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CONFLICT AND CHANGES IN POLITICAL CAPITAL: LIVELIHOOD EVIDENCE FROM MANYU IN THE SOUTHWEST REGION OF CAMEROON

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Abstract

The role of political capital in influencing livelihood outcomes across the world has gained currency in livelihood scholarship within different contexts. As a valuable and dynamic tool for exchange, political capital links individuals, groups to government/departments where they benefit from tax cuts, subsidies, access to loans and projects that enhance livelihoods and participation in communities. Households and communities not politically connected to governmental department or support governing parties have the risk of being disconnected from development trails. This may be exacerbated when households pick up arms against their governments as is the case with the ongoing conflict in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon, with implications on political capital. This exploratory study seeks to understand the changes in political capital from the ongoing conflict between 2015 and 2020. Through a purposive sampling process to select the study units, qualitative and quantitative data was collected using observation guide and key informant interviews for qualitative data and the questionnaire and interview guide for quantitative data. Armed conflicts lead to loss of personal political identity by limiting stock of political influence. Survival becomes a priority during conflicts than accumulation of political capital. A consensus be reached between the contending parties to foster participation, representation and recovery of political identity.

Keywords: *conflict, political capital. Livelihood, Southwest, Cameroon*

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1.0 Introduction

The role of political capital in influencing livelihood outcomes in human settings across the world has gained currency in livelihood scholarship especially within different contexts.

As a valuable and dynamic resource, a stock of influence that can be built, spent and saved, political capital enable firms that are politically connected to the government or its departments to have access to loans, benefit tax cuts and subsidies but also having the advantage of government protection against competitors (Wu et al., 2012; Li & Cheng, 2020). It also enable groups to carryout strategic cooperation with government or its departments to improve on cooperate performance(Yu et al, 2022), attract possible development opportunities to communities(Nwaogwugwu and Anaeto, 2017), increase participation in projects (Bate et al, 2024; Nwaogwugwu and Anaeto, 2017) as well as merge families (Sseguya, Mazur and Masinde, 2009) and political communities.

In Africa just like elsewhere, it has been intimated that households and communities not linked or politically connected to governmental department or support governing parties have the risk of being disconnected from the development trails and sustainable projects from their states (Nwaogwugwu and Anaeto, 2017; Giri, 2020; Kratli and Toulmin, 2020; Tanyi et al., 2024) but this may become more challenging when households and communities are faced especially with armed conflicts.

Conflicts affect livelihoods by restricting access to assets that people rely on for survival (Ashu et al, 2023, Bang and Balgah, 2022). In sub-Saharan Africa where conflicts have been reported, there is innumerable loss of assets (Stites and Bushby, 2017; Wiggins et al., 2021 Ashu et al., 2023). In Mali and Nigeria, Kimenyi et al., (2014); Kratli and Toulmin, (2020), stated that there was disruption in livelihoods with implications for the households. In Mali alone, they argue that during the war in 2013, 74% of the population was internally displaced, 40% as refugees with disruption of schools, hospitals, water, electricity, and agricultural value chains

Despite being replete with conflicts over the years, the conflicts in Cameroon were largely ethnic, farmer-grazier conflict, intercommunity land conflicts (Yenshu & Ngwa, 2001; Kofele-Kale, 2007; Mope Simo, 2011; Nformi et al., 2014; Eno & Fombe, 2016; Nchinda et al., 2016; ; Ndi & Batterbury, 2017; Jabiru, 2017; Kinsam, Tankou, & Lengha, 2021; Ngenge, 2021).. The upsurge of an armed conflict in November 2016 between Cameroon's defense forces and Separatist fighters in the English speaking Regions of Cameroon (herein referred to as the Anglophone region), is the first of its kind for the past seven years. The hijack of local institutions, return to corporal punishment within communities and labeling of persons was identified as a driver of personal political identity distortion to the larger political framework (World Bank Group, 2021; Ashu et al., 2023; Ashu, 2024). In this right, the political connection and political identity of the poor to legitimately access and defend their entitlements and enhance their livelihoods were stifled. The people become adamant to pressing claims and enlarging political space. This affects participation in politics and projects.

