

# 1. Cameroon

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## Student Activism, Violence and the Politics of Higher Education in Cameroon: A Case Study of the University of Buea (1993-2003)

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### **Introduction**

In the morning of 3 February 2003, over 3000 students of the University of Buea (UB), Cameroon, took to the streets to express their discontent over rising insecurity in Molyko, the university residential area. This was the first major student protest since November 1995 (see below). The last student strike had resulted in the abolition of the students' union and a ban on student strike action. During the February 2003 protests, students expressed their outrage over recurrent armed robberies in their residential quarters. It had become public knowledge that a gang of armed bandits had repeatedly raided student quarters in Molyko, stealing cellphones, money, shoes and handbags. Some female students were also reported to have been raped. In the night of Monday 3 February, the alleged robbers descended once again on Molyko and broke into at least five student hostels. The news spread like wildfire and by 7 a.m., a considerable number of students had occupied and barricaded the main road to Buea town in protest. Life came to a standstill as traffic grounded to a halt, caused by the protesting students who blamed the civil authorities of Buea for failing to provide adequate security in the university neighbourhood. The students also blamed the police for failing to intervene whenever major robberies were reported. They maintained that they had had enough of the the police's excuses.

Exasperated by the most recent robbery and police ineptitude, the students resolved to march to the Governor's Office to plead their case. The governor, alerted of the unrest, decided to pacify the protesting students. On his way, he met the riotous students, who requested that he accompanied them on foot to the site of the recent burglary. His refusal further enraged the students. Some of them started throwing stones at the governor's car, thus provoking the police to use tear gas in order to disperse the huge crowd. The students remained defiant and only returned to campus at midday, threatening to take the law into their own hands.<sup>1</sup> A few weeks later, one of the presumed bandits was identified and a mob of students fell on him and 'necklaced' him at the popular university junction. As he painfully burnt to death, the crowd stood by and watched, delighted to have exercised popular justice.

The strike yielded some dividends. A police post was created in the Molyko neighbourhood and a 9 p.m.–to–6 a.m. curfew was imposed.<sup>2</sup> The curfew infuriated the students who alleged that the police were using the restriction as an excuse to intimidate students returning from night classes or study periods. It was also reported that the governor was relieved of his post shortly after the strike. Although he may have been dismissed for 'political' reasons, students insisted that the main reason was his inability to address security problems in the student quarters.

The above account provides a rough idea of the nature of student activism in contemporary Cameroon. In this specific case, we encounter a group of nameless and faceless students occupying a particular constituency in society – as university students who, by means of a violent strike action, assert and claim their rights to state protection as young citizens. Youths' appropriation of violence as a means of collective action has contributed to a kind of moral panic. Indeed, they are sometimes described as 'terrors of the present' (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001:33) on account of their propensity for violent action. But who precisely are these students? What are their various claims both as individuals and as groups? What is their relationship to university authorities, the civil administration and the state? What are the implications of their activism? In the light of the above questions, I examine student activism at the University of Buea by locating its 'politics' within a broader analytic framework which incorporates the struggle for the democratisation of the state and institutions of higher learning in Cameroon. The key issue explored is student activism's responses to transformations within higher education structures and broader political processes between 1990 and 2003. Furthermore, I explore the 'university' as a setting for various kinds of student activism whose consequences reach beyond the university. I argue that student activism cannot be depoliticised because it is, by its very nature, political. I make a distinction between student activism in the early and mid-1990s and the situa-

tion in 2003 when the fieldwork for this chapter was conducted. The divergence is explained by a range of factors such as generational and experiential differences, as well as transformations in the political economy of Cameroon.

Through this analysis, I hope to make a contribution to on-going efforts by scholars and policy-makers towards understanding the socio-political status of higher education in Africa and student participation in the management of these institutions. This analysis also has implications for appreciating the dynamics of democratic processes and political culture in postcolonial Cameroon.

### **A Brief History of the University of Buea**

The University of Buea (UB), located in the South West Province, is a leading state-sponsored university in Cameroon. It has reported the highest success rates among its student population, compared to other state universities in the country. While a number of private universities have cropped up in the English-speaking Cameroonian provinces, especially in the North West Province, UB remains the only official anglophone state university. The other five state universities are, in the main, francophone, although the University of Yaounde 1 is nominally bilingual. UB's student population as of 2003 was about 7,000 and it continues to attract students from the two anglophone provinces and more recently, from the francophone Cameroonian provinces.

Higher education started in Cameroon in 1961, following the establishment of the National Institute for University Studies in Yaounde. In 1962, the Institute was renamed the Federal University of Cameroon (Njeuma et al 1999:2), a shift intended to reflect the political climate of that era. The English colony of Southern Cameroons had gained its independence in October 1961 by joining the already independent Republic of Cameroon to form a federation. In 1967, the Federal University of Cameroon became the University of Yaounde and enjoyed a monopoly until 1993. Between 1967 and 1993, the university had outgrown its capacity, owing to overpopulation on a campus that was originally designed for 5,000 students. In 1993, for instance, the student population of the University of Yaounde was over 40,000 (Njeuma et al 1999:1) with extremely limited resources to cater for the growing number of students. The establishment of four university centres in 1977<sup>3</sup> alleviated the deplorable situation only for a short period. One of the main problems of the University of Yaounde was that its programmes replicated in structure and content those of the French university system, thus limiting access to anglophone students (cf. Njeuma et al 1999:10; also see Konings 2002). It was against this background that anglophone Cameroonians repeatedly demanded the establishment of an English-oriented university for the anglophone population, as most anglophones had to go to neighbouring Nigeria for university studies (cf. Nyamnjoh 1996).

Eventually, Decree No. 92/074 of 13 April 1992 formally elevated all the university centres to full-fledged universities. Hence, the Buea University Centre became the University of Buea 'conceived in the Anglo-Saxon tradition [...] consistent with the education system prevailing in Anglophone primary and secondary schools' (Njeuma et al. 1999:10). Dr Dorothy Njeuma, a renowned administrator and prominent member of the ruling party was appointed vice-chancellor by another presidential decree. She held the position until September 2005 when she was transferred to the University of Yaounde I. One of the positive consequences of the university reforms of 1993 was that the creation of more state universities increased access by female students. For instance, by 1999, 47 per cent of students at UB were female and some informants estimated that this might have increased to about fifty-one per cent.

