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**Master's degree in  
Human Rights and Multi-level Governance**



Analyzing the Issue of Child Trafficking in Sport  
from Cameroon to France

Causes and Consequences of Child Trafficking in  
Sport (football)

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## Table of Contents

Acronyms.....	3
Chapter 1 : Introduction.....	4
Statement of the problem.....	6
Objectives .....	6
Significance of the study .....	7
Research Questions.....	7
Theoretical Framework.....	8
Figure 1 Maslow Hierarchy of Needs.....	10
Terminology .....	10
Figure 2: The elements found within the definition of human trafficking .....	11
Chapter 2 : Methodology.....	13
Research Approach and Design.....	13
Population selection.....	13
Population and sample.....	14
Instrumentation .....	14
variability.....	14
Ethical consideration .....	15
Chapter Outline.....	15
Study Limitations .....	17
Chapter 3 : Causes of child trafficking in sport.....	18
Football Migration.....	18
Figure 3:African Players in the UEFA League .....	19
Background study .....	19
The case of Ben .....	21

The desire to succeed.....	22
Poverty.....	23
Misconception on trafficking of persons.....	25
Lack of education.....	25
Chapter 4 : The consequences of child trafficking.....	26
Background Study.....	26
The Relationship between human rights and human trafficking.....	28
Recruitment Methods.....	30
Forms of Exploitation.....	31
The Measures taken by Cameroon to combat child trafficking in sport.....	32
4International Instruments.....	33
CRC Approach to child trafficking in Cameroon.....	34
Regional instruments on child trafficking in sport.....	36
Sport Industry FIFA.....	37
The Mission 89 organization.....	38
Chapter 5 : Results Analysis.....	39
Participate gender.....	39
Participant age.....	39
Occupational status.....	39
Data analysis.....	40
Chapter 6 : Conclusion and Recommendations.....	43
Bibliography.....	46
Annex.....	51

## Acronyms

UEFA	Union of European Football Associations
FIFA	Federation of International Football Association
AFCON	Africa Cup of Nations
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
MINAS	Cameroon Ministry of Social Affairs
CEMAC	Central African Economic and Monetary Community
FECAFOOT	Cameroonian Football Federation
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
AU	African Union
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
IOM	International Organization for Migration
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
ILO	International Labour Organization
WHO	World Health organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
EU	European Union
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
OCRIEST	Central Office for the Repression of Illegal Immigration and Employment of Foreigners without Permission
OCRTEH	Central Office for the Repression of Human Trafficking

## Chapter 1 : Introduction

The year 2022, is one of the most important years for the sports industry. It holds the UEFA Women's Euro, the FIFA Men's World Cup, and the 33<sup>rd</sup> Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON). At the same time, it calls for parents to be vigilant of child traffickers posing as sports agents. Young African men between the ages of 14-18 are lured into Europe in hopes of launching their careers in football. Only for them to find themselves in a challenging situation, what seemed to be a legit football recruiting agent turns out to be an organized trafficking scheme.

Trafficking in persons is an international crime that victimizes millions of individuals, mainly affecting children worldwide. According to the International Labor Organization, human trafficking is the second largest criminal activity in the world (after illegal drug smuggling), generating more than \$150 billion annually.<sup>1</sup> The United Nations estimates more than 4 million men and women are forced into modern slavery each year early. Children account for one in every three victims detected worldwide, and 66 percent of trafficked victims are girls.<sup>2</sup> Countries in the west, central Africa, Central America, South Asia, and the Caribbean represent a much higher number of the amounts of children trafficked.<sup>3</sup>

Child trafficking takes place in different forms, for example in sports, thousands of young Africans are lured by human trafficking agents posing as football agents. Promising young Africans, a prospective future career abroad. The false agents charge parents a hefty amount of money to pay for plane tickets, passports, and visa fees for their victims.<sup>4</sup> Once the traveling process is complete and finalized, the self-determined minors find themselves stranded in Europe and forced into modern slavery.

The Association Foot Solidaire's report suggested that since 2005 seven thousand footballers have been taken against their will from Africa to France. The Former

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<sup>1</sup> (*Human Trafficking by the Numbers*, n.d.)

<sup>2</sup> (*Child Trafficking*, n.d.)

<sup>3</sup> (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020, p. 81)

<sup>4</sup> ("How African Boys Are Trafficked to Europe for Football Trials," 2015)

Cameroonian football star, Jean-Claude Mbvoumin founds the association, which promotes the protection of young players and helps fight against the trafficking of minors.<sup>5</sup>

According to data from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), between the years 2016 to 2019, West and Central African countries recorded more trafficking cases than countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Out of 4799 victims detected in 26 Sub-Saharan African countries, 3336 were in central and west Africa, including 2553 children.<sup>6</sup>

The International Criminal Police Organization, Interpol reported that Cameroon is both a transit and destination point for child trafficking with over four million trafficked each year.<sup>7</sup> The Cameroon government is working aggressively to eradicate child trafficking. In 2019, the Cameroon Ministry of Social Affairs (Minas) rescued more than 1,147 street children who were vulnerable to being trafficked by human traffickers.

Child trafficking or smuggling is a grave violation of human rights, and human dignity, children's survival and development are threatened, and their rights to education, health, and growing with family, and be protected from exploitation and abuse, are severely denied.<sup>8</sup> This study will focus on the trafficking of children from Central Africa (Cameroon) to European countries (France) because in, most African countries, football is the most popular sport and favored by millions of fans, making it the target for human trafficking.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> (User, n.d.)

<sup>6</sup> (Human Trafficking in West Africa: Three out of Four Victims Are Children Says UNODC Report, n.d.)

<sup>7</sup> (Ngala-Killian, 2012)

<sup>8</sup> (Child Trafficking in West Africa, 2002, p. vii)

<sup>9</sup> (Gachanja, 2020)

There are different types of exploitation that people can experience when they travel across international borders. Some of these include begging, which leads to sexual, physical and psychological violation. Groups such as unaccompanied minors and undocumented migrants are at risk the most. Some of these include poverty, conflict, gender inequality, and lack of access to education. International treaties and other international instruments obligate states to protect the victims of human trafficking.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

In most African states, child trafficking is a widespread issue. In 2019, there were 15,000 minors trafficked into Europe.<sup>10</sup> This number is two times higher than the number reported in previous years. The false hopes of becoming a professional football player were also a reason for the high number of cases. In 2015, a report by a football-related organization stated that France had over 7000 cases of this type of trafficking.<sup>11</sup>

### **1.2 Objectives**

The goal of this study is to;

- i. Provide an understanding of the relationship between child trafficking and human rights.
- ii. The study understands the causes and effects of child trafficking in the sports industry, particularly in football from Cameroon to France by analyzing who is being trafficked, where they are trafficked to, what they are trafficked for, and the responses of these two countries.
- iii. Refine the current understanding of different terms such as human trafficking, human smuggling, and migration.
- iv. Examines policy responses and programming trends to combat the growing spectra of child trafficking from west Africa to Europe.

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<sup>10</sup> (Nkang, 2019)

<sup>11</sup> (Hawkins, 2015, p. 2)

### **1.3 Significance of the study**

This study is crucial because child trafficking in sports is rarely in the news. While there are numerous publications on the topic of trafficking, the availability of literature on the subject is limited. Therefore, this study will help fill the gap in the missing literature.

- i. To elaborate on the relationship between the two subjects of human rights and sports.
- ii. To enlighten: developing countries, local coaches of football clubs, and the public are not aware of human trafficking in sport. therefore, this study will provide a wide range of subjects and serve as a guide on the dangers of child trafficking in the sports industry.
- iii. To raise awareness among parents and children, the study, will analyze the various methods used by fake agents to lure their victims. This study will be a to guide family and friends and educates them on how to protect children, identify victims, and to be able to spot traffickers.
- iv. Student and researchers: this study will be essential to those seeking to explore the topic of human trafficking in general, trafficking of children, and most importantly, human trafficking in sport.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

It makes the purpose worth pursuing, and the significance of the study answers the questions:

1. What are the primary causes and consequences of football trafficking in minors?
2. What are the primary methods used by traffickers to lure their victims into sport trafficking?
3. Which international and regional legal frameworks safeguard children from being trafficked from sport?



## 1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study follows Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), which is a commonly used theory of social work. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a five-stage model shaped in the form of a pyramid. Maslow's theory suggests that there are basic needs that humans desire to survive in life if not met, there would be negative consequences. Namely, Psychological safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization.<sup>12</sup> He describes psychological needs as the most important basic need which includes eating when hungry, having enough water to hydrate the body, and the capability to give the body enough rest when sleep is required.<sup>13</sup>

The need for security is the second fundamental goal of Maslow's hierarchy. We need a safe environment to feel comfortable. He pointed out that children need to be protected because they cannot protect themselves from dangerous situations. Insecurity leads people to react with fear and anxiety. Insurance is also an example of a service that guarantees safety, locking doors and opening savings accounts is human nature to prevent unprecedented situations.<sup>14</sup>

Once the psychological and security needs are satisfied, the need to be loved and to love is the third goal of the hierarchy. Maslow refers to platonic and romantic relationships. He further stated that if this need is not satisfied, there is a greater chance that people become isolated and develop physical ailments.<sup>15</sup> The esteem need is the fourth on the pyramid, human beings are guided by two components, which are self-confidence and feeling important to others. If the esteem need is not met, we feel devalued by others resulting in feeling inferior. Psychologist Alfred Adler believes feeling of inferiority leads to discouragement or behaving for selfish reasons to gain superiority.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> (Abraham Maslow, 1943)

<sup>13</sup> (Elizabeth Hopper, 2020)

<sup>14</sup> IBID

<sup>15</sup> (Tiwari, n.d.)