The motivation for participation by individuals and households is accentuated by the feeling that their voice counts bearing in mind that they can influence the course of action. With the recent political fever drawing towards elections in Cameroon, state authorities will find relevant information and strategies that fast track and foster entry into areas affected by the Anglophone crisis as a way to enhance mobilization, representation, participation and instill trust in individuals and communities.

The difficulty in finding literature that isolates and examine political capital during conflicts lives much to be desired. Much of the scholarship is limited to political capital in firms and other institutions (Yu et al, 2022; Wu et al., 2012; Li & Cheng, 2020; O'Bryan, 2018). Nwaogwugwu and Anaeto (2017) made attempts at analyzing political capital but were limited to political factors affecting livelihoods. Much of the discussions on political capital has been observed as part of institutions, policies and processes within the sustainable Livelihood Framework where Bauman and Sinhe (2001) hold that political capital allows for a more structured and rigorous analysis of power relations when treated on its own. Other schools of thought have pointed out that political capital (Jaspers & Maxwell, 2009; Sseguya, Mazur and Masinde, 2009)) is important in the analysis of livelihood since it captures the capacity that enables persons to influence decision making (proximity to power). With political capital that an individual or a group has, gives them the ability to influence policy and the processes of government as well as to claim rights to assistance after a disaster, conflict and seasonality (Bauman, 2001; CPRR, 2013).

Political capital is essentially positional power used by individuals and groups in making decisions, influence the direction of programs and distribution of resources (O'Bryan, 2018, Bauman, 2000). Lack of power at the locale prevents distribution of surplus and reproducing poverty, a situation neither overt nor captured in the Sustainable Livelihoods notion of policies institutions and processes (Bauman and Sinhe, 2001). Development failures are always linked to power and politics but a consideration of political capital within the tier of projects and programs avoids corruption and dominance. political capital as an essential link between the other five assets that help in deploying other assets to optimal targets Sseguya, Mazur and Masinde, 2009) . This study therefore 1). Identifies the livelihood activities the people within the study communities are involved in and 2). views political capital as an asset that can be affected by contextual realities so as to understand the changes in political capital observed in Manyu division of the South West Region of Cameroon between 2016 and 2020 during the Anglophone crisis as the case may be. Political capital here becomes an important tool for representation and participation for eventual recognition and protection of collective interest (Akwetey and Mutangi, 2022). In assessing the political capital of the respondents within the communities under study, we resorted to collecting information from the respondents on variables such as those with valid identification documents, voter cards, membership into political parties, participation at elections as well as leadership positions in the parties or associations.

2.0 Materials and methods

2.1 Study area

2.1.1Administrative and geographic location

Manyu Division where the study was carried out is one of the six divisions in the South West Region of Cameroon located at the border with Nigeria. The division is bounded in the East by the Northwest Region (one of Cameroon's Anglophone regions). It is made up of four administrative sub-divisions namely: Eyumojock located in the south and West of Mamfe Central is a lowland that shares common boundary with the Federal Republic of Nigeria , Akwaya in the North, Upper Banyang in the East and Mamfe

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Central sub-divisions (Mbuarrey, 2013). Akwaya, a hilly sub-division also shares borders with Nigeria (Mbu-Arrey, 2013).

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; Nkwator, 2000).

The division has a total population that has witnessed an increase from 181,039 inhabitants in 2005 census (Institut National de la Statistique Cameroun, 2005; Egbe et al., 2012; Mbi, 2019), to a calculated total of 394,371 inhabitants spread over the four sub-divisions as follows: Eyumojock made up of 46,771 inhabitants (communal Development plan (CDP), 2011), and Mamfe Central having 200,000 persons (CDP, 2011).

