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## Sectors labour force participation and poverty in the Douala Metropolis of Cameroon

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### ABSTRACT

*This work examines how difficult economic situation has affected the quality of workers' family life in the domains of domestic comfort, health seeking behaviour, feeding habits and leisure activities. The systematic non-random sampling method was used to select respondents in which we started with an nth subject and then selected every twentieth unit after the first was selected. We discovered that the higher the rate of decent jobs in a sector, the higher the income inequality in that sector and precarious sectors like the informal and agricultural sectors have very low-income inequality. The public sector is a very decent sector in Cameroons with more decent jobs concentration and less income inequality than the private sector which has less decent jobs and higher inequality. The higher the income inequality in a sector, the higher the inequality of workers' access to modern health facilities and the diversification of their leisure activities. Works in Douala do not help workers to live a sustainable life void of poverty, hunger, indecent and health problems. The government should invest in education and training, promote the private sector and the agricultural sector to enhance employability and to identify and register informal sector workers.*

**KEY TERMS:** Cameroon, domestic comfort, health, income inequality, work

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## INTRODUCTION

Poverty is relative to a society and epoch. Therefore, one is poor when one cannot attain the desired values of one's society. Considering this, a preliminary survey, or what is often called a pilot survey, was carried out using thirty randomly selected respondents who were asked about the psychological and social essentials for ordinary living patterns in Douala before formulating the questionnaire. The results were grouped into four appropriate categories: domestic comfort, feeding habits, health seeking behavior, and leisure activities. Domestic comfort was measured using homeownership, possession of durable goods, home quality such as sufficient electrification (having light inside and outside of the compound), having potable water, privacy, air conditioning etc. We measured feeding habits using variation of foods, eating a balanced diet and daily meals frequency. Health seeking behaviour was measured by asking respondents where they would go for treatment when they were sick (the hospital, consult a traditional doctor, stay at home, buy medications from road vendors, or use all the above). Finally, leisure activities were measured using reading, visiting friends, sport, travelling, visiting recreational centres, watching television, drinking, etc. Therefore, this article examines the relationship that exists between sector labour force participation (informal, public, liberal, agricultural, commercial, domestic sectors) and poverty (domestic comfort, feeding habits, health seeking behavior, and leisure activities).

## BACKGROUND

The World Bank (2024) states that Cameroon is a lower-middle-income country which has a population of over 27.2 million in 2021. Between 2007 and 2014, its overall number of poor increased by 12 % to 8.1 million. Its poverty reduction rate is slow as compared to its population growth rate. Poverty is mostly concentrated in the country's northern regions, where 56 % of the poor live. Many people in the metropolitan city of Douala which is the economic capital of Cameroon are struggling to survive because of an increasing demographic pressure and a youthful population.

According to City-facts (2024), Douala has a population of 2.3 million inhabitants. Its population changed from 1975 to 2015 to +478,8% and to + 83% from 2000 to 2015, and its median age is 22 years. Nanche (2020) indicates that about 91 per cent of the youth earn below the poverty line. He also demonstrates that only 9 per cent and 13.3 per cent of them are unemployed and students, respectively; therefore, 68.7 per cent are the working poor. Nanche (2020) indicates that migrants account for about 53.6 per cent of the residents in the Douala metropolis, with most of them expecting a salaried job in a situation where job opportunities are scarce. Consequently, Douala has a high unemployment rate, migrant workers concentrate in the informal sector of the economy and poorly paid jobs.

Constructing a dynamic poverty profile for Cameroon, Fambon, S. (2005) states that between 1983/84 and 1996, poverty in Cameroon appears to have been a significant phenomenon which affected rural areas more severely than urban areas. He also states that relating to expenditures and income inequality poverty is higher in urban than in rural areas thus indicating the higher social fragility of urban areas. Fambon (2007) also explains that human and social resources, as well as physical capital, household size, occupation and the residence region are the main determinants of poverty.

The World Food Program (2023) states that more than 55% of Cameroonians live in poverty. National Institute of Statistics (NIS) (2014) states that poverty rate was 53% in 1996, 40% from 2001-2007 and 37.5% in 2014 NIS (2016). This was due to demographic growth estimated at 2.6% per year and a slow poverty reduction. The number of the poor increased from 6.2 million in 2001 to 7.1 million in 2007 and 8.1 million in 2014.

