

Multipurpose Motor Park Creation as a Palliative to Urban Transport Disorder and Congestion in Bamenda, Cameroon

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Abstract

Unorthodox urban transport parking and the proliferation of motor parks has elicited traffic congestion and chaos in the city of Bamenda. This article seeks to address the disorder through the creation of a multipurpose motor park as palliative to the disorder accrued. The paper advocates that a harmonized parking sector would not only decongest the city, but will as well maintain urban order. Some 182 questionnaires were administered to the city dwellers, transport agency owners and administrative authorities for first-hand information on the need for a multipurpose motor park. Field observation and interview sessions were carried out to confirm primary information acquired. The GPS was used to capture points for mapping of existing parks and the proposed multipurpose one. An in-depth documentary research was done to have information on the situation of the Bamenda city to propose solutions. Data collected was treated and analysed through the ArcGIS 10.0 and AutoCAD Map 3D to realise maps and diagrams for results. The Microsoft excel spread sheet was used to treat and generate tables for presentation and analyses. Results from findings disclose that the multiplying of motor parks in the city of Bamenda from all angles both as private and public has initiated disorder in the sector. Close to 63% of the parks are owned by private individuals who are more profit oriented than public interest focused leading to disorder. Demographic pressure from the perpetual increase in the population of Bamenda from 48,111 inhabitants in 1976 to 755,602 in 2020 has favoured congestion. The traffic flow of the city which is concentrated on its popular inlet through Up-Station from other regions has provoked severe congestion in the city. Uncontrolled parking has instigated urban transport chaos which can be salvaged through the creation of a multipurpose motor park.

Keywords: multipurpose Motor Park, urban disorder, traffic congestion, palliative, Bamenda.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Sub-Saharan African emergent cities are currently facing dense traffic movements owing to rapid population explosion and more from insufficient roads and parking space which breeds anarchy and congestion. This phenomenon is more felt in emergent cities which are generally the economic and employment hubs of their area. Such cities face rapid population growth from migration and rural exodus which pulls the unemployed population to search for greener pastures Ananya and Aihwa, (2011). This mass movement unfortunately increases the traffic flow of the emergent cities which with their incapability to contain such traffic are affected by severe congestion. Such dense traffic flows are experienced in several African cities and are responsible for the numerous congestion and delays in delivery of goods and services. This delay and congestion emanates from insufficient road network to contain the traffic demand as well as

inadequate and uncontrolled parking which is not sustainable Dorina and Dominic, (2015).

The panacea to sustainable transport parking is the creation of a multipurpose parking space which will harbour and control in and out flow of traffic movements that always provoke congestions in the heart of cities Fogwe, (2020). Such is the case of the Bamenda city which is faced by wanton traffic congestion that lasts for hours and renders movements uncomfortable. It is in furtherance to such uncomfortable conditions that this article seeks to address the disorder through the creation of a multipurpose motor park as palliative to traffic congestion in Bamenda. The paper propounds that a harmonized parking sector would not only decongest the city, but will as well maintain urban order and tranquillity.

Bamenda is located between longitude $10^{\circ}82'19''E$ and $10^{\circ}15'19''E$ and latitude $5^{\circ}57'40''N$ and $6^{\circ}01'62''N$ (Figure 1).

