

Integration and Conflict in the Cameroon Grassfields

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(Secretary: Hideyuki Okano)

Prof. Eisei Kurimoto (Osaka University)

It is a great pleasure to invite Dr. Michaela Pelican for the 65th Seminar of the Global COE program. She came from the University of Zurich and is now a visiting fellow at the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University. I met her in 2002, nine years ago, at a seminar organized by the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Germany. In my hand I hold the accomplished work of the seminar there. I circulate it among today's seminar attendants for the sake of reference. It includes contributions of Dr. Günter Schelee and of Dr. Dereje Feyissa, who has been to Osaka University¹. The work of Dr. Feyissa discusses the movement of the Mbororo people from Sudan to western Ethiopia. Today, Dr. Pelican addresses the movement of the Mbororo from northern Nigeria to the Grassfields in Cameroon as well as their relations with neighbouring agriculturalists. Participants in the floor may not be familiar with the name, Mbororo, but you may have heard the term, Fulbe or Fulani. They are big ethnic group living across the Sahel belt from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. Fulbe or Fulani is their general ethnonym. Among them, pastoral Fulani are called "Mbororo". Some reach up to Ethiopia, while some reach to the Cameroon highlands, as Dr. Pelican will discuss today.

Presentation by Dr. Michaela Pelican

Introduction.

I am happy to be here. This presentation is based on research carried out mostly between 2000 to

¹ He was Post-doctoral Research Fellow, 21 st Century Center of Excellence, Osaka University from May 2003 to March 2005.

2002. At that time I was a researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle, Germany, where the conference Prof. Kurimoto mentioned took place. After that period, I visited Cameroon several times between 2007 to 2009 in order to start a new research project as well as to carry out follow-up research on my Ph.D. I have been familiar with the Cameroon and the Grassfields in particular since 1991. Therefore, I can look back on an extended period of economic and political change. My research interests include identity politics and conflict. As I was chosen as a presenter today, I will speak on conflict and integration. I have also worked on social change, pastoral economy and migrant transnationalism.

The structure of the presentation is as follows. First, I will introduce the Cameroon Grassfields in its ethnic and cultural diversity. Second, I will present selected conflict scenarios. On the one hand, I will look at farmer-herder disputes which is a topic widely discussed both in Cameroon and in the academic literature. On the other, I will introduce two major conflicts over chiefly succession which occurred in 1997 and 2007 respectively. By analysing the two conflicts, I want to illustrate changes in conflict strategies, particularly among the Mbororo/pastoral Fulbe in Cameroon.

Cameroon Grassfields.

The Cameroon Grassfields is a cultural and geographic unit in Cameroon that includes the Northwest and West Provinces. I carried out fieldwork specifically in the Northwest Province which is part of Anglophone Cameroon. Cameroon had been a German protectorate, but was later divided by France and Britain. As a result, the larger part of Cameroon became Francophone, while the smaller part (contemporary North- and Southwest Provinces) became Anglophone. Thus, Cameroon has a triple colonial history.

The major economic activity in the Grassfields is cereal and tuber agriculture; but the region is also favorable to extensive cattle grazing, especially in high and middle-level areas. As you can see on the first slide, the land is fertile and green.

This region is culturally diverse. One of the topics of my Ph.D. research was the role of ethnicity in conflict and conflict resolution. This area is dominated by three ethnic groups. The first is the Grassfields peoples (Bantu people). They constitute the majority of the population with approximately 85%. Second are the Mbororo or pastoral Fulbe with 10-15% of the population. The smallest group is the Hausa with less than 1%.

The Grassfields people consist of several ethnic groups, but, in this discussion, I consider them as one group, because they share socio-cultural similarities. They belong to different linguistic groups, but are all organized in centralized polities known as Grassfield-chiefdoms. They are

either Christians or adherents of local religions. Most of them are farmers. They entertain strong relations with their territory in terms of farming economy as well as in terms of religion and politics.

