

# Resilience through Mobility: Urban Residents' Adaptation Strategies in Conflict-Affected Bamenda, Cameroon

Gilbert Zechia Mofor

Department of Geography

Higher Teacher Training College

University of Bamenda, Cameroon

Japhet Kuma Chiane Beng (Correspondence Author)

Department of Geography and Planning

University of Bamenda, Cameroon

E-mail: [chiane beng@yaoo.com](mailto:chiane beng@yaoo.com)

Marcel Doumtsop

Department of Geography and Planning

University of Bamenda, Cameroon

Received: September 2, 2024    Accepted: October 22, 2024    Published: November 1, 2024

doi:10.5296/ijrd.v11i2.22217    URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/ijrd.v11i2.22217>

## Abstract

The global phenomenon of human population displacement during environmental stressors and socio-political crises has far-reaching impacts. In urban areas, residents' mobility is often driven by various factors. This study investigates urban residents' mobility as a resilience strategy in response to the Anglophone socio-political crisis in Bamenda, Cameroon. Employing a case study design and purposive sampling, the research selected five neighborhoods based on the extent of residential changes as a result of the ongoing socio-political crisis in the region. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 105 respondents and focus group discussions to explore residential mobility as a

resilience mechanism. The findings revealed that five specific population groups were affected by the socio-political crisis, prompting them to relocate within Bamenda. Among those displaced, 60% were households led by individuals aged 26-32. Key reasons for displacement included ongoing violence, loss of life, family disconnection, property destruction, disrupted economic activities, halted education, and increased internally displaced persons in the region. The study also found that residents with higher financial status could relocate to safer areas, while vulnerable individuals often fled or temporarily sought refuge in forests. The prolonged crisis, over seven years now, has severely impacted Bamenda residents, escalating forced displacement rates. Consequently, the study recommends that the government implement targeted urban planning policies to enhance resilience strategies, focusing on affordable social housing, resettlement structures, and improved access to basic services for displaced residents, while fostering peace and stability in Cameroon's Northwest and Southwest regions.

**Keywords:** Resident, Resilience, Mobility, Household, Bamenda, Socio-Political, Crisis

## 1. Introduction

Population displacement in both developed and developing countries is often triggered by a combination of socio-political, environmental, and economic factors. In developing countries, conflicts and violence, such as the Syrian Civil War, have led to massive displacements, with millions fleeing to neighboring countries and Europe (Seven, 2022). The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine has further exacerbated global displacement, with over 8 million people forced to flee Ukraine and more than 200,000 people losing their lives since the conflict began in 2022 (Pandey, Wells, Stadnytskyi, Moghadas, Marathe, Sah, & Galvani, 2023). Environmental disasters, such as the 2010 Haiti earthquake, have also caused significant displacement due to the destruction of homes and infrastructure (Salam, & Khan, 2020). In developed countries, economic factors and political instability, like the Brexit-induced uncertainty in the UK, have prompted some residents, particularly immigrants, to relocate (Jancewicz, Kloc-Nowak, & Pszczółkowska, 2020). Additionally, environmental concerns, such as the wildfires in California and USA, have led to the evacuation and displacement of thousands of residents due to the imminent threat to their safety and property (Locke, 2020). There are also variety of triggers, from political turmoil to environmental hazards, which caused population displacement across different regions in the world.

The socio-political crises ravaging African countries have wrought immense suffering, leaving behind trails of devastation, loss, and despair. In South Sudan, a brutal civil war that began in 2013 has claimed nearly 400,000 lives, forcing over 4 million people roughly a third of the population to flee their homes, with many seeking refuge in neighboring Uganda, Ethiopia, and Sudan (Moro, 2022). The ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is another harrowing example, where ethnic violence and rebel insurgencies have displaced more than 5 million people, rendering them homeless and vulnerable, while thousands have perished in the relentless chaos (Rugaza, 2022). In the Tigray region of Ethiopia, a conflict that erupted in 2020 has spiraled into a humanitarian catastrophe, with an estimated 600,000 people dead and over 2 million displaced, many of whom have been

driven into dire conditions in Sudan and other regions of Ethiopia (Ezugwu, & Duruji, 2023). The heart-wrenching plight of these innocent civilians, uprooted from their homes and thrust into a cycle of violence and poverty, revealed the disheartening reality that far too many African nations are engulfed in turmoil, leading to unimaginable suffering and widespread human displacement.

Nigeria's socio-political crisis, characterized by deep-seated ethnic, religious, and political tensions, has led to significant displacement of residents across various regions (Abasili, Ezeneme, & Nwokike, 2023). In the Northeast, the Boko Haram insurgency has devastated communities, forcing millions to flee their homes, particularly in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states (Ya'u, 2022). The Middle Belt region plagued by herdsman-farmer conflicts, has seen violent clashes over land and resources, displacing thousands in states like Benue and Plateau (Duke, & Agbaji, 2020). In the South-South and Southeast, agitation for resource control and separatist movements, respectively, have fueled unrest, causing widespread insecurity and displacement (Akeem Idowu, 2023). For instance, the Niger Delta's militancy has not only disrupted oil production but also forced residents to relocate due to the threat of violence (Rufus, & Cocodia, 2023). These crises, rooted in historical grievances and socio-economic disparities, have created a volatile environment, leading to large-scale internal displacement and a fractured society.

The Anglophone socio-political crisis in Cameroon has devastated countless lives and properties particularly in Bamenda City, where the crisis has transformed the once-thriving area into a ghost town (Bate, Balgah, & Yenshu, 2023). The persistent conflict, has led to rampant violence, with frequent clashes between non-State armed groups and government forces (Crawford, Kewir, Annan, Gaby, Kah, Kiwoh, & Sone, 2022). Bamenda city, one of the hearts of the Anglophone region, has witnessed horrid scenes of mass killings, burning of homes, schools, hospitals, and other essential infrastructure (Amin, 2021). The incessant violence has not only disrupted economic activities but also forced thousands to flee their homes in search of safety. Many residents have sought refuge out of Bamenda city where some moved closer to Nigeria. Living far from the life they once knew (Ikuteyijo, 2020). The heartbreaking destruction of public and private properties, combined with the collapsed of key social services, underscores the grave impact of socio-political tensions that have torn apart communities and left Bamenda city in despair.

