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**Over-Making *Nyanga*: Mastering “Natural” Beauty and Disciplining Excessive Bodily Practices in Metropolitan Cameroon**

**Abstract:** This study examines how Anglophone urban elites in 1960s metropolitan Cameroon negotiated local and global ideas about culturally constructed forms of “natural” black beauty. Formally educated Christian urbanites, such as freelance female journalists, who often worked as civil servants, sought to discipline women’s bodily practices and emotional expressivity in order to regulate the boundaries of perceived feminine respectability and to define a woman’s “natural” beauty, a descriptor with both internal and external implications. The language they used included both local terms such as *nyanga*, a Cameroonian Pidgin English word for varied ideas about beauty and stylishness, and standard English terms. This specific use of language illustrates the hybridity of understandings of natural beauty and bodily comportment, painting a distinct African imagery denoting the social progression of black Cameroonian elite subcultures.

**Keywords:** Cameroon; gender; beauty; bodily practices; pan-Africanism