International Journal of Social Sciences Perspectives
ISSN: 2577-7750
Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 1-17.
2023
DOI: 10.33094/ijssp.v12i1.682

Conflict and livelihood changes in the south west region of Cameroon: A social capital perspective

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Keywords:
Cameroon
Conflict
Livelihood
Social capital.

Received: *4 August 2022*
Revised: *19 September 2022*
Accepted: *6 October 2022*
Published: *14 October 2022*
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Abstract

The relevance of acceptable livelihoods for the socioeconomic wellbeing and human survival cannot be overemphasized especially within a socio-political context. This study attempts to understand the livelihood changes that have taken place between 2015 and 2020 for displaced and resident households within the communities in Manyu from a social capital perspective. Despite being replete with conflicts in the past, the recent uptick of socio-political crisis in Cameroon's two English speaking regions have led to several deaths, displacement of persons and livelihoods are affected. For a long duration of the crisis (6 years), very little attempt has been made to understand how the crisis is changing the livelihood dynamics of different actors in the affected areas of Manyu Division. As an exploratory study, we employ purposive sampling and simple random sampling to respectively select the two divisions and study communities. Quantitative data was collected using a survey questionnaire and interview guide while for qualitative data, an observation guide, participant observation and key informant interviews were considered. The study reveals that the existing social order of communities is replaced by a new form of chaotic dictatorial and coercive structure without respect for human dignity but self-interest. Also, a common meal can pacify tensions during conflicts by building trust, solidarity and netness for conciliation and social harmony. Greater strides be made between contending faction to resolve the conflict so displaced persons and households could return to normal life.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.
Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

1. Introduction

The relevance of acceptable livelihoods for the socioeconomic wellbeing and human survival cannot be overemphasized. The nature of resources available, the risk factors as well as the institutional and policy contexts remain critical for appreciating livelihood outcomes (Balgah & Ngwa, 2016; Kimengsi, Balgah, & Gwan, 2016). An evaluation of conflict on livelihoods indicated that by 2013, conflicts have affected the livelihoods of about 1.3 billion people around the world (Stites & Bushby, 2017; United Nations Development Program, 2013). Conflicts are interlinked with livelihoods. When there is conflict, livelihoods are threatened through restriction of access to resources that people depend on for their wellbeing.

Livelihood failure contributes in different ways to the emergence of conflict by weakening the social relations/bonds of communities where people resort to violent competition over scarce but necessary resources (Kimengsi et al., 2016; USAID, 2005) as have taken place in Africa.

The recent uptick in violence in Sub-Saharan Africa after a decline in conflict toll in 2000, akin to global increase in conflict, has left a third of the countries in the region under conflict with immeasurable human suffering, loss of human life, destruction of institutions with accompanying economic and social drowns (Kothari et al., 2019; Stites & Bushby, 2017). For instance, persistent conflict in Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, genocide in Rwanda, the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict, and the Sierra-Leone conflict, led to over 825000

deaths (Kothari et al., 2019). The trend and baton later fell on Sahel countries (Kothari et al., 2019) including Cameroon.

Cameroon has been replete with multiple forms of conflicts, ranging from farmer-grazier conflicts (Jabiru, 2017; Kinsam, Tankou, & Lengha, 2021; Nchinda, Che, Shidiki, Chi, & Ngome, 2016; Nformi, Bime, Fon, & Nji, 2014),through inter-tribal/ethnic conflicts (Ngenge, 2021; Yenshu, Emmanuel & Ngwa, 2001) to land grabbing conflicts (Eno & Fombe, 2016; Kofele-Kale, 2007; Mope Simo, 2011; Ndi & Batterbury, 2017). In 2014, Cameroon had a direct conflict with Boko Haram in its Northern region. The conflict worsened the already-delicate economic situation for the four million inhabitants of that region considered as the poorest part of the country before the conflict (International Crisis Group, 2017). At the peak of the conflict in 2015, International Crisis Group (2017) reports that, 2,000 civilians and soldiers were killed, more than 1,000 people kidnapped, about 2,100 members of Boko Haram were killed by the vigilante groups and the Cameroonian defense forces which resulted to forceful displacement of people alongside their traditional skills before the conflict in the Anglophone region.

From November 2016 till date, the North West (NW) and South West (SW) Regions of Cameroon have been characterised by instability and violence, due to what is now called the Anglophone[1] crisis (Bang & Balgah, 2022; OCHA-Cameroon, 2019). The crisis was orchestrated by a strike by 'Anglophone' teachers and Lawyers against the obligatory use of the French language in courts and schools in these (2) predominantly English-speaking regions in Cameroon (Bang & Balgah, 2022; Rogers, 2021). The protests met with stiff resistance given that this was against the government's policy of national integration; eventually breeding secessionist tendencies. About 100 civilians were arrested and some deaths were recorded as a result of the initial strike action (Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa & Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights (Chrda & Rwchr, 2019). In spite of government's effort to promote dialogue, the crisis escalated into an armed conflict in 2017. Frequent confrontations between armed secessionists (separatists) and Cameroon's defense forces have led to heightened insecurity and lockdowns (ghost towns) imposed by separatists in Cameroon's North West and South West ('Anglophone') Regions (Nkongho, 2018; Rogers, 2021). Violent confrontations and lockdowns have not only disrupted access to farm inputs, labour supply, and access to finance and product markets for farmers in these regions (Shillie, Bwifon, & Balgah, 2022), but has upscaled the number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to 36000 registered refugees in Nigeria and 500000 respectively (OCHA-Cameroon, 2019). By the end of 2018, at least 1,800 people were reported dead due to this crisis (Chrda & Rwchr, 2019; OCHA-Cameroon, 2019). Current estimates are around 90.000 internally displaced persons and about 60.000 refugees (Bang, 2022; Bang & Balgah, 2022; Craig, 2020).

