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Cameroon: Legacies of violence and prospects for peace. New impulses from research

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Conference Report: Cameroon: Legacies of violence and prospects for peace. New impulses from research (ABI, 16-17 June 2021)

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Responding to a growing need to anchor analysis of the current violent crises in historical perspectives, the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute (Freiburg) organized a workshop on 16 and 17 June 2021 that had to be held as a webinar due to the Covid-19 pandemic.[1] Eight papers were presented and discussed; offering food for thought to a broad audience of quite different disciplinary background – but this audience may be enlarged even further by this report. Studies on Cameroon slowly begin to expand.

The conference organisers opted for a long-term view spanning from 1) the precolonial to German colonial period, via 2) the British and French mandate rule until decolonization/reunification (1961), and 3) the Ahidjo and Biya years until today. Compared to other African countries of approximately the same size, Cameroon's violent history has for a long time received at best a fair share, but certainly not a high scholarly attention. Recently, a good number of Ph.D. and larger research projects were started and some of the webinar's participants are themselves active in creating international networks of researchers. Some of those individuals, both senior and junior, used the opportunity to share their research results and discuss promising avenues for further research.

The conference organisers had identified a number of gaps in the academic literature on Cameroon's legacy of violence including a lack of a gender-lens on violence and contestation; i.e. female activists, female organisations and female victims of violence are not well covered in academic production.[2] During the last decades relatively little has been published on the British UN mandate period, though more archival material should be available today. Finally, Cameroon is rarely compared to other countries, and is particularly absent in larger debates on violence, conflict-mitigating institutions or 'state failure', arguably because it is still not regarded as a severe conflict case despite some undisputable facts: more than 6000 people killed in armed conflict[3]; by mid 2022 77,400 refugees in Nigeria, 592,600 internally displaced persons and 417,500 returnees[4] have been identified - since 2017[5], when the conflict between separatists and government turned violent. Additionally, the Boko Haram rebellion rages in Northern Cameroon since 2013 and at least three neighbouring countries experience protracted armed conflicts.[6]

This report will briefly summarize the themes of the presentation before offering a view on some of the highlighted desiderata of research. Three contributions had a clear historical perspective on roots of the current conflict by pointing at earlier episodes.

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[1] See appendix for the conference programme.

[2] Terretta M (2013b) Petitioning for Our Rights, Fighting for Our Nation. The History of the Democratic Union of Cameroonian Women, 1949-1960. Mankon Bamenda: Langaa RPCIG.

[3] https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon (last visited 24 August 2022)

[4] https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/cameroon/ (status 1.8.2022; last visited 24 August 2022)

[5] For a diverse overview on the Anglophone questions, consult: Kah HK (2016) Impact of Independence of the Republic of Cameroun on the Future Independence and Reunification of British Southern Cameroons. 2(2): 21.; Fonchingong T (2013) The quest for autonomy: The case of Anglophone Cameroon. 7(5): 224–236. DOI: 10.5897/AJPSIR10.033., Konings P and Nyamnjoh FB (2018) Anglophone Secessionist Movements in Cameroon. In: de Vries L and Schomerus P (eds) *Secessionism in African Politics*. Palgrave Series in African Borderlands Studies. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 59–89

[6] An interesting exception is the work of Agbor and Nijesam about political violence. Agbor A and Njieassam EE (2019) Beyond the Contours of Normally Acceptable Political Violence: Is Cameroon a Conflict/Transitional Society in the Offing? Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal 22: 1–32.

The workshop contributions

Tristan Oestermann (HU Berlin) noticed a gap between the imagined unity and the real territorial split of Cameroon dating back to the precolonial and German colonial periods, arguing that today's division into Anglophone and Francophone parts follows roughly a very long historical trajectory. Oestermann traces this division back to trade patterns of the Early Modern Era, which were not fully erased by German colonial rule, and obviously even less so during French and British mandatory rule. For a very long time, Cameroon was no administrative or economic unit. Adverse wind conditions meant that there was little marine exchange between the two coastal zones. Similarly, during the German rule, the colonial economy was largely split into two zones; a split that was established much earlier than the introduction of the Anglophone and Francophone governance styles at the end of World War I.[7]

