

**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND THE  
ACCUMULATION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN CAMEROON.  
PARTICIPATION COMMUNAUTAIRE ET ACCUMULATION  
DU CAPITAL SOCIAL AU CAMEROUN.**

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine the effect of community participation on social capital in Cameroon. If we consider that local development is a process by which a community manages to coordinate itself around objectives that fall within its territorial jurisdiction, it is clear that the real complexity linked to the emergence of a community lies in its ability to strengthen the links between the actors involved. As part of this research, we used data from the Afrobarometer Round7 survey conducted in 2018 among 1202 individuals. The use of a recursive bivariate probit incorporating the constraint of full-time work supply enabled us to show that community involvement significantly amplifies relationships of trust and solidarity in Cameroon. Consequently, by considering that a high level of social capital is an expedient for the economic and social development of Cameroonian localities, the results of this research provide decision-makers with public policy tools that make it possible not only to improve the effectiveness of collective action movements but also to consolidate the process of self-determination of decentralised local authorities.

**Keywords:** Community participation; social capital; local development; Cameroon.

## RESUME

L'objectif de ce travail était de déterminer l'effet que la participation communautaire exerce sur le capital social au Cameroun. Si on considère que le développement local est un processus par lequel une communauté parvient à se coordonner autour des objectifs qui relèvent de sa compétence territoriale, il est clair que la véritable complexité liée à l'émergence d'une communauté réside dans sa capacité à renforcer les liens entre les acteurs impliqués. Dans le cadre de cette recherche, nous avons exploité les données de l'enquête Afrobaromètre Round7 réalisée en 2018 auprès de 1202 individus. L'utilisation d'un probit bivarié récursif en intégrant la contrainte d'offre de travail à plein temps a permis de montrer que l'engagement communautaire amplifie significativement les relations de confiance et de solidarité au Cameroun. Dès lors, en considérant qu'un capital social élevé est un expédient pour le développement économique et social des localités camerounaises, les résultats de cet article fournissent aux décideurs des outils de politique publique qui permettent non seulement d'améliorer l'efficacité des mouvements d'action collective mais aussi de consolider le processus d'autodétermination des collectivités territoriales décentralisées.

**Mots clés :** Participation communautaire ; capital social ; développement local ; Cameroun.

## Introduction

The concept of social capital is increasingly attracting the interest of economic intellectuals and major international organisations (UNDP, 2020). In the context of underdeveloped countries, the concerns of marginalised populations are forcing us to take an interest in other dynamics linked to interactions within communities (Nana Djomo and Atangana Ondoua, 2012). Furthermore, the new conception of the economy through the Social and Solidarity Economy places people in an ambivalent role; on the one hand, he is a social actor who produces social norms and, on the other, as a passive actor who allows himself to be influenced by existing social constructs without being able to make any changes to them (Lightbody, 2017). In this case, we need to identify the mechanisms by which a community manages to deal with local problems and analyse how these mechanisms produce benefits. (UNDP, 2020).

Indeed, with the State becoming increasingly incapable of managing the economic and social needs of a rapidly expanding population, the majority of people living in vulnerable areas are forced to rely exclusively on the solidarity of their families, neighbours or even the community (Tchitchoua J. and Onana S. P., 2020). This solidarity can manifest itself in the pooling of food resources, mutual assistance in times of need, the exchange of services, family loans, service transfers and other forms of assistance in times of need (Watson, 2016). It is therefore clear that the analysis of social capital is of major interest to the authorities. It is a resource whose role is becoming increasingly apparent in a context of weak economic growth and growing social inequalities. According to Sarate et al (2020), there are many forms of benefit from social capital, which can be grouped according to its effects on living conditions and social cohesion. With regard to improving living conditions, social capital is of major interest in Cameroon (Guiso et al, 2004). Over the past ten years, a number of political and economic crises have exacerbated poverty and reinforced social inequalities (Djatcho et al., 2020). This situation has led to the emergence of informal social protection mechanisms as an alternative means of combating poverty (Mebada, 2018). Today, organisations such as tontines and community associations are developing in all the different spheres of social groups, making it possible not only to provide microcredit but also to build the social infrastructure needed to combat poverty (Metseyem, 2020). As far as social cohesion is concerned, social capital is a tool that promotes social stability within the family or community; it reduces selfishness and strengthens solidarity (UNDP, 2020). Kinship ties are still the primary source of support in many African communities, in the face of difficult and unforeseen events such as illness, accident or death.

The more affluent members offer their support to those in vulnerable situations, and vice versa, depending on the needs expressed (Pleyers, 2020).

In the light of the above, it is clear that the ongoing accumulation of social capital creates a framework for coordination and interaction that is conducive to local development (Sarate et al, 2020). On the other hand, the construction of effective coordination bodies at local level faces a number of complexities that differ from one locality to another. Socio-economic or demographic parameters can to some extent lead to a deterioration in social relations, insofar as community groupings are more likely to reinforce the exclusion of minorities or to install a climate of mistrust and power struggles (Portes, 2014). Given the difficulty in identifying the effect of community participation on relationships of trust and solidarity, this study seeks to answer the question: can strong individual participation in community movements help to extend social capital in Cameroon?

Consequently, the aim of this study is to understand the theoretical justifications of social capital and to highlight the effect that community participation has on its accumulation in Cameroon. More specifically, it will first identify the theoretical and empirical underpinnings of social capital, then present the methodological approach for estimating social capital in collective action movements in Cameroon, and finally present and discuss the research findings.

## **1. Literature review.**

The way in which populations create or destroy social capital has attracted a great deal of attention from economists because they organise themselves collectively or democratically to deal with the concerns that engage their community. However, the existing literature and knowledge on the relationship between community participation and social capital remains unstructured and fragmented. Therefore, in order to clarify the relevance of social capital in participatory movements and to validate its importance for local development, this section will provide theoretical and empirical benchmarks from the literature.

### **1.1 Social capital theory in a participatory approach: from sociology to economics.**

#### **1.1.1. The sociological foundations of social capital.**

The way in which populations create or destroy social capital has attracted a great deal of attention from economists for the simple reason that they organise themselves to deal collectively with concerns that engage the community. However, the existing literature and knowledge on the relationship between community participation and social capital remains unstructured and fragmented (Saz-Gil et al., 2021). Originally, social capital was first used by Hanifan (1916) to describe ordinary life relationships such as companionship, family or any

other social unit. The theoretical formalisation of the concept was produced by researchers in Sociology, whose main contributions on the subject came from the work of Bourdieu (1980), Granovetter (1983, 1985), Coleman (1988, 1990), Burt (1995) and Putnam (1995).

