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Full Length Research Paper

Peasant Farmers and Insecurity in the Country Side: Experiences of Market Gardeners in the South West and North West Regions of Cameroon

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Cameroon is plagued with the problem of high insecurity today. The presence and manifestation of crime, conflicts and accidents during funeral celebrations amongst rural farmers involved in cashcrop production reflects the extent of the problem. With the advent of the economic crisis in Cameroon in the mid 1980s and decline in coffee production, Small farmers in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon became involved in market gardening to improve on their welfare. Prosperity in market gardening led to improvement in the income level and status of many peasant farmers and a change in their lifestyles. Faced with these innovations, the rural population of the South West and North West Regions have been victims of insecurity in various forms. These include stealing of farm inputs, property and agricultural produce at homes, ware houses farmsteads and farmlands. Small farmers are also victims of arm robbery along farm to market roads and homes after the sale of farm produce. In the agricultural production process, many of these small farmers have been victims of land use conflicts that lead to insecurity, lost of human lives and property. Funeral celebration in Grassfields communities and the Western Region of Cameroon are cultural events often characterized by pump and pageantry marked by firing of guns. Prosperous and wealthy peasant farmers in the South West and North West Regions upon sale of farm produce, often buy, brandish and shoot expensive firearms during funerals as symbol of wealth. In several incidences these gunshot culture have led to lost of human lives and other casualties. In developing countries more than 80 percent of the active population in rural areas is involved in agriculture with over 40 percent affected by poverty. Many Small farmers do not have access to education. Security concerns in Cameroon are often centered on the urban settings where crime rate is high with little attention on rural areas and its population that guarantees our food security. This paper argues that in Cameroon crime and insecurity is on the increase in the country side and should be an issue of concern with reference to case studies of market gardeners in Lebialem and Santa areas of the South West and North West Regions of Cameroon.

Keywords: Peasant Farmers, Market Gardening, Crime Dynamics, Rural Insecurity, South West and North West Regions

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location of South West and North West Regions

The North West and South West Regions within which this study is carried out are two of the ten administrative regions of Cameroon (Figure 1). They were transformed from provinces into regions by a presidential decree of 2010. The regions are surrounded by the Federal

Republic of Nigeria on the North West, Adamawa, West and Littoral Regions of Cameroon in the East, and the Gulf of Guinea in the South. In the study matrix vegetables are produced by farmers in Pinyin, Santa Mbei, Njong, Baligham, Mbei in Santa, Mmuock Leteh, Fosimondi, Mmuock Mbie and Bamumbu in Lebialem Division. Bansa, Oku and Jakiri areas also produce these exotic vegetables but are not considered for the study. The vegetables are cultivated in savanna belts and

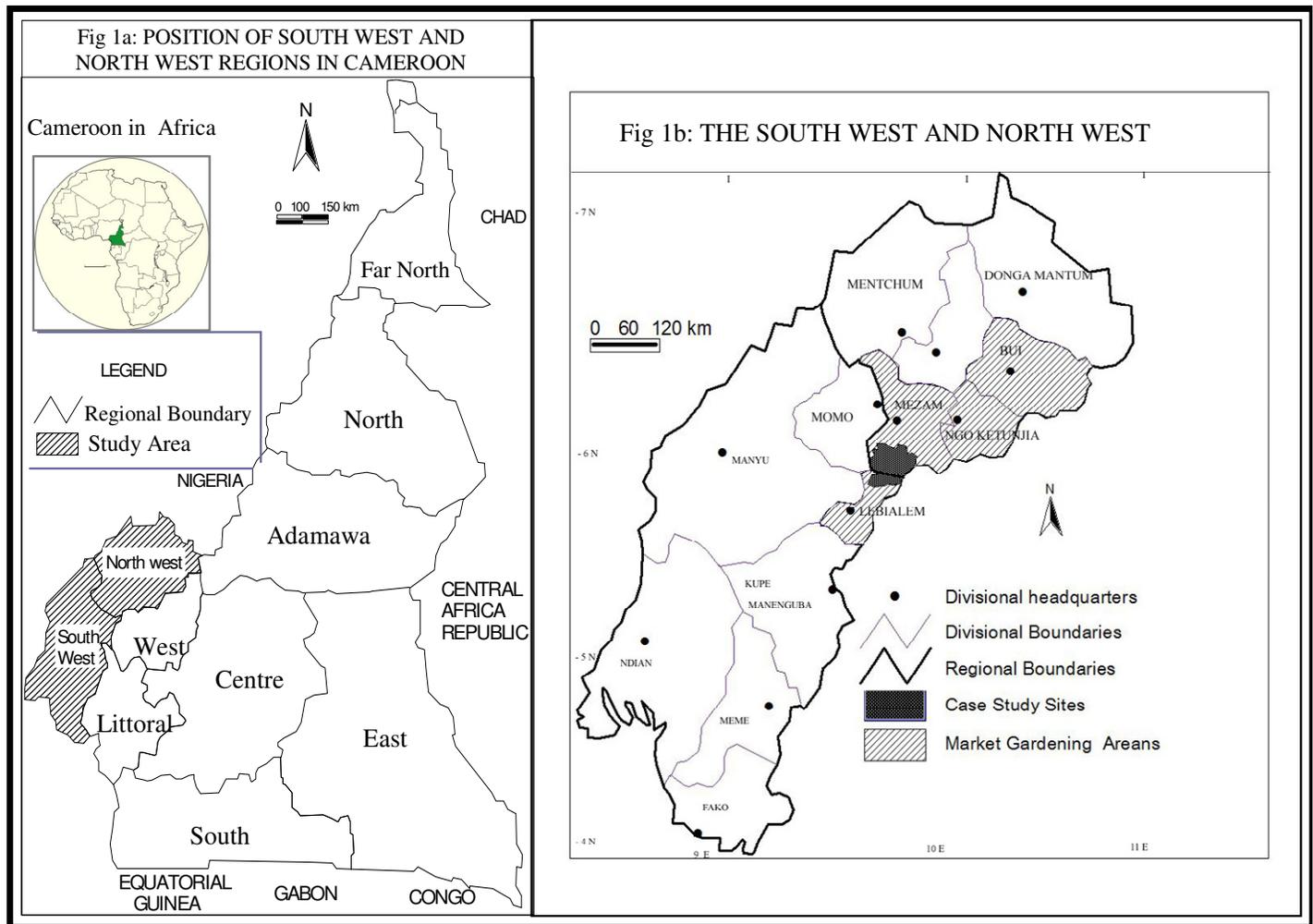


Figure 1a and 1b
Source: realized by the author from INC Base maps, 2015

mountainous landscapes lying 2400m above sea level. These include the volcanic massifs of the Bamboutos Mounts (2740m), interrupted by lowlands and flood plains. The main types of soils are humic, granitic, pyroclastic and alluvial soils of volcanic origin (Hawkins and Brunt 1965).