Substantial literature has explored the ongoing socio-political crisis in Cameroon with significant focus on the broader conflict dynamics and its impacts on the nation. Research by Folefac, (2022), Assessing the impact of political crisis in Cameroon. Keke, (2020), Southern Cameroons/Ambazonia Conflict: A Political Economy, Talla, (2024), Culture or Power: The Eruption of the Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon. Has detailed the overall humanitarian and socio-economic impacts of the Anglophone crisis. However, there is a notable scarcity of research specifically addressing the migratory patterns of residents within Bamenda city amidst the turmoil. This study seeks to fill this critical gap by examining how urban residents' mobility serves as a resilience mechanism in Bamenda city, exploring the specific patterns of resident's mobility and adaptation in the new quarters owing to the ongoing socio-political unrest.

## 2. Theoretical Construct

### *2.1 Mobility Resilience Framework*

Mobility resilience refers to the ability of individuals, communities, and systems to adapt, recover, and thrive despite disruptions triggered by natural disasters (Skeldon, 2008), climate change (IPCC, 2012), pandemics (Tian et al., 2020) and conflicts (Crawley & Skleparis 2018; Seven, 2022). The issue of displacement in the last few years have been subject to many contexts. Scholarly works have demonstrated this in light of several triggering factors that affect movements and access to essential services. The mobility resilience framework suggest that people adapt to stronger social norms in the face of greater external threats and they gain group survival through mobility (Elster and Gelfand, 2021; Harrington and Gelfand, 2014). With 740 million internal migrants and 214 million international migrants in the world (UNDP, 2009), and many more moving short distances and on a temporary basis (Tacoli, 2013), this has made human mobility a fundamental driver of social and demographic change nowadays (Black et al., 2011), influencing the development of cultures, societies and economies at the global and local levels. The current and future characteristics of conflicts and warfare is marked by simultaneous disruptive activities against governments, industries, economies, and societies, acts of violence and aggression. This makes vulnerable population to move and search for livelihood in other places where they end up adapting to the environment of their arrival (Cresswell, 2014).

Resilience is the ability of a system to recover to its original functional structure in the face of external shocks (Martin and Sunley, 2015). In the midst of sudden external challenges, many individuals have demonstrated a remarkable degree of stability during crises, particularly in the context of a pandemic (Gonçalves and Ribeiro, 2020; Hu and Chen, 2021). Numerous studies have shown that social, economic, and demographic factors are often considered in relation to conflict, which is typically associated with mobility (Galeazzi et al., 2021). For example, population mobility can be resilient to external shocks (da Mata Martins et al., 2019), and from a standpoint of system evolution, economy and mobility represent two major parts of society, that is, wealth and population (Liang et al., 2021), the resilience of them are also the common features of social systems in the face of external shocks (Osth et al., 2018). Under the impact of the crisis, mobility shows a certain degree of resilience and heterogeneity at different scales in space (Kang et al., 2020; Mu et al., 2020).



Figure 1. The resilience framework

The resilience framework as shown in figure 1, emphasizes that mobility is not just about physical movement but also includes social, economic, and emotional dimensions. In the face of crisis like the conflict in the two Anglophone regions of Cameroon, mobility resilience manifests through adaptive strategies, people migrate from affected villages into major city centers like Bamenda using informal transportation networks creating makeshift routes. Most of them seeking refuge in cities, tend to adapt to new livelihoods. Psychological resilience allows them to maintain a sense of belonging and connection, fostering community cohesion. Together, these elements create a framework for understanding how people navigate and sustain their mobility during challenging times, ensuring they can access essential services and maintain their livelihoods despite adversity.

## 2.2 Adaptive Mobility Theory by Tim Cresswell (2014)

The proponent of the Adaptive Mobility Theory was Tim Cresswell (2014), and the basic assumptions of the theory suggests that mobility is not just about the physical movement of people but is intricately linked to socio-economic, cultural, and political structures within which individuals operate. It assumes that in times of conflict or crisis, mobility becomes a critical adaptive strategy for survival and revival, where individuals and communities use their ability to move to mitigate risks, access resources, and maintain livelihoods (Cresswell, 2014). The theory also emphasizes that the decision to move or remain in place is influenced by various factors, including safety, resource availability, social networks, and infrastructural support.

In line with the current study, the theory provides a lens through which the adaptive strategies of urban residents can be understood. Mobility is a key component of resilience in conflict-affected areas, as it allows residents to evade danger, maintain access to essential services, and sustain livelihoods. In Bamenda, residents have developed various adaptive strategies to cope with the challenges posed by the current socio-political conflict. For

instance, many individuals rely on informal networks of transport, such as shared taxis and motorbikes, to navigate disrupted public transport systems especially movements from city center to the city fringes and to surrounding rural communities such as Bafut, Bali, Mbengwi, and Ndop. This reliance on alternative mobility options illustrates Cresswell's notion of adaptive strategies where people find ways to maintain accessibility despite infrastructural challenges. Moreover, the concept of emotional resilience emerges prominently. Residents often express a sense of attachment to their neighborhoods, fostering a desire to return despite the conflicts. This emotional connection informs their mobility decisions, for instance, individuals may choose to walk through their neighborhoods rather than take a longer, safer route, displaying a complex interplay between emotional ties and practical mobility. Bamenda's conflict-affected environment creates dynamic challenges, and understanding mobility as a response to these challenges sheds light on how residents adapt to ensure survival and stability. The theory helps explain why and how individuals prioritize mobility in their resilience strategies during periods of instability, thereby framing the study within an established conceptual understanding of mobility in conflict zones. However, despite the strength of the theory, there has been criticism from notable scholars.

Critics such as Kavak, et al., (2024), argue that Adaptive Mobility Theory may oversimplify the complexities of mobility in conflict situations, as it focuses primarily on movement as an adaptive strategy without fully considering the emotional, psychological, and cultural factors that influence decisions to move or stay. Additionally, the theory has been criticized for not adequately addressing the barriers that vulnerable groups may face in terms of mobility, such as economic constraints, physical disabilities, or lack of access to transportation. In this study, the concept highlights how mobility plays a critical role in urban resilience and adaptation in conflict-affected Bamenda, but it should be applied with consideration of the socio-economic realities and limitations faced by the city's residents.