According to Bourdieu (1980), social capital is a set of actual or potential resources linked to a lasting network of more or less institutionalised relationships. In other words, this type of capital is the set of social relationships that an individual can exploit to his or her advantage. The sociologist Granovetter (1983, 1985) develops two social theories: the "strength of weak ties" theory and the "embeddedness" theory. Firstly, Granovetter (1983) shows that social agents maintain strong ties and weak ties<sup>1</sup>, the intensity of which is characterised by the frequency of time spent together, emotional strength, intimacy and reciprocity between individuals. Weak ties are said to be strong because they make it possible to derive benefits similar to those of strong ties. Secondly, Granovetter (1985), through the "embeddedness" theory, shows that the volume of economic transactions does not respond solely to individual motives, but is embedded in a structure of social relationships. Coleman (1988) postulates that social capital depends on social structures and brings two types of benefit to actors, namely the dissemination of information and reciprocity in benevolence understood here as solidarity or cooperation, which is itself based on the requirements of trust, which can be rational (Coleman, 1990) or affective (Blanchot and Campoy, 2021).

To complete the analysis of social capital, we have the work of Putnam (1995), which expands on Coleman's (1990) analysis of reciprocities<sup>2</sup> by emphasising the obligation of the norms that maintain trust. By way of demonstration, Putnam et al (1993) carried out a study of the determinants of democratic performance by comparing the regions of northern and southern Italy. These authors concluded that the best-performing regions were those where networks and norms of reciprocity were stronger. Putnam (1995) further emphasises the positive externalities of social capital by distinguishing three (03) types of ties: *bonding* ties<sup>3</sup> described as horizontal ties that unite individuals within the same community, *linking* ties or vertical ties that are interactions between agents belonging to different groups, and finally *bridging* ties in which individuals are distant from one another<sup>4</sup>. Putnam (1995), based on the American experience,

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<sup>1</sup> Strong ties are sustained and frequent relationships. Weak ties are made up of simple acquaintances.

<sup>2</sup> Reciprocity arises from the fact that any individual who provides assistance to another is confident that he or she will receive the same assistance when circumstances are reversed.

<sup>3</sup> In *bonding* relationships, agents have identical status: they belong to the same group. Family relationships and friendships are explicitly included.

<sup>4</sup> *Bonding* and *linking* types of social capital can be understood as strong ties, whereas *bridging* social capital belongs to the category of weak ties (Granovetter, 1985).

states that social capital is a resource that facilitates coordination between social actors and reduces delinquency (Méda, 2002).

### **1.1.2. The economic foundations of social capital.**

Following the publication of Putnam's work (1993), the theory of social capital became widely accepted in scientific circles and among development practitioners. It has to be admitted that the conceptualisation of social capital in economic analysis arrived a little later than in social analysis (Rozas, 2009). The first contributions from economists were initially pessimistic. For Solow (1999), social capital was an abuse. It is impossible to establish similarities between economic capital and social capital. Moreover, Arrow (1999) insists that social capital is not the result of physical or financial effort and its ownership cannot be transferred like capital in its traditional conception (Claridge, 2018). The use of the notion of social capital as capital is therefore a metaphor which, according to Solow (1999), should be abandoned.

Moreover, while the ideas of the first economists gave clear objections to social capital, it should be noted that social capital has gradually emerged as a resource that influences individual behaviour in the same way as human or financial capital. For Dasgupta (2000) and Durlauf and Fafchamps (2004), a social network is a system of interactions between individuals who form relationships of various kinds. It may be a structure of communication, links or contacts that an individual can mobilise when needed (Dasgupta, 2005). However, a network is not free to operate. According to Aoki (2010), networks maintain a sequence of flows in which trust is the main expedient. To speak of trust would be to consider that social capital is no longer simply a private asset but a collective asset that the community must protect through social norms and a permanent threat of sanction (Bowles and Gintis, 2002).

### **1.2. Investigation of the empirical literature on the link between community participation and social capital.**

The vast majority of studies on social capital are unanimous on its effectiveness in achieving community development. These studies converge on the idea that social capital provides access to a wide range of resources and improves the well-being of individuals by reducing their poverty (Erguibi and Sadik, 2021). The main divergences concern the coordination mechanisms between the social actors involved and the degrees of reciprocity. First of all, it should be noted that community participation is assessed differently in the empirical literature. These may be popular collective action movements, village solidarity organisations or, in general, any group formed into formal or informal associations. The main point is that most studies on the production of social capital are carried out in disadvantaged environments such as villages. The

work of Saz-Gil et al (2021) provides an interesting review of the literature on the links between rural cooperative movements and social capital. According to these authors, community participation is a factor that favours the accumulation of social capital through several mechanisms that can be internal or external.

In internal mechanisms, community participation creates social capital through several anchors: equal rights, interdependencies, organisational justice and collective identification (Saz-Gil et al, 2021). With regard to equality of rights, social capital is generated more in groups of individuals where decision-making power is defined not according to economic criteria but according to democratic and inclusive approaches (Bretos et al, 2017). Secondly, participants in cooperative movements develop horizontal interdependencies between themselves which, according to Sabatini et al, (2014), amplify social capital through generalised trust. In the third analysis, groups that are based on organisational justice<sup>5</sup> are most likely to produce trust and discourage opportunistic behaviour (Mahajan et al.,2013).In the case of collective identification, Majee and Hoyt(2010) Bretos and Errasti (2016) community participation through joint ownership, democratic decision making, teamwork and open communication leads to higher levels of trust and social capital.

Apart from internal mechanisms, several authors show that the social capital created in an organisation can be generalised to all groups in the community (Saz-Gil et al, 2021). Indeed, when participants in a cooperative have developed very good relationships of trust and reciprocity among themselves, it is quite possible that these attitudes will be the same outside their workplace (Sabatini et al., 2014). Moreover, communities also produce bonding social capital. That is, being democratic and participatory organisations, they foster the acquisition of cooperative and supportive values, social norms, trust and civic attitudes among members. We can deduce that the social capital created and accumulated in a cooperative, based on trust and established norms of reciprocity, influences the attitudes and behaviours of members outside the cooperative, thus moving towards the generation of social capital at community level (Arando et al., 2012).