Climate in this area is varied, characterised by intense rainfall from mid-March to November and a dry season from mid November to late March with periodic alterations due to climate change. Annual rainfall varies between 1250mm and 10657 mm per year. Temperatures fluctuate between 29.42°C along the Fako coastal areas to 23°C in the Bamboutos Mountains. The production basin is one of the most densely populated parts of Cameroon with average densities of 300 inhabitants per km² (calculated from BUCREP 2005). The populations involve in market gardening, crime and insecurity comprises the Ngemba, Widikum, Tikari and Fulani ethnic groups.

2. RESEARCH DATA AND METHODS

Data used for the production of this work has been collected from diverse sources. Field surveys (questionnaires administered, interviews and observations) were conducted in market gardening areas and food markets where the target population operate. Secondary data and internet material have also been exploited for the work. The secondary data was generated from findings of the PhD thesis work of the author, review of historical data and field work conducted on the study sites in 2011 and updated. These primary and secondary data furnished information on market gardeners, their conditions, identity, activities and income levels. The types of crime, conflicts and accidents in vegetable production basins, actors and victims of insecurity and outcomes on the peasants were also deduced from these data sources. Focus group discussions were carried out on ceremonial grounds in

Mmuock Leteh and Santa Njong to generate information on risk of firearms, victims of the 2011 incident in Lebialem and their perception of these habits on development. The communities of Pinyin, Mbei, Njong Awing Baligham in the North West and Mmuock Leteh, Fosimondi and Bamumbu in the South West were chosen because they represent ideal areas of market gardening where earnings from vegetable production has enriched the populations leading to excessive lifestyles, crime and insecurity. These communities have also won major prizes in potatoes (first), carrots (first), cabbage (second) amongst others during National Agro-Pastoral shows in Cameroon the latest being Ebolowa in 2011. The data have helped in the production of this paper.

3. Root factors sparking crime and insecurity in the study matrix

The problem of insecurity in the study sites is the outcome of persistent economic crises in Cameroon.

3.1 Crisis in the Cameroon Coffee Sector: 1985-1994

The coffee sector in Cameroon has suffered from a number of crises that have adversely hit its producers. The freefall of prices between 1985 and 1993 made earnings from coffee to drop drastically. Debts owed farmers of this produce by the government were huge (more than 100 billion CFAF for coffee and cocoa) leading to hardship (Ojuku 2005). This trauma, which virtually paralysed the coffee production circle in Cameroon, pushed the government to put in place a number of recovery strategies. In 1989 the agricultural sector was restructured aided by the European Union through STABEX that paid the sum of 44, 5 billion, to farmers, cooperatives et cetera as part of the debts owed. These were aimed at restoring order in a sector that generates income for more than 25 % of farmers in Cameroon including the South West and North West Regions. Production however continued to drop. In the South West and North West Regions of Cameroon the contribution of coffee to agricultural income dropped from 78 % in 1980 to 16 % in 1992 (European Commission 1999). The drastic fall in the world prices of coffee and cocoa, provoked a dramatic turn away from the cultivation of these crops in the South West and North West Regions. These crops had assured incomes to more than 80 % of the region's rural residents by 1975 showing its importance as testified by some farmers.

According to Victor Apabelou, the importance of coffee could be measured by indicators such as the rate of family mobilisation for the activity, proportion of people engaged in coffee production (95 % in M'muock and Bamumbu, et cetera) and the proportion of land allocated to the produce which varied from 50 to about 85 % of arable lands. (Ojuku 2005).

3.1.2 Response to Coffee Crisis and Income Insecurity

The response of the population to coffee crisis and insecurity in income varied in the region. The more aggressive farmers cut down the plants while others abandoned the crop completely in parts of Lebialem and Mezam Divisions and adopted vegetable gardening. In Alou, Ashong and Baforchu, farmers integrated food crops on existing coffee plots faced with prices evolution. Some producers of Fongo Tongo and Bangang origin in the West Region of Cameroon abandoned coffee farming and became hired labour migrants in Mmuock villages of the South West Region. The unsuccessful of these labour migrants that could not be fully absorbed in market gardening areas, have become vectors of crime, gambling, drug and insecurity during off farming seasons in the host communities.

Also, in several communities of the study sites, it became hard for farmers who had not invested sufficient financial resources, to pay back accumulated debts encountered over the years. Many had to borrow money to cover expenditures on community development contributions, health, housing, and the educational needs of their children. In Bamumbu (Lebialem), for instance, the rate of indebtedness stood at 86 % amongst 15 poor interviewed in 2004 that had to borrow money for unanticipated needs such as feeding, agricultural inputs, clothing and education of the children (Ojuku 2005). In Awing in the North West Region, the more dynamic of the cash crop producers embarked on raphia palm exploitation which they considered as a dynamic plant. The liquid, bamboo, leaves, and fibre was exploited for production of palm wine, house utensils (benches, beds, cupboard, stools, baskets, bags, and brooms), roofing of houses and construction of enclosures. In Mmuock Fosimondi and Leteh, many people embarked on vegetable production which today is the root of cash income and insecurity problems in these communities.

3.2. The Economic Crisis and Impact on Market Gardening

The effects of the economic crises of 1980s in Sub-Saharan Africa greatly affected the plight of rural populations in the research matrix. In Cameroon, the origin of this crisis dates back to 1961 when the country had its independence from France and Britain (Cornia et al 1988). Paul Biya - the Cameroon head of state officially announced the crisis in Cameroon on 11th December 1986 in an end of year speech which read:

'L'année 1987 sera une année difficile, dure retroussiez, les manches...'