Continued fighting between rival groups has had significant (negative) livelihood effects on the entire populations of these two highly affected regions, as it affects access to different forms of capital resources needed for livelihoods within the regions (OCHA-Cameroon, 2019; World Bank Group, 2021). In fact, the effects can be quite horrifying to contemplate. As Ayang (Guardian post, 6th November, 2018, p3), recounts:

> *"The horrific figures speak for themselves, 460.000 people displaced, 3.3 million in need of humanitarian assistance, hundreds of innocent civilians killed, countless separatist fighters and government forces murdered … my people have disappeared. This is a dirty war".*

It is worth noting that the livelihood effects of the 'Anglophone' crisis may vary from one community to another, due for instance to the intensity of confrontations, the availability of humanitarian assistance (OCHA-Cameroon, 2019) adaptation and resilience capacity of the affected populations, inability of affected populations to move (Bhusal, Kimengsi, & Awasthi, 2021), or deliberate decision to stay either due to uncertainty of the future or strong attachment to place (Mallick & Schanze, 2020). Conflict management and humanitarian assistance can benefit from research findings if explicit efforts are made to analyze the conditions of these different groups of affected persons, and not always assuming homogeneity across groups. This study focused on a context characterized by intensive confrontations, and examines changes in social capital and their effects on livelihoods of IDPs and other members of the communities.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Out of the six divisions in the South West, Meme and Manyu are the hardest hit by the Anglophone crisis (OCHA-Cameroon, 2018, 2019, 2020). In Manyu division which is largely rural, schools were reported burnt down, deaths recorded, looting, increased criminality, maiming, destruction of some public and private properties with accompanying displacement of persons to bushes and other havens for safety and survival (OCHA-Cameroon, 2019; World Bank Group., 2021). It was the livelihoods of these rural people that have been punctured by the Anglophone crisis. Although livelihood resources (human, financial, natural, economic and social) are abundant in the division (Balgah & Ngwa, 2016; Egbe, Fonge, & Tabot, 2012), the crisis has imposed new forms of interactions between these forms of capital and contextual vulnerability; with potential disruptions in livelihoods (Buchenrieder & Balgah, 2013; Scoones, 1998). Contextual factors (in this case the unprecedented crisis) led, for instance to internal and external displacement obliging people in rural or urban

[1] The Anglophone crisis is one of several humanitarian crises that has been raging the country's Northwest Region and Southwest Region- also called the Anglophone region since 2016" (Bang & Balgah, 2022).

areas to negotiate and renegotiate their livelihoods in order to cope with new situations (Mcllwaine, 2008). Intense regular and violent confrontations are likely to resort into impoverishment, loss of assets, collapse of health and education systems, displacement and diseases, creating a 'new' situation in which affected populations must adapt (Stites & Bushby, 2017).

In spite of the long duration of the crisis (6 years), very little attempt has been made to empirically assess how the crisis is changing the livelihood dynamics of different actors in the affected areas of Manyu Division. This article presents a pioneer attempt to understand the livelihood changes that have taken place between 2015 and 2020 for persons that have been affected by the crisis be they displaced as well as resident households within the communities in Manyu from a social capital perspective. The general trend in the emerging literature so far has been to focus on IDPs and refugees, while neglecting the effects on other households and communities (OCHA-Cameroon, 2019, 2020). We extend this knowledge boundary by analyzing and comparing the changes in livelihood conditions for Anglophone crisis victims in some communities in Manyu division. However, to limit complexity, we examine only the changes in social capital assets. As such, this study focused on two specific objectives: (1) undertaking a description of the current level of displacement of community members, and (2) examining the changes in social capital assets between 2015 and 2020.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Effects of Conflicts on Livelihoods

Conflicts have negative effects on livelihood outcomes by restricting access to livelihood resources (Stites & Bushby, 2017; USAID, 2005; Young, 2009). It directly harms people's livelihoods through loss of personal and community assets with long term effects on livelihoods and food security (Wiggins et al., 2021). Braam et al. (2021) argue that conflicts in Somalia affected economic development with accompanied widespread destruction and displacements in 2020. Household productivity tends to be affected by loss of labour power through death, there is looting, destruction of cattle, opportunistic stealing and deliberate destruction of livelihoods of other people (Dimelu, Danjuma, Mbolle, Mbadiwe, & Enwelu, 2017; Wiggins et al., 2021). The different assets are thus affected during conflicts but recent scholarship on livelihood argue that conflicts have more effects on social capital (Kitissou & Yoon, 2014; Maxwell, Majid, Adan, Abdirahman, & Kim, 2015; Stites & Bushby, 2017).

A good number of contemporary studies on the Anglophone conflict have concentrated on its history and colonial linkages (Bang & Balgah, 2022; Roger, 2018) on the dynamics and role of the media (Lee, Cockburn, & Nganji, 2022; Nkongho, 2018; Roger, 2018) the efforts made by government and international organizations in dealing with the conflict (Bongse, 2020) and on the role of the diaspora in fueling the conflict (Roger, 2018; Rogers, 2021). Studies on the livelihood effects are merging. However, impact studies are extremely difficult to find. An exception to this rule is Tanyu (2021) who examines the food, finance, education and security challenges faced by women and children as a result of the armed conflict in Anglophone Cameroon. He concludes that the effects have been heavy, with some women engaging in prostitution to sustain livelihoods. Some highly affected victims have been internally displaced, while others became refugees in neighboring Nigeria. This study presents an empirical case study in Manyu division, with a focus on changes in social capital.

2.2. Social Capital: Definitions and Implications on Livelihoods

Social capital is a difficult term to define (Carradore, 2018; Fine, 2010; Grootaert & Bastelaer, 2001) and has accentuated the development of different perspectives- philosophical, sociological, economic, and organizational (Khan et al., 2018). According to Adler and Kwon (2002), social capital relates to social interactions, relations, ties, connections which are considered as primordial to human life. It is "the aggregate of the actual potential resources, which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintances" (Bourdieu, 1986).

Social capital is relevant yet a positive force in economic and political development (Fukuyama, 2001). Its cream of relationships of interaction, inter-connectedness, networks, recognition, remain valuable during conflict. In the last two decades, more scholarly attention has been directed to the relevance of social capital and networks for local populations in general, and those exposed to conflicts in particular (Stites & Bushby, 2017). In fact, persons under such condition as conflict, survive through their own efforts, networks, adaptation and strategies (Kothari et al., 2019; Stites & Bushby, 2017). In areas affected by conflicts, social networks and social capital interventions were of great help to households to overcome financial downturns (Ngwa & Balgah, 2016; Yasukawa, 2020) although there was a reduction in intervention with the deepening of the crisis. A similar situation was reported in Somalia by Maxwell et al. (2015) for a study of 2011-12 famine in Somalia indicating that, social interconnectedness was a response strategy by households to survive the famine.

Dimelu et al. (2017), Wiggins et al. (2021); Braam et al. (2021) on their part reveal in their scholarship that conflicts resulted in social and physical disconnections from relations and networks which affected remittances during periods of risk. Fukuyama (2001) attributed such disconnections to in-group solidarity

which hitherto reduces group members' ability to cooperate with outsiders due to imposed negative externalities on the group.

These changes in the nature of social capital during conflicts also complicate the way it is measured. Social capital: the sum of actual or potential resources accrued to an individual or group due to possession of durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu, 1986) can be measured using variables as durable networks, recognition, social inter-connectedness, and association membership. Fukuyama (2001) complements that honesty, keeping with commitments, reliable performance of duties, reciprocity and cooperation in groups constitute social capital. It would therefore constitute of institutions, relationships, attitudes and values.