Nicodemus Fru Awasom (University of Ghana) directly responded to one of the research desiderata by focusing on the British mandate policy aimed at expanding the existing Nigerian colonial holdings by simply adding the British Cameroons to it. According to Fru Awasom, British authorities deliberately thwarted a collective quest of Southern Cameroonian leaders for independence in 1960. The plebiscites organized by the United Nations paved the way for an asymmetrical unification, as it disempowered Anglophone elites in the negotiations with their Francophone counterparts who had already achieved independence (an option not available for Anglophones). For this presentation, Awasom went back to his earlier research materials, including rich interviews conducted in the 1990s and complemented by archival sources (United Nations documents, newspapers, official gazettes and government communiqués) – a work that deserves further extension.[8]

Kerstin Stubenvoll (HU Berlin) drew on her broader study on the Cameroonian labor movement(s) during the French UN Mandate period to discuss the case study of a massacre committed by French forces close to the 'village-pilote' in Ekité. She argued that European models of land use, economic participation and employment met with both resistance and adaptation in what could be interpreted as a war against the 'administered population'. This contribution also highlighted how colonial authorities tried to attribute conflict escalation exclusively to UPC-affiliated 'terrorists' without considering the diversity of actors and the complexity of the conflict, whether deliberately or not.

All three 'historical' papers highlighted elements of continuity. These include the lack of the rulers' accountability towards the ruled and of international bodies to the local population; deepening socio-economic imbalances; a striking similarity of political strategies; and the impact of

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[7] Tristan Oestermann provides an analysis on rubber trade in South-East Cameroon to illustrate working conditions under Germany colonial order. Oestermann, Tristan (2016): Saving the Supply and Making People Work: Sustainability, Labor, and Control of Production in the Rubber Trade of Southeast Cameroon, 1899–1903. In: Bänziger, Peter Paul; Suter, Micha (eds.): Histories of Productivity. Genealogical Perspectives on the Body and Modern Economy, New York: Routledge p. 57-73.; Geschiere, Peter; Oestermann, Tristan (2018): Coercion or Trade? Multiple Self-realization during the Rubber Boom in German Kamerun (1899–1913). In: Adebanwi, Wale: The Political Economy of Everyday Life in Africa. Beyond the Margins. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, pp 92-114.

[8] Fru Awasom has published many journal articles on diverse subjects linked to the Anglophone crisis, federalism, the UN Plebiscite, etc. Fru Awasom, Nicodemus (2013): Negotiating Federalism: How Ready Were Cameroonian Leaders before the February 1961 United Nations Plebiscites? Canadian Journal of African Studies 36(3):425-459; Fru Awasom, Nicodemus (2020): The anglophone problem in Cameroon yesterday and today in search of a definition. Journal of the African Literature Association 14 (2), pp- 264 – 291; Fru Awasom (2000): The Reunification Question in Cameroon History: Was the Bride an Enthusiastic or a Reluctant One? Africa Today 47 (2), pp. 91-119.

ecology. The subsequent papers addressed under-researched angles to the current Anglophone conflict:

Michaela Pelican (University of Cologne) shed light on a fully underrepresented perspective on the Anglophone conflict, namely of the pastoralist Mbororo ethnic minority who, both individually and collectively, have been targeted by extreme speech and acts of violence by separatist forces. The age-old trope of farmer-herder conflict in the North-West region has been revived and relations between other population groups and the Mbororo are at best ambivalent. Pelican was able to draw on qualitative and quantitative data that underline a current 'double bind', with government security forces occasionally working in collaboration with individual Mbororo who risk jeopardizing a respectable level of local conviviality built up over recent decades.[9]

Roxana Willis (University of Oxford and University of Freiburg) focused on the moral economy of violence among Ambazonian separatist fighters. The emic understanding of the use of force, and self-imposed ethical limits to exerting violence have been neglected so far. A moral economy lens, owing to conceptual frameworks of George Karandinos[10] and Gilles Deleuze Felix Guattari[11], is used to understand restraint of violence, but also why separatist fighters at times opt for destructive violence - with some clearly motivated by a logic of opportunistic self-advancement. [12]

Maria Ketzmerick (University of Bayreuth) highlighted the role of diaspora groups for the Anglophone conflict. Evidently, diaspora groups were instrumental to attract global attention to the concerns of the Anglophone minority. At the same time, the transnationalization of conflict governance can be seen as a process of escalation. The sociology of rebel formation might be affected by this effect, as are perceptions of actors and their transnational networks. [13]