Prior to 1990, development in Cameroon was highly centralised and marked by a 'top-bottom' policy that led to high dependence of population on the state. This together with ill-conceived development policies and institutions led to the collapse of many state-owned enterprises. Terms of trade worsen in Cameroon and there was rise in inflationary and real interest rates, balance of payment deficits, and indebtedness. For instance, in 1994 Cameroon's internal and external debts stood at 640 and 450 billion CFAF, respectively (IMF, April 1986, and October 1990). The worsening economic situation of the country, made it impossible for the state to guarantee the social and economic security of its citizens. Many farmers of the South West and North West Regions of Cameroon abandoned coffee and adopted Market gardening to cope with hunger, unemployment, hardship and poverty in the countryside

The collapse of formal employment opportunities in urban areas further traumatised many civil servants leading to return migration to the countryside. These waves of urban returnees to the South West and North West regions also adopted market gardening. They became more involved in agricultural innovations and commercial agriculture in urban environments. Initially, they were very innovative, had limited land resources and finance, and operated small scale farming along side secondary activities transferred from the towns to the villages. Many of them have become highly integrated and adapted to rural life and are very rich in farm business. Some have purchased heavy trucks and commercial vans used to operate as middlemen in the marketing of vegetables between the production basins and Douala, Yaounde and other towns of the CEMAC region.

3.3 Devaluation of the CFA Franc in 1994 and Social Insecurity

The devaluation of the CFA Franc was implemented in the franc zone countries to fight against the dwindling economy of these countries since 1985/86. On January 11th, 1994, in Senegal, these countries, amongst which is Cameroon, witnessed a 50 % fall in value (devaluation) of their currency (CFAF) vis à vis the French franc to which it was pegged. This made prices to rise while life became hard to bear. The exports of Cameroon were uncompetitive in the world market. Growth rates per year stood at -5 % with Gross Investment dropping by 16% (from 27 to 11 %). Public Investment dropped drastically at a time the public infrastructures were aging out (European Commission, February 1997). The outcome of this currency devaluation was devastating to the population of the South West and North West Regions even after the economy of Cameroon picked up with a growth rate of 3 % in 1998 and 5.3 % in 2000.

These efforts yielded little dividends as corruption increased in all the sectors of the economy where the migrant's hope for a relief and brighter future was laid. Nominal income dropped by 50 % for civil servants within a duration of three months (December 1993 to April 1994) aggravated by inflationary rates on the market. Migrants and other populations hardly hit by this crisis had to take many decisions. Many North Westerners and South Westerners based in the towns had to return home faced with the high cost of living manifested through inflationary prices of basic necessities (food, housing, clothing, hospital, water, light and telephone bills and transport fares) (Table 1 Figure 2). Vegetable production proved to be more adapted to their needs as it yielded short term incomes and food for consumption. Migration to the countryside for the cultivation of these crops attracted many persons hit by the devaluation of the CFA franc.

It is difficult to dissociate the role of each of these fundamental Socio-economic factors discussed in explaining the circumstances leading to hardship, vulnerability and insecurity in the study area. Each cause has contributed at different levels and periods to account for crime dynamics and rural insecurity in market gardening areas of the Southwest and Northwest regions.

Table 1. Evolution of Prices of Some Goods in Urban Areas After 1994

Products	Unit Measure	1995 Prices		1996 Prices		1997 Prices		1998 Prices		1999 Prices	
		A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Kerosene Lamp	Litre	127	138	148	158	159	162	148	149	157	155
Township Taxi	Unit	124	125	136	138	138	139	140	138	144	136
SNEC Water	M3	326	328	367	335	367	335	367	367	400	387
Electricity	Kwh	61	61	63	59	63	58	63	63	69	69
Ordinary Bread	Kg	509	919	688	743	689	774	706	764	689	772
Exercise Book 192 pages	Unit	392	217	450	245	450	235	464	219	500	222
Palm Oil	Litre	448	445	475	480	526	514	562	543	579	569

Source : Deduced from 'Annuaire statistique du Cameroun direction de la comptabilité nationale'

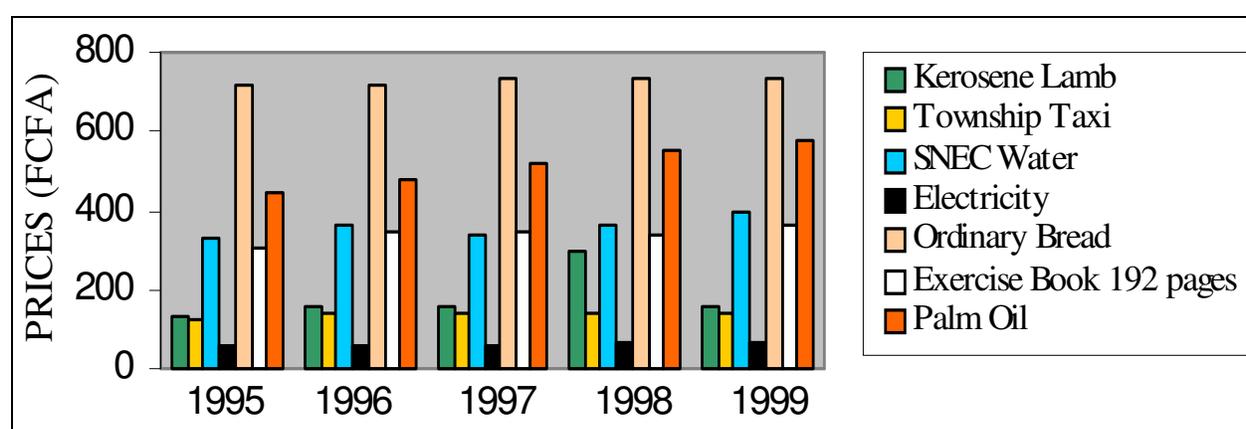


Figure 2. Evolution of prices of some goods in urban areas after 1994

4. Introduction of Market Gardening and Outcomes

Market gardening that is the target of crime and insecurity in the NW and SW Regions was introduced by the colonial administration. Pastoral Bafou (1922), Darmanaic (Kombou) and IRA Bambui are the cradle of exotic vegetable production in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon. France one of the colonial powers spearheaded the introduction of these crops through the defunct companies of Darmagnac and SINCOA (Societe Industrielle, Commerciale et Agricole) in Babadjou and Monvoisin in Baloum, Bansa and Balessing as far back as 1952 (Dongmo 1982). These new crops were then diffused to the Mmuock villages in the South West Region. Mmuock

migrants resident in Santa area later introduced market gardening in this part of the North West Region. The culture expanded and was later improved by IRA- Bambui with the departure of the Europeans.

Market gardening has since the 1980s been practiced in the savannah grasslands (around the high lava plateau) and wetlands of Santa and Lebialem in the South West and North West Regions of Cameroon. Some of the crops grown are carrot (*Daucus carota*), irish potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum*), cabbage (*Brassica Oleracea*), Leeks (*Allium porrum*), celery (*Apian graviolens*). Production is done in large quantities even though the volume is declining faced with price heights in farm inputs (Table 2).

