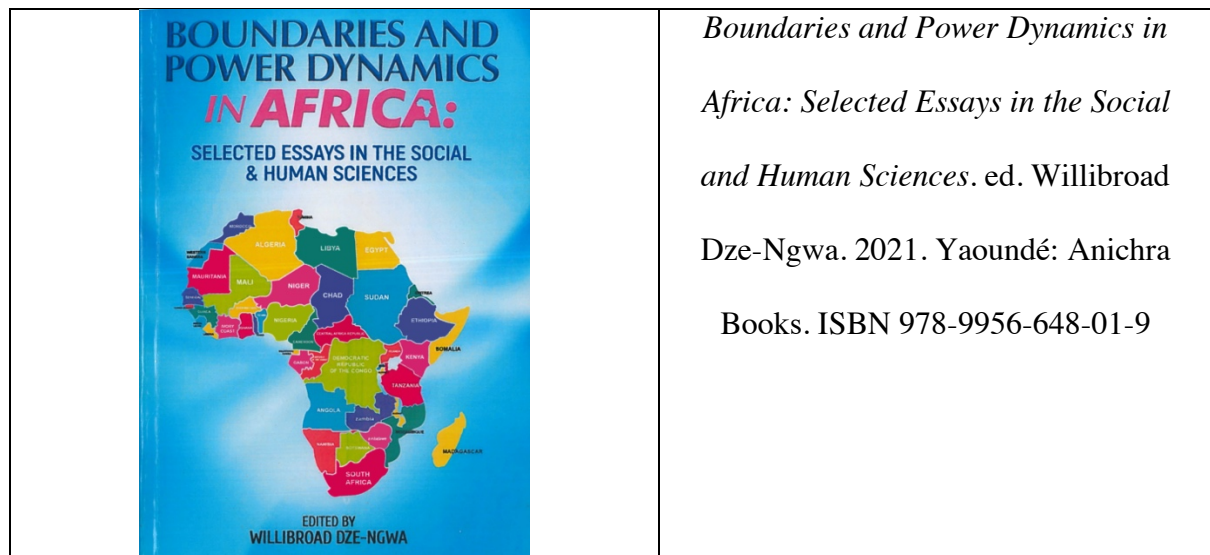


## Book Notice

This book has not been much noticed and is not well served by internet or international library system indexing so, with permission of the editor, we are making available the Table of Contents and the introduction which includes summaries of the individual chapters.



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Boundaries and Power Dynamics in Africa: Selected Essays in the Social and Human Sciences. ed. Dze-Ngwa, Willibroad, 2021 Yaoundé: Anichra Books. ISBN 978-9956-648-01-9

### **Introduction**

*Willibroad Dze-Ngwa*

There is an inseparable link between boundaries and conflicts, be they conventional or ideological boundaries. The desire to better understand these boundary issues and take informed decisions and actions at rolling back conflicts pushed us to invite scientific contributions from across the social and human sciences. We received thirty five submissions and after careful scientific review, we opted to start publishing the first thirteen articles. The result is this current edited volume titled *Boundaries and Power Dynamics in Africa: Selected Essays in the Social & Human Sciences*. We hope to continue coming out with the other papers as we move on in this scientific journey.

The issues raised and discussed in this volume are well crafted and articulated in thirteen well researched and thoroughly peer-reviewed chapters tackling colonial, post-independence and contemporary conventional and ideological boundaries- related issues. The authors were interested in subjects such as: contested colonial and postcolonial military boundaries in Cameroon, hate speech and hate actions resulting from inherited colonial boundaries, the Boko Haram cross-border terrorism, international boundary of refugees repatriation, the impact of integrating refugees and the host perception of integrity and security, the UNHCR policy on urban refugee protection and the pursuit for durable solutions for urban refugees, boundaries and the dynamics of political engagement and militancy; and child trafficking in Cameroon. In a more international perspective, articles handled cross-border hydro-geological risk assessment of the Lake Benakuma area of the North West Region of Cameroon; the myths and realities of the trans-African Highways, a critical appraisal of the African Union's Malabo Protocol, post-colonialism and power-relations in African Poetry and boundaries issues in the

concept of the human person and the African thinking. History has taught us that research and dissemination of research results through education, re-education and soft power reconstruction are relevant tools used in civilized societies to solve common problems emanating from boundary issues.