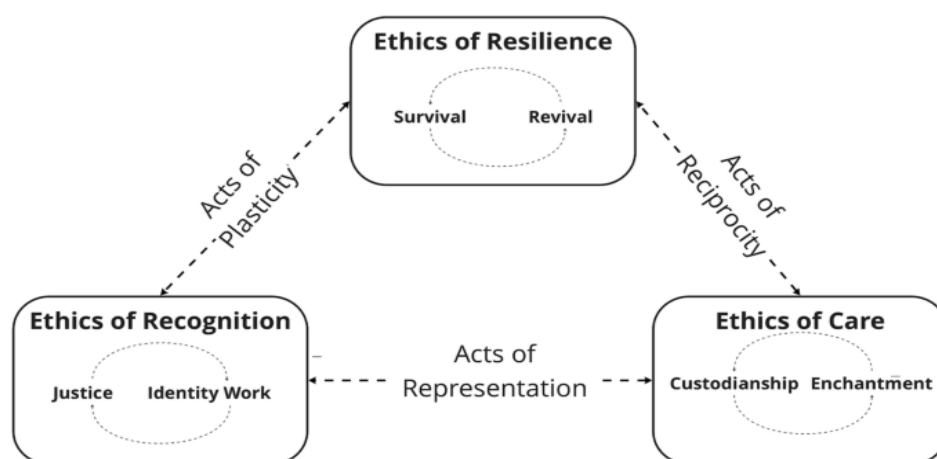


Figure 2. Adaptive Mobility Theory by Tim Cresswell (2014)





## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1 *Situational Review of Socio-Political Crisis in Bamenda City*

The socio-political crises are catalysts for resident relocation underscores how conflict-driven instability compels individuals to move in search of safety and stability. Studies reveal that socio-political crises often lead to significant displacement, with residents fleeing conflict zones to escape violence and insecurity (Anierobi, Obasi, Nnamani, Ajah, Iloma, Efobi, & Chigbe, 2024). For instance, research by Solís, & Aguilar (2024), shows that in regions experiencing intense political unrest, such as Syria and Venezuela, mass relocations occur as people seek refuge from violence and economic collapse. The socio-political crisis in Bamenda city, Cameroon, reveals a harrowing scenario of conflict-driven upheaval. The crisis rooted in longstanding Anglophone-Francophone tensions, has dramatically impacted the region's socio-political and economic fabric (Fokwang, 2023). Recent studies highlight that the conflict has led to significant disruptions in daily life, with reports of violence, forced displacement, and destruction of property (Osman, & Abebe, 2023). Konings & Nyamnjuh, (2003), documented how the conflict has transformed Bamenda city into a battleground, where residents faced not only physical threats but also profound disruptions to their social structures and economic activities. The disheartening scenario includes widespread displacement, with many fleeing to less affected areas or neighboring countries, such as Nigeria, due to the relentless violence and instability (Ajiboye, 2024).

In 2016, the socio-political crisis which emerged from legal and educational system grievances later escalated into arm conflict menacing the peace and unity of Bamenda city and beyond (Eposi, & Ewange, 2021). This protest focuses uniquely on the perceived lack of respect to the educational and legal system as well as the linguistic fault lines. Irrespective of the Government intervention, not much has changed. It is observed that severity of the crisis led to a lot migration waves including internal displaced population from hinterland to Bamenda city and from one area to another within Bamenda city considered much safer. On the contrary the upheaval of 1990 saw the movement of the population from Bamenda city to the country-side which therefore indicated strongly that human will all move to the safer zone (Green zone). In due course the crisis has had devastated consequences to involved movement of population in Bamenda city from unsecured quarter to much more secured quarters. A phenomenon which has triggered recent residential mobility as a means of coping strategy in the study area with new consequences in the new quarters. Population displacement gave birth to other new dire consequences in the receiving or host quarters in the light food insecurity, high and poor living conditions, expensive house rent, a heavy toll on household welfare and waterborne diseases.

#### 4.1.1 Insecure Neighborhoods

Insecurity remains a major concern in most Cities of the developing economies. Field findings revealed that before the advent of the socio-political crisis in the study area, localities such as Temebang (Old Town) has been battling with much insecurity. Common here were theft, kidnappings and killings. Recently, the advent of the socio-political crisis has exacerbated the existing situation in places commonly today called “red zones” or quarters in



the like of Alabukam, Ntankah, Ntamben, Mulang, and Rendevour have been subjected to hostilities, military operations, cross-fire, militia atrocities locally known as the “boysis”, and violence against humanitarian personnel (kidnapping). Owing to this volatile and precarious security environments, the urban households were trapped and several victimized; especially the non-indigenes from the Northwest and Southwest regions as well as the internal displaced population from other divisions such as Boyo, Bui, Menchum, Momo, Ndonga Matung and Ngoketunja resort to move to relatively safer but temporal places as a means of resilience strategy. Aside, field studies indicate that not only the strangers moved but influential Government official, Business persons, retired uniforms officials, lawyers and high profile educated class also moved due to these discriminatory attacks. This internal displacement phenomenon saw some quarters in Bamenda III (Nkwen) and Bamenda I (Up-Station) communities emerged with influx of migrants in search for safer places compare to the departed quarters.

In addition, field observation indicates that, in this crisis prone environments, the provision of social services at the receiving quarters mentioned above remain wanting challenging. Accordingly, livelihood surviving activities such as petite trading and smaller shops that were operating in departed quarters were relocated, some completely closed down owing to this resilience strategy to deter insecurity in the study area. Schools, public infrastructure and churches have completely been shot down in some major parts of the Bamenda town. This further engenders population displacement dynamics in the study area.