That social capital – though intangible, influences the accumulation of other forms of capital and puts it at the center of analysis of livelihood changes attributable for instance, to conflicts. Social capital remains an integral link between the different forms of capital and this has become an important element accentuating the accumulation of economic capital translated and reproduced through organized groups like clubs. The volume of social capital is a reflection of the size of connection (Bourdieu, 1986) despite never completely independent. However, it becomes a relative force that generates reciprocity, solidarity and trust that facilitates interaction between other forms of capital for accumulation. This remains a major form of capital during conflicts.

2.3. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework Revisited

Measuring social capital is a difficult, if not impossible and a controversial thing to do (Carradore, 2018; Fine, 2010; Grootaert & Bastelaer, 2001; Khan et al., 2018). The difficulty is that of translating theoretical concepts into valid and measurable constructs (Khan et al., 2018). This difficulty is associated with the development of a range of tools to measure social capital whose validation still remains an issue (Grootaert & Bastelaer, 2001; Khan et al., 2018).

Within the Sustainable Livelihood Framework, social capital is assessed through variables like networks, social claims, social relations, affiliating associations (Scoones, 1998). The social capital assessment tool (SOCAT), has been identified as another tool for measuring social capital since it gives an understanding on how communities and household measures of social capital interact with other development indicators (Krishner & Shrader, 2000). SOCAT involves the use of qualitative and quantitative methods by using a wide dimension of variables relating to household characteristics, social organization, networks, collective action, solidarity, trust and cooperation as well as conflict resolution (Grootaert, 1999; Krishner & Shrader, 2000). Since empirical correlates really vary from one area to another and social capital can be unsocial capital at another level (Krishner & Shrader, 2000) requires that we select from the variety with the use of proxy variables.

Variables prevalent in social capital scholarship include: membership in associations, social networks, trust, sharing, reciprocity, connections, associated life, cross network linkages, family and kinship ties (Andriani & Christoforou, 2016; Carradore, 2018; Fine, 2010; Grootaert & Bastelaer, 2001; Khan et al., 2018). This study draws variables from SOCAT and Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) for understanding social capital under sociopolitical crisis in Manyu.

An internally displaced person (IDP) is a person who has not crossed the border to find safety but is on the run at home (UNHCR, 2022). The main cause is conflict and natural disaster. In this article, an internally displaced person would refer to a person who has changed location either temporally or permanently either to the bushes and/or displaced to nearby towns and villages.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. The Study Area

The Republic of Cameroon is located in the central African region between latitude 2^0 and 13^0 north of the Equator and longitude $8^0$30' and $16^0$10 East of the Greenwich Meridian. It is bordered by Nigeria to the North and Northwest, Chad to the North and Northeast, Central African Republic to the East, the Republic of Congo to the Southeast, and Gabon and Equatorial Guinea to the South. The country is divided into 10 regions. This study was carried out in Manyu division of Southwest Cameroon. The division is more rural. Manyu division is located between $5^0$10'33" N and $4^0$43'25"N latitudes and $10^0$9'48"E and $10^0$2'38" E longitudes (Egbe et al., 2012). It has a surface area of 945,720.6 ha, and is a low plateau characterised by an undulating topography that range in altitude between 135 – 1000m (Egbe et al., 2012; Nkwatoh, 2000).

The main economic activity is agriculture and is usually subsistence with accompanying smallholder schemes (Egbe et al., 2012; Mbi, 2021). Other livelihood activities include jobs in the civil service, transportation services, trade, sand dredging, food vending, technicians and teaching. Socially, there are many groups within the communities such as work parties, associations, cooperatives, financial reciprocal groups and other networks. Nine of the villages (Kembong, Ogomoko, Nfuni, Mbatop, Afap, Eyanchang, Besongabang, Okoyong, Mamfe)[2] spread across two sub-divisions (Eyumojock and Mamfe central) in Manyu were selected

[2] *Kembong, Ogomoko, Nfuni, Mbatop, Afap, Eyanchang, Besongabang, Okoyong and Mamfe refer to study communities selected by simple random sampling for the study. These communities are found in Mamfe Central and Eyumojock Sub-divisions in Manyu, South west Region of Cameroon.*

for the study. These study sites were selected based on their experience of the sociopolitical crisis that is ongoing within these communities since 2016.

3.2. Population and Sampling

The target population for this exploratory study consist of farmers and non-farmers who were either displaced or residing in the communities under study in Eyumojock and Mamfe-Central sub-divisions. The sampling technique applied the probability and non-probability techniques to select respondents for the study. The research work entails a population of 10,585 inhabitants (Communal Development Plan, 2011, 2012), but which cannot be studied because of time, lack of financial resources and insecurity. As such, the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size formula was adopted to calculate the final sample size.

The formula is as follows:

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP(1-P)}{(d^2(N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$$

Where: s = required sample size.

X^2= the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841). That is 1.96 x 1.96 = 3.8416

N = the population size.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05).

Given that the population of Eyumojock and Mamfe Central was 10585, the sample size is determined as follows:

$$S = \frac{3.841 \text{ x } 10585 \text{ x } 0.5(1-0.50)}{(0.05)^2(10585-1) + 3.841 \text{ x } 0.5(1-0.50)}$$

$$S = \frac{40656.985 \text{ x } 0.25}{0.0025(10584) + 3.841 \text{ x } 0.25}$$

$$S = \frac{10164.24625}{26.46 + 0.96025}$$

$$S = \frac{10164.24625}{27.42025}$$

S = 370.68 or 371 inhabitants.

Given the calculations made, the study sites and sample are as follows: In Eyumojock sub-division the sample size for Mbatop was 8, Afap 18, Ogomoko 28, Mfuni 56, and Kembong 159. In Mamfe central: Okoyong-25, Eyanchang – 20, Besongabang- 56. Data was therefore collected from a total sample size was 370 from 9 communities.

To select the study sites (Eyumojock and Mamfe Central), a purposive sampling was done since the sub-divisions were the most affected (Craig, 2020; OCHA-Cameroon, 2019) with difference in the nature of security. The study communities were in the two sub-divisions, selected through a simple random sampling by listing the villages found in Eyumojock and Mamfe central. The names of each subdivision were written on pieces of papers, folded, put in a dish and shaken. A child was asked to pick from the dish and unfolded. The names of the study communities were written down to give the results we recorded above.

The study made use of both primary and secondary data with the use of different instruments and sources. A mixed methods approach was applied. For primary data collection, the quantitative instrument used was the questionnaire and the interview guide while for qualitative data, an observation guide, participant observation and key informant interviews were used.

3.3. Data Analysis and Presentation

Quantitative data was entered, cleaned and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25. Descriptive statistics (mean, percentages and the standard deviation) were then generated. In order to test for significance on whether there was any change in social capital between the years, the student t-test was used, verified through different degrees of freedom and a 0.05 level of significance. The results are presented in tables.