<sup>16</sup> (Hopper, 2019)

Maslow ends his theory with the self-actualization goal, which is having the sense of feeling that we are doing what we believe we are meant to do. Human beings desire to achieve dreams and live to their best capabilities. Maslow states that only a few people accomplish the need for total actualization.<sup>17</sup>

The relationship between human trafficking and Maslow's hierarchy of needs begins from the moment there is a gap in basic needs. In the case of trafficking of children in sports. Human traffickers lure children who are in a state of vulnerability. Human traffickers claim to offer basic needs such as clothing, shelter, and food to their victims. These are the most important needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Furthermore, traffickers in pretense offer temporal intimate relationships and friendships. Maslow already highlighted the need for humans to feel love and to be loved.<sup>18</sup>

The theory also covers the needs of traffickers. The traffickers find themselves in this situation due to the need to cater for their basic needs such as having the capability to cater to their psychological needs. Once they can provide for their psychological needs, the next goal is achieving safety and security. Due to the work, they do, they need some assurance, therefore, resulting in upgrading their home security. Having financial stability guarantees individuals a sense of importance in society thus boosting our self-esteem and reaching the point of self-actualization. As humans, we long to belong to a society.

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<sup>17</sup> *ibid*

<sup>18</sup> (Meshelemiah & Lynch, 2019, pp. 86–88)

## 1.6 Figure 1 Maslow Hierarchy of Needs



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## 1.7 Terminology

Human trafficking is often confused with human smuggling, and the term migration. Therefore, this section of the study covers the definition of the commonly used term in this research. By the end of this section, readers should be able to distinguish between terminologies like human trafficking, migration, human smuggling, and trafficking. The definition of a child provided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) serves as a supplementary basis for this concept.

In accordance with the Right of the Child (CRC), Article 1 stipulates that a child/minor means every human being below the age of eighteen years.<sup>19</sup> This study uses the term athletes, referring to minors who aspire to be football players, also unaccompanied minors.

For this purpose, human trafficking is defined based on the definition provided by the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (also referred to as the Trafficking Protocol or UN TIP Protocol),

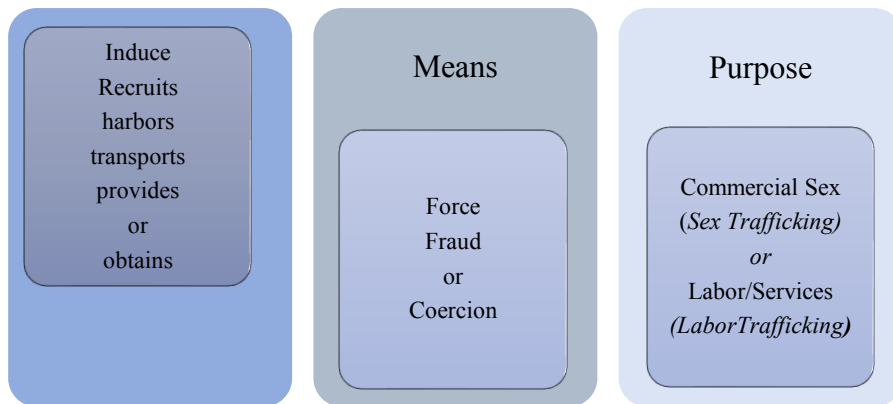
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<sup>19</sup> (Convention on the Rights of the Child Text, n.d.)

Article 3 (a) states that "Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons, by measures or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, of fraud, deception, or the abuse of power or of position of vulnerability or of giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices like servitude, or the removal of organs.<sup>20</sup>

The definition consists of three core elements – action, a means, and a purpose. The pattern which generates trafficking victims is fulfilled by the consecutive connection of these three main components. It is a process that increases the rate of modern-day slavery, beginning with an acquaintance you have in your neighborhood who knows an individual who can organize employment or visa, shifting on to the individual who assists people get across the border illegitimately, to the individual who provides accommodation for the victims whilst they are transiting, and eventually to the individual who buys the victim.<sup>21</sup>

**1.8 Figure 2: The elements found within the definition of human trafficking**



<sup>20</sup> (*About Migration*, n.d., p. Article 3)

<sup>21</sup> (Mbhamali, 2022)

Smuggling according to the protocol against the smuggling of migrants by Land, Sea, and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Article 3 defines human smuggling as;<sup>22</sup>

- a) "Smuggling of migrants" shall mean the procurement, in order to obtain directly or indirectly, a financial or another material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.
- b) "Illegal entry" shall mean crossing borders without complying with the necessary to for legal entry into the receiving State.

It is crucial to note that while some smuggled people do not experience abuse or exploitation during their journey, these individuals are generally unaware of the risks they face upon arrival in their country of destination. People can become easy targets for traffickers if they are unaware of the dangers they face and can be susceptible to debt bondage.<sup>23</sup>

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) migration is defined as the movement of people and a migrant is an individual who is moving or has relocated across an international border or within a state away from their place of habitual or residence, regardless of <sup>24</sup>

- a. Their legal status
- b. Whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary
- c. The cause of the movement
- d. The duration of stay

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<sup>22</sup> (Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, n.d., p. Article 3 (a) (b))

<sup>23</sup> (Human-Trafficking-and-Smuggling-of-Migrants-State-of-Play-in-the-IGAD-....Pdf, n.d., p. 4)

<sup>24</sup> (About Migration, n.d.)

## **Chapter 2 : Methodology**

This chapter of this dissertation explains the procedure used to gather data for answering the study's primary questions as described in chapter one. It constitutes of the research approaches, population definition, sampling methods, instrumentation, timeframe procedure, variability, limitations, and chapter outline.

### **2.1 Research Approach and Design**

For analysis, the study adopted the qualitative approach, which is essential in understanding a subject in detail was used to answer the question of what and when, a descriptive research design was adopted to describe the population of Cameroon opinion accurately and on the subject on the cause and consequences of sport trafficking. The descriptive method is essential in delivering answers to what, when and how and discovering characteristics. Reports from the United Nations organizations such as the UNODC, UNICEF, WHO, ILO, news articles, official government documents, nongovernmental and international organizations, and academic studies were used.

### **2.2 Population selection**

Cameroon is a country situated in Central Africa and has a population of about 27,922,852 people (2022 estimate), becoming the 52 most popular country in the world. Cameroon shares borders with Nigeria in the west, Chad in the north and the Central African Republic in, the east. It is composed of 250 different ethnic groups which are known for peaceful coexistence with each other.<sup>25</sup>

- Cameroon Highlanders 38%
- Peoples of the Southern Forests 18%
- Kirdi 18%
- Fulani and Sahelian 14%
- People of the Coastal Forests 12%

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<sup>25</sup> (Ethnic Groups Of Cameroon, 2018)

The population of this study of defined by all adults who reside in Yaoundé, which is the Political capital city and the second most populous city in Cameroon after Douala. Since January 1, 2022, the Yaoundé center has had a population of 4,337, 000.<sup>26</sup> The name originated from the Ewondo or Yaoundé people, which is an ethnic group originating from the Bantu people. They are known to be the original occupants of the capital city.<sup>27</sup>

### **2.3 Population and sample**

The population of Cameroon is diverse and large; therefore, the researcher will follow the probability sampling technique. Which is a method involving selecting a sample, or a part of the population that a researcher wants to study. Simple random sampling gathers a random selection from the entire population, where each region has an equal chance of selection. Therefore, 50 individuals from different occupational fields will be beneficial for this study.

### **2.4 Instrumentation**

To gather the appropriate amount of data for this study. A descriptive method was employed. It is important to note that the survey instrument is composed of a fixed-alternative questionnaire. The questionnaire is composed of socio-demographic questions, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and occupation 10 questions with an option of questions ranging from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The Questionnaire can be found on the annex page of this study.

### **2.5 variability**

To measure the independent variable which is the analyzing the vulnerability attached to economic needs such as (poverty, unemployment, and lower income level; as the so, social dynamics that govern trafficking in person causes of child trafficking

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<sup>26</sup> (Yaoundé, Cameroon Metro Area Population 1950-2022, n.d.)

<sup>27</sup> (“ewondo (yaunde) people,” n.d.)

in sport causes independent variables be for this study relies on the rate of trafficked children each year in Cameroon for exploitation.

The variable representing groups is appropriate for this research since there are various ethnic groups in Cameroon. The categorical variable will be indicated through ordinal variables which is a research method relying on demographic factors such as age, location, ethnicities, and occupation. The study advanced to assess ordinal data by using the Likert scale which is a rating used to measure opinions, attitudes, and behavior. This approach has an advantage of closed ended questions and allows respondent to get detailed insight into opinions and perceptions about a certain topic.<sup>28</sup>

The structure of the responses is as follows. strongly agree, Agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree the data is collector ted frequency distribution table or bar graph for each question to visualize the frequency of response.