The World Bank (2024) states that since November 2021, Cameroon has been experiencing high inflation because of the shortage and increase of the price of staple goods (bread, wheat and related products, vegetable oil, and meat). This was probably because of the disruption of the global value chain due to Covid-19 pandemic and Ukraine's invasion by Russia. Consequently, this has affected Cameroon's economic recovery, and has heightened inflation pressures and domestic structural vulnerabilities. The key problem of this work was how difficult economic situation due to an inflation rate recorded at 2.30 % in December 2018 (Trading Economics 2019) decelerated growth to 3.2 % (International Monetary Report, 2018) in 2017 has affected the quality of workers' family life in Douala.

## Research question and purpose

The research problem is: how do the works people do affect their family's life in terms of health seeking behaviour and domestic comfort considering the high inflation rate in Douala-Cameroon? The purpose of this work is to find out how reduced salary, rising unemployment and inflation in Cameroon have affected the quality of workers' family life in the private, informal, public, agricultural, and liberal sector in the domains of domestic comfort, health seeking behavior and feeding habits.

## Research theory

This paper is based on the household wealth theory which explains that wealth is a source of well-being. Nanche (2020) indicates that only 22% of married women in Douala are unemployed which means that they depend basically on their husbands for their livelihood. More so, Nanche (2021) indicated that 25.74% and 7.5% of men and women respectively earn above the poverty-line: 177,000 francs CFA. Men earn an average salary of 100,000 francs as against 60,000 francs for women. Therefore, the income of most family comes mainly from the man in a poor economy like Cameroon where jobs are hard to find.

## Motivation

This research was motivated by the large number of people in the economic capital which despite the different types of works they do, still live in poverty. Therefore, this research was carried out so that decision-makers may carry reforms to help underemployed workers live a decent life.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Altman (2007), household incomes for poor people are uncertain because of a combination of high unemployment, low wages, and high labour 'turnover'. Unemployment is more common in the developing world than is normally thought. Jade and Derek (2019) state that working poverty and low-wage poverty in South Africa are experienced mostly by female, African, middle-aged, and urban-resident workers, as well as informal sector workers, equally, workers are employed in elementary occupations and in the private household industry. On average, they reside in households with five household members, only two of which are employed. According to the World Bank (2012), in 2010 about 92% of Cameroonians were employed in the informal sector, 3.8% were unemployed and 70% were underemployed.

Tshediso (2013), Biyase, and Zwane, (2017) explains that the employment status of the head of household is negatively associated with the probability of household poverty or is a statistically significant determinant of household welfare. Ramon et al. (2004) added that employment status determines household income. With every addition of a household member in the employment line, per capita income (as a ratio of the poverty line) increases. Employment status is the strongest predictor of poverty level of households. United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills [UKCES], (2010) states that formal sector employees are more heterogeneous in their expenditure habits than those in the informal sector. Households where the head is a farmer are the category most affected by poverty followed by those whose heads work in an informal sector. The best-protected households against poverty are those whose head is either a manager in the public or private sector, an employee in the formal private sector or a proprietor in the informal non-agriculture sector. Generally, the informal sector does not play its role as a social security net for the poor in developing economies (Altman 2007).

According to Altman (2007), in South Africa about 20% of workers rely on informal work, 7% are domestic workers and 10% are temporary workers, 57% of workers have permanent contracts in the formal sector and about 65% of the working population earn very low income. Derek (2019) states that paid employment is the most sustainable way of poverty reduction. It means that attention must not only be paid to rapid job creation but also to decent jobs creation. Being employed is not always the case of walking out of poverty. Finding a job does not guarantee someone will receive remuneration that is high enough to cover their basic needs and be relatively secure financially. In some cases, workers reluctantly only work part-time after failing to find full-time work.

Derek (2019) also indicates that growth in Africa is weakly linked to poverty reduction because Africa has failed to create enough good jobs. Africa's post-1995 growth story has not prioritized the relative growth of employment in high productivity sectors. That is why the region's fastest growing economies have the least responsiveness of employment and poverty to growth. The objective of this article is to explain how differing labour sectors produce varied levels of income and poverty-rate.

