

# **Probing inter-ethnic relations between Cameroon-Nigeria: the case of Menchum Division, 1922 to 1961**

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## **Abstract**

The paper treats inter-ethnic relations between Cameroon-Nigeria in Menchum from 1922-1961 and cohabitation in the area. Trans-border relations under the domain of agriculture, trade and commerce, craftsmanship, transport and communication as well as in fishing and hunting which existed between polities in Menchum from small starts expanded by 1922 when the British goods came into circulation in larger quantities by informal routes. It is argued that trade relations produced different categories of people in Menchum and Nigeria who contributed to the growth of the area. Most of the Nigerian traders came and left after carrying out their trade transactions. However, a good number of them liked the area and decided to acquire land with their profits and settled there. They also employed youths who worked for them as porters or *bambe*.

**Key words;** Trans-Border relations, Nigerians, British Goods, Cameroon, North West Province, Menchum.

## **Résumé**

*La présent article traite des relations interethnique entre les Cameroun et le Nigeria dans La Menchum de 1922 à 1961 et la cohabitation dans la région. Les relations transfrontalières dans le domaine de l'agriculture, du commerce, de l'artisanat, des transports et des communications, ainsi que de la pêche et de la chasse qui existaient entre les différents groupes de la Menchum ont commencé a partir de petites en chantier se sont développées en 1922 lorsque les produits britanniques ont été en circulation par des voies informelles. L'on soutient que les relations commerciales on produit différentes catégories des personnes dans La Menchum et au Nigeria, contribuant ainsi à la croissance de la région. La plupart des commerçants nigérians venaient être partaient après avoir effectué leurs transactions commerciales. Cependant, un bon nombre d'entre eux trouvaient la région bonne et décidaient d'acquérir des terres avec les bénéfices excédentaires tires de ces relations et de s'y établir définitivement. Ils employaient aussi des jeunes qui travaillaient pour eux comme porteurs ou bambé.*

**Mots clés :** relations transfrontalières, Nigérians, fabrication Britanniques, Cameroun, Nord-Ouest Province, Menchum.

# **Probing inter-ethnic relations between Cameroon-Nigeria: the case of Menchum Division, 1922 to 1961**

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## **Introduction**

Trans-border relations in the domain of agriculture, trade and commerce, craftsmanship, transport and communication as well as in fishing and hunting existed among polities in Menchum. It should be remembered that during this period British Cameroon was administered as part of Nigeria (Fanso, 1989: 83). So there was no customs border between Southern Cameroon and Nigeria, only an internal administrative boundary.

Trade and migration started timidly and expanded by 1922 when British goods became more pronounced in circulation. Local economic activities included the growing of food crops, the making of housing materials, local crafts, and the production of fuel for local consumption. Most of these activities were in the subsistence economy. However, there was a cash economy which included a considerable amount of local and regional trade. Indirect involvement in trade through selling cash crops concerned most of the indigenous people of the study area and kept them busy throughout the year since it was an important source of income. This paper argues that inter-ethnic relations produced different categories of people in Menchum and Nigeria who contributed to the growth of the area. These relations created opportunities among the inhabitants ranging from different forms of trade.

## **1-Dynamics of Trading Items**

### **a) Agriculture**

Indigenes of Menchum Division and some Nigerian immigrants carried out agricultural activities. Most agricultural labour was done by indigenes of Menchum Division. In the agricultural domain the Nigerians only came in to boost the sector. Agricultural activities included cultivation of cash crops like oil palm, banana, sugar cane, kola-nuts, coffee and food crops such as cassava, cocoyam, beans, potatoes, egusi, maize, Irish potatoes, groundnuts and vegetables (Ayuketa, 2005: 63). According to an interview with chief Moses Ngong Bong (13/08/2015) ‘The Nigerians who actually settled in Menchum Division by 1961 became more involved in agricultural activities to sustain themselves and for commercial purposes which in turn produced benefits for the farmers.’ He also said ‘The

population of Nigerians in Menchum Division during that period was 600. Among them were mostly Igbo, Yoruba, Ijaw. ’

According to him ‘The Nigerians embarked on agriculture in Menchum Division for subsistence, supplementary, leisure and economic reasons’. Another informant, Anthony Efoh Eman said ‘they had a motive to sell any surplus that might be realized (. This enabled them to save cash that could otherwise have been used in buying food. They also made some money out of the surplus products’ (19/01/2016). Full-time traders also did some farming. Meanwhile those who farmed for commercial reasons sold a larger part of their products.