4. Results and Discussions

In this section, the results of the study are presented and discussed by taking into consideration the demographic characteristics of the respondents, the current level of displacement and the changes in social capital

4.1. Demographic Characteristics

With respect to social capital analysis, demographic information was collected with the following variables taken into consideration: age, household size and an estimated monthly income of the respondents from the study communities.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample.

Variables	Number of respondents	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Age of the household head	216	40.52	17	63
a Household size	214	5	2	11
b Estimated monthly income (in FCFA)[3]	214	127,182.24	20,000	430,000

Note: [a] Total number of people belonging to the household, including non-residential ones under care the Household head.
[b]Total estimated monthly income for all members of the household;

4.1.1. Age of Household Head

As shown in Table 1, the age of household heads engaged in livelihood activities range between 17 years and 63 years. The mean age of the household heads is 40.52 years (40.52±10.95 years). This mean age is higher than Cameroon's current mean age of 18.5 years (Cameroon Population Clock, 2022). Household heads according to the results are made up of youth and who are at their productive ages. In this regard, the results indicate that the respondents in the study area can pursue different livelihood activities either in their locality or elsewhere. The young people are bound to engage in labour intensive activities in the informal sector for lack of employment in the formal sector (Jan, Khattak, Khan, Hayat, & Rahim, 2012). The mean age of 40.52 years which is slightly above the national average of 18.5 years, suggests that households in the study area have persons who are above the middle age but who are able to adapt to the changing condition of the crisis by easily getting jobs elsewhere, especially in urban areas (Ifeanyi-Obi & Matthews-Njoku, 2014); and become more productive with a positive effect on livelihood strategies in some communities within the study area.

4.1.2. Household Size

Following United Nations (2017) definition of household as a group of people with common provision for food, shelter and other essentials for living, Household size in this study is the total number of people belonging to the household, including non-residential ones under the care of the Household head. Households in the study area contain a maximum of 11 and a minimum of 2 persons, with a mean value of 5 persons per household (5±2 persons). When compared with the national average of 5 persons per household (National Institute of Statistics (Cameroon) & ICF, 2020) we find that the rates are coterminous. This indicates that households have the capacity to accommodate an equal labour force that is capable of supplying farm labour largely for subsistence farming as found in the area and providing the necessary push in income generating activities for such households. This is commensurate with the findings of Amungwa (2013) and Balgah and Ngwa (2016) who argued that large households provided the required labour for households with increased opportunities for income generation.

By implication, not all of the household members will be partially or entirely engaged in income generating livelihood strategies (Gebru, Ichoku, & Phil-Eze, 2018). Moreover, since households constitute even non-residential individuals, there could be a reduction in household labour and prop households into difficult opportunities for survival. The submission by certain scholarship on livelihood that when there is an increase in household size, there is an increased tendency for diversification (Ahmed, Bhandari, Gordoncillo, Quicoy, & Carnaje, 2018; Jan et al., 2012) we infer with Hussein and Nelson (1998) and Dimelu et al. (2017) that diversification becomes a difficult strategy to achieve within this present context due to small household size. To Dimelu et al. (2017) the household members at this level seek to maintain former areas of activity to cope with other daily schedules within the conflict condition. This contradicts the findings of Tebe (2008) who pointed out that as household size increases, there is a tendency for poverty rates to increase. More to this, the results of ECAM (2002) revealed that poverty rates in the South West region are highest between the ages of 40-49 at 41%. Such rates could increase when there is socio-political crisis that may result from forceful displacements experienced by the community residents and migrants (Nkongho, 2018).

4.1.3. Estimated Monthly Income

Table 1 shows that the mean income/month/household is FCFA 127,180 (127,180±65,650 FCFA), with a minimum of FCFA 20.000 and a maximum of FCFA 430.000FCFA for some households. This indicates income inequality and variation among households in the study site. The mean income per capita per month (calculated as the mean monthly income divided by the mean household size) is approximately FCFA 25,430. When computed on per capita/day, we find that within the households, every individual is entitled to approximately FCFA 848 daily. When these figures are compared with the national rates of the low middle income poverty line of FCFA 782 (US$3.20) per day (World Bank Group., 2021) we notice that the

[3]*FCFA is an abbreviation for Franc de la Communaute Fonciere en Afrique which is Cameroon's currency or legal tender.*

households earn incomes that keep them slightly above the national poverty line by FCFA 66. This indicates that households are still living under poverty levels but are working harder to maintain income levels and improve their living conditions.

When incomes are calculated and compared to poverty line range of lower middle income poverty line of FCFA 23,616 per month (787.2/day) and the upper middle income poverty line of FCFA 40,593/month (1,353.1/day), the results revealed that 1.3% of households are living below the lower middle income group indicating that they are financially very poor households. Whereas 0.9% of households are slightly above the lower middle income poverty line to indicate that few households are experiencing financial poverty but making strides out of their current condition. A greater proportion of households (97.7%) are found at the higher income group, at least as households. Considering that each household has a mean of 5 persons, computed values indicate high poverty levels for some households. For example, if FCFA 41,000 is equally divided for the 5 persons in the household, each member will be entitled to FCFA 8200 per month.

When the minimum wage in Cameroon of FCFA 36,270 per month and 1209 per day (Cameroon Minimum Wage, 2022) is considered, we infer that many households have been able to reach a minimum wage level. This result is in line with that of ECAM (2002) in pointing out that 5 out of 10 persons in rural areas are affected by poverty This would mean that financial poverty remains a problem for some households in the communities under study.

4.2. The Current Level of Displacement

The study found that displacement of persons was at two levels: within the community and out of the communities. Within the communities, people were displaced to their farms (bushes) while some hid in their houses. For those out of their communities moved either to nearby villages and towns or across the division and international borders.

Table 2 presents the current level of displacement of persons within the communities under study to indicate changes between 2015 and 2020. The results are expressed in percentages. The results show that people were displaced to different locations.

Table 2. Current level of displacement.

Variable	Year	Area of displacement			
Displaced individuals (responses and %)		To bushes	Hid in the house	Nearby village	To Nigeria
	2015	No (60%)	No (7%)	No (68%)	No (68%)
	2020	Yes (38%)	Yes (3%)	Yes (32%)	Yes (32%)

Source: Field work, 2020.

Despite the displacements encountered, there was a variation in the nature of the displacement in that while some individuals were displaced to other towns and villages (32%), to their former settlements or bushes (38%), 32% were displaced to more distant areas and even out of the division/country. This result indicates the intensity of the Anglophone crisis at the time despite still on-going. Within the ranks of such displacements, individuals find it difficult to find jobs or livelihood activities to generate incomes for themselves thereby confirming findings of Nkongho (2018); Bang and Balgah (2022) and Bang (2022) who reported that thousands of persons have been displaced with 80% of the people living in forests and bushes.

