

Gentrification and Displacements in Sub Saharan Africa: Insights from Bamenda Municipality of the North West Region of Cameroon

Mildred Endam Acha
The University of Bamenda
&
Mbang Lawrence Akei
The University of Bamenda

Abstract

Gentrification is a powerful force for economic change, however, it is accompanied by displacements, linked to different phases and forms of transformation especially in the third world where remarkable income differences and poverty plague most urban dwellers. Displacement is a traumatic experience with mental and physical challenges that inflicts considerable hardships on the victims. Despite the salience of this issue, the focus of most academic debates in Sub Saharan Africa orbits around socio-economic development and urban poverty. To close this gap, this study seeks to (1) identify the drivers of displacement and the role of gentrification in the displacement process in Bamenda and (2) examine the patterns and socio-economic implications of displacement in Bamenda. To attain these objectives the study employed a mixed research design, administering 120 questionnaire to household heads in displaced neighbourhoods. Beside questionnaire, recurrent field survey and key informant interviews with displaced victims (residents, business persons and institutions) were conducted across the city to understand the drivers, forms and waves of displacement. This was updated with secondary data gotten from scientific journals and documents from other institutions concern with the displaced. Findings reveal that displacement within the municipality of Bamenda is dominantly driven by commercial growth and intensification of urban activities (30%), followed by insecurity (27%) which has been very significant from 2016 till date. Four forms of displacements were found to be associated with different phases of urban transformation over time. Prominent among them is the displacement of urban dwellers (40%) followed by commercial displacement (30%), which is most prevalent within the socio-political crisis era. Results also indicate that displacement intensities vary spatio-temporally, with highest intensities in the high density residential zone before 2016 followed by low density residential zone linked to insecurity. This has resulted to economic hardship (33.33%), homelessness (25%), social and economic breakdown (21.67%) and trauma (20%). Base on these the study recommends re-housing options locally to accommodate the displaced in order to reduce homelessness and financial burdens,

increased police surveillance to reduce insecurity, proactive planning to minimize over densification as well as rental control to curb excessive rental increase that riggers displacement in Bamenda.

Keywords: Gentrification, Urban Displacement, Insecurity, Commercial Intensification, Socio-economic Implications, Bamenda.

1 Introduction

Displacement associated with gentrification is a traumatic experience that inflicts considerable hardships on the experiencer. Displacement deprives people of a place to call home making poor and vulnerable people homeless (Ah Goo, 2024). Gentrification has led to the eviction and displacement of many people from working-class areas around the world. Rapid neighbourhood socioeconomic changes are an issue of pressing concern for many urban residents and local governments around the world (Preis *et al.*, 2020), which however triggers displacement in different forms. Globally, the number of displaced persons by January 2024, stood at 117.3 million people, fleeing from different countries, linked to violence, insecurity and other causes (NRC, 2024). Gentrification is a problem that commonly manifest where vast wealth inequality already exists (Waldek, 2020). Gentrification is a powerful force for economic change in our cities, but it is often accompanied by extreme and unnecessary displacement. Gentrification can mean whole communities displaced, significant racial change, and increased homelessness (Eldredge, 2016). Although this process of neighbourhood change is perceived by some as rejuvenating communities and creating desirable neighbourhoods for the middle class (McKinnish *et al.*, 2010), notwithstanding, it brings about an affordable housing crisis for the working class (Slater, 2006), which eventually can lead to homelessness and the displacement of people (Atkinson, 2000; Newman & Wyly, 2006). Displacement, however, is difficult to research empirically and to document (Atkinson, 2000; Lees *et al.*, 2008) because of the challenges involved in finding people who have been displaced (Atkinson, 2000). Furthermore, the fate of people who have been displaced are often not recorded in official statistics (Baeten *et al.*, 2017).

Urban expansion and transformation is most rapid in the developing world where cities gain an average of about five million residents or inhabitants monthly (UN-Habitat, 2008, in Akhere & Kimengsi, 2020). Perhaps the most controversial gentrification topic is its consequences on residential displacement. Although understanding the relationship between gentrification and residential displacement is critical (Hyra, 2015). Some gentrifying areas once dominated by low-income minorities demonstrate an association between the movement of upper-income people and a loss of minority political representation. The economic effects of gentrification in the less developed world vary widely, but the arrival of new investments, new spending power, and a new tax base usually result in significant increase in economic activity indirectly triggering displacement (Acha & Fombe, 2023). Gentrification is not a new phenomenon in urban Africa, decades after gaining independence, many African cities have experienced an unprecedented urban transformation leading to displacement of low-income citizens and tears apart the community's social fabric. Gentrification in South Africa reinforces the remnants of apartheid, (Calugaru, 2022). Today, inner-city residents, some of who have lived through the devastating effects of these forced removals are facing the threat of eviction from their homes because of what has now been referred to as a new form of socio-spatial apartheid - gentrification (Ah Goo, 2024). Gentrification is rapid in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA), Cameroon inclusive, albeit with varying degrees, within major cities; Douala, Yaoundé, Bafoussam and Bamenda.

Bamenda is the main town of the North-West Region that doubles as the capital of the Region and Mezam division harbouring a good number of the Regional Delegations, major educational institutions and is the foci for business in the Region, (Fombe & Acha, 2020). Given these opportunities and proximity to most villages in the North West Region, Bamenda has witnessed an influx of population and increased socio-economic activities. The intensification of urban activities within the city core over time have resulted not only in congestion and increased property value (land and housing rents), unaffordability, but created intense competition for space and consequent displacement of the urbanites and urban activities. This displacement process in the recent decade is exacerbated by the socio-political crisis.

1.1 Historical Evolution of Gentrification and Displacement

The temporal delimitation of this paper spans from 1990 to 2024, a period marked by intensified gentrification and displacement in Bamenda. The 1990s correspond to the period of inner city renewal termed “clean-up campaign” characterised by the destruction of anarchical and irregular buildings along the inner streets and the construction of main streets in Bamenda (Acha & Fombe, 2023). This saw the displacement of those who could not construct decent houses along the main commercial streets in Bamenda to the urban fringe. However, despite being at the centre of gentrification debates for decades, displacement has until recently been overlooked in the literature on gentrification (Wyly et al., 2010). Consequently, a generally positive stance on gentrification has been taken and the extent of its negative consequences has been understated (Slater, 2006; Smith, 2008). To close this thematic gap, this paper focuses on the drivers, patterns and socioeconomic implications of displacement amidst gentrification in the municipality of Bamenda. The gentrification process in urban areas is unstoppable and the urban poor are often victims of this transition. This study is significant in that it uncovers how the evolutionary phases of gentrification in Bamenda triggers displacement, victimising the urban poor, impinging on their social lives, livelihood and networks, increasing urban poverty and inequality, worsened by the socio-political crisis. This necessitates appropriate policy actions, in alignment with SDG1 (end poverty in all its forms, SDG2 (end hunger, improve food security and nutrition), SDG3 (ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing of all), SDG10 (reduce inequality for all urbanites) and SDG11 (inclusive, safe and resilient cities).