Although researchers have written a lot on work and wellbeing, they have paid attention mostly to well-being at the workplace (Schneider et al 2018) and psychological or subjective well-being (Inanc Hande, 2018), with little information on how the work one does affects one's family's life. There is an essential question which needs

an answer of how the structure of the contemporary labour market is linked to household outcomes in relation to poverty. The relationship between poverty and employment is a complex one and it is very important for the fight against poverty.

## METHODOLOGY

We adopted the postpositivist approach for this research: which is a deterministic philosophy in which causes probably determine effects or outcomes. Therefore, this study was quantitative in nature in which the relationship between work sectors and the variables of poverty were established. The target people were all those who were 18 years and above, that is, who were of working-age. We selected the respondents from all the five sub-divisions of Douala as indicated below. Only those who were willing to participate took part in the survey. The questionnaires were administered by directly contacting and handing them to the respondents (self-administered) and the non-literate ones were helped to fill them.

A preliminary survey, or what is often call a pilot survey, was carried out using thirty randomly selected respondents who were asked about the psychological and social essentials for ordinary living patterns in Douala before formulating the questionnaire. One out of every twenty of them was selected. The desired values—things one needs in Douala to live a better life—were obtained from the pilot survey and were grouped into four appropriate categories: domestic comfort, feeding habits, health seeking behavior, and leisure activities.

For the research to be representative, we used a multi-stage sampling method. The first was the quota sampling method in which the number of persons sampled in each subdivision was determined by its number in the total population of Douala. The second was cluster sampling in which the various neighbourhoods of each sub-division and the number of questionnaires administered in each neighbourhood depended on its size. Finally, a systematic sampling method was used in which everyone had an equal chance in the selection. In every neighbourhood, much effort was made to start with an *n*th subject and then select every twentieth unit after the first. In this case every unit in the general population had the same chance of being selected.

We compared the specific category to the general population. This method of the calculation of percentage permits one to compare a modality of the independent variable to the percentage obtained in the total population or sample. If the percentage of the independent variable is more than the percentage of the total column, we put a +. This shows the difference it makes in the whole. To show that it is not just random variation the correlation that exists between them was calculated.

## RESULTS

In this section, the relationship between sector labour participation and income inequality as well as wellbeing are examined. Wellbeing is measured in terms of health, domestic comfort, feeding habits and leisure activities.

### **Sector labour force participation and income disparity**

This part examines whether the decency of a sector influences the income inequality of that sector and whether there is a correlation between labour sectors and income inequality.

Table 1: Occupation and income inequality

Income Sectors	24,000-74,000	75,000-125,000	126,000-176,000	177,000-227,000	228,000-278,000	279,000-329,000	Above 330,000	Earn nothing	Total
Private	20 23.8%	<b>17</b> <b>43.6%</b>	<b>7</b> <b>53.8%</b>	4 23.5%	<b>5</b> <b>55.5%</b>	0	<b>7</b> <b>53.8%</b>	0	60 29.7%
Informal	<b>28</b> <b>33.3</b>	6 15.4	1 7.7	2 11.8	0	0	1 7.7	4 15.4	42 21.3
Public	2 2.4	3 7.7	<b>3</b> <b>23.1</b>	<b>6</b> <b>35.3</b>	<b>3</b> <b>33.3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b> <b>15.4</b>	0	18 8.9
Liberal	<b>8</b> <b>9.5</b>	<b>4</b> <b>10.3</b>		<b>4</b> <b>23.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b> <b>15.4</b>	0	18 8.9
Agricultural	2 <b>2.4</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2 1
Commercial	<b>10</b> <b>11.9</b>	<b>4</b> <b>10.3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b> <b>11.1</b>	<b>1</b> <b>100</b>	1 7.7	0	17 8.4
Domestic	1 1.2	1 2.6	<b>1</b> <b>7.7</b>	0	0	0	0	4 15.4	7 3.5
Unemployed	13 15.5	4 10.3	2 15.4	1 5.9	0	0	0	<b>18</b> <b>69.2</b>	38 17.8
Total	84 100	39 100	13 100	17 100	9 100	1 100	13 100	26 100	202 100%

The above table shows that there is a very high-income inequality among workers of all the sectors except the informal and agricultural sectors where activities are not organized and people engage in it in order to survive: they are very precarious sectors. The agricultural sector is not mechanized and farming is done using archaic methods. The private, public and liberal sectors have very high-income inequality. For example, those who work in the private sector significantly earn 75,000-125,000frs, 126,000-176,000frs CFA, 228,000-278,000frs CFA and above 330,000frs CFA. There is a very high concentration of those who earn very low salary in liberal professions than the other salary brackets in the same profession.

