

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Street Begging: An Emerging Lifestyle in Yaounde, Cameroon

Dr. Clement Anguh Nkwemoh

Lecturer, Department of Geography,
Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences, University of Yaounde, Cameroon

Dr. Paschal Kum Awah

Lecturer, Department of Anthropology,
Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences, University of Yaounde, Cameroon

Abstract:

The Yaounde metropolis is an epitome of contemporary cities where some city dwellers come to rely on others through begging. Street begging depicts some of the social problems that plague growing cities today. This research therefore targets the origin, social, spatial and demographic characteristics as well as routine activities of beggars with the aim of improving welfare.

The methodological design of the research was a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches. It entailed inductive and classical approaches involving direct observations, survey using questionnaires, the use of aerial photos and topographic sheets of the study zone to investigate the proliferation of beggars in Yaounde. Anthropological and Geographic analyzes were performed. Findings show that street begging has developed and intensified with urbanization. It was also realised that this activity is practised by both sexes of all age groups. Most of the beggars come from Cameroon, specifically from the North and Far Northern Regions of Cameroon. Begging is intricately linked to poverty of some city dwellers in the Yaounde metropolis. This set of people cannot afford basic necessities like food, clothing, shelter and health care, so begging is a means of livelihood.

Reactive and proactive measures like establishing social centres and group homes are required to contain the phenomenon of street begging and take the street beggars off the streets.

Keywords: Yaounde metropolis, Poverty, Street begging, Street beggars, Booster Institutes, Assisted living,

1. Introduction

The rapid rate of urban expansion in areas of the less developed world today is becoming a lasting reality. Meanwhile, the urban challenges, social ills and a host of issues that come with this type of Third World urban expansion also begin to emerge. They include: noise (AUGEA INTERNATIONAL-IRIS CONSEIL, 2001); water crises (Nkwemoh & Lambi, 2012); generation and management of waste (CAVIE, 2001; Nkwemoh, 2012); increasing crime waves, prostitution, stealing, traffic congestion, the prevalence of shanty towns and spontaneous markets (Mougoue, 1982; Youana, 1983; Durang, 1999 and GRET, 2001) and street begging (Osa-Edoh & Ayano, 2012). The streaming population that dwells in the cities is characterized by a blend of different classes of persons. Amongst these are those who are well-to-do and those who are wretched. The different facets of begging and the implications have been viewed elsewhere by Aye(1996), Dean, H., & Gale, (1999) Daczuk (2000), Umoh (2000) Horn & Cooke (2001), Jowett & al. (2001), Kennedy & Fitzpatrick (2001). Adegbite (2005), Quidz (2005) and Osa-Edoh & Ayano(2012).

Begging is a phenomenon common in most major cities around the globe. As of late, the number of beggars in countries like Finland has been increasing (Encarta, 2008). Nordic countries have a fairly hostile environment, which has limited the flow of beggars into them for some time. As the conditions in places like the Roma communities in Romania are at nearly third-world standard, with little literacy, few jobs, and bad living conditions, emigrating to another country to beg becomes more and more attractive as an option (Encarta, 2008). These people live for around 3 EURO a day, and can make more than 20 EURO a day by begging. The numbers given by beggars are 20-25 EURO, while those given by store owners where the beggars exchange the coins to notes give amounts between 50-80 EURO (Encarta, 2008). The point is that they can make far more money by begging abroad, than by working (if they get a job at all) in their own country. In places like Thailand, the beggars are usually working under different gangs and organized crime. Giving money to these beggars directly aids the crime in the area. As the number of beggars increases, evidence of organization usually emerges. The beggars are assigned different posts around the city, and at the end of the day the gains are pooled (whether this money is then distributed, or if it goes to the pocket of someone is not certain) (Encarta, 2008). This is very different from what obtains in the Yaounde Metropolis.

There is a handful of literature on theories touching Beggars over the globe. German expressionist artist Käthe Kollwitz explored themes of inhumanity in her drawings, prints, and sculptures. Her works also frequently took the form of social protest, particularly

against war. Kollwitz compassionately depicted poverty, working class life, and tragedy in works such as the charcoal drawing *Study for the Beggars* (1924). Brook's motion pictures, some of which are also experimental in nature, include *The Beggar's Opera* (1953). The main research problem centres on the fact that little or no attention is attributed to street beggars in the Yaounde metropolis. Two Research Questions come to mind - who are beggars? Why do beggars beg? Two possible answers can be given to these questions. Firstly, beggars are neither sex nor age specific. Secondly, the reasons for begging are basically socio-economic and cultural. We then set out to: firstly, trace the origin, characteristics and routine of beggars in Yaounde; secondly, examine the reasons for begging and where they beg, nature of things preferred during begging. We conclude this paper with perspectives related to containing begging.

2. The Empirical Realities of the Metropolis

Yaounde metropolis (Figure 1) is found between latitudes $3^{\circ} 45' 50''$ and $3^{\circ} 59' 55''$ North of the Equator and Longitudes $11^{\circ} 22' 40''$ and $11^{\circ} 30' 25''$ East of the Greenwich Meridian. It is bordered to the north east by Mefou and Afamba Division, to the North West by Lekie Division and to the south by Mefou and Akono Division. Its surface area is 304 km² and this occupies the Mfoundi Division in the Centre Region.