2 Conceptual Underpinning

Gentrification is a multi-faceted and contested socio-spatial process that reshapes urban environments through capital reinvestment. At its most basic level, gentrification occurs when neighbourhoods witness a sudden influx of investment and changes in the built environment, leading to rising property value and cost of living affordable only to limited strata of the society and resulting in the displacement of the neighbourhoods original residents

(Mkrtychian, 2024, Mickel, (2022). The influx of population in Bamenda is accompanied by investment and a change in built-up with consequent property value increase and displacement. In general, gentrification occurs when formerly lower socio-economic status neighbourhoods transit to higher socio-economic status. This implies a two-part process; the movement in of higher socio-economic status residents, and the moving out of lower socio-economic status residents (Hamnett, 1991 & Slater, 2006 in Adam and Yudhim, 2018).

Two key features of gentrification are displacement and change in social and urban character. Displacement involves physical dislocation or direct displacement. This involves the eviction or forcing residents out of a neighbourhood and also from the core of the city toward cheaper and often poorer quality accommodation impinging on the continuity of their social lives, relationships and networks because of unfair increased costs of housing (Mela Social Enterprise, 2020). Displacement, however, is difficult to research empirically and to document because of the challenges involved in finding people who have been displaced (Atkinson, 2000, Lees *et al.*, 2008). Displacement in the context of gentrification refers to “what happens when forces outside the household make living there impossible, hazardous or unaffordable” (Hartman *et al.*, 1982). There are different forms and dimensions of displacement. For example, it may be direct where displacement takes place through evictions, rent increases or other pressures imposed by landlords (Marcuse, 1986). Indirect displacement, on the other hand, is more subtle and may be experienced as long-time residents witness economic, social, cultural and political changes taking place in their neighbourhood, while remaining in their homes (Marcuse, 1986; Davidson & Lees, 2010). These changes may lead to the residents no longer feeling at home in their neighbourhood (Marcuse, 1986), or experiencing what Davidson (2008) refers to as “out-of-placeness”. Similar experience is shared by occupants of informal settlement in Zambia during development interventions to upgrade their slum, (Huchzermeyer 2011). Similarly, Mkrtychian, (2024) underscores the lack of affordable housing in Los Angeles leading to eviction of the urban poor. Given the present socio-political instability that plaques Bamenda direct and indirect forms of displacement are common.

Displacement equally refers to forced or voluntary household movement from place of residence usually expanded beyond formal forced moves such as

evictions to include unaffordable rents or poor living conditions (Zuk *et al.*, 2015 in Mychal and Kathryn, 2019). This study consider displacement as a situation where urban dwellers, activities and services are forced or voluntarily leave their initial locations to other locations driven by different forces, impinging on the social live, relationship and networks of urban dwellers. This study anchors on the model of Neighbourhood Change by Grigsby *et al.*, (1987) focused on how higher income residents succeeds lower income neighbourhoods transforming them, consequently displacing the urban poor, however displacement in Bamenda is not limited only to the urban poor.

3 Study Area and Methodology

This study is based on the municipality of Bamenda, precisely Bamenda I, II and III sub divisions, located between latitude 5°94" and 5°98" north of the Equator and longitude 10.15 ° and 10.18° east of the Greenwich Meridian, situated at elevation 1258 meters above sea level (Bamenda City Council Master Plan, 2011-2027). Bamenda is bounded to the west by and southwest region, Momo division and Bali sub-division respectively. To the north, it is flanked by Bafut sub-division, to the northeast by Tubah sub-division and to the south by Santa sub-division. Table 1 presents the demographic and socio-economic information.

Table 1: Demographic and socio-economic facilities in the sub divisions of Bamenda

Sub divisions	Population projected for 2024	Secondary schools	Health facilities	Markets	Built-up	Hotels	Motor parks	Travel Agencies
Bamenda I (SE)	68,999	10	5	1	#1343.7	5	1	1
Bamenda II (NW)	299,843	39	57	5	#3116.7	41	4	8
Bamenda III (NE)	260,975	22	31	4	#2607.21	14	3	5
Total	629,817	67*	93#	10	-	66**	8	13

Figure 1 presents the location of the Bamenda Municipality in Mezam Division of the North West Region of Cameroon.