The Mbororo belong to the ethnic category of Fulbe as I mentioned already. They came to the Grassfields in the beginning of 20th century. Originally, they came from northern Nigeria around the area of Kano, and migrated southwards following two different roads. Some passed through northern Cameroon and arrived first; others took a bit longer, passing through Nigeria and spending some decades on the Jos Plateau, before entering Cameroon. As they reached the Grassfields only in the beginning of 20th century, Grassfielders consider the Mbororo as 'strangers' and 'late-comers.' This historical hierarchy is reflected in the political hierarchy. Politically the Mbororo are subordinated to Grassfields-chiefs. They are cattle pastoralists, but because of sedentarisation in the 20th century, they also started farming.

The third group is the Hausa who play a minor role in this presentation. Hausa is a heterogeneous ethnic category. It includes not only the descendants of early Hausa traders from northern Nigeria, but also Town Fulbe coming from northern Cameroon and Grassfields people who converted to Islam. Therefore, all Muslim town dwellers and Muslim villagers are categorized as Hausa.

The Hausa and the Mbororo have strong relationships. They share social, cultural and religious similarities and form a religious/Muslim minority. The Hausa entered the region around the same period with the Mbororo. They share economic links and consider themselves as a religious and cultural unit.

Thus, these are the three main ethnic groups that live in the Cameroon Grassfields.

Selected Conflict Scenarios

1. Farmer-Herder Dispute

The topic of farmer-herder conflicts has been paid much attention in academia. In this section, I introduce different types of farmer-herder conflicts in the region. In order to give the audience an idea on the variety of conflicts, I show three conflicts in different places: Wum, Bambui, and Misaje.

a) Wum: Women's uprising

Wum is a place notorious for farmer-herder dispute. Speaking of farmer-herder conflicts in the Northwest Province, people first recall the name Wum. Wum has experienced intense conflict between farmers and herders over land issues. They sometimes developed into violent conflicts

and military interventions.

In 1973, women farmers of the Grassfields staged a public protest against the encroachment of Mbororo herders into their farming area. Also, they accused their local chiefs of collaborating with herders. The administration took side with the farmers. In 1981, a more intense conflict emerged. A violent encounter broke out between farmers and herders over excessive crop destruction. This led to a military intervention in which 8 people were shot.

In spite of subsequent attempts to resolve the issue, a new conflict emerged in 2003. 600 Grassfields women besieged the Wum palace and held their chiefs hostage to protest against their expulsion from farming land. They claimed the removal of Mbororo herders from their lands. Thus, constant struggles between Grassfields women farmers and Mbororo herders over land have been observed in this region.

b) Bambui (2009): Local Solutions

This case is representative of another type of conflict resolution. I was there by chance and could observe what happened. One of my acquaintances took me to his grazing area. He said “Let’s go to Bambui. One of my cows was killed,” so I joined him. We went to the place and we found a cow in a ditch. As it turned out, because this cow had destroyed Grassfields people’s farm, they chased out away and it accidentally fell into the ditch and died. The Mbororo herder got angry and threatened to report the incident to the police and open an case. However, after his anger had calmed down, he thought that it was not so useful to go to police, and they tried to find a peaceful solution. In the end, the Mbororo man brought the case to the local Grassfields chief. On the farmer’s side, two young boys were identified as responsible who had been farming groundnuts for cash cropping. The chief summoned everybody who was related to the incident and listened to all the testimonies. Then, he concluded that the farmers have to pay a moderate compensation. He judged that both sides had incurred damages, but that the herder’s damage was heavier, as he had lost a whole cow. Eventually, they agreed on the issue.

c) Misaje (2001): cattle theft instead of farmer-herder conflict

The third example is from Misaje. Misaje is primarily a grazing zone. However, in this area, farmers and herders live close to each other. Despite spatial proximity of farmers and herders, no major incidents of crop damage and issues over access to land have occurred. Instead, this area has experienced rampant cattle thefts. When I was there, there were a lot of thefts and the administration tried to expose the cattle-theft-mafia composed of members of all ethnic and economic groups as well as government collaborators.