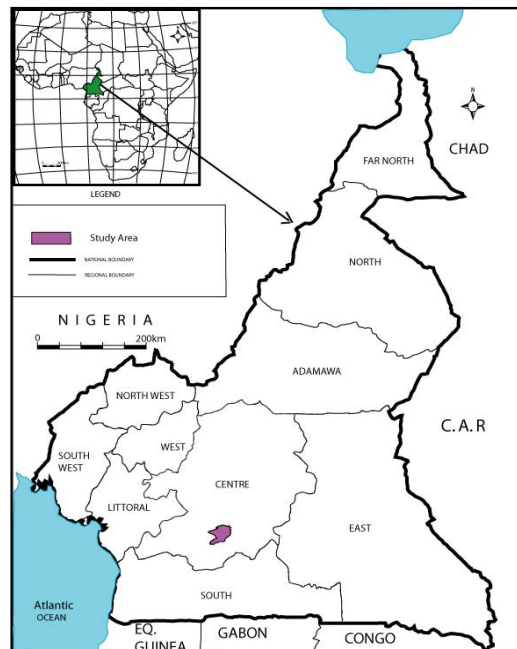


Figure 1: The Location of the Yaounde Metropolis

The Yaounde Metropolis is part of the western sector of the southern Cameroon Plateau. It is made up of gentle rolling chains of hills, and numerous valleys. It is found within the humid tropics and has 4 seasons. The city is gradually taking the space of the equatorial evergreen forest. The population of Yaounde was 1.800.000 according to BUCREP in 2010 and is estimated today at about 2.500.000. Yaounde is the most populated city in the Country. It is a city with all social classes. There are the poor that sometimes grade into beggars.

Poverty is a condition of having insufficient resources or income. In its most extreme form, poverty is a lack of basic human needs, such as adequate nutritious food, clothing, housing, clean water, and health services. Extreme poverty can cause suffering and death, and even modest levels of poverty can prevent people from fulfilling many of their basic human right. The world's poorest people live in developing areas of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. These people struggle daily for food, shelter and other necessities.

3. Material and Methods

The design of the research was a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches. It entailed inductive and classical techniques. The techniques that have been employed include direct field observations and the use of aerial photographs and topographic sheets of Yaounde 3b, 3d and 4c (Oveng and Nkolbisson) of the scales 1:50.000 for the location of the study area. Other information came from the Libraries of the universities of Yaounde and Buea as well as the Ministries of Family and Social Affairs. Questionnaire was designed on beggars' perception on the related themes including the identification of respondents, their place of origin, reasons for begging, average income and level of satisfaction. Geographic analyzes were performed. The data collected was analysed by the using of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17 and Microsoft Office Excel. Findings are presented in the form of Tables, figures and charts. Meanwhile, the Computer Assisted Drawing programs and GIS Softwares such as Adobe Illustrator facilitated the Cartographic part of this paper.

4. Results

This section deals with the identification of beggars, the reasons for begging, begging tactics, difficulties faced by beggars and status of beggars.

4.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Beggars

According to our findings, begging is practiced by both the male and female gender. About three-quarters (74%) of the beggars were males. According to our findings begging is practiced by city dwellers of all age groups. Accordingly, 9% of beggars are youths, the adults 76% and the aged account for 15% of the beggars. This is an indication that the activity is mostly carried out by the economically and biologically active age groups.

Low literacy is responsible for a lot of the begging, especially amongst beggars where 18% of them are literate. Meanwhile 82% have not gone to school at all. Of those beggars who are educated, 20% are Primary School Leavers, 9% are those who have completed the secondary and high school, while most are those with University education.

Findings on the marital status of beggars indicate that 47% of beggars are single, 47% is married and 6% are widows. they are either single, married or widows. With regards to the area of origin of beggars, survey results indicate that 88% of them are from Cameroon while 12% comes from Chad, Niger and Central African Republic. Of the beggars that come from Cameroon (as seen in the Figure. 2), 50% are from the Far North Region, 32% from the Northern Region and 3% from the Adamawa Region. The rest Southern half of Cameroon contributes 15% of all the beggars

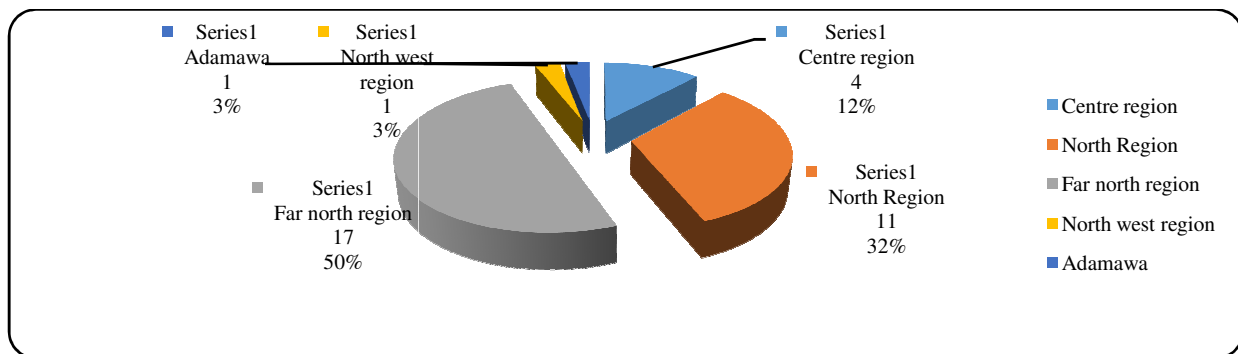


Figure 2: Origin of flower gardeners

The above situation shows that begging is becoming widely practised. There exist two categories of beggars in Yaounde: fulltime (76%) and part-time beggars (24%)

4.2. Reasons for Begging

It is difficult to give particular cause or set of causes to the institution of beggary, as is the case with a criminal. A set of causes such as physical disability, mental derangement, personal or social maladjustment, poverty, custom of alms giving, unemployment, disruption of joint family, whether singly or in combination may produce a situation which may predispose people to begging.

The major reasons declared by beggars for being involved in this activity in the Yaounde Metropolis are that they need money to buy food, to buy clothes, to take care of school needs, to take care of health as well other reasons such as shelter (Figure 3).