## **2.6 Ethical consideration**

This investigation took all necessary measures to protect the integrity and dignity of participants by seeking consent. It is important to note that no psychological, social, physical, or legal harm was done to participators. Ethical measures were taken, through voluntary participation, and informed consent. Participants who preferred anonymity were given the necessary confidentiality. Participants were not forced to participate and were given every right to withdraw at any point during the questioning process. All informants were clearly briefed to understand the purpose of the research, and approval was done through verbal and nonverbal consent.

## **2.7 Chapter Outline**

The overall structure of the study is composed of six chapters. It begins with chapter one with an introduction of the study in general, followed by the statement of the problem objectives and the significance of this research. Also, entails an analysis

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<sup>28</sup> (Bhandari, 2020)



of the theoretical framework which is supported by the Maslow Hierarchy of needs Theory. Then followed by the terminology section which helps readers understand the various important terms that are constantly used in this study.

Chapter two analysis the research methods and procedures adopted by this study, it is composed of the research approach; population definition; population sample; instrumentation; variability; procedure framework; ethical consideration and study limitations.

Chapter three begins with a background study on France's migration evaluation. Then followed by analysis football migration and is analyzed by a case study of a minor that was trafficked from Cameroon to France by a fake agent. Also, the chapter responds the research primary questions such as the primary cause of child trafficking in sport and different factors contributing to the issue

Chapter four, this section includes the consequences of child trafficking and presents an analysis of the recruitment methods, revealing the different types of exploitation children are exposed to. Also, contains the international and regional legal framework that aims to safeguard the right of a child such as the CRC. It considers regional instruments and FIFA safe guiding principles.

Chapter 5 provides a description of the results obtained for methods highlighted on the methodology. The results are summarized to form a better understanding of the opinions of the people of Cameroon of child trafficking.

Chapter 6 the final section of research entails a conclusion n and recommendations that could be adopted by the different types of groups represented in this study which are parents, children, scholars, researchers, coaches, sports agents, organizations, and governmental institutions.

## **2.8 Study Limitations**

Whilst gathering information some locals were not willing to partake in the study. Moreover, some participants hoped for monetary award after sharing their opinions. It is important to note that the limitations encountered by the researcher did not downgrade the quality of the study.

## **Chapter 3 : Causes of child trafficking in sport**

### **3.1 Football Migration**

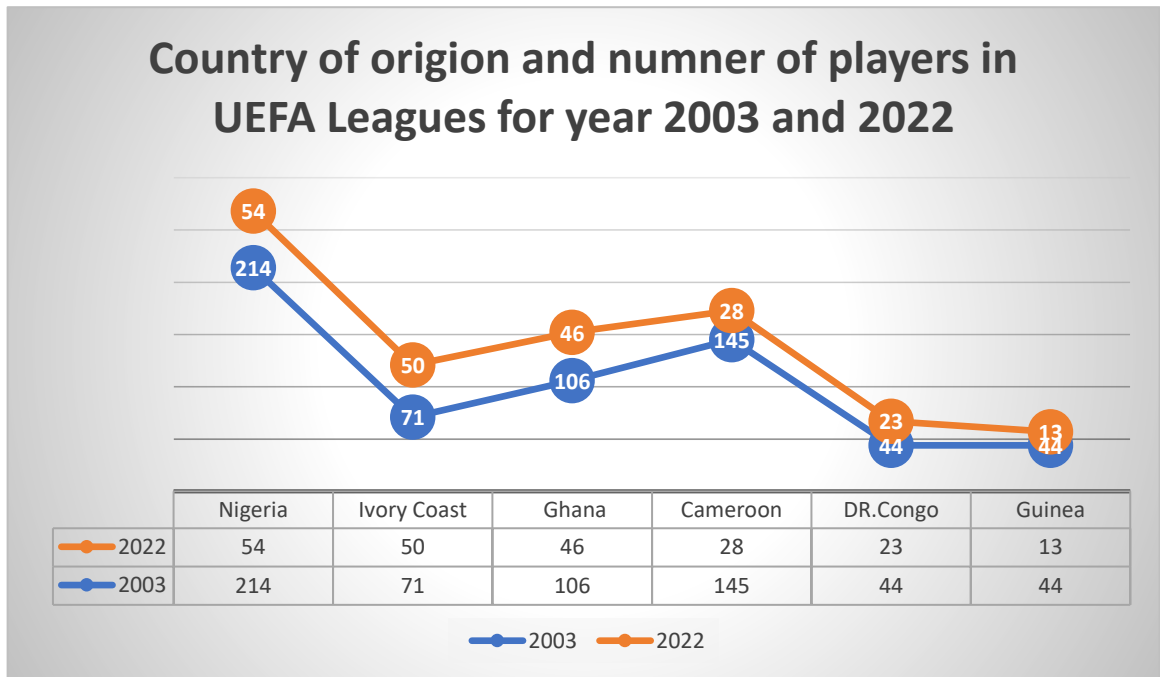
Football migration increases the flow of permanent migrants and has gained popularity since the year 1980s. During that period, the number of African footballers playing in European football leagues significantly increased from 350 to more than 1000 players. Currently, the number of African players has exceeded that of the 1980s. The African continent is lacking in professionalism and offers limited opportunities for local athletes. The sports sector is largely affected by the lack of effective policies to promote the development of sports, and insufficient sporting facilities and equipment. As a result, elite sports athletes are limited from reaching their full potential. Other problems such as corruption, cheating, violence, and cultural superstitions deter the sports industry from growing. The socio-development of sport in Africa and the EU is one major cause of football migration.<sup>29</sup>

Football migration was powered by imperialism. As colonies sourced raw materials in African states, talent was being sourced from Africa to Europe. France is the only country in Europe with the largest number of African Football players, it consists of more than 207 players in the professional football league.

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<sup>29</sup> (Onwumechili, 2019, p. chapter 5)

3.2 Figure 3: African Players in the UEFA League



Aspiring athletes in Cameroon drew their inspiration from football stars like Samul Eto’o of Cameroon, Didier Drogba of Ivory Coast. In several African countries the media broadcasted the success of African players with flourishing careers abroad, thus fueling the desire for young athletes to desire to play for international leagues. During the year, 1980 and 1990, aspiring athletes trained with great effort in the local football fields, with the aim of attracting international scouting agencies.<sup>30</sup>

**1.1 Background study**

Football in Africa was introduced through European imperialism. The term is defined by Syzmanski as the domination of one country by another for economic exploitation. The first football match was held in South Africa in 1862.<sup>31</sup> Football gained popularity in the 1980s after the development of underage competitions by FIFA. Despite its popularity, football in Cameroon remained an elite sport under imperial rule. Cameroons has a complex imperial history, Germany was the first country to colonize Cameroon then after the Second world war, Germany lost its

<sup>30</sup> (Alegi, 2010, pp. 99–103)

<sup>31</sup> (Ayuk, 2022, pp. 3–4)

colonial rule over Cameroon, the eastern region was imperialized by France and the western region by Britain. The rise of political tensions between the West and the East caused the two regions to compete in football. However, in 1972, Cameroon proclaimed a unitary state merging both the Anglophone and francophone regions. Thereafter, a league was formed.<sup>32</sup>

Football is the most popular sport in Cameroon unembedded in the culture. After Egypt, the Lions of Cameroon team come second as Africa's strongest football team. Cameroon has claimed victory five times in the Africa Cup of Nations tournament. Also, they successfully to reach the World cup quarterfinals in 1990 in Italy.<sup>33</sup>

Male football is considered an important sport by the community; therefore, girls' football is not significant. Often, girls do not take part in sports such as football due to cultural beliefs, for example sports the English region of Cameroon, strongly believes that a woman's place is in the kitchen not on a football field. Football and rugby are sports-related to masculinity. And volleyball and netball are sports associated with femininity. Moreover, there is a popular belief in Cameroon, which discourages girls from playing 'masculine' sports. It is believed that football can cause girls to lose their virginity and are viewed as bisexual if they partake in such sports.<sup>34</sup> Due to the lack of popularity, this study focuses on football trafficking of the boy child.

Child trafficking is not a new phenomenon, a young man, doing his high school in Cameroon, by the name of Albert Yorumb, was excited to have met a football agent that recognized his football talent and offered to take him to the Le Havre Football Club, which was France oldest football club. Against his parent's wishes, he dropped out of high school to follow his football career. Within his arrival in France, his agent disappeared plus he had no money with him. Also, the French football club didn't sign him.

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<sup>32</sup> (Alegi, 2010, p. 61)

<sup>33</sup> (*Top 10 Best Football Teams In Africa 2022 (National) – Information*, n.d.)

<sup>34</sup> (Ayuk, 2022, pp. 7–8)

## 1.2 The case of Ben

Ben only aged 16 came from a middle-class family, from Youde Cameroon. He dreamed of becoming a football star like Samuel Eto'o, Alex Song who had left like to play for big European leagues. He played for the youth team club of Yaoundé. Everyday day including weekends he trained. He believed in his potential of becoming an international football star. Bens family paid the fake agent 3000 euros and in return he told them that Ben would earn a lot of money playing as a midfielder in Europe. Also, he mentioned to have had connections. Upon arrival in Paris, he left Ben without, alone and confused. He refused to go back home because the economic education in his home country is in a dire state.<sup>35</sup>

“Football is a way out,” said Ben, everyone wants to play, we don’t have a very good football structure in Cameroon. Even high-level players want to leave and live in Europe. That is very important. We lived well; we had a good life... One day I played a good match and afterwards a man came to me and said that I should not be in Cameroon. My place is not here and that I should go to Europe. He said that he wanted to be my agent so that I should call my dad and tell him, But I was in school, and I didn’t like school.”

