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Bushland in Mindif Region, Cameroon : functions, decline, context and prospects

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PROPOSITIONS

with the PhD thesis “Bushland in Mindif Region, Cameroon”

Wassouni

1.

Due to socio-political dynamics of the last decade in Cameroon, people rarely say what is true at first contact. This necessitates a critical look at survey data on land, cattle, activities, opinions etc. gathered by way of the usual surveys. (this dissertation)

2.

The causes of conflicts amongst bush resources users are more rooted in institutions and law enforcement than in competition due to growing scarcity as commonly believed. (this dissertation)

3.

In North Cameroon, people respond to increasing population densities by a mixture of cropland expansion and, though as yet to a lesser extent, largely indigenous intensification and innovation. (this dissertation)

4.

Protection of the bushland in North Cameroon is not only important for its direct functions in rural livelihoods but also to induce more land use intensification and innovation in agriculture before these functions are lost. (this dissertation)

5.

Unfair governance, e.g. the granting of harvest rights that exclude local populations, may aggravate the depletion of natural resources because frustration pushes local resource users to act against laws and even their own economic good.

6.

Just like scientific data, local knowledge and perceptions may be either good or bad sources of information. Rural development research must therefore cross-test and integrate local and scientific insights.

7.

When questioned on behaviours, people tend to refer to an economic rationale even when behaviours are more culturally than economically determined.

8.

It is commonly held that chronic poverty is both cause and effect of lack of capacities (e.g. lack of knowledge, lack of capital). Actually, chronic poverty should be viewed primarily as both cause and effect of lack of motivation.