Table 2. Some farmers sampled and vegetables handled in the South West and North West Regions 2009-2011

Some Interviewed	Persons	Population Total Sampled		Crop Type Sample		Estimated Quantity Produced Per Season		
		No	%	crop	Unit Measure	2009	2010	2011
Pinyin (Asobo Pius)		8	23.5	Persley	Bag (30 L)	581	336	202
				Celery	Bunch (3kg)	309	388	297
Santa Njong (Felix Nkwete)	4	11,8	White Cabbage	Leeks	Packet (4kg)	530	410	453
				Potatoes	Jute Bag (100kg)	420	128	106
M'muock Leteh (Leku Michael)	4	11,8	Garlic	Carrots	Jute Bag (100kg)	465	410	315
				Leeks	Packet (4kg)	588	400	413
M'muock Fosimondi (Tanangfie Claude)	4	11,8	Potatoes	Carrots	Jute Bag (100kg)	106	114	100
				Carrots	Jute Bag (100kg)	106	114	100
Bamumbu (Lekunze Innocent)	3	8,8	Potatoes	Carrots	Jute Bag (100kg)	950	600	405
				Carrots	Jute Bag (100kg)	413	560	610
Santa Mbei (Simon A. Achu)	2	5,9	Potatoes	Carrots	Jute Bag (100kg)	413	560	610
				Carrots	Jute Bag (100kg)	413	560	610

Source: Compiled from field surveys April 2011. Names of some key producers contacted are indicated

5. Conflicts, Crime and Insecurity Dynamics

5.1 land disputes and Insecurity

Rural land disputes are one of the most conspicuous effects of market gardening that have stir up insecurity in the South West and North West Regions of Cameroon. The disputes occur in areas where land is scarce for farming due to high population pressure on land, intensive farming and livestock grazing. Market gardening areas are characterised by high population densities. There are about

325 persons per km² in Mmuock Leteh, 295 persons per km² in Fosimondi, 385 persons per km² in Pinyin, and 305 persons per km² in Santa Mbei. High densities have stirred up tension over land and open confrontation between villages leading to the destruction of livestock, crops, houses, enclosures, and casualties on human lives. During conflicts, people are brutalised with knives, guns, machetes, stones and poison to death through conspiracy (Plate 1). Some of these weapons are deathly owned by civil servants, sponsored agents and retired military personnel involved in market gardening.



Plate 1a. Remains of a house destroyed during a land dispute between Mmuock Leteh-Lebialem in the South West Region and EPA –Bafou, Menoua Division, February 2008



Plate 1b. Deathly cartridges belonging to hired personnel employed by EPA to combat local market gardeners. This material was collected on farmlands under land dispute in March 2011

Table 2. Past conflicts reported, items damaged and cost evaluated in the Nkongle Agricultural Post, Mmuock Leteh, Lebialem Division, SW Region

Type of Conflict	Year	Nature of Damage	Surface (M ²)	Cost Evaluated	Place
Land Dispute	8/1996	Cocoyams	3551	211440 CFAF	Awut-Fosimondi
Farmer-Grazier	8/1996	Carrots/Corn	72940	700284 CFAF	Nkongho-Leteh
Farmer-Grazier	8/1997	Irish Potatoe, Maize, Carrots	268	268000 CFAF	Ntemzem-Leteh
Irrigation Water	8/1997	Irish Potatoe, Leeks, Carrots	2304	21000 CFAF	Bewop-Leteh
Farmer- Farmer	8/1998	Cabbage, Carrots	83125	406165 CFAF	Memveh-Leteh
Farmer-Grazier	05/1999	Carrots	410	615000 CFAF	Maleta-Leteh
Land Dispute	4/2000	Carrot, Irish potatoes, Trees	2096	1023200 CFAF	Ntemzem-Leteh
Farmer Grazier	8/2001	Cabbage, Irish potatoes	268	402000 CFAF	Tali-Fosimondi
Farmer-Farmer	2/2002	Carrots	638	957000 CFAF	Nkongho-Leteh
Farmer-Grazier	5/2002	Carrots, Irish potatoes	8052	696900 CFAF	Tali-Fosimondi
Land Dispute	5/2003	Irish potatoes, Carrots, Maize	1711	2566500 CFAF	Pahgepou-Leteh
Irrigation water	1/2003	Irish potatoes, Water tubes	2262	120100 CFAF	Lekot N.-Leteh
Farmer grazier	1/1998	Irish potatoes, Fence, Trees	225	1988600 CFAF	Mbelenka-Fosim.

Source: Nkongle Agric Post, (Ojuku 2005)

Inter-village conflicts overland are not new in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon. Inter-village land disputes such as the Bamumbu - Pinyin war in 1978/79, the M'muock Fosimondi- Leteh squabbles in the 1960s, 1980s, 1990s and 2010 over Tsieh Nchie, and the Leteh and Bafou land disputes over Tandelebeng in 1960s, 1970s and 1982 were exclusively limited to the defense of village territories against neighbours. Recent land disputes from 1983 to present day have been attributed to cash income in crop production, and settlement. Such are the M'muock Mbie - Fosimondi land dispute of 1983, and M'muock Fosimondi - Leteh dispute over Tse Nchie in the late 1980s, March 1994 and 2010. Deathly and violent conflicts erupted between Fongo Tongo and M'muock- Fosimondi in 2006 and 2014 leading to the death of 3 persons and others wounded. Similar disputes have taken place between EPA (African Pastoral Company) and Mmuock Leteh over Tandelebeng leading to the destruction of livestock, farm houses and brutalisation of people on both camps in February 2008 (plate 1). These conflicts have rubbed many cash income migrants in the past in the study area (Table 2). Sometimes these conflicts do lead to road blockade for search of victims involved in killing for retaliation. This is typical of recent disputes over market gardening lands between Fosimondi and Fongo Tongo in the South West – Northwest borders of Cameroon in 2012 that led to government intervention.

5.2 Crime wave in Agro-pastoral communities

Prosperity in market gardening has led to stealing and insecurity a social ill in the South West and North West Regions. These mal practices include nocturnal harvesting of crops on farms, burgling of store houses for cash crops

and farm inputs. In the South West Region farm inputs (water sprinklers, rubber tubes and pipes) for channelling water into crops, and other valuable irrigation equipments for farm work have been stolen by agro-bandits. Stealing has also extended into investments on non - farm activities. Livestock belonging to prospective migrants and indigenes from their cash income proceed are frequently stolen by Mbororo. Burglary at night also prevails in the Nkongle, Mbelenka, Atsualah, and Maghah areas in the South West Region, and Mbei, Njong, Pinyin, Baligham, and Awing in the South West Regions of Cameroon. Field investigations indicate that practices of this nature are rampant during the dry seasons in market gardening areas. Crime and insecurity is also observed in areas where kolanut is produced but which have been abandoned for market gardening due to fall in coffee prices.