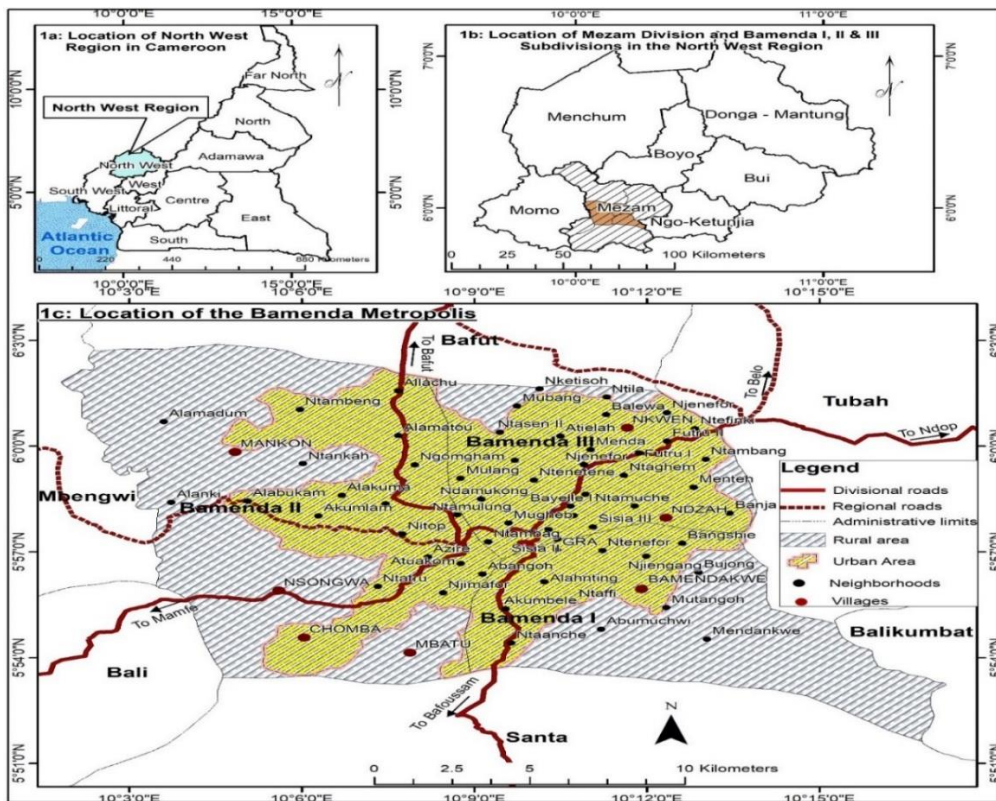


Figure1: Location of the Bamenda Municipality in Mezam Division of the North West Region of Cameroon

Source: Bamenda City Council (2020) and Administrative limits of Cameroon (NIC, 2020).

This study employed the survey and comparative research designs suitable to monitor displacement waves and directions and compare the intensities of displacement over space and distances covered over time. This comparative

design gave an image of the pre-crisis displacement volume noticeable at the city core principally link commercial densification and the post-crisis displacement volume common in the urban fringe zone and shadow (Low Density Residential Zone) associated mainly to insecurity. This is illustrated in figure 3 and 4. Three-field assistants drilled on the concept of gentrification and displacement facilitated field survey and data collection. Participants in the study were purposefully selected using the criterion sampling, focusing on those displaced within different time period as a result of gentrification. To locate potential participants, snowball sampling was used where members of the community helped to identify the displaced persons. The participants shared their experiences through a series of face-to-face and in-depth phenomenological interviews which focus on the subjective experiences of a particular phenomenon. Audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim was an approach adopted for this study to capture the meaning of the experience of displacement in the participants 'own words.

Two sources of data were vital for this study; primary and secondary data. Primary data was gotten from interviews and administration of 120 questionnaires to household heads (table 2) using the snowball and criterion sampling techniques and field measurements using the GPS tool to measure the distances covered by the displaced.

Sub divisions	Population projected for 2024	Sampled neighbourhoods	Questionnaire administered per municipality
Bamenda I (SE)	68,999	Abangoh, Mendankwe, Alahnting I & II, Ntaafi	20
Bamenda II (NW)	299,843	Ntatrue, Mbingfibieh, Atuazire, Ntambag I, II & III	60
Bamenda III (NE)	260,975	Ntaghem, Mugheb, Mbelem, Mbefi	40
Total	629,817		120

Table 2: Questionnaire Administered per Sub-division in Displaced and Relocated Neighbourhoods in Bamenda.

Thematic maps were derived from secondary sources like the Bamenda City Council and updated with field data. Secondary data was gotten from Council Development Plans of the three sub divisions of Bamenda and articles in diverse scientific journals and dissertations regarding displacement trends and drivers over time. GPS Map Camera Lite version 1.8.3 was used to capture geo-referenced pictures of some demolished property associated with road expansion, structures affected by fire incident, which led to displacement. Descriptive analysis were utilized and results presented on tables, pie charts, bar graphs and maps.

The limitations of this study include the paucity of data on number of persons displaced, difficulty identifying the displaced and the insecurity accessing and gathering data in unsafe neighbourhood. To overcome these limitations, firstly, interviews were utilized along side the snow ball method to identify the displaced. Long term residents of different neighbourhoods gave information on the trend and volume of displacement in their localities. Field agents familiar with different neighbourhoods were used in data collection, especially in unfamiliar neighbourhoods. For ethical consideration, the study ensured informed consent, without coercion, making sure every participant willfully and freely participated, guaranteeing confidentiality of information through anonymization to safeguard their status. With the understanding of the vulnerabilities of the displaced, we tried to prevent re-traumatization by avoiding sensitive questions and focused more on the drivers of displacement and how it affected their economic and social wellbeing. For equity and justice, the study ensured the participants understood the objective of the study and propose possible policy actions that could ameliorate their situation.

4 Results

This section presents drivers, patterns (migration waves and displacement directions) within different periods, displacement patterns, and implications.

4.1 Drivers of Displacements in the Municipality of Bamenda

Multiple drivers underpin the displacement of population in Bamenda at different seasons.

Displacement in Bamenda is triggered by growth in commerce and intensification of urban functions, urban renewal programs, property value increase, upliftment in administrative status and insecurity (figure 2).

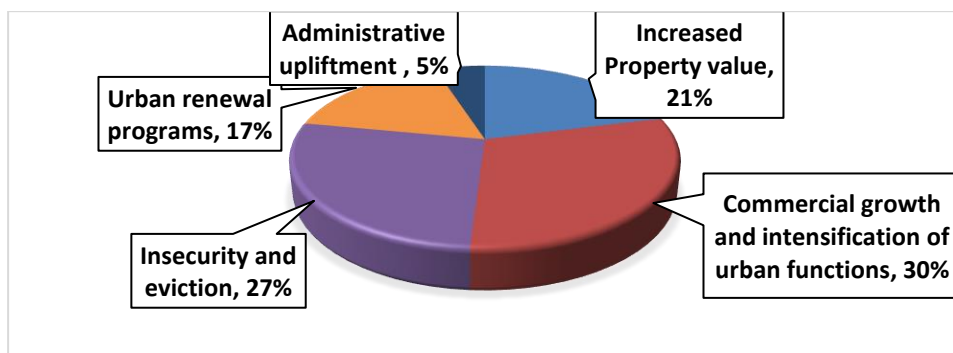


Figure 2: Drivers of Displacement/Eviction within the Municipality of Bamenda.

Source: Fieldwork; (2024)

A majority of the population (30%) observed that commercial growth and intensification of urban functions (construction/enlargement of roads, growth in transport hubs, settlement upgrade and growth in social institutions), dominantly trigger displacement. The influx of multiple businesses in the urban core and growth poles of Bamenda have enhance the displacement of its initial inhabitants. Insecurity (27%) associated with the socio-political crisis within the current decade has become prominent in triggering displacement to different directions of the city. As the gentrification process unveils, property value (land value, rents and commodity prices) increases significantly triggering displacement especially for the urban poor. Urban renewal programs (road expansion, upgrading of buildings and commercial units, demolition of anarchical buildings) equally accounts for displacement in Bamenda. The 1990s in Bamenda marked the period of inner city renewal termed “clean-up campaign” characterised by the demolition of anarchical and irregular buildings along the

inner streets and the construction of the main commercial streets in Bamenda. This led to the displacement of the urban poor who could not afford or construct decent houses along the Commercial Street of Bamenda to the urban fringe. Administrative upliftment (5%) has triggered displacement After Bamenda gained the status of a city, and sub divisional councils were created, this triggered a wave of voluntary displacement with increased population movement towards the urban fringe zones, in the new council vicinities.