Discussion

What do we learn from the comparison of the three cases?

First, there are regional differences in the intensity of farmer-herder conflict. In addition, the intensity is different depending on seasons. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize about violent conflict between farmers and herders in the region.

Second, people speak of farmer-herder conflict in terms of ethnicities; i.e. farmers are identified as Grassfielders, while herders are seen as Mbororo. Thus, farmer-herder conflict is translated into ethnic conflict in their narratives. However, the situation is more complicated. In the case of Misaje, there is no actual rivalry. But, in the case of Wum, the conflict is between Grassfields women and cattle rearers, many of whom also belong to the Grassfields group.

Especially, in the case of Wum, several issues are at the heart of the conflicts. First is the gender rivalry within Grassfields society. Men occupy the land close to the village, while the women have been pushed far into the bush. Thus, women are more exposed to crop damage, while men do not have the same problem. This is the reason why women took the central role in the conflict. Second is the conflict between chiefs and commoners. Chiefs have an ambivalent position. While their followers expect them to support women farmers' interests, they benefit from cattle herders on their territory who pay them money. Thus, the presence of the Mbororo aggravates existing tensions within Grassfields society, and the women's concerted anger turns against the Mbororo.

Economic diversification contributes to the gap between the perception and the actual situations. In the second half of 20th century, most Mbororo became sedentarized. As a result, they also began farming as well as engaging in grazing. On the other hand, wealthy Grassfielders started to invest in cattle husbandry. Sometimes they entrust their animals to Mbororo herders. Thus, ethnicities no longer correspond to occupations. Nonetheless farmer-herder conflict continues to be perceived in ethnic terms.

To understand the prevalence of this ethnic perception we need to adopt a historical perspective. Farmer-herder conflicts over land and crop-damage have been reported since the very beginning of the Mbororo's arrival in the Cameroon Grassfields. The colonial administration paid attentions to these conflicts and pursued changing approaches to resolve the issue. Sometimes they gave primacy to Grassfields farmers as 'natives' of the area; at other times, they welcomed herders due to their tax contributions. In the end, they decided to demarcate grazing zones and farming zones. As you can see on the slide ('Colonial Period: Dividing the Land'), the hilltops are considered herding zone, while lowlands are for farming. However, the point is that the conflicts are seasonal. Herders have to come down to the lowlands during the dry season. Therefore, conflicts continue to arise.

After independence, there were attempts by the government to regularize farmer-herder relations. Conflict resolution procedures were transferred from the interpersonal level to the state institutional level by introducing complex administrative procedures, such as the establishment of a farmer-herder commission. However, because of manipulations and corruption, the system did not work, and has left confusion and frustration among conflicting parties.

Conclusion

To conclude this section, there is still no solution to farmer-herder conflicts. It is due to economic reason, people can easily perpetrate. Recently NGOs have attempted to resolve the problem by encouraging amicable resolution at an interpersonal level. As we can see in the case of Bambui, interpersonal communication functions rather better than governmental institutions which require additional expenditures.

2. Investiture Conflict in Misaje

In this section, I introduce two major conflicts of a political (rather than economic) character. One of the conflicts occurred in Misaje in 1997. I was not there at the time. The conflict arose between local Grassfielders and the Muslim community (Mbororo and Hausa) during the investiture ceremony of the new Grassfields chief. When a Grassfields chief dies, a new chief has to be installed. As many Mbororo live around in Misaje, the local Grassfielders invited all the population for the ritual. They requested all participants to follow the prescriptions for the ritual, which included wearing no headdress. However, this rule was not acceptable to Muslims. Both communities, Grassfielders and Muslims, began to negotiate exceptions but could not find a solution. On the actual day of the ritual, the conflict broke out. Muslims went to the mosque passing through the ritual ground. The Grassfielders were annoyed with their behavior and started attacking them.