Lectures officially started at the University of Buea on 10 May 1993 with an enrolment of 786 students.<sup>4</sup> Most of them were anglophone students who had been transferred from the University of Yaounde. The number rose to over 4,000 by 1995 and has steadily increased since then. Students were expected to pay a registration fee of 50,000 CFA (then about US\$200 but currently about US\$85 owing to the devaluation of the local currency in January 1994). Since 1993, the University of Buea has provided exemplary training to its students, compared to the other state universities, despite a series of turbulent student protests against university authorities, the first of which started just three months after the commencement of official lectures.

### **Student Activism at the University of Buea from 1993 to 1995**

UB was established at the peak of the economic crisis in Cameroon. In 1993, civil servants' salaries were slashed by sixty per cent followed by a fifty per cent devaluation of the currency in January 1994.<sup>5</sup> Many government employees went without salaries for over three months. The socio-political landscape was characterised by periodic moments of civil disobedience. The economy was yet to recover from the ghost town operations<sup>6</sup> that took place between 1991 and 1992, during which economic activities almost came to a halt especially in Cameroon's economic capital, Douala. In fact, the establishment of more state universities in a context of acute economic crisis was criticised by the Bretton Woods institutions as counter-productive (Njeuma *et al* 1999). It was during this economic turmoil that UB was born. According to then Vice-chancellor, Dorothy Njeuma, at its inception in 1993, the university received no financial support from the government. Even before the higher education reforms were implemented, she argues, the institution had not received the government grant allocated to university centres for the 1992/93 fiscal year.<sup>7</sup>

It was precisely this desperate economic situation that prompted the government to introduce registration fees in 1993. Prior to this, students at the University

of Yaounde received regular scholarships from the state, and did not have to pay tuition fees, except a registration fee of 3,500 CFA. The higher education reforms eventually ushered in more state universities and the payment of a higher registration fee by students, which has been maintained at 50,000 CFA per annum. Although students at the University of Yaounde protested against this new decision, clashing with university authorities and the government (cf. Konings 2003), there is general consensus that the newly transferred students at UB were quite willing to pay the required fees. Most anglophones interpreted this as their direct support for the newly established 'Anglo-Saxon' institution.

Three months after UB became a full-fledged university, it experienced its first student strike. At issue was an alleged increase in student registration fees. News had circulated around campus that during the next academic year, students in the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences would pay 150,000 CFA while their counterparts in the Faculty of Science would pay 200,000 CFA (then about US\$600 and US\$800 respectively). On 20 August 1993, the students went on strike to express their discontent over the alleged decision. The protests led to the disruption of the semester exams that had been scheduled for late August. Although the strike was non-violent, soldiers and policemen were unexpectedly deployed on campus to keep an eye on students.<sup>8</sup> Students refused to write their exams unless the university administration rescinded its threat to increase fees. They also used this opportunity to voice their dissatisfaction over other issues such as the high cost of living in student quarters. In particular, they complained of the high rents imposed on them by landlords eager to make quick profits from the growing student population. While the university authorities and the student leaders remained at loggerheads over the strike, the Minister of Higher Education intervened and denied that the government had any plans to introduce tuition fees at UB. Eventually the students called off the strike and wrote their exams.

This incident provoked intense discussions among ordinary citizens and students. Some observers were of the opinion that the student protest could have been averted if the university authorities had dialogued constructively with student leaders. Instead, each side had accused the other of bad faith, thus leaving little or no room for constructive dialogue. It should be pointed out that at its inception, UB encouraged the formation of a democratically elected students' union to represent the concerns of the student body. Authorities also insinuated that UB was the first state university in Cameroon to provide the students' union with a seat on the University Council.<sup>9</sup> It was during one of such council meetings that the students' union president, Ebenezar Akwanga, was alleged to have rejected the idea of increasing student registration fees. During the strike, the registrar of UB purportedly asked the students' union president to set up a delegation to present their grievances to the vice-chancellor, but the student leader rejected the request. In an interview with *The Herald*, he gave the following explanation for refusing to meet the vice-chancellor:

“What she failed to realise was that she was appointed and I was elected. I am representing my constituency – the student body. Since the students don’t want me to have any dialogue with her at this moment until she carries out their demand, I was not supposed to constitute a delegation to meet her. It is just like parliamentarians; you cannot act without the approval of your constituency”.<sup>10</sup>

Not everybody agreed with the student leader. Some students reportedly accused Mr Akwanga of being arrogant and having refused to make use of the opportunity to plead the case of the student community. Others accused him of writing a rude letter to the vice-chancellor, thus misconstruing his lack of diplomatic skills for heroism. Ngwesse Nkwelle, a reporter for *The Herald* described the students as ‘too young to have known anything else, especially about how to channel discontent’. This view notwithstanding, it was apparent that students were a force to reckon with and that there was need for more democratic leeway for dialogue between activists and the authorities.

Unfortunately, this was not the case as the vice-chancellor in a show of autocratic power, resolved to ban further strikes by students and compelled them to sign an undertaking never to strike against university authorities. This requirement was fixed as a condition for registration by returning students. Among other stipulations, Article 2 of the document published on 7 September 1993 stipulated that the undersigned student would ‘abstain from any form of strike action whatsoever and from any activity likely to jeopardize the smooth functioning of any of the establishments of the university’.<sup>11</sup>

Many students reacted angrily to this injunction although they eventually signed the document. In fact, students were expected to sign the undertaking together with their parents or guardians prior to completing registration formalities. Some students were of the opinion that the vice-chancellor had banned further strikes in order to pre-empt student outrage if tuition fees were increased during the next academic year scheduled to commence in November 1993.

Upon returning to UB for the 1993/1994 academic year, students also learnt of the shocking decision by the vice-chancellor to dissolve the students’ union executive headed by Mr Akwanga. The latter and his colleagues were accused by the administration of the following:

- misleading the student body to commit serious acts of indiscipline, including the boycott of examinations from August 23 to 25 1993, barricading the gates and access roads to the university thereby disrupting activities, threatening students and staff, and insulting staff;
- refusal to meet the authorities despite repeated invitations to do so;
- rude and insulting attitude of the president and other members of the executive towards the administration;
- participation in activities likely to jeopardize the smooth functioning of the university.<sup>12</sup>

They were also banned from running in future elections or holding any office on campus for one year. Although this decision did not trigger off a new strike, many students condemned the vice-chancellor's decision as undemocratic and ruthless. They also threatened not to elect a new students' union government.