When the study subdivisions- Eyumojock and Mamfe Central- are taken individually, they provide a better understanding of their characteristics. The Eyumojock sub-division for instance, shares its western boundary with Nigeria, Akwaya in the north, Upper Bayang and Mamfe Central in the east while the south is shared with the Mundemba and Toko areas in Indian Division. It extends from latitude $5^0$10'9"to $5^0$50'7" North of the equator and longitude $8^0$50'100" to$9^0$20'5" East of the Greenwich Meridian covering a total surface area of approximately 3,442 km^2 (CDP, 2011; Mbi, 2019). The sub-division has 66 villages with one ethnic group (Ejagham) split into three clans namely: Ejagham Njemaya (26 villages), Central Ejagham (25 villages) and Obang (15 villages) although other groups of people are resident in this area including migrants from North West, West and from Nigeria (CDP, 2011; Kimengsi et al., 2016). The administrative headquarter of the subdivision is Eyumojock, 45km from Mamfe Town and about 300Km from the Regional capital (CDP, 2011).

Mamfe Central sub-division is located in the centre of Manyu Division and shares common boundaries in the north with Akwaya sub-division, in the east and south and west by Eyumojock and Upper Banyang sub-divisions respectively (Egbe et al., 2012; Mbi, 2019; Kah & Bate, 2020).

The Mamfe Central sub-division is made up of 11 autonomous villages grouped into four clans. Mamfe town has extended from Small Mamfe as the main village to parts of Besongabang and Egbekaw villages. The indigenes of the area are the Banyang with a mix of other tribes to include the Anyang, keyangs and tribes from North West region (Bali, Banso, Widikum) who mostly practice farming attracted by the fertile soil (CDP, 2011; Mbi, 2019).

2.2 Population and sampling

2.2.1Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

The sampling techniques for the study consisted of probability and non-probability techniques. The probability technique gives each study community the opportunity to be selected for the study, and non-probability sampling techniques because the researcher wanted to select the sites that were mostly affected by the crisis. Probability and non-probability sampling techniques was also because the study is both qualitative and quantitative for smooth collection of data for the study. A multistage sampling technique was used to select the respondents in Manyu Division. Within the Division, the researcher purposively selected two sub-divisions – Eyumojock and Mamfe Central – from the four sub-divisions that make up Manyu Division. The reason for these choices was that the areas were relatively calm and constituted centres where displaced persons came to seek refuge and livelihood due to the ongoing crises (Ashu et al, 2024). Within these two sub-divisions, the villages for the study were selected randomly. The simple random sampling was applied by writing all the names of the villages on different pieces of papers which were later folded and put in a bag. After being shaken, the researcher randomly hand-picked five papers from the first bag containing study sites of Eyumojock and later four for Mamfe-Central. The papers from each bag was unfolded and written to correspond to the following study communities: Kembong, Ogomoko, Afap, Nfuni and Mbatop (in Eyumojock sub-division) and Okoyong, Eyanchang, Besongabang - Mamfe (in Mamfe Central subdivision).The sampling procedure resulted to five villages being selected from Eyumojock sub-division while three were selected from the Mamfe Central sub-division as seen in Table 1. The difference in the number of villages selected per subdivision was due to differences observed in population statistics from the subdivisions and partly because much of the crisis was at the outskirts (Eyumojock) subdivision.

The overall population size of persons above 16 years is made up of 10,585 inhabitants (Communal Development Plan, 2012).

This research work entails a large population (10585 inhabitants). As such, the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size formula was adopted to calculate the final sample size. This formula is as follows:

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

Where: s = required sample size.

X2= 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 subdivisions was 10585, the sample size is determined as follows (Ashu et al., 2024):

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

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

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

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

S = 370.68 or 371 inhabitants.

The sample size was used in relation to the population of the study villages to determine the number of people to be selected from each community for the study. The calculation led to generating the information as recorded in table 1.