Cultural aspects contributed to the escalation of the tension. Annoyed Grassfielders brought out their masks which are perceived to be dangerous. Especially women were thought to become barren when seeing the masks. On the other hand, Muslims (Hausa and Mbororo, including their women) were not afraid of the masks. They did not believe in the power of the jujus (masks) and attempted to show their own magic. The Mbororo brought out sticks to counter the intimidation of the masks. This symbolic stand-off was tense and close to turn into a violent confrontation. After this incident, Muslims did not participate in the ceremonies any more.

How can the conflict be analyzed? Generation by generation, the ritual of chiefly inauguration has been carried out. So, why did a confrontation arise only this time? In my opinion, the national political context of the 1990s needs to be taken into account.

I understand the investiture conflict as a conflict over power relations expressed in the idiom of cultural difference. In this incident Muslim communities that were formerly under the authority of Grassfield chiefs raised objection against established power relations, and claimed their rights as a religious minority. Grassfielders, on the other hand, regarded the Muslims' rejection as a danger to the successful accomplishment of the ritual. In their understanding, the ritual of installation is for all inhabitants, and if some persons do not stick to the rules, this would affect the whole country. In addition, they regarded the Muslims' rejection as an assault on their political primacy.

This incident could not have happened if it were not for the situation for the 1990s. In this period, Cameroon experienced economic and political liberalization. A multi-party system was established and new freedoms were introduced, such as freedom of press and freedom of opinion. Thus, people were exposed to new ways of looking at things, and questioning established national and local power relations. Thus, the incident in Misaje reflected the national-level changes of the 1990s.

Another aspect of the 1990s was the increase of violence and militancy. Similar to other African countries, the democratic transition engendered insecurity. People went to streets to demonstrate; political rallies, irregular detentions and economic boycotts were rampant. In the Northwest Province, the government imposed a state of emergency and people experienced military presence and violence. The conflict of Misaje broke out in such a situation. The tense atmosphere still occupied the area at the time of the incident. When the divisional officer (administrator) threatened to send in the military to resolve the investiture conflict, people became afraid as they knew the results of military intervention from earlier experiences.

Thus, the confrontation was brought to an end with government intervention. However, the issue that brought about the investiture conflict was not resolved. The conflicting parties never discussed on who was right, and no agreement was established on the issue. In retrospect, informants expressed discomfort and confusion with the violent character of the conflict; they preferred to forget about it.

3. Sabga leadership crisis

This conflict occurred a decade later in Sabga, a Mbororo community close to the capital of the Northwest Province. While the effects of the political changes of the 1990s still affected the people, this case illustrates the growing influence of international development and human rights discourse on local and national politics.

In 2007, when a Mbororo leader died, another leader took over his position. But the regional

administration did not accept the community-elected leader. They imposed an alternative candidate. While their candidate was also a Mbororo, he was not the choice of the community. The Sabga community reacted with public protests. Their elected leader sought refuge at the American Embassy in the capital, and some women formed a delegation to demonstrate in front of Prime Minister's Office. This regional conflict thus attained a national and international dimension, entangling the prime minister's office and a foreign embassy.

However, the situation went further. The problem was brought to international level by the Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association (MBOSCUDA); a non-governmental organization of the Mbororo, founded in the early 1990s and with good connections to international development and human rights organizations. The Mbororo human right activists solicited national and international support for Mbororo entitlement to self-determination. Not only were people discussing the Sabga issue on the street, but international pressure was raised by foreign embassies as well as the UN human rights body. Consequently, the Cameroonian government offered compensation to the deposed Mbororo leader and his entourage and showed some commitment to right the situation; however, no measures were implemented.