However, whatever reasons for the Nigerians involved themselves in agriculture in Menchum, these include desires for food self-sufficiency and to ameliorate their economic situation. Significantly, the socio-economic factors favoured the intensification of their farming activities (Ndikum and Mosoh 2011: 7-20).

The Nigerians concentrated on the cultivation of crops like egusi, maize, cassava, yams, Igbo coco, okra, vegetables and grains. Most of their families produced these staples to last throughout the year, with surpluses sold in order to generate income. Those who worked on the plantations also cultivated crops for local consumption. They did this during their spare time on vacant plantation land. The fertile lands of the Menchum community and other highlands motivated the Nigerians to engage in the cultivation of these crops (Agbor 2004: 56). After harvest, surplus was taken to Nigeria and sold in the local markets in the region.

Cash crop cultivation was another farming activity carried out by the Nigerians around the Wum area (Kindleberger, 2011: 85). Many Nigerians owned small plantations on which they cultivated cocoa, and coffee. They practiced what was called “two parties”, a form of sharecropping in which the farmer and the land owner shared the proceeds from production on a plot of land according to Moses Ngong Bong (13/08/2015). The attitude of the Nigerians towards agriculture was that they got every able-bodied Nigerian available involved in farming activities. For example, yam mounds were done by both men and women. Their farming output was sold in both Menchum and Nigerian markets.

The men sowed yams in their mounds while the women planted cassava, maize, beans, egusi and cocoyams in the spaces between them. The men also cut poles and tended the yam vines while the women weeded the yams and other food crops. Through their concentration on agriculture, Nigerians introduced food crops from Nigeria into Menchum Division such as hairy yams and Igbo coco (Ndikumand Mosoh, 2011: 90). According to Jude Onyioma and

Njuh Emmanuel, this ameliorated the nutritional conditions of the inhabitants (18/01/2016). The high demand for these food crops by the local inhabitants encouraged the farming migrants to settle permanently with their families.

The Nigerians cultivated subsistence and cash crops. Cash cropping was also undertaken by some seasonal farmers from Nigeria, whose influx into the region was only during the clearing, hoeing and weeding periods of the year. This group sought employment of any sort from the inhabitants who owned farms (Amaazee, 1998: 55-58). This was common in Wum, Weh and Esu. Payments were either in cash or kind. Some were compensated through the sharing of profits from the farms. Many of them were granted plots of land to cultivate their own crops as payments for their labour. Through this practice, some of these men ended up acquiring their own farms in the vicinity of the town (Amaazee, 1998: 58). As a result, they got involved in the competition for the growing of cash crops in relation to other crops. This practice according to Anthony Chimuanya earned the Nigerians a lot of money and subsequently the migrants found that they had a high standard of living in the area and also explaining why many of them did not return to Nigeria (06/08/2016).

Benakuma, unlike Gayama became one of the greatest cocoa producing and collecting centres in Menchum Division because of the available labour supplied by the Nigerians. Most Nigerians involved in agriculture concentrated in cocoa farming thereby greatly increasing cocoa production. Nigerian farmers could ensure household food security through the sale of cash crops and this income made their integration in town comfortable (Lantum, 1969: 58-80). For a long time, their successes attracted many to follow them to the area.

### **b) The Domain of Fishing**

Other inter-ethnic relations according to Andreas Teghe created between Cameroon and Nigeria in Menchum Division were in the domain of fishing (13/08/2015). Nigerians were in the majority among the many people that were fishing in Cameroonian lakes and rivers in the area. It was carried out mostly in the rivers Menchum, Yebua, Yemeni, Yemenong and Katsina-Ala as well as some major lakes such as lake Wum, (Ndikum and Mosoh 2011: 96).