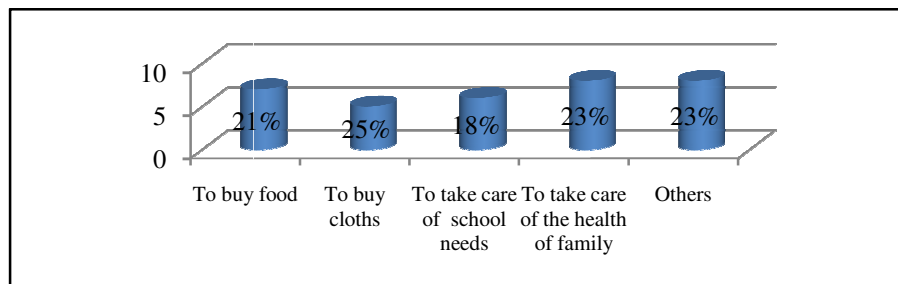


Figure 3: Reasons for begging in the Yaounde Metropolis

Findings equally show that the intensity of the reason for becoming a beggar is not equally distributed. Of the total number of beggars interviewed, 21% beg because they need food, 15% beg to earn money to buy clothes, 18% beg to take care of school needs of their children and 23% beg to take care of their health related needs. Those who advanced other reasons for begging (e.g. to pay for house rents) accounted for 23%.

Previous studies (Abang, 1986; Aye, 1996; Dean & Gale, 1999; Daczuk, 2000; Umoh, 2000; Horn & Cooke 2001; Horn & Cooke, 2002; Lynch, 2005; Adegbite, 2005; Quidz, 2005 and Osa-Edoh & Ayano, 2012) in other countries and continents had identified similar reasons. Firstly, economic causes of beggary are linked to poverty, loss of employment, under-employment and lucrative Business. Secondly, social causes like family disorganization emerging from lack of parental control, community disorganization,

break-up of joint family system and social custom. Thirdly, biological Causes are associated with sickness or disease, physical disability, mental deficiency and old age. The fourth group of reasons are linked to religion whereby religious mendicancy and indiscriminate alms-giving abound.

Amongst the reasons, poverty for instance is manifested in many ways but we have just taken the case of beggars (those who hang around the streets asking for help) to illustrate the impact of urbanization and poverty. Most of the portions of the population that cannot take care of their basic needs have simply moved down to the streets.

The above reasons show glaringly that people mostly beg in order to obtain the basic necessities of life. They are therefore not out to make money to become very rich people, but for survival. These sets of people are equally human beings and if they are properly taken care of they could become very useful to the society. To be blind is not to be death; to have amputated legs does not mean to become blind. To have amputated arms does not mean to be unable to walk. The implication of the above statements is to emphasize that if these people are rehabilitated they can become useful people in the society.

4.3. The spatio-temporal Distribution of Beggars in Yaounde

An illustration of the spatial distribution of beggars in the metropolis is presented in Figure 4.

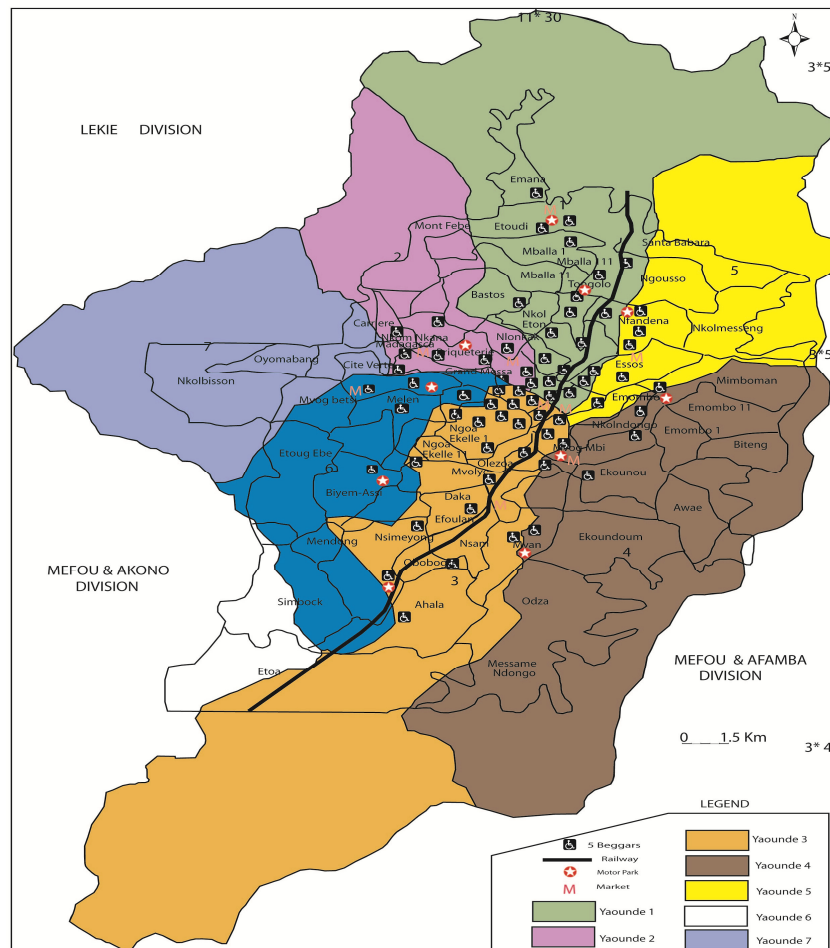


Figure 4: Estimated spatial distribution of beggars in the Yaounde Metropolis

Findings on the spatial distribution of the residence of sampled beggars according to councils in the Yaounde Metropolis show that, beggars are residents in all other districts of Yaounde except Yaounde 5 and 7 (Table 1).

