

## Multiplicity of Urban Fronts and phenomena in Cameroonian Cities: example of Douala the Economic Capital

Tende Renz Tichafogwe<sup>1\*</sup>, Zephania N. Fogwe<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Geography, The University of Yaounde, Centre, Cameroon

<sup>2</sup>Department of Geography and Planning, The University of Bamenda, Bamenda, Cameroon

### \*Corresponding author

*Tende Renz Tichafogwe*

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**Abstract:** Good multitudes of Cameroonian cities are characterized by a strong recurrence urban front issuant of combined population surge and industrialization. Douala as a sub-Saharan millionaire city witnessed an accelerated spiral of population increase and spatial sprawl in the wake of uncontrolled development of fronts. The fronts depict dynamic limits of growth of urban perimeters with uncoordinated urban physiognomy. The development of Douala is not homogenous in its planning and infrastructural growth due to improper monitoring of urbanisation process. This paper examines the modus-operandi of front development in the city and explains the gaps that have led to an unproductive dynamics of fronts in Douala. The study aims at mapping existing urban fronts and introducing control strategies to reduce unproductive front development in Douala. Field observations, interviews, on-the-spot appraisals, archival sources and documentary research constituted significant data collection sources. The urban space of Douala was determined from satellite images of two periods while the population increase was treated through the Microsoft excel spreadsheet to obtain results. Results revealed that urban front proliferation in Douala is triggered by a rapid population upsurge representing some 405.87% increase in 40 years with the population moving from 476.000 inhabitants in 1975, to 1.931.977 in 2015. The urban space of Douala increased in 24,251 hectares for the past 44 years passing from 3249 hectares in 1970 to 27500 in 2014. Douala is largely an archetypical urban mismanagement territory of poor planning policies, uncoordinated spatial layout of urban settlement and anarchical occupation of land. Legislation and governance has not succeeded in shaping land ownership and buildings leading to anarchy and unproductive dynamics of the fronts in the city. The paper suggests that a participatory management approach involving the public and private actors be used to implement control and address the anarchy that reigns in Douala.

**Keywords:** Douala, spatial expansion, poor planning, population growth, urban fronts, unproductive dynamics, participatory management.

## INTRODUCTION

The city of Douala is the economic capital and industrial nerve of Cameroon, which harbours about 80% of the countries industries. This has led to the rapid population increase from urbanisation and industrialization. The fast developing nature of the city, coupled with limited human capital and poor management policies have resulted to intense anthropogenic pressure, which have affected the urban land use of the city through the development of fronts. The development of fronts has become so rampant and recurrent in the city in such a way that the physiognomy is disorderly as much anarchy.

An urban front depicts the dynamic limits of the growth of urban perimeters, which reveals a

boundary between two spaces of varied rural and urban characteristics [1]. Front emergence is a phenomenon that is not static but changes over time and space. Because of this, there is a constant change observed in the city of Douala especially in terms of spatial expansion and infrastructural growth. The city of Douala is experiencing a galloping urbanisation due to the uncontrolled development of fronts that have affected the urban land use and provoked anarchy. The development of Douala is not homogenous in its planning and infrastructural growth. The implementation of the urbanisation process has unfortunately led to an unproductive dynamics observed in the city.