The public sector is a very decent sector in Camerouns because 61.11% of those who work in this sector earn above the poverty-line of 177,000fr CFA followed by those in the liberal sector (33%). About 26.66% and 17.64% of those who work in the private and commercial sectors respectively earn above the poverty-line. Hardly do those who work in the informal and agricultural sector earn above the poverty-line and there is hardly any income inequality in these sectors because they are very precarious sectors and they do not require any academic requirements. Nanche (2020) indicates that they understand very fast when those who have a mastery of the work teach them on the spot.

Jobs in the metropolitan city of Cameroon are not up to the standard of the SDGs because they are neither productive nor decent. According to Nanche (2016), the mean income of Douala is 103,000frs CFA and the modal class income is between 24,000-74,000frs CFA. Nanche (2021) also indicates that the average salary for men is 100,000frs and 60,000frs for women which is far below the poverty-line of 177,000frs. This has fallen because as shown by Aerts et al (2000), it was 104,000frs CFA for men and 63,000frs CFA for women.

Using the concentration measure of income inequality, Nanche (2020) indicates that those who earn above 177,000frs CFA (which is the poverty-line) form the upper quintile of Douala households and they receive about 50.89% of the total income. They made up only 19.8% of the total population. There is high-income inequality

because 49.11% of the total income is shared by about 80.2% of the population.

There is a very significant relationship between sector of occupation and income (Chi2 =173, 31 Degree of Freedom= 70 I-P= >99.99%). There is a relationship between decent jobs and inequality: when the sector has decent jobs, the income inequality is higher such as the private and public sector whereas sectors with precarious jobs such as the informal and agricultural sectors have very low-income inequality.

### Sector labour force participation and workers' health

This section examines whether where one goes to for treatment is influenced by the type of sector in which one works.

Table 2: Occupation and Areas of treatment

Areas of treatment Sectors	Hospital	Traditional medicine	Stay at home	All above	Total
Private	45 32.8%	7 20.0%	7 17.9%	6 46.2%	58 28.7%
Informal	26 19	10 28.6	12 30.8	1 7.7	42 21.3
Public	13 9.5	1 2.9	1 2.6	4 30.8	18 8.9
Liberal	12 8.8	1 2.9	4 10.3	1 7.7	18 8.9%
Agricultural	1 0.8	0 0	1 2.6	0 0.	2 1%
Commercial	15 10.9	6 17.1	1 2.6	0 0	17 8.4%
Domestic	7 5.1	2 5.7	0 0	0 0	7 3.5%
Unemployed	18 13.1	8 22.9	13 33.3	1 7.7	38 17.8%
Total	137 100	35 100	39 100	13 100	202 100

The above table indicates that only 67.82% of the workers of the various sectors go to the hospital and those who significantly go to the hospital are those who work in the private sector, public sector, commercial sector and housewives. The above analyses show that the civil service and private sectors are the sectors that have the highest number of those who earn above the poverty-line. Although housewives work only in the domestic sphere, they are dependent on others for their medical treatment unlike the unemployed. Although only 17.64% of commercial sector workers earn above the poverty-line, a significant number of them visit the hospital when they are sick.

About 17.33% and 19.31% of workers use traditional medicine to treat themselves and stay at home respectively. The former because as compared to going to the hospital (modern medicine), traditional medicine is relatively cheaper. The modern sector is characterized by corruption and negligence. Workers of the informal

sector, liberal sector, agricultural sector, and the unemployed are those who significantly stay at home. Apart from liberal sector workers the others are very precarious jobs and the unemployed has no income for the payment of bills.