The demographic profile of activists of crimes is unique. Mostly male youths of less than 25 years of age are involved. Some actors of crime in the countryside are fugitives from urban environments. In urban areas they are wanted for acts committed ranging from theft, rape, gambling, aggression, murders, drug abuse. Others are wanted for robbery at homes, business premises, highway, play grounds and drinking parlours. Field interviews revealed that some of these youth do raid the towns of Bamenda, Dschang, Mbouda and Bafoussam and seize valuable items such as motor bikes from urban dwellers and escape to the countryside with these goods for sale. When money generated from the sale of stolen items is finished, these criminals hide along farm to market roads, the high ways, and rural-urban roads to terrorise passer-bys at night for money and valuables. It is for this reason that travels between Nkongle market and Dschang where arm robbery is rampant were of recent banned at night.



Plate 2. Insecurity in market gardens is mostly perpetrated by youths involved in crime. An element of a gang caught for multi-burglary, theft of farm produce, drug and rape cases in Mmuock Leteh area, April 2011

5.2.1 Drivers of Crime

Four main factors account for increase of crime in market gardening areas. Firstly, the migration of population to market gardening areas for wage labour and involvement in farming without adequate capital and planning often lead to frustration, crime and insecurity. Poverty and low investment in farming results to crop failure and idleness, which in turn makes stealing inevitable in the area. Secondly, seasonal variability in weather due to climate change has rendered cash crop production expensive especially in the drought periods faced with water shortage. Farmers not able to afford irrigation inputs such as wetland positions for cultivation in the dry season, water sprinklers, tubes and pipes for irrigation are thrown out of production and become vulnerable to crime. Some of these crisis farmers resort to stealing to meet up with farm demands. Thirdly, the neglect of Kolanuts, food crops and coffee plantations which were alternative income sources for the populations has increased rural crime in savannah belts where market gardening is currently practiced. Socio-economic hardship resulting from persistence of the economic crisis, fluctuations in world market prices of coffee and the devaluation of the C.F.A. franc have combined with other factors to increase insecurity in agro-pastoral fields.

In Pinyin insecurity in agriculture is perpetrated by the Mbororo minority groups displaced from grazing by market gardeners and diminishing cattle stocks. Elements of this Fulani ethnic group that are no longer in possession of livestock, periodically orchestrate arm robbery on farm to market roads, the highway and homes. Prior to market gardening the Fulani were livestock breeders on the Bamboutos Mountains, Santa Highlands and Awing area. Many Moslems were displaced by vegetable cultivation on grazing lands. Others lost their cattle population as a result of involvement in numerous court cases and theft of cattle by the indigenous population in the process of farmer grazier conflicts. To the Mbororo involved in crime, stealing is a coping strategy to sustain life faced with idleness. Data from relatives of these people sampled revealed that Mbororos involved in crime and insecurity are mostly illiterates who have variously served as 'Gainakos' (cattle care takers) and have never attained a primary education.

More than 50% of the farmers sampled in communities of the South West and North West Regions responded positively to have been affected by either theft of farm inputs, crop harvest, or livestock and burglary of farm stores during the past ten years. Practices of this nature have great implications on the population in the study area. Where income acquired from cash production is (Table 3) destined for particular uses, these malpractices can hinder such goals.

Table 3. Average Incomes Generated from cash crop in the North West and South West Region per year

Market Areas	gardening	Irish potatoes (FCFA)	Carrots (FCFA)	Leeks (FCFA)	Cabbage (FCFA)	Celery (FCFA)	Tomatoes (FCFA)
Pinyin,		1200 000	120 000	650 000	175 000	600 000	50000
Mbei,		800 000	150 000	250 000	200 000	400 000	75000
Njong		800 000	300 000	150 000	250 000	200 000	75000
Awing		300 000	0	0	75 000	50 000	50000
Baligham		250 000	0	0	50 000	0	30000
Mmuock Fosimondi		1800 000	600 000	600 000	200 000	0	25000
Mmuock Mbie		300 000	700 000	100 000	100 000	0	0
Mmuock Leteh		2000 000	700 000	350 000	150 000	0	50000
Bamumbu		400 000	800 000	400 000	100 000	0	0

Source: Estimated Data from Interviews (Rural and Urban Food Markets) and Field enquiries, 2013/2015

Table 2. Some middlemen sampled, capital assets and major goods handled in SW and NW Regions

Trader Observed	Place of Origin	Capital FCFA (Estim.)	Major Goods Handled Per Month		
			Types Destination	Quantity (Estim)	
Vincent Dikum	Menka-Pinyin	21 Million	Leeks, Persley, Celery	20000	Douala
Mbu Linus	Menka-Pinyin	14 Million	Leeks, Persley, Celery	12000	Douala
Leku Lucas	Maleta- M. Leteh	60 Million	Potatoes: Carrots: Leeks	1440: 960: 9 600	Yaounde
Nangue Esther	Ntemzem-M. Leteh	20 Million	Potatoes: Carrots	960: 240	Yaounde/D'la
Nkweteshing Cl.	Tali- Fosimondi	65 Million	Leeks: Potatoes: Carrots	14400: 1200: 720	Douala
Nkemzeshong J.	Njingla-Fosimondi	90 Million	Potatoes: Carrots: Leeks	1100: 900: 12 000	Yaounde
Paul Mbida	Nzemelah-Bafou	90 Million	Potatoes: Carrots: leeks	1680: 720: 120 000	Y'de/D'la*
Fomekeu Samson	Effem M.- Bafou	120 Million	Beetroot: Carrots: Leeks...	3600: 1800: 19 200	Douala
Bonas	Nzindong-Bangang	45 Million	Potatoes: Carrots: Cabbage	540: 240: 100	Yaounde
Nkwete Felix	Zaavion-Babadjou	5 Million	Cabbage: Leeks: Potatoes	200: 2560: 480	Douala
Clement Wara	Santa Mbei	300 Million	Potatoes: Carrots: Leeks...	>2400: 1200: 28800	D'la/Gabon

5.2.1 Victims of Armed Robbery

Armed robbery affects the entire rural communities of the South West and North West Regions as activist of these crimes target any person that possesses wealth and valuable assets. However, the most frequently assaulted persons are middlemen, cash crop producers and labour migrants in market gardening areas.