In a more empirical study aimed at gaining a better understanding of how social capital works, Rozas (2009) formalised a model of the interaction between agents in the Peruvian Pisco industry, referring to game theory and more specifically to the coordination games developed by Cooper (1999). Cooper (1999) considers that coordination games produce two effects:

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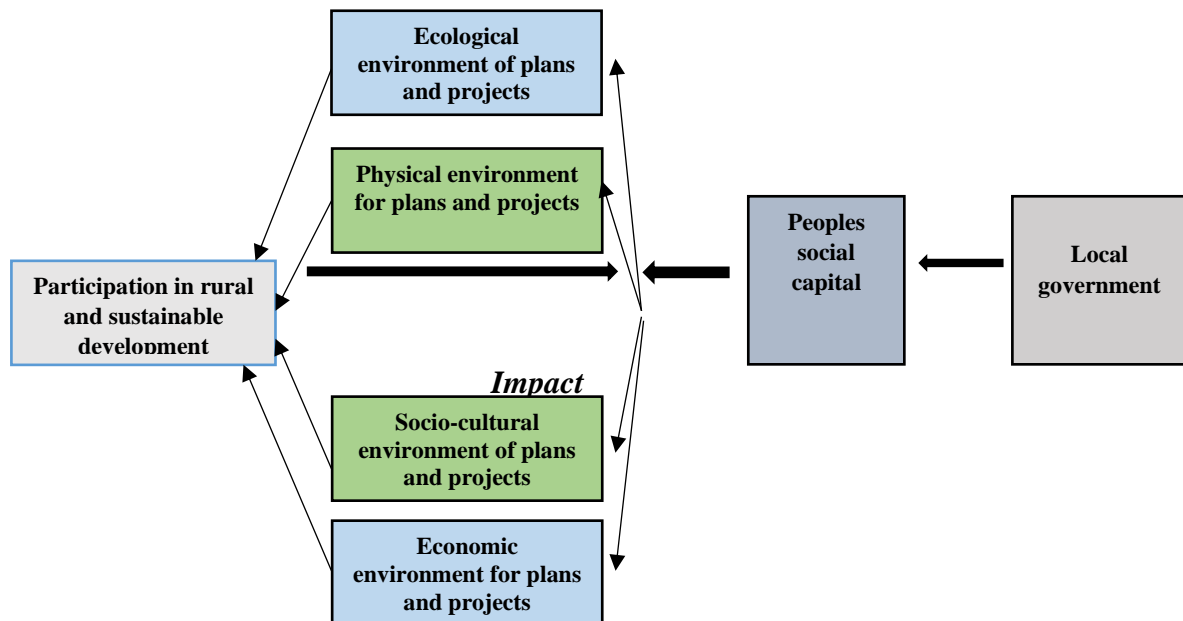
<sup>5</sup> Organisational justice is defined in terms of organisational procedures, transparency in the circulation of information and fairness in the management of employees' careers.

positive externalities and strategic complementarities. The first effect highlights the fact that an individual's action produces benefits for the other participants, while the second reveals that individuals collectively adjust the results of their respective actions. In conclusion, Rozas (2009) believes that coordination leads to a social optimum only if producers choose to harmonise their respective actions by working together.

Valenzuela et al (2020) study the implications of community participation for the accumulation of social capital in the province of Quezon in the Philippines. Focusing specifically on participatory forest management, these authors conclude that community participation in mangrove restoration projects is a practical and effective strategy for sustainable forest management. In other words, it helps to increase social capital, thereby improving communities' access to information and services. In a similar study carried out in Cameroon, Eke Balla (2021) sought to highlight the contribution of social capital to the adoption of sustainable management practices for non-timber forest products in the East Region. The results of this study show that the adoption of sustainable practices in community forest management strengthens the social ties between community members.

As part of a study in rural Iran, Sabet and Khaksar (2020) link the actions of local government, the participation of villagers and social capital. They start from rigorous hypotheses, considering that the mobilisation of members of a local community has an impact on internal social structures, at the same time encouraging the empowerment of established groups. For these authors, we need to move away from traditional thinking, which forces us to focus solely on economic, physical or human capital. Without sufficiently strong social capital, other capitals are poorly allocated in social organisations. Consequently, social capital is seen as a central element in improving the dimensions of community participation in the concerns that engage them. More specifically, Sabet and Khaksar (2020) show through Figure 1, that social capital determined by the quality of social relations, trust and solidarity is not only a catalyst for collective action but also one of its outcomes (Popovych, 2018).

**Figure 1: Links between social capital and community participation.**



**Source:** Author based on Sabet and Khaksar (2020).

However, while the majority of studies conclude that there is a positive connection between community participation and social capital, others reveal the ambivalence of this relationship. We can envisage situations where the choice to participate in a community movement does not lead to an accumulation of social capital (Dasgupta, 2005). It is therefore possible for community participation to deteriorate the initial stock of social capital in a social network (Portes, 2014). Durston (2000) points out that intra-group conflict, rivalry and discrimination are factors that can destroy the social institutions of trust and cooperation from which social capital emerges. In addition, Nilsson et al (2012) point out that several factors can make it difficult to extend social capital. These include increased size, greater organisational complexity and a multiplicity of interests, which can damage social ties, encourage mistrust, reinforce discouragement, reduce the availability of information and lead to resignation. In the light of the above, there are theoretical divisions on the nature of the effect of community participation on social capital in both developing and least developed countries. Table 1 below presents some of the authors who have looked at the production of social capital in community action movements.

**Table 1: Empirical review of the level of social capital in the Community context**

Authors	Main results
Rozas (2009)	Coordination leads to a social optimum
Nilsson et al. (2012)	large groups undermine social capital
Hidalgo et al (2018)	People with greater access to social capital show higher levels of community engagement in Ghana
Spognardi (2019)	stakeholder-controlled agricultural producers' associations rely heavily on trust, reciprocity and interpersonal relationships.
Valenzuela et al (2020)	Involving local people in mangrove restoration projects in Quezon province in the Philippines helps to increase social capital and access to information.
Sabet and Khaksar (2020)	Trust and solidarity are catalysts for collective action in Iranian villages.
Eke Balla (2021)	Community forest management in East Cameroon strengthens social ties between members of the community.
Nugraha et al (2021)	Relationships of trust between social players and the formation of networks have a significant impact on the decision to act together in rural areas of Indonesia.

**Source:** Literature review.

## 2. Methodology.

This section presents the data, sample and variables used in the study, and describes the estimation method used.

### 2.1. Study data.

The data used to model the relationship between community participation and social capital accumulation in Cameroon, were extracted from the Afrobarometer Round7 database whose survey was conducted in 2018. This study is based on a non-probability sample of 1202 individuals located in the 10 regions of Cameroon, in both urban and rural areas (table 2). Beyond these 10 regions, Douala and Yaoundé are considered as distinct strata due to their significant demographic weight. The choice of Cameroon as the subject of analysis is motivated not only by the multiplicity of ethnic groups, which complicates the accumulation of social capital, but also by the current context of administrative decentralisation, in which community movements are expected to play an optimal role.