4.2 Patterns of Displacement and Implications

Patterns here refers to the phases of displacement and spatio-temporal waves within the different urban phases and forms of displacement.

4.2.1 Phases of Urban Transformation and Displacement Patterns from 1970 Present

The displacement directions in Bamenda coincide with different phases of urban transformation (figure 3), further triggering gentrification.

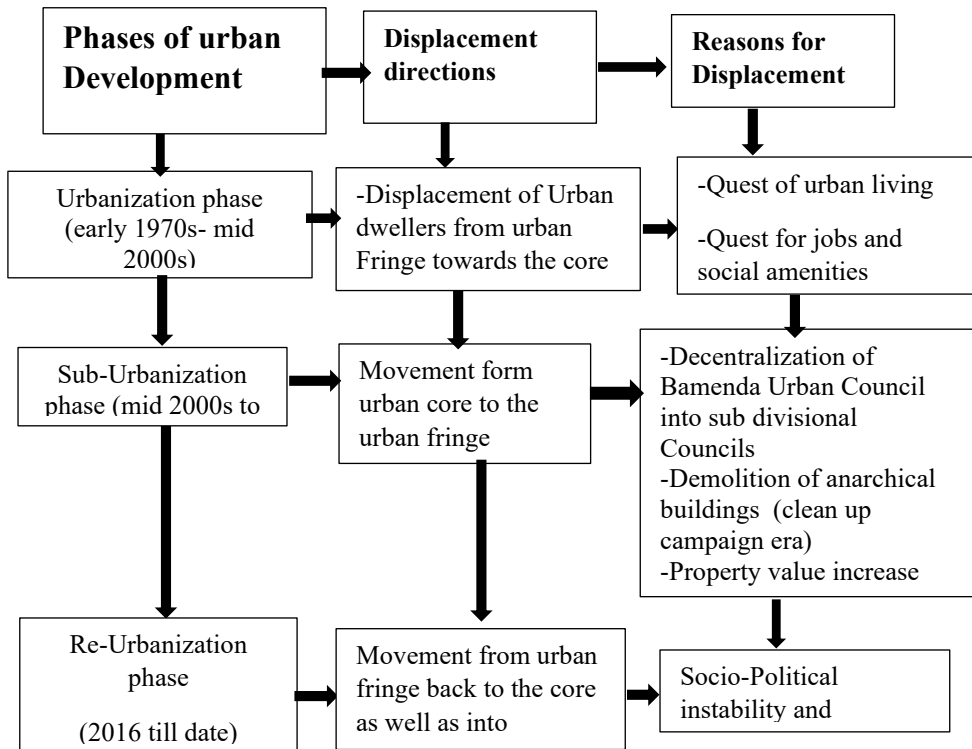


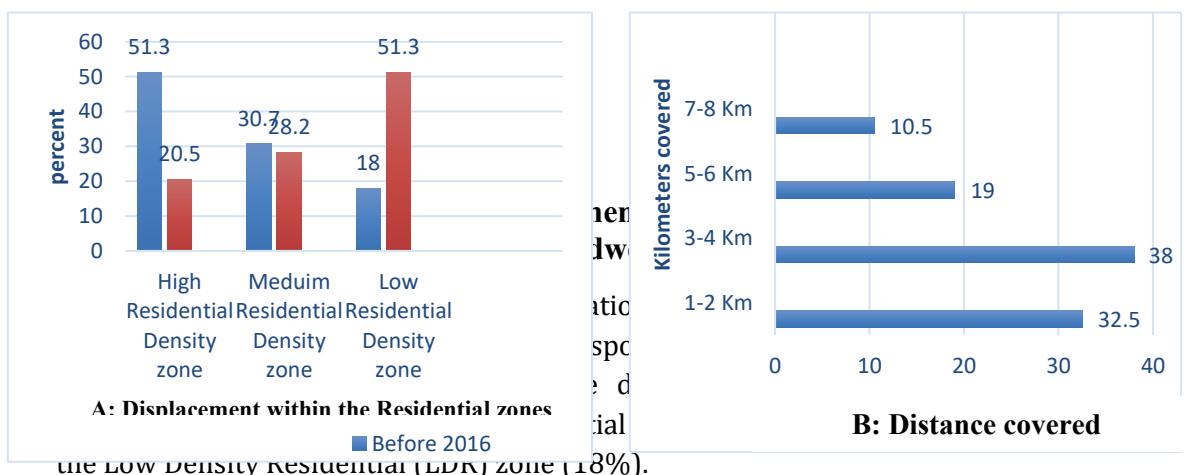
Figure 3: Phases of Urban Transformation and Displacement Directions over Time

Source: Authors' Conception (2024)

Displacement from 1972 to early 2000s depict movement from the sub urban areas towards the urban core (urbanisation pattern) to gain access to better amenities and opportunities (jobs, trading, nearness to services). From the mid 2000s to 2016, displacement dominantly took the pattern of movements from the congested urban core to the urban fringe, following the decentralisation of the defunct Bamenda Urban Council into the three sub-divisions. This led to a counter-urbanization movement enhanced by sprawl where land, rents and living conditions in relation to the serenity of the environment were comparatively favourable. From 2016, with the advent of the socio-political crisis, the direction of displacement changed and became more prominent towards Bamenda I and III, resulting to a demographic shift considering that the most threatened are within the age group of 15-50.

Results reveal that majority of the population (76%) have been displaced from one residential neighbourhood to another or displaced by forces beyond their control.

The spatial variation in intensity of displacement and distance covered are indicated in figure 4.



the Low Density Residential (LDR) zone (18%).