Although the student leaders were divested of *de jure* authority, they apparently continued to enjoy some legitimacy and still influenced student activities informally. For instance, students threatened to strike again during the registration period in early November 1993. According to a student circular, a peaceful demonstration was scheduled to hold on campus on 4 November 1993 following the administration's request that students should pay 2,000 CFA for students' union fees. Students argued that they had paid 2,000 CFA during the previous academic year and the funds had not been used. They interpreted the request to pay another students' union fee as dubious and exploitative. Furthermore, many argued that without a students' union government, they could consider the union dead. The timely intervention of the registrar pre-empted the strike, owing to an official decision from his office annulling the dues.<sup>13</sup>

During the 1994/1995 academic year, the university administration, in a bid to stave off its financial crisis, conceived the idea of a Parent Faculty Association (PFA) modeled on the Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) that are part and parcel of primary and secondary school management in anglophone Cameroon. The PFA was designed to co-opt parents into the management of the university and to create awareness of the need to diversify the university's sources of income instead of depending exclusively on the government. To this end, each student was required to pay a PFA fee of 20,000 CFA per academic year. News about the plan to introduce the PFA fee spread quite rapidly as students were about to conclude their semester exams in June 1995. A newly elected students' union (see below) interpreted this as the administration's strategy to increase fees. The union leaders proceeded to mobilise the student population against the idea, again pitting students against the administration in defiance of the ban on student strikes. During the protest, the students confronted the newly elected president of the PFA, Mr Fossung and Dr Biaka, the secretary general, forcing them to resign. Shortly after this incident, the PFA was dissolved by an order of the Minister of Higher Education.

While the student protest succeeded in its objective, it led to unexpected consequences for several students. Five students, three of them from the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, were suspended indefinitely for inciting students to strike. Some of the students had written articles critical of the administration in the student newspaper, *The Chariot*. The paper was suspended after the strike. When it was permitted to resume two years later, a new editor was appointed and the Journalism department was requested to redefine the objectives of the paper.

Sometime around June 1995, a student memo posted on bill boards on and off campus and signed by one of the suspended students, Cho Lucas Ayaba, accused the administration of being anti-Anglo-Saxon in its handling of student crises. The memo cited, among other things, the administration's arbitrary suspension of students for peaceful demonstration, the undemocratic dissolution of the first students' union executive and the unilateral decision to charge an additional 20,000 CFA as PFA dues.<sup>14</sup> The suspended students called on their colleagues not to pay the alleged PFA fees and to continue to fight for a democratic university administration.

At the end of the 1994/1995 academic year, a new students' union executive was elected into office, thus reviving the union that had been suspended during the previous year. Students were excited about the revived union and anticipated that the union leaders would effectively articulate their problems. However, it appeared that the administration was already biased against the new leaders in view of the role they had played in the protest against the PFA.

The revived students' union known as the University of Buea Students Union (UBSU) went into effect in September 1995, at the beginning of the 1995/96 academic year. One of its first achievements was to open and run a student canteen which provided photocopy services at reduced rates compared to other private agents on campus. The new leaders appeared to be quite dynamic and popular among students. But they soon got into trouble with the authorities over a range of issues, the most critical being the administration's reluctance to give them access to student funds. The union leaders claimed that although they had met the budgetary and constitutional requirements for such access, the UB authorities had no plans to collaborate with them. They threatened to call a general student strike on Monday, 27 November 1995.

On 24 November 1995, UBSU submitted a memorandum to the vice-chancellor and the registrar, enumerating student grievances, namely: the administration's reluctance to give union leaders access to the students' union account; the urgent need of funds to run the student canteen for the welfare of the students; the university's refusal to grant permission to UBSU to publish its newsletter, *UBSU Time* and the exclusion of union leaders from the decision-making process in matters affecting students.<sup>15</sup> This memorandum led to a deterioration in the already hostile relations between UB authorities and the new union leaders.

After receiving the memorandum, the registrar immediately sealed off the student canteen and asked the union leaders to vacate their offices without further delay. Shortly thereafter, the president and secretary-general of UBSU were served with a letter from the vice-chancellor suspending them indefinitely. According to Dr Dorothy Njeuma, the student leaders were suspended for 'gross indiscipline, disrespect for authorities and incitement of students to revolt... [and consequently were] barred from entering the campus of the University of Buea and from any

services offered by the institution until further notice.<sup>16</sup> Later that afternoon, the university was in a state of turmoil as students came out to protest against what they interpreted as the dismissal of their student leaders. Their main objective was the immediate reversal of the vice-chancellor's decision, failing which they would continue to boycott classes until their demands were met. The entrance to the university was barricaded and students marched back and forth chanting freedom songs. Thus, a strike that had been planned for 27 November, unexpectedly began earlier and took a new and violent turn. As more and more students joined their protesting colleagues, the protests moved from campus to the main streets in Buea, thus disrupting traffic and normal business.

The demonstrations turned violent when the students set the registrar's car on fire. According to eyewitnesses, the registrar had tried to force his way into the university campus in defiance of the barricades erected by students. Unable to drive through the huge rocks that had been rolled into the street, the registrar came out of his car to confront the students. But he was chased away and his car set to flames. Other acts of violence were also reported such as the burning of the UBSU vice-president's apartment allegedly in retaliation for his pro-administration stance.<sup>17</sup>

News of the burning of the registrar's car spread throughout the town. A crisis that had started as a standoff between students and the university administration soon degenerated into an ethnic conflict. Members of the Bakweri ethnic group, who are autochthonous to Buea, soon began to attack 'strangers'. Although no casualties were reported, students were appalled to learn that their strike against the university authorities had been appropriated by indigenous ethnic groups to suit their own purposes. Apparently, the union president, Mr Valentine Nti, was a member of an ethnic group in the North West Province while the vice-president and secretary-general were from the South West Province. The strike was therefore interpreted as a rebellion of North West students against the Bakweri-dominated authorities of the university.

As the strike gathered momentum, soldiers were called into the campus and student quarters in Molyko. This provoked even more violence as students resorted to throwing stones at the gendarmes and soldiers – *intifada* style. Students also burnt tyres on the streets and pulled more rocks to block the main streets. Inflamed by this open show of confrontation, the military became even more brutal. They broke into apartments and arrested students. Many were savagely beaten and hundreds more were taken to police cells. The military crackdown on the protests forced the students to retreat. After four days of demonstrations and fierce confrontation with the 'forces of state violence', many students began to desert their quarters for neighbouring towns. It was only after a week that uneasy peace was restored.