The thirteen chapters open with Emmanuel Yenkong Sobseh's article titled "Contested Colonial and Postcolonial Military Boundaries in Cameroon: Rethinking Observation and Comparison Practices and Reforms in Uncertain Times" in which the author offers insights into both the history of colonial militaries in Cameroon, and how the British and the French who scrambled for and failed to annex the territory were busy observing and comparing German military strategies from the time of German annexation on 12 July 1884. This situation established military boundaries among the Germans, British and French forces, which shaped the history of Cameroon from 1914 till reunification in 1961. Sobseh argues that colonialism had a telling influence on post-independence military relations in Cameroon.

In Chapter Two titled "From Hate Speech to Hate Action: Inherited Colonial Boundaries and the Challenges to Peaceful co-existence in Cameroon, 1990-2020" Willibroad Dze-Ngwa's paper investigates on the contribution of hate speech to the Anglophone/Francophone dichotomy and the resultant ongoing Anglophone Problem in the country, which is already shaking the very foundation of the country's unity with threats of disintegration. According to Dze-Ngwa, these geographic and ideological boundaries born out of colonial divides are artificial and should be rolled back conflicts through concrete peace-building initiatives weaved around social justice, peace and reconciliation within the different communities established through colonial boundaries.

Chapter Three, "Boko Haram Cross-Border Terrorism: Chronicling the Bygone to elucidate its Extension from Nigeria to Cameroon" investigates Boko Haram's origins, evolution and targets its extension from Nigeria to Cameroon. It probes into its birth, reasons

for its cross-borders terrorism, examines associated concepts and assesses the consequences of its activities on the afflicted communities. In this chapter, David Nchinda Keming reveals that the international concerns about Boko Haram terrorism were primarily driven by concepts, appellations, historicity, evolution, reasons/how it crossed the borders, consequences of its terrorism and lessons to actors in fighting global terrorism. Keming concludes that although the wings of the sect were clipped, it remains a threat worthy of monitoring by Cameroon/Nigerian security agents, stakeholders, politicians, and academics to elude its reincarnation.

In Chapter Four, Eric Moh Kepeh's article titled, "International Boundary of Refugees Repatriation: Understanding the Voluntary Repatriation of Nigerian Refugees from Cameroon, 2001-2019" evaluates the extent to which the repatriation of Nigerian refugees from Cameroon from 2001 -2017 was under the international refugee laws. It further analyses the different phases of repatriation, the role of the country of origin and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to enhance the concept of voluntariness. Kepeh intimates that the massive influx of refugees into Cameroon shows the commitment of the country to live up to its international obligations towards this vulnerable populace despite the insecurity situation in North-Eastern Cameroon-Nigeria borders. He argues that the recent uncivil return of Nigerian refugees from Cameroon from 2016-2017 has faced stiff criticism from diverse International stakeholders within and without. According to him, this singular act has put to question the international, regional and domestic refugee laws that are anchored on the premise that, no contracting state shall expel or return a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

Like Kepeh, Christian Mafany Nkatow in chapter five titled "The Impact of Integration of Central African Refugees and the Host perception of Integrity and Scurity in the East and

Adamawa Regions of Cameroon” reflects on the refugee issue, this time around, he examines the integration of Central African Refugees (CARs) in the East and the Adamawa Regions of Cameroon and brings out perceived thoughts of the hosts communities concerning the impact of the integration of the refugees on the integrity and security of the two Regions. Mafany concludes that the host communities perceived refugee integration towards the integrity and security of the regions mixed feelings due to the degrading conditions of security in the two regions.