This implies displacement was more in the densified areas of Bamenda compared to the less densified zones. After 2016, the pattern of displacement became rather higher in the LDR zone 51.3%, followed by the MDR zone 28.2% and least in the HDR zone with 20.5%. This implies the spatial intensity of displacement vary temporarily. Before 2016 most of the displacement was wilful, associated with reasons like; desire for spacious homes, construction of personal house, fleeing from congestion in preference to a serene environment among others. After 2016, majority of displacement was associated to insecurity especially in the fringe zones corresponding to the LDR zones like Mbingfibie, Alabukam, Ntatu, Ntanhah where urban dwellers and public offices (Bamenda II council) are displaced to the urban core (HRD). Figure 4b revealed that majority of the displaced (38%), covered 3-4km, while 32.5% were displaced over 1-2km, 19% over 5-6km and 10.5% over 7-8km.

4.2.2 Spatio-temporal Wave of Influx and Displacement Directions in Bamenda

Most temporary displacements are observed during instances whereby personal dwellings require major upgrading like rooftops transformation that entails the occupants to temporarily relocate with property. This is often over very short distances. Also within the crisis period, most residents (property owners) in insecure areas have sought temporal refuge in safer areas (Bamenda I), while other urban dwellers have left their initial locations with no hope to return especially renters.

Migration waves and intensification of urban functions in Bamenda can be traced with the influx of the Hausas from the North with their traditional artisanship and commercial activities, which marked the beginning of gentrification in the Municipality. After the First World War, more Hausas moved into Ntambag (I, II and III) for commerce, occupying Abakwa on the Ntambag plateau where they established the first major market and the first layout plan of Abakwa. This constitutes the first wave of immigrant before and after WW1, illustrated by the thick purple arrow in the southern direction (figure 5).

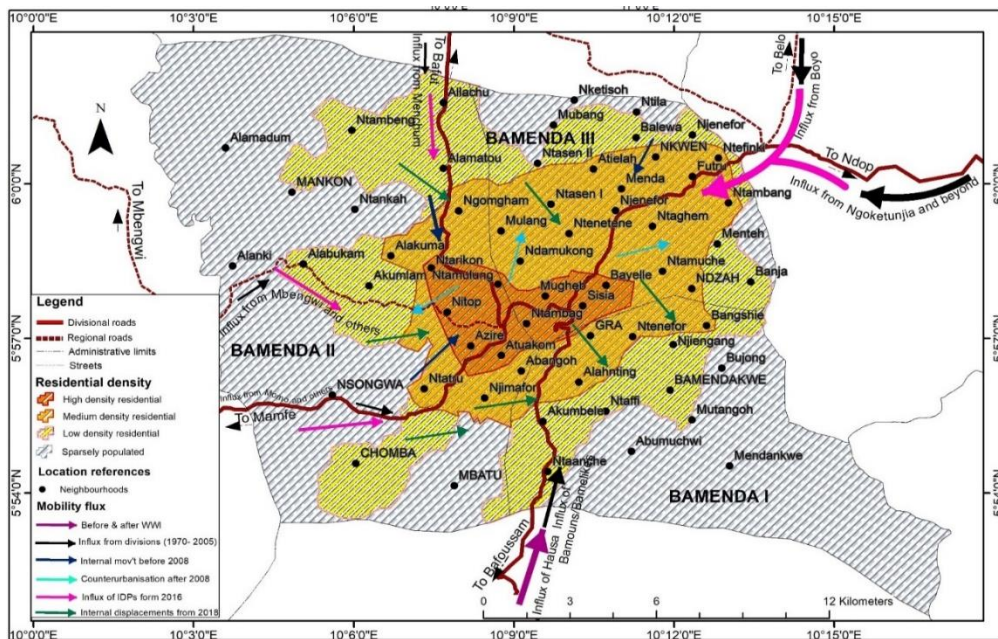


Figure 5: Migration waves and displacement directions in Bamenda over time

Source: Base Map NIC, Updated with Fieldwork, (2024)

The different colours of arrows symbolize movements at different seasons and directions.

The development in the Hausa business community attracted more people into the Municipality from other regions followed by the influx of Ibos into the town with varied business activities. This has been followed by successive waves of influx from the neighbouring divisions and sub divisions in the North East direction (Bui, Donga-Mantung, Ngoketunjia and Boyo Divisions) and beyond indicated by the thick black arrows. This recurrent influx is associated with intensification of urban activities over time as indicated on table 1, and subsequently trigger displacement from the urban core as land value increased significantly overtime.

The blue arrows correspond to displacements (internal movements), within the Municipality before 2008. The lemon green arrows from the High Density Residential (HDR) zone towards the Medium Density Residential (MDR)

and Low Density Residential (LDR) zones corresponds to counter urbanization movement after 2008, when the sub divisions were created to decongest the urban core, intensifying displacement into the urban Fringe zone.

Aside these general patterns, prominent within the most recent decade (since 2016 till date), are internal displacement from unsafe zones (the suburbs of Bamenda II most specifically) towards the city centre and into the core of Bamenda I and III. Most vulnerable are the medium income population moving into GRA demanding houses for rent and acquiring land from the natives in Alahting. Figure 5 presents the origin and proportion of immigrants using the thickness of arrows though cannot be expressed in exact quantitative terms. The pink arrows correspond to in-migrants since 2016 from unsecured suburbs towards the core, associated with the socio-political crisis. The green arrows indicate internal movement of displaced persons from the suburbs of Bamenda II from 2016 into Bamenda III and dominantly Bamenda I, which are relatively safer.

4.2.3 Forms of Displacement in Bamenda

This study took into consideration the displacement characterised by mobility of residents, commercial, institutional and transportation hubs forms across the Bamenda municipality indicated on figure 6.

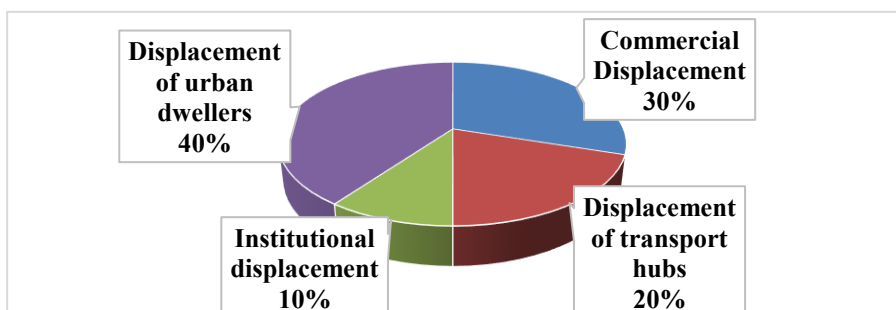


Figure 6: Displacement forms Common in the Municipality of Bamenda
 Source: Fieldwork (2024)

Figure 6 presents four patterns of displacement, most dominant being the displacement of urban dwellers which constitute (40%). Significant displacement of urban dwellers have occurred within different urban transformation phases in Bamenda, (figure 3), wherein urban dwellers have been evicted due to developments that threaten or are incompatible with rehabilitation. Commercial displacement constitute 30% of the population, and commonly occurs during demolition and upgrading process recurrently initiated by the City Council and Sub divisional councils as part of their urban renewal programs to upgrade market structures, rehabilitate and expand roads. Commercial displacement equally occurs in the advent of social externalities like fire outbreak. A case in point is the recent fire incident in the Bamenda Main Market in February 2024 that ravage 320 shops leading to the displacement of over 500 traders (Figure 7).