A major consequence of the strike was the reinstatement of the ban on student politics at UB, which created an even wider rift between the administration and the student body. More students were reported to have been dismissed, particularly from the Department of Journalism, on the grounds that they had published articles in private newspapers considered injurious to the reputation of the university. Intimidation and various forms of administrative harassment were employed by the authorities to rein in students. Eventually, the authorities resolved to reinstate the secretary-general of the defunct students' union in his post, but the union president's suspension was maintained and he was prevented from enrolling in any state university in Cameroon, thus compelling him to seek alternative opportunities in exile. In the aftermath of the strike, the university community was subjected to police-style discipline. Even lecturers who spoke against the authorities were labelled as subversive and targeted for arbitrary punitive sanctions. Four years later, in 1999, students were allowed once again to organise themselves into a student government. This time, the administration had finally devised a blueprint to keep students permanently divided and, therefore, subject to further control and disciplinary power.

### **Students' Union Politics since 1999**

In this section, I examine the form and content of student politics since its re-introduction in 1999. I argue that the employment of divide-and-rule tactics by the university authorities to make students toe the line is largely inspired by existing methods designed and refined by the Biya regime.<sup>18</sup> Thus, mimicry of the post-colony in farcical proportions is reproduced at the micro-level of the university leading to continuous erosion of the limited democratic space that had been gained at the inception of the university.

After the ruthless abolition of the students' union in 1995 and the arbitrary dismissal of the students' union president, students had no form of collective or central representation through which they could channel their concerns. Although each class had its elected delegates (known as class delegates), their legitimacy was limited to their specific departments and more particularly to their class. While a central students' union was visibly absent, many student associations continued to thrive and tended to organise their activities along academic and socio-cultural lines. Between 1995 and 1999, there was no organised demand for a revival of a common students' union most probably for fear of administrative reprisals. Another reason was the generational and experiential gap between students who enrolled in 1993 and those who came much later at the turn of the decade. The pioneer students were already acquainted with political activism on account of their experiences at the University of Yaounde prior to their transfer to Buea. Students who enrolled later knew little about students' union activism except for the legendary accounts of union leaders who had been dismissed or suspended

by authorities for daring to think differently. The re-introduction of student government four years after its suspension could also be an indication of careful timing by the authorities – on the assumption that most of the students who were part of the student riots between 1993 and 1995 would have graduated.

It is against this backdrop that one can understand the nature of student activism after 1995. In typical patrimonial style, the re-introduction of student government was interpreted in many circles as an expression of the largesse and goodwill of the vice-chancellor towards the students. But the structure of its organisation was completely bereft of student input. Rather, it was unilaterally imposed on them and all they had to do was to comply with the dictates of the university administration. Instead of a common students' union as seen in most universities the world over, the university authorities devised a new system of student representative government whose power and functions were restricted to individual faculties.

According to the genius of the authorities, each of the five faculties constituted a separate and distinct constituency. Each of the faculties elected its own executive whose jurisdiction was limited to the faculty and, as such, was unable to speak on behalf of the entire student body. The five faculty presidents made up what was popularly termed the 'college of presidents' and when this study was conducted in 2003, the president of the Faculty of Social and Management Sciences had been elected as spokesperson of the College of Presidents. As leader of the college of presidents, he claimed the right to speak on behalf of the entire student population, but in reality, his legitimacy did not extend beyond his faculty. While this structure conveyed the idea of the existence of a decentralised student government, many students felt that the numerous faculty student governments were toothless bulldogs since their powers were extremely limited. Some students perceived the presidents and other office-holders as mere stooges of the authorities, partly because they were inefficient in their respective domains and, as a 'college of presidents', unable to forge a common agenda representative of the plight of the wider student community.

Each Faculty Association (FA) had a 12-member executive. All the associations were subject to a common constitution (drawn up by the authorities) outlining the pattern and functions of the student governments. Their funds were collectively controlled by the university administration and each executive was accountable directly to the dean of its faculty and ultimately to the vice-chancellor. Membership was open to all full-time registered students upon payment of their students' union fee, which had to be paid in full prior to registration.

The faculty associations operated under the ideology of peaceful co-existence with the university authorities. In this regard, dialogue was the one and only acceptable maxim, reiterated to me time and again by the student leaders. In fact, it was mandatory for students to sign an undertaking not to strike or protest against

the administration as already highlighted. While dialogue was often cited as the paramount ideology, the reality was that student representatives were often treated as extensions of the administrative machinery rather than as partners representing a different constituency perhaps with different interests.

### **Legitimacy of New Student Leaders**

Since the introduction of the new system of student government, the leaders have enjoyed relatively little or no legitimacy. All the FA presidents were males and most of them claimed to have held positions of leadership in high school. Some of them were also office-holders in other youth associations such as alumni or cultural organisations. While most of them expressed interest in national politics, none of them were members of any political party.

The student leaders were generally eclipsed by the leaders and activities of other student associations, particularly famous alumni organisations of prestigious high schools such as St. Joseph's College, Sacred Heart College, Presbyterian Secondary School Mankon and Saker Baptist College. Alumni associations which were independent groups had no relationship with the administration and were perceived by students as playing a more dominant role in student life than in FAs.

Corruption among faculty presidents was also widespread. Although none of the leaders I met in 2003 were accused of corrupt practices, it was an open secret that most of the leaders who came to power in 1999 and 2000 were responsible for the mismanagement of student funds. In October 2001, for instance, UB authorities were shocked to learn of the alleged malpractices of the student leader of the Faculty of Social and Management Sciences. The leader claimed to have donated a substantial amount of money to *The Chariot* as support from his executive, but *The Chariot* denied receiving any funds from the infamous president. His degree was withheld by the university because he could not account for the funds. The authorities appear to have withheld the degrees of several student leaders accused of mismanaging student funds. However, the authorities have failed to bring charges against the student embezzlers and many students are sceptical of and indifferent to the issue of corruption among student leaders.

Many interviewees felt that their colleagues competed for the office of president in FAs purely for financial gain. Others charged that they were concerned about the criteria used in selecting candidates, since this was controlled by the administration. According to many participants, the university authorities ought not to participate in the selection of candidates and the conduct of FA elections. This claim emerged on account of the suspicion that the authorities selected students who were perceived to be pliant. On the other hand, the authorities maintained that candidates were selected on academic merit. In response, students

asserted that smarter students did not necessarily make better leaders and that every student ought to be given a chance.