“I wanted was to play football. I said to my dad it was football or nothing. The agent aid he needed the money to make things like my visas and my passport and the plane ticket, father paid. I was training very hard then because I knew that when I come here, to France, I will be playing football at this high level. The man was calling me all the time. Train hard’ you know I’m counting on you”

“We go off the airplane and went to a hotel in Rossy, in Paris. It was near the airport. I think in the north of the city. The Agent had booked me a room. It was an ok hotel. Not very expensive but nice. He said, I am just going somewhere, I will be back very soon.’ I thought everything was good. I was in Europe; I had my place to stay, and the agent was taking care of me. But he never came back. I called and called. He didn’t pick up. I knew I was alone, I went to the hotel reception and asked to use the phone, I called my parents back in Cameroon. I tell them where I am, the man left me at the hotel. I don’t know what to do. My mother told me to calm down and called one of her friends to come to the hotel. She took me to stay with them that how it happened,” said Ben.

When asked if he considers going back home to Cameron, ben responded and aid “Go home? To do what? If it wasn’t for football, I never would have left

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid 201-202

Cameroon but I if I abandon it now, that would have been a waste of time. I would have wasted I think ten years of my life and if I go home the problem would be what would I do?”<sup>36</sup>

*The interview took place in France between Ben and the Jean-Claude Mbvoumin, founder of the Association International FootSolidaire. It was published in the book called the lost boys.*

Numerous families find themselves in Ben’s situation. He is lucky to be alive and healthy. However, Ben was lucky enough to have a have who would help them out. Therefore, they resulted to severe exploitation or destroy their future, his reason for leaving Cameroon motivated by the need to succeed in a football career. Analyzing Maslow Hierarchy, his reason for leaving his home country id founded by driven Maslow reason stage of needs of self-actualization. The researcher will analyze the economy of Cameroon to find clarity in ben case and other cases like his.

### **1.3 The desire to succeed**

The response to of why aspiring athletes desire to play for European football leagues is embedded in revenues. European football clubs hold strong financial power. overall is estimated to be worth approximately 28.4 billion. The French Professional league is in the top 5 highest earning league generating approximately 3.3 billion Euros in the 2018 and 2019.<sup>37</sup> This reflects the drive that young aspiring athletes must join such teams. Moreover, European leagues have the most well-paid players, such as Lionel Messi, Neymar, Cristiano Ronaldo and Kylian Mbappe.

African professional football players earn from 15000 euros to 100,000 or 10,00 to 5000-20,000 per month.<sup>38</sup> Football migration is motivated by aspiring athletes’

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid 201-202

<sup>37</sup> (European Football Leagues Earn Record Revenues | WARC, n.d.)

<sup>38</sup> (Acheampong et al., 2019, p. chapter 1)

desire to gain social status and boost their financial status by gaining them visibility. Migration is powered by economic rewards to fulfil personal desires. Cameroon economy is limited to provide opportunities for young athletes. For this purpose, young athletes seek for external football teams to improve their social and professional goals. No doubts professional football can grant them with considerable economic income which could be used to support their families residing in their country of origin,

It is true that the Cameroon national team was once he strongest team in Africa, qualifying more than 8 times to play for the FIFA world cup, this numerous exceed any number any African team has ever qualifies. Unfortunately, in Cameroon the team no longer has the same reputation as before.

#### **1.4 Poverty**

Cameroon is rich in natural resources such as oil, natural gas, gold and iron, manganese, and uranium. and considered lower middle-income country located. Cameroon benefit from its central location, between the west and central Africa. And a member state of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC). Also, is the largest economy of the CEMAC community. In 2020, the state produced more than 45 percent of the CEMAC nominal GDP.<sup>39</sup>

The state economy is a mixed economy system which is market oriented including agricultural Despite its potential growing economy, based on the World Bank statistics, the poverty in Cameroon in Cameroon is high and access to basic needs is a challenge for citizens causing an increasingly vulnerable and fragile state 37.5% of the population lives below the poverty line, with limited financial resources, parents cannot provide their other children with basic needs such thus creating a n advantage for human traffickers.

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<sup>39</sup> (Acheampong et al., 2019)



Poverty Is one of the greatest factors of child trafficking Cameroon, to escape poverty they opt to play abroad, their earnings are used as a social contribution to establish organization, public libraries, and schools. <sup>40</sup> For instance, Mvoumin a former football player from Cameroon established an organization to combat child trafficking in sport from African to European countries. His organization is described into detail in the upcoming section.

### 3.6.1 Anglophone crisis

The country political system plays a great role in destabilizing the economy. The state is currently under heavy corruption, with little to no transparency and accountability, the bureaucracy is fragmented. This negative characteristic of the government stands as a challenge for economic growth. Cameroon's colonial history is affecting the country in a negative way. For the past 50 years, the population majority, treats the anglophone population as second-class citizens leaving them vulnerable to suppression and cruelty. The government neglect grievances from the anglophone community such as concerning marginalization, particularly in the education and legal systems.<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, there are clashes between the anglophone and security forces and militants' crisis began in October 2016 in the Northwest (NW) and Southwest (SW) regions and human trafficking of all kinds is on the rise. Since the beginning of the crisis, approximately 150.000 children have been displaced in the last 3 years. Violation among children is on the rise, they are region and internally trafficked then tuned in to child soldiers, brutal killings and are sexually violated.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> (Acheampong et al., 2019)

<sup>41</sup> (Collin, n.d., pp. 1–15)

<sup>42</sup> (*ANGLOPHONE CRISIS IN CAMEROON*, n.d.)

### **1.5 Misconception on trafficking of persons**

One of the greatest mistakes that individual make is to think that it can never happen to them. With this mentality, A person is automatically vulnerable to being a victim of trafficking. However, trafficking in persons happens to any age group, gender, with women and children being the most susceptible group. Since in Cameroon and several African states, child trafficking in sport is not matter that the media broadcast about. Therefore, most people ae not aware of the issue of trafficking in sport.

The stereotypical human trafficking victim is often portrayed as uneducated, poor, or otherwise disadvantaged and desperate. Although that can be true, many victims do not fit that image. Traffickers around the world target people of all social strata, education, and economic levels. For instance, the case of Ben, he came from a middle-income family, yet he became a victim. In some instances, recruiters exploit illiteracy to serve their needs.

### **1.6 Lack of education**

According to the UNESCO publications, Cameroon has an adult literacy rate of 77.07 percent, with 82.63 percent of males whilst females have a rate of 71.59 percent. In overall, Cameron ranks 115 in the global literacy rate. Literacy, the ability to read and write is arguably the single most important factor in determining a person's career Poverty and illiteracy tend to go together. Children from poor background families, want to go abroad to pursue a career in football. Considering that trafficker's prey on minors. Some of which leave school with the hope of being recruited by a well-known European team.<sup>43</sup>

Abandoned children do not have the opportunity to go to school, therefore their chance to education is disrupted. This is a human right violation. The SDG Sustainable development Goals were created to succeed after the Millennium Development Goals

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<sup>43</sup> (Cameroon - Literacy Rate 2018, n.d.)

which ended in 2015. As per defined by the United Nations the SDGs are “the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. Learn more and act.”<sup>44</sup>

Therefore, SDG 8 Emphasizes on the importance of quality education. Therefore, making it a human rights sustainable development hinges on every child receiving a quality education. When children are offered the tools to develop to their full potential, they become productive adults ready to give back to their communities and break the cycle of poverty. Education enables upward socioeconomic mobility.<sup>45</sup>

## **Chapter 4 : The consequences of child trafficking**

### **4.1 Background Study**

France is a Western European country bordered by Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany in the North, Italy and Switzerland in the east and the English Channel and Bay of Biscany in the west. And Spain and Andorra in the south. France’s government is considered a semi presidential Republic and stands as the founding member of the EU. In 2020, the population was 67.39 million people, it is composed of approximately 9.9 migrants and half of them originate form African countries. <sup>46</sup>The numbers of immigration entries to France are through the talent passport.

France is one of the most diverse countries in Europe. In 2019, there were over 6.7 million immigrants living in the country. Out of these, only 3.5 million were able to obtain French citizenship. This leaves about 4 million people who were not able to become citizens. It is also estimated that around 26.5% of the country's population is composed of people who were born in other countries. In total, there were over 1.6 million immigrants from various countries residing in France. Some of these include

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<sup>44</sup> (dpicampaigns, n.d.)

<sup>45</sup> (SDG Goal 4, n.d.)

<sup>46</sup> (France Is Located in Western Europe Bordered by Belgium and Luxembourg to the North; Germany, Switzerland, and Italy to the East; the Mediterranean Sea - [PPTX Powerpoint], n.d.)