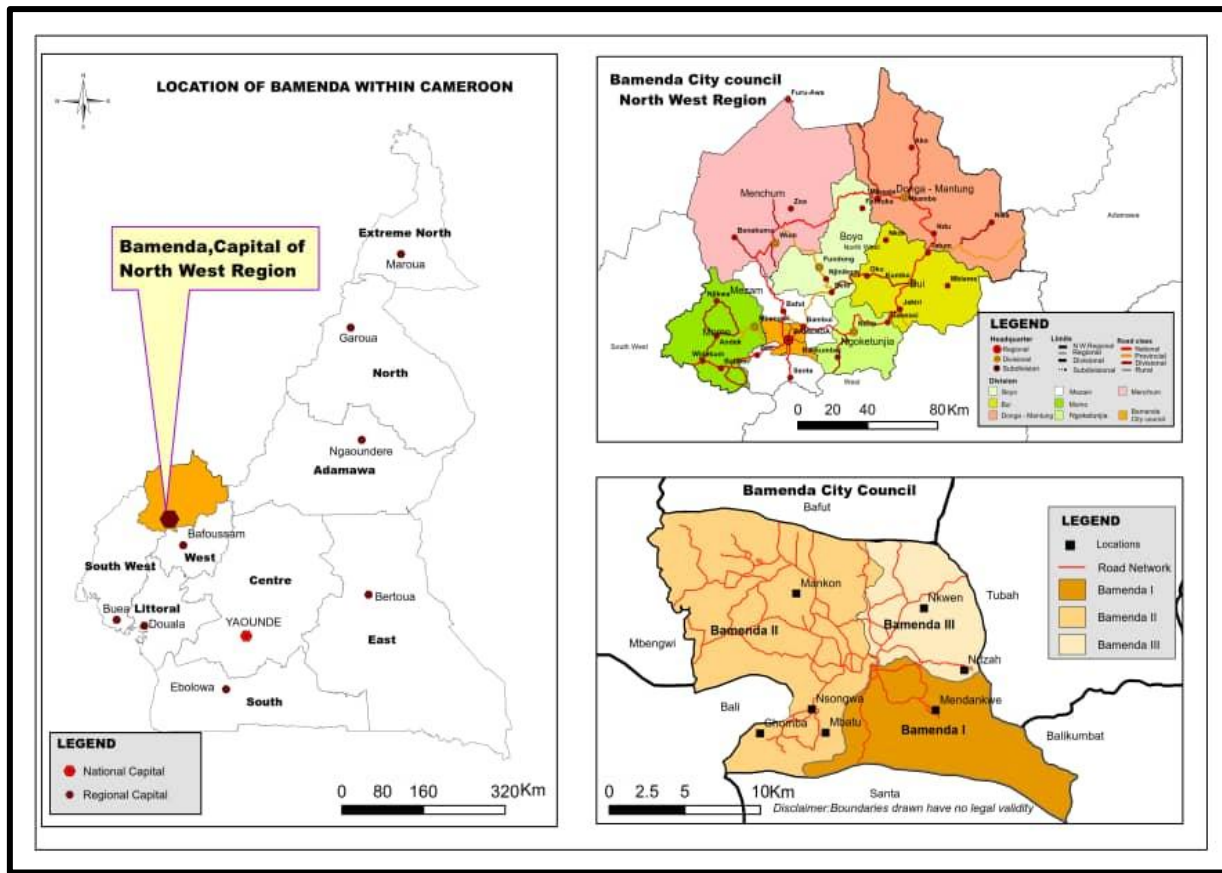


Fig-1: The Location of Bamenda in Cameroon

Source: Modified from National Institute of Cartography by Kah Elvis, 2020

Bamenda is bounded to the north by Bafut, the east by Tubah and Baikumbat, the south by Santa and the West by Mbengwi and Bali sub-divisions. It is the headquarters of the Northwest region of Cameroon and an emergent city in development.

2. LITTERATURE REVIEW

Several write-ups on traffic congestion and urban disorder have been published on cases of other countries and on Cameroon as well. Some have even dwelt on Bamenda and its traffic flow problems which have become recurrent at present. The work of Fogwe (2020), visits traffic congestion in Bamenda from the motorbike sector and raises the awareness of an immediate action to curb the situation. Since the major cause of the traffic emanates from uncontrolled parking and take-off points, a centralised motor park is therefore imperative. Moto parks are important because of the large number of people that use public transport Dorina and Dominic, (2015). Motor parks came to existence as a response to the need for central collection points of passengers and goods, commercial activities and population increase. Once created, they will promote order and accountability in the transport sector. In addition to the economic importance of Motor parks to

an area, they serve as veritable recovery points of lost items in the transport sector Fasakin, (2001). It becomes easy to track and recover a missing item if the take-off and arrival parks are centralised. These parks vary in design, nature, environment and services depending on the type created by the authorities of a city. However, for such recovery of lost items to be efficient, the transport sector in response to parking has to be controlled.