This assertion went hand-in-hand with the claim that most student leaders were in league with the administration and lacked the capacity to defend the interests of the student community. For instance, the university has a contrived, perhaps mimicked, tradition of presenting New Year wishes to the vice-chancellor. During one of these banal exercises, a student leader was chosen by the administration to present a speech on behalf of his colleagues. He applied himself to the task and prepared a fine speech for the occasion. But a few minutes before he delivered the speech, he was presented with an alternative 'official speech' by the Director of Student Affairs which he read to the vice-chancellor and her collaborators with a feigned gusto.

It also emerged from my interviews that none of the student leaders represented the student community at senate meetings, despite official provision for a student seat. No wonder, over sixty per cent of students surveyed said they were not satisfied with the performance of their student leaders. Most respondents claimed they did not know the specific functions of the faculty presidents other than the fact that they enjoyed the prestige of being called 'president' by ordinary students.

Student participation in various FAs was terribly low. Although there are competing theories for the discouraging level of participation, most students pointed out that it was a waste of time to attend FA meetings because nothing good came out of them. All the incumbent faculty presidents whom I interviewed conceded that student participation was very low. In the Faculty of Social and Management Sciences with a student population of over 4,000 the average attendance at FA meetings was 25. The same situation was true of the Faculty of Science with over 2,000 students. Females were least interested in FA politics. Many of them perceived it as a male domain and felt that they stood to gain nothing by devoting their time to FA affairs. During the last student elections, a female candidate in the Faculty of Social and Management Sciences dropped out of the race just before the commencement of the elections on the grounds that she felt intimidated. Since FAs were introduced, only the Faculty of Arts has had a female president. Although she completed her degree in the summer of 2002 and continued to live in the Molyko neighbourhood, she was still actively involved in the FA affairs of the Faculty of Arts owing to the absence of an elected executive for the 2002-2003 academic year.

### **Relationship Between Students and the Administration**

There was a broad consensus among research participants that the relationship between the administration and the student community was not cordial. Students insisted that the administration's attitude was characterised by benign neglect and, sometimes, outright hostility. They also complained about a range of issues that had been continuously raised with the authorities for a couple of years, but which had not been addressed, despite promises to address them.

Many students were outraged by the lack of schedules for make-up examinations during the summer vacation. At issue was the fact that a large proportion of final year students had to spend an entire year repeating a course that could have been validated if resits were scheduled during the long holidays. Students complained that the other state universities in the country organized resits for all courses except the University of Buea. Students felt they needed an explanation from the authorities as to why most courses were not offered during summer make-up exam sessions.

Another key concern which students claimed the university authorities had failed to address was the problem of housing and insecurity in the student quarters. As highlighted earlier, the university provides accommodation to only about a hundred and twenty students on campus. Thus, about 7,000 students lived off-campus in private rooms whose rents are negotiated with landlords. There are no laws to protect tenants and this leads to arbitrary increases in rents by landlords desperate for quick profit. Most students felt the university authorities had the powers to reach an understanding with landlords granting that precedents had been established at the University of Ngaoundere in the Adamawa Province of Cameroon.

Students also complained of insecurity in their neighbourhood. Neither the university nor civil authorities in Buea had taken their complaints seriously. It was only after repeated armed robberies and a student protest that civil administrators decided to intervene to try and resolve the crisis. The creation of a police post in the student neighbourhood of Molyko was perceived to be largely ineffective by most students for a number of reasons. The police post was understaffed, and instead of keeping the peace, the police were allegedly more interested in stopping taxi drivers to extort bribes from them. There were reports of armed robberies during the period of my research and students expressed disappointment that no arrests had been made. The police, students affirmed, usually showed up only after the bandits had left the scene of the crime. An alternative solution, some students proposed, was for landlords to hire private security agents to patrol student residences, but this of course comes with a price tag. And it was apparent that students could not afford additional costs, which simply compounded their disillusionment with government authorities.

Another grievance expressed by many students was the university authorities' perceived lack of commitment to expand infrastructure. They complained in particular of overcrowding in lecture halls, limited access to potable water on campus (water was available in the university restaurant only) and defective toilet facilities. Some of the student leaders contended that they had approached the authorities with a student-sponsored proposal to install taps in selected parts of the campus but this proposal had been rejected. Despite these problems, the university built a new lecture hall in 2002 and gradually increased its library and staff infrastructure. In addition, a new building was constructed to house the Faculty of Social and Management Sciences. However, it should also be underscored that despite favourable attempts to expand infrastructure, the university's student-intake rate far outweighs the limited facilities. A campus that was built to accommodate just over 2,000 students currently has over 7,000 students and this number continues to increase every year. Students felt that the university had the resources but had allocated them to projects that were not perceived to benefit the student population. The construction of a fence round the university in 1999 was a case in point.

The university's decision to construct a fence touched off an unprecedented controversy among students, lecturers and even ordinary citizens. The project cost tens of millions of CFA. According to university officials, the fence was a top priority owing to the gradual encroachment on their land by private landlords. Many students were of the opinion that more lecture theatres and laboratories ought to be constructed instead of a fence. There was no open student protest against this project but an expatriate volunteer lecturer of sociology in the Faculty of Social and Management Sciences criticised the idea. Dr Kai Schmidt-Soltau, the said sociologist, spoke overtly against the project and labelled the fence a 'Cage of Fools' in one of his columns in a popular newspaper, *The Post*.

Dr Schmidt-Soltau eventually had an opportunity to raise his criticism in an academic audience during an august event on campus organised by a vibrant and popular student association known as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Club. The club was chaired by a final-year sociology major, whose pan-Africanist ideas had attracted much attention among students and faculty. During celebrations commemorating the African Union day, the OAU Club invited various personalities including the vice-chancellor, the Governor of the South West Province, human rights activists and several scholars at the university. Dr Schmidt-Soltau was also invited to present a talk to the club members and unknowingly to its organisers, he chose to speak on the topic of conflict resolution in Africa, with specific reference to the most contentious issue of the day – the construction of the fence. Alarmed by the sociologist's no-nonsense approach, the vice-chancellor accompanied by the governor stormed out of the hall during the lecture. A

few days later, Dr Schmidt-Soltau was served with a letter terminating his voluntary services at the University of Buea. He was further forbidden to come within 500 metres of the university premises (cf. Schmidt-Soltau 1999). The authorities also intimidated the leaders of the OAU Club and threatened to dismiss its president for allowing their association to be used by 'subversive' individuals for private ends. A rival club was eventually formed under the auspices of the administration and this led to the collapse of the original OAU Club.