After the event, MBOSCUDA activities in Sabga were temporarily banned. In fear of his live and future, the provincial administrator sought political asylum in the US. Moreover, this incident impacted on Mbororo unity. The Sabga community was split into opposing factions, cutting across families and neighborhoods. Only after many months of dissension, the community grudgingly came to accept the new leader.

How we can interpret the conflict? First of all, underlying this conflict is a long-standing rivalry between the Mbororo and an influential entrepreneur with interest in Sabga land and leadership. The candidate whom the regional administration imposed was also supported by this influential entrepreneur who saw the leadership vacancy as an opportunity to intervene. Because of his power and wealth, the government supported his side.

Secondly, the Sabga leadership crisis illustrates new trends in Mbororo conflict strategies and political self-understanding. They opposed the government decision. They made claims on the local level at first, but then brought the issue to the national and international level. MBOSCUDA was very active in this movement. They made a lot of efforts to change the approach of the Mbororo people towards politics. They made clear that even if the Mbororo are 'late-comers' or 'strangers', they also have rights. The Mbororo who considered themselves as a marginalized minority, became more aware of international and global discourses on minority rights, and took them up for their political usage.

Whether the Mbororo is indigenous people or not is a contentious issues. Internationally, they are recognized as indigenous. The UN and some NGOs working in Cameroon have recognized the Mbororo as an indigenous of people of Cameroon. On the other hand, the government of Cameroon never officially recognized them. This gap stems from different interpretations of the word 'indigenous'. In Cameroon, there are two interpretations of 'indigenous.' Firstly, 'indigenous' means 'native' in the sense of 'first-comers'. In this understanding, 'indigenous' is applied to Grassfielders, similar to the term 'natives' under colonial rule. The other interpretation is the one the UN promotes, which defines 'indigenous' as politically marginalized and ulturally different from the dominant majority. In the case of the Grassfields, these two definitions are not compatible.

The different meanings of 'indigenous' inspired new conflict within the Mbororo community. For example, some take advantage of the interpretation of the UN. They portray themselves as 'indigenous' and benefit from travelling around the world, participating in UN meetings. They emphasize the cultural aspect and their marginalized situation. On the other hand, many Mbororo who went to school or migrated abroad do not want to identify with the term 'indigenous. They lay emphasis on the fact that Mbororo society has changed and oppose being regarded as backward or marginalized.

Concluding Remarks

I have shown different conflicts in one region. Each conflict has its own context such as economic, cultural or political.

First of all, ethnicity is used as an established idiom to express local-level conflict. This is due to the political context but also historical factors. For example, farmer-herder conflict is not necessarily perceived in ethnic terms, but it is.

Second, conflict strategies of the Mbororo have transformed. As we can see in the case of Misaje, the Muslim community opposed the Grassfielders' political authority which wasn't done before. In addition, it is unprecedented for the Mbororo to raise their voice, a new strategy also illustrated in the Sabga leadership crisis.

What we learnt from the Sabga crisis is that participation in global networks may enhance the status of a group or individual. However, it does not guarantee viable solutions to local conflict. Conflicts like the Sabga case occur in specific areas between specific people. If they use overriding discourses, they can bring the case to the national level. But ultimately, national legislation and judiciary will prevail. As a result, nothing changes. It creates the potential for new conflict and internal dissension. Moreover, uneven access to international development resources and

disappointment with international strategies might raise new sparks of possible conflict.

Question and Answers

Dr. Yumiko Tokita-Tanabe (Global Collaboration Center, Osaka University)

I am a scholar of South Asia. I suppose that your analysis would be relevant to the situation of South Asia today as well. My first question is about the UN definition of ‘indigenous people.’ In the case of India, it is clear that people who claim autochthony are autochthonous. How does the difference of the definition affect the context which you have mentioned? How do the minority people who came in the 20th century claim relevance?

My second question is on transnational Muslim networks. I would like to know if there is a transnational network of Muslims in your fieldsite.