Fishing equipment included nets, traps and dugout canoes. Fishing was carried out during day and night and most of the fish caught was sold in major markets in Menchum like Esu, Weh, Wum, Befang, Baworo as well as some Nigerian towns like Calabar and Enugu (Ejedepang-koge, 1985: 50-68). The kind of fishes that were found in the rivers and lakes

included shrimps commonly called “*njanga*” (*Palaemon serratus* sp. ), “*bongers*”, and sardine-like “*belole*”. There were also fish such as “*kippe*”, “*suh*”, “*nyongo*”, “*kululu*”, “*mbange*” in the local languages. The type of fishes caught here were very rich in protein (Neba, 1987: 74.). Fishing was important in Menchum Division as it provided food to eat and generated income since it was in high demand both in Menchum Division and in Nigeria.

According to the Nigerian Samuel Nji, fishing in some rivers went on all year round due to the constant availability of fish (05/08/2015). That is why fishing around the rivers Katsina-Ala and Menchum was a full time occupation. In other rivers and lakes, fishing was carried out seasonally especially in Lake Wum and Lake Nyos. This depended on water level of the river and lake. During the dry season, many of the Nigerian fishermen concentrated on farming activities weaving, hunting and trade.

### c) Hunting and Animal Husbandry

Hunting and animal husbandry were other economic activities alongside craftsmanship that were carried out in the major forest regions of Menchum Division by the Nigerians. Animal husbandry included the rearing of cows, pigs, chicken and goats. According to John Ning (10/10/2015), as well as animal husbandry many Nigerians involved themselves in the sale of petty goods and hunting. They hunted animals such as antelope, cane rat and monkey in the Ngo’o area, Wum and Benakuma. This was common in the region and improved relations between Cameroonians and Nigerians as Cameroonian hunters supplied Nigerians with bush meat. The Nigerians were very active in hunting themselves (Ndikum and Mosoh, 2011: 43). The general hunting methods that were used were the setting of traps as well as the use of hunting dogs. The Nigerians introduced a hunting method through the use of traps and digging of trenches. Spears were also used, especially with poisoned edges (Schalsberg and Zartman, 1986: 23-27).

In an interview with Julius Nong, he said ‘when the Igbo caught these animals, they usually transported them to Nigeria, through the various border towns and creeks’ (01/10/2015). Once in Nigeria, these animals were sold at very high rate and in turn the Igbo bought goods such as medicines, second hand clothes (*ukreka*) and plastic household equipment to resell them in the Menchum region. Another interview with Musa Kum (13/08/2015) concurred. As such, hunted game (‘bush meat’) activity was a common trade item for the Igbo-Onitsha market, especially during the dry season. Some of the Menchum

towns gained a steady supply of Nigerian products thanks to the hunting activities carried out in their region.

## **2) New Production Techniques and Increase in Trade Activities**

Many traders carried out trans-border trade in manufactured goods making them available to the people of Menchum Division. They also depended on entrepreneurs from Nigeria for some specialized services. The industrious and gregarious Nigerians came to specialize in various types of crafts as well as trade seen in the domain of manufacturing techniques.

### **a) Manufacturing Techniques**

According to Chief Barnabas Ike the Nigerian artisans dealt in car spare parts, bicycles, radio, shoes, watches, trucks and tyre repairs, battery charging, welding, smithing /forging, shoe mending and making, baking, tailoring, painting, truck pushing, typing, photography and building (06/08/2016). They also dominated carpentry (furniture and house-roofing), mechanical work of all types and building and construction (Agbor, 2004: 89).

In fact, these Nigerian small-scale entrepreneurs, through their ingenuity, controlled most of the economic activities in Menchum. In most of the parts of the division, Nigerians dominated in craft work and as such were instrumental to the growth of the economy. All these encouraged inter-ethnic relations between Cameroon and Nigeria especially among traders who depended on the importation of such material from Nigeria (Agbor, 2004: 89). Following the economic report of the area in (NAB, 1961: 7), about 70% of persons involved in carrying out economic activities in the territory were Nigerians.