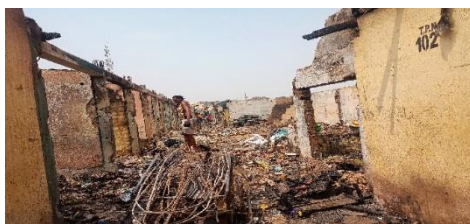


Photo A



Photo B



Photo C



Photo D

Figure 7: Displaced Commercial sites with burnt market sheds at the Bamenda Main Market
Source: Fieldwork (2024)

Photo A, B and C are market sheds ravaged by fire while photo D is under demolition

Beside this, interviews with the market masters of Bamenda Main Market and some traders within the city core revealed that multiple traders are displaced due to intensification of the urban core and rising rental prices leading to the displacement of less lucrative businesses to the suburbs where rental cost is relatively cheaper. Displacement of transport hubs was resorted to by a significant majority (20%) of the population as a strategy to decongest the urban core. Most noticeable was during the decentralisation of the first motor park formerly located at the Congress Hall area to the suburbs to serve as commuter parks as well as the displacement of transport agencies shown on figure 6. Institutional displacement in Bamenda began in 2007 with the creation of the three-sub division and the construction of their offices in the urban fringe zone of the three municipality. Unfortunately these institutions have become displaced due to persistent insecurity caused by the socio-political crisis (Table 3).

Table 3: Displaced Socio- Economic and Administrative Facilities in Bamenda

Facilities/institutions	Initial location/year	New location	Reasons for displacement
Bamenda II Council	Mbingfibie	Ntambag (Around Judicial Police)	Insecurity
Moghamo Travel Agency	Azire (Old Church Road)	Ntamulung (Sonac Street)	Insecurity
Regional Delegation of Secondary Education	Food Market Bamenda (before 2016)	Alahnting (Up Station) After 2016	Insecurity and commercial growth in the old site, infrastructural development in the new site
PLAN Cameroon NGO	Ntarikon	Alahnting (Up Station) After 2016	Insecurity
Bamenda Main Market	Ntambag I (Old Town)	Ntambag II (Commercial Avenue)	Urban renewal
Mazi Express	Mugheb (Mobile Nkwen)	Alahnting (Bamenda I Market)	Urban renewal

Source: Fieldwork (2024)

Table 3 presents some displaced socio-economic facilities and services in the Municipality of Bamenda.

Furthermore, figure 8 presents transport hubs that have been displaced. Moghamo Express initially located at Hospital Roundabout to Ntamulung (Sonac Street) due to insecurity linked to the socio-political insecurity and others that have relocated over time.

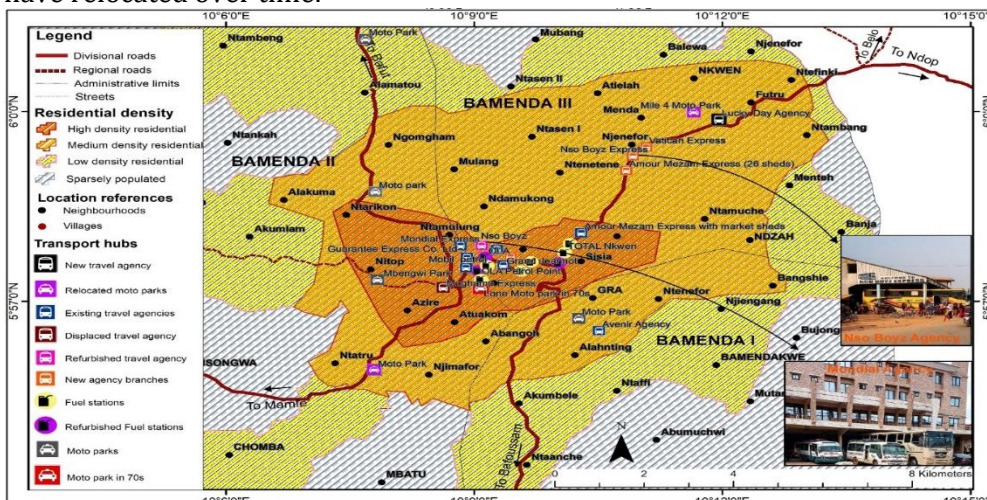


Figure 8: Spatial Displacement of Transport Hubs in Bamenda
 Source: Base Map NIC, Updated with Fieldwork (2024)

4.2.4 Implications of Displacement in Bamenda

Displacement affects the departure (Ntaturu, Mbingfibie, Mbefi, Chomba and Alabukam) and arrival zones (Alahnting, Bayelle, Menda, Futru). Table 4 summarily presents the implications of displacement in Bamenda

Table 4: Socio-economic Implications of Displacement in Bamenda

Socio-economic implications of displacement	Frequency	Percent	Rental Changes over time in Bamenda I		
			Type of Accommodation	Pre-displacement era (Before 2016)	Post-displacement era (after 2016)
Trauma (mental and physical health challenges)	24	20%			

Economic hardship	40	33.33%	A apartment of 3 bedrooms with internal facilities	40000-50000	60000-80000
Rental increase and homelessness	30	25%	A Studio (room parlour with internal facilities)	20000-25000	30000-50000
Social/economic breakdown	26	21.67%	A single room with internal facilities	10000-12000	15000-25000
Total	120	100	A single room with no facilities	5000-8000	10000-15000

Source: Fieldwork, (2024)

Field study reveal that economic hardship (33.33%) is the dominant implication of displacement. Economic hardship results from loss of a means of livelihood, job loss, retarded growth, poverty, increased financial burden etc. leading misery and vulnerability of the displaced. Displacement retards growth in the departure zone with the shutdown of many businesses, reduction in market population, reduction in developers as well as investors. An interview with a 48 years old father of 5kids, reveal, *"Insecurity evicted me from my home in Alabukam (Bamenda II) and I loss my business to the 2023 fire incident in Bamenda Main Market. Living now in Alahnting (Bamenda I), is hell for me and family because I have no income to support the family and pay rents. Business turnover at the new business place I have gotten in Bamenda I market is very slow because I loss my customer network"*. Interviews with a 40 year displaced Female trader from Ntarikon Markert to Bamenda I market revealed that *"due insecurity, I have loss my business network and costumers. I now have to battle with business stagnation, difficulties adapting to the new site and unplanned expenses, high rents and other inconveniences"*. 25% indicated that they are faced with homelessness and increased rents in the relocated neighbourhoods (table 4). Bamenda I specifically has recorded increased rents after 2016 because of the massive influx of displaced and its relative security.