Dze-Ngwa and Kepeh , in Chapter Six titled “UNHCR policy on Urban Refugee Protection and the pursuit for durable solutions for refugees in Yaoundé, Cameroon” examine UNHCR efforts in fostering the effective implementation of the 2009 UNHCR urban refugees’ policy in specific domains like, documentation, and Refugees status determination, community relations, livelihood and durable solutions to urban refugees in Ya o u n d é . The study is anchored on the assumption that, despite the promulgation of the 2009 UNHCR policy on urban refugees, those in Ya o u n d é continue to face challenges hindering their effective integration in the urban sphere. The chapter reveals that the UNHCR in collaboration with the government of Cameroon have made enormous progress in securing and improving access to education, health, livelihood and self-reliance, documentation and refugees status determination although much still needs to be done to create more protective space and sustainable solutions to urban refugees in Yaoundé.

Researching on boundaries along political party lines in Cameroon, Laive Fru Awah’s article in chapter seven titled “The Dynamics of Political Engagement and Militancy in British Southern Cameroons, 1953-1961: A Strength or Weakness in the Peoples struggle for Self-Determination and Independence” investigates the serious division and break up from within political parties in the former British administered Southern Cameroons which led to the emergence of a rival party and the systematic switch over of some militants to new parties.

Awah argues that the sudden and flexibility with which militants easily started changing political affiliations in Southern Cameroons from 1953 later became normal routine, which raised interrogations as to the implication of such dynamics on the struggle for self-determination and independence. He concludes that the dynamics of political engagements and militancy in Southern Cameroons greatly weakened and compromised the struggle for self-determination and independence of the territory.

In Chapter Eight, Michael Kpughe Lang's paper, "Combating Child Trafficking in Cameroon's Bamenda Grassfields: Efforts of the Bamenda Archdiocesan Justice and Peace Commission assessed" analyzes the role of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Bamenda in the fight against child trafficking in Cameroon's North West Region. It argues that the active participation of the faith-based institution in combating child trafficking has been marked by partial success with evidences that the role of this Catholic Commission in terms of prevention and prosecution of trafficking is not particularly encouraging. Child trafficking remains a dramatic reality in the area, which serves as evidence that the Commission's efforts are stalled. He however proposes strategies to better check child trafficking in the region.

Chapter Nine titled "Cross-Border Hydro-Geological Risk Assessment of the Lake Benakuma area of the North West Region of Cameroon" assesses the existence of potential threat to the immediate surroundings of Lake Benakuma. In this chapter, Elvis F. Kah argues that these threats can be of various forms ranging from flooding, airborne diseases, toxic gas emissions, to disease transmission through insect bites. He notes that Lake Benakuma, which is a crater lake in the North West Region of Cameroon poses a number of threats to its immediate surroundings. With water accumulation estimated at 3.5 billion m<sup>3</sup>, this lake occupies a blown off mount top whose walls retaining the lake's water have thinned over time. Located at less than 4 kilometres from River Menchum, the presence of this lake here poses as

a threat to the entire valley that stretches into Nigeria at less than 20 km. He makes some proposals on how to better manage the risk emanating from the lake.