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[9] Pelican has published amply on the Mbororo minority, including Pelican, Michaela. 2015. Masks and Staffs: Identity Politics in the Cameroon Grassfields. Oxford, New York: Berghahn, and Pelican, Michaela. 2009. Complexities of indigeneity and autochthony: an African example. American Ethnologist 36(1): 149-162. Her workshop presentation is also published in the ABI Working Paper Series: Pelican, Michaela et al. 2022. Mbororo under Attack: Extreme Speech and Violence in the Anglophone Conflict in Cameroon. ABI Working Paper 21. Good overviews of the ‚Anglophone crisis' are provided by Michaela Pelican (2022). The Anglophone Conflict in Cameroon – historical and political background. ABI Working Paper 20; and Marie-Emmanuelle Pommerolle, Hans De Marie Heungoup (2017): "Anglophone crisis": A tale of the Cameroonian postcolony. African Affairs 116 (464), 526–538.

[10] Karandinos, G, Hart, LK, Castrillo, FM, Bourgois, P (2014) The moral economy of violence in the US inner city. Current Anthropology 55(1): 1–22.

[11] Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix (1988). A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. London: The Athlone Press Ltd.

[12] Roxana Willis has published on a related matter, such as for example: Willis, Roxana and Angove, James and Mbinkar, Caroline and McAulay, Joseph, 'We Remain Their Slaves': Voices from the Cameroon Conflict (April 15, 2020). Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3576732. Her workshop presentation is published in the ABI Working Paper Series: Willis Roxana et al. 2022. "We are fighting for the freedom of our people": The moral economy of violence among Ambazonian separatist fighters in Cameroon. ABI Working Paper 23.

[13] Maria Ketzmerick has analyzed state-building, securitization and decolonization processes in Cameroon: Ketzmerick, Maria; Bonacker, Thorsten: How Security Dynamics Shaped Trusteeship Statebuilding: The French Administration of Cameroon. In: Bonacker, Thorsten; Distler, Werner; Ketzmerick, Maria (Hrsg.): Securitization in Statebuilding and Intervention. - Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2017. - S. 155-182; Ketzmerick, Maria: Securitized State Building?: The Camerounian Decolonization in Conflict.; Ketzmerick, Maria: Staat, Sicherheit und Gewalt in Kamerun: Postkoloniale Perspektiven auf den Dekolonisierungsprozess unter französischer UN-Treuhandverwaltung. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2019, In: Kreide, Regina; Langenohl, Andreas (Hrsg.): Conceptualizing Power in Dynamics of Securitization: Beyond State and International System. - Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2019.

These three papers shed light on important actors and their arenas that so far, have failed to attract public or academic attention. The final two workshop papers looked at long-term peace-building and more short-term conflict resolution schemes.

Kiven James Kewir (African Leadership Centre, Nairobi) scrutinized women's active participation in negotiations aiming at sustainable conflict resolution in the current crisis. Despite the fact that women are disproportionally affected by the conflict, they have been largely absent from all high-level negotiations. Arguably, they play a more important role on a local level, but limited research has been carried out to examine women's contribution to peacebuilding and mediation between the central government and the Anglophone separatists. Access to respondents proved difficult, but qualitative data could be collected via in-depth interviews and focus groups discussions beyond the conflict-affected Anglophone regions. The contribution also pointed out practical solutions to a severe problem of investigation.[14]

Denis Tull (SWP Berlin) presented a co-authored comparative study[15] on dialogue forums which prominently included Cameroon's *Grand Débat National* in 2020. While most such dialogues held in Africa are not very successful, they occupy a central place in national politics in political, symbolic and communicative terms and also absorb the attention of the international community. A comparative analysis reveals the rationality of actors, their constellation, interests and expectations; the content/process of negotiations and their outcome/effect through four different perspectives on co-optation strategies, institutional legacies, political theatre and peacebuilding. In the Cameroonian case, the "Tripartite Conference" in 1991 which ended a period of large-scale anti-regime mobilization is a key reference point for all main actors.

These two papers drove home the point that a much more detailed analysis is needed to assess the motivations of stakeholders and the chances of success of any activity portrayed as fostering peace.