**Table 2: Geographical distribution of the sample.**

Regions	Observations	%
Adamaoua	64	5.32
Centre	104	8.65
Douala	136	11.31
East	40	3.33
Far-North	216	17.97
Littoral	48	3.99
North	136	11.31
North-West	104	8.65
South	40	3.33
South-West	88	7.32
West	104	8.65
Yaounde	122	10.15
Total	1202	100

**Source:** Author based on Afrobarometer Round 7 data, 2018.

## 2.2 Estimation method.

In order to evaluate the effect of community participation on social capital in Cameroon, the estimated equation will first take the following reduced form:

$$Y_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_{1i}H_i + \alpha_{2i}X_i + \epsilon_i \quad (\text{E.1})$$

Where  $Y_i$  represents the social capital of individual  $i$ ,  $H$  measures community participation, and  $X_i$  designates the set of individual and family control variables for individual  $i$ .  $\alpha_0$ ,  $\alpha_{1i}$  and  $\alpha_{2i}$  are the parameters to be estimated and  $\epsilon_i$  the error term. As in many studies (Steckelberg, 2021; Metseyem, 2020, etc), equation (E.1) is estimated by a linear model for both continuous variables (Ordinary Least Squares (OLS)) and binary variables (probit or simple logit). This makes it possible to calculate robust variances at the level of groups of individuals and to interpret the results directly. On the other hand, this equation is not sufficient to correctly highlight the link between community participation and the accumulation of social capital in Cameroon. Indeed, an individual's stock of social capital may be disrupted by several constraints that are difficult to observe, such as: participation in the labour market, participation in domestic effort, level of education, culture, historical facts, family constraints, state of health, etc. (Alrasheed, 2019). Given these constraints, the estimation of the coefficient  $\alpha_{1i}$  may suffer from endogeneity bias.

The endogeneity problem is an important econometric constraint because, it may be difficult to distinguish individuals with low levels of participation from those with high levels of participation (Hayrapetyan, 2019). Failure to observe these differences may influence the identification of a link between community participation and social capital accumulation. In the traditional analysis of time allocation (Becker, 1965), we consider that an individual must divide his time between work and leisure. On the other hand, work activities are classified into two sub-activities: paid activities and unpaid activities (Gronau, 1977). While the former refer to participation in the labour market, the latter have more to do with domestic production or voluntary work. This allocation of time includes the time that must be devoted to the community. More specifically, individuals are less likely to be involved in lengthy negotiation processes in their locality because of their full-time occupation, either in paid work (Lebovics, 2007) or domestic tasks (Bozouls, 2021).

Given the difficulty for individuals to mobilise social capital when they are in full-time employment, the econometric strategy will be to use a recursive bivariate probit. This method is effective not only for taking account of causality between variables by correcting the structural endogeneity of the basic model, but also for studying the impact of community

participation on the accumulation of social capital by taking account of the nature of the temporality of the main economic activity, i.e. a binary labour supply variable which takes the value 1 if the individual is working full-time and 0 otherwise. This estimation approach is theoretically defended by the adult social capital model of Favaro et al. (2020), who consider the occupation of young people's educational institutions as an instrument of their civic engagement in adulthood and the improvement of their social capital.

The endogenous equation is therefore as follows:

$$T_i = \beta_0 + \beta_{1i}H_i + \beta_{2i}G_i + \lambda_i \quad (\text{E.2})$$

Where  $T_i$  is the full-time labour supply of individual  $i$ ,  $H$  is community participation, and  $G_i$  is the set of individual and territorial control variables for individual  $i$ .  $\beta_0$ ,  $\beta_{1i}$  and  $\beta_{2i}$  the vectors of parameters to be estimated and  $\lambda_i$  le termes d'erreur. To take account of endogeneity, the predicted value of full-time labour supply is introduced into the equation (E.1).

$$Y'_i = \alpha'_0 + \alpha'_{1i}H'_i + \alpha'_{2i}X'_i + \alpha'_{3i}T^*_i + \epsilon'_i \quad (\text{E.3})$$

The error terms are such that:

$$E(\lambda_i | (H_i, X; H'_i, X'_i)) = E(\epsilon'_i | (H_i, X; H'_i, X'_i)) = 0 \quad (\text{E.4})$$

$$\text{VAR}(\lambda_i | (H_i, X; H'_i, X'_i)) = \text{VAR}(\epsilon'_i | (H_i, X; H'_i, X'_i)) = 1 \quad (\text{E.5})$$

$$\text{VOC}(\lambda_i, \epsilon'_i | H_i, X; H'_i, X'_i) = \rho \quad (\text{E.6})$$

With  $\rho$  any constant defined by the relation :  $\begin{pmatrix} \lambda_i \\ \epsilon'_i \end{pmatrix} \sim \mathbb{N} \left[ \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}; \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \rho \\ \rho & 1 \end{pmatrix} \right]$

The variables  $Y_i$  and  $T_i$  respectively designate the trade-off that an individual must make between participating in social networks or being fully occupied in a paid activity<sup>6</sup>. The models are as follows:

$$\begin{cases} Y_i = 1 \text{ individual has strong social capital and } 0 \text{ otherwise} \\ T_i = 1 \text{ individual is not in full-time employment and } 0 \text{ otherwise} \end{cases}$$

### 2.3. Measurement of variables.

Variable social capital is assessed differently by different authors. The main differences arise from the elements that make up social capital. On this basis, social capital is a multidimensional, multivariate concept (Sabet and Khaksar, 2020). This is why the World Bank had provided a heterogeneity of the concept in five (05) dimensions: i) trust and solidarity, ii) groups and networks, iii) collective action and cooperation; iv) social cohesion and inclusion; v) information and communication. More specifically, Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA)

<sup>6</sup> Each variable is decomposed into several simultaneous choices with 04 possible observations:  $(Y_i, T_i) \in \{(0, 0), (1, 0), (0, 1), (1, 1)\}$ .

is used to construct the composite index of social capital with reference to the work of Apparao et al., (2019).

Nevertheless, the link between community participation and social capital cannot be established without taking into account socio-demographic variables such as age, level of education, living environment and gender. Indeed, some authors believe that it is younger people who have more strength, more time available and more motivation to participate in civic activities (Hayrapetyan, 2019; Cronkleton et al., 2021), unlike Saparniene et al. (2021), who believe that trust in public institutions increases with age. With regard to education, Saz-Gil et al (2021) consider that education provides individuals with social values that amplify their degrees of sociability. Furthermore, the living environment is also a determining factor insofar as the successful development of rural areas or deprived urban neighbourhoods depends on the existence of good social interactions between individuals (Lang and Fink, 2019). In addition, religious beliefs, household size, gender, ethnicity, employment status and local discrimination may also be important constraints on social capital, and therefore need to be taken into account.