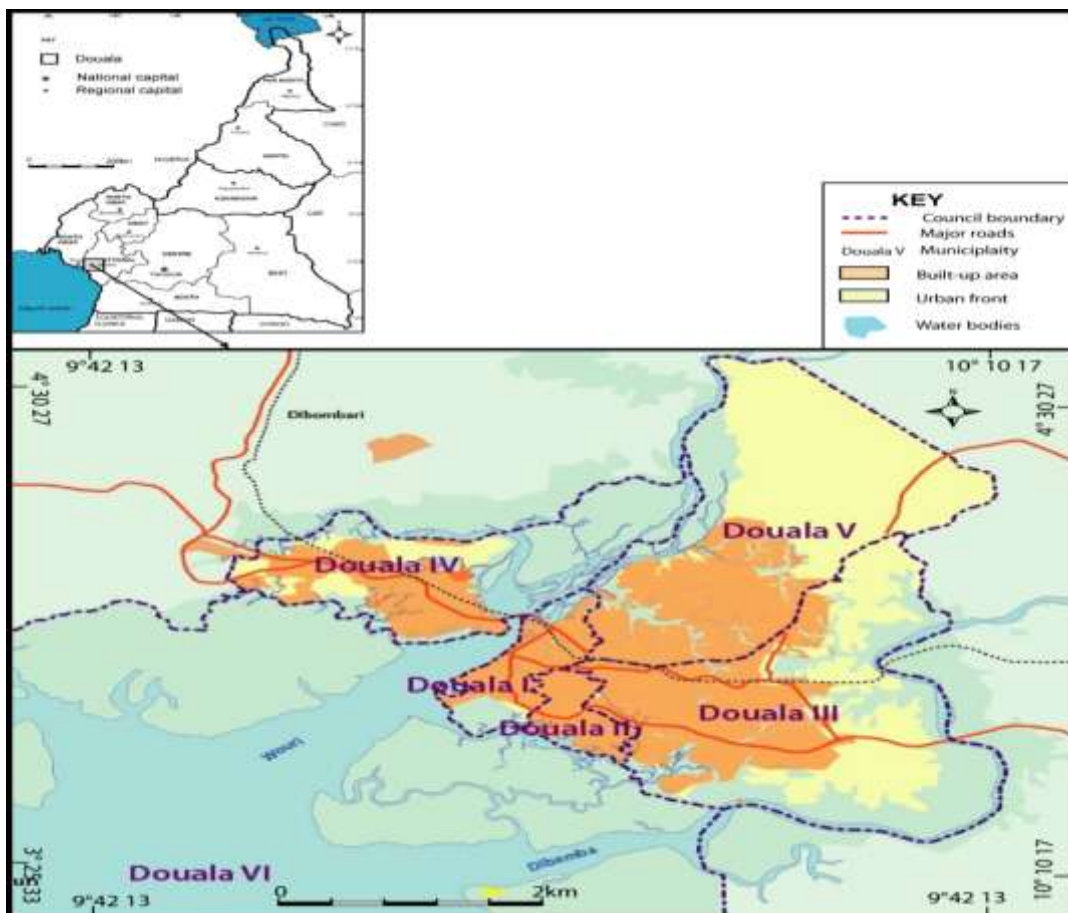
In order to have a planned city, the rules governing urban land use are supposed to be strictly respected and monitored and defaulters called to order. Such is not the case largely in the city of Douala like in most Cameroonian cities that has provoked anarchy in the areas. In Cameroon, the Law N<sup>o</sup>2004/003 of 26<sup>th</sup> April 2004 sets out laid down rules and regulations governing town planning and housing. Section 37 of the set law stipulates that a land use plan shall be a document drawn up to define the allocation of land and rules governing such allocation in the medium term. The plan shall define the area of each of the allocated land and spell out for each of them, rules and special land use restrictions [2].

The presence of such brilliant laws makes one to be tempted to think that Cameroonian towns are an Eldorado to leave in with no land use problem. Rather, what is observed in Douala is the poor implementation of land use laws, which have led to an unproductive dynamics of fronts in the city. Spatial expansion and urban sprawl in the city is not controlled and land ownership and occupation does not respect the planning

order. A majority of the increasing population in Douala are low-income earners who with the hope to have a better standard of leaving rush for the marshes and settle in prohibited areas of the city. The cycle of disorder continues even in the eyes of the authority that have become powerless to address the situation and has thus lead to the development of fronts in an anarchical manner here and there in Douala. This paper therefore examines the mode of operation of front development in the city and explains the gaps that have led to an unproductive dynamics of fronts in Douala. The article maps-out the existing urban fronts and introduces control strategies to reduce unproductive front development in Douala.

### The Location of the Study Area

Douala is located between longitude 9°42' and 10°75' E and latitude 3°2' and 4°2'N. It is the inland extension of the Cameroon estuary at the Gulf of Guinea, constituted of the low coastal plain (Fig-1). It is the economic capital of Cameroon and the most populated city with a total of 1.931.977 people [3].



**Fig-1: The Location of the Study Area**

Source: Field Work, 2016

**METHODOLOGY**

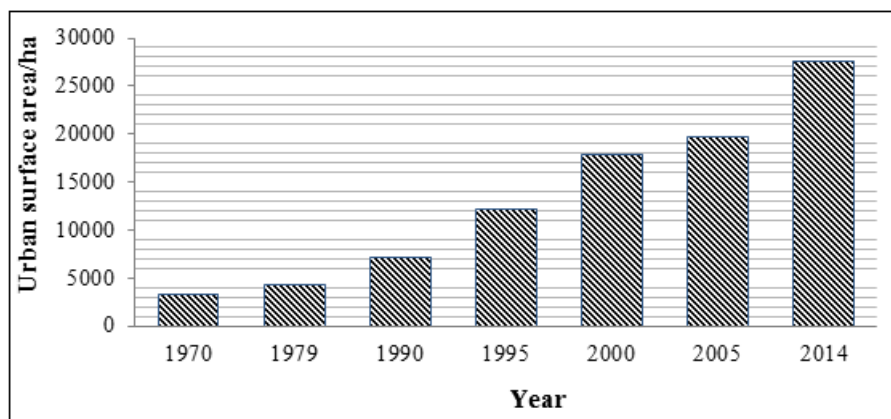
Field observations and on-the-spot appraisals provided data on the spread of fronts in Douala and pictures taken to express the state of the city at present. Extensive secondary data and population census data of Douala indicated the rate of population increase from 1975 to 2015. These data collected was treated using the Microsoft excel spreadsheet and tables with diagrams for analysis. Spatial expansion data from satellite images of two different periods of sprawl in Douala and the spatial increase for the past forty years was analysed. Cameroonian town planning policies on land use and housing permitted the explanation of norms. Such norms brought out the gaps that have led to the unproductive front development in the city of Douala. The field research was both quantitative and qualitative.

**RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

The results obtained through field studies revealed that urban front proliferation in the city of Douala is caused by urban sprawl and spatial expansion, population increase and anarchical occupation as well as poor planning policies and implementation.

**Spatial expansion and urban sprawl in the city of Douala**

The city of Douala has experienced a persistent increase in its urban space through demographic pressure and sprawl. The evolution of the urban space in Douala has increased over time and this change has influenced the development of fronts in the city. Results from Figure 1 connote that Douala has increased in 24,251 hectares of urban surface for the past 44 years leaving from 3249 hectares in 1970 to 27500 in 2014. The increase in the urban space has been progressive over time with a consistent marginal growth of the city (Fig-2).



**Fig-2: The Evolution of Douala Urban Space from 1970 to 2014**

Source: Field Work, 2015

As the urban space of the city increased, the marginal growth too increased overtime. The marginal growth of the Douala urban space stood at 966 hectares from 1970 to 1979. It increased to 4900 hectares from 1990 to 1995 and dropped to 1850 from 2000 to 2005. From 2005 to 2014, the marginal growth of the Douala urban space increased to 7800 hectares indicating a steady rise. The consistent increase in the urban space provoked the sprawl in the city.

The city of Douala through urban sprawl phenomenon has problems of urban poverty and the short sightedness of decision makers to address the uncontrolled sprawl [4]. Housing problems in Douala

are not well managed and coordinated by the authority and the individuals concerned. The myopic nature of addressing housing problems in the city has yielded the emergence of two different types of human habitats. They buildings include makeshift ones constructed with the use of wood otherwise known as “carabottes” and standard buildings with reference to materials used for construction. The makeshift buildings consist of houses with walls or boards with corrugated iron roof, floor screed and no ceiling. Makeshift buildings especially at the periphery of the city are informal. The standard buildings on their part constituted block walls, corrugated or aluminium tray, floor tiles and ceiling of plywood or wood panelling (Fig-3).



**Fig-3: Substandard and Standard buildings identified in some urban Fronts of Douala**

Source: Fieldwork, August 2017

Figure-3 in the Makepe Missoke neighbourhood is an example of a makeshift structure constructed illegally with wood and old abandoned corrugated iron sheets with people living inside in a deplorable condition to the left. The photo to the right on its part of the Cite SIC neighbourhood exhibits a sample of a standard structure constructed out of cement bricks and tiled which harbours high-income earners of the city.

Douala exhibits all forms of sprawling development ranging from scattered to nucleated ones. There is low density sprawl observe in Bepanda, Cite de Palmiers and Akwa Nord as well as leapfrog development around the Wouri and Dibamba rivers. Douala also depicts ribbon sprawl around the Yassa and Bonaberi areas, which are along the gateways into the city [4]. Spatial expansion and urban sprawl in Douala is characterised by a persistent increase in the population that has influenced the development of fronts in the city.

### **Population growth and anarchical occupation in Douala**

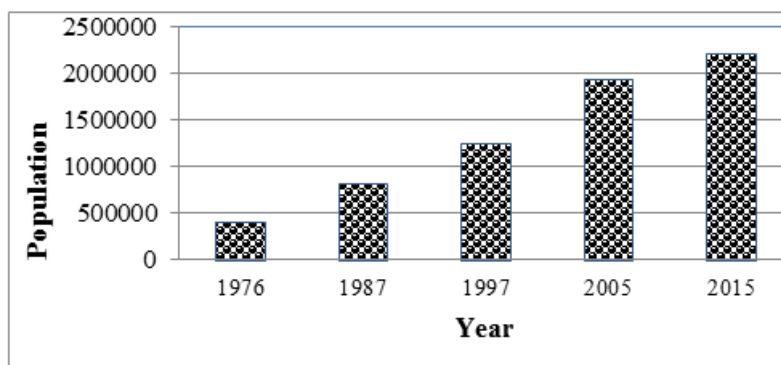
Population growth in Douala has experienced a progressive increase for the past four to five decades. The growth has occurred over the years from the natural change in population emanating from the difference in birth and death rates and from the rate of migration. Douala makes for 10% of the total population of Cameroon. The population growth of Douala however does not only emanate from the movement of people into the city, but also from the change in the number of people who live in the city. Several factors are the cause of increase in population. Industrialisation offered job opportunities to available social amenities, which attract people as well as the quest for improvement in the

standard of living from the migrant population. The population of Douala is increasing and has caused an increase in that of the different municipalities that make-up the Wouri Division as well. The increase varies from one municipality to the other. The increase in population has been more after independence as observed by the population trend

The population of Douala increased from 120000 people in 1960 to 395813 in 1976, with a marginal increase of 275813 people. Eleven years later (1976 to 1987), the population increased to 809852 with a marginal increase of 414039 people, an increase, twice as that of the past sixteen year's period (1960 to 1976). Two major factors can be shortlisted as the cause of this rapid growth. The first is the growth of industries in Douala that attracted the population and served as a pull factor to in-migrants. The second factor is the creation of the Douala Autonomous Port that increased trade and created job opportunities that made the population to move into Douala.