Social/economic breakdown (21.67%), embodies; loss of community cohesion, disruption in business network, disruption in children's education, overcrowding in homes and classrooms, pressure on services etc. Although relocated zone witness pressure on resources and services, growth is triggered in various ways due to the different activities engaged in by the displaced.

67

Corresponding Author: *Mbanga Lawrence Akei*
mbangalaw@yahoo.com
The University of Bamenda

Interview with the Market Master of Bamenda I, revealed *“the market has expanded and upgraded more within the crisis period (from 2016 till present), the massive influx of the displaced into Bamenda I, has triggered commercial growth, increased built-up and property value increase”*. 20% of the displaced testify of their traumatic experience (depression, loss of identity, difficulty forming new relationships, malnutrition due to high food prices etc. which affects their mental and physical health. A 45year old mother with 4kids displaced from Ntatu to Bamenda I testify *“food stuffs here are twice expensive, my children cannot feed well. In my old accommodation I had farms and food stuff in excess, cheerful friends and neighbours, here no one knows me and life is so expensive and lonely”*

5 Discussions

A majority of the population observed that commercial growth and intensification of urban functions, is the major trigger of displacement. The gentrification process in Bamenda is characterised by commercial growth, growth in social institution, expansion in built-up and growth in transport hubs. This implies areas most gentrified like the HDR zones, appears the most displaced zone especially before 2016 (pre-socio-political crisis era). This is because this zone is characterised by intensification of urban activities consequently generating higher noise levels accompanied by high property value (land, rents and commodities) making such areas more suitable for commerce rather than habitation. This corroborated the ideas of Acha & Fombe, (2023), and Mickel, (2022), who noted that gentrification changes the character of a poor urban area through the influx of wealthier people, improving housing, and attracting new businesses, typically displacing current inhabitants in the process.

Insecurity and eviction, especially after 2016 indicated by 27% of the population is another prominent driver of displacement. The resurgence of different types of crimes in the Bamenda Municipality (violent crimes, property crimes, white-collar crimes, organized crimes, etc). are the outcome of frustration amidst gentrification. Gentrification creates a despondent class, especially the urban poor and unemployed youths, unable to earn a livelihood who become vulnerable to all sorts of crimes. This despondency manifest through frustration and aggression in line with Murray’s concept of the Cycle of Violence. This is corroborated the ideas of Stewart and Cantora (2015), who

observed that social and structural conditions in urban areas create environments that are conducive to crimes and deviance. This has become so significant in the socio-political crisis era in Bamenda. This aligned with Wanie *et al.*, (2020), who observed that the socio-political crisis is associated with increased crime in some localities in Bamenda. This has led to the massive displacement of urbanites from insecure zones (Alabukam, Ntatu, Ngomgam, Ntanka in Bamenda II) into sections of Bamenda III and much of Bamenda I that are relatively safe.

Beside insecurity, eviction in the Municipality of Bamenda is linked to increase property value especially with the low-income groups who cannot afford high rents specifically in the HDR zone with intensified urban activities. This aligned with the ideas of Mehdipanah *et al.* (2017) who noted that inflated home prices instigate displacement of a neighbourhood's previous resident. Different waves of displacement in Bamenda are highlighter by this paper, their origin and proportion of immigrants, though not expressed in exact quantitative terms because of the absence of official statistics. This aligned with the idea of Atkinson (2000); Lees *et al.*, (2008) who noted that displacement, is difficult to research empirically and to document because of the challenges involved in finding people who have been displaced (Atkinson, 2000, Lees *et al.*, 2008). Amongst the consequences of displacement in Bamenda noted by this study are economic hardship (33.33%), rental increases and homelessness (25%), social and economic breakdown (21.67%) which results from, joblessness, poverty, loss of community cohesion, disruption in business network among others. This corroborated Mela Social Enterprise (2020) findings that displacement impinges on the continuity of the social lives, relationships and networks of the displaced and unfair increased costs of housing. Same view is shared by (Fullilove, 2004; Atkinson, 2015) who noted that displacement disrupts deep social ties and strong support networks and the sense of community. Regardless of this fact, the influx of displaced population into receiving zones in Bamenda has trigger growth in such areas, through construction and investment. This corroborated the ideas of Richardson *et al.* (2019) who noted that neighbourhoods undergoing gentrification experiences investments and change in built-up environment leading to rising home value.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has revealed that gentrification and displacement like in many developing urban societies are recurrent processes that characterize the municipality of Bamenda, although the intensity vary within different phases of urban transformation and has become prominent in the recent decade (2016 till date) plagued by the socio-political crisis. Commercial growth and intensification of urban functions (30%), was the major trigger of displacement in Bamenda however insecurity (27%) since 2016 has becomes a significant driver of displacement. Most gentrified areas (HDR) zones and most insecure areas (the suburbs) have witnessed higher densities of displacement comparatively. Displacement in densified areas is not peculiar to the socio-economic status of residents, however in unsafe zones the affluent are victims of insecurity and consequently have evicted such areas. Displacement could be temporal especially in the advent of insecurity for home owners but permanent for renters. Regardless of the nature of displacement in Bamenda, there are numerous development implications among which are economic hardship (33.33%), trauma (20%), rental increase and homelessness (25%) Base on the drivers of displacement identified in Bamenda. The study therefore recommends that the government through the development proponents in Bamenda should regulate development activities, implement proactive planning across the municipality to minimize over densification in some area, curb displacement and provide re-housing options locally for the displaced. There is also the need to implement effective laws against eviction and increased police surveillance as well as property value control to curb displacement in Bamenda.