### 3. Results.

The econometric model based on the above data yielded a series of results. Firstly, in order to calculate the social capital and community participation indices, we first had to check the consistency of the items chosen. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients calculated were 0.722 and 0.6867 respectively, indicating that the consistency of the variables is sufficiently high to quantify social capital and community participation. In addition, this study was based on a set of econometric models. The initial results obtained from linear regression using OLS and simple probit show that there is a positive and significant association between citizen involvement and social capital (table 3). This research also considers that the samples may suffer from selection bias (Favaro et al., 2020). The simple probit produces reduced social capital equations if the error term is normally and independently distributed. It is then possible to correct for selection bias using Heckman's method. The Mills ratio  $\lambda_i$  obtained from the prediction of equation (E.1) is as follows with  $\Phi$  the normal cumulative distribution function and  $\phi$  the centred reduced normal density function:

$$\lambda_i = \frac{\phi\beta Y_i}{\Phi\beta Y_i} \quad (\text{E.8})$$

The selection bias is corrected by introducing the inverse of the Mills ratio as an additional explanatory variable in the following structural model of social capital:

$$Y''_i = \alpha''_0 + \alpha''_{1i}H_i + \alpha''_{2i}X_i + \lambda_i^{-1}\epsilon''_i \quad (\text{E.9})$$

As indicated by Alrasheed (2019) the simple probit is not sufficient to study social capital. Indeed, social capital is subject to several complexities that may influence its relationship with community participation (Dasgupta, 2010).

**Table 3: Estimates of the standard social capital model.**

Variables	MCO			Single Probit and Probit corrected			
	Coef.	Robust	Margins	Coef.	Robust	Margins	Heckman
<b>Participation index</b>	0.151*** (0.032)	0.151*** (0.031)	0.151*** (4.87)	0.28*** (0.092)	0.282*** (0.094)	0.098*** (3.05)	0.282*** (0.091)
<b>Gender</b>	0.0398 (0.0283)	0.0398 (0.0283)	0.0398 (1.41)	0.0799 (0.0798)	0.0799 (0.0798)	0.0279 (1.00)	0.0799 (0.0798)
<b>Age</b>	0.020*** (0.00291)	0.0202*** (0.00321)	0.020*** (6.29)	0.0119 (0.00825)	0.0119 (0.008)	0.004 (1.33)	0.0119 (0.0082)
<b>Age2</b>	-0.01*** (0.00003)	-0.0002*** (0.00004)	-0.01*** (5.21)	-0.00015 (0.00013)	-0.0001 (0.00011)	-0.0001 (1.35)	-0.0001 (0.000103)
<b>Disability status</b>	-0.066** (0.0306)	-0.0660** (0.0302)	-0.066** (2.19)	-0.23*** (0.0868)	-0.23*** (0.086)	-0.08*** (2.71)	-0.233*** (0.0868)
<b>Level of education</b>	-0.00292 (0.0171)	-0.00292 (0.0176)	-0.0029 (0.17)	-0.0923* (0.0479)	-0.0923* (0.0487)	-0.0322* (1.90)	-0.0923* (0.0479)
<b>Socio-economic groups</b>	-0.0453 (0.0348)	-0.0453 (0.0350)	-0.0453 (1.29)	-0.112 (0.0986)	-0.112 (0.0989)	-0.0391 (1.14)	-0.112 (0.0986)
<b>Socio-professional categories</b>	-0.0182 (0.0216)	-0.0182 (0.0213)	-0.0182 (0.85)	-0.0297 (0.0614)	-0.0297 (0.0614)	-0.0104 (0.48)	-0.0297 (0.0614)
<b>Religion</b>	-0.0359 (0.0226)	-0.0359 (0.0231)	-0.0359 (1.55)	-0.19*** (0.0633)	-0.19*** (0.0649)	-0.06*** (2.95)	-0.189*** (0.0633)
<b>Household size</b>	-0.00788 (0.00620)	-0.00788 (0.00624)	-0.0079 (1.26)	-0.039** (0.0178)	-0.039** (0.0187)	-0.014** (2.15)	-0.0399** (0.0178)
<b>Living environment</b>	0.0464 (0.0294)	0.0464 (0.0296)	0.0464 (1.57)	0.140* (0.0829)	0.140* (0.0830)	0.0490* (1.70)	0.140* (0.0829)
<b>Ethnic group</b>	-0.03*** (0.0108)	-0.0326*** (0.0108)	-0.03*** (3.03)	-0.10*** (0.0306)	-0.10*** (0.0309)	-0.03*** (3.33)	-0.102*** (0.0306)
<b>Frequency of local insecurity</b>	0.0287 (0.0291)	0.0287 (0.0293)	0.0287 (0.98)	0.0604 (0.0815)	0.0604 (0.0816)	0.0211 (0.74)	0.0604 (0.0815)
<b>Local living conditions</b>	-0.078** (0.0355)	-0.0785** (0.0342)	-0.079** (2.29)	-0.242** (0.103)	-0.242** (0.103)	-0.082** (2.37)	-0.242** (0.103)
<b>Local unemployment</b>	-0.12*** (0.0334)	-0.123*** (0.0321)	-0.12*** (3.82)	-0.41*** (0.0964)	-0.41*** (0.0968)	-0.14*** (4.30)	-0.407*** (0.0964)
<b>Gender discrimination</b>	0.0571 (0.0418)	0.0571 (0.0425)	0.0571 (1.34)	0.0995 (0.116)	0.0995 (0.116)	0.0347 (0.86)	0.0995 (0.116)
<b>Ethnic discrimination</b>	0.120*** (0.0384)	0.120*** (0.0405)	0.120*** (2.98)	0.333*** (0.106)	0.333*** (0.107)	0.116*** (3.15)	0.333*** (0.106)
<b>Religious discrimination</b>	-0.0601 (0.0426)	-0.0601 (0.0453)	-0.0601 (1.33)	-0.179 (0.118)	-0.179 (0.122)	-0.0626 (0.122)	-0.179 (0.118)
<b>Invmls1</b>							1.201*** (0.364)

**Source:** Author based on Afrobarometer Round7 data, 2018. \*\*\*, \*\* and \* indicate significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively. Robust standard deviations in brackets. As mentioned above, the analysis of social capital cannot be carried out without taking into account the internal specificities of social structures. The choice of a bivariate analysis consists in integrating the double determination of community participation on the one hand with social capital and on the other with the supply of full-time work. The bivariate probit estimates establish a positive and significant relationship at the 5% threshold between community participation and social capital. In addition, among the individual variables, gender is positively

associated, reflecting greater social mobilisation by men than by women. With regard to age variables, table 4 shows that younger people develop greater social capital than adults.

