

FORESTS OF CONNECTIONS, FORESTS OF CHANGE: DYNAMICS OF HIV EMERGENCE IN SOUTHEASTERN CAMEROON

a talk by

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4:00-5:30PM

10 SACHEM, ROOM 105

Virologists have established that HIV-1M, the group of human immunodeficiency viruses that generated HIV/AIDS, emerged from a subpopulation of chimpanzees in the forests of southeastern Cameroon and adapted to human transmissibility in the early 20th century. Instead of approaching the emergence of HIV as a singular, unidirectional event, however, this talk underscores the importance of nesting the history of this virus within the histories of those people living in these forests and along these rivers. Dynamics of human mobility have characterized forest communities for generations, drawing on centuries-old relations of social fission and fusion, competition and cooperation. This talk examines the social, economic, ecological, and medical factors that combined to provide a context in which people were able to connect with each other in profoundly new ways, permitting the emergence of a new human virus.

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