From 1987 to 1997, the population of Douala moved from 809852 people to 1244295 with a slight marginal increase of 20404 people from 414039 to 434443. The growth during this period in Douala was slow from the effect of the economic crisis in 1987 that hit Cameroon and caused many activities to slow down in Douala. Eight years later from 1997 to 2005, the population of Douala increased from 1244295 to 1931977 people with a rise in the marginal increase of 687682 people. Projections in 2015 revealed an increase to some 2200000 people. The period of 2005 to 2015 had a marginal increase of 268023 people indicating a progressive increase in the population growth of Douala (Fig-4).





**Fig-4: Population Evolution of Douala from 1976 to 2015**

Source: Field Work, 2017

As the population of Douala increased, people settled in the city through planned manner controlled by the SIC and a more unplanned or spontaneous manner with little or no control which has provoked anarchy in the area.

#### **The genesis of urban fronts in Douala**

Urban front emergence and development is a phenomenon which occurred in Douala around the 1914s in the form of functional segregation. At the outbreak of the War in 1914, Douala was the coast area made up of four villages: Joss, Akwa, Deido and Bonaberi. The population was mostly of Douala natives doing traditional estuarine and coastal fishing and trade. The settlement was dispersed and the foreigners occupied mostly the periphery. The people of the other ethnic groups were few and made up of Hausas and Bamilekes. Douala thus portrayed primary settlement frontiers marked the front lines of progressive colonisation and state control which while advancing bypassed unattractive areas. This left enclaves of non-colonised territory behind as the vast land between the Bassa plateau and the port area that was settled between 1930 and 1960. This demonstrates that such functional frontier advance involve pull and push factors, the attraction of new opportunities and vacant land.

Between 1922 and 1945, settlement clusters of natives as the arrival of other Europeans installed themselves on the Joss plateau and Akwa. In the areas abandoned by the Dualas, (with regards to the Green Belt Project) new comers installed themselves in the New Bell and Akwa area. Between 1945 and 1960 New Bell became very dense towards its centre and especially towards the north where the new comers divided up themselves: Kassalafarm, Nkololoun, Congo, Lagos, etc. This became a new form of quarter segregation. By

1960 Douala had stretched out on 1450 hectares towards the north coast so that new Douala villages developed: Bonanjinje, Bonantone, Akwa Nord. Consequently by 1959, the town had five functional clusters: Joss Plateau (administrative and residential), Bonapriso and Bonadoumbe (high class residential), port and Akwa I (commercial), Akwa II and Deido (native population residential), New Bell and New Deido (non-native population residential). Each of these were surrounded by a functional frontier.

Between 1960 and 1975, excessive population density in New Bell between 1965 and 1975 in Bepanda extended their settlements to Nylon and Makepe Missoke respectively 1975 and 1985 the slum quarters received a high influx of immigrants pushing the municipal authorities to react in two ways. This involved dislodging people from the central over populated areas and also the construction of three residential areas: Makepe, Bonamoussadi, and Cite des Palmiers. Each of these parameters doubles and quadruples each 10 to 20 years. With regards to the area, in 1986 it was 1450 hectares while in 1982 it was 1650 hectares and in 1991 it had risen to 11 000 hectares. Douala was about 10 times more populated in 1960 than it was in 1945 with the total number of immigrants passed from 22 000 in 1946 to 77 000 in 1953, 116 000 in 1960 for a total of 155 000 inhabitants. This rapidly increasing number meant that there was need to do extensive construction for the population.

The birth and dynamics of urban fronts in Douala started in the early 1980s with a reversal of the colonisation of valleys in the town contrary to the early years of urban development in the 1970s of well-built plateaux. The accelerated growth rate of Douala necessitated the introduction of an updated master plan

from that of Dorian as housing was at the top of the agenda of the plan. Nevertheless, the conception and adoption of the master plan was inadequate, if not slow to withstand the already increasing population that sprawled into all the quarters of the city. In 1981, a new urban space termed "*nouveau front d'urbanisation*", emerged in Douala around the north east, Makepe-Ndogbong, Kondi, KM-8 quarters [1]. The front was characterised by planned occupation of land and plateau with well-built houses, access roads and good drainage system on Makepe-Ndogbong on one hand. On the other hand was an unplanned occupation of land in the valleys with make-shift houses built out of wood, little or no access to quarters and poor or inadequate drainage system, hence causing recurrent floods.