Age in years	Percentage of District Council of residence					Total
	Yaounde 1	Yaounde 2	Yaounde 3	Yaounde 4	Yaounde 6	
Less than 19 Years	16.7	12.5	0	0	0	8.8
20-54 years	33.3	12.5	50.0	100.0	75.0	35.3
55-69 years	50.0	50.0	33.3	0	25.0	41.2
70 +	0	25.0	16.7	0	0	14.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 1: Distribution of sampled begging population according to Councils
Source: Field Work May 2015

The distribution shows that Yaounde 2 has the highest percentage (47.1%) of beggars, Yaounde 1 and 3 with 17.6% each, Yaounde 6 (11.8%) and then Yaounde 4 (5.9). Yaounde 2 is the residence for most (73.8%) of adult beggars followed by Yaounde 1 (26.2 %). The survey also shows that a greater part of the beggars in the young and old age groups are in Yaounde 2. Findings equally show that not all beggars beg where they live. According to Figure 5, a majority (67%) of them are to be found begging around markets. This is followed by those who beg along road sides and road junctions (15%) and at Moto Parks(6%)in front of Churches (6%) and other spots (6%) each of the sampled beggars.

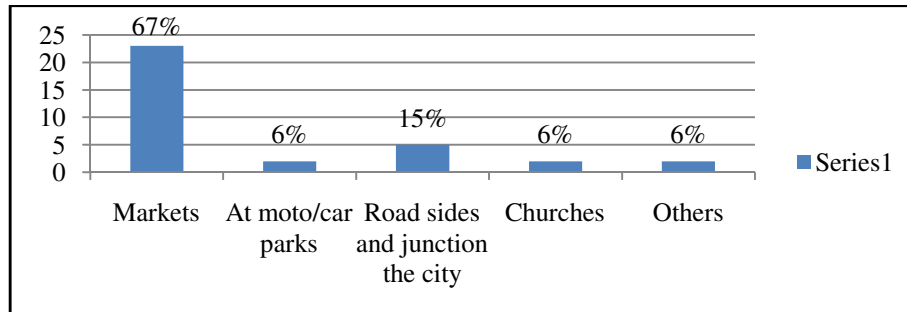


Figure 5: The distribution of beggars according to area of begging

The results from field investigation also show that 85% of the beggars sampled beg every day. Meanwhile 15% of this population begs occasionally.

4.4. Behavioral Patterns of Beggars in Yaounde

It is not uncommon to find a nursing mother who is helpless, lying or sitting by the roadside around Carrefour Warda or the Central Post Office. A dish is usually placed in front of her and the baby to permit passers-by to react. Obviously, only a few people would like to pass without a glance. They stay here the whole day under the scorching tropical sun. They are however sometimes interrupted by heavy rainfall. One would be tempted to ask where the household head of such families would be.

Sometimes not far from this area is found a blind or handicapped man being directed by his son or daughter of about 6-14 years. When they are seated, the father gesticulates and asks for money. Meanwhile a dish is placed in front of them with a few coins. This sign invites passers-by to give money. When they are moving for instance in the markets or parks, the son or daughter holds the dish in the right hand while pulling the stick that is held by the father with the left hand. Some people always have something to offer to these people. Sometimes they can stumble over cheerful givers who could give them a huge amount of money. At other moments their dishes are empty for the day. For how long can this go is the rhetorical question here.

Other sets of needy people that have been identified along the streets in the city are people with amputated arms or legs. They either hop, creep or simply move with the amputated arms asking for assistance. In down town, during the day, it is very common to find people sitting or standing differently from hawkers and vendors. These people appear comparatively wretched than business people. They make gestures indicating that they are begging for money. Some do not even hesitate to say that they need help or that they have not eaten since morning.

Some beggars usually have kids who are between the ages of 4-10 years old assisting them in the exercise. The children carry small pans or baskets and any time that a car halts, they go to the windows to ask for cash. Sometimes this pays off and the family is given something substantial but in most cases, they are usually given just a token. The most pathetic group of these beggars is the group of nursing mothers who sit at these specific spots, seeking assistance through begging. Carrying babies and looking for food, clothing and shelter.

The blind and handicapped are glaringly different from those that are strong enough to walk and work. Evidently they are looking for basic needs like food, clothing and shelter and possibly medical care. Some of them probably left their countries because of civil strife and political instability. It was realized that some of them had not declared themselves to the High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). They are probably not used to the city and are therefore only looking for the barest means of survival.

Another category of persons were abandoned/runaway children. Some consist of people coming from the villages around but with no relatives in town. They equally stay by the streets and fend for themselves. Sometimes some beg but others are not very far from scavengers. All of the above no doubt confirm the visual characteristics that epitomize begging emerging from poverty in urban areas with Yaounde Metropolis as a particular case in point.

4.5. Income and Living Status of Street Beggars

The results from the analyses of sampled beggars in the metropolis permit us to realize that the monthly income for beggars in all the local district councils is not equitably distributed. As seen on Table 2, the bulk (91 %) of the sampled beggars earn less than 25000 per month. Meanwhile the rest earn between 25000 and 49000 per month.