According to George Okafor, some of ‘those who settled in Benakuma, Wum, Esu and Weh were involved in the making of furniture and art works’ (06/08/2016). Most of the early mechanics in the region were Nigerians especially those who had had formal training. Mechanics have contributed enormously to the improvements of trade and relations in the region through the formation of trade associations and easy way of paying porters.

However, against this background of Nigerian trade dominance, Menchum indigenes found it difficult to develop their own entrepreneurship. The Nigerian craftsmen had survived a long time in this region because they didn’t train locals. Some local inhabitants according to Adolf Chinyere, were placed under their charge as apprentices, their Nigerian masters did not

show them all the techniques involved in the art. In effect, most of the local apprentices ended up abandoning their masters (6/08/2015).

Besides manufacturing techniques, the new economic system brought increased demand for a wider range of services like hair dressing, shoe mending and tailoring. In most of the towns, restaurateurs and bakers, farmers and domestic labourers (Eyongetah and Brain, 1989: 144). The introduction and commercialization of labour with the presence of the Nigerians led to the diversification of economic activities within towns.

Inter-ethnic relations between Cameroon and Nigeria in the Menchum Division were also mediated by traditional craftwork. This included dyed cloths, woven goods, pottery and metalwork. The most widespread cottage industry concerned cloth: spinning, dyeing and weaving (Ndubisi, 2009: 96). Men and women used home-spun cotton which was either produced locally or imported for weaving. The making of embroidered cloth was an important economic activity by the early 1960s. However, the traditional type of clothes suffered a setback by this time with the large influx of European fabrics although many people (Nigerians and Menchum) still preferred the locally-made attire (Agbor, 2004: 84).

Just like local potters, Nigerian potters made pots known today as “Canaris” for the storing of drinking water, for cooking and for storing of food stuffs. Commercial blacksmithing, which was introduced by Nigerians was advanced and led to the production of modern hoes, blades, axes, cutlasses and knives (Agbor, 2004: 84). In an interview with Sylvanus Okonkwo, he listed the items produced for trade. These included boxes of various sizes popularly known as suitcases, kerosene lanterns, buckets and bowls (06/08/2015). Small boxes were used by school children around the border town of Esu as school bags during the rainy seasons since they walked long distances to school. The involvement of Nigerians in mechanical repair work led to the introduction of spare parts stores in the Division. Nigerians trained some inhabitants on how to repair cars and sell spare parts. Among the people who were trained as mechanics dealing in parts were Sylvanus Okonkwo and Fon Albert II Kawzu of Esu (Achangkeng, 2000: 63).

### **b) Trade and Commerce**

Another category of Nigerians in Menchum who were called “buyamsellams” in pidgin. These were self-employed Nigerians who were involved in the buying and selling of agricultural products and foodstuffs throughout the entire area. This group of Nigerians

boosted the economic activities of Menchum in many ways (Ndikum and Mosoh 2011: 102). They reduced the rate of unemployment and increased the revenue of the various councils and the per capita income of many indigenes as well as themselves. They were involved in the selling of crops like plantain, fresh tomatoes and other vegetables as well as the buying and selling of egusi, crayfish (Lantum, 1969: 70).

Other relationships followed involvement in trade and commerce. They were concentrated in cocoa, coffee and palm plantations like those near, Essimbi, Baworo and Gayama. These plantations increased the population because many people came from different parts of Cameroon and Nigeria to work in them. However, Nigerians formed the majority of plantation workers (Achangkeng, 2000: 63).

According to Barnabas Ike, an Igbo man based in Wum, most Nigerians who were involved in trade in Menchum first came as labourers in the plantations and became interested in trade only after their retirement from the plantations (06/08/2015).

In an interview with Francis Aneng, ‘the Nigerian traders caused a widespread and long-lasting impact in relations brought about by trade and commerce’ (07/08/2015). Their role in the internal development of the economy of Menchum Division remained of profound significance. Elvis Okafor holds that, ‘the Nigerians involvement in {trading} stock fish and clothing material benefited them enormously especially as they acted as middlemen and agents of large companies like those that were involved in the buying of palm oil, cocoa and coffee from the indigenous population’ (12/08/2015). A group of Igbo traders was involved in the smoking and selling of fish. They smoked the fish on wire grills. (See plate 1).