Rapid urbanisation and industrialisation coupled with the construction of the Bonaberi Bridge to link the south to the west made numerous people to move into Douala. As the population of Douala spread towards the periphery, two types of quarters emerged. One type were illegally built houses without plans, occupying land that has no title in Makepe Missoke, Bepanda as well as Beedi, while on the other are new towns in the form of dormitory towns with well-built SIC houses in Makepe SIC, Bonamoussadi and Kotto [5]. Despite plans to decongest the city of Douala, slum quarters continued to receive immigrants pushing the authorities to react. The reaction saw the dislodging of the population from the central zone, over populated areas and the production of the SDAU for the town. The SDAU was established in 1983 introducing the restructuring of Nylon by ARAN, the creation of the MAETUR and the re-orientation of the policy of the SIC for the construction of three residential areas in Makepe, Bonamoussadi and Cite des Palmiers. In the course of executing these projects, the economic crises started in 1987 causing several companies to close down rendering their workers jobless. Above all, it slowed down the rate of immigration into the town. As a result of this, four fronts of spontaneous squatter settlements developed though not in a very anarchical manner since it was guided by the SDAU [6].

The first front was found towards the north and north east at Bonangang. The second front is from Cite des Palmiers towards Nyalla Etrangers. The third front is from Camp des Officiers towards Ndogpassi and Nkolbon. Another front during this period is in the south of Logpom towards Logbaba and the industrial zones. The Bonaberi area also witnessed the emergence of a front towards Nkomba and Mabanda, Grand

Hanger and near the Bonassama Hospital, from the population that left from New Bell, Bepanda and other parts of Cameroon. The 2005 to 2010 period witnessed the emergence of other urban fronts to swell the number of fronts already in existence in Douala. That is how a front sprang up in the Bois de Singes quarter in Douala, characterised by a problematic quality of life style as the inhabitants lived in marshes and ghettos in the heart of the city [7]. By 2008, another front developed around Song-Mahop, a quarter that stretches around the south east periphery of Douala, characterised by an absence of proper planning, illegal occupation of land revealing a dual phase of an urban area as in a planned and spontaneous city [8].

A planned city is that which created from conception up to follow-up from the urban managers and stakeholders, while a spontaneous city is that with no follow-up or control in neither the occupation of land nor any legal rules. These two characteristic urban zones portray a segregation perceptible form of a zone of transition between an urban and rural characteristic. The period 2010 to 2014 is characterised by a proliferation of other urban fronts in the Douala metropolis. They include that in Yassa-Japoma on the road leading to Yaounde. Another front in emerged in the Genie Militaire-KM-14 neighbourhoods towards the new Douala University site. The most recent is North East urban front in the Ndogbong valley, Makepe Missoke and Bepanda, towards Kotto and Logpom areas. The growth and development of the North East urban front is rapid and dynamic. The spatial expansion in Douala has dramatically increased with a constantly increasing number of in-migrants into the area. This phenomenon is characterised by a planned city in the raised surfaces such as the plateaux and plains, interspersed with unplanned city or spontaneous areas in valleys and marshes at parallel lengths to each other.

The city is further characterised by an organised form of settlement on one hand, responding to urban sprawl with a checkerboard type of land use pattern. An anarchical form of settlement spreading as slums with an undesirable land use pattern leaving the town to be vulnerable to most environmental hazards such as floods, landslides, erosion and soil creep. Other characteristics reveal a city with poor drainage, inaccessible and enclave with overcrowding, morphological rupturing and reversals, contrary to a well-drained area that is accessible and open. All these differential characteristics give the impression of a line of demarcation between rural and urban functions of

Douala. This is as an urban front. It differs from earlier boundaries because; these boundaries have clear-cut lines that separate two areas such as vegetation, hills, rivers or springs. A front is a demarcation zone that

does not have clear-cut boundaries but has varied rural and urban characteristics. Urban front sprawl in the city of Douala can be mapped-out as follows (Fig-5).