District Council of Residence Beggar	Percentage of Income per month		Total
	Below 25000 FCFA	25000-49000 FCFA	
Yaounde 1	100	0	100
Yaounde 2	87.5	12.5	100
Yaounde 3	100	0	100
Yaounde 4	50.0	50.0	100
Yaounde 6	100.0	0	100
Total	91.2	8.8	100

Table 2: The Monthly Income Ranges of Sampled Beggars According to District Councils in Yaounde

The results show that Yaounde 2 with 47.1% is the district with the highest percentage of income earned by beggars. This is followed by Yaounde 1 with 16.1% and Yaounde 3 with 16.1%. A closer view of the results according to income bracket permits to realize an inequality in the distribution of earnings by districts. The district with the highest percentage for the income bracket below 25000FCFA is Yaounde 2 with 45.2%. This is followed by Yaounde 1 with 19.4%, Yaounde 3 with 19.4%, Yaounde 6 with 12.9% and Yaounde with 4%. With regards to the income bracket between 25000 and 49000 FCFA per month only two districts of the Metropolis are concerned. Yaounde 2 is the first with 66.7% of the total beggars who earn something within this income bracket, followed by Yaounde 4 with 33.3%.

The overall income for beggars is evidently too small to take care of their family needs but they prefer this to nothing. Results from the sampled beggars in the metropolis permits to realize that 91% is satisfied with begging while only 9% indicates that they are not satisfied with the activity. Street begging has got a resounding impact on the status of mendicants. From the income that they get by begging, most of them can easily provide for food, clothes, health facilities and educational needs. This finding is clearly evidenced by the nature of things that they beg (Figure 6).

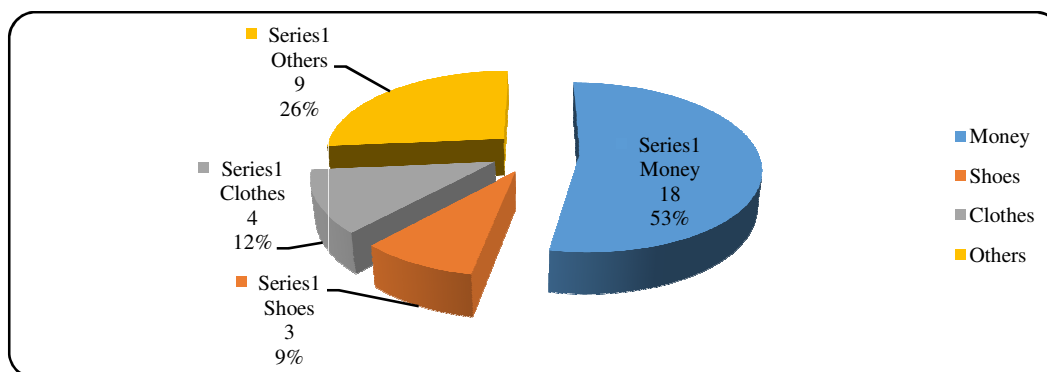


Figure 6: Nature of things begged

Figure 6 shows that most (53%) of the beggars who were interviewed prefer money meanwhile and gifts in kind only comes after. The others mentioned entailed things like food, medicines, school facilities amongst others.

5. Discussions

From our findings, begging is neither age nor age specific in the Yaounde area. This has equally been justified by many research findings in sub-Saharan Africa (Umoh 2000, Edoh and Ayano 2012), North America (Horn and Cooke 2002), in Europe and Asia and the rest of the world (Kennedy, & Fitzpatrick, 200;1 and Smith, 2005; Dean, 1990; Dean and Gale 1991) Daczuc (2000), Jowett et al, 2001) and Quidz (2005). This situation is quite evident since the reasons for begging has no preference for any particular sex. Rather it depends on the situation in which any of such cases finds him or herself. According to these same sources, there is a gamut of reasons why people beg. These reasons also differ from region to region but begging has been proven to be very common around public places as initially held by Horn and Cook (2002)

Since mendicants are so desperate where they beg, they would accept anything that is offered to them as noted by Horn and Cook (2001). A beggar obviously has no choice as proven by a general acceptance of all gifts even though some of these gifts are much more appreciated than others. Its obvious that a mendicant who has not eaten for the day would prefer food to clothes or shoes. Just like someone who is ill would prefer medication to other things.

The fact that some beggars earn more than some salaried workers or wage earners is a clear testimony that begging to some beggars is becoming a lucrative informal economic activity. There is no dignity in begging although begging is better than stealing or borrowing. This is especially the case since you may steal what was never yours or borrow what you will never pay back. Begging is a vice that needs to be eradicated from a society. This assertion is greatly supported by Umoh (2000) Edoh and Ayano (2012)

It is probable that the origin of most beggars from the North and Far North is buttressed by the fact that perhaps what we consider as begging was enshrined in the culture of the settlers in the Maghreb and Sahelian zones before they were Islamized. This may not be considered as begging but rather as an aspect of routine or normal life when one finds himself in a situation of desperation. Islam

allows *Talibe* in its doctrine. A majority of Mendicants have Islamic background so their begging practice is reinforced by the *Talibe* Doctrine.

Begging may not necessarily be a bad idea since it is better than stealing. Charitable organization or even church bodies may call for donors to raise funds to help the needy. In the Netherlands for instance, *Martinmas*, on 11 November, is Saint Martin's Day, also known as Beggars' Day. Children go around their neighbourhoods singing and begging for treats. Begging becomes a problem when it is persistent and there are no hopes that the Beggars situation would ever improve. As mentioned earlier, People over the globe beg for different reasons.

As noted earlier, most of the Beggars in the Metropolis come from the Northern Regions of Cameroon where majority of them are of the Islamic faith. It should have been thought that perhaps it is part the culture in Islam but this is clearly controversial. Begging in Islam for instance *according to internet sources* (<http://www.myislam1.weebly.com/is-begging-allowed-in-islam.html>) is forbidden except in case of dire necessity.