Insights from the workshop discussion

The contributions, presented in four blocks, were discussed by experienced Cameroonist scholars: Peter Geschiere, Andreas Eckert, Gordon Crawford and Andreas Mehler. They related some older paradigms used in the study of Cameroonian politics and society to current research, inter alia highlighting the explanatory value of explaining violent contestation as an expression of anger by *cadets sociaux*[16]; the ambivalence of acceptance versus rejection of elite enrichment[17]; or the integration of Cameroon in an unequal system of exchange on a global level.

Despite the variety of theoretical and methodological approaches and quite diverging empirical puzzles, the webinar exposed a good number of commonalities or consensual assessments. The discussions per panel (and overall) highlighted that from the colonial period until today, violent conflicts in Cameroon develop on the background of man-made environmental degra-

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[14] Kewir already has done research in the field of gender, such as in his article: Kiven James Kewir, Patience Munge Sone (2015): Gender in the Military: A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experience of Female Soldiers in the Cameroon Army. International Journal of Social Science Research 3 (1); Kewir, James Kiven et al. (2021). Shrinking Civic Space and the Role of Civil Society in Resolution of Conflict in Anglophone Cameroon. Report of the Centre for Trust Peace and Social Relations (CTPSR), Coventry University. https://pure.coventry.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/42002302/civic_space_web.pdf (accessed August 9, 2022).

[15] Andreas Mehler/Denis Tull/Miriam Glund: Dialogue as the new mantra in responding to political crisis in Africa? The cases of Mali and Cameroon, ABI Working Paper 17, Freiburg 2021

[16] Jean-François Bayart, *L'État au Cameroun,* Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, « Références », 1985 (chapter 7).

[17] Geschiere, Peter and Francis Nyamnjoh (2000). Capitalism and Autochthony: The Seesaw of Mobility and Belonging. Public Culture 12(2): 423-452.

dation, deep intervention in the name of 'development' and restricted access to natural resources, not least land. Cameroon's global interconnections were repeatedly highlighted: European markets, early on, gave impulses to the local labour market. But the growing plantation economy created unsustainable conditions both for the natural environment and local people. It is relatively easy to see lines of continuity in contestation from early acts of dispossession to today's grievances, e.g. in the Mount Cameroon area.[18]

An important field of research is not only the colonial past as a closed period per se, but also the effects that the latter still has today on political processes both in Cameroon and in the three former colonial powers, Germany, France and Great Britain. In fact, the German colonial past has had a major (and frequently overlooked) impact on the current crisis, as divisions and cleavages were deepened for economic purposes and exploited in a divide-and-rule policy already at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century[19], resulting in Cameroon never being an administrative or political entity in colonial times. Under the French and British colonial past, the divisions between the two parts of Cameroon unsurprisingly intensified, as both colonial powers wanted to emphasize Cameroon's belonging and integration to "their" colonial territory for imperialist reasons. In Germany in particular, the German colonial past in Cameroon and above all its impact on the current crisis is little known and received[20], also because this fundamentally contradicts the German self-portrayal as a detached party and mediator in crises. While public awareness of colonial crimes in today's Namibia has grown strongly and is beginning for today's Tanzania, this is hardly the case in Cameroon.[21]

The impact of external actors would merit therefore more and systematic scholarly attention, not least because many Cameroonian intellectuals are readily attributing a big share of responsibility for the current crisis to them, though rarely based on solid facts[22]. This fact-finding is obviously better developed for the United Nations and its sub-organisations; at least some light is shed on the 1961 referendum as we have seen, but what about the preceding League of Nations? The wish to see more research on the British mandate period had been voiced earlier. But what about France in the more proximate past? Access to archives (like in the case of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda) may be facilitated in the future and offers prospects for a much better documented analysis.

Pre-existing societal structures of exclusion and suppression, coupled with regulatory and repressive policies introduced in colonial times (but maintained ever since), have created – in Cameroon just as in similar cases – an alienated youth whose mobilization is a key element of

[18] Beyond Mount Cameroon see Frankline A. Ndi and Simon Batterbury. "Land grabbing and the axis of political conflicts: insights from Southwest Cameroon." Africa Spectrum 52.1 (2017): 33-63.; Eckert A and Rohde E (1994) 'What Makes My Land My Land?' Bodenrecht, Entwicklung und Landkonflikte in Kamerun. Africa Spectrum 29(3). Institute of African Affairs at GIGA, Hamburg/Germany: 285–302; Oyono PR (2004) One step forward, two steps back? Paradoxes of natural resources management decentralisation in Cameroon. The Journal of Modern African Studies 42(1). Cambridge University Press: 91–111.