#### 4.1.2 Mediate Causes of Residents Mobility within Bamenda City

Population mobility in crisis-prone areas in Cameroon is predominantly driven by a combination of violence, insecurity, and socio-economic instability. The ongoing Anglophone crisis has been a significant catalyst, as clashes between separatist groups and government forces have created perilous living conditions (Kingsley, Mansor, & Enh, 2024). In Bamenda city, residents have faced threats or unbearable situations to their safety which prompted most to relocate to a much safer zones commonly called ‘green zone’ or secured quarters (Mekolle, Tshimwanga, Ongeh, Agbornkwai, Amadeus, Esa, & Atanga, 2023). It is also observed that, this crisis in Bamenda City has triggered economic instability that further aggravated the situation, as the disruption of trade and local businesses has eroded livelihood opportunities. Additionally, the destruction of essential infrastructure, such as schools and healthcare facilities weaken the basic needs of communities in the study area, hence leading to increased emigration of residents in search of safer and more viable quarters. These instance factors have collectively driven residents’ mobility and exemplified the profound impact of socio-political crisis on population in Bamenda city and beyond.

The ongoing insurgency and associated security concerns in Bamenda city have exposed specific population displacement dynamics and trends, which have become crucial strategies for conflict resilience. The conflict's intensity has resulted in both short-term and long-term displacement scenarios: Short-Term Displacement: This refers to temporary movements during periods of heightened tension and violence. Residents relocated within Bamenda city to escape immediate threats or secure safer areas during peak conflict times for short and long

terms. Long-Term displacement in contrast depicts displacement that involve more permanent relocations as individuals and families move to new areas within the city to establish stable living conditions away from hot conflict zones. In all, household mobility in Bamenda city has thus emerged as a significant adaptation strategy for managing and enduring the ongoing crisis. This shifting of residences not only helps individuals and families cope with immediate threats but also aids in building resilience and ensuring long-term stability in the face of persistent insecurity. The underline triggers are classified under pull and push determinants.

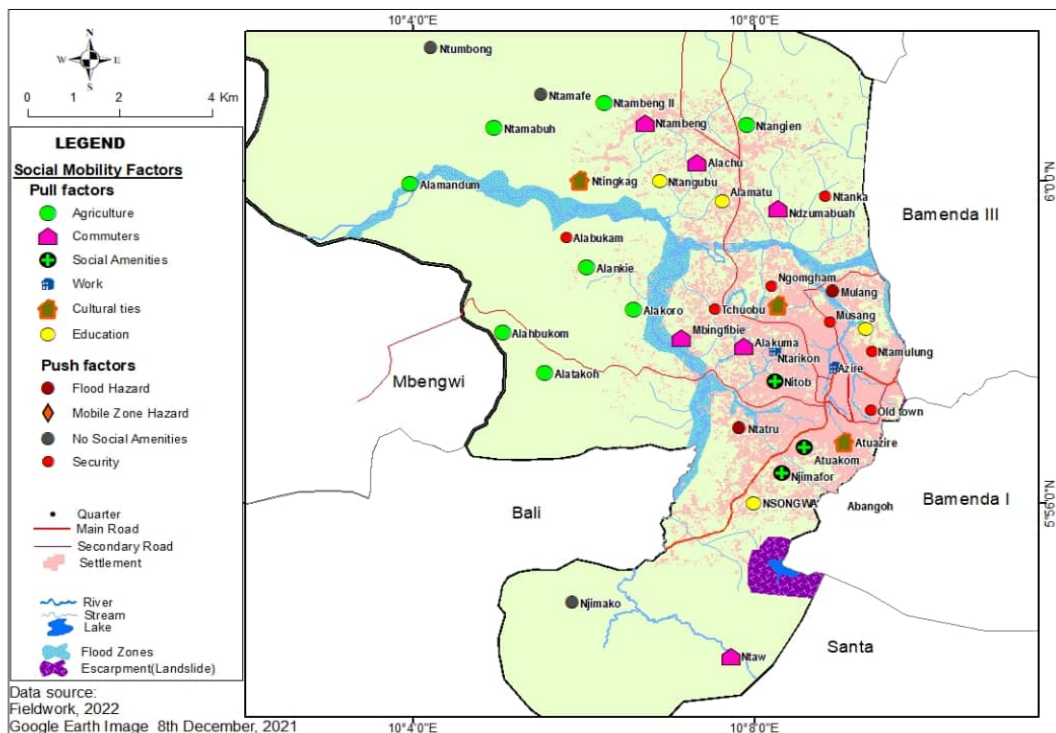


Figure 4. Mobility Determinants of Population in Bamenda, Cameroon

Figure 4 illustrates the various drivers behind population movement within the study area during the conflict period. The severity of the ongoing conflict has compelled a significant portion of the population to relocate, with pull determinants reasons being a primary motivator. Many individuals have been forced to move for permanent residents due to insurgency and concomitant security concerns leading them to seek haven in less volatile areas. The figure also highlights push determinants, although less prominent, which have also contributed to residential changes. For instance, damaged infrastructure, floods, destroyed homes or lack of basic services have pushed residents to relocate into new quarters with novel challenges. More often than not, collective factors underscore the complex interplay of determinants which triggers migration patterns during the crisis (Malik, 2023).

#### 4.1.3 Socio-Economic Drivers of Residents ‘Mobility within Bamenda City

Aside the prevalent of pull and push determinant previously mentioned in the study area, there are some socio-economic drivers which equally contributed to residential mobility within Bamenda city.

Table 1 infers that the need for education of children were top priority for many persons who either moved to the Bamenda I municipality or to the Bamenda III municipality thanks to the relative existing calm where children could go to schools like GBHS Mendankwe, GTHS Mendankwe and GBSS Mbansha for the secondary schools and the host of Nursery and Primary schools. At the level of private higher institutions of learning, schools such as FONAB Polytechnic mile III Nkwen, Harvard and St. Luis University attracted students from the crisis hot spots to these mentioned campuses thanks to relative calm and for the fact that, there were not Government owned educational institutions. Apart from educational pulling factors, many persons who relocated were petite business people who needed safer localities to operate because they could not move out of the Bamenda City. It is based on this resilience strategy that 19.9 % of the petite traders relocated to the Bamenda I and III municipalities with new sustains expenses. At the same time, 14.4 % of the population moved because receiving Quarters were relatively calm and secured than the departed quarters “Red zones” where harassments, abductions and confrontations were more frequent. Given that the receiving accommodations areas are calm; it became a proper site for most Humanitarian organizations whose missions were to assist the displaced population within Bamenda city as a whole. Their present was a motivated factor for many families to relocate to especially in the areas in the Up station Bamenda I Municipality. It was established that, house rent was a variable that highly subjected mobility into two ways; (1) persons with higher income level were obliged to change from substandard houses to modern ones while (2) those with lower income moved involuntarily into relatively low-cost houses. It was also observed that, insufficient space, lifestyle and house sizes were some of the social consequences faced by the displaced population in their new quarters.