Morocco, Algeria, and Portugal. Other countries that also have large populations of immigrants include Senegal, Guinea, and the Ivory coast.<sup>47</sup>

In 2019, around 272,000 individuals got a residence permit in France, which is more than twice as many as in 2018. These include 92,000 students, 45,000 individuals who came from French families, and 43,000 people from families of foreigners residing in France. There were also around 38,000 refugees and sick individuals who came to France for treatment. Most of these individuals came for the purpose of work, while the others came for other reason. Most residence permits in France are issued after one year of residence in the country. This is typically the case for around 70% of people who got their first permit in 2018. The process of getting a residence permit in France can be very complex and time-consuming.<sup>48</sup>

France reported a rise in human trafficking between the year 2002 and 2017 from people from Eastern Europe, west and North Africa. women ranked 84.6% of victims and 3.8% were children. Traffickers in France target undocumented migrants and expose them to different types of exploitation such as psychological pressure, drug addiction, physical violation, prostitution and many more. The number of foreigners in the sex trafficking exceeds 90% and a likely victim of human trafficking. Around 5000 and 8000 teenagers in France, between the ages of 15 and 26 are victims of extraditing and are coerced into crime. exploiters often seek for unaccompanied minors. and force them into crime, minors at risk in Mayotte are vulnerable to any form of exploitation due to the lack of shelter, education, and medical care. Mayotte is an attractive destination for migrants due to good standard of living.<sup>49</sup>

The number of reported cases is higher than the actual number of traffic minors living in France. In 2017 uncompiled minors were more than 14,900, these are people under the age of 18 years. The government of France considers minors without legal

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<sup>47</sup> (2021-CP-France.Pdf, n.d., p. 4)

<sup>48</sup> (2021-CP-France.Pdf, n.d., p. 6)

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.page 9-15

representatives as children at risk not migrants. However, the government shows consistent commitment in investigating and persecuting and protecting victims of trafficking. for example, the sex trafficking and labor trafficking holds a 10-year prison confinement. and a €1.5 million fine. Also, the Central Office for the Repression of Human Trafficking (OCRTEH) with respect to sex trafficking; and the Central Office for the Repression of Illegal Immigration and Employment of Foreigners without Permission (OCRIEST) for labor trafficking.<sup>50</sup>

In contrary unaccompanied minors, in France are officially protected in theory since they are vulnerable to exploitation.<sup>51</sup> Moreover the COVID 19 pandemics caused the French government, associations and host families to be overloaded due to the need for protection for unaccompanied minors who were identified.

#### **4.2 The Relationship between human rights and human trafficking**

Several human rights international mechanism prohibits the human trafficking, however the major of human rights treaties which prohibits the violation of fundamental rights and human trafficking are the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This study focuses on the CRC which was specifically adopted for the protection of the right of a child. Also, the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography (2000).<sup>52</sup>

As per defined by the United Nations ‘Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.p.9

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.p.10

<sup>52</sup> (United Nations, n.d.)

many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.’<sup>53</sup> Children are not discriminated from the definition, their rights are further protected by the CRC.

Human rights law frowns upon the violation of basic and fundamental principles of life, Governments are propelled to adopt the international human rights law to promote rights and fundamental freedoms of people. Contained in the Universal declaration of Human rights, which was adopted the General assembly in 1945 and 1948. Article 1 states that ‘All human beings are born free and dignity and rights, they are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. Article 3 states that Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security. Article 4 declares that no one shall be held in slavery or servitude and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all form.’<sup>54</sup>

It is important to note that human trafficking is considered by the United Nations and international organizations as a modern slavery. The ILO defined the term as an umbrella including practices such as forced labor, debt bondage, forced marriage and human trafficking. It refers to scenarios where individuals cannot leave because of threats violence, coercion deceptions and abuse of power. <sup>55</sup> Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment The right to be protected from non-refoulement<sup>56</sup>

Human rights violations that are associated to human trafficking are

- Human Rights act 1998
- The prohibition of discrimination based on race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status<sup>57</sup>
- The right to life

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<sup>53</sup> (United Nations, n.d.)

<sup>54</sup> (Nations, n.d.-b Article 1, Article 3 and Article 4)

<sup>55</sup> (Nations, n.d.-b)

<sup>56</sup> (*Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, n.d.)

<sup>57</sup> (Human Rights Acts 1998, n.d.)

- The right to liberty and security
- The right not to be submitted to slavery, servitude, forced labor or bonded labor
- Article 5 The right not to be subjected to torture and/or cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment
- The right to be free from gendered violence
- The right to freedom of association
- The right to freedom of movement
- The right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health
- The right to just and favorable conditions of work
- The right to an adequate standard of living
- The right to social security
- The right of children to special protection
- The right to an effective remedy

#### **4.3 Recruitment Methods**

Traffickers use methods that are entailed in the definition, which are coercion, deception, or abuse of vulnerability; they take advantage of their victims' current situation. For young players who aspire to play in big European football leagues. The method of deception is what is used by trafficking agents. These young aspiring athletes are misled to a nonexistent future in football. Agents target local football academies, pretending to scout for talent. Traffickers can work as individuals and as a syndicate. Often trafficking networks generally consist of local community members, including religious leaders and former trafficking victims who have transitioned to perpetrators.

Child trafficking in sport can happen through the internet, with the availability of internet and easy access to mobile phones. Traffickers benefit from using the internet in recruiting victims; however, it is not clear if the number of trafficking cases has increased with the use of internet. Often traffickers would like to remain undetected,

moreover the process of trafficking one person to another country, requires a lot of planning. Therefore, traffickers may opt for traditional methods to avoid leaving behind traces.

- social media such as Facebook, Instagram, websites,
- Newsgroups: sites for exchange of information.
- Websites and search engines

Taking note that Traffickers are smart enough to study the behavior of their victims.

#### **4.4 Forms of Exploitation**

Victims face several consequences from the moment they are abandoned in strange country, with no one to help them. Unaccompanied children are vulnerable to any form of abuse and exploitation. Each victim is impacted differently, depending on their situation. The apparent impact experienced by child victims is fear because they are separated from their parent, families, community, and familiar surroundings. Since they are alone, without money to cater for their daily basic needs such as food, shelter, and adequate clothing. There are high chances that they may resort to begging on the street. That is how minors become homeless and lose contact with their families.

The UN has been attributed as estimating the population of street children worldwide at 150 million, with the number rising daily. Ranging in age from three to eighteen, about 40% are homeless. Whilst some may opt for begging on the street, they are vulnerable to being recruited into criminal gangs and exploited into physical, social, and psychological abuse. The crime of sexual exploitation has serious long term effect consequences on children

Sexual violence – including rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced results to psychological and social harm. Victims experience an increased risk of HIV and



other sexually transmitted diseases, pain, illness, social isolation, and psychological trauma. Some victims may resort to substance abuse to cope with trauma.

Psychological traumas related to sexual violence Sexually abused minors are prone to depression, which is a mood disorder which occurs when emotions associated with sadness and hopelessness continue for an extended period interrupting the normal thinking pattern. If detected early, depression can be easily dealt with by professional. But in a child on the street whose tourist visa has expired and has no legal papers of stay, has a low chance of obtaining the care that he needs.<sup>58</sup>

It is not unusual for victims of sexual violence to suffer from PTSD Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. There are three forms of PTSD common amongst victims; re-experiencing the events that took place through flashbacks. Avoidance of people and things of interest and hyper arousal which leaves victims on the edge and easily startled and experiencing abrupt changes in moods and outbursts. Other consequences victims may face are. Self-harm, constant panic attacks, suicidal thoughts, eating disorders, sleep disorders, according to the UNICEF one billion children – report having experienced some form of violence in a previous year.<sup>59</sup>

#### **4.5 The Measures taken by Cameroon to combat child trafficking in sport**

Safe Sports are beneficial and healthy for the growth of a child they allow for the mental and physical development of a child. Moreover, on a human rights perspective, sport have the capability to combat discrimination by creating an environment suitable for integration of various groups. For instance, children suffering from discrimination due to poverty, disabilities, or minority group. Also, sport promote nonviolence because it encourages fair play and have regulations for [potential violence]. Sports are also known to promote peace, tolerance, and friendship through its ethical values.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> (Depression | RAINN, n.d.)

<sup>59</sup> (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder | RAINN, n.d.)

<sup>60</sup> (David, 2005, pp. 261–263)

#### 4.5.1 International Instruments

The CRC is an international human rights treaty that outlines the civil, political, economic, social, health, and cultural rights of children. It is one of the most universally approved and ratified human rights instruments. It is ratified by 196 United Nations state Parties except for the United States and South Sudan. The Convention upholds 3 main principles which affirms that children have equal rights.<sup>61</sup>

##### Article 1 Non-discrimination

"States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's parents or legal guardian, race, color, sex, language, religion, political or another opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, poverty, disability, birth or other status."<sup>62</sup>

##### Article 3 Best interest of the child

"In all actions concerning children whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institution, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration."<sup>63</sup>

##### Article 6 The right to survival and development

"State parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child."<sup>64</sup>

##### Article 12.1 The views of the Child

"States parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the rights to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the view of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. "<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> (*What Is CRC or Convention on the Rights of the Child?* n.d.)

<sup>62</sup> (*Four Principles of Child Rights*, n.d.)