Following an interview with Raphael Okocha, the Nigerians put in a lot of effort in the stock fish and clothing trades due to their high profits (06/08/2015). They smoked the fish before it was transported to the market. The trade was organised in such a way that fishers sold to fish smokers. These later sold the fish to market women. All three activities were undertaken by Nigerians.

Plate 2 shows large quantities of crayfish. Most often, when the crayfish was bought from the borderlands, it was sold in the nearby border markets to the “buyamsellams” (retailers). Based on the sale of stockfish and cloth, the dealers also sold consumer goods such as yam, garri, crayfish, fresh spices and vegetables. All these commodities, with the exception of yam and garri, constituted the petty trade usually done part time and particularly by

housewives. These commodities were also traded by the store sellers who bought goods in bulk then retailed them at the level of the market (Ndikum and Mosoh, 2011: 102).

### Plate 1: Fish Trading



**Source:** The Author's collection, Fieldwork, 01/08/2015.

Once smoked, they sent it to various markets. Such stockfish was sold in the Esu border market in large quantities. This fish is caught in the border waters of Katsina-Ala and Benue between the Nigeria-Cameroon border and then smoked.

### Plate 2: Contemporary Nigerian Crayfish Traders



**Source:** The Authors' Collection, Fieldwork 09/04/2016.

Plate 2 shows some contemporary Nigerians who continue to be involved in the sale of crayfish. It was a common phenomenon to see Nigerians and their apprentices selling together.

According to Raphael Okocha, (06 /08/2015), ‘Spices such as ‘ougbonaw’ (bush mango) ‘djangsa’, pepper and ‘eru’ were also traded. Vegetables were mostly bought in and around Menchum and transported by the Igbo to Nigeria where the demand was high.

Assorted goods like enamel and plastic utensils were brought from Nigeria to towns like Esu, Weh, Bafmen, Befang, Benakuma and Wum'. While a majority of the Igbo women traded in foodstuffs, the men traded in hardware goods (such as spare parts) and secondhand clothes.

The sale of clothing was another Nigerian dominated trading activity. Most of the goods that came into Menchum passed-through the Esu and Baworo ports which were the major entries and through the Katsina-Ala and Furu-Awa from Gayama and Birama (Ayuketa, 2011: 68). In an interview with Raphael Okocha, she said 'Traders in secondhand dresses usually had their warehouses in Esu and Wum (06/08/2015). From here, they were then taken to the various markets around the region.'

Generally, most of the Igbo began as apprentices, selling in shops owned by their masters. What is interesting is that, most of these Igbo masters preferred to travel home and recruit apprentices from there who were then taught the ways of their master. The period of apprenticeship usually lasted for about five years. Upon completion of apprenticeship, the young traders were offered a gift or a loan from their masters to set up their own businesses. In such ways of doing things, the Igbo people flooded the entire Menchum area to the extent that certain portions of the markets were usually attributed only to the Igbo (Ndikum and Mosoh, 2011: 103). Amina, believes that some Igbo possessed as many as 12 apprentices at a time, depending on the size of their business. Upon graduation, these apprentices, seeing the benefits of the trade decided to stay, thereby increasing their population in the region and gradually gaining control of the economy of Menchum (13/08/2015).

Apart from owning big stalls, some of them hawked their goods from village to village in the local four-day and eight-day week markets (Amaazee 1995: 234). They traded right into the interior of Menchum. The Nigerian traders also involved their offspring at tender ages of between 6 and 12 years in trading activities. As such, on the pavements of streets in the various towns were found peddlers, sitting by with trays or carrying them about. They sold items like kola-nuts, groundnuts and wares of all sorts especially during the holidays. According to many of the Igbo contacted, children were engaged in trade at an early age so as to encourage them to become responsible traders. From such a background, any child who was not fortunate enough to obtain a white-collar job, found it possible to settle and become a full time trader (Ayuketa, 2005: 71).