**Table 4: Estimates of social capital using bivariate regressions.**

VARIABLES	Bivariate probit		Recursive bivariate probit
	Coef.	robust	rbiprobit
<b>Participation index</b>	0.230** (0.0992)	0.230** (0.0992)	0.244** (0.106)
<b>Gender</b>	0.0689 (0.0803)	0.0689 (0.0803)	0.0590 (0.0860)
<b>Age</b>	-0.00169 (0.0146)	-0.00169 (0.0146)	-0.00169 (0.0138)
<b>Age2</b>	-0.000012 (0.000164)	-0.000012 (0.000164)	-0.0000113 (0.000153)
<b>Disability status</b>	-0.257*** (0.0880)	-0.257*** (0.0880)	-0.257*** (0.0882)
<b>Level of education</b>	-0.108** (0.0529)	-0.108** (0.0529)	-0.108** (0.0522)
<b>Socio-economic groups</b>	-0.117 (0.0993)	-0.117 (0.0993)	-0.117 (0.0991)
<b>Socio-professional categories</b>	-0.0298 (0.0622)	-0.0298 (0.0622)	-0.0299 (0.0619)
<b>Religion</b>	-0.217*** (0.0697)	-0.217*** (0.0697)	-0.217*** (0.0669)
<b>Household size</b>	-0.0470** (0.0194)	-0.0470** (0.0194)	-0.0471** (0.0186)
<b>Living environment</b>	0.145* (0.0831)	0.145* (0.0831)	0.145* (0.0830)
<b>Ethnic group</b>	-0.103*** (0.0311)	-0.103*** (0.0311)	-0.103*** (0.0308)
<b>Frequency of local insecurity</b>	0.0554 (0.0816)	0.0554 (0.0816)	0.0550 (0.0817)
<b>Local living conditions</b>	-0.245** (0.103)	-0.245** (0.103)	-0.245** (0.103)
<b>Local unemployment</b>	-0.424*** (0.0973)	-0.424*** (0.0973)	-0.424*** (0.0975)
<b>Gender discrimination</b>	0.0892 (0.116)	0.0892 (0.116)	0.0895 (0.117)
<b>Ethnic discrimination</b>	0.334*** (0.107)	0.334*** (0.107)	0.333*** (0.106)
<b>Religious discrimination</b>	-0.192 (0.122)	-0.192 (0.122)	-0.192 (0.118)
<b>Full-time job offer</b>			0.309

**Source:** Author based on Afrobarometer Round7 data, 2018. \*\*\*, \*\* and \* indicate significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively. Robust standard deviations in brackets. Furthermore, given that the research is based on a recursive bivariate analysis, four (04) probabilities can be expressed marginally jointly or conditionally. If we maintain the initial formulations such as Y designating the social capital variable defined by 1 if the individual holds strong capital and 0 otherwise as well as T the endogenous full-time labour supply variable defined by 1 if the individual works full-time and 0 otherwise. The different probabilities(P) will be as follows: P (Y=1 U T=1), P (Y=1 U T=0), P (Y=0 U T=1) and P (Y=0 U T=0). In the first case, the expected marginal effect would be a 0.34% reduction in the extent

of citizen engagement, which is consistent with the results obtained previously, since individuals offering their labour force full-time are unlikely to mobilise more social capital than others. Furthermore, table 5 shows that community participation could decrease by 3.97% if the individual has low social capital and cumulatively offers full-time work.

**Table 5: Some conditional probabilities and marginal effects.**

Variables	P (Y=1 U T=1)	P (Y=1 U T=0)	P (Y=0 U T=1)	P (Y=0 U T=0)
<b>Participation index</b>	-0.0034 (0.30)	0.0832*** (2.78)	-0.0397** (2.37)	-0.0401 (1.22)
<b>Gender</b>	0.0161 (1.63)	0.0078 (0.32)	0.0153 (1.12)	-0.0393 (1.43)
<b>Age</b>	-0.000073 (0.08)	-0.00051 (0.12)	0.00013 (0.15)	0.00045 (0.11)
<b>Age2</b>	-0.0000 (0.07)	-0.0000 (0.07)	0.0000 (0.07)	0.0000 (0.07)
<b>Disability status</b>	-0.0148*** (2.93)	-0.0745*** (2.95)	0.0148*** (2.93)	0.0745*** (2.95)
<b>Level of education</b>	-0.0062** (2.06)	-0.0314** (2.05)	0.0062** (2.06)	0.0314** (2.05)
<b>Socio-economic groups</b>	-0.0067 (1.17)	-0.0339 (1.18)	0.0067 (1.17)	0.0339 (1.18)
<b>Socio-professional categories</b>	-0.0017 (0.48)	-0.0086 (0.48)	0.0017 (0.48)	0.0086 (0.48)
<b>Religion</b>	-0.0125*** (3.07)	-0.0630*** (3.16)	0.0125*** (3.07)	0.0630*** (3.16)
<b>Household size</b>	-0.0027** (2.43)	-0.0136** (2.44)	0.0027** (2.43)	0.0136** (2.44)
<b>Living environment</b>	0.0084* (1.75)	0.0421* (1.75)	-0.0084* (1.75)	-0.0421* (1.75)
<b>Ethnic group</b>	-0.0059*** (3.29)	-0.0298*** (3.35)	0.0059*** (3.29)	0.0298*** (3.35)
<b>Frequency of local insecurity</b>	0.0032 (0.68)	0.0161 (0.68)	-0.0032 (0.68)	-0.0161 (0.68)
<b>Local living conditions</b>	-0.0141** (2.37)	-0.0711** (2.40)	0.0141** (2.37)	0.0711** (2.40)
<b>Local unemployment</b>	-0.0244*** (4.34)	-0.1229*** (4.44)	0.0244*** (4.34)	0.1229*** (4.44)
<b>Gender discrimination</b>	0.0051 (0.77)	0.0259 (0.77)	-0.0051 (0.77)	-0.0259 (0.77)
<b>Ethnic discrimination</b>	0.0192*** (3.10)	0.0968*** (3.13)	-0.0192*** (3.10)	-0.0968*** (3.13)
<b>Religious discrimination</b>	-0.0111 (1.56)	-0.0556 (1.57)	0.0111 (1.56)	0.0556 (1.57)

**Source:** Author based on Afrobarometer Round7 data, 2018. \*\*\*, \*\* and \* indicate significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively. Robust standard deviations in brackets. To refine the results of this study, we conducted a robustness check by modifying the social capital variable. We focused the measurement of social capital on the basis of generalised trust in the system of governance (Head of State, local and traditional administrations), the security services and the justice system (Steckelberg, 2021). The results presented in Table 6 are in line with our initial conclusions, although there are slight variations.