[19] For insights in German Colonialism in Cameroon, consult: Kuss S (2017) *German Colonial Wars and the Context of Military Violence — Susanne Kuss* (tran. A Smith). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Available at: https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674970632; Authaler C (2016) Negotiating "social progress": German planters, African workers and mandate administrators in the British Cameroons (1925-1939). In: *The League of Nations' Work on Social Issues: Visions, Endeavours and Experiments*. Geneva: United Nations, pp. 47–56.

[20] Smith WD (2012) The German Colonial Empire. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

[21] Reference is given mostly to Namibia, e.g. Thomas Thiemeyer. "Cosmopolitanizing Colonial Memories in Germany." Critical Inquiry 45.4 (2019): 967-990.

[22] As a notable exception, Willis et al. (2021) analyze the economic interest and involvement of UK, US, France, Germany, China and Canada in Cameroon and interpret it as acts of complicity in the current Anglophone conflict (chapter 3).

violent strategies to maintain or acquire power until today (Argenti 2007, Fokwang).[23] However, the agency of the youth (male and female) is rarely studied in its own right. A tendency to view 'the youth' as largely a category of victims (of unemployment and political manipulation) is hardly fully convincing.

Although the webinar deliberately avoided a focus on the Boko Haram insurgency, some participants, among them Ousmanou Adama (Maroua University)[24], suggested that linkages between the Anglophone crisis and the cross-border insurgency can be established (ranging from weak state capacities to counter both armed rebellions to the aforementioned alienation of *cadets sociaux*). Looking at Cameroon's crises one by one may benefit an authoritarian government that continues to ascribe specific pathologies to entire population groups with the goal of deflecting political and academic interest from the substantial responsibility that the authorities bear. In fact, for a very long time, the regime has been remarkably able to isolate the different spaces of contestation and pursue a "divide and rule" policy down to the village level.[25] This will become harder, as some predicted, with the tangible effects that the Anglophone crisis has on the Francophone part (e.g. via Anglophones' displacement and long-term migration to main and secondary cities in the Francophone regions).

Discussing "culture" might be often a lofty exercise, but in the Cameroonian case of armed conflict two aspects may merit closer attention. Firstly, researchers have pointed at the exceptionality of examples for a local "culture of peace"[26]. Practitioners at times assume that local mediation boards, wise elders or other "traditional" institutions could (re)create at least "peace enclaves".[27] Such institutions seem largely absent in most of Cameroon, potentially because traditional rulers were since colonial times firmly incorporated in the administrative machinery and lost most of their autonomous sources of legitimacy. However, NGOs and church-based organisations are active in this sense. Secondly, Cameroon's government has scantly invested in any sort of conciliatory memory politics. The victims of slave razzias and of colonial expansion, the prosecuted anti-colonial freedom fighters and haunted opponents to the Ahidjo and Biya regimes were never commemorated appropriately.[28] However, some participants pointed also at the risk to create collective trauma by clumsy approaches to invest in collective memory. A radical alternative in practical terms would be to 'transcend' conflict by resolutely engaging in the building of a joint peaceful future. Such plans are rarely evoked in the current debate. Those were also rare in the past and largely repeating just the mantra of 'development' (with

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[23] The important role of youth is also illustrated in the following papers: Argenti N (2007). *The Intestines of the State: Youth, Violence, and Belated Histories in the Cameroon Grassfields.* Illustrated edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Fokwang, Jude. "Politics at the margins: alternative sites of political involvement among young people in Cameroon." Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue canadienne des études africaines 50.2 (2016): 211-228.

[24] Ousmanou Adama's participation in the webinar inspired him to contribute a paper on Anglophone IDPs in the Far North region, which is also published in the ABI Working Paper series. Adama, Ousmanou. 2022. The predicament of IDPs from the Anglophone regions in the Far North of Cameroon. ABI Working Paper 22.

[25] E.g. Peter Geschiere and Francis Nyamnjoh. "Capitalism and autochthony: the seesaw of mobility and belonging." In *Millennial capitalism and the culture of neoliberalism*, John Comaroff/Jean Comaroff (eds). Duke University Press, 2001. 159-190; Francis Nyamnjoh / Michael Rowlands. "Elite associations and the politics of belonging in Cameroon." Africa 68.3 (1998): 320-337.