The Bamenda Motor park sector is faced with illegal parking in and around the city Kimengsi and Fogwe, (2017). The town is made up of both private and public parks which respect legal norms on one hand, and disrespect them on the other in the day to day functioning of the city. Legal parks are areas reserved for specific parking used for inter and intra transportation systems within a city as approved by the local governments and agencies Ahmed, (2013). The functioning in legality does not only maintain order but as well facility traffic flow within an area. With the recurrent traffic flow discrepancies observed in Bamenda, it is imperative a control mechanism be put in place such as a multipurpose motor park. It will reduce traffic congestion, improve on the city beauty

and contribute to maintain urban order in a city Oladipo Olubomehim, (2012). Once created, the multipurpose motor park will reduce traffic congestion at best in Bamenda and facilitate transport control of motor parks which has become a major city drawback nowadays.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data collection was done through primary and secondary sources for a qualitative and quantitative research. Within the framework of the primary data collection, some 182 questionnaires were administered randomly to the city dwellers, travel agency owners and administrative authorities for first-hand information on the need for a multipurpose motor park. In the questionnaire administration, 165 were administered to inhabitants of the three municipalities that make up Bamenda, hence 55 questionnaires each. Furthermore, 3 were administered to the Mayors of each of the three municipalities (Bamenda I, II and III), and 14 to the various private and public transport agencies in Bamenda. Field observation throughout the three municipalities that constitute the city of Bamenda was done to determine the appropriate area for the multipurpose motor park and also to capture pictures for the presentation of results and analysis. Interview sessions were carried out to confirm primary information acquired through questionnaire administration and even to confirm secondary sources of data gotten from documents. The GPS was used to capture points for mapping of existing parks in order to determine the ideal area of the proposed multipurpose one.

Within the framework of the secondary data collection, an in-depth documentary research was done to have information on the situation of the Bamenda city which has been written by varied authors with the hope to propose solutions to the new research at hand. Data collected was treated and analysed through the ArcGIS 10.0 and AutoCAD Map 3D to realise maps and diagrams for results. The Microsoft excel spread sheet was used to treat and generate tables for presentation and analyses.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results from findings propound that uncontrolled motor park mode of operation and population growth pressure has triggered the urban disorder found in Bamenda.

4.1: Motor park genesis and evolution in Bamenda from 1977 to 2020

The idea of an organised private motor park was born in Bamenda around the early 1980s by the then famous travel agency “Le Bien est Bien” at Ghana Street and “Fani Vayage” at Ghana Street entrance. These two parks together with the public motor parks were controlled by the then Bamenda Urban Council, now city council with the first ever appointed

government delegate Mr Jomia Pefok from 1977-1992. Under his leadership, several other private agencies were born such as the “Savana Express” at city Chemist Round About. These private agencies operated only with 19 seats buses and transported passengers from Bamenda to Bafoussam and Mamfe towns. As the demand for more means of transport increased, others came into play with the creation of “Amour Mezam” and “Guarantee Express Limited” in the early 1990s. Trade and business deals with other parts of the country encouraged Amour Mezam to introduce night journeys with an extension of movements to Littoral, Centre and Southwest regions of the country. Further increase in demand lead to the purchase of 70 seats buses which came into Bamenda for the first time in 1991. Currently, there are about nine private motor parks and five council motor parks in Bamenda though most of these parks function periodically because of the socio-political crisis in the English speaking regions.

It is interesting to note that these agencies operated in an uncontrolled manner dictating their own norms while violating State laws. It is in furtherance to this that in 2009, the Government Delegate passed an injunction through radio, restricting council parks in the three sub-divisional councils to tress-pass, load and off load from one sub-divisional council to another. Further, all private agencies were to be one kilometre away from public owned parks and any violation warranted a penalty of 25,000FRS, CFA. This injunction however did not stand the test of time as much pressure from population growth without any improvements in the road network quality and size led to more traffic congestion and delays. With such congestion and delays, the authorities sought for an immediate response and by 2007/2008, all travel agencies were instructed to relocate to mile 4 and up-station (Bamenda I and II) council areas. This attempt too unfortunately failed and the agencies moved back to their areas of origin, thus increasing the disorder. The illegal parks reduced the distances of passengers but increased the traffic disorder in the town, hence the need for control.