Begging has been established as a tradition amongst Tuareg migrants in the Sahel region. Barau (2014) states that Tuareg migrants in Kano, Nigeria are vulnerable groups of people in respect of human rights, violence, healthcare, poverty and literacy. He equates begging with human right and poverty. According to Barau (2014) the commercial lifestyle of Tuaregswas upset through the proliferation of colonial policies that weakened the Trans-Saharan trade which used to sustain the delicacy of the region. Fiot et al (2013) supports the idea that the many conflicts and disasters in the Sahel region have deprived many families of basic economic needs and made them beggars. He further states that many countries in the region have extended their begging to state level where they depend on foreign aid to meet their national needs.

Children in Sahelian countries, who are enrolled in Qur'anic schools beg as part of their education. In the Sahelian region, Islamic education predates colonization and the establishment of mission and secular state schools. Ideologies about religion, politics and education have shaped how Qur'anic schools have transformed and proliferated over time and have resulted in a wide variety of schools today. Some schools called the *Daaras or Makarantar* are founded on Islamic traditionalism and a Master – disciple pedagogy, while others - the *Madāris* (Arabic schools) – are founded on Islamic modernism and combine the study of the Qur'an with subjects from the curriculum of state schools and a teaching style resembling that of state schools (Delap 2009, Boyle et al 2007). Pupils in *Madāris* pay school fees and are not sent out to beg, [29] whereas education in *Daaras* often is free or almost free but implies that pupils – *Talibés* – may beg for alms (Diop 2010). However, some *Marabouts* have found alternative ways of maintaining their *Daaras* and do not send their *Talibés* out to beg (Gandolfi 2003).

Muslims believe it is better to depend on Allah for everything, the "Provider & Protector." According to Islamic beliefs, no Muslim should ever be hungry and no Muslim must ever beg (Perry et al 2004). This means that as a Muslim nation, it is believed that it is the community's responsibility to assist those who are in genuine need. When this situation arises, it is time when both the poor and the rich will be tested. It is also time when a Muslim must depend on Allah solely for support and sustenance. Islam teaches that it is better to work than to accept charity except for three reasons: 1) A man who has debts is allowed to beg until the debt is paid in full. 2) A man who has experienced a disaster (an earthquake or tornado) which has ruined his home, is allowed to beg until s/he is able to work once more. 3) A man who is starving or is in dire need is permitted to beg if three men speak of this need or express their agreement that this is appropriate for the individual. It is lawful for this Muslim to beg until able to work once more.

It is understood that begging is not the same as a Muslim desiring to give *sadakah* or charity to a person who is in need. The people deserving charity are eight: wayfarer, the bankrupt, the needy, converts, captives, collectors of *zakat*, and the cause of Allah etc. (List from Quran2:177). It is thus obvious that, Muslims who beg in the metropolis are backed by one or two of the above reasons. There are three primary reasons why begging is prohibited. According to Islam: 1) Begging will cause the Muslim to lose dependence on Allah alone. The Muslim turns from asking Allah for money and support and turns to asking men for help. 2) The Muslim who begs lowers himself before others and thus loses honour and dignity. 3) The Muslim who begs causes others to go without. Muslims are afraid to offend Allah by not helping the beggar and the person who gives charity and does not have the funds, feels a loss of property for their family

The general idea behind begging is assistance but how do beggars manage what they have and for how long can they continue to constitute the problem. According to Hunters S. Thompson cited Collier's Year Book (1968), back in the cities in America, the vast majority of hippies was still living from day to day. On Haight Street those without gainful employment could easily pick up a few dollars a day by panhandling. The influx of nervous voyeurs and curiosity seekers was a handy money-tree for the legion of psychedelic beggars. Regular visitors to the Hashbury found it convenient to keep a supply of quarters in their pockets so that they wouldn't have to haggle about change. The panhandlers were usually barefoot, always young, and never apologetic. They would share what they collected anyway, so it seemed entirely reasonable that strangers should share with them. The above facts suppose that begging abound even in the developed world. The main difference is seen basically only where and how these people are treated. In the developed countries there are Social Security benefits and Group Homes or sort of Social Centres to take care of the Beggars and Destitute. In these countries, things are meticulously arranged in such a way that there are areas for the disabled according to age groups.

The situation is succeeding in the developed world but it seems it is going to take a longer period in the less developed world in general and Cameroon in particular. In Yaounde, some handicaps have even tried to move out of their way of begging. They tend to do business. A vivid example is a case with a tri-cycle, who sells provisions with his cycle and owns a provision store. He sells brushes, polish, candies, chocolate bars, and a few brands of biscuits amongst others. Some have decided to go to school and today

they can work and take care of themselves. These are indicators from which one can pick up and also turn to convert the various groups into self-reliant, performing Groups.

6. Facing the Challenges of Street Begging

Though the challenges raised by street begging are enormous they can be overcome by multifarious approaches oriented to reintegrating these beggars into gainful employments. Five approaches have been discussed in this light.

Firstly, a careful situation analysis of refugees should be undertaken to solicitate and ensure assistance by UNHCR. Regarding those that have come into the territory as refugees, they should be encouraged to declare their presence to the authorities and seek the necessary assistance from the UNHCR. When settled, they might then look for a job that suits them. This would enable them to cope with their family needs without going to beg in public. Begging no doubt is not a crime like stealing but the impression on the whole is not good to cultures unfamiliar with begging. This approach will reinstate the dignity of some beggars who once were very responsible personalities in their home countries.

A second measure is creating Booster Centres to rebuild the sense of purpose in young people. Concerning the abandoned and runaway children, this problem can be solved using two approaches. Firstly, the abandoned children should be identified and admitted in the Booster Centre by the government or charitable organizations. An example of this is already being attempted by the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs, where a team is taking some street children back to their Families. This move should be intensified and well to do families should even be contacted for assistance and possibly, adoption. Such assistance can be by accepting the children in their home as a family member. It can also be by accepting to take care of the child while he or she is in another facility. The next approach concerns those children who have escaped from homes. They should be absorbed in specialized centres by Government or through programs by Welfare Associations. They should be kept and trained as in the Booster Institutes. Such communities have proven sometimes to be some of the best in craft work. Some of these people may be excellent weavers, shoe menders, carvers amongst others. This would enable them to grow as very responsible adults with a sense of purpose. This would obviously go a long way to alleviate poverty and the associated social problems.