About 6.44% use all the above methods that is, they first of all stay at home and either take no medication or buy some medicine informally cheaply at the roadside and if the sickness persists, they visit traditional practitioners and if the illness is not cured they are obliged to go to the hospital for diagnosis which is expensive. Those who significantly use all the methods are workers of the private sector and public sector because of the income inequality that characterizes these sectors. Those with low salary most often suffer the consequence of poor health.

The above can be categorized into four groups: the first concern those who significantly use the hospital and traditional medicine. About 88% and 35.3% of commercial sector workers significantly use modern medical services and traditional medicine respectively.

The second category involves workers of the private sector and public sector because they significantly go to the hospital and also use all the above method when they are sick. About 77.59% and 72.22% of the private sector and public sector workers go to the hospital when they are sick respectively. They are those who have the highest number of people above the poverty-line.

The third category concerns workers of the informal sector and the unemployed because they significantly visit traditional practitioners and stay at home when they are sick. This is because the informal sector is a very precarious sector, and it is obvious that the unemployed do not have the means to go to the hospital. They have the highest percentage of those who stay at home when they are sick (30.76% and 33.33% respectively)

The fourth category concerns liberal sector workers and agricultural sector workers who only significantly stay at home when they are sick. They are not rich enough to either go to the hospital or visit traditional healers.

There is a slightly significant dependence of sector of work and where one treats oneself when one is sick ( $\chi^2 = 52.40$ , Degree of Freedom = 40, I-P = 90.95%). Health inequality exists in sectors where there is high income inequality and sectors with more decent employments have more quality health service than those who work in the informal and agricultural sectors.

### **Sector labour force participation and domestic comfort**

In this section we establish whether there is a causal relationship between sectors of occupation and homeownership, cost of home, cost of rent, home qualities and possession of durable goods.

Table 3: Occupation and Homeownership

Homeownership Sectors	Homeless	Own home	Rent	Living with someone	family house	Total
Private	10 19.2%	41 36%	6 20%	2 40%	1 100%	58 28.7%
Informal	8 15.4	26 22.8	7 23.3	1 8	0 0	42 21.3
Public	4 7.7	12 10.5	2 1.6	0 0	0 0	18 8.9
Liberal	9 17.3	8 7	1 3.3	0 0	0 0	18 8.9
Agricultural	2 3.8	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	2 1
Commercial	5 9.6	11 9.6	1 3.3	0 0	0 0	17 8.4
Domestic	4 7.6	2 1.7	1 3.3	0 0	0 0	7 3.5
Unemployed	11 21.2	14 12.3	11 36.7	2 40	0 0	38 17.8
Total	52 100	114 100	30 100	5 100	1 100	202 100

The above table shows that 56.43% of the workers in the metropolitan city of Douala are homeowners. Those who significantly own homes are workers in the private and informal sectors as well as public sector and commercial sector. We notice that 70.68%, 61.90%, 66.66%, and 28.94% of private sector, informal, public sector and commercial sector workers own homes. Therefore, those in the private sector and public sector own more homes because as compared to the other groups, they earn higher income followed by the informal sector and commercial sector workers.

Those who significantly suffer from homelessness are liberal sector workers because they have a very high concentration of those who earn very low salary, such as those in the agricultural sector, commercial sector, housewives and the unemployed. Due to income inequality among businessmen/ women? there is also unequal ownership of homes, businessmen/ women? are significantly homeless and homeowners. We noticed above that there is a very high-income inequality among liberal sector workers which leaves the less established to suffer from homelessness. The unemployed do not have a job that can enable them to own a home although they significantly rent. Those who cannot afford to own a home either depend on a family member or any other persons are left homeless.

However, there is a significant dependence of homeownership on occupation ( $\chi^2 = 75.26$ , Degree of Freedom = 50  $I-P = 98.80\%$ ) there are more homeowners among workers of the private and public sectors and liberal sector workers suffer more from homelessness. Those who depend on the family or live under someone are mostly those who are in the private sector due to income inequality. Our data also show that the unemployed equally live under someone.

The homes of private sector workers, liberal sector, commercial sector, housewives, significantly possess four



of the seven qualities. The unemployed have more quality homes (they two significant qualities secured homes and modern toilets) than those who work in the informal sector that significantly possess only modern toilet. Despite the differences, there is absolutely no correlation between possession of quality homes and occupation ( $\text{Chi}^2 = 35.79$ , Degree of Freedom = 70 I-P = 0.02%).

