians are canoe owners and they use money to reinvest in the fishing industry. I also found that there are different careers among migrant fishermen. There are fishermen who become canoe owners after different steps in their life. Many Nigerian fishermen are born in Londji Plage, they started first to learn how to go fishing with their parents, work as bolomen at the beach and join the crew. When their parents think that they are mature, they give them canoes and they become owners. That is the transmission of fishing knowledge between two generations (children and fathers). But some fishermen from

Nigeria become owners after their fathers died. For the fishermen from the North, the situation is different because most of them are only fishermen. One finds only one canoe owner from the North. They learn fishing like Nigerians but the difference is, the migrants from the North only came to find job and the majority learned fishing in Londji Plage. Some of them are serious and can be canoe owners if they save money to buy their canoe. Hassan is a canoe owner and he got it after several months working in the ice factory and cold room.

The commercialization of fish involved different actors in the social field (Grønhaug 1975) in Londji Plage. In this social field interact canoe owners, fishermen, their wives, and buyers who come from outside to buy fish. The canoe owners have a particular relationship with buyers in the negotiation of the fish price. These buyers called *buyam sallam* use many strategies to have a control on canoe owners. Their relation with canoe owners allows them to get fish at low prices. Some fishermen react to this situation because in Kribi the price is always higher than Londji Plage.

The households in this village depend on the category of migrant. Nigerian fishermen have different households; the first is comprised by husband, wife, children and other members like the brother of husband and his wife and children. Israel and his brother illustrate that case. Israel is the head of the household and their wives play a big role in the economy of the household because they smoke fish and earn money for food and take care of children. The house of the Nigerian chief (Sebastian) is also comprised by his family (wives and children) and new fishermen coming from Nigeria. This house plays the role of transit for the new comers before they integrate into the society. It's the same case for Hassan household which play that role for migrants coming from the North of Cameroon. But the particularity of Hassan households is comprised by men. Migration is always seen as the relation *rural-rural*, *rural-urban* and *urban-urban* (Cordell, Gregory and Piché 1996) but in my analysis I found that some migrant fishermen from the North come from cities like Maroua, Garoua and Ngaoundere. Londji Plage became a destination for young boys from those cities. Because of unemployment, the migration of young people leads them toward rural areas like Londji Plage where the fishing activity is developed. I found that migration took a new dimension; people migrate from *urban to rural* area and this rural area has a lot of resource that can be develop by the government.

The relation between migrants and bureaucracy is a social field where we see the interaction between actors from different fields as defined by Grønhaug (1975): the relation *micro-macro*

level. Nigerian fishermen are threatened to go back home because of payment of resident permit even though some of them are born in Londji Plage. The strategy of Cameroon to control the coastal area after the conflict boundary is to push Nigerian to return home. The challenge of Minepia is to control the fishing activity and replace the locals in this business. But the fact is Nigerians are majority and all canoes belong to them. After my analysis the Nigerian canoes will not decrease because of the threat of police. Canoe owners reinvest much in this business; they marry to local women and have their descendant to perpetuate the fishing activity. Migrant fishermen are very important in the economy of fish and their absence will cause a lot of leakage to people in Londji Plage.

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