Dr. Pelican

As for the first question, the case of Cameroon represents a situation common to many parts of Africa. The adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has a long history. They experienced ups and downs in the planning process (African countries played an important role in later years). Even though the declaration only came to be adopted in 2007, it was nearly accepted in 2005. However, some of Southern African countries refused it due to the vague definition of ‘indigenous.’ They claimed that the definition of the UN is problematic for the whole of Africa. Thus, the question “who are the first-comers?” came into focus.

I mentioned two components of the Definition by the UN: cultural difference from the majority group and political marginalization. But, there is a third component which I intentionally excluded. The reason is that the third component, historical primacy, has been excluded in the African context. The UN member states finally agreed that the third component is not relevant and should be taken out in the African context. If it were included, everybody in Africa should be considered as indigenous. It is impossible to distinguish who are the first-comers and who are the late-comers in Africa due to the long history of population mobility in the continent. The definition of indigenous would vary depending on how far we go back in time. For example, Grassfielders settled only in the seventeenth century, compared to the Mbororo who came in the twentieth century. The same issues can be observed even in Southeast Asia.

In my personal opinion as an anthropologist, it is useless to discuss on who is an indigenous people. But, in its political and activist dimensions, this discussion has significance. People have hope on the discourse on global human and minority rights, and claim themselves as indigenous peoples.

They have succeeded to influence various governments with this strategy. I, as an anthropologist, do not think the Mbororo are indigenous, but politically they should be allowed to claim themselves as indigenous.

As for the second question, a transnational network of Muslims exists also in the northwestern region of Cameroon but it is only active in the religious domain. Saudi Arabia and Egypt have financed the constructions of mosques and school equipment, but remote areas such as Misaje are not in a part of the network. Although they are aware of its existence, they do not tie themselves into the network.

Robel Haile (MA student, Osaka University)

I would like to ask the significance of dividing the society by name of 'indigenous.' When looking at history, there are tribal societies such as chiefdoms and other political organizations, but they are integrated into a state after the independence of African countries. Why it is necessary to divide the society?

Dr. Pelican

There are discussions whether we should discuss human rights by categorizing people e.g. by gender or minorities, but the situation has been steered into the direction that they have to claim such identities to be more successful.

There are lots of discussions on the matter in anthropology and philosophy. This issue concerns the relationship between a state and its citizens. A state should treat all citizens as equal. The initial twenty to thirty years after independence, post-colonial African countries devoted themselves in nation building. In the case of Cameroon, Ahmadou Ahidjo, the first president, banned ethnicity from all forms of politics. Nobody was allowed to speak about ethnic identities. The constitution at the time provided that citizens should be treated the same way and that every Cameroonian had the right to settle wherever he/she wanted. But, democratization in the 1990s changed the situation. Ethnicity gained political significance in the new struggles over power. The government counteracted against the growing opposition from the northwest. In this process, they stressed ethnic identity all of sudden.

That is also the time, the constitution was amended. The passage that all Cameroonians are allowed to settle wherever they wanted was removed. Instead, a new passage was included, saying that the government provides and secures the rights of all indigenous people and minorities. Similar phenomena can be observed in different parts of the world.

Prof. Kurimoto

In theory, democratization and decentralization ensure people to move easily inside a country. As a result, people in more populated area migrate to less populated areas. Such migration makes the people in less populated area into minorities. They find that they become a minority even in their homeland. Even in such a place, democratization urges people living there to choose one political representative. In such a situation, some people might not agree with the result, even if the representative is elected fairly. They might claim that the elected person does not have the right to represent because he/she belongs to a group of new-comers. Such phenomena are prevalent in present Africa.

Robel Haile

I am a student from Eritrea. The same situation also can be observed in Eritrea. Eritrea achieved independence in 1993. At that time, a part of the population remained in Sudan as refugees. After three to four years, they returned to their homeland en masse. The government provided resettlement areas for them in the Western part. It created the same situation in Eritrea as well.