**Table 6: Trust level estimation: Robustness check.**

Variables	Bivariate probit	Recursive bivariate probit
<b>Participation index</b>	0.250** (0.107)	0.255* (0.131)
<b>Gender</b>	-0.00173 (0.0852)	-0.00512 (0.0991)
<b>Age</b>	-0.0125 (0.0151)	-0.0125 (0.0147)
<b>Age2</b>	0.000149 (0.000166)	0.000149 (0.000160)
<b>Disability status</b>	-0.163* (0.0955)	-0.163* (0.0939)
<b>Level of education</b>	-0.0233 (0.0580)	-0.0233 (0.0550)
<b>Socio-economic groups</b>	-0.174 (0.108)	-0.174 (0.106)
<b>Socio-professional categories</b>	0.0123 (0.0666)	0.0123 (0.0664)
<b>Religion</b>	-0.196*** (0.0758)	-0.196*** (0.0709)
<b>Household size</b>	-0.0537*** (0.0206)	-0.0538*** (0.0208)
<b>Living environment</b>	0.0301 (0.0900)	0.0302 (0.0885)
<b>Ethnic group</b>	-0.115*** (0.0334)	-0.115*** (0.0333)
<b>Frequency of local insecurity</b>	0.0372 (0.0876)	0.0371 (0.0874)
<b>Local living conditions</b>	-0.219* (0.113)	-0.220* (0.113)
<b>Local unemployment</b>	-0.418*** (0.108)	-0.419*** (0.107)
<b>Gender discrimination</b>	0.00107 (0.126)	0.00106 (0.124)
<b>Ethnic discrimination</b>	0.320*** (0.114)	0.321*** (0.110)
<b>Religious discrimination</b>	-0.138 (0.131)	-0.138 (0.125)
<b>Full-time job offer</b>		0.0685 (0.0643)
<b>Constant</b>		0.105 (1.529)
<b>Observations</b>	1,202	1,202

**Source:** Author based on Afrobarometer Round7 data, 2018. \*\*\*, \*\* and \* indicate significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively. Robust standard deviations in brackets.

### Conclusion and recommendations.

At the end of this work, we arrive at the overall result that the involvement of populations in citizen and community movements amplifies relations of trust and cohesion within local communities. More specifically, community participation increases the probability of having strong social capital by 24.4%. To this end, we consider that social capital is an essential

springboard for local development (Sarate et al. 2020). Poverty, which is on the increase in most developing countries, could be better avoided by multiplying social relations at local level. However, our study has contributed to existing research on two key points. Firstly, local development strategies have not always taken account of coordination mechanisms within constituted groups. As Bretos and Marcuello (2018) point out, before talking about collective action, we must seek to understand how individuals with strong roots in their territories can align their personal goals with the broader interests and needs of their communities. Furthermore, this work responds to a social capital issue, which is the supply of time. While the majority of previous work ignores this reality, it is clear that the allocation of time between leisure activities, paid or unpaid work and participation in community activities is of vital interest in poor countries. This last observation and the previous results have led to a number of managerial implications for public policy and prospects for future research.

In terms of public policy, the first measures to be taken would be to increase the number of community platforms and modern means of communication in order to strengthen people's connections. This means building more roads, creating more community tele-centres, and promoting better access to New Information and Communication Technologies (NICTs). In addition, people need to be educated about the social values that promote probity, solidarity and respect for others. This is why the State must promote civic education in local communities. In addition, this work has highlighted the negative effect that income inequality and social discrimination have on social capital. Strong measures must be taken to reduce socio-professional and economic disparities. However, this article presents several prospects for future research. On the one hand, a study integrating a quantitative indicator of structural social capital aggregated to a reference locality could allow a better globalisation of the effect of community participation. On the other hand, this study does not cover all the ethnic groups encountered in Cameroon; our analysis is limited to the country's four (04) major cultural areas. An estimation of social capital taking into account all tribal heterogeneities could better appreciate the endogeneity of each community.

## APPENDIX.

### Appendix 1: Definitions and descriptions of control variables.

Variables	Terms and conditions	N.	Average	Standard deviation	Min	Max
<b>Individual characteristics</b>						
<b>Gender</b>	1 man and 0 women.	1,202	0.498	0.500	0	1
<b>Age</b>	Age in completed years	1,202	34.09	14.51	18	98
<b>Age2</b>	Age in years squared	1,202	1373	1277.13	324	9604
<b>Disability status</b>	1 suffers from some form of disability and 0 otherwise.	1,202	0.296	0.457	0	1
<b>Level of education</b>	3 university, 2 secondary, 1 primary and 0 not in education.	1,202	1.787	0.889	0	3
<b>Socio-economic groups</b>	2 public-sector employees, 1 private-sector employee and 0 inactive.	1,202	0.774	0.586	0	2
<b>Socio-professional categories</b>	3 managers, 2 skilled employees, 1 unskilled employee and 0 inactive.	1,202	0.937	0.902	0	3
<b>Religion</b>	3 animists and others, 2 Muslims, 1 Christian and 0 non-believers.	1,202	1.130	0.597	0	3
<b>Household size</b>	Number of adults in the household on the day of the survey.	1,202	3.362	2.168	1	19
<b>Living environment</b>	1 urban and 0 rural.	1,202	0.527	0.499	0	1
<b>Ethnic group</b>	4 Sawa 3 Fang-Beti-Bulu , 2 Grassfields, 1 Sudanese-Sahelian and 0 don't know.	1,202	1.197	1.323	0	4
<b>Territorial characteristics</b>						
<b>Frequency of local insecurity</b>	1 has been assaulted at least once, 0 never.	1,202	0.431	0.495	0	1
<b>General living conditions in the locality</b>	1 good and 0 otherwise.	1,202	0.238	0.426	0	1
<b>Local unemployment</b>	1 high unemployment rate 0 low unemployment rate.	1,202	0.284	0.451	0	1
<b>Gender discrimination</b>	1 has experienced gender discrimination and 0 has not.	1,202	0.154	0.362	0	1
<b>Ethnic discrimination</b>	1 was discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity and 0 otherwise.	1,202	0.227	0.419	0	1
<b>Religious Discrimination</b>	1 was a victim of religious discrimination and 0 otherwise.	1,202	0.172	0.378	0	1
<b>Endogenous variable</b>						
<b>Full-time job offer</b>	1 works full-time and 0 otherwise.	1,202	0.161	0.368	0	1