Students lamented the repressive disposition of the university administration, particularly the vice-chancellor. Such repression targeted not only students perceived as being 'subversive' but also lecturers who dared to criticise the administration or its stooges. For instance, university lecturers who openly called for better working conditions at the university were targeted for punitive sanctions (cf. Nyamnjoh and Jua 2002).

Censorship was also rife in the lone student newspaper, *The Chariot*. University lecturers who were back-stage members of the editorial board tended to censor news stories that were critical of university authorities. It should also be noted that *The Chariot* had been suspended for about two years following the student strike of June 1994. Hence the presence of lecturers on the editorial board tended to discourage students from publishing the kinds of stories they felt would be of interest to the student community. For example, *The Chariot* could not publish a news story about a university administrator who was accused of having swindled funds intended for a specific student activity because the censors perceived such news stories as provocative.

Research participants talked about the presence of spies. Many students alleged that the university authorities sponsored students as spies to monitor the activities of other students. Certain lecturers had also been co-opted as spies to monitor both students and their colleagues for subversive activities. Many interviewees expressed their outrage about the university's ban on students' right to strike or organise protests against the administration. This was interpreted as outright repression and the university authorities were challenged to vindicate their purported espousal of democratic culture by repealing the legislation which required students to sign a legal undertaking not to organise strikes or protest marches. In the next section, I make use of these findings to address a range of issues concerning violence, student politics and its relationship to broader political issues.

### **Violent Protests and the Contours of Repression**

In the above paragraphs, I have provided a detailed account of student activism at the University of Buea since its inception in 1993. I have shown that student protests tended to be violent, an aspect which if considered more broadly, is not unique to students. Many scholars writing about student activism have recorded the crisis of violence that often accompanies most protests (see for example,

Naidoo 1991; Wise 1998; Konings 2002; Mashayekhi 2001; Klopp & Orina 2002). Because many youth and student protests have often culminated in violence, 'young people are now seen and constructed as a menace' (Diouf 2003:9). Little effort is made to put acts of violence into perspective granting that student protesters are already categorised as 'les enfants terribles'. It is against this background that I wish to examine students' violent protests from a sociological perspective.

More often than not, most government officials perceive 'street protest as a form of deviant behaviour' (Aelst and Walgrave 2001:461). However, while some forms of protest have become normalised, others (such as violent protests) are subject to renewed stigmatisation. That notwithstanding, Apter (1997) asserts that 'people do not commit political violence without discourse' and such discursive constructions should be privileged in the analysis of violent protests. For instance, in the case of student protests at UB, one observes that actors were concerned with issues that went beyond often-repeated struggles for bread and butter. Student leaders tended to construct discourses around issues regarding their exclusion from decision-making processes and the administration's plans to exploit the student population. While these discourses did not espouse violence as a 're-ordering' mechanism (cf. Apter 1997:5), students often resorted to violent protests as a means outside the rules of the game, and because of their efficacy in particular instances, they were legitimised and normalised among student activists. Hence violent protests could be viewed not only as a therapy by striking students but also as 'testimonials to moral claims – claims to a higher legitimacy, rectifying, that is, the righting of perceived injustices...' (Apter 1997:18). A case in point was the capture and ruthless necklacing of one of the alleged bandits in February 2003 at the Buea University junction. The government's silence over the issue could also be interpreted as an implicit acknowledgement of certain extra-institutional protests or forms of justice.<sup>19</sup>

Violent protests at UB could also be located within the realm of 'low politics' following Bayart's classic distinction between high and low politics. According to him, the sphere of low politics is occupied by marginalized groups such as women, children and the youth. To study low politics is to study the 'politics of the powerless' (cf. Cruise O'Brien 1996). But powerlessness does not entail the absence of agency granting that youth participation in the public sphere is contingent on different kinds of agency (cf. Durham 2000). Resort to violent protests by student activists has been interpreted as a form of deconstructing the state (Cruise O'Brien 1996) and perhaps as a way of 'uprooting' postcolonial legitimacies (Diouf 2003:7). This understanding could be extended to many African universities whose leadership in some cases represent the entrenched patrimonial state structures (see Klopp & Orina 2002 for similarities in Kenya). Thus, even in their perceived powerlessness, student protests at UB could be understood not only as addressing concerns relevant to their immediate circumstances, but also as con-

fronting broader issues endemic to the body politic of the post-colony. The burning down of the registrar's car during the strike of November 1995 or the students' insistence that the governor of the South West Province should accompany them 'on foot' to the raided student hostels are statements of deconstruction. The semiotic contrast between the burnt 'car' and the everyday challenge of being a pedestrian is eloquent. By urging the governor to accompany the young citizens on foot, the students were actively uprooting or demystifying the fetishism which power has come to represent to many postcolonial government auxiliaries.

In a discussion of violence in the post-colony, one cannot afford to ignore the various forms of violence exercised by the postcolonial state against its citizens and in this case, the students at the University of Buea. According to Nyamnjoh and Jua (2002) 'education in Africa, from colonial times to the postcolony, has been the victim of various forms of violence, the most devastating of which is the violence of cultural and political conversion....' The African university has become a site of both academic and political repression whereby academics in league with the patrimonial state enjoy the 'license to use and abuse students' without remorse (Nyamnjoh and Jua 2002:5; also see Mbembe 1992, 2001, on the predicament of female students in male-dominated institutions of higher learning). The dynamics of the above claims could be examined more critically at the University of Buea where extreme and often arbitrary forms of violence have been employed by both the state and university authorities over students. In this connection, Foucault's concept of disciplinary power is useful as a model for understanding symbolic violence at UB. Disciplinary power is a form of surveillance internalised by people who represent the targets of power. The basic goal of disciplinary power is to produce a person who is docile and complacent with the system (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1985:134-135). To this end, 'disciplinary technologies' are employed to police and produce docile bodies. Writing about youth politics in postcolonial Africa, Mbembe (1985) noted some of the techniques of discipline utilized by postcolonial governments to police university students and the youth in general. He asserted that the techniques included among other things, the dissolution of student organisations and arrest of student leaders, forced labour for purposes of re-education, and the creation of rival student associations (Mbembe 1985:109-10). At the University of Buea, a range of these techniques have been used time after time and by every indication, the tempo of student politics at UB seems to have succumbed to a level of docility expected by the authorities. New students and perceived subversive activists are harassed and reminded of the fate of pioneer students who ended up in suspension lists because they dared to stand up to the authorities. The deployment of spies among both students and lecturers evokes the presence of a 'panopticon' or in popular parlance, the spectre of 'big brother'.