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

<sup>64</sup> ibid

<sup>65</sup> Ibid

The United Nations declares that children are vulnerable members of the society need special care and assistance therefore their physical and mental growth should be protected for full development. Therefore, their rights are protected by the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly on 20 November 1989 and are highly recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Part 1, Article 1 of The CRC specifically defines a child as every human who is below the age of eighteen years.<sup>66</sup>

#### **4.5.2 CRC Approach to child trafficking in Cameroon**

Cameroon signed the CRC on October 27, 1990 and ratified on 11 January 1993. The government's compliance with the CRC has been influential with revising national laws on protecting and promoting the rights of children. Therefore, the CRC requires Cameroon to adhere to Article 35 which requires s government to take all measures possible to make sure that children are not abducted, sold, or trafficked. Furthermore, Article 39 established for children have been neglected and abused and exploited states that states should "take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse."<sup>67</sup>

The constitution of Cameroon was adopted in the supreme law adopted sets out inalienable rights that it guaranteed to all Cameroon citizens, the symbols and principal institutions, the governmental structure, the amendment procedures, and constitutional provisions implementation methods' principles embedded in the constitutions derive its inspiration from the Charter of the United Nations. Article 45 of the constitution allows ratified treaties and international agreements to have superiority over national legislation.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> (*The Convention on the Rights of the Child*, n.d.)

<sup>67</sup> Ibid CRC

<sup>68</sup> (*Constitution Of Cameroon - [PDF Document]*, n.d., p. Part VI)

Relating to the fight against child trafficking and slavery Law n° 2005 / 015 of 29 December 2005 was adopted by The National Assembly e to fight against child trafficking and slavery. It consists of 9 Sections aligned by three chapters. The first chapter provides a definition for a child to be someone below the age of eighteen year. Furthermore, the first chapter entails of the definition for human trafficking, the following sections contains sanctions for perpetrators, incarceration years and penalties. The last chapter include miscellaneous and final provisions<sup>69</sup> The government established ministerial departments responsible for the implantation of the rights of children as listed;<sup>70</sup>

- Act No. 97/009 of 10 Jan. 1997 on combating torture
- Act No. 2005/015 of 29 Dec. 2005 on combating child trafficking
- Act No. 2005/006 of 27 Jul. 2005 concerning the status of refugees
- Act No. 97/009 of 10 Jan. 1997 on combating torture
- Act No. 84/04 of 4 Jul. 1983 on conditions for the adoption and guardianship of orphans
- Act No. 98/004 of 14 Apr. 1998 on educational guidance
- Act No. 83/013 of 21 Jul. 1983 on the protection of disabled persons
- Decree No. 2004/320 on the organization of government (creating several ministerial departments responsible for the rights of children)
- Decree No. 2001/041 of 19 Feb. 2001 on the organization of schools
- Decree No. 2001/109/PM of 20 Mar. 2001 on the organization and functioning of public institutions for the care of children and the rehabilitation of socially maladjusted minors
- Decree No. 2001/110/PM of 20 Mar. 2001 on the organization and functioning of public institutions for the care of infants

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<sup>69</sup> (Cameroon-TIP-Law-English.Doc, n.d.)

<sup>70</sup> (CAMEROON, n.d.)

#### 4.6 Regional instruments on child trafficking in sport

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRW) was adopted by the 26th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, it entered into force on 29 November 1999. the Declaration on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child. recognized the need to take all appropriate measures to promote and protect the rights and welfare of the African Child.<sup>71</sup>

The first part of the charter consist of 31 articles emphasizes on the rights freedoms, and duties of the child. The Second and final part consist of 18 articles, presents obligations that members states should adopt legislative and measures to implement provisions of the charter. The Charter was founded by the AU after realizing that African states had underrepresented during the drafting of the CRC. Also, to cater for African cultural needs. Overall, the CRC was deemed western. However, the two legal documents complement each other in term of principles and states obligations.<sup>72</sup>

Currently, it has been signed a ratified by 47 member states of the African Union, Cameroon included The ACRW prohibits torture and child trafficking in general, Article 16 of the chapter presents the importance for member states to protection against child abuse and torture Article 28, calls for states to take all needed steps to protect children from using children to traffic illegal substance from one to one country to the other. In relation to the sale, trafficking, and abduction. Article 29 calls upon state parties to prevent the sale abduction and trafficking of children by any person including guardians.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> (36804-Treaty-African\_charter\_on\_rights\_welfare\_of\_the\_child.Pdf, n.d., p. 4)

<sup>72</sup> (African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, n.d.)

<sup>73</sup> (36804-Treaty-African\_charter\_on\_rights\_welfare\_of\_the\_child.Pdf, n.d., p. 16,22,24)

Article 25 presents that children who are permanently or temporarily deprived of his family environment for any reason shall be entitled to special protection'.<sup>74</sup> Trafficked children, when they reach abroad, they are neglected which automatically they are denied of their basic rights such as shelter, food, education, and health care. Also, victims are exposed to numerous forms of torture such as physical, sexual, and mental torture.

#### **4.7 Sport Industry FIFA**

FIFA's vision 2020-2023 making football the human right approach adopted by FIFA aims to embrace its responsibility and to respect human rights and recognizes its responsibility to uphold dignity and equal rights to all, Moreover FIFA works with external human rights stakeholders. When it comes protecting children, FIFA has adopted a safeguarding principle which aims to take proactive action to protect people from harm or any form of abuse. Also, it takes all possible measures to identify, and address possible risks of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, trafficking and exploitation. Also, uphold the right as declared by the CRC 1989. To tackle the issue of trafficking of minors in football, FIFA banned the transfer of players below the age of 18 years.

In 2008 FIFA developed and launched the FIFA Guidelines which are a set of guidelines dedicated to enhancing child safeguarding values within the football industry. It is an initiative that was developed by the FIFA Committee together with its child Safeguarding Expert Working Group. The aim is to provide guidance to member associations (MAs) to contribute to preventing any form of harm that may be inflicted on children in football and to respond to arising matters of concern.

FIFA guidelines and principles consider a child to be everyone under the age of 18 and acknowledges the problem of child trafficking in football. Therefore article 19 of the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players was established to protect minors

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<sup>74</sup> *ibid*

form being exploited. It states that international transfers can only take place if the athlete is above 18 years of age. Minors are admitted based on the following conditions:<sup>75</sup>

- Minors' parents relocate to the location of where the recruiting football team is located.
- Transfers only occur within the European Union or Economic Area EEA provided that the player is between the age of 16 and 18 years.
- The athletes live within the radius of 50 km from the national border. The maximum distance from the players' home to the football club should be 100 kilometers.

#### **4.8 The Mission 89 organization**

The Cameroon government is working alongside international and national organizations to combat the issue of modern slavery in sports. The Ministry of Youth and Civic Education of Cameroon formed a collaboration with Mission 89 Organization. Mission 89 is a nonprofit and independent children's rights and sports development organization. It is in Geneva. Its aim is to mitigate child trafficking in sports through research, education, and advocacy for mandatory regulations, which aim to make sports training academies accountable for the safety and well-being of children under their supervision.<sup>76</sup>

The collaboration consists of Sports & Anti-trafficking Stakeholders in Cameroon. Together they aim to promote the NOTINOUR GAME campaign which is an anti-human trafficking awareness raising initiative whose primary aim is to educate the youth on the understanding of human trafficking and irregular migration in sports. Raising awareness to prevent children from becoming victims as they pursue their sports career.

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<sup>75</sup> (Infantino & Samoura, n.d., p. 22)

<sup>76</sup> (Mission89 Home, n.d.)

During a 10-day meeting held in Yaoundé, with Samuel Eto'o Fils, the FECAFOOT President, Mission 89 CEO Lerina Bright and football federations participating in the AFCON, Samuel Eto'o Fils shared his experience as a young footballer leaving his home country Cameroon to France. He mentioned that the importance of letting youth in Cameroon and in Africa in general know that Europe is not the ivory tower they believe it to be. Mr. Eto'o Fils also promised his contribution in raising awareness to safeguard the youth who want to explore a football career. All participants pledge to raise awareness and combat child trafficking in sport.<sup>77</sup>

## **Chapter 5 : Results Analysis**

### **5.1 Participate gender**

The study sought to get responses from all genders, despite its focus being on male football. The research was able to reach the desired number of participants through the help of Mission 89. Most participants were males with 24 participants and 23 participants, 3 participants preferred not to reveal their gender.

### **5.2 Participant age**

The age ranger was from 18 to 58 years and above. The majority of partakes included the age range between 16-33, which make up 30 percent of participants, out of 50 participants 12percent (6 people) were between the ages of 18-25 years, 24percent from 34-41 years (12 people), 42-29 amounted to 28 percent 14 people eog responses and 10 percent came from the age between 50-57 (5 people).

### **5.3 Occupational status**

The study made sure to include a diverse occupational sectors to understand depth of knowledge have about child trafficking in spot and in general, therefore participants occupations were to limited to informants occupation raged from the unemployed,

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, mission 89



bartender, hospital psychologist, phone service providers pharmacist, shop assistant, store sales manager, football coaches, human rights activists, students (2), inter region bus drivers (2), nurses (2), security officers (2), teachers, the CEO and co-founder of a sport organization, gender officer in the ministry of Ministry of Justice, football players under (4), local football coaches 2, street vendor. Choir master, housewives (2), landlord, intern, police officers and store assistant.

## **5.4 Data analysis**

### **5.5.1 Do you agree or disagree that child trafficking exists in the sports industry?**

According to the result obtained. Most of the population do not believe that child trafficking can take place in the form of sport. There 20 out of the 50 people disagree with the notion, followed by 28 percent (14 people) agree with to the statement, 18 percent remained neutral, with 10 percent strongly agree. The result seemed to be a reasonable excuse sport in Cameroon are a major event and they bring joy, therefore it is not something that is seen a threat to children safety.