The task of adapting to the new condition becomes a difficult option that the internally displaced person has to contend with. Forceful displacements would probably mean that household members left their residences with little or no adequate preparation to the areas of displacement which made it difficult for them to take essential assets and work equipment for easy engagement into available livelihood strategies in receiving communities.

The displaced also had other family members and relations who were displaced against their will with a mean displaced number of 2 in 2020 and no displacement recorded as such in 2015. As a survival strategy, displaced persons reportedly engaged in income generating livelihood activities different from their main livelihood strategies. Some got additional livelihood strategies to complement their main activity like food vending, working in other people's farms, transportation as observed in some communities.

We also observed that displacement had a negative effect on livelihoods of the displaced persons especially those displaced to other towns. In a chat with a displaced person from Kembong village, displaced to Mamfe town (which are part of the study communities), Mr Oru Agudu (aged 34)[4] whom we met at Kembong, disclosed to us that:

> *"I find it difficult to come to this village because of difficulty in transportation and the fear of meeting any confrontation between those boys and the military. Where I live now things are not easy. I only do jobs around to get food to eat whereas I have a large cocoa farm with plantain inside that I have not been able to harvest anything from there these past three years. I am thinking of coming back but things are very difficult for me".*

[4] Mr. *Oru Agudu (Aged 34) is one of the respondents who is internally displaced to another community but returns periodically to check on his landed property and family members.*

We find from the analogy that, individuals and household heads who have been displaced to distant places do not find it easy to diversify their activities. Instead, we notice that they changed livelihood strategies to enable them cope in their areas of displacement which Young (2009) has described as maladaptive strategies which were ephemeral. In this regard, the type of strategy is location-specific and according to the local realities. Displaced persons who were not too sure of their main activity left for other strategies that would enable them survive during the crisis. These results contradict the findings of Mahama and Maharjan (2017) who stipulated that households and individuals who anticipate future loss of main activity forcefully tend to diversify their activities. Challenging and forceful displacement breeds checks to livelihood strategies to be taken by households during periods of hostilities (Fang, Kothari, McLoughlin, & Yenice, 2020; Jaspars & Maxwell, 2009; Stites & Bushby, 2017). Farmers are more concerned with safety not the crops as some even abandon the farms with the crops. Dimelu et al. (2017) also confirm these results with their findings that during farmer and herder conflict in Kogi State, Nigeria, the farmers abandoned their farms with crops as well as the cultivation of some crops which led to poor access to financial and human assets as the case may be. OCHA-Cameroon (2019a) also complement this finding when it reported that conditions of displaced persons were deteriorating due to lack of access to food, shelter and health but which is further compounded by violence and lockdown.

Further discussions with the household heads revealed that the main concern of household heads were to change from their main livelihood strategy. 54% of the respondents changed their livelihood activities for some specific reasons which were to assist their families and friends (reported by close to 70% of the households), to cope with the crisis (reported by 60% of the households), take care of the health and educational needs of the household (reported by close to 56.5% of the households) and to raise additional income (reported by close to 54% of the households). Livelihood activities are hereby constrained by the prevailing crisis with a loss in major economic activities accentuating temporary adjustments to food entitlements (Jaspers & Shoham, 2002) of the internally displaced persons.

4.3. Changes in Social Capital between 2015 and 2020

To explore the changes that were manifest in communities with respect to social capital, this study highlights on variables that are context-specific. They include group and group membership, level of intimacy/trust, family reunion, social cohesion, collective action, recognition, awards, and social reconciliation/arbitration.

Table 3. Group dynamics.

Social capital variables	Year	Cooperative	Savings	Work party	Trade union	Chi-square
Type of group belonged to	2015	16%	1.9%	14.1%	23.9%	$X^2 = 14.96$
	2020	16%	9.9%	14.1%	16%	$p = 0.005$
Specific activity of associations/groups	Year	Business	Driving	Teaching	Farming	$X^2 = 46.491$
	2015	0%	40.4%	33.8%	19.7%	$p = 0.000$
	2020	17.8%	24.4%	31.9%	19.7%	

Source: Field work, 2020.

4.3.1. Groups and Group Membership

The members of the different communities under study had strong attachments to groups and being part of the groups. The results revealed that, all the respondents within the study area are members to different social groups in 2015 as well as in 2020. This suggests that internally displaced persons and other members of the households have high regard for group life. It is an indication that they are not living in isolation but a community with required productive social relations to enhance their well-being and social development. It was incumbent for the household heads to enroll into groups in 2015 and 2020. From the results presented in Table 3, the identified groups that households enrolled were cooperatives, savings groups, work parties and trade unions. The distribution on Table 3 reveals that more of the household heads have joined savings groups (from 2% in 2015 to 10% in 2020, an 8% increase, $p = 0.005$), whereas, there has been a drop in the households who belonged to Trade Unions (close to 24% in 2015 and 16% in 2020, an 8% drop, $p = 0.005$). This is probably due to the type of activities carried out by these organizations as 62% each of the respondents in 2015 and 2020 reported that they joined groups based on the relationship between the group and their main livelihood activities. Moreover, the increase enrolment as seen from the results, has not been commensurate with savings as there was a significant drop in annual savings (FCFA141,905 drop, $t = 9.006$, $p = 0.000$). One may suggest that from 2015, respondents were very much interested in improving their social relations and livelihood to compensate for loss at the beginning of the crisis which was thought to be short-lived. It is also probable that displaced persons and affected households would have identified savings groups as more reliable point for accessing credit since there was no other financial institution from which they could borrow money. Household heads were not certain of their future earnings from main livelihood consistent with the findings of Mahama and Maharjan (2017) and Barbelet (2019).

Membership was also in work parties (*Njangi groups*). There were however no identified changes in the number of work parties as there was 14.1% membership both in 2015 and 2020. These work parties have not reduced or increased probably because they have turned out as a major source of labour for farm owners who find it difficult to find workers. A respondent at Mbatop revealed thus:

> *"The name of my njangi group is Young Strugglers. We are 12 of us and we help every member during any kind of work like clearing of cocoa farms, farms for tilling, breaking of ripe cocoa pods and we hire out our labour for low returns to other persons within the community. Without this group I would not be successful in farming all these years".*

In March 27/2020, we followed one of such groups in Nfuni for clearing of cocoa farm. The activities were well organized where we worked for two hours accompanied by a group meal. When we went back home, all the members gathered at the coordinator's (*Ntuifa Okhoum*) house for a cup of palm wine. Group membership promotes the culture of solidarity among members.

A decrease in the number of households that belonged to trade unions to 8% indicates that the conflict had a significant relationship on certain groups (trade union) with a negative ($p = 0.005$) effect on membership.