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Table 1: Distribution of population within Villages chosen for the study

Sub-division	Villages selected	Population of male above 16	Population of female above 16	Total	Total No. selected
Eyumojock sub-division	Nbatop	90	140	230**	8
	Afap	200	316	516**	18
	Ogomoko	300	500	800**	28
	Nfuni	640	953	1593**	56
	Kembong	1905	2648	4553**	159
	TOTAL	3135	4557	7692	269
Mamfe Central sub-division	Okoyong	Not Available (N.A)	N.A	710*	25
	Besonabang	N.A	N.A	1603*	56
	Eyanchang	N.A	N.A	580*	20
		Total		2893	98
Overall Total				10,585	370

* as per 1967 census, ** CDP Eyumojock,2011.

The researcher employed the proportionate sampling procedure to select the number of participants within each village. In this regard, 269 persons were selected from Eyumojock sub-division, while a total of 101 persons were selected from Mamfe Central sub-division. The variation in sample sizes between Mamfe Central and Eyumojock clusters is due to the differences in population sizes resulting from different available census statistics where Eyumojock (CDP Mamfe, 2011) is having a higher population than Mamfe Central sub-division.

From the Eyumojock stratum, 269 persons who were household heads were targeted because they have detail information about other members. For Mamfe Central sub-division 101 persons were targeted for the study. The difference in the number of respondents in Mamfe Central is because it is relatively calm to the communities in Eyumojock sub0division. Data in this regard was collected from a total sample of 371 persons from 8villages in the study area.

2.3 Data Analysis and Presentation

Here, both descriptive and inferential statistics were performed to analyze the data collected from the respondents. The various statistical measures were in line with the objective of the study and type of data collected. In examining this, the data collected on the questionnaire was analyzed and employed following the objective of this study which is to identify changes in political capital of households between 2015 and 2020

Here, Data to indicate changes between 2015 and 2020 were collected using the questionnaire with a classification of the strategies between the two periods as a way to ascertain the proportion of the respondents with respect to the categories. For instance, for political capital, the variables for both years included participation in electoral activities, possession of identification documents and voter card, party or association membership, as well as leadership, calculated for both years using mean and percentages. Other summary descriptive statistics were used to summarize the information related to livelihood strategies between the two periods. Also, the analyses required the use of means, standard deviation, percentages, frequencies, and cumulative frequencies.

In order to test for significance whether there was any change in the livelihood options undertaken by respondents between the two years we employed the Student's t-test. This was verified via the desired degree of freedom and a 0.05 level of significance.

3.0 Results and Discussions

The results of the study are presented and discussed beginning with the sociodemogrhics, livelihood strategies engaged in and the changes in political capital identified within the study communities.

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The demographic characteristics of the sampled households captured by this study are presented in table 2

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Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the sample.

Variables	N	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)	214	127,182.24	20,000	430,000

[a] *Total number of people belonging to the household, including nonresidential ones under the care of the Household head;*

[b] *Total estimated monthly income for all members of the household;*

3.1.1 Age of Household Heads

As shown in table 2, 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. The results indicate that most of 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 et al., 2012; Ashu et al., 2023). Moreover participation in decision making towards political activities and projects could be very rewarding since the population is still very active. The mean age of 40.52 years 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 will be 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. This further indicates that there is a strong possibility for households to bounce back into normal livelihoods and become more resilient even when the sociopolitical crisis comes to an end (Ashu, 2024) but also an indication that the population may attain old age within a short time with effects on the future of the communities.

3.1.2 Household Size

Following United Nation's (2017) definition of household as a group of people with common provision for food, shelter and other essentials for living, Household size was defined in this study as 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 (CDHS, 2018), 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 et al., (2016) who argued that large households provided required labour for households and increases opportunities for income generation. The structure of the population also indicates the ability and probability for participation in a larger political framework that influence decision making. From our observation, we found that for the very large households, there were children of school going ages. This was more in Nfuni, Mbatop, Kembong and Okoyong.