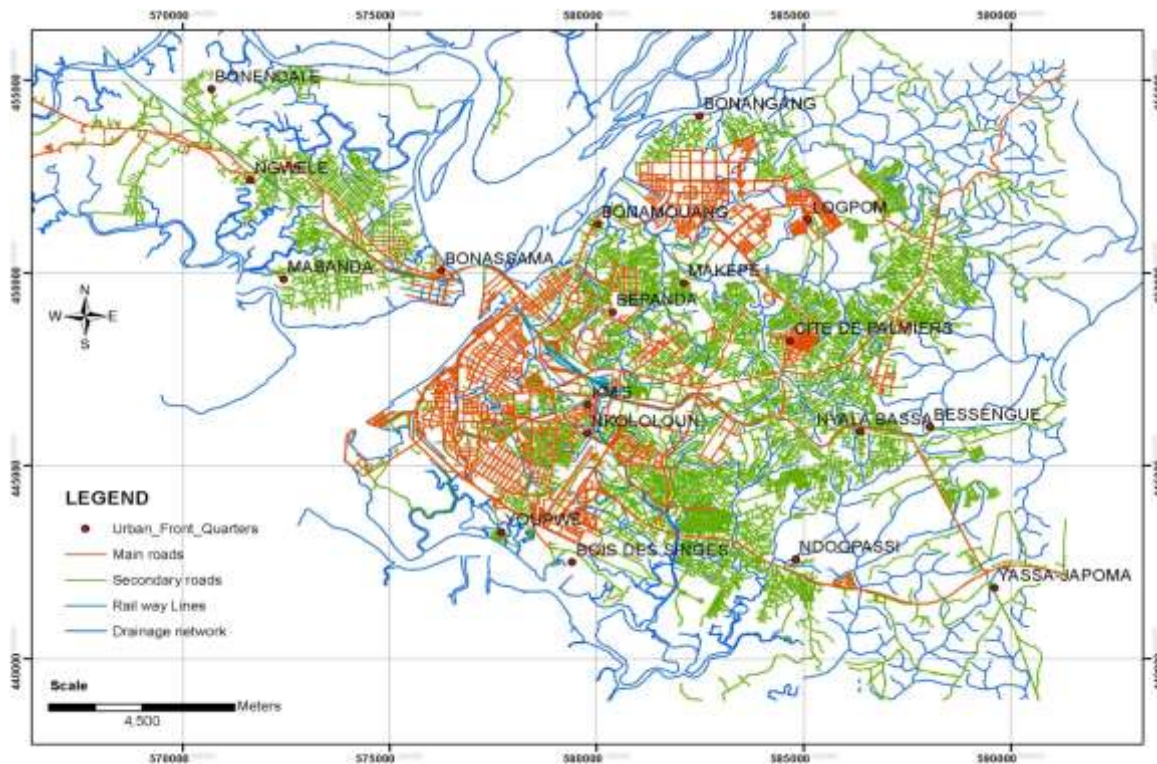


Fig-5: Urban Fronts Sprawl in the City Douala.

Source: Field work, 2017

## DISCUSSION

The multiplicity of urban fronts in Douala results from drawbacks of the Cameroons urban planning policies. Faced with such difficulties, there has been some institutional responses which though implemented have not been able to redress the situation of poor planning. The gaps of urban planning policies in Douala are discussed in the subsequent sections.

### Gaps of Cameroon’s urban planning policy and front proliferation in Douala

Urban planning in Cameroon in general and Douala in particular is enshrined with good rules and regulations. The major challenges therefore are the inadequate implementation of this town planning laws and insufficient competence of the personnel to follow-up the regulations. In Douala, urban planning operates under the Town Planning Law No 2004/003 of 26 April 2004. This law stipulates that the master plan and land use plan are two main documents guiding development of the towns. Loopholes have led to an unproductive front dynamics in the city of Douala.

### Master Plans are poorly designed and obsolete

A master plan is a document that lays down the basic guidelines for developing a given urban area, the general use assigned to land and the schedule for the provision of amenities. The august 1982 master plan of Douala by the SDAU served as the only document available even though never implemented. The master plan though updated in 2012 by the PDU of the Douala Urban Council, came only after settlement had occurred and anarchy had reigned in the city. This made it difficult to address the situation of planning, as the already settled population were resistant to changes.

### The insufficient implementation of land use plans

The land use plan, which is a document drawn to define the allocation of land and the rules governing such allocation, also spells out the rules of special land use restrictions. Field studies reveal that the land use plan of Douala makes it difficult for a satisfactory urban planning. The poor implementation has therefore led to the haphazard allocation of land uses without taking into account their compatibility with the environment

and other land uses which has led to uncontrolled settlement of the population. The only document put into function to a certain extent by urban planners in Douala is the sector plan that deals only with sections of the town. The Douala urban Council authority admitted to the fact that it has implemented some sector and layout plans in the built-up area of Bonamoussadi and Makepe SIC. Unfortunately, the master plan that is supposed to determine the compatibility of this sector plans with other land uses and to ensure uniformity of the town. The non-compliance to these vital documents makes it difficult for proper town planning. Land uses have thus favoured suburban sprawl forms without considering their compatibility with the ecosystem, which has provoke unproductive dynamics.

### **The misuse of urban planning tools**

In order to ensure adequate implementation of urban planning guidelines, tools such as building permits, town planning certificates and development control. The town planning certificate that delivered by the mayor of the relevant Council is upon technical recommendation of the local urban planning service is supposed to be granted after field inspection. It is only then that a building permit can be issued to the developer. Technical and field studies are done out by the Regional Delegation of Land Tenure and State Property, Surveys and Urban Development, Health and Urban Council who may or not issue the permit. Unfortunately, adequate studies by the technical staff before building permits issued are not done. As a result, town planning certificates and building permits are delivered to developers in risk-prone areas that have perpetrated anarchy.