Dr. Pelican

The term ‘indigenous’ in these context is void of any content. It is just a political claim based on categorization. It is similar to grouping people with colors like blue or red.

Prof. Kurimoto

I would like to ask about the leadership crisis in Sabga. You do not mention the institution. Do you mean a chief by using the term ‘leader?’

Dr. Pelican

The Mbororo do not have chieftaincy traditionally. However, the Mbororo in that area settled in the early 20th century. It is the biggest Mbororo community in Northwest. In this community, they have a chieftaincy similar to that of the Grassfielders, but they call their chief *lamido*. Also, there is a leader called *Ardo*, who is in charge of collecting cattle tax. In addition, they have a traditional leader for smaller groups. *Lamido* is also a term used by the sedentarized Fulbe which means an institutionalized leader. The Sabga leadership crisis occurred after the *lamido* died.

Prof. Kurimoto

Is the position of *lamido* hereditary?

Dr. Pelican

You can say yes and no. It is a complicated story. The Mbororo are not centralized like the Grassfielders, but they have increasingly absorbed the political style of the Grassfielders. The Sabga settlement was founded by *Ardo Sabga*, who declared that the next person who succeeding

the position should always be a junior brothers. As the person who died is the second to the last, he has a younger brother. But the Sabga community did not hope for the brother to take the position. The brother did not live in Sabga and he was more of a Hausa person living in the Southwest. People in the community judged that he would not take care of them so much. Therefore, the community chose the nephew of the deceased person. However, the government and the entrepreneur did not want the nephew. They claimed that the last brother should succeed the position. The nephew was refused to register as candidate by the government with the reason that he did not submit the application in time.

Prof. Kurimoto

Who went to the capital to claim to the government?

Dr. Pelican

A few educated and politically active Mbororo women. One of the women who went to the capital had experience of working with the government. Another one had working experience in the Tax Revenue Office. They became women leaders in MBOSCUA and organized the female section. They are regarded by the people as women leaders of the Mbororo in general.

One thing I need to mention is that this development in the Mbororo community is very specific to this area. The Mbororo chieftaincy in that region is modeled after that of the Grassfielders. But in other parts of Cameroon, they do not feel happy to follow the system of Grassfielders.

Miku Ito (PhD student, Osaka University)

I would like to know the role of women in ethnic conflict in the region. I did my field research with Fulbe in the Niger Delta and there exists a conflict between farmers and the Fulbe. Women consider the conflict as men's business. On the contrary, you mentioned in your presentation that women have an active role in the case of Wum. I would like to know how they participate in the conflict.

Dr. Pelican

In Grassfields communities, women are the main farmers and responsible for feeding the family. Therefore, the damage to farm land often afflicts women. On the other hand, among the Mbororo, the men engage in pastoralism. Therefore, in the perspective of Grassfields women, it is the Mbororo men who make a problem. In addition, men look down on women to some degree. Therefore, the men often do not take seriously women's complains.

Furthermore, there is a gender issue inside the Grassfielders. As men claim farmland close to the compounds, women are pushed away into the bush. This also makes the women to take action.

Contrarily, there are few conflicts between Mbororo and Grassfields women. They sometimes go to the market together, they are each other's customers, and they see each other in hospitals. There are friendships across ethnic boundaries. But it is not appropriate to suggest that women's friendship plays a decisive role in resolving conflict. It largely remains a private affair.

Prof. Kurimoto

In the case of Wum, you mentioned that 600 women stood up and held the chiefs into captivity. To what extent was it a protest against chieftaincy itself, not as a challenge against the herders' expulsion from farming land?

Dr. Pelican

It is not possible to separate the two issues. The women consider the Grassfields chief as the person who has the power to drive away the Mbororo. That is why they go to the chief to put pressure on him. They know that the chief has a double interest. He also can benefit from the presence of the Mbororo.