REFERENCES

- Acha M. and Fombe L. F. (2023). Gentrification Patterns, Trends and Development Implications of the Bamenda Metropolis from 1972-2022. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management Review*. 6, 139-153
- Adam E. & Yushim K. (2018). Gentrification and displacement: Modelling a complex Urban Process. *Housing Policy debate*

- <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327515561> Accessed (15/07/2022)
- Ah Goo, D., (2024). The essence of displacement: A phenomenological analysis of inner-city residents' experiences in South Africa, *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, DOI: 10.1080/20797222.2024.2343675, 1-9
- Akere, S. G. and Kimengsi J. Z. (2020), *Urban Expansion and the dynamics of Famers Livelihoods: Evidence from Bamenda*, Cameroon. *Journal of Sustainability* 2020, 12(14), 5788; <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12145788>
- Atkinson, R. (2015). Losing one's place: Narratives of neighbourhood change, market injustice and symbolic displacement. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 373–388.
- Baeten, G., Westin, S., Pull, E., & Molina, I. (2017). Pressure and violence: Housing renovation and displacement in Sweden. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 49(3), 631–651.
- Atkinson, R. (2000). Measuring gentrification and displacement in Greater London. *Urban Studies*, 37(1), 149–165. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0042098002339>
- Calugaru, K. (2022) *Gentrification in South Africa: A Remnant of Apartheid*. <https://borgenproject.org> > gentrification... Accessed (20/06/2023)
- Davidson, M., & Lees, L. (2010). New-build gentrification: Its histories, trajectories and critical geographies. *Population, Space and Place*, 16(5), 395–411. <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.584>
- Eldredge B. (2016). *What is Gentrification, its causes and effects?*. <https://www.brownstoner.com/brooklyn-life/what-is-gentrification-definition-causes-effects> (Accessed 2/08/2021)
- Fombe L. F. & Acha M.E. (2020). *Land Use Dynamics and Variations in Sprawl across Sub divisions in Bamenda Urban-scape 1996-2018*. *Journal of Sustainable Development* 13(4), 224-234
- Fullilove, M. T. (2004). *Root shock: How tearing up neighbourhoods hurts America, and what we can do about*. Random House LLC.
- Grigsby G. W., Isaac F. M. Marja C. H. & Peter D.L. (1987). *Understanding Neighbourhood Dynamics: A Review of the Contributions of William*

- Grigsby. jstor.org Vol.33,No.10 pp1779-1795 Sage publications, Ltd.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43083232>
- Hartman, C., Keating, D., & LeGates, R. (with Turner, S.). (1982). Displacement: How to fight it. National Housing Law Project. DOI:10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2017.06.002
- Huchzermeyer, M. (2011). Cities with “Slums”. From Informal Settlements Eradication to a Right to the City in Africa. Claremont, CA: UCT Press
- Hyra D., (2015). The Bac-to-city movement: Neighbourhood Redevelopment and Processes of Political and Cultural Displacement. *SAGE Journals* VOL. 52, Issue 10 <https://doi.org/10.1177/00420980114539403>
- Lees, L., Slater, T., & Wyly, E. (2008). Gentrification and Social Mixing: Towards an Inclusive Urban Renaissance? Routledge. Vol. 45, Issue 12 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098008097099>
- Marcuse, P. (1986). Abandonment, gentrification and displacement: The linkages in New York City. In N. Smith & P. Williams (Eds.), *Gentrification of the city* (pp. 153–177). Allen and Unwin
- Mehdipanah, R., Giulia M., Giulia M., & Elen G. (2017). “Urban Renewal, Gentrification and Health Equity.: A Realist Perspective.” *The European Journal of Public health*, 28(2), 243-248
- Mela Social Enterprise, (2020). Managing Gentrification Intercultural City Policy Study. Case study, Berlin, Baccelona, Montreal. <https://rm.coe.int.icc-policy...PDF>. Accessed (20/8/2022)
- Mickel G. (2022). Gentrification: Remedies and consequences. Green Law Blog Of Peace Environmental Law Programs. Elisabeth Haub Law School of Law Pace University <https://greenlaw.blogs.pace.edu/> (14/02/2022)
- Mkrtychian, J., (2024). Gentrification. Encyclopaedia Britanica. <https://www.britanica.com>topic> (Accessed 02/10/2024)
- Mychal C. & Kathryn L.S. P., (2019). Guide To Measuring Neighbourhood Change to Understand and Prevent Displacement. National Neighbourhood Indicator Partnership (NNIP) Urban Institute (2019).
- Newman, K., & Wyly, E. (2006). The right to stay put revisited: Gentrification and resistance to displacement in New York City. *Urban Studies (Edinburgh, Scotland)*, 43(1), 23–57.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980500388710>

- NRC, (2024). Global displacement figures 2024 – Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) <https://www.nrc.no> > global –figures (Accessed, 23/09/2024)
- Preis B., Jonakirman A., Bob A., Steil J., (2020). *Mapping Gentrification and Displacement Pressure: An exploration of four distict methodologies*. Urban studies Journal limited 2020. sagepub.com/journal-permissions <https://doi.org/10.1177/004209802963011> pg1-20
- Richardson, Mitchell B. and Franco J., (2019). Shifting Neighbourhoods: Gentrification and Cultural Displacement in American Cities. National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC) www.ncrc.org DOI:10.13140/RG.2.2.25432.85764 pg 1-33
- Smith, N. (2008). On “the eviction of critical perspectives”. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 32(1), 195–197. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2008.00773.x>
- Steward, K., and Cantora, A., (2015). Urban Crime. Encyclopaedia of Crime and Punishment. WILEY online Library. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118519639.wbecpx204>
- UN Habitat, (2008). *The state of African Cities Report 2008. A Framework for addressing urban changes in Africa*. UN Habitat, ISBN:9789211320152
- Waldek S. (2020), Why Gentrification is not necessarily a good thing. The Pros and Cons of Neighbourhood Revitalization <https://www.housebeautiful.com>, Accessed (27/12/2022)
- Wanie C. M, Fokeng M. R, and Fenjoh D. D. (2020), “*Spatial Typology of Crimes in Bamenda Urbans cape, Cameroon.*” *Journal of City and Development*, 2(1), 7-17. doi: 10.12691/jcd-2-1-2.
- Worldometers. (2024) Cameroon Demographics, [tps://www.worldometers.info](https://www.worldometers.info)
- Wyly, E., Newman, K., Schafran, A., & Lee, E. (2010). Displacing New York. *Environment & Planning A*, 4, 2602–2623. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a42519>