A familiar discourse often invoked by authorities to dismiss student claims is that the latter have been 'misled' or manipulated by agents who intend to destabilise the state (Mbembe 1985:110). It is quite crucial to note how such legendary discourses are regurgitated endlessly by university authorities to reject and repudiate protesting students. In a recent publication, Dr Dorothy Njeuma and her colleagues charge that:

Constructive dialogue with students is rare. Students' unions created to provide a forum for negotiation with students have become a mechanism for violent confrontation rather than *dialogue, as the unions are influenced by politicians to destabilise the universities in the effort to promote particular political agendas* (Njeuma et al 1999:16 emphasis mine).

Similar accusations were made against student movements in the 1970s and 80s. In particular, they were accused of being manipulated by communist organs and international communism (Mbembe 1985:108). Parallel claims are made and replicated in the age of multiparty politics.

### **Can Student Activism be Depoliticised?**

I have argued above that although student activism in the 1990s at UB tended to focus on issues of immediate concern to the student community, it also extended its breadth into the domains of local and national politics. It is probable that the administration's claim that students were being manipulated by politicians for alternative ends stems from students' oppositional stance with regard to issues of broader concern in the country. It should be pointed out that the increase in student activism on the African continent could be directly linked to political liberalization in the early 1990s. In Cameroon for example, 'political liberalization allowed space for students to voice their long-standing grievances about the deteriorating living and study conditions' (Konings 2002:180) while in Kenya, limited political liberalization in 1991 'reinvigorated a tradition of student activism' (Klopp and Orina 2002:46). Similar claims could be made for Nigeria where the struggle for democracy was championed by academics in collaboration with students despite stiff resistance from successive military regimes (Jega 1994). It is evident from the foregoing discussion that one cannot dissociate student activism from broader political processes, although most African governments have often sought to do so, albeit ambivalently. In Cameroon, President Paul Biya has often discouraged university students from participating in politics – '*la politique aux politiciens, l'école aux écoliers*' (cf. Konings 2002:190) but at the same time, his government has encouraged the formation of youth branches of the ruling party on campuses, particularly during the early 1990s at the University of Yaounde. The government also encouraged the formation of ethnic militia among student groups at the University of Yaounde in order to combat popular demands for

democracy and political reform (cf. Konings 2002; Jua 2003; Fokwang 2003). Thus, it is unfathomable to talk of depoliticising student activism when student activism itself, by its very essence, is political. One could extend this discussion to interrogate what constitutes 'the political', not from the perspective of university administrators or researchers' agendas, but from the vantage point of the student activists themselves (cf. O'toole et al 2003).

During the student protests at Buea in the mid-1990s, one observes that broader political concerns of that era became embroiled in the crisis. At issue was the ethnicization of the student protests by indigenous groups and some members of the private press. The University of Buea is not only located in Bakweri territory, but it is also headed by members of the Bakweri ethnic group, although a majority of the students and lecturers are from the North West Province (Konings 2003:39). Despite this, there is popular talk of north western hegemony over local ethnic citizens thus pitting the latter against the former. It was along these lines that the UBSU-led protests against the authorities in November 1995 were re-interpreted by certain individuals. This became apparent at the Buea local market where 'strangers' were purportedly chased away and accused of having burnt the registrar's car.<sup>20</sup> Accusations were also made against prominent members of the UB administration, particularly those of North West origin for trying to undermine the vice-chancellor's legitimacy and thereby helping to fuel the protests. A columnist in a local private paper summarised the conflict in the following words:

Too many people of the North West and possibly Manyu are simply not comfortable with having two Bakweris among the twenty-two senior officials of the University of Buea. Truth of the matter is that the Bakweris have been marginalised since reunification in 1961. The reasons, as we all know, are not far-fetched. Each time a Bakweri was earmarked for high political or administrative office, there was always the tendency to remind the powers that be of their tainted and questionable loyalty to the fatherland. Is it wrong for President Biya to have discovered merits in two Bakweris who are already creating sensation in the running of this University? Is it also wrong for a caring President to seek to right the wrongs of yester years against a humane, civilised, and liberal minded people? The North-West students and their cohorts must be told unequivocally that they cannot eat their cake and have it, and that what is good for the goose is good for the gander.<sup>21</sup>

While there is no evidence that student politics at UB was ethnicised as analysed in the case of the University of Yaounde by Konings (2002), it is apparent that the student protests were interpreted along the autochthony-allochthony discourses that have bedevilled Cameroon since the introduction of political liber-

alisation in the early 1990s. In summary, the autochthony-allochthony conflict in Cameroon and other parts of Africa has come to represent the claims of indigenous ethnic citizens against domination by so-called ethnic strangers (cf. Geschiere & Nyamnjoh 2000; Konings 2001; Bayart et al 2001). In the anglophone South West Province of Cameroon, local elites and politicians have fuelled these discourses for political gain by depicting their anglophone counterparts of the North West as dominating and exploitative (see Konings 2003 for ramifications of these discourses in recent religious conflicts in the South West Province). The fact that student politics despite itself has been interpreted along prevailing political concerns is an indication of the continuous intersection between the constituency of student activism and socio-political developments within the body politic. Thus, one cannot talk of the depoliticization of student activism as such, but rather, advocate its analysis, which by every indication can shed light on local politics.

### Conclusion

This chapter has presented a detailed analysis of student activism at the University of Buea from its inception in 1993 to 2003. The above account sheds light not only on students' claims but also on the social, economic and political developments that took place during the era under consideration. I have demonstrated that one can establish a divergence between the character of student activism in the mid-1990s and its later manifestations since 1999. Between 1993 and 1996, student complaints were directed at the university authorities and when space was not provided for the articulation of their plight, activists tended to organise protests against the university administration. These protests seemed persistent despite the employment of ruthless disciplinary techniques by the administration to police students and their activities. This eventually culminated in the complete suspension of students' union politics on campus and it was only re-introduced four years later. Since 1999, student activism has been relatively less confrontational towards the university administration and directed more at civil authorities. I argued that while the university authorities might have succeeded in producing docile bodies out of the new generation of student activists, the reality is in the generational and experiential gap between activists of the early 1990s and those that took over student politics at the end of the decade. The socio-political climate has also changed, compared to the stringent economic crisis and the unstable political conditions of the early 1990s. Most of the pioneer students who enrolled at the University of Buea were formerly students at the University of Yaounde where student groups had already built a solid reputation in their clamour for political liberalisation and democracy in the country. This spirit of activism was carried along to Buea where student activists frequently confronted the administration over issues of concern to the student community.