In Chapter Ten, Michael Ajua Alemanji's article, "Trans-African Highways: Myths or Economic Imperatives?" argues that major development goals that started as myths have always been transformed into real projects by economic and other imperatives. Alemanji backs his argument by looking at the success stories of some projects. To him, it took America only 19 years to start and complete construction of the 67, 578 km of its interstate and defence highways. He intimates that, when the French ventured to start construction of the Panama Canal in 1893, the public viewed it as a myth. Although the French eventually abandoned the work, the Americans continued the project, inaugurating it on 15 August 1914. Similarly, the 47, 958 km of the Pan-American Highway started as a dream. Today it links Canada, the US, Mexico, and some 15 Latin American countries. The inter-connected countries enjoy economies of scale and other benefits because of their inter connectivity to the Pan—American Highway. Following these examples, Alemanji queries why the entire continent of Africa has completed only one of the nine trans-African highways approved 41 years ago by their heads of states and governments (Dakar Senegal — N'djamena Chad a mega 4500 km). He further argues that transportation triggers development and can change the shape and size of cities, increase agricultural production, spur technology, promote industry and enhance the socio-economic development of a people. He suggests that the completion of the trans-African highways network, in particular the Trans-African Highway No 8 linking Lagos to Mombasa, will halt the stagnation of African economies. The existence today of regional and international air carriers operating within Africa and the outside world already bears testimony to the principle of competitive envy and should spur all African countries to complete construction of the trans-African highways.



Chapter Eleven handles “The African union’s Malabo Protocol: A Critical Appraisal.” In this article, Peter Masumbe Sakwe handles the AU idea of creating the African Criminal Court (ACC) via the Malabo Protocol which is yet to materialize, although it evokes multifaceted reactions. Sakwe argues that, the AU envisages creating a court with powers similar to those of the International Criminal Court, (ICC) which will logically be gratifying; given its envisaged jurisdiction over suspected crimes, especially by African leaders against their citizens and countries. He however questions the powers of such a court considering the politico-legal enshrining of the immunity clause not to prosecute serving Heads of State and senior Government officials and the inadequate financial resources. He submits that, simply condemning the court before its creation is counter-productive; since its potentials might shift Africa’s focus from conflicts, insecurity, violations of rule of law alongside human rights, and fighting the ICC.

In chapter twelve titled “Postcolonialism and Power-Relations in African Poetry” Eric Nsuh Zuhmboshi, analyses the abuse and manipulation of power in African politics as reflected in postcolonial African poetry. He argues that in the postcolonial era, a new bourgeoisie class cropped up among the Africans whose purpose is to lord it over the downtrodden masses and handle the mantle of political leadership for as long as possible. From the prism of postcolonial theory, Zuhmboshi’s paper is based on the Rulers as an instrument of exploitation and repression and not of service and development. He submits that the political rulers and elite in Africa see political power as a means of enriching themselves at the detriment and impairment of the downtrodden masses. He concludes that it is because of this manipulation of political power and influence that there is an alarming widening gap between the rich and the poor in postcolonial Africa. The final chapter titled “The Concept of Human Person in Kierkegaard and African Thinking: An Existential Demarcation” examines the notion of person in Kierkegaard vis a vis the African view point. Prior to the emergence of the existentialist

movement, philosophers had neglected matters concerning the concrete existence of man. Kierkegaard, like other existentialists, sees man as a free agent and tries to illuminate human freedom and its implication with a view to promoting authentic choice which is the base of living an authentic life. Thus, Kierkegaard draws attention to what it means to be an existing individual, and possibility of man's self-realization. Man has the choice to freely separate himself from the 'crowd' and attain authentic existence. In this article Theophilus Ngeh Asah and Elias Ihimbru Num, argue that the African equally conceives 'free choice' as that which determines an individual who is considered as an existential man living together with his kindred. Such an individual is capable of making choice, and it is in the idea of free choice that the African notion of the human person differs from that of Kierkegaard and other existentialists. Their argument establishes a boundary line in the African thinking. To the Africans the individual is defined by the community, and the freedom of the individual is conceived in relation to the others. Asah and Num conclude that the African perception of the individual is community and people oriented, therefore, it could contribute positively to the global understanding of the nature of human person. The African notion of the individual should therefore be adopted and lived out in all human society. Considering the key issues raised in these well-researched papers, I have no doubt that scholars, researchers, policy makers, opinion leaders and students will have an enrich understanding of how conventional physical and contemporary ideological boundaries influence life, nation-building and global development. Though we employed historical methodology in writing many of the chapters, we allowed other disciplines to apply methodologies specific to such social and human sciences.

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