Many middlemen and owners of trucks transporting goods for sales in Douala (the economic capital of Cameroon) and Yaounde (the political capital) have been assaulted on their return trips by arm robbers (Table 2). These are persons who purchase and/or cultivate cash crops (vegetables, fruits and legumes) in the South West and North West Regions and transport them to the urban markets of Cameroon and its neighbouring countries for sale. Rural residents, urban returnees in the region, urban based migrants in Yaounde and Douala and emigrants of Cameroon nationality resident in the CEMAC (Economic and Monetary Community of Central

African States) countries. The immigrants from these Central African countries are the main actors involved in large-scale wholesale trade in the Western regions of Cameroon. The huge sums of money carried along on return trips from the urban markets of Cameroon (Douala and Yaounde) makes middlemen vulnerable to armed robbery (Table 2).

More than half (60 %) of population involved in these activities are adults aged 35-55 years and 40 % (more than one third) aged 20-34 years, made up principally of males with 4 % female representation. The arduosity of the activity, occasional loss of family contacts, huge capital requirements and nature of the transactions imposes a socio-economic and natural barrier to the number of females involved.

The most dangerous and unsecured locations are Effem Mmuock on the Dschang-Mbelenka road, Magha-Kombou road, Matazem-Pinyin road stretch, Mile 12 Santa-Awing road (Table 3).

Table 3. Robbery Cases reported on some roads in Santa (NW) and Lebialem (SW) Regions 2007-2013

Place	Year	Arm Robbery Cases	Corporal Injuries	Losses Incurred		
				Money Lost FCFA	Valuable Items	Deaths
Nkongle – Mbelenka Road	2011	03	02	2.30000	03 phones	01(culprit)
	2010	04	01	300 000	01 Motor bike	01(culprit)
	2008	01	02	-	03 Goats, 01phone	01(culprit)
Dschang – Nkongle Road	2013	3	02	8.500000	0	01
	2012	02	01	0	01 phone, Cattle	01
Magha-Kombou	2008	04	2 wounded	210 000	3 phone	-
Pinyin-Matazem	2013	04	3	180000	02	-
	2011	08	03	15000	02 phones	-
	2009	01	01	8000	1 digital camera	-
	2008	03	01	20000	01Watch, 2 phones	-
Mile 12- Awing	2011	02	01	65000	4 phones	-
	2010	02	1 raped	-	1 phones	-
Leteh-Bangang	2007	2	1	25000	-	-

Source: Interviews April 2013

During end of year festivities such as Christmas and New Year celebrations, the criminals raid homes by surprise and steal valuables, when the occupants are on celebrations in rural market centres. In December 2010, three armed gangs raided homes at the Ntemndzem, Maleta area in Mmuock Leteh during Christmas manifestations and stole 1.4 million FCFA, farm tools, 4 locally designed guns and 1 automatic gun. These attacks have made the study sites periodically vulnerable to insecurity.

5.4 Funeral Manifestations and insecurity

In the study area, funeral celebrations have been characterised by insecurity. These celebrations in Grassfields communities of Cameroon like in other parts of West Africa are cultural events often characterized by pump and pageantry marked by gun shots. Prosperous and wealthy peasant farmers in the South West and North West Regions upon sale of farm produce often buy and carry expensive firearms during funerals as symbol of wealth. During celebrations in the study matrix, the firing of musketry has led to lost of human lives and other casualties. In Baligham many people have sustained injuries from stray bullets during funerals. In April 2011, thirteen persons were injured and one killed by a den gun in Mmuock Leteh- Lebialem Division during a death celebration (plate 2).

This culture has become a source of conflict which threatens peace amongst families and communities affected. Because wealth from market gardening has become a indicator of mapping social boundary in rural areas of the study matrix several market gardeners possess both den and expensive modern guns to manifest their status. The locally fabricated guns are dangerous because they are carried by unlicensed persons and shot inside the crowd during traditional dance ceremonies. Modern fire arms are also possessed by unlicensed persons who carry these arms and shoot them unrestrictedly during funerals manifestations. Some people fire these guns even when addicted upon heavy consumption of alcoholic drinks.

Powder guns locally referred to as 'Temehfeghebaah', single and double bar 'Temehkieuh' operated with cartridges and bullet guns are owned by the poor. The emerging rural aristocrats have expensive modern guns that fire several rounds ranging from 4 to 25. Wealth is the main symbol of social stratification in the Grassfields of Cameroon. Today money has become a new symbol of power and social status during funerals in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon. Wealthier farmers are easily identifiable by these expensive guns and fancy clothing. Fire arms are shot in several rounds continuously to manifest wealth and status. Wealth from market gardening has therefore become a weapon of marking social boundary in the study matrix with the impact on human lives.



Plate 2. Uncontrolled shooting of fire arms (A), during funeral manifestations often lead to horror and grief. A student (B) age 11years at Yaounde Central hospital under re-animation, wounded (C) by three stray bullets on the head (C), at Mmuock Leteh in April 2011

Case Study of a Crime Supply Source and Insecurity Networks

Most youths that animate crime and insecurity in market gardens at Santa Area originate from Bamenda town due to urban problems. Following the ghost town operations of 1990s that wreck Bamenda and violence from multi-party elections leading to a night curfew imposed by the state to curb the situation, crime rate increased, orchestrated by the poor unemployed youths.

Faced with this situation, other forms of social vices emerged making it difficult to cope with urban life. Nocturnal businesses were paralysed while prostitution

heightened in the town. Organised raiding of Santa market gardens and other areas adjacent to Bamenda for cash income became a mode for urban-based bandits. Poverty increased and was marked by a rise in the consumption of second handed goods and rampant begging along the streets. In some areas, urban based migrants who denied returning home at the onset of these crises cultivated vices such as conman ship and gambling in market places, crowded roadsides and play grounds, as a coping strategy. This they did to maximise profits. Crime rate increased leading to tension and suspicion that reduced population circulation at night. Insecurity heightened at homes, streets, roadsides, motor