Bamenda is made up of both public and council owned and private or individual owned motor parks. They are five public motor parks distributed in the three municipalities (Table 1).

Table-1: Public or Council owned motor parks in Bamenda

Local council	Motor park area
Bamenda I	Bamendankwe motor park
Bamenda II	Muwatsu motor park Ntaturu motor park. Mbengui motor park.
Bamenda III	Mile 4 Nkwen motor park.

Source: Bamenda city council, 2020

These motor parks are owned by the local councils and the income generated from them is for their local developments. Even though owned by the local council, inertia and familiarity has provoked

disorder in these parks. They are nine owned private motor parks which can be identified in Bamenda at present (Table 2).

Table-2: Private motor parks or Travel agencies in Bamenda

Travel agency type	Motor park area
Psalms 23	Mile 3
Nso boys	Mile 4
Amour Mezam Express	Mile 2
Jeannot Express	Sonac street
Grand Jeannot Express	Sonac street
Vatican Express	Sonac street
Avenir Express	Bamendakwen Park
Guarantee Express	Big Mankon
Moghamo Express	Sonac street

Source: Bamenda city council and field work, 2020

Results from the field indicate that 63% of the travel agencies operate in the heart of the town with an increase in the number of buses. These travel agencies transport passengers from Bamenda to Yaounde,

Douala, Limbe, Kumba, Mamfe, Buea and Bafoussam towns in Cameroon mostly through the National Road No 6 highway both during the day and at night (Figure 2).



Fig-2: Examples of some travel agencies located in the heart of Bamenda city

Photo by Ndiyun, 2019

Figure 2 shows the Moghamo travel agency motor park in Sonac Street in A and that of Amour Mezam in Nkwen mile 2 in B which are all in the heart of the city. The fact that their take-off and arrival points is within the city causes much traffic congestion which is what this work seeks to address. Traffic congestion in major sub-Saharan cities is the cause of numerous delays in delivery and loss of time and money in the business world Nyambod, (2010). This has slowed-down businesses in Nigeria and has triggered the construction of roads with fly overs and tramp ways to curb the situation Oladipo Olubomehim, (2012). With the rapid increase in transport vehicles and the uncontrolled parking in Bamenda, it is necessary to concentrate the bus stops in one common area so as to

decongest the city and reduce if not stop the wanton traffic congestion observed. It is no news that the population growth rate has increased tremendously more than the road network can contain, thus the necessity for alternative majors of survival.

4.2: Population growth and pressure on the Bamenda city tranquillity

The population growth of Bamenda over the years and the pressure exerted on the urban spatial expansion of the town has contributed to the traffic congestion found. The population has progressively increased overtime for close to forty four years now (Figure 3).