[26] United Nations (1999) A/RES/53/243: Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. https://undocs.org/A/RES/53/243.

[27] See e.g. for former Yugoslavia Katunarić, Vjeran, and Boris Banovac. "Conflicts and Peace in Multiethnic Cities of the Former Yugoslavia: a Case Study." In Mesić, Milan (ed.). "Perspectives of multiculturalism-western and transitional countries." Croatian Commission of UNESCO, Zagreb 2004: 181-199.

[28] Karine Ramondy (2020) *Leaders assassinés en Afrique Centrale 1958-1961.Entre construction nationale et régulation des relations internationales*, Paris: L'Harmattan sheds light on the cases of Félix Moumié and Ruben Um Nyobè.

President Paul Biya's programmatic book "Pour le Libéralisme Communautaire" written back in 1986 and now buried in oblivion).[29]

Participants also discussed methodological approaches and not least current challenges of empirical research – including Covid-19 and restrictions to travel to the more immediate war zones which would be essential to generate data. Appeals to conduct research in a much more inclusive and bottom-up approach were also voiced. Disadvantaged groups like persons with disability or indigenous population groups (e.g. Mbororo) are rarely interview partners.[30] Quick-fix generalisations about entire groups (but also about the organized opposition and the government) should not be promoted by researchers.

Suggestions for possible ways forward

What is so specific about Cameroon or the current Anglophone conflict? Maybe even not so much. From the organisers' perspective the lack of truly comparative work is a major gap. A systematic longitudinal analysis (comparing former episodes of violence with the current episode in Cameroon) would be of high interest – who are the main actors, their strategies, their narratives, and forms of communication? Why did an episode of violence end and what can we deduct from this? Did a direct armed confrontation only transform into structural violence? But also, the comparison between country cases would hold the promise of understanding Cameroon better. Only one paper (by Denis Tull) at the webinar took such an angle.

Another important approach for future research on Cameroon is closer cooperation with researchers from Cameroon and the surrounding countries. On the one hand, such a cooperation would avoid a northern, possibly even neo-colonialist perspective by integrating diverse voices. On the other hand, it promises to facilitate research on the ground in the field, as local researchers usually have better networks and local knowledge. However, there are some challenges to closer cooperation with Cameroonian research institutes, such as the difficult data situation in Cameroon and the poor state of the academic landscape, which is reflected, for example, in the lack of access to databases and literature as well as to stable electricity and internet connection. A good proportion of Cameroon's finest intellectuals live abroad. Structural inequalities between researchers from the Global North and the Global South are also challenging, including the funding of individual research projects, the widely differing budgets for travel expenses, etc. For Cameroonian researchers, it is very complicated to obtain funding from European countries, as this is often linked to the place of residence or citizenship in the country in question. In the near future, however, it will also become more difficult for everyone to obtain funding, as research budgets will decrease significantly due to the socio-economic and budgetary consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic (and the current war in Ukraine). Acquiring funding for research on the Anglophone crisis, more particularly in Germany, is not aided by the fact that the Anglophone conflict is still and surprisingly quite unknown in this country, which can make it difficult to argue the relevance of the research project. An innovative proposal to strengthen the African university system in the long term is the further development of the African Union's flagship project "An African Virtual And E-University" within the framework of the 2063 Agenda.[31]

[29] Biya, Paul (2019). Pour le libéralisme communautaire. Lausanne : Favre.

[30] Mouiche, I. (2011). Democratisation and Political Participation of Mbororo in Western Cameroon. *Africa Spectrum*, *46*(2), 71–97. Dafinger, Andreas, and Michaela Pelican. "Sharing or Dividing the Land? Land Rights and Farmer-Herder Relations in Burkina Faso and Northwest Cameroon." Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines 40, no.

[31] African Union (o.J.). Education, Science & Technology. https://au.int/en/education-science-technology.

Compared to earlier periods of research, the urge to link research with activism has however increased. Some hope persists that inclusive research, the juxtaposition of diverging perspectives and the provision of data could promote dialogue and ultimately support conflict resolution. This conviction must translate into a much more active dialogue between research and non-academic actors (governments, NGOs, practitioners).

Appendix: Conference programme