### **Sector labour force participation and possession of durable goods**

Results show that much more public sector workers possess a refrigerator than the others and more salaried persons in the public sector and the liberal sector possess at least a cooker. It is noticeable that although those in the private sector and liberal professional possess at least a radio, those in the informal sector and liberal professional also significantly possess it. So, a radio is a durable good that is commonly possessed by most workers. Although more public sector workers and private sector possess a television, the difference from the other professional sector is not all that wide. Much more public sector workers possess a personal car than the others because it is expensive, and they earn higher income. Although those in the private sector are dominant, there is no wide gap between them and the other groups. Equally, public sector workers and liberal sector workers possess more computers than the others. More workers in the private sector possess a mobile phone than those in the other sector. Those who work in the informal sector possess mobile phones the least.

The dependence of possession of durable goods on occupation is very significant ( $\text{Chi}^2 = 173.31$  Degree of Freedom = 70 I-P =  $\geq 99.99\%$ ). Public sector workers possess more durable goods than those in the private sector.

As concerns labour force participation and domestic comfort, we discover that public sector workers have more domestic comfort than the other sectors. They significantly own homes and more expensive homes, pay more expensive houses and consequently their houses possess more qualities, and they possess more durable goods than workers of the other sectors. Although private sector workers significantly possess homes, they have limited home qualities and durable goods. Equally, those in the business sector also significantly possess expensive homes but they and workers of the liberal sector rent average houses. The cheapest homes are owned by workers of the agricultural sector. We discovered that there is a very significant relationship between homeownership, expensive homes, amount paid as rent and possession of durable goods and labour force participation sector.

## Sector labour force participation and feeding habits

Table 4: Occupations and daily meal frequency

Meal Frequency Sectors	Once	Twice	Thrice	Four times	Total
Private	6 26.1%	30 30.6%	22 31.9%	2 20%	60 29.7%
Informal	5 21.7	17 17.3	17 24.6	3 30	42 21.3
Public	3 13	9 9.2	5 7.2	1 10	18 8.9
Liberal	2 8.7	9 9.2	7 10.1	0 0	18 8.9
Agricultural	0 0	2 2	0 0	0 0	2 1
Commercial	1 4.3	9 9.2	6 8.7	1 10	17 8.4
Domestic	1 4.3	2 2	3 4.3	1 10	7 3.5
Unemployed	5 21.7	20 20.4	9 13	2 20	38 17.8
Total	23 100	98 100	69 100	10 100	202 100

The variety of significances that we have per sector also indicates the high-income inequality that exists within the different sectors. However, the above table indicates that the number of times people eat per day does not really depend on the sector in which they work despite the differing decency of work in the sectors. For example, the public service is much more decent than the informal sector, but public sector workers significantly eat once and twice per day whereas informal sector workers significantly eat thrice and four times per day, commercial sector workers significantly eat twice, thrice and four times per day and housewife significantly eat once, thrice and four times per day. Those who significantly eat twice and thrice per day are private and liberal sector workers and the unemployed have the worst feeding habit: they eat only once and twice per day.

From the above, it is glaring that the number of times one eats per day hardly depends on the sector in which one works. Therefore, the dependence is not significant ( $\chi^2 = 24.16$ , Degree of Freedom = 30  $I-P = \geq 23.54\%$ )

Result shows that most public sector workers (72.22%) and some liberal sector workers (55.55%) consume a variety of meals daily. A few workers of the private (44.83%) and informal sectors (45.23%) eat a variety of meals per day. The former because of high income inequality in the sector where a majority earn meager incomes and the latter because their jobs are precarious. More of those in the private (46.55%) and informal sectors (40.48%) eat a variety of meals weekly and few of those who are public sector workers (16.66%), and liberal sector workers (27.78%) because more of them vary their meals daily. However, public sector workers hardly vary their meals fortnightly unlike 5.17% 7.14% 11.11% of the private and informal sectors as well as liberal sector workers respectively.

Those in the informal sector mostly take a variety of meals daily and weekly hardly do they consume it monthly nor occasionally that is when they find it especially during festivals. Whereas 3.44% and 5.55% of those who work in the private sector and liberal professional consume a variety of meals monthly and occasionally because of the income inequality that exists in the sectors.