Table 1. Socio-Economic drivers of residents ‘mobility within Bamenda city

<b>Drivers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Safer educational institutions	35	19.3
Safer economic space	36	19.9
Peaceful area	26	14.4
Humanitarian institutions	8	4.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2024.

4.2 Implications of Residents' Mobility as a Resilience Option within Bamenda City

In addition to the urban sprawl and informal settlements leading to rapid rate of construction in the study area, the notion of salient crisis resilience actions by the urban population to overcome insecurity brought more changes and implications. Residential mobility as a coping strategy was not the only tactic but the focus of this articles pivot on resident mobility. Figure 5 shows the variables of social implications of resident mobility in the Bamenda city.

According to field findings, the control of population mobility and infrastructural planning in an urban milieu become intricate and obsolete during crisis period. Between 2016 and 2022, Bamenda city, one of the crisis hotspots in the Anglophone region of Cameroon has seen the development of consistent informal settlements, urban sprawl, and periodic unnecessary traffic, while some quarters (Alabukom, Mulang, Ntanka) are deserted. A few persons that still live in these localities are mainly the indigenes, and those who have been there for a length of time with a good mastery of the environment. Agriculture, a rare livelihood activity observed in the tropical cities has now becomes the norms rather than the exception as the concentric concentration of agricultural land use is found all-round the urban fringe of the Bamenda city.

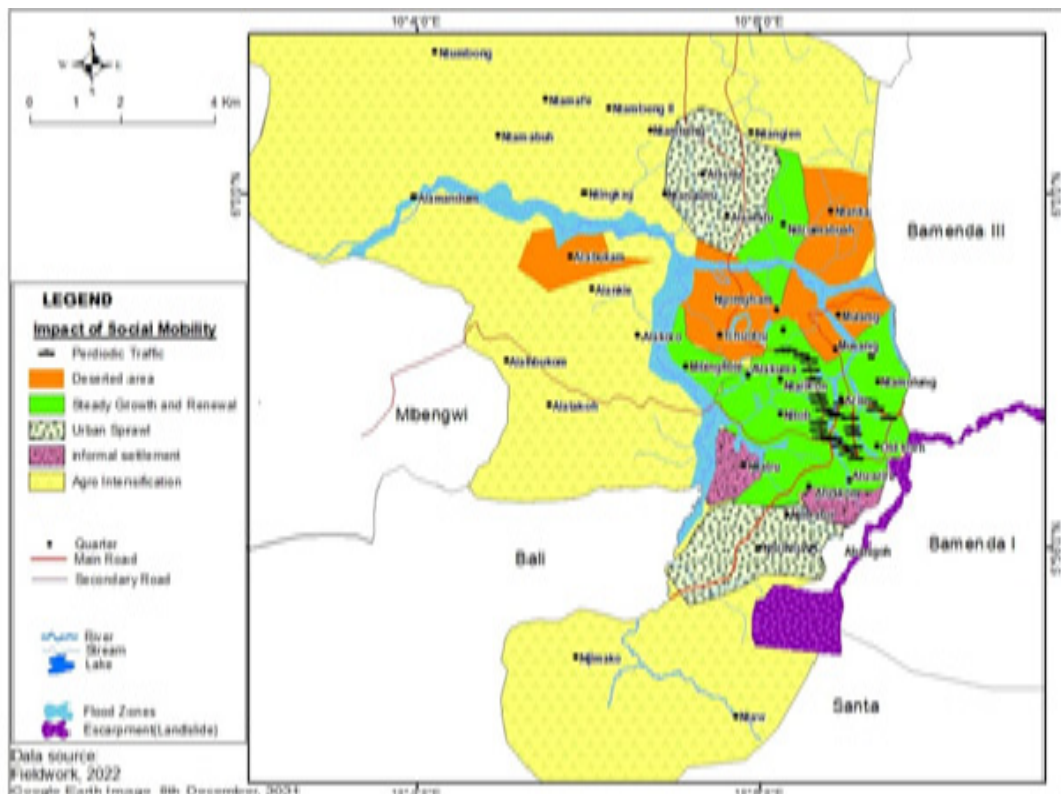


Figure 5. Social Impact of mobility in the Bamenda city

Source: Fieldwork, (2024).

This is meant to feel the internal displaced population from hinterlands who flee because crisis. In terms of urban development trends, the population perceived at 50.48% that informal settlement development is fast increasing (figure 6). This can be opined with field examples from Sissia I, Sissia II, Ntatu, and Alabukom. Complementary informal business activities along major streets, edges of major road axes, mobile money and credit union kiosk, petrol kiosk, fruits kiosk, roadside restaurants, photocopies and drinking spots have also gained grounds. The proportion of the urban households who assessed settlement development as decreasing phenomenon stood at (6.66%). There are those still living further away from the central town and found in conflict hot spot quarters. Where pockets of resistance persist, some people keep on living the area for safety area while those left behind do not carry out any meaningful developmental activity with the fear that the conflict may escalate or compulsory paying of “liberation Tax”.