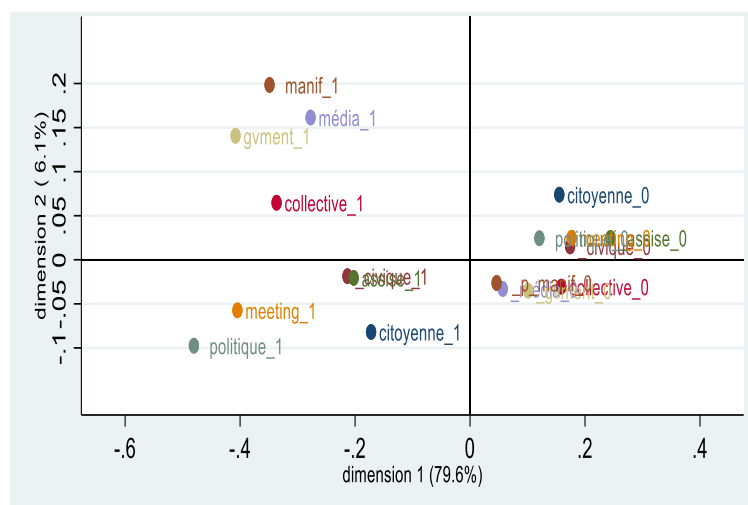
Source: Author based on Afrobarometer Round7 data, 2018. N=sample size.

### Appendix 2: Calculation of the community participation index.

Items	Frequency (%)	Factor scores	Quality	Percentage Inertia
<b>1. Civic participation</b>				
1 took part in the 2013 legislative/municipal elections.	43.59	0.048	0.877	0.050
0 did not take part in the 2013 legislative/municipal elections.	56.41	0.063	0.877	0.038
<b>2. Civic participation</b>				
1 is a member of a volunteer association	44.59	0.050	0.902	0.050
0 is not a member of any volunteer association	55.41	0.062	0.902	0.040
<b>3. Participation in community meetings</b>				
1 is involved in community meetings	53.08	0.059	0.883	0.058
0 are not involved in community meetings	46.92	0.052	0.883	0.066
<b>4. Participation in political meetings</b>				
1 takes part in political meetings	29.20	0.032	0.816	0.137
0 take part in political meetings	70.80	0.079	0.816	0.057
<b>5. Participation in a political party</b>				
1 is a member of a political party.	18.97	0.021	0.811	0.131
0 is not a member of a political party.	81.03	0.090	0.811	0.031
<b>6. Participation in a political march</b>				
1 took part in a political march	11.81	0.034	0.903	0.092
0 did not take part in a political march and 0 otherwise.	88.19	0.077	0.903	0.042
<b>7. Participation in collective denunciations</b>				
1 took part in collective denunciations	31.03	0.019	0.910	0.037
0 did not take part in collective denunciations	68.97	0.092	0.910	0.008
<b>8. Participation in media programmes to denounce</b>				
1 used the media to denounce a problem	17.39	0.021	0.869	0.093
0 did not go to the media to denounce a problem	82.61	0.090	0.869	0.022
<b>9. Taking the matter to the government</b>				
1 complained to the government about a problem	19.30	0.013	0.893	0.043
0 didn't go to the government to complain about a problem	80.70	0.098	0.893	0.006

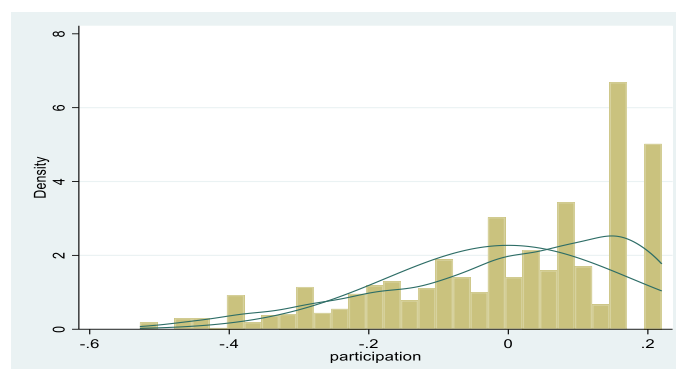
Source: Author based on Afrobarometer Round7 data, 2018.

### Appendix 3: Projection of community participation items (ACM).



Source: Author based on Afrobarometer data, Round 7, 2018.

#### Appendix 4: Distribution of participation scores.



Source: Author based on Afrobarometer data, Round7 2018.

#### Appendix 5: Calculation of social capital index.

Items	Factor scores	Quality	Inertia %
<b>1. Trust and solidarity</b>			
<b>Confidence in the head of state</b>			
0 i don't trust the head of state	0.022	0.946	0.098
1 i have confidence in the head of state	0.069	0.946	0.031
<b>Confidence in justice</b>			
0 i don't trust the law	0.032	0.929	0.096
1 i trust the law	0.059	0.929	0.052
<b>Confidence in the local authority</b>			
0 i don't trust the local authority	0.034	0.959	0.072
1 i trust the local authority	0.057	0.959	0.044
<b>Trusting the traditional chief of my locality</b>			
0 i don't trust my local traditional chief	0.022	0.928	0.098
1 i trust my local traditional chief	0.069	0.928	0.031
<b>Confidence in my local police</b>			
0 i don't trust my local police force	0.028	0.877	0.121
1 i trust my local police force	0.063	0.877	0.055
<b>Trusting my local religious leader</b>			
0 i don't trust my local religious leader	0.016	0.942	0.076
1 i trust my local religious leader	0.074	0.942	0.017
<b>Confidence in the army</b>			
0 i don't trust the army	0.022	0.869	0.132
1 i trust the army	0.069	0.869	0.041
<b>2. Groups and networks</b>			
0 i am not a member of a religious association in my locality	0.069	0.557	0.001
1 i am a member of a religious association in my locality	0.022	0.557	0.004
<b>3. Collective action</b>			
0 i don't join with others to solve a problem	0.040	0.651	0.003
1 i join with others to solve a problem	0.051	0.651	0.003
<b>4. Social cohesion</b>			
0 i get the impression that there's a big gap between the rich and the poor	0.031	1.050	0.009
1 i don't think there's much of a gap between rich and poor.	0.060	1.050	0.005
<b>5. Information and communication</b>			
0 i don't communicate with others on important matters	0.032	0.911	0.008
1 i communicate with others on important matters	0.059	0.911	0.004

Source: Author based on Afrobarometer data, Round7, 2018.

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