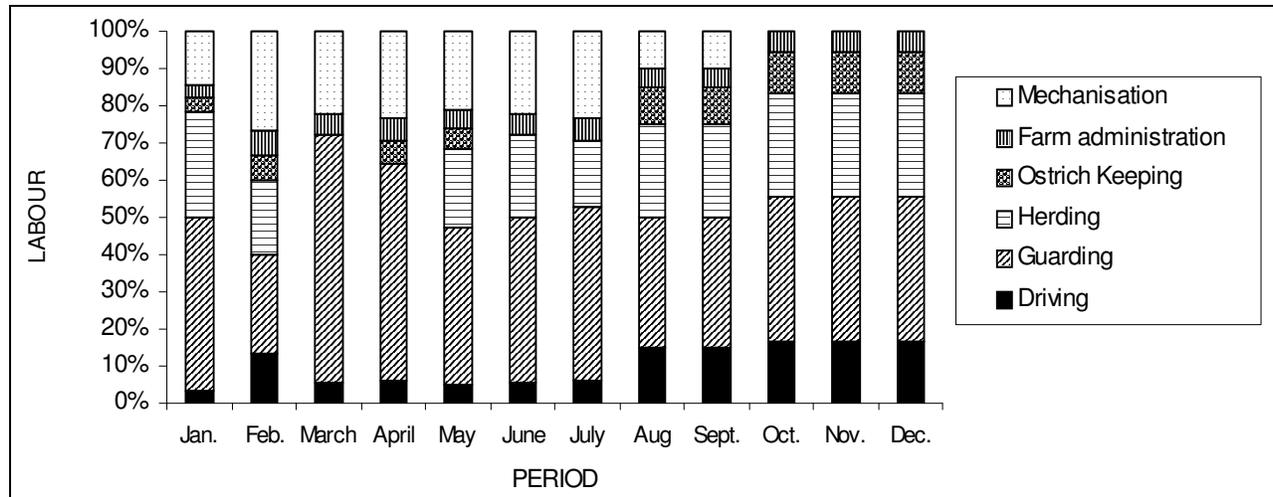


Figure 2. Seasonal Variation of Hired Labour intake by Activity in the IRF, Mbei.
Source: Realised from data compiled at IRF Santa, April 2011

parks, market places, bus stops and other places that harbour migrants and their cash income activities. This environment marked by general hardship played down on youth activities as it made life uncomfortable in Bamenda, forcing a significant proportion of the population who could not cope with the situation to return to Santa Area.

Government reforms to control rising indecency in the city further aggravated the situation in Santa. In efforts to keep the town clean, reduce traffic congestion. The urban council demolished makeshift shades carrying assorted business items and dwellings along the streets belonging to hawkers, and roadside vendors. This forced many of the urban dwellers who could not adapt to the new happenings to return home. About 25 % of these crisis migrants opened up large market gardens in the Santa Area and Lebialem Division while others continued to operate crime. The more successful urban returnees have become profiteers of the urban crisis judging from their earnings and investments (Gwan, and Ojuku 2005).

In Santa Area crime is perpetrated by a squeeze job market in the countryside. Most labour migrants in search of jobs in market gardening areas end up in frustration due to limited openings. Crime becomes an alternative way of fighting unemployment and poverty especially in off farm season activities. Out of a population of 30 migrants looking for jobs in the Integrated Rock Farm (IRF) Santa in 2009 only 14 were recruited in herding, farm administration, animal traction, security of the estate and poultry farming (fig 2). The disorder that marked the democratisation process in the 1990s and cyclical fluctuations in the world market prices of coffee played a key role for the bad situation experienced in IRF (Ojuku 2011). The firm over the years witnessed an influx of labour migrants for jobs. It represents a veritable scheme that has exerted a positive impact on the life of the population of the North West and South West Regions.

5.5 Farmer Grazier Conflicts

Disputes over land-use for farming and grazing have plunged Bororos (Fulani) graziers into a multitude of attacks with resident farmers and graziers leading to crime and insecurity. Bororo are marginalized Fulfulde groups found in the western grassfields of Cameroon. They migrated from northern Nigeria via Donga Mantung Division and settled in the Sabga plains of Mezam in the first half of the 20th century (Nkwi and Warnier 1987). As a result of their nomadic movements and large herds of cattle brought along, they occupied the higher altitudes in the Santa grasslands. In these new areas, they were granted grazing and farmlands for use by members of the Ngemba annual meeting in 1964 (File N° 3146/PAB). Their settlements spread over the years on savannah western Cameroon.

In the newly acquired lands, these Fulani graziers built huts 'mbouguru, mbuteru or buccaru' and erected paddocks within which they kept their cattle in the evenings. On the open vast grasslands and gallery forest they grazed their cattle at times assisted by paid Ngemba indigenes known as 'wainabe'. These cattle population numbered more than 16 830 heads in 1975 (Boutrais, 1978).

Periodic assaults from market gardeners have compelled those living on the fertile lands to resettle along slopes and crestlines prone to landslides. These practices that began in the study area in 1986 after the first settlements were implanted in Banjah and progressively in Awing, Santa Mbei, Njong and Pinyin have cemented bitter relations between the Bororo and migrant farmers over time. Farmers complain about cattle encroachment into farmlands and heavy crop damages yearly.

Reacting to these crises in the 1970s, a prefectorial order No 130/AP/DBS/BRD of 29/09/1972 demarcated agricultural land and pasture lands. According to Ngoufo (1988), the prevalence of this crisis along the slopes of the Bamboutos Mountains led to the passing of a presidential decree (N° 78/263 of 03 July 1973) that obliged graziers to restrict their grazing activities at the peaks and steep slopes of the region. Some of the Mbororo have of recent been compelled to become farmers face with recurrent encroachments into their lands and declining livestock numbers. Others have built permanent houses roofed with corrugated iron sheets to resist these incursions and possible expulsion from lands they occupy since 1930. Mbororo without cattle and lazy youths are today a permanent source of insecurity in market gardening areas on the North West and South West Regions

Local commercial farmers and owners of agro-pastoral firms orchestrate these raids on the Mbororos in many places. Mbororos cattle have also been under chronic attacks in Pinyin. Some of the Mbororo victims of land expropriation were absorbed by the IRA agro-pastoral firm and regularly paid on permanent basis for works done (Fieldwork 2015). In Menka-Pinyin, migrant farmers have occupied lands belonging to these Mbororos with market gardens. Where this occupation has met with resistance, livestock have been attacked and maimed and some stolen or detained by the traditional anti-gang society known as 'Tongaré'. Field investigations revealed that in Santa Mbei and Jong pasture lands have been sprayed with poisonous pesticides in some isolated cases to kill livestock belonging to the Mbororos (Mokon Shadrack, 2005, Fogap Martin 2015 interviewed). Some victims and families affected in the past were obliged to migrate to Momo Division for security reasons (Mahe, 2003).