Trading activities between Cameroon and Nigeria in areas like Benakuma, Wum, and Esu grew due to the presence of the Igbos in these areas. They were very industrious and even

in remote areas they continued with their trading activities. They also became involved in petty trading such as grocery shops, retailing of palm oil, palm oil products, vegetables and even bush meat derived from hunting. Electrical goods, lace for women, basic necessities like milk, sugar, tea, biscuits, pots, paraffin stoves and a lot more, were trade items of the Igbo in the various towns in the division. Apart from selling, it is believed that the Igbo introduced hand carts and grinding mills, which provided jobs for many. The carts according to George Okafor, were used for the transportation of goods and services from one part of the town to another and the grinding mills for grinding of corn (06/08/2015).

Apart from trading in goods and services in Menchum, the Igbo people traded as provision store, and restaurant owners (Ufford, 1999: 234). The presence of Igbo traders especially in Wum advanced the development of the town through the construction of houses and especially the construction of new stores and the rehabilitation of the Wum market (according to employees of the Wum Council). The statistics (as presented in Table 1) help explain the involvement of Igbos in diverse activities in the Wum Town. The table presents the activities that were being carried out by the Igbo and indigenes. These activities are also represented in Chart 1.

In an interview with Ben Chu Foy, the dominance of the Nigerians in trade led to delinquency within the ranks of the Nigerian traders and sometimes this resulted in ugly incidents in the various towns and villages (01/07/2015). According to Emmanuel Igos, the Igbos used their dominance in trade to harrass the indigenes especially with their “touch and buy” principle, which forced people to buy articles they had touched (06/08/2015). Some malpractices even led to a strike in this area between 1946 and 1947 where the indigenes boycotted the Nigerian traders and their goods for one year (Ndikum and Mosoh, 2011: 98). A similar situation also happened in Limbe in the same year (Ndikum and Mosoh, 2011: 98).

**Table 1: Estimated Percentages of Activities Carried out by Nigerians from 1922 - 1961**

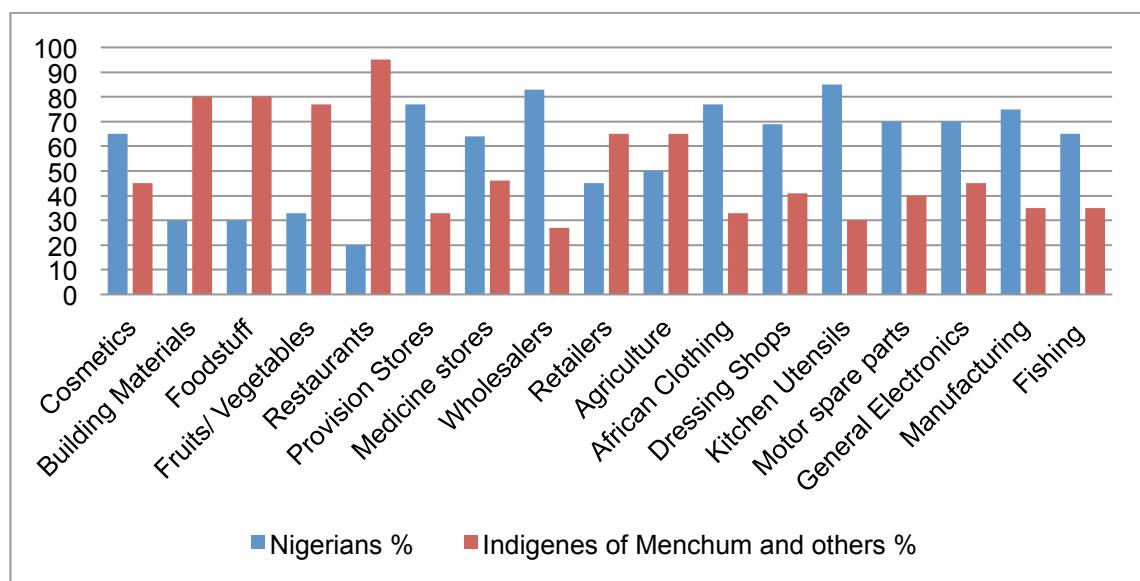
Activities/Produce	Nigerians %	Indigenes of Menchum and others %
Cosmetics	65	45
Building Materials	30	80
Foodstuff	30	80
Fruits/ Vegetables	33	77
Restaurants	20	95
Provision Stores	77	33