It is worth mentioning that, 44.1% of the households both in 2015 and 2020 were part of other groups that were not captured in this study.

In this study, 62% of households both in 2015 and 2020 agreed that the groups they belong to have a relationship with their principal livelihood activity. The respondents explained that, they joined groups because, the groups were a source of information, as reported by 23.5% in 2015 and 81.1% in 2020), as a source for provision of technical support (reported by 15.9% in 2015 and 2020) and as funders (reported by 60.6% in 2015 and 3% in 2020, $X^2 = 110.617$, $p = 0.000$). Membership into associations can be deduced from the analysis as being mainly for the provision of relevant information especially concerning their livelihood activities; for technical support and for funding in that order. This indicates that displaced households have high regard for information and technical support than providing them with money which may not lead to sustainable livelihoods within their households. Information would probably assist in reconnecting households to their loved ones whom they were disconnected from, during the conflict. This confirms Wiggins et al. (2021) report that during conflicts, as has taken place in Syria and Nigeria, displaced persons experienced loss of connections which they depended on for support. This became possible through physical disconnection and the loss of telephones and telephone contacts which disrupted remittances from family relations.

Results revealed a 17.8% increase in households that engaged in business between 2015 and 2020. This may probably be that most of the households whose main livelihood activity was farming, lost this source of income due to high levels of insecurity generated by unknown gun-men from the ongoing Anglophone crisis (Bang & Balgah, 2022; Nkongho, 2018; World Bank Group, 2021). As a means to safe-guard their household food consumption, they were compelled to engage in other income generating activities, especially in business.

On the other hand, there was a drop in the respondents whose main livelihood activity was driving (from 40.4% in 2015 to 24.4% in 2020, a 16% drop, $p = 0.000$). The drop in driving can be accounted for by the numerous lockdown that perturb driving activity within and out of the study area. In the course of this study, we found 8 vehicles that were set ablaze. This made the activity risky leading a drop in the number of persons who engaged in the activity. The crisis had a negative effect on driving as a main livelihood strategy. Such risky conditions only provided opportunity for diversification of their livelihoods. The result confirm that of Mahama and Maharjan (2018) for study of some districts in Bangladesh.

Just as was the case with the type of group respondents belonged to, 6.1% of the households both in 2015 and 2020, reported other activities carried out by the groups from those captured in this study.

When respondents were interrogated on whether non-family members provided assistance to them during sickness or sudden death of family member, the analysis reveal that, all the respondents agreed that they have non-family members who assisted them financially during ill-health, sudden death or funeral celebrations and other rituals. This indicates that households practice communal life during conflict with the tendency of building social capital and networks among members in the study area. Membership in farmer associations is highly esteemed as it provides rural households with information, knowledge, training and experience that is linked to income diversity, for livelihood options and opportunities for employment (Asfir, 2016; Maxwell et al., 2015).

4.3.2. Level of Intimacy/Trust

The depth of the relations between households in communities affected by the crisis has also been analyzed to understand the nature of the relations inherent in group membership between 2015 and 2020. The results on Table 3 reveal that in 2015 the number of close friends for household heads within the community was at an average of 2 persons whereas in 2020, the average number of close friends was 1. This shows that the number of close friends dropped from an average of 2 in 2015 to 1 in 2020 ($t = 1.76$, $p = 0.079$). This would probably suggest that, the decrease in level of intimacy could be the product of the sociopolitical crisis. This indicates that conflicts have a negative impact on the level of intimacy with friends. When trust is destroyed, there is a possibility for a reduction in the nature of interaction between friends through weakening of bonds existing between them, consistent with the work of Jaspers and Shoham (2002); Jaspars and Maxwell

(2009). This leads to sporadic interaction between formerly close friends with increasing social distance. One correspondent in Nfuni village commented thus:

> *"This is not the time to trust someone, even relationship with an opposite sex. An argument, a quarrel or a fight between close friends is so dangerous because the same people could alert the military or amba boys and say damaging things against you, pa na die don come so oh'."*

This means that wherever it occurs, conflict destroys harmony, solidarity, trust and acceptability within human circles (Dimelu et al., 2017; Wiggins et al., 2021). This makes it difficult for friends to confide in others commensurate with what (Fukuyama, 2001) has described as radius of trust as exhibited in traditional societies. This negatively affects livelihood options to be taken by the households thereby increasingly deteriorating living conditions.

Table 4. Number of friends and meetings held.

Variables	Year	Mean	Std. deviation	t-distribution
Number of close friends within the community	2015	2	1	t = 1.760
	2020	1	1	p = 0.079
Number of times entire family gathered for a meeting or meal a year	2015	3	1	t = 9.298
	2020	1	1	p = 0.000
Number of associations you belonged to that have been dissolved	2015	0	0	t = -9.046
	2020	1	1	p = 0.000

Note: Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
Source: Field work, 2020.

4.3.3. Family Reunions

The results of the analysis revealed marked differences in family reunions for the affected communities between 2015–2020. The results reveal that in 2015, family members gathered for a number of 3 times a year for a family meal. They gathered 1 time in 2020 for a family meal. This means there was a decreased average of 2 times that the gathering did not hold. This result shows that most family members felt unsecured returning to their communities for family meetings. There could be fears of being kidnapped for ransom especially those doing business as well as those working in the public service. This confirms the findings of OCHA-Cameroon (2019); World Bank Group. (2021) that the crisis in the SW/NW of Cameroon has been characterised by increasing criminalisation where actors have been involved in assassinations, human rights violation with dismemberment of civilian, and the accompanying acts of militias marked by kidnappings for ransom.

Such meetings have the danger of being considered by state forces as discussion grounds for separatist actions where family members could be identified and dealt with accordingly. In this regard, communities were not a safe haven for family members and meetings as the case may be. In this case, families could hardly perform certain rites and rituals that remind them of their interrelatedness. This weakens the social asset of communities because people can hardly come together on salient family issues (Dimelu et al., 2017). This drop in friends, number of groups as well as family meetings, indicates a drop in social capital accumulation and netness for these households during the crisis where results are consistent with that of Bermudez (2017); Dorien, Grosemans, Schrooten, and Bergs (2021).

The results in Table 4 also revealed that some associations were dissolved in 2020. The mean value of 1 (P =0.000) indicates that some associations ceased function. This probably, is due to the socio-political context accentuated by recurrent displacements to bushes and nearby communities, and providing grounds for eventual weakening of systems of mutual support that play a great role in reducing poverty coterminous with the findings of Olsson et al. (2014); Dimelu et al. (2017).