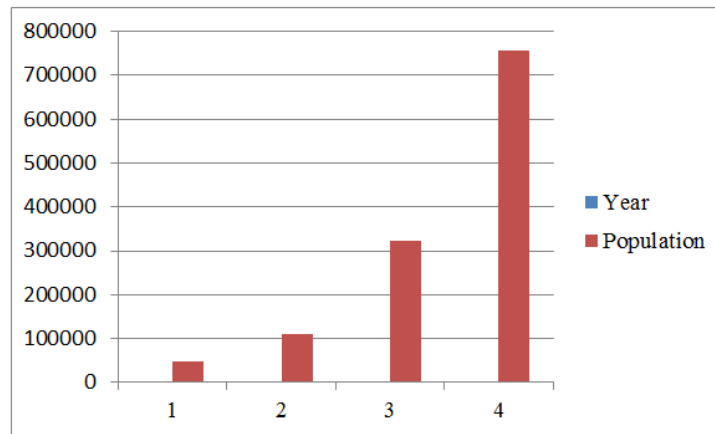


Fig-3: Population Evolution in Bamenda from 1976 to 2020

Source: BUCREP, 2005 and 2010 projections and Bamenda MASTERPLAN, 2011

The population of Bamenda has increased from 48111 inhabitants in 1976 to 755602 in 2020. This increase no doubt has increased the built-up space in the city accompanied by population settlement. As the headquarters of the North West Region of Cameroon, more than 75% of the regions activities are concentrated in Bamenda which serves as a pull factor to many. Such administrative and opportunity concentration in the headquarters has thus triggered the population increase in the town which has affected the traffic flow. Rapid population growth over slow city development and planning is one of the major causes of traffic congestion in the cities of the developing world Woods, (2010). Such is the case in Bamenda where the population growth has increased more than the available road infrastructure can contain posing a huge problem to the city planning. Since settlement has unfortunately preceded planning, provision for motor

parks was not made leading to the disorder and congestion observed. Despite State action through injunctions and restrictions of road side and inner city motor park creation, the implementation and operation leaves much to be desired. Travel agency owners are in a dilemma of respecting the law and making profit as the cycle of disorder is persisting hence, the need for a stringent solution.

Field revelation of the factor perception on the advantages of a harmonised motor park in Bamenda from travel agency owners, passengers, city dwellers and administrative authorities confirmed that it will reduce at best the urban traffic problem observed. Some 31.87% of the inhabitants adhere to the fact that traffic congestion will be reduced at best if a motor park is created out of the city centre (Table 3).

Table-3: Factor perception of a multipurpose motor park creation in Bamenda

Reasons	Respondents	Percentage
Reduction of traffic congestion	58	31.87
Gain in delivery and services time	46	25.28
Improvement on urban transport order and tranquillity	38	20.88
Amelioration of urban planning and management	26	14.28
Reduction in environmental pollution	14	7.69
Total	182	100

Source: Field work, 2020

With this creation out of the city centre, inter urban transport vehicles will drop passengers which will continue further into the city through taxi and other internal means of movement. As such, the number of vehicles that move within the inner city will be reduced, thus reducing the wanton traffic that occurs. Such strategies have been implemented in Rwanda Nsengiyera *et al.*, (2019) which has reduced traffic congestion in Kigali. It is the hope of this paper that if such a project is executed in Bamenda, then the persistent traffic congestion observed every day will be reduced at best. Furthermore, the multipurpose motor park creation will as well lead to the gain in time in

terms of delivery of goods and services performed by travellers. With a 25.28% confirmation from the respondents and interview sessions as well as field observation, the traffic flow in the city is better and advantageous when les travel agencies operate. Much time in the delivery of goods and services are gained as the passengers can easily move around the town with little or no obstacles. A multipurpose motor park in Bamenda will improve urban transport order and tranquillity of the town as accepted by some 20.88% of the respondents approached. The recurrent disorder observed from unorthodox parking along the roads and markets that block circulation for hours and the un-

authorised sprouting of motor parks around the town will be reduced. The park will help administrative authorities manage and better contain circulation in and around the city thereby having an urge over the control of the town. Aside urban order and tranquillity, urban planning and management will be ameliorated with the creation of the motor park. As such the concentration of all city functions within the centre will be decongested giving the town an ameliorated aesthetical connotation. The motor park creation out of the city centre will reduce environmental pollution to some extent. Some 7.69% of the respondents confirmed of some visible environmental improvements within the city in periods when the circulation is restricted. Uncontrolled littering, noise and air pollution is reduced on such days. This implies that if the motor park is created out of the city centre, pollution will be reduced to a greater extent. These factors and more reveal that the creation of a multipurpose motor park will improve on the development of the Bamenda city.

4.3: Multipurpose motor park creation and function in the Bamenda city

A multipurpose motor park is one which has numerous functions aside being just for arrival and take off of passengers Jean Paul (2017). It incorporates arrival and take-off points, restaurants and bars for refreshments while in a process of waiting as well as mini hotel services especially to those who arrive at late hours at night. Within the Bamenda city, such an ideal motor park is absent, reason why this paper things creating one will curb traffic in the inner city. Once the motor park is created, it will provide security since all travel buses take-off at the same time. The motor park aside reducing traffic congestion in the town will as well create employment since several people will have an opportunity to work and even do business within the park area. The creation of a multipurpose motor park with a surface area of 40,403m² will accommodate all travel agencies in Bamenda and maintain control by the authorities (Figure 4).