Medicine stores	64	46
Wholesalers	83	27
Retailers	45	65
Agriculture	50	65
African Clothing	77	33
Tailoring Shops	69	41
Kitchen Utensils	85	30
Motor spare parts	70	40
General Electronics	70	45
Manufacturing	75	35
Fishing	65	35

**Source:** Author's collection from the fieldwork, 05/05/2015.

Note should be taken here that the data on which this table is based on interviews conducted about Nigerian activities in Menchum from 1922 to 1961 but they do not reflect variation within the forty year period covered, for example during the Second World War when the arrival of European trade goods was severely restricted. This information was from employees of Wum Council. It was aimed at appreciating efforts of Igbo in the development of the Wum Town. The above statistics help explain the involvement of Igbo in diverse activities in Wum.

Chart 1: Estimated Percentages of Activities Carried out by Nigerians from 1922-1961



**Source:** Author's Collection, Field Work, 05/04/2015.

Given that the Nigerian traders had large capital and a near monopoly in trans-border trade, their trading transactions doubled after 1961 (Eyongetah and Brain, 1974: 145). The independence of Cameroon did not have a negative impact on the economic activity of most of the Nigerians. Some of them stayed and continued their economic activities. The introduction of custom duty posts in Esu, Wum and Benakuma did not scare Nigerian traders as many of them had long been highly involved in trade in Menchum Division and they know all shortcuts which enabled goods to be smuggled into the Division.

From 1885 to 1961, the economic reports of this region show that the major contributors to the economy through taxes and customs duties were Nigerians (Ngoh, 1989: 165). Their contribution to the economy was enormous because Nigerians were involved in all aspects of the commercial activities in the region. In addition, the revenue increased tremendously because of the surplus labour that was supplied from both countries. (Ndikum and Mosoh, 2011: 94-96).

### c) Communication and Transport

Discussing this in an interview with Stephen Ngoh, he said that inter-ethnic relations between Cameroon and Nigeria in Menchum Division opened the gateway into Menchum from Nigeria through many routes. The territory had numerous watercourses like the rivers and streams which the Nigerians used to enter the territory (10/10/2015). According to him ‘Where no roads existed, like in cases where goods could only come into the territory through the rivers and hand paddled canoes were used on the watercourses to enter into the territory’.

On the same topic Emeka Okonkwo said that ‘The availability of footpaths and narrow motor tracks also served as a means of communication for these Nigerians, (10/10/2015). Some of them trekked with their loads for a period of two to three days to enter the territory’. Some of the Nigerians paid porters to transport their goods from Birama to Esu and Baworo to Wum (Ndikum and Musoh, 2011: 98). However, especially after WW2 there were also lorries that were available to transport goods from one place to another. Those who could afford the fare came on lorries which carried goods and passengers. The transportation fare from Nigeria to Wum usually ranged between 5,000 CFA francs to 15,000 CFA francs depending on the season in the early 1960s, the very end of the period under consideration (Ndikum and Musoh, 2011: 99). The passengers sat on two long benches placed inside of the open back. (Ndikum and Musoh, 2011: 98). Since the roads were so narrow that two lorries could not pass side by side, the travelling days were arranged in a way there were days

scheduled for all lorries moving up or down along the Esu-Furu-Awa or Wum-Baworo road, and Esu-kpwep road (Ndikum and Musoh, 2011: 99).

This delayed journeys leading to a shortage of certain commodities in certain areas of the region (Ndikum and Musoh, 2011: 99). The goods which could not be transported by lorry were transported by head. This was done by young men called *njungolese* (porters). Most of the journeys by road were usually done only during the dry season because of the bad condition of the roads in the wet season.

According to an interview with Raphael Oku, the principal markets where goods were supplied in Menchum included Baworo, whose market days were usually on Mondays (06/08/2015). In another interview with Christian Kenah Meh, ‘to enter Esu and Furu-Awa through Birama, they passed through the Cross River with the use of hand paddled canoes just as was the case through Benakuma from Baworo (23/10/2015). From Furu-Awa, they could pass through Esu and Weh to Wum or Furu-Awa-Gayama to Esu following narrow motorable roads. These roads were usually passable only during the dry season. However, it is worth noting that majority of the lorry owners and drivers were Nigerians’. To enter Wum, the Igbos used the roadway of Esu through Weh.