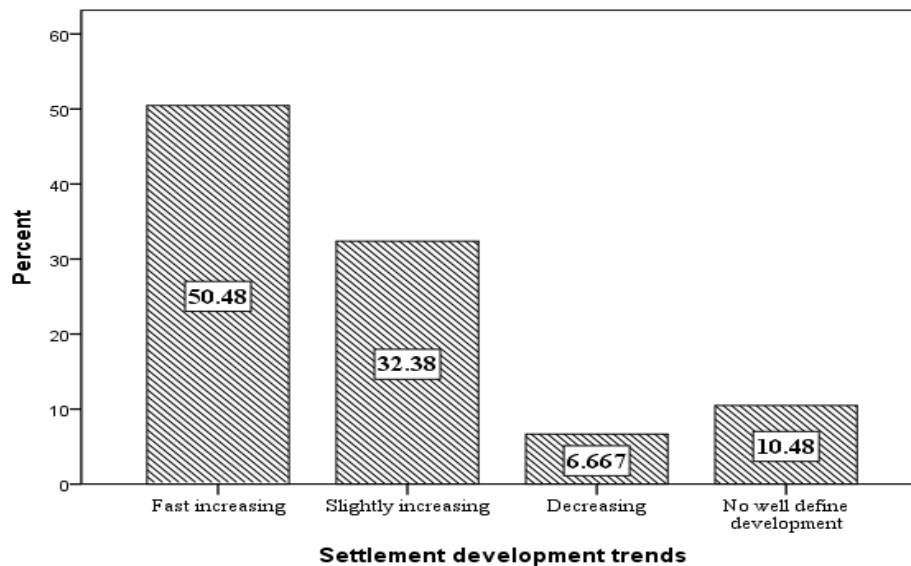


Figure 6. Informal settlement trends in the study area

Source: Fieldwork, 2024.

#### 4.3 Challenges and Sustain Strategies of Urban Mobility

The challenges associated with the sustainable management of residential mobility are multifaceted and complex, particularly in the context of the persistent socio-political crisis in Bamenda city. In this light, key issues including resistance from the displaced population, which often stems from a lack of trust in management processes and fear of further displacement (Cho, 2024). Inadequate funding compounds the problem as limited financial resources restrict the ability to implement effective management strategies and provide necessary support to those affected (Malakoane, Heunis, Chikobvu, Kigozi, & Kruger, 2020). There is a shortage of trained personnel equipped to handle the complexities of managing residential mobility in crisis situations, and a general lack of expertise in slum management



exacerbates the difficulties in the study area. The study further indicates that these challenges are particularly distinct in Bamenda city, where the socio-political unrest has led to widespread displacement and increased strain on management efforts. It is obverse that, rapid influxes into safer quarters can lead to informal settlements and slums, where conditions are often poor and lacking basic amenities. To tackle these issues, there is a need for sustain strategies including enhancing public sensitization to foster better understanding and cooperation from the displaced population. Revising the process for acquiring accommodations and building permits could restructure legal and regulatory aspects, making it easier to manage new housing developments. By implementing these strategies, the management of residential mobility in time of crisis could become more effective, helping to address the severe impacts of the ongoing socio-political crisis on both the displaced population and the overall urban infrastructure in Bamenda City.

#### 4.3.1 Actors and Household Age in Residential Mobility Drive Within Bamenda City

The result from the descriptive analysis of Table 2 and figure 7 present actors and age of urban households in the study area. Findings identified famers, students, traders, civil servants as the main actors involved in this displacement drive. Further insights states that, the relocated students and pupils are the main group of people who moved. This is because the ramification of the socio-political crisis has disrupted most state institution from operating with only fewer ones operating in most areas of the Bamenda City. Thus, students who left the rural areas in Bamenda city where schools are not operating usually go back home during the weekend to collect food and student's allowances. It was established that, those who moved range between the ages of 26-32 years closely followed by the age range 18-25 years (figure 7). This is inferring to the ramification of the socio-political crisis which has pushed children of school going age and those of the job market to hustle in the Bamenda City.

Table 2. Actors involved in the Mobility

S/N	Actors
1	Farmers
2	Students
3	Traders
4	Civil servants
5	Relocated students

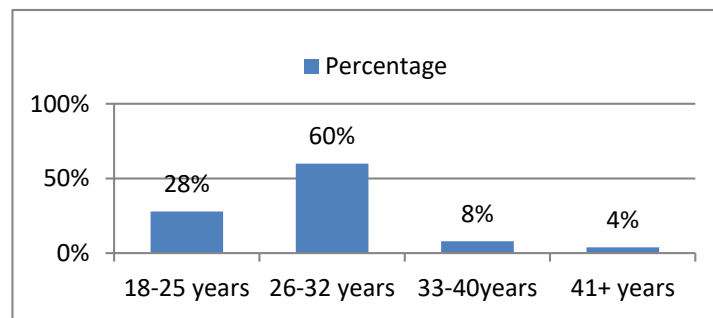


Figure 7. Age range of households

Source: Fieldwork, (2024).

## 5. Conclusion

The study highlights the significant role of urban residents' mobility as a resilience driver within Bamenda City, Cameroon, amidst the ongoing Anglophone socio-political crisis. Increased migration to cities in Cameroon continues to strain urban infrastructure, leading to overcrowded housing, inadequate sanitation, and strained public services especially cities hosting internal displaced population like the case of Bamenda City. It is observed that, the crisis has triggered substantial population movement as residents seek safety and stability, leading to notable shifts in residential patterns. Although many persons have displaced out of the Bamenda city owing to this crisis but the striking phenomenon is the residential rotation as strategy to cope with persistent crunch. It obvious that while mobility is a necessary response to immediate threats posed by violence and instability, it also reflects a complex interplay of factors including economic instability and loss of infrastructure. Within urban residential mobility has emerged not only as a survival strategy but also as a mechanism for resilience, enabling affected displaced populations to adapt and rebuild in the face of adversity in the city. However, the challenges associated with managing this mobility drift, such as resistance from displaced populations and inadequate resources, highlight the need for more effective and nuanced approaches to urban planning and resettlement possibilities.

Furthermore, the study emphasized the importance of integrating sustainable management strategies to support displaced populations and facilitate their relocation processes. Enhancing public sensitization, revising regulatory frameworks, and ensuring fair compensation are critical steps towards improving the efficacy of mobility management in crisis contexts. The resilience demonstrated by the residents of Bamenda City amidst such severe socio-political turmoil illustrates a people adaptability and resourcefulness. This research contributes valuable insights into the dynamics within urban residential mobility in crisis situations and provides a foundation for policymakers and practitioners to develop more targeted and effective strategies to address the challenges faced by displaced communities within or out of the geographical places.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations were reached:

- i. The Cameroon government should ensure safe and accessible transportation routes for residents during conflict periods, enhancing their ability to relocate or access essential services.
- ii. The government should encourage the use of mobile technology for conflict-affected urban residents to share real-time information about safe zones, conflict hotspots, and alternative transport routes, aiding in efficient mobility.
- iii. There should be support to community through transportation networks to facilitate collective relocation and provide shared resources for vulnerable groups, especially women, children, and the elderly, during conflict-induced mobility needs.
- iv. There should be incorporation of mobility-focused resilience strategies into urban planning policies, ensuring that transportation and relocation are central to conflict-adaptation frameworks in cities like Bamenda.