The third approach is the creation of Centres for Assisted Living through which funding for the welfare of people requiring specialized assistance can be sought from International Bodies and NGOs (Thorsen 2012). In Cameroon the S.D.T.V.S (Community Assisted Living) was created in 2011. This is a very good initiative but its impact is still to be felt. Programs should equally be elaborated by the Government and Non-Governmental Institutions to cater for the children of the disabled or handicapped. This includes programs that would encourage the kids to go to school while they are young. It also includes programs that would encourage the adolescent to be oriented towards a trade or to become an apprentice. They might also be trained in certain business domains and then supported financially to start up a business. Upon completion of a professional apprenticeship tenure, a workshop should be opened for the young trainee by the government or organization. This idea is already being practiced by some organizations for basic education, but efforts should be reinforced.

Considering the fact that most of the homeless are with children or children themselves, it becomes very important to alleviate poverty before the children grow. People who grow up in poverty may experience lifelong problems because of it. They are at a disadvantage in sectors such as education because they have limited income and resources to pay for their training. All children also need adequate nutrition and health care for good physical and mental development. Children of poor mothers or poor communities are often malnourished and sick from a young age. Barau (2014) and Fiot et al. (2013) have shown that people who grow up in persistently poor households experience more difficulties throughout their lives than those raised in households that are above the poverty level. Overly, they do not do well in school, have more difficulties in marriage, and more frequently become single parents. In addition, poverty tends to perpetuate itself. In many cases, those who had poor parents are poor themselves, earning lower-than-average incomes. They may also have learned a mind-set that keeps them from getting out of poverty. All of these negative long-term effects are much more likely to occur if children experience prolonged poverty, an unfortunate circumstance much more likely to affect minority children. A variety of organizations support antipoverty programs in developing countries. They include: International government organizations, such as the UN; Aid agencies run by developed countries; Nongovernmental (mostly non-profit) organizations, and Private development banks.

Assistance can be easily obtained by the government from the United Nations bodies. The UN operates many of the largest anti-poverty programs through its branch agencies. The UN Development Program runs a variety of programs in developing countries to increase literacy rates, create jobs, share technologies from developed countries with developing countries, protect the environment and natural resources, and ensure women's rights (Thorsen 2012). Other UN agencies involved in alleviating poverty in the developing world include the United Nations Children's Fund, which provides food, medicine, and education programs for children worldwide, and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, which supports increased agricultural productivity and improved food distribution and nutrition. The attention of the above institutions is very indispensable since the state of the above aspects of poverty is recurrent.

Many of the studies on begging in the Sahel have been more on begging in Talibes (Thorsen 2012, Fiot 2013) but our study has focussed on begging in a more holistic way and beyond the Talibe. A lot of the studies have been more on children begging as a results of their parents sending them out to *Daraas* where they have to live for an education. Parent's acceptance of different forms of suffering must be understood in its local context. First, parents who perceive begging as work, (Perry et al 2004) are not necessarily concerned about their children spending more time working than studying, especially not if the children retain some of the money they earn. In contrast, parents who are opposed to child begging (Einarsdóttir 2010) are unlikely to choose *Daaras* where begging is involved. Our study has included adult beggars to understand the perspective beyond children.

7. Conclusion

The study on street begging in the Yaounde Metropolis has permitted us to establish some tacit conclusions. Firstly, street begging is rapidly being recognised as a main issue and has developed with urbanization. This has been elucidated by the presence of beggars in almost all of the Districts of the Metropolis. It was also revealed that this activity is practised by both sexes of the young adult and old age groups. But a majority of them are males of the middle and old age groups who are illiterate for the most part.

The results equally show that most of the beggars do not come from elsewhere. Most of them come from Cameroon, specifically from the North and Far Northern Regions of Cameroon. Begging is intricately linked to poverty of some city dwellers in the metropolis. This set of people cannot provide for food, clothing, shelter and medical care in health facilities. Begging has become a routine daily activity around Parks, Markets, main roundabouts and shopping centres. The study also reveals that most beggars are not very satisfied with their present situation.

Some young beggars are currently being relocated into families and schools by the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs but these efforts are still insufficient. One still finds many street children and beggars in streets as if nothing has been done. It is against this backdrop that tacit measures are proposed to control or minimize the level of street begging. It is with this view in mind that the study proposes the establishment of Booster Institutes, Social Centres and/or Group Homes as possible ways to solve the problem of street begging.