By implication, not all of the household members will be partially or entirely engaged in income generating livelihood strategies (Gebru et al., 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 (Jan et al., 2012; Ahmed et al., 2018), we infer with Hussein and Nelson (2002) and Dimelu (2017) that diversification becomes a difficult strategy to achieve within this present context due to small household size. To Dimelu (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 when the results of ECAM II (2002) pointed out that poverty rates in the South west region are highest between the ages of 40-49 at 41% but could increase when there is sociopolitical crisis that may result from forceful displacements and non-participation in decision making experienced by the community residents and migrants.

3.1.3 Estimated Monthly Income

Table 2 shows that the mean income per month per household is FCFA 127,180 (127,180±65,650FCFA), 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 per day, (calculated as total mean income per month divided by 30 days), 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, 2022), we notice that the 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 below FCFA 24,000 we had 1.3%; the range of FCFA 24000-41000 registered 0.9%; while those above FCFA 41,000 constitute 97.7%.

The results indicate 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

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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 which is the lowest amount of money a worker can be legally paid for his livelihood activity which is FCFA 36,270 per month and 1209 per day (Cameroon Minimum Wage, 2022), we infer that many households have been able to reach a minimum wage level.

This result is in line with that of ECAM II (2002) in pointing out that 5 out of 10 persons in rural areas are affected by poverty. The age range of our study seen at a mean age of 49 years ties with the highest poverty age group of 41-49 for the Southwest region with a 41% poverty rate

This would mean that financial poverty remains a problem for some households in the communities under study. The results also confirm the findings of Barbelet and Wake (2017) that displaced persons sought to raise incomes from a multiplicity of livelihood options and raised incomes that stabilised their conditions of residence

3.1.4 Marital status

Table 3 reveals that greater proportions of households are married, constituting 42.6% of the sample, while those cohabiting are represented by a relative frequency of 29.2%. Within the sample, 8.8% were single, 7.9% widows, with a registered percentage of 7.4% and 4.2% for widowers and divorced cases respectively. By implication, the high percentage of those married (42.6%) is an indication that engagements in livelihood strategies are likely to be stable but with a tendency towards diversification since the couples would want to live together and support each other thereby stabilizing the labour force of the household. Also, women who receive support from spouses are likely to be better off than those who are widows or those who do not receive support from other sources (Mulugeta, 2009). Such stability remains volatile for those cohabiting, and singles whose livelihood preferences might change over time since those concerned can either engage in other relationships or move out of their communities due to conflict. The widows may find it difficult to engage in other livelihood preferences and depend on other relations for survival. This of course depends on whether they inherited investments left behind by their husbands or not. We found out during this period that survival option and mean vary between the widows. Two widows made the following revelations on how they survived.

Widow 1: (In Kembong on the 14/3/2021): she said:

> *"My name is Ayuk. I am 46 years old and I have been married twice. My first husband died ten years ago and two years later got married to my second husband who died about two years ago. I have five children and myself to take care of. The farms I inherited from my late husband are having cocoa and bush mango which are so difficult for me to handle them. I am in a relationship with one Nigerian who provides me with assistance so that I can take care of the children and complete the remaining section not cultivated by my husband. The work is too tedious for me so need someone to help".*

Widow 2: *(in Eyanchang village on the 27/12/2020) commented that:*

> *"I lost my husband through an operation at the District hospital in Mamfe in August 2019. We have six children. My eldest child is 26 years. My husband had planted palms and cocoa which I have given out to some persons on lease for two years each so that I can use the money and train the children. I also do fish business that provides additional income for my family"*

The two testimonies presented above show that as individuals are different so too are different paths to livelihood choices for survival. Livelihood conditions for widows seem to be contingent on factors such as (1) the capacity to manage investments left behind by the former husband; (2) the number of children; and (3)the decision to re-marry or not. Re-marriage or new cohabitation can therefore be understood as a livelihood strategy, where the new spouses are obliged to assist the women even after having other children. This result seems to contradict the contentions of Mulugeta (2009), who held that the strategy was good due to increasing number of children; but that more children would mean increase in poverty and misery. Female households 'heads in the study area - particularly widows seem less likely to engage in wage employment and non-agricultural livelihood activities, as they tend to prioritize income from investments left behind by their spouses; much in line with the findings of Rahman and Akter (2014).