### **Insufficient qualified staff and conflicting functions**

The Douala City Council and its six local Councils cannot effectively carryout development because of insufficient qualified staff and mismanagement of funds. The technical office in charge of urban planning in the Douala Urban Council, for example, has few surveyors, assisted by untrained field workers that have led to the poor implementation of town planning rules and regulations. Development control for example that is a tool to regulate and control development has various stages of application with the end being demolition. This is not properly carried out by the Council authority as the houses constructed in the risk zones have not been totally demolished leaving the city in an unplanned shape.

There is a conflict in most of the functions performed by the various stakeholders involved in the development of the city of Douala. An interview with the delegate of land tenure and state property indicates that they issue land titles to land owners in areas earmarked by the city Council as risk-prone areas. There is therefore conflict of function between the Council and the ministries. At the level of the ministries, the responsibilities of the ministries and the decentralised local authorities overlap and are not plainly defined. The ministries on one hand infiltrate into the authorities of the Councils that creates disorder.

### **Land ownership problems**

Just like other African countries, Cameroon suffers a profound right-to-land dualism between traditional and modern rights. There is an overlap between land use rights, customary rights and modern rights established by the state law. The notion of indigenes and outsiders is very strong in land matters and the ceding of traditional land to an outsider is very long and challenging. According to the law, land without formal property titles belongs to the state even though the traditional occupants claim it for themselves because of their traditional rights. This situation validates the complexities involved in land use and land ownership conflicts. Still on the same trend, the ministry of urban development and housing have not allowed for effective enforcement of land ownership laws as only a lesser number of urban properties are registered. The official plot production of the state is very limited. This makes new unplanned urban development to spread to the peri-urban area without rules and official rights. Many household heads in Douala own the houses in which they live, but fewer of the residents have registered land titles to the land. There is an active market to untitled or illegally titled plots resulting from the absence of an updated cadastral. All these factors and more have led to the development of urban fronts in Douala that are sprawling in an unproductive manner. At the wake of this disorder in the city of Douala, and with its economic power, the authority in an attempt to curb the situation introduced a couple of measures as follows.

### **Institutional responses to urban front development and unproductive dynamics in Douala**

The stakeholders involved in the planning of the city of Douala in an attempt to address the situation of unplanned development and development of fronts introduced a series of responses to the anarchy in the city. The first is the identification of the various



infrastructures that do not respect the urban planning norms and have been ear marked for demolition through the “*a demolir*” sign. The demolition sign on buildings signifies to be demolished and serves as an injunction tantamount to destruction placed on a structure earmarked for the non-respect of the law. Placed by the DUC and owing to the fact that it comes after several written documents have been channelled to the

defaulters and evacuation periods granted, one would be forced to think that the inhabitants of the set structures will quite immediately. Several of such injunctions are placed on some buildings along the city of Douala, but the authorities do not act fast in the demolition process, which has made the concerned to hastily complete their unfinished building despite the injunction on it (Fig-6).



**Fig-6: Injunction responses from the Authority of the Douala City**

Source: Fieldwork, December 2011 and February 2015

The photo to the left of the Ndogbong Valley neighbourhood of Douala reveals a building marked for demolition in 2011 by the DUC. Unfortunately, the delay of the authority to act fast saw the completion of the building in 2015 to the observed state in the photo to the right.

It is interesting to note that this process of disrespect of the law is very rampant and recurrent in the entire city of Douala. Several of these injunctions have been marked on buildings and little or nothing is done to see to it that the demolition process is goes into effect. Consequently, an uncontrollable anarchy has

reigned in the city leading to an unproductive dynamics of the urban fronts identified. The proliferation of urban fronts in Douala like in most Cameroonian towns has become a cause for concern and the methods of reducing anarchy from these fronts should not only be left on to the hands of the authorities alone, but to the civil society and the population as well. It is in furtherance to this that a complimentary participatory management approach is suggested to all the stakeholders involved in urban production. Use a model on the participatory urban land use and development of Douala to address the situation (Fig-7).