### **Informed consent**

Obtained.

### **Ethics approval**

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Canadian Center of Science and Education.

The journal and publisher adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

### **Provenance and peer review**

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

### **Data availability statement**

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

### **Data sharing statement**

No additional data are available.

### **Open access**

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

### **Copyrights**

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to

the journal.

## References

- Abasili, K. N., Ezeneme, E. V., & Nwokike, C. E. (2023). Analyzing the Roots of Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria: An In-depth examination. *GSJ*, 11(10). Retrieved from <http://www.globalscientificjournal.com>
- Ajiboye, B. M. (2024). In quest of pastures new: the horrifying narratives of forced and irregular migrant returnees in the Southwest, Nigeria. *GeoJournal*, 89(5), 188. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-024-11193-5>
- Akeem Idowu, S. (2023). *Between Self-determination and Secession: An Assessment of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) Agitations for the Independence of Southeast Nigeria*, Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/10037/33034>
- Amin, J. A. (2021). President Paul Biya and Cameroon's Anglophone crisis: *A catalog of miscalculations*. *Africa Today*, 68(1), 95-122. <https://doi.org/10.2979/africatoday.68.1.05>
- Anierobi, C. M., Obasi, C. O., Nnamani, R. G., Ajah, B. O., Iloma, D. O., Efobi, K. O., ... & Chigbe, E. I. (2024). Communal conflicts in Nigeria: Assessment of the impacts on internally displaced persons and settlements amidst COVID-19 pandemic. *Heliyon*, 10(9). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e30200>
- Bate, N. A., Balgah, R. A., & Yenshu, E. (2023). Conflict and livelihood changes in the south west region of Cameroon: A social capital perspective. *International Journal of Social Sciences Perspectives*, 12(1), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.33094/ijssp.v12i1.682>
- Black, R., Adger, W. N., Arnell, N. W., Dercon, S., Geddes, A., & Thomas, D. S. G. (2011). The effect of environmental change on human migration. *Global environmental Change*, 21(S1), S3 S11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2011.10.001>
- Cho, D. T. (2024, May). Civil Conflict's Impact on the Pursuit of Inclusivity, Safety, Resilience and Sustainability in Anglophone Cities of Cameroon. *In Urban Forum (pp. 1-23)*. Springer Netherlands. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12132-024-09513-6>
- Crawford, G., Kewir, J. K., Annan, N., Gaby, A. A., Kah, H. K., Kiwoh, T. N., ... & Sone, P. M. (2022). Voices from 'Ground Zero': Interrogating History, Culture and Identity in the Resolution of Cameroon's Anglophone Conflict. Retrieved from [https://web.facebook.com/SNWOT/?\\_rdc](https://web.facebook.com/SNWOT/?_rdc)
- Crawley, H., & Skleparis, D. (2018). Refugees, migrants, neither, both: Categorical fetishism and the politics of bounding in Europe's 'migration crisis'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(1), 48-64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1348224>
- Cresswell, T. (2014). Mobilities III: moving on. *Progress in Human Geography*, 38(5), 712-721.
- Da Mata Martins, M. C., da Silva, A. N. R., & Pinto, N. (2019). An indicator-based methodology for assessing resilience in urban mobility. *Transport. Res. Transport Environ*, 77,

352-363. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trd.2019.01.004>

Duke, O., & Agbaji, D. D. (2020). Fulani herdsmen crisis and the socioeconomic development of Benue state, Nigeria. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 10(8), 343-357. <https://doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.10.08.2020.p10442>

Elster, A., & Gelfand, M. J. (2021). When guiding principles do not guide: the moderating effects of cultural tightness on value-behavior links. *J. Pers.* 89, 325-337. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12584>

Eposi, T. K., & Ewange, M. P. (2021). Education under attack in Cameroon: The effects of the socio-political crisis on the Anglophone sub-system of education of the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. *International Journal on Integrated Education*, 4(12), 156-171. <https://doi.org/10.17605/ijie.v4i12.2527>

Ezugwu, O. A., & Duruji, M. M. (2023). Tigray Conflict and Political Development in Ethiopia: Assessing Governance, Political Participation and Human Rights. *Journal of African Conflicts and Peace Studies*, 5(2). Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jacaps/vol5/iss2/11>

Fokwang, D. (2023). *Cultivating Moral Citizenship. An Ethnography of Young People's Associations, Gender and Social Adulthood in the Cameroon Gra: An Ethnography of Young People's Associations, Gender and Social Adulthood in the Cameroon Gra*. African Books Collective. Spears Media Press, 2023. Project MUSE. Retrieved from <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/123665>

Folefac, C. H. (2022). *Assessing the impact of political crisis in Cameroon, 1972-2018* (Doctoral dissertation, North-West University (South Africa)). Retrieved from <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2979-4233>

Galeazzi, A., Cinelli, M., Bonaccorsi, G., Pierri, F., Schmidt, A. L., Scala, A., Pammolli, F., & Quattrocioni, W., (2021). Human mobility in response to COVID-19 in France, Italy and UK. *Sci. Rep.*, 11, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-92399-2>.

Gonçalves, L., & Ribeiro, P. (2020). Resilience of urban transportation systems. Concept, characteristics, and methods. *J. Transport Geogr.* 102727. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2020.102722>

Harrington, J. R., & Gelfand, M. J. (2014). Tightness–looseness across the 50 United States. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. Unit. States Am.* 111, 7990-7995. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1317937111>

Hu, S., & Chen, P. (2021). Who left riding transit? Examining socioeconomic disparities in the impact of COVID-19 on ridership. *Transport. Res. Transport Environ.* 90, 102654. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trd.2020.102654>.