Table 3: Marital status of respondents.

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	19	8.8
Married	92	42.6
Divorced	9	4.2
Cohabiting	63	29.2
Widow	17	7.9
Widower	16	7.4
Total	216	100

Source: Field work, 2020

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3.1.5 Education of household head

Table 4: Level of education of household head

Level of education	Never attended school	Primary	Secondary	Post-secondary	University
	2.8%	49.1%	32.9%	4.6%	10.6%

The distribution on table 4 reveals that the educational level of participants is divided into five different categories of those who never attended school considered as non literate group and make up 2.8% of the respondents. The remainder of 97.2% considered as literate, but which is above the national literacy rate of 77.1% (Knoema, 2018), is divided into those who attended primary school, secondary, post secondary and university level. Within the literate group, those of the primary level were the highest (49.1%), followed by those with secondary education (32.9%), those with University education (10.6%) while those at the post-secondary level recorded the least (4.6%) among the literate group. These results show that within the displaced communities in the study area, there are literate persons meaning that they are capable of understanding, interpreting integrating and managing information necessary for achieving sustainable livelihoods. In this light, as households acquire education and experience in farming, there is an increased likelihood that such households will remain food secure (Ngwa &Balgah, 2016). But we find that as household level of education increases there is a tendency, according to the results, for many persons to quit agriculture as a form of livelihoods and venture into other activities in other areas that seem lucrative to them as is the case with the low rate of post secondary (4.6%) and university educated persons recorded within the study communities. This is a similar situation reported by Ifeanyi-obi and Matthews-Njoku (2014) in North Eastern Nigeria, where graduates see farming not as a blessing but as a degrading activity for those who don't admire a better life or productive livelihoods to traditional farming. Those who never went to school constitute 53.7% of persons engaged in agriculture and the informal sector. This result supports other works by Amungwa (2013); Ashu, (2016) ; Kimengsi (2016) and Mutenga, (2018), who generally content that literacy rate among farmers is low. With these conditions, education would significantly influence non-agricultural livelihood options in addition to agricultural livelihood as reported Rahman and Akter (2014). From the income levels identified section 3.1.3, it was observed that income levels were stable and even higher than the national average to indicate that household livelihoods tend to remain stable.

3.2 Livelihood Activities identified

Before 2015, the inhabitants of the various communities who were displaced had diverse activities they were engaged in to secure their livelihoods. The occupations of the household heads as represented on table 5, show marked variations in livelihood strategies with the highest percentage (53.7%) of the respondents engaged in farming which is close to the national average of 70% (Abia et al., 2016). Rural areas in this case are largely areas where agriculture remains the main livelihood activity especially as it provides food and fibre for the locals and the urban centres; and also provides employment as a way to raise incomes and maintain livelihoods (Akpalo, 2005; Mgbado, 2010; Amungwa, 2013). In addition to farming it was observed that the some people who were displaced were involved in the collection of non-timber to confirm reports that in the forest areas for instance, populations especially in rural communities, depend largely on the collection of forest products (timber and non-timber) for their livelihood where community forest have been playing a lead role where they are found (Beauchamp and Ingram, 2011).The other activities that the respondents were engaged in included business (22.3%),and commercial motor cycle (13.3%). From observation, the business sector in the study was dominated by very small, informal business ventures, such shoe mending, tailoring, hawking, and food vending. The lowest percentage of livelihood involvement were recorded in occupations like driving (2.8%), pastors (2.4%), Nursing (1.4%), Teaching and Civil Servants (1.9% and 0.9% respectively).