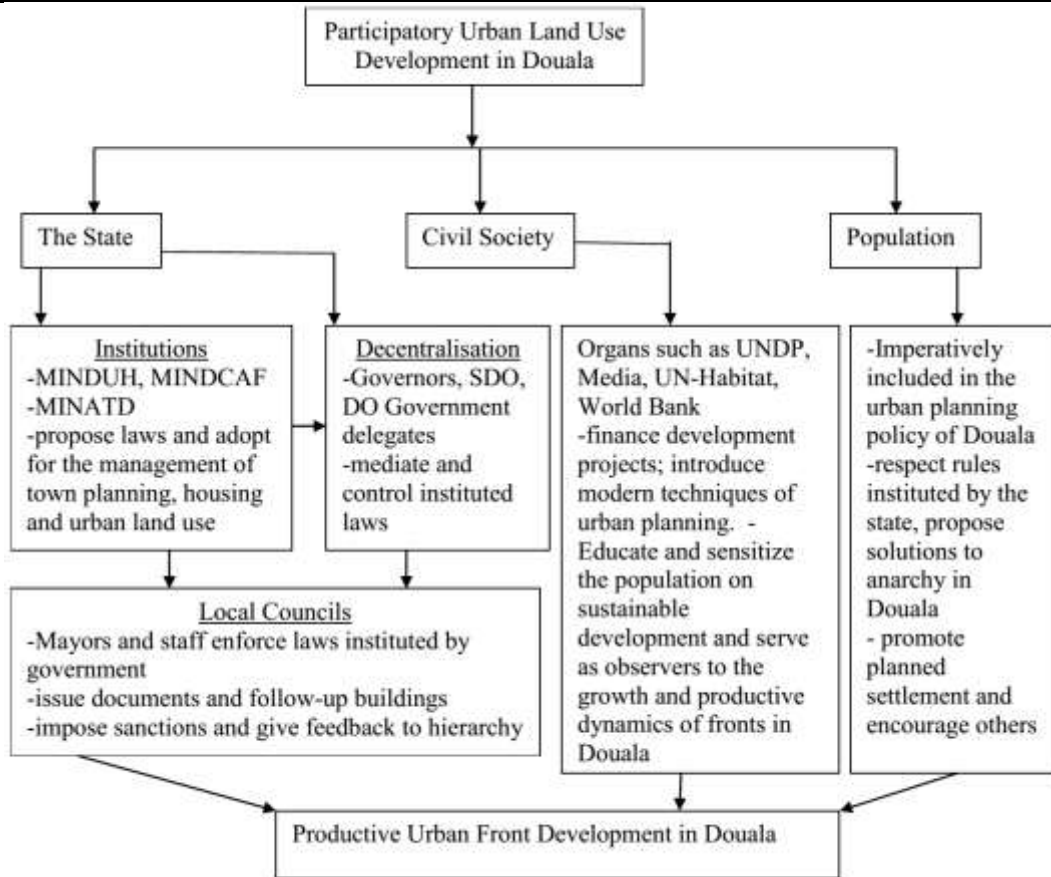


Fig-7: A Model of Participatory Urban Land Use Development in the City of Douala

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

The state is omnipresent in the management of urban disorder by its institutions and its decentralised organs. The state plays the role of regulator and indicator of public policies and wrestles against disorder through the financing of public projects to develop the city of Douala. The DUC and its Local Councils are supposed to work in a synergy to ensure the execution of an adequate land use plan of the city and reduce conflicts of authority with the local Councils.

The civil society and NGOs also have a role to play in the growth and governance of Douala. Their financial aids for development projects, monitoring process to ensure the projects be executed and educating the public on town planning responsibilities is indispensable for the development of the city of Douala.

The population as well constitute an important factor in the reduction of anarchy and introduction of sustainable development in Douala. They act as non-state actors that are supposed to be included in both the management process and execution of policies. In

passing, the contribution of the population that has invaded the city was a major step to anarchy, which this paper seeks to reduce. Nevertheless, it is better to address the situation of urban disorder that characterises the city of Douala especially so that many other Cameroonian towns can copy the example and strive for proper planning.

### CONCLUSION

With the introduction of a participatory management approach to urban land use and development in Douala, the multiplicity of urban fronts will no longer sprawl unproductively in the end. The Douala urban front proliferation and poor planning since 1981 has led to several drawbacks of urban development and land use management in the city hence, anarchy. The gaps of poor urban policies, non-respect of urban laws, illegal occupation of land and laxity from the authorities amidst spatial expansion and population growth have contributed to the numerous urban fronts in Douala that this article has identified. Considering that these irreversible difficulties have led to an unproductive dynamics in the city of Douala, this paper suggests the use of a participatory management

approach to address and curb the situation. The paper recommends the strict respect of the Horizon 2025 Master Plan produced by the Douala Urban Council and the land use plans to any present and future occupants of the city. Persistent follow-up and day to day inspection of the spatial growth and settlement in Douala should as well be done to limit or stop anarchical constructions. Readjustment programmes through dialogue with existing occupants and the authority should be carried out to improve on the already existing infrastructure so as to better shape the city of Douala.

The manner in which a city is rather planned or managed determines its character, potential for development and the way this influences the natural environment. Drawing inspiration from this, Jean Claude Mbuencho, Cameroon's Minister of Housing and Urban Development during a participatory meeting (8/12/2014), for the first ever urban forum in Cameroon that took place from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2014 under the theme: "Planning and Managing Urban Development, Time for Action is Now", declared that we can build modern cities. He therefore understood that Cameroonian towns lack Master Plans. However, the reawakening of the Douala authorities to fight anarchy and introduce a planned city may be a stitch in time to save nigh.

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