Ikuteyijo, L. O. (2020). Irregular migration as survival strategy: Narratives from youth in urban Nigeria. *West African youth challenges and opportunity pathways*, 53-77. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21092-2\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21092-2_3)



IPCC. (2012). *Managing the risks of extreme events and disasters to advance climate change adaptation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jancewicz, B., Kloc-Nowak, W., & Pszczółkowska, D. (2020). Push, pull and Brexit: Polish migrants' perceptions of factors discouraging them from staying in the UK. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*, 9(1), 101-123. <https://doi.org/10.17467/ceemr.2020.09>

Kang, Y., Gao, S., Liang, Y., Li, M., Rao, J., & Kruse, J., (2020). Multiscale dynamic human mobility flow dataset in the US during the COVID-19 epidemic. *Sci. Data* 7, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.13135085>

Kavak, S., Hamza, M., Gammeltoft-Hansen, T., & Stone, R. A. (2024). Refugee agency in secondary mobility decision-making: a systematic literature review. *Frontiers in Human Dynamics*, 6, 1376968.

Keke, R. C. (2020). Southern Cameroons/Ambazonia Conflict: A Political Economy. *Theory & Event*, 23(2), 329-351. Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com>

Kingsley, J. B., Mansor, S., & Enh, A. M. (2024). The Pseudo Integration of former British Cameroons and its Impact on Recurrence of Conflicts (1961-2018). *Tamkang Journal of International Affairs*, 27(2), 129-202. [https://doi.org/10.6185/TJIA.V.202401\\_27\(2\).0003](https://doi.org/10.6185/TJIA.V.202401_27(2).0003)

Konings, P., & Nyamnjoh, F. B. (2003). Strategies of the Biya Government to Deconstruct the Anglophone Identity. In *Negotiating an Anglophone Identity*, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 38(2), 467-469.

Liang, L., Chen, M., Luo, X., Xian, Y., (2021). Changes pattern in the population and economic gravity centers since the Reform and Opening up in China: the widening gaps between the South and North. *J. Clean. Prod.* 310, 127379. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2021.127379>

Locke, M. S. (2020). Insult to injury: Disaster displacement, migrant threat perception, and conflict in host communities (Doctoral dissertation). Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.18292.58245>

Malakoane, B., Heunis, J. C., Chikobvu, P., Kigozi, N. G., & Kruger, W. H. (2020). Public health system challenges in the Free State, South Africa: A situation appraisal to inform health system strengthening. *BMC Health Services Research*, 20, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-019-4862-y>

Malik, A. (2023). Migration patterns and social change: A global perspective. *Al-Anfal*, 1(01), 49-56.

Martin, R., & Sunley, P. (2015). On the notion of regional economic resilience: Conceptualization and explanation. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 15(1), 1-42. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jeg/lbu015>

Mekolle, J. E., Tshimwanga, K. E., Ongeh, N. J., Agbornkwai, A. N., Amadeus, O. A., Esa, I., ... & Atanga, P. N. (2023). Political instability and HIV/AIDS response in the South West

and North West regions of Cameroon: A qualitative study. *BMC Public Health*, 23(1), 2155. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-16994-w>

Moro, L. N. (2022). South Sudan after secession: The failure as a new state and the outbreak of war since 2013. In *Routledge Handbook of the Horn of Africa* (pp. 55-63). Routledge. eBook ISBN 9780429426957

Mu, X., Yeh, A. G.-O., & Zhang, X. (2020). The interplay of spatial spread of COVID-19 and human mobility in the urban system of China during the Chinese New Year. *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science*, 2399808320954211. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2399808320954211>

Osman, A. A., & Abebe, G. K. (2023). Rural displacement and its implications on livelihoods and food insecurity: The case of inter-riverine communities in Somalia. *Agriculture*, 13(7), 1444. <https://doi.org/10.3390/agriculture13071444>

Osth, J., Dolciotti, M., Reggiani, A., & Nijkamp, P. (2018). Social capital, resilience, and accessibility in urban systems: A study on Sweden. *Networks and Spatial Economics*, 18(2), 313-336. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11067-017-9375-9>

Pandey, A., Wells, C. R., Stadnytskyi, V., Moghadas, S. M., Marathe, M. V., Sah, P., ... & Galvani, A. P. (2023). Disease burden among Ukrainians forcibly displaced by the 2022 Russian invasion. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 120(8). PMID: PMC9974407. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2215424120>

Rufus, A., & Cocodia, J. (2023). Biting the fingers that feed: Militias and rural host communities in Nigeria's Niger Delta. In *Rural Violence in Contemporary Nigeria* (pp. 184-206). Routledge. eBook ISBN 9781003201953

Rugaza, D. (2022). Political instability as root of armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences*, 18(3), 204-214. <https://doi.org/10.9734/arjass/2022/v18i3397>

Salam, M. A., & Khan, S. A. (2020). Lessons from the humanitarian disaster logistics management: A case study of the earthquake in Haiti. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 27(4), 1455-1473. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-04-2019-0165>

Seven, Ü. (2022). Armed conflict, violence, and the decision to migrate: Explaining the determinants of displacement in Syria. *Migration and Development*, 11(1), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2020.1859>

Skeldon, R. (2008). Linkages between internal and international migration. In J. DeWind & J. Holdaway (Eds.), *Migration and development across borders: Research and policy perspectives on internal and international migration* (pp. 13-28). International Organization for Migration and Social Science Research Council.

Solís, D. V., & Aguilar, M. D. C. G. (2024). From Central America to Venezuela: Displaced people, forced migration, and the geopolitical agenda of the United States. In *Handbook on Migration and Development* (pp. 188-203). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Talla, D. T. (2024). Culture or power: The eruption of the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon (Master's thesis). Portland State University. <https://doi.org/10.15760/etd.3768>

Tian, H., Liu, Y., Li, Y., Wu, C. H., Chen, B., Kraemer, M. U., Li, B., Cai, J., Xu, B., & Yang, Q. (2020). An investigation of transmission control measures during the first 50 days of the COVID-19 epidemic in China. *Science*, 368(6489), 638-642. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abb6105>

UNDP. (2009). Human development report 2009: Overcoming barriers, human mobility and development. United Nations Development Program.

Ya'u, U. I. (2022). Boko Haram insurgency and environmental degradation in the North-East region of Nigeria, 2009-2021. *Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies*, 2(1). Retrieved from <https://jceas.bdi.uni-obuda.hu/index.php/jceas/article/view/89>

### Copyright Disclaimer

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).