Prof. Kurimoto

In your presentation, ethnicity works as a political idiom for rivalry between the herders and the farmers. But the contents of ethnicities have changed, especially within the last 20 years. That means that a traditional idiom is still being used, but might not reflect real issues. Real issues might lie in some different place. According to you, one is the gender issue, and another is between new rich and new poor. Do you have any idea on what is the real issue?

Dr. Pelican

It is difficult. People continue to talk about farmer-herder conflict in the ethnic idiom. People try to find easy ways to understanding the situation and easy solutions. But some of the real problems are within Grassfields society such as gender, other might be the gap between rich and poor, or power and wealth. But it is true that some people have new power like the case of MBOSCUA shows.

Prof. Kurimoto

It is true that people's livelihood became diversified and people have access to new power. I have a question on MBOSCUA. Do the leaders of the association engage in cattle grazing? Or, do they have only limited experience of herding? I want to know to which extent the pastoral ideology is still alive?

Dr. Pelican

They are still quite attached to cattle. The diversification of the economy is only a recent phenomenon since the 1990s. In this period, people began to find jobs outside of cattle raising. Therefore, even leaders in development organizations still have experience of cattle herding. If they do not engage in cattle-herding themselves, their families still have cows. Many of them still invest in cows. In most cases, they ask relatives to take care of their animals. However, in the next twenty years, the situation will probably change. The next generation might not be attached to herding in the same manner.

Shin'ichi Fuji (PhD student, Osaka University)

I have a question on compensations. In the case of Bambui, the conflict was resolved by giving compensation to herders. What materials are used for the compensation? I study conflicts on the Solomon islands, and, in the case of the Solomon islands, they pay rice, yam, taro and shell money. I would like to know in the case of Cameroon.

Dr. Pelican

Compensation is paid in money. First, they estimate the value of the cow which differs according to age and so on. Then they negotiate the price to make it lower. In the Bambui case, they first asked the farmers to pay immediately. But it is not possible for farmers as they only have money when the harvest of groundnut comes. So, they usually settle on a loan and pay the first rate immediately. But, I do not know whether the farmer completed the full amount in the end.

Prof. Kurimoto

What becomes of meat of the cow?

Dr. Pelican

I guess the meat goes to the chief.

Dr. Yumiko Tokita-Tanabe

You mentioned in the case of the Sabga leadership crisis that a leader elected by the community sought refuge at the American embassy. I cannot imagine that the situation developed to such an extent without any state resources or natural resources. In this story, what resources are at stake?

Dr. Pelican

In order to understand the situation, it is necessary to look back more than 20 years. First, it is related to the conflict between the influential entrepreneur and the Mbororo. His mother was a Grassfielder and his father Mbororo. He considers himself Mbororo, and wants to be recognized as Mbororo. But, the Mbororo do not accept.

Second, he was rich and had strong ties with the government. That is why the government is on his side. In the 1990s, when MBOSCUDA was founded, the entrepreneur also founded an association of herders. The association is actually a one-man association. On the other hand, MBOSCUDA was found by Mbororo youths who are educated but from marginalized families. MBOSCUDA established international ties and works in development. Thus, there is twenty years of rivalry between MBOSCUDA and the entrepreneur.

Third, they know the impact of seeking refuge. Refuge at embassies can be taken as big news and they know the impact through radio. The leader has known the US ambassador because the latter had visited Sabga before. Thus, in order to make the issue bigger, the leader may seek refuge at the embassy.

Prof. Kurimoto

Was anyone arrested or killed in the incident?

Dr. Pelican

No one killed, but some were arrested. The public protests were held twice on the street. As they blocked the road, police came with tear gas, they shot a horse, and put people into prison. Another time, when the final leader was installed, two hundred soldiers were stationed in the village for security reason.

Prof. Kurimoto

Are people here armed?

Dr. Pelican

No. They are only armed with traditional weapons. They had colonial guns, but no modern weapons.

Prof. Kurimoto

Dr. Pelican, thank you very much for today. We have to close the session due to the time constraint.