There is a slight significance of the variation of meals on occupation ( $\chi^2 = 66.02$ , 31 Degree of Freedom = 50 I-P = 93.61%). Public sector workers have a better feeding habit than the other sectors. Although they have low frequency of meal per day, they vary their meal daily unlike the workers of the other sector. Therefore, there is a slight dependence of sector of work and feeding habit because there is no relationship between it and feeding frequency and there is a relationship between it and variation of meals.

### **Work and leisure activities**

As for labour force participation and leisure activities, it was discovered that commercial sector workers have significantly got a diversity of leisure activities such as travelling, visiting friends, visiting recreational center, and drinking. Equally, workers in the private sector and liberal professional significantly diversify their activities. These diversifications are due to the high inequality in these sectors. Therefore, the more inequality that exists in a sector, the more the workers of that sector slightly diversify their leisure activities. For example, commercial and private sector workers diversify more their leisure activities than those in the public sector. The dependence of leisure activities on occupation is significant.

### **DISCUSSION**

Isabel et al (2012) confirm that the poor cannot afford to be unemployed especially those in Douala and as a result, they struggle to earn an income through own-account work or sporadic casual wage employment. A growing number of them live and work precariously usually in a series of short-term jobs, without recourse to stable occupational identities, social protection, or protective regulations relevant to them. Clawson and Gerstel (2015) indicate that the temporal dimension of work highlights work schedules as a source of inequality and disadvantage. Unstable and unpredictable work schedules affect health and well-being through non-economic pathway by making it difficult for workers to balance the demands of employment and personal life (Ben-Ishai 2015) which in this article was examined in terms of health seeking behaviour, domestic comfort, and leisure activities.

Contrary to what Sissons Paul et al (2018) indicate, in the United Kingdom those who work in the administrative and support service constitute only 10.9% of the poor, in Cameroon, it is the most decent sector with only 44.44% of those who earn below the poverty-line. Looking at all the sectors there are significant concentrations of all the salary levels thereby creating income inequality, which is contrary to what Autour et al (2006); Goos and Manning (2007) state that changes in industrial and occupational composition are characterized by their polarizing form, with increasing concentration of workers in more highly paid as well as lower-paid positions, but hollowing-out in the middle.

This is because according to Thijs et al (2019) the earnings premium associated with a good occupational match is larger in countries where the credentials have a stronger link to the labour market, but the penalty for a mismatch is also greater in such countries. Moreover, strong linkage reduces unemployment risk. This is also typical of Cameroon and especially in the sectors where income inequality is very high because those with higher education qualification obtain the best jobs and are paid better than those who are less qualified thereby creating income inequality. Goldins and Katz (2009) argue that the failure of the US educational system to increase educational attainment is one of the most important reasons for raising earnings inequality in the United States since the 1970s. Similarly, those with low qualifications in Cameroon work in the informal sector as a survival strategy where they earn very low income thereby creating income inequality between them and more decent sectors such as the private, public, and liberal sectors.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK**

The government should invest in education and training to enhance employability and facilitate the school-to-work transition. Job search techniques, entrepreneurship and rights of young workers should all be part of the curricula. The training strategy constitutes a framework for building bridges between education, training, and the world of work. The government should lose constraints on private sector growth, with a particular emphasis on access to finance for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Informality should be reduced by identifying and registering informal sector workers through labour inspections. Investing in the agricultural sector will help ameliorate the feeding habit of the people. These reforms will help reduce the rate of unemployment,

provide more salaried jobs that will increase people's incomes. As a result, citizens will have better domestic comfort, feeding habits, health seeking behaviour, and better leisure activities and will have healthier and more emotionally balanced life.

### **CONCLUSION**

It was discovered that public sector workers have more domestic comfort: own more durable goods, high quality, and expensive homes than workers of the other sectors. Workers of the private, public, and commercial sectors equally own expensive homes. Public sector workers also have a better feeding habit than workers of the other sectors. Although they have low frequency of meal per day, they vary their meal daily unlike the workers of the other sectors. They alongside with workers of the private sector significantly go to the hospital when they are sick. Workers of the informal sector and the unemployed have the highest percentage of those who stay at home when they are sick.

### **Declaration**

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