### **5.5.2 Do you agree or disagree that the causes of child trafficking are linked poverty?**

After explaining to participants about sport trafficking and child trafficking in general, when asked if this issue is linked to poverty, most responses were 40 agreed and 40 strongly agreed for poverty to be one of the main factors of child trafficking in sport. The population believe that the problems they face are because of their government which lacks transparency and wrong decision thus leading to poverty. Besides those who are aware of the issue, their reasoning is based on fundamental knowledge of the subject. But for locals who seemed not to know about the subject matter at hand. They may have opted for this response because there is a high rate of poverty in Cameroon.

### **5.5.3 Do you agree or disagree that child trafficking can happen anywhere and anytime?**

Child trafficking can happen to anyone and anytime and no country is immune to child trafficking. The obtained results revealed that 28% do not believe that trafficking can happen anytime, during daytime and nighttime. 10% of participants strongly disagree. For a crime to like child trafficking to occur, they believed that the victim was responsible for causing the situation, by being found at the wrong place and time. Especially during the night when the level of crime heightens. 26% agree and 22% participants strongly agree. Combined, that revealed that 24 out of the 50 participants believe that child trafficking can happen anywhere, taking to account that 7 (14%) chose to be neutral on their responses. This could be a proof that the government of Cameroon, is putting effort in anti-child trafficking campaign.

#### 5.5.4 Would you pay for your child to go abroad with a sport agent?

Only 42% would disagree for their child to go abroad with a stranger and 34% would consider letting their child go. The reason for some parents to refuse was linked to attachment and safety. “The thought of letting your child go to a place I don’t now with someone don’t trust would cause me sleepless nights’ said one informant.

#### 5.5.5 Do you agree that child trafficking causes long lasting effects on victims?

This question obtained most responses from 33% of informants who agree and 22% who strongly agree. The term long-lasting effect triggers the term abuse; therefore, this is a widely known term with a negative connotation. That is one of the reasons that the key informants opted to agree. However, 28% disagree with this notion with reasons that children are not easily affected by anything as their minds process thoughts in a child-like manner therefore they can easily forget any traumatic experience within a short space of time.

#### 5.5.6 Do you agree or disagree that child traffickers look like professionals?

A majority of 49% of participants disagree and 16.3% strongly disagree that child traffickers can have a reputable look. One of the methods used by traffickers is to look decent enough to deceive their victims. Therefore, in most African countries, people

believe that a criminal should look a certain way, which would make them easy to identify.

5.5.7 Do you agree or disagree that human traffickers use the internet to lure child victims?

A majority of 36% of respondents claim that the internet plays a big role in increasing the number of victims. The reason for this is that the internet is viewed as an environment that has no parental control, therefore, and people are easily deceived. Almost every child has a mobile phone and is connected to the intranet. On one hand, 28% disagree, because they claim that physical presence is the only way one can be abducted.

5.5.8 Do you agree or disagree that the government should play a role in protecting children from being trafficked?

The role of government is to install institutions that will protect, promote, and persecute perpetrators. The people of Cameroon believe that the government should be held responsible for such crimes. Therefore, 48% informants opted to agree and 42% strongly agree that the government should provide protection for children of any sort. With the ongoing Anglo crisis, the number of abductions, disappearance and killings is alarming.

5.5.9 Are you aware of regional and international legal framework safeguards children from being trafficked?

Most respondents are not aware of any available regional or international legal framework protecting the child such as the CRC. 40 % Agree to have knowledge of at least one framework, especially related to national laws. One information mentioned that the state should be only required to adopt its own legal framework instead of foreign countries to impose rules and regulations on African states.

5.5.10 Do you have experience in child trafficking or know someone who has been trafficked?

The numbers are alarming, 42% of people know or have heard of at least one case of child trafficking in their lifetime. This response raises questions when it comes to the safety of children, it is important to note that the child disappearance may have not been related child trafficking in football but to child trafficking in general. This is proof that the child trafficking is a big issue which continues to grow. Also, some disappearances are linked to the mentioned Anglo crisis.

## **Chapter 6 : Conclusion and Recommendations**

In addition to being a country that is prone to this issue, Cameroon also has a significant problem with child trafficking. This issue affects the rights of children in the country. Despite the country's economic potential, its governance system still doesn't provide the necessary resources to support its athletes. consequently, it is important that the country's government takes the necessary steps to fight against child trafficking.

The country's political socio-cultural factors can affect the success of its legal instruments. For instance, the ongoing Anglophone conflict has put people at risk of being exploited. So, it is important that the government takes the necessary steps to fight against child trafficking.

It is also important that the sport industry and its stakeholders take the necessary steps to raise awareness about the dangers of child trafficking. In addition, the

Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) requires States to provide children with the right to education.

Despite the government's efforts to combat child trafficking, the number of people in the country who are aware of the issue is still not high. In 2019, the government conducted over 2,500 anti-trafficking sessions, and it reached 397,447 individuals. This means that there are still millions of people who were not reached.

The lack of proper funding and coordination hindered the government's efforts to implement anti-trafficking clauses in the country. Therefore, it is important that the government takes the necessary steps to fight against this issue. One of the most effective ways to prevent sports trafficking is by raising awareness about the issue among professional athletes.

Conducting sessions with a panel list of speakers from the football instant anti trafficking organization. The participants should not be limited to children, coaches, parents, teachers, law enforcement officials and many more.

Campaigns should not be limited to urban areas but also in rural urban areas where traffickers are likely to exploit parents lack for education. The awareness campaigns should include precaution measures such as warning players of the ways they may be approached and the methods the criminals are using.

Also advising them Clubs will not contact them by Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter. If they do contact them online, then they will email you using a registered club email account. Indicating that Clubs are not likely to use Hotmail, Gmail, or Yahoo email accounts. They will only use their official email account to make the first contact with them. A genuine approach to you will never include a request for payment. Clubs never ask for money in relation to a trial or contract offer. If someone asks them for money to arrange a visa, flight, or medical then the offer is not real.

The number of children living abroad is rising. Whilst some refuse to return because of shame, there government of Cameroon's should put in effort in repatriation. from the study, there is no proof that the government has implemented repatriation law of child residing in France. Cameroon should form a coalition with France governmental institutions to combat this issue.

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## Annex

### Questionnaire Sample

#### Child trafficking in Sport

The study is for academic purposes. There is no right or right answer. It seeks to raise awareness of the subject matter of child trafficking in sports. Participant are not obligated to write their names, the rest of the questions are obligatory. If a participants can wishes not to continue with the questionnaire, they have the right to withdraw for it.

---

\* Required

1. Name (optional)

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Sex

*Mark only one oval.*

Female

Male

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Age

*Check all that apply.*

18-25

26-33

34-41

42-49

50-57

58 and above

4. Occupation

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How many children do you have?

---

6. Do you agree or disagree that child trafficking exists in the sports industry?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

7. Do you agree or disagree that the causes of child trafficking are linked poverty?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

8. Do you agree or disagree that child trafficking can happen anywhere and anytime?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

9. Would you pay for your child to go abroad with a sport agent?

*Mark only one oval.*

- No
- Maybe
- Yes

10. Do you agree or disagree that child trafficking causes long lasting effects on victims?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

11. Do you agree or disagree that child traffickers look like professionals?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

12. Do you agree or disagree that human traffickers use the internet to lure child victims? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly disagree  
 Disagree  
 Neutral  
 Agree  
 Strongly agree

13. Do you agree or disagree that the government should play a role in protecting children from being trafficked?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Strongly disagree  
 Disagree  
 Neutral  
 Agree  
 Strongly agree

14. Are you aware of regional and international legal framework safeguards children from being trafficked?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes  
 No  
 Maybe  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

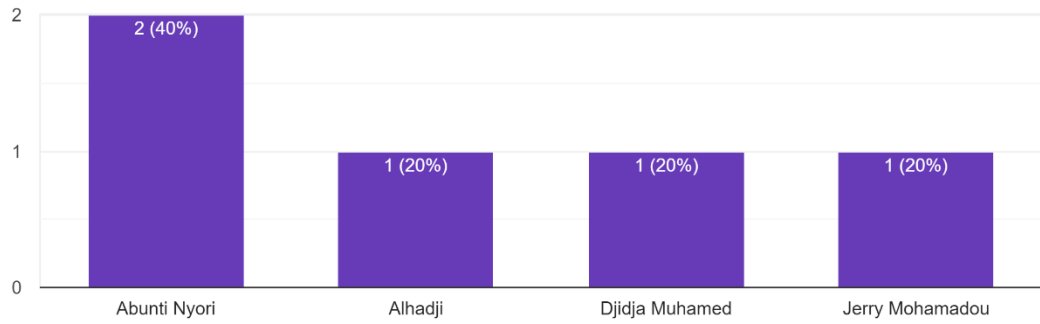
15. Do you have experience in child trafficking or know someone who has been trafficked?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes  
 No  
 Maybe  
 Wish not to answer
-