Farming, motor-cycle riding as well as business activity are the main occupations of the household heads within the study area. The results ramify contentions to the high level of involvement in the informal sector in developing countries (Fonchingong, 2005; Tebe, 2008; Kimengsi et al., 2016); Kimengsi et al., 2019). This however contradicts Gebru et al. (2018) who opined that 35^-50% of income from rural dwellers in developing countries come from non-farm sources

Table 5: Main Occupation of Household Head

Main occupation	Farming	Business	Pastor	Nurse	Driver	Teacher	Motor cycle	Civil servant
	55%	22.3%	2.4%	1.4%	2.8%	1.9%	13.3%	0.9%

Source: Field work, 2020.

3.3 Changes In Political Capital in Manyu Division between 2015 and 2020

3.3.1 Possession of identification documents

Result from table 6 shows that close to 96% of the respondents had valid identification documents in 2015, while all of them were in possession of valid identification documents by 2020. Within our area of study, we observed that it was difficult for people going through checkpoints manned by forces of law and order without such identification documents. From our field observation, separatist fighters were also found checking identity cards where they chopped-off the area carrying the national flag. Ownership of identification documents however facilitated movement within the study area. In this, those persons having health challenges found it difficult to travel to the district hospital for treatment except when transported on emergency by Doctors Without Borders ambulance. In this case non-possession of identification documents suggest that movement of displaced persons were curtailed (Justino, 2011; Wiggins et al., 2021).

Table 6: Possession of documents and participation in politics

Aspect	Year	No	Yes	Chi-square
In possession of a valid identification card	2015	4.2%	95.8%	X^2= 9.194

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	2020	0%	100%	p = 0.002
In possession of a valid voters card	2015	14.1%	85.9%	X^2= 2.794
	2020	20.2%	79.8%	p = 0.095
Belong to any political party	2015	22.1%	77.9%	X^2= 5.253
	2020	31.9%	68.1%	p = 0.022
Participate in voting in the last municipal elections	2015	11.5%	88.5%	X^2= 305.047
	2020	100%	0%	p = 0.000
Hold leadership position in the political party belonging to	2015	68.1%	31.9%	X^2= 80.91
	2020	100%	0%	p = 0.000

Source: Field Work, 2020.

3.3.2Possession of Voter card

Regarding possession of voter cards, there was a significant 6% drop in the respondents with voter's cards (from 86% in 2015 to 80% in 2020, X^2 = 2.795, p = 0.095). Possession of voter card makes one eligible for elections but from the results a drop in possession of such cards could be the result of the sociopolitical crisis that is ongoing within the study communities. When we interrogated some respondents on possession of voter card, we noticed from their facial expression suspicion of who the researcher was even though we had spent time with them in their communities. For purpose of convenience, we will present responses from two of the respondents. The first respondent said, thus;

> *"Are you a new person in this community? Are you not aware of the danger of a voter's card? Well, let me tell you that everyone knows that having a voter card is like a man carrying a suicide bomb. I burnt my voter card close to nine months ago because those guys can embarrass us on the road or in the house and once found, one will be in trouble*"

The second respondent maintained thus;

> *"I had a voter card that I used to participate in elections but within this crisis the card was seized and destroyed by certain gunmen along the Mamfe-Bamenda road. I was lucky that I was not harmed though I was asked to bail myself with 5000frs".*

The testimonies from the two respondents indicate that the non-possession of voter card is an added advantage to one's ability to remain secured and participate in any livelihood activity of choice. One would probably suggest that possession of a voter card in the study area could be likened to an individual carrying a suicide explosive. Possession is tantamount to a death sentence. This indicates that there are some people who will not participate in future elections because their right to participation has been hijacked. This would imply that, representation and participation in governance are withheld during conflicts.