Despite these differences, both the student protests of the early and mid-1990s as well as the recent protests in 2003 have something in common – the disposition for violence. The fact that student protests have often turned violent has created a perception of youths and students in particular as a menace to the sanity and stability of society. That notwithstanding, I argued that it is crucial to go beyond the sensational conclusions and explore the dynamics of violent protests sociologically. In this regard, I contend that violent protests could be understood not only as a form of expressing disillusionment, but also as a mode of deconstructing the postcolonial state and the legitimacy of its local auxiliaries such as government-appointed vice-chancellors and university administrators. That is to say, violent protest is not always orchestrated for its own sake, but is usually accompanied by discourses, even if such discourses are incoherent and unconvincing. Furthermore, violent protests could be responses to the symbolic and physical violence of the state against unarmed and powerless citizens.

Drawing on ethnographic data, this chapter also explored the relationship between student activism and local politics in an attempt to evaluate if student activism can be depoliticised. The chapter concludes that student politics cannot be depoliticised. In fact, it observed that an in-depth analysis of student activism can shed tremendous light on critical socio-political developments at the local and national levels.

While peaceful protest is recognised as healthy for a democracy and is ‘increasingly enjoying greater legitimacy not only among government elites but also by public opinion’ in several Western countries (Aelst & Walgrave 2001:480) it is unlikely that African governments would embrace this consensus for a long time to come. The integration of many African universities in the ‘wider system of repressive rule’ implies that the striving for ‘university autonomy and academic freedom is tied to broader struggles for democracy and human rights’ (Klopp & Orina 2002:45-46). For many optimistic scholars, such as Klopp & Orina, the university remains an offsetting for ‘resistance and advocacy for democratic change’. Such optimism notwithstanding, the trend in Cameroonian universities is deeply distressing owing to complacency among students and faculty. Widespread corruption in the mismanagement of student funds and administrative lethargy in bringing such union leaders to justice are indications of a decaying system. However, the recent strikes that beset three of the six state universities in 2005 indicate that student activism often has serious consequences for local and national politics, hence the intertwinement between student activism and politics.

## Notes

1. Christopher Ambe Shu, 'Irate varsity students stone governor over insecurity', *The Herald*, No. 1311 of 5-6 February 2003, pp. 1-2.
2. Christopher Ambe Shu, 'Police brutalize UB students for barricading road to protest insecurity', Online edition of *The Herald*. Available online at <http://www.heraldnewspaper.org>, January 20 2004 accessed on January 23 2004. Once again, students were expressing their disgruntlement at police negligence in dealing with calls for urgent intervention against armed burglary.
3. The four university centres were as follows: the Buea University Centre (specialising in languages, translation, interpretation and the arts); Douala University Centre for Business studies and the training of technical teachers; Dschang University Centre for Agricultural Sciences and lastly; Ngaoundere University Centre for Food Science and Food Technology (Njeuma et al 1999:5).
4. See *The Chariot*, Vol. 07, No. 3, 3.
5. The devaluation of the CFA Franc in Francophone West Africa provoked a series of strikes in some countries such as Mali and Senegal. Students played a leading role in these strikes but in Cameroon, no protest marches were organised. See Wise (1998) for an account of the student protests against the devaluation of the CFA Franc in other West African countries.
6. The ghost town operation entailed a period of civil disobedience during which cities were deserted and/or economic activities stopped. During the ghost town period, business activities were limited to Saturdays and Sundays, which permitted people to buy groceries needed for the rest of the week. The principal aim of the ghost town was to weaken the economy and force Paul Biya to resign or enter into dialogue with those advocating more democratic reform.
7. See interview with Dr Dorothy Njeuma, *The Messenger*, Vol. 1 No. 018 of Friday August 27, 1993, pp. 8-9.
8. 'Buea University Students on Strike' in *The Messenger* Vol. 1 No. 018 of Friday 27 August, 1993, 1, 8-9. The article also carries an interview with Dr Dorothy Njeuma where she presents arguments for the need to increase tuition, owing to the poor fiscal standing of the university.
9. See details of these claims by Dr Njeuma and Prof. Chumbow (then deputy vice-chancellor, now rector of the University of Yaounde 1) in *The Herald* No. 054, Wednesday September 1-8, 1993, p. 3.
10. Quoted from *The Herald* No. 055, Wednesday September 8-15, 1993, p. 8.
11. See *The Messenger* Vol. 1, No. 020, Wednesday September 22, 1993, p. 8.
12. See *The Messenger*, No. 026, Thursday November 4, 1993, p. 7.
13. Luma Slim Davis, 'Registrar Prevents Strike at University of Buea', in *The Messenger*, Vol. III, No. 036, Wednesday November 10, 1993, p. 9.
14. Peterkins Manyong, 'Distressed Buea Varsity Students cry out against Victimisation' in *The Herald*, No. 227, Thursday August 3-6, 1995, p. 2.
15. For instance, the students argued that they had been isolated from participating in preparatory meetings against the official opening of the new academic year scheduled for 30 November 1995.

16. 'University of Buea in state of emergency', *The Herald*, No. 262, Monday November 27-29, 1995, pp. 1-2.
17. See *The Herald*, No. 265, Thursday December 7-11, 1995, p. 3.
18. President Paul Biya came to power in November 1982 and has remained in power until today. He has employed various forms of 'divide and rule' especially during the multiparty era in order to resist defeat (see Eyoh 1998; Geschiere and Nyamnjoh 2000 and Takougang 2003).
19. In 2000, religious personalities, local human rights groups and Amnesty International accused the Cameroon government of carrying out extrajudicial killings. Mass graves were discovered in the outskirts of Douala provoking widespread horror among citizens, thus confirming the government's repeated denial that the accusations had been unfounded. See <http://www.amnesty.org>, AI INDEX: AFR 17/005/2000 4 December 2000.
20. Bekong Fondong, 'University of Buea Crisis: Bakweris attack "strangers" for burning Registrar's car', *The Herald*, No. 262, Monday November 27-29, 1995, p. 2.
21. Mohammed Molua Gbadago, 'Genesis of the Buea University Fracas' *The Star Headlines*, Vol. 5, No. 31, Monday January 15, 1996, pp. 4-5.

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