Apart from motorable roads, there were footpaths that were used by some of the Nigerians so that their goods could arrive at the final destination quickly (Ndikum and Mosoh, 2011: 101). For example, there existed a footpath from Birama to Gayama through Furu-Awa, Esu, Weh and Wum town (Ndikum and Mosoh, 2011: 101). Through the various routes, the Nigerians were able to enter the territory and carry out their activities and then to return home. During the Christmas season, they made large profits that enabled them to build houses (Amaazee, 1998: 234-236).

According to a Report on Fungom District (NAB 1975: 9), ‘some Nigerians, who saw the benefits of their fellow brothers in the territory, became very anxious to move into the community. This went a long way in increasing the population of Nigerians in the Menchum. With their number in this division, communication was easy, and this facilitated the buying and selling of their goods in the territory. Considering the fact that Menchum Division comprised of so many ethnic groups, there was a need for a language of communication. It was as a result of this that “pidgin English” was used as the lingua franca in trade and commercial activities of the Nigerians in Menchum’. Pidgin as a means of communication can also be traced back to the early contacts with European traders, missionaries and colonial

agents (Eyogetah, 1974: 158). With such a communication medium, the Nigerians found it easy to communicate and trade easily with the people of Menchum. This in the long run improved inter-ethnic relations between them.

The Nigerians participated in the daily development of the territory through their different economic activities, which played a great influence in the lives of the people. Their economic success made it possible for them to buy property in Menchum and to settle permanently.

## Conclusion

Inter-ethnic relations between Cameroon-Nigeria through Menchum Division from 1922 to 1961 were important to the indigenous people of Menchum as trade united them and were an important source of income. The paper set out to show that Nigerians were involved in different categories of activity in Menchum that contributed to the growth of the area. We presented the influence of Nigerians in the area in the domain of agriculture, fishing, craftsmanship, hunting and animal husbandry, production and the manufacturing techniques, trade and commerce, communication and transport. The socio-cultural, and economic evolution of the area was greatly influenced by trade and the trade relations created a dynamic community around Menchum Division.

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Efoh Eman Anthony, Aged 45, Cocoa Farmer, Gayama, 19/01/2016.  
Emeka Johnson, Aged 76, Businessman, Wum, 06/08/2016.  
Emmanuel Igos, Aged 58, President of the Nigerian Union, Wum, 06/08/2015.  
Igo Anthony, Aged 66, petty trader, Kpwep, 19/01/2016.  
Ike Barnabas, Aged 76, Former Igbo Union President, Wum, 06/08/2015.  
Meh George Bin, Aged 77, Retired teacher, Esu, 04/08/2015.  
Nji Samuel, Aged 74, Farmer, Fisherman and Secretary of NdauTse, Weh, 05 /08/2015.  
Ngoh Stephen, Aged 84, Trader and Farmer, Teneghe-Esu, 10/10/2015.  
Nong Julius, Aged 86, Farmer and Fisherman, Kejeme-Esu, 11/10/2015.  
Okafor Elvis, Aged 50 Trader, Trader, Weh, 12/08/2015.

Okafor George, Aged 74, Retired Mechanic, Wum, 06/08/2015.  
Okocha Raphael alias the photographer, Aged 45, Trader in Bush Mango, Wum, 06/08/2015.  
Okonkwo Emeka, Aged 74, Businessman, Bamenda, 10/10/2015.  
Okonkwo, Sylvanus, Aged 85, Retired Driver, Wum, 06/08/2015.  
Onyioma Jude and Njuh Emmanuel, Aged 45 and 35 respectively, Traders, Kpep, 18/01/2016.  
Teghe Andreas, Aged 90 Farmer, Azhor-Weh, 13/10/ 2015.  
Udoka, Chinyere, Aged 64, Buyam-sellam, Wum, 06/08/2015.

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