3.3.3 Political party membership

The fear of ownership or possession of a voter card is reflected in a drop in political party membership. The results showed that there was a 10% drop in the respondents who belonged to political parties between 2015 (77.9%) and 2020 (68.1%). One of the participants reported it was dangerous identifying one self with a political party. The respondent recounted awareness of belonging to a political party indicates that the individual was considered "being in support of La Republique and taken for a blackleg." He explained such persons were brutally murdered by gunmen. The respondents that told us they belong to political parties first of all made sure we were going to be confidential with the information. This would probably account for a drop in membership in political parties and other associations. Dimelu (2017) reports that conflict were a major cause to ethnic and religious divide in Eastern Nigeria with ambivalent spurs in the participation in community life. Some respondents reported that they lost the benefits they were receiving as leaders in some of the associations that they belong to, which probably would reduce the advantages they benefited from those groups for their livelihoods. Some borrowed money to invest in farming and purchase of cocoa and NTFPs, which is no longer possible during the conflict thereby experiencing loss of livelihoods.

3.3.4 Participation at elections

Political participation within our study communities revealed differences between the years. It is also observed from table 4.20 that 88.5% of the respondents participated in municipal elections by 2015, whereas there was no participation registered in the elections that took place in 2020 (X^2 = 305.047, p = 0.000). The results indicate the difference in participation between the year of no conflict (2015) and when there was a manifestation of the sociopolitical crisis in 2020. This indicates that political party membership and participation in elections are significantly in association with the prevailing social context. Political capital tends to be eroded during political crisis by reducing membership in groups and voluntary participation in political activities (ICG, 2018;Mallick et al., 2021). This further worsens a situation described by Agbor and Njieassam (2019) that the political system makes little allowance for public participation with the creation of pseudo-institutions that make participation practically impossible. To complement this finding is a submission that participation was difficult to achieve due to tensions that marked the electoral activities especially the 2018 presidential elections and the 2020 municipal and parliamentary elections also characterised by hostilities and observed security incidences, rampant shootings, road blocks, attacks on security checkpoints, ambushes and use of explosives especially in Manyu division (ICG, 2018; WFP, 2020). These actions hinder participation for decision making within the communities.

3.3.5 Leadership in party or association

In the same line, while close to 32% of the respondents held leadership positions in their respective political parties in 2015, none of them were found to still holding these positions by 2020

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(X^2 = 80.916, p = 0.000). Although the benefits of holding leadership positions in political parties, as explained by those who had leadership positions include food/drinks (reported by 10.5%) as well as titles as a leader in the party (reported by 89.5%), these respondents did not value these benefits by 2020. This is an indication that remunerations and rewards to motivate for leadership and participation become ineffective for fear of being identified as "black-legging" (which we described earlier) and dealt with accordingly. We notice that the fear of being murdered or dismembered by affected community members was essentially for survival and protection of livelihood of households because during conflicts survival becomes the priority (Jaspers &Shoham, 2002; Jaspers &Maxwell, 2009; Hussein & Nelson, 2002; Steel & Van-Lindert, 2017).

4.0 Conclusion and recommendation

We have examined political capital in Manyu Division by comparing results of 2015 to those of 2020. We find in all that a conflict have a negative impact on political capital as it suppresses political consciousness and action, hinders representation and bars political participation in governance. Political capital tends to be eroded during political crisis by reducing membership in groups and voluntary participation in political activities. Conflict reduces the ability of the local people to building power relations with others making them vulnerable to power elite who hijack such opportunities to limit participation in decision making. The locals will not be able to counter the abuse of power by the powerful elite who is usually contesting their claims. During armed conflicts, the phobia for belligerent groups prevents participation on a larger political framework but with little participation in community decision making as households become more concerned with survival than accumulation of power. There is a loss of personal political identity which limits stock of political influence. The priority of the individuals tends towards survival rather than political participation in the political process. This affects representation since individuals not in possession of necessary documents cant participate in selecting their choices. In this regard a consensus should be reached between contending groups to give peace a change so that people can return to their communities and chart a new path for the welfare and wellbeing.

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