4.3.4. Social Cohesion

In an attempt to explore the social ties of the respondents, result from Table 5 reveal no change in the number of times household head travelled out of community in 2015 and 2020 (12 times on average, $p > 0.1$). Also, no significant changes were observed in the number of times respondents had the opportunity to share drink or food in public place (28 times in 2015 and 29 times in 2020, $p > 0.1$). Both results are an indication that there was need for safety of lives than leisure but also where freedom of movement was curtailed (Wiggins et al., 2021; World Bank Group, 2021). We found out that those who travelled too often, by our observation were those who went to live with their children attending school in the urban centres. Also, those who travelled out of the community were engaged in other livelihood strategies like business, driving and technical work.

Table 5. Household social cohesion within the community.

Variables	Year	Mean	Std. deviation	T-distribution
Number of times household head travelled out of community	2015	12	4	t = -0.823
	2020	12	6	p = 0.411
Times had the opportunity to share drink or food in public place	2015	28	14	t = -1.174
	2020	29	11	p = 0.241
Number of traditional rites performed by family	2015	1	1	t = -6.266
	2020	0	1	p = 0.000
Number of funerals and birth celebrations attended	2015	10	3	t = -5.350
	2020	13	6	p = 0.000

Note: Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
Source: Field work, 2020.

When the respondents were asked to indicate the number of times they went for funerals or birth ceremonies, the results reveal a significant increase in the number of times respondents attended funerals and birth ceremonies (from an average of 10 in 2015 to 13 in 2020, p = 0.000). This suggests that funeral ceremonies and birth celebration grounds were venues where community members commune with persons involved and other displaced community members. These areas could probably be seen to indicate relatively secured places for entertainment and leisure for those visiting. We observed from the study communities that, the interactions as well as the celebrations were often very brief for people to return to their locations during the day. More to this, bereaved families were asked by the Cameroon defence forces, in places where they have camps, to provide drinks to them to enable them also celebrate with the families meanwhile, some important and well-to-do family members attended such funerals after family members would have consented with separatist gun-men on the amount of money to be paid. In this regard, social cohesion remained very fragile and intermittent due to the on-going crisis (Braam et al., 2021; Jaspars & Maxwell, 2009). This also puts the bereaved households at an ambivalent state.

This implies that funeral grounds may pacify tensions by bringing contending actors to building trust, solidarity and netness.

4.3.5. Collective Action

It can be inferred from Table 6 that there has been a significant drop in the level of unity within the communities in carrying out task that benefit the entire community. For instance, while slightly above 4% of the households reported less unity amongst community members in 2015, over 52% by 2020, were less united in carrying out task that benefit the entire community (X^2 = 142.658, p = 0.000). With this result, it is probable that the security challenge has punctured the sanction system within communities wherein leaders fear to take certain decisions that may cause their safety and lives. Also, less unity could be the result of the different households' engagement and concern over activities that would yield more financial benefits to support their households during the challenging times. In this regard, less unity when combined with the crisis among households, further magnifies the already existing problem of low participation in projects around Ejagham communities accentuated by mismanagement, conflicting interests and limited government support (Kimengsi et al., 2016; Mbi, 2021).

From the analysis, all the respondents indicated that they have been in contact with persons who were non-family members but who provided money or other forms of assistance that enabled them solve problems of ill-health or death of family members both in 2015 and 2020. This is an indication of deep organic solidarity where households were concerned with the welfare of others irrespective of their family leanings as the case may be (Nkongho, 2018). This denotes a kind of gift economy characterised by selfless service and concern for others. It is also an indication of the strength of weak ties (Granovetter, 1973) exemplified within communities.

The respondents were asked if they ever did any work in their communities that benefited others. There was no significant difference in works done in the neighborhood that has been of benefit to interviewed households (over 90% in 2015 and 88% in 2020, p > 0.1). This indicates that during periods of hostilities, people are more concerned with activities that support their main livelihood activities than with community activities which to them, are of no benefit. More to this, the respondents indicated the lack of recognition for services rendered to the community in the past years. This would have contributed to inadequate participation in community activities in 2020. However, 12% of the people in 2020 still hold that community activities remain beneficial to them to explain why they were united to carrying out community tasks. This confirms (Kimengsi et al., 2016) who reported that community participation within the area is marked by conflicting interest, mismanagement and lack of government action.

From the results on collective action therefore, conflict plays a negative role on community members' engagement in community activities that concern them, which is traced to dissenting groups, distortions and weakened sanction system (anomie). This has serious implications on the organization and functioning of really existing traditional structures of communities (Balgah, Buchenrieder, & Brandi, 2021).

Table 6. Collective action at community level.

Aspect	Year	Less united	United	More united	Chi-square
Level of unity at community in carrying out task that benefit the entire community	2015	4.2%	43.7%	52.1%	$X^2 = 142.658$ p = 0.000
	2020	52.1%	8%	39.9%	
Non-family members provide money or other assistance to solve common problems of ill health or death	Year	Yes		No	NA
	2015	100%		0%	
	2020	100%		0%	
Any work done in the neighborhood that has been of benefit to household	Year	Yes		No	
	2015	90.1%		9.9%	$X^2 = .390$ p = 0.640
	2020	88.3%		11.7%	

Source: Field work, 2020.

4.3.6. Awards

The analyses of the data reveal that awards were given to persons as acknowledgement for their contribution to the communities. Table 7 reveals that in 2015, 24% of the people received awards as acknowledgements for their contributions to their communities. In 2020, none of the respondents received an award for their contributions within the community (p = 0.000). The mixed feelings and controversy on recognition by community members in 2020 have been identified from the results of this study as basically emanating from the type or nature of gifts. In this right, recipients were probably not satisfied with the type of recognition they received, which they later considered as non-event. In 2015, 84% of community members were mostly given food and drinks as rewards for the livelihood improvement activities within the community. In 2020, close to 86%, p > 0.1 of the respondents revealed that their activities were rewarded.

For other awards given to community members in 2015, titles were reported by close to 34% of the respondents. In 2020, there were no title awards as it turned out to be a non-event ($X^2 = 86.644$, p = 0.000). Also, the significant difference in the provision of financial gifts as well as traditional or official ceremonies for the elites could have contributed to low participation probably because these elite were unable to provide financial assistance or visit their communities any longer. The sociopolitical crisis, marked by the erosion of motivational indicators for community participation, has negatively affected the nature of recognition among community members within the study communities. It has also created differences in efforts and nature of rewards towards recognition and motivation between the years (Barbelet & Wake, 2017).

Table 7. Contribution to community.

Aspect	Year	Theft	Sale of property	Drunkenness	Others	Chi-square
Highly prevalent disputes in the community	2015	10.9%	0%	28.6%	60.5%	$X^2 = 82.936$ p = 0.000
	2020	25.5%	26.2%	0%	48.3%	
Presiding officers of the disputes that occur in the community	Year	Quarter head	Traditional council	Forces of law and order	Others	Chi-square
	2015	35.3%	64.7%	0%	0%	$X^2 = 83.019$ p = 0.000
	2020	26.2%	25.5%	45.6%	2.7%	

Source: Field work, 2020.