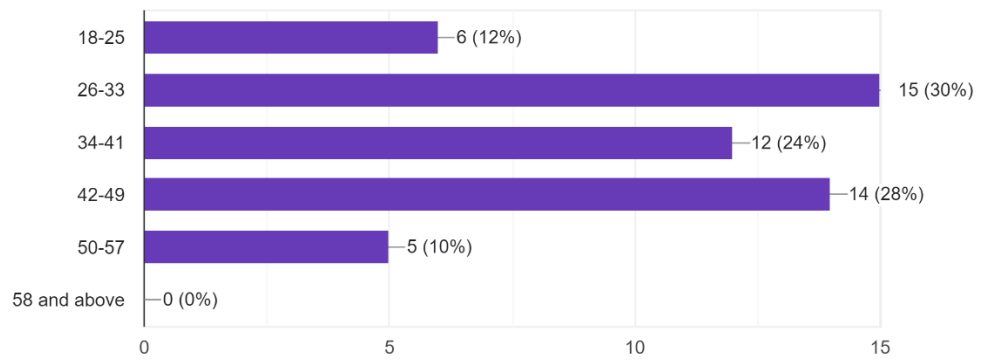
Name (optional)

5 responses



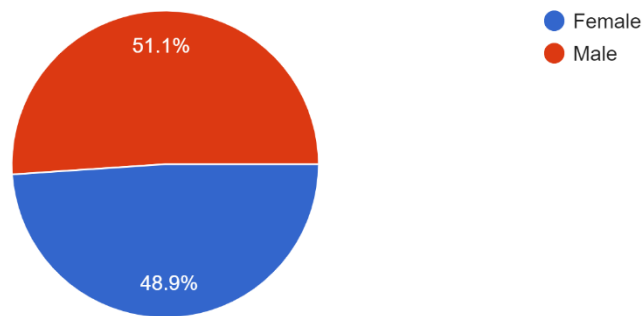
Age

50 responses



Sex

47 responses





## Analyzing the Issue of Child Trafficking in Sport from Cameroon to France

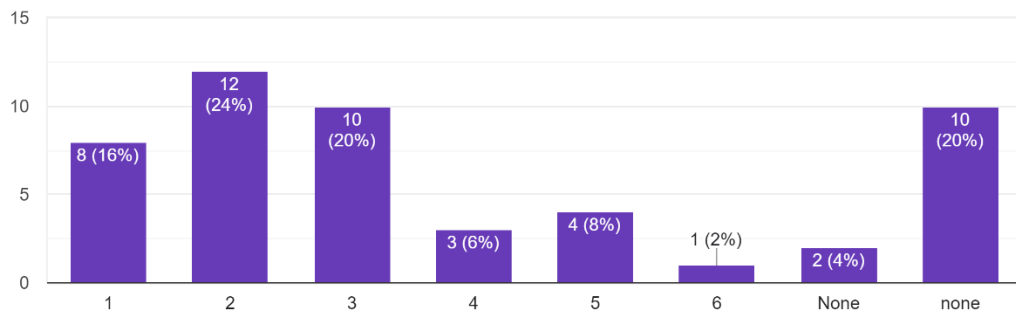
### Occupation

49 responses



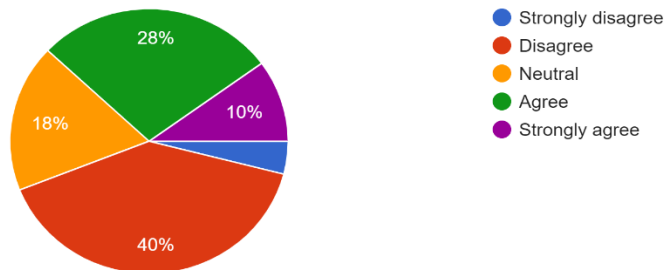
### How many children do you have?

50 responses



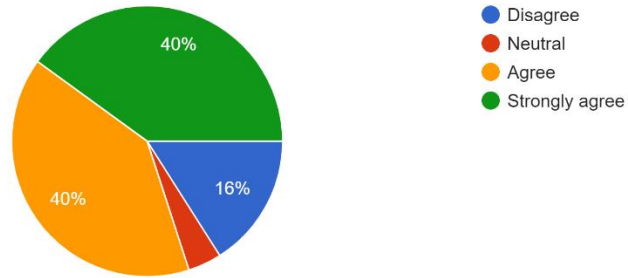
### Do you agree or disagree that child trafficking exists in the sports industry?

50 responses



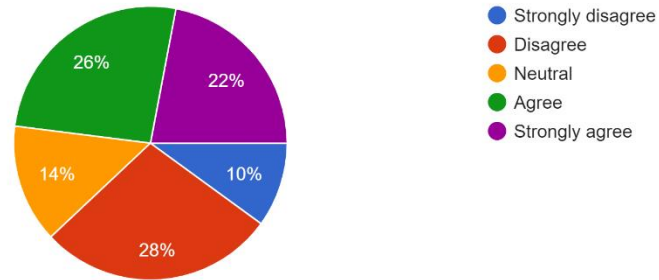
Do you agree or disagree that the causes of child trafficking are linked poverty?

50 responses



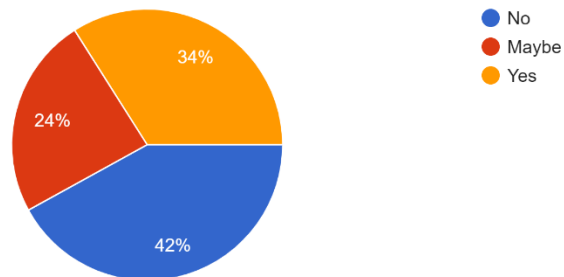
Do you agree or disagree that child trafficking can happen anywhere and anytime?

50 responses



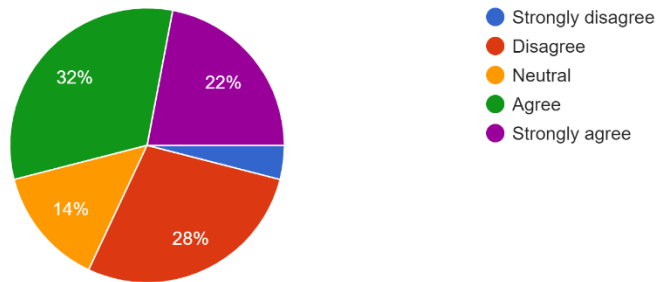
Would you pay for your child to go abroad with a sport agent?

50 responses



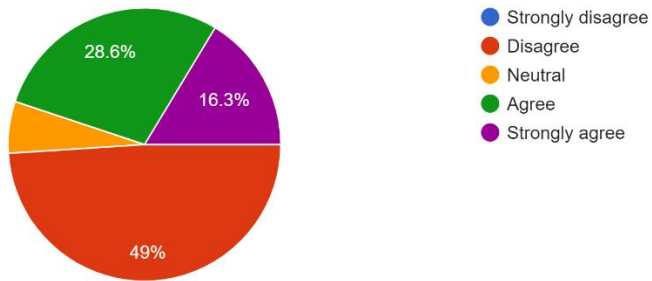
Do you agree or disagree that child trafficking causes long lasting effects on victims?

50 responses



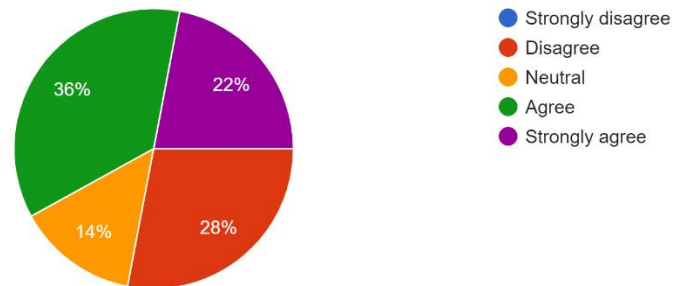
Do you agree or disagree that child traffickers look like professionals?

49 responses



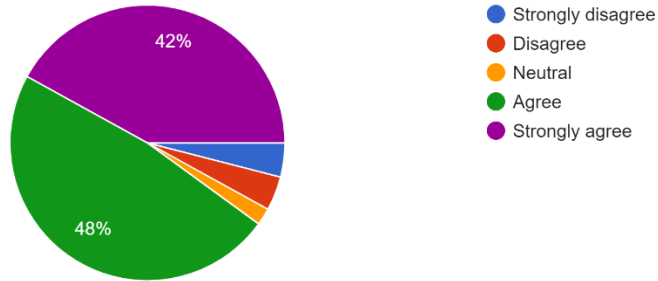
Do you agree or disagree that human traffickers use the internet to lure child victims?

50 responses



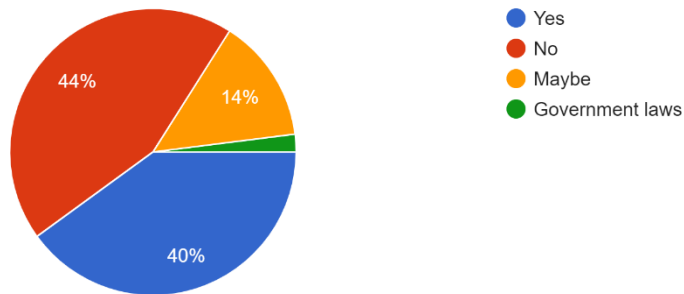
Do you agree or disagree that the government should play a role in protecting children from being trafficked?

50 responses



Are you aware of regional and international legal framework safeguards children from being trafficked?

50 responses



Do you have experience in child trafficking or know someone who has been trafficked?

50 responses