Confronted with these problems from migrant farmers and the local population, some Fulani have resorted to alternative solutions. Many have been compelled to resettle at the rim lands of Nzindong, Balepo, Gangong and Ashong face with these difficulties. Also, the Santa areas of Awing, Njong, Alatening, Baligham where pockets of their camps and farmlands are found have been at the forefront of multi-conflicts with farmers leading to court cases. Such cases have drained away their financial resources and reduced the cattle population as they seek for favours from unscrupulous government officers during these cases.

Assaults from migrant farmer have combined with crises such as nocturnal cow theft, cattle diseases (rinder pest) in the 1980s and rivalry for Ardo titleship to impoverish the Mbororos leading to a redynamisation of their activities. Today many of them are involved in irish potatoes commercialization in Menka Pinyin and motor bike transport in the study sites. Some also cultivate huckleberry at Banjah, Alatening, and Baba II for sale. They use cow droppings around their home surroundings to grow these crops. Labour is hired from Ngemba communities. Reacting to the situation of Mbororos in the Bamboutos Highlands one of the Mbororo in Pinyin made the following revelations:

“Local farmers do farm directly near cattle camps to claim damages when these crops are destroyed. Some block cow tracks, salt licks and roads leading into water drinking points making it difficult for cows to neither feed, graze nor move freely. Farmer-Grazier conflicts are not new in Pinyin and its neighbourhood. They made news in Santa area in the 1990s. Cattle were poisoned with gamaline, wounded with cutlasses, some stolen at night and sold in Bali park-Bamenda, and Mbororo huts burnt down in Pinyin. Political differences raised suspicion on Mbororos belonging to the opposition parties. Our lands were invaded and occupied by profiteers of this situation...

Ibrahim Gambo, 35 years old, Mbororo Pinyin, 2005 cited in Ojuku (2005).

Reacting to these accusations the resident migrant farmers justify their actions on many grounds. These include seasonal invasion of vegetable cash crop and food crop lands by stray animals.

These confrontations are always hard to control except through the intervention of law enforcement authorities. In 2004, the Governors of West and South West Provinces of Cameroon, restored order at Tandelebeng by laying a demarcation boundary for lasting peace, following a prolonged violent conflict that had sparked up chaos between Bafou and Mmuock Leteh villages, leading to the loss of valuables such as cash crops, farmsteads and irrigation equipment (CRTV 2003).

Land-use conflicts and insecurity in the Western Cameroon are not new and restricted to the study area. They date back to beyond the 1940s and 1950s. Many

Table 4. Victims of Farmer-Grazier Conflicts in Mbororo Ardorates of the South West and North West Regions

Name	Place	Year	Damages	Circumstances of Losses	Factor
Ardo Gaga	Pinyin	1979	20 cows	Poisoning with Pesticides	Cropland
Ardo juli	Santa Njong	1990	20 cows	Poisoned	Conflicts
Ardo Haman	Santa	2001	700 cows	Sales and gift for favours	Kinship struggle
Ardo Sanda	Pinyin	NA	130 cows	Theft, Land problems	Conflicts
Da Jami	Santa-Mbei	1992	45Cows	Land Expropriation (IRF)	Modernisation
Ardo Njaouga	Upper Farm Santa	1994	-	Land expropriation (EPA)	Modernisation
Eggi Bangeh	Gong-Babadjou	2004	10 cows	Spraying of open pasture land with pesticides	Land dispute

Source: Malam Teukeur and Addurrah A., 27 November 2003 cited in Ojuku (2005)

parts of the grassfields where the Ngemba Annual council meeting had granted Mbororo migrants land to settle and rare their livestock came under pressures of conflicts (Nkwi, and Warnier, 1982). In 1965, Ardo Musa the defender of Upper Ngemba Mbororo interests, raised several complains against local indigenes for their periodic assaults on the Fulani. In 1979 Ardo Gaga of Pinyin lost many cattle killed by using toxic pesticides sprayed on animal pasture. In 1990 a similar fate occurred to Ardo Julli at Njong. Today, the conflicts make news in many areas of the grassfields (Ardo Jilah, interview, Ntaya Bafut, 2003).

In Aghem, Wum, the paramount Fon was taken hostage for more than 8 weeks in 2003 for recurrent assaults of Mbororo cattle on their farm lands. The women complain of cash and food crops destroyed by cows at a period many of them are poor and hit by the economic crisis (C.R.T.V. 2003). Only the intervention of the Governor of North West Region and Senior Divisional for Wum, former Prime Minister of Cameroon, and livestock/agricultural staff restored order in that area. According to the Fon of Aghem, such conflicts date to 1973. In a presidential decree N°78/263/ of 03/7/1978, authorization was granted to grazier to direct their livestock on steep slopes and out of farm lands.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

One notes from issues raise in this paper that prosperity in agriculture, and resulting crime, conflicts and insecurity have been a new characterisation of rural Western Cameroon. The chain of economic crises identified in Cameroon, virtually paralysed the population but broad its fortunes in the post crisis period. Improvements in income from market gardening have led to the emergence of new aristocrats in the study sites. This relocation of wealth to the rural milieu by market gardening has been a mixed blessing. While pressure has reduced in the cities marked by a reverse of rural exodus in favour of vegetable production basins, crime and insecurity has grown and remains a new challenge to

development planners in Cameroon. In the South West and North West Regions of Cameroon, rising insecurity affects the rural population. Wealth from agriculture has reduced poverty amongst successful farmers and at the same time increased crime in these regions.

The paper holds that insecurity in its various forms results from land use conflicts, arm robbery, farmer grazier conflicts, and excessive lifestyle in funeral manifestations. In each situation human lives, valuable property, infrastructure and resources have been destroyed. Insecurity is not new in the Cameroonian society faced with poverty. In the northern part of Cameroon, rural communities involved in grazing have been taken hostage by high way robbers and Bokoharam insurgents for ransom. These assaults have also been characterised by human casualties and insecurity. Pirates in the high seas of Cameroon have claimed many lives for money. In Cameroon cities like other parts of sub Saharan Africa, insecurity reigns with many people assaulted for money on daily basis. Government attention tends to focus more on urban areas and neglect the rural world that harbours majority of the poor and food production basins. Security concerns should be a focus of the government in the North West and South West Regions and other rural settings of Cameroon to secure and save lives, property and other hard earned investments. Such efforts will curb rural crime, promote social cohesion, national integration and collective efficacy in the mitigation of this enigma for security concerns.

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