8. References

- i. Abang, T. B. (1986). Rehabilitating the disable and destitute in Nigeria. Retrospect and Prospects. Nigeria Journal of counseling and development.
- ii. Adegbite, C. O. (2005). Disabilities in Children: a Perspective. Journal of Health Physical Education and Recreation, 4, 92.
- iii. AUGEA INTERNATIONAL-IRIS CONSEIL- ARCAUPLAN in SDAU & PDL de Yaoundé. (2001).
- iv. Aye, E. U. (1996). Containing Street Children Menace: In Woman in Numerical News, 1996/97(Ed). Federal Office of Statistics Publication, 70, Lagos, Nigeria. www.ccsenet.org/res Review of European Studies Vol. 4, No. 4; 2012
- v. Barau, (2014) A. S. Measuring plights of migrant Tuareg groups in Kano city, Nigeria.
- vi. Boyle, H. N., Seebaway, S. Z., Lansah, I. and Boukamhi, A. (2007) Islamic Education Sector Study – Ghana.
- vii. Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development.[http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/EdStats/GHADprep07.pdf]
- viii. CARVIE (2002): Enquête sur le cadre des vies des populations de Yaounde et de Douala. Vol. IV A: Résultats par arrondissement pour la ville de Yaounde
- ix. Daczuk, S. (2000). Walk on by Begging, Street, Drinking and the Giving Age. In p. Lynch (Ed), Critique and Comment; Understanding and Responding to Begging (p. 18). Australian Journals.
- x. Dean, H. (1990). Begging Questions: Street-Level Economic Activity and Policy Failure (p. 163).
- xi. Dean, H., & Gale, K. (1999). Begging and the Contradictions of Citizenship. In H. Dean (Ed), Begging Question: Street-Level Economic Activity and Social Policy Failure (vol. 3, p.14).
- xii. Delap, E. (2009) Begging for change. Research findings and recommendations on forced
- xiii. child begging in Albania/Greece, India and Senegal. London: Anti-Slavery International.
- xiv. Diop, D. (2010) The case of Talibés and the modernisation of Koranic schools in Senegal. Unpublished M.Sc. dissertation, School of Politics and International Relations, University College Dublin.
- xv. Durang X. (1999): Etude sur les modes de vie et l'habitat a Yaounde 1998. Projet ADIC 92/153- composante 01 Rubrique 5.1- Etudes GRIOT (Groupe de Recherche Interdisciplinaires et d'Observation de terrain)
- xvi. Einarsdóttir, J., Boiro, H., Geirsson, G. & Gunnlaugsson, G. (2010) Child trafficking in Guinea. An explorative study. Reykjavik: UNICEF Iceland.
- xvii. Encarta Encyclopedia© (2008). Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn./The Bettmann Archive
- xviii. Fiott D, Hoebeke H, Marijnen E and Mattelaer A. (2013). The Sahel Crisis: Where do European and African Perspectives Meet? Policy Brief, Institute for European Studies, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. <http://www.ies.be/conference/sahelcrisis2013>.
- xix. Gandolfi, S. (2003). L'enseignement islamique en Afrique Noire. Cahiers d'études africaines, XLIII, 261-277.
- xx. GRET (Groupe de Recherche et d'échange Technologiques (2001): Le zones d'occupation illégales a Yaounde. Rapport Mission N0 2 Etudes de cas
- xxi. John Gay. Microsoft® Student 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.
- xxii. Horn, M., & Cooke, M. (2001). A question of Begging: a Study of the Extent and Nature of Begging in the city of Melbourne. In P. Lynch (ed.), Critique and Comment: understanding and responding to begging. Australian journals.
- xxiii. Horn, M., & Cooke, M. (2002). Understanding Begging in our Public Spaces'. Parity, 15(1), 10. Hoyt, H (1939B): The structure and growth of residential neighbourhood in American Cities.
- xxiv. Jowett, S., Banks, G., & Brown, A. (2001). Looking for Change: the Role and Impact of Begging on the Lives of People who Beg In P. Lynch (ed.), Australian Journals.
- xxv. Kennedy, C., & Fitzpatrick, S. (2001). The links between begging and Rough Sleeping: A Question of Legitimacy. Housing Studies, 16, 549-560.
- xxvi. Lynch, P. (2005). Critique and Comment: Understanding and Responding to Begging. Australian Journals, 16.
- xxvii. Microsoft ® Encarta ® (2009). © 1993-2008 Microsoft Corporation

- xxviii. Mougoue, B. (1982). Croissance urbaine périphérique; le cas de la zone Est de Yaoundé. Thèse de Doctorat de 3ème cycle. Université de Yaoundé, 300p.
- xxix. Nkwemoh, C. A and Lambi, C.M. (2012). Water Crisis in the Yaounde Metropolis. In African Journal of Social Sciences. Vol. 3 no. 3
- xxx. Osa-Edoh, G. & Ayano, S. (2012). The Prevalence of Street Begging in Nigeria and the Counseling Intervention Strategies. Review of European Studies; Vol. 4, No. 4; 2012
- xxxi. Perry, D.L. (2004) Muslim child disciples, global civil society, and children's rights in Senegal: The discourses of strategic structuralism. Anthropological Quarterly, 77(1): 47-86.
- xxxii. Quidz, B. (2005). Poverty and hunger: a race against the clock. The International French News Magazine: Label, 57, 45-46. iDakar-Yoff, Senegal. http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/english/overview_6585.html
- xxxiii. Smith, P. (2005). "The Economics of Anti-Begging Regulations". American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 64. (2), 549-561
- xxxiv. Thorsen D, (2012). Children Begging for Qur'ānic School Masters. Evidence from West and Central Africa. UNICEF, Dakar, April. http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/english/overview_6585.html
- xxxv. Umoh, S. H. (2000). Managing the problems of the Nigerian Adolescents through Counseling. A paper Presented at a Workshop Organized by the Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Nigeria.
- xxxvi. UNICEF. (1996). National Performance Gap. The Progress of Nations (pp. 33-34).
- xxxvii. www.mylot.com/post/575198/causes-of-beggarywww.faceofmalawi.com > Big Issue Malawi
- xxxviii. www.otterspecialistgroup.org/Bulletin/Volume24/Gothard_2007.html
- xxxix. www.politics.co.uk > Reference >
- xl. www.slideshare.net/tatiyoba/beggingppt
- xli. www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/res/article/download/19479/13318
- xlii. <http://www.myislam1.weebly.com/is-begging-allowed-in-islam.html>
- xliii. Youana, J. (1983): Les quartiers spontanés péricentraux de Yaoundé. Une Contribution à l'étude de l'habitat du plus grand nombre. Thèse de Doctorat du 3ème cycle, Université de Yaoundé, 324p.