4.3.7. Social Reconciliation/Arbitration

Where ever humans interact with one another, issues are bound that need redress by competent authority as the case may be. An analysis of the data on Table 7 revealed that 54% of the respondents in 2015 as compared to 68.1% in 2020 reported as having had problems that sought the attention of the entire community. There was therefore an increase of 14.1%, $X^2 = 8.883$, p = 0.003) of respondents with such issues. This means that crime was on the increase in 2020. The result also indicates a significant association (p = 0.003) between social issues and livelihoods that needs redress. These issues (drunkenness, sale of other people's property, theft, rape, murder, gossips, fighting, etc.) are highly significant to livelihoods of communities under study (Braam et al., 2021).

These results are in line with the findings of OCHA-Cameroon (2019); World Bank Group (2021) Wiggins et al. (2021); Bang and Balgah (2022). For instance, Wiggins et al. (2021) stated that conflicts were a breeding ground for other conflicts marked by situations where the strong took advantage of the weak through grabbing their land, robbery, outright theft, sexual violence on women and girls including rape, killing of men to grab their wives and to have their land seized, were common crimes within communities during conflicts. These crimes put personal security at crossroads and prevent household heads from engaging in preferred livelihood strategies which could result to negative livelihood outcomes with impending poverty stricken conditions. This may cause splitting of families denoting the splitting of risks as a livelihood strategy (Wiggins et al., 2021).

Findings on how such issues were resolved in the various communities revealed that on average, community gathered to resolve issues related to household once in both 2015 and 2020. Among the issues identified, it can be inferred from Table 7 that theft (10.9% in 2015 and 25.5% in 2020), effects of drunkenness (28.6% in 2015) and the sale of other people's properties (26.2% in 2020, $X^2 = 82.936$, $p = 0.000$), were the major issues or disputes settled by the community. Other social issues identified were fighting, murder, boundary issues, rape, divorce (60% in 2015 and 48% in 2020 with a 12% drop, $p = 0.000$). The increase in crime is the product of the sociopolitical crisis accompanied with immanent fractured sanction system within the communities. This confirms the findings of Odusote (2016); OCHA-Cameroon (2019); Wiggins et al. (2021); Bang and Balgah (2022).

Arbitration systems in communities, facilitate settlement and negotiation between contending parties in order to manage community tension or facilitate community sociability (Nwazi, 2017; Yenshu, 2011). In the communities under study, quarter heads and traditional councils were the only institutions handling those matters where in 2015, majority of such cases were handled by them (46% of the households, $X^2 = 83.019$, $p = 0.000$). In 2020, problems within the communities were handled by the forces of law and order. Within this period (that is 2020), there was a drop in the number of disputes (9% and 39%) held by Quarter heads and Traditional authorities respectively. The other crimes which we highlighted were resolved by other groups. We found out that the other groups were family members and separatist fighters. During our visits to the communities, we observed that the separatist groups were the main judges over many matters that arose within and out of the community. They were contacted over certain matters by the individuals concerned or when informed by other persons. The results indicate that before the crisis, the main institutions concerned with arbitration and conciliation were the family, quarter heads and the traditional councils commensurate with the findings of Mazrui (1986) and Yenshu (2011) who reported that within kingdoms and communities in Africa, the traditional methods for resolving disputes and other issues, required that they were referred to elders and other organized groups considered by the community to that respect.

The method used in solving these issues and sanctions were mostly through fines to defaulters (93% response rate for 2015 and 100% for 2020). However, by 2020, there was a shift in the strategy characterized by the beating of defaulters (reported by 83% of the respondents, $X^2 = 180.907$, $p = 0.000$). This result suggests that during the crisis there was a return to severe corporal punishment for members of the community irrespective of their age grades. This was orchestrated by separatist fighters within the different communities.

The phenomenon of "black-legging" has been a perilous connotation (which we observed) within the communities. Being labeled as a 'black-leg' is associated with dangers such as death, huge fines coupled with serious corporal punishment as well as looting of residence. It is dangerous to be labeled as such. This could probably provide explanation for the reduction in intimacy and social cohesion. This peturbs engagement in livelihood options but encourage the development of different survival strategies as highlighted in Table 6 consistent with findings of Alinovi, D'Errico, Mane, and Romano (2010) where women developed strategies of moving in groups to farms and other places.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study we have highlighted the social capital perspective of changes in livelihoods between 2015 and 2020 in Manyu division characterised by Anglophone crises and found that members in the affected communities are made up of persons at their productive ages with a tendency to pursue different livelihood activities to adapt to changing conditions marked by conflicts. Communities are still living below the poverty line but are working harder to maintain and also increase income levels. Income inequality is glaring and financial poverty is a really existing condition within communities.

Conflict triggered the displacement of community members to bushes, nearby villages and towns with a negative impact on livelihoods. The displacement has equally evoked and challenged issues of origins and identity relations which often characterize power relations in African communities as families relocated to former residences. The displacements reorient scholarly debates on matters of location, relocation and de-location. Displacement of persons provides opportunity for some persons to either change or diversify livelihood strategies as a survival strategy

From this study, it was observed that the conflict erodes social capital and interconnectedness of households. Crisis decrease levels of intimacy by reducing interactions between friends, weakens social bonds and destroys trust especially when displaced households face challenging livelihoods. This is complemented with a high level of sporadic interactions between close friends. We identified that the challenge of interconnectedness during conflict is resolved as community members seek membership into groups primarily for technical, financial and psychosocial support.

Conflicts are obstacles that prevent families from performance rituals and rites which culminate to weaken the social asset of communities and puts family reunions at crossroads. This is accentuated by intense, displaced criminalization of communities by militia and sporadic attacks by state forces.

During conflicts households have high regard for information to enable them reconnect to loved ones, and for technical support than money which may not lead to sustainable livelihoods. Common meals between contending parties at funeral ceremonies play an important role in pacifying tensions during conflicts by

building trust, solidarity and netness for social cohesion and harmony. Also, collective action with regard to community activities during hostilities is difficult to achieve. Instead, community members are more united when life is at risk. This forms the basis of a really existing solidarity and communal life exhibited in rural communities in the South West region of Cameroon.

The search for livelihood (social capital) during conflict creates conditions where the existing social order in communities is somewhat replaced, if not entirely, by a new form of chaotic dictatorial and coercive structure without respect for human dignity but for personal interest.

We therefore strongly recommend that strides be made to resolve the sociopolitical crisis for a quick return to normalcy. This involves providing an enabling environment through common meals by dissenting factions for solidarity, trust and social interconnectedness. Social healing for the displaced persons remains necessary as a means to link households to other family members.

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