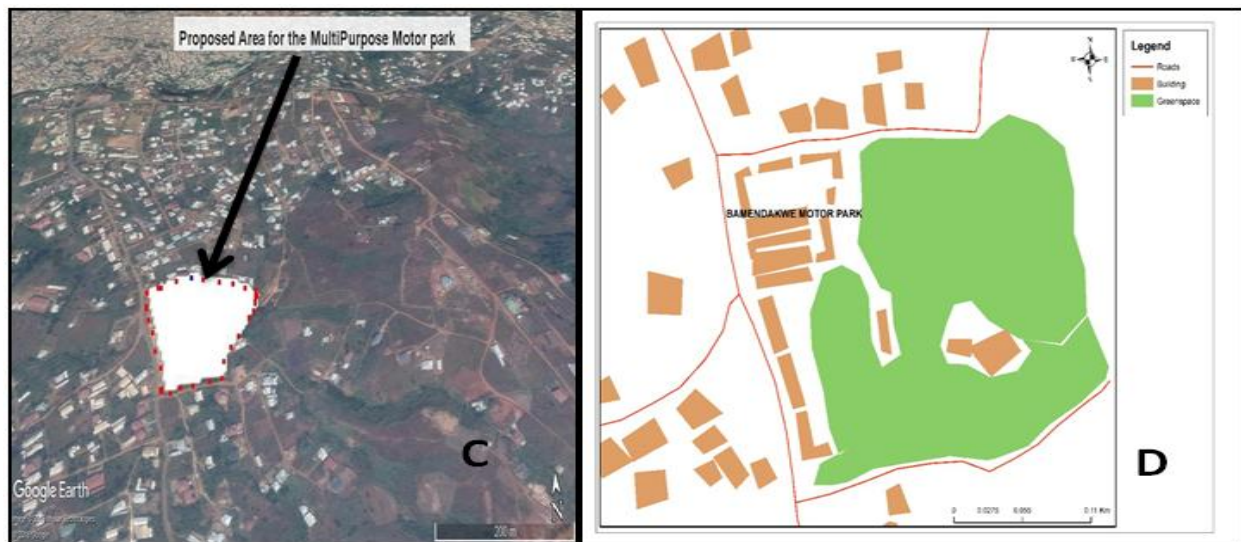


Fig-4: Proposed surface area of the Bamenda Multipurpose motor park

Source: Google earth image 2020 and field work 2021

The Bamenda 1 council with its available space around the Bamundankwe area has been shortlisted to host the park. Figure 4 shows the proposed area view of the park in C and the actual state of it in D once the proposal will be adopted and implemented by the city authorities. The multipurpose motor park will reduce the pressure on street parking and take off points and maintain city beauty as well as order. The Bamenda city which suffers from insufficient transport infrastructure and organisation will be relieved with the introduction of the multipurpose park.

5. CONCLUSION

Population pressure and the demand for advanced services in the transport sector have been

observed to be a major drawback to city planning and tranquillity in Bamenda. This paper which was aimed at introducing a multipurpose motor park as a palliative to urban transport disorder and congestion found out that it would not only decongest the city, but will re-shape the beauty and aesthetics of the town. Motor parks and their role in urban transport amelioration have proven to be one of the major sources of organised urban planning in the developed world Scottish Executive, (2003). The Bamenda urban transport parking is characterised by uncontrolled parking along streets and the proliferation of unauthorised motor parks within the heart of the city which breeds anarchy and affects traffic flow. Several attempts by the authorities to impose order with sanctions in this sector have met with stiff resistance from both the passengers and the travel agency owners.

The consequence is the numerous traffic congestion, delay in delivery and urban disorder that reigns in the city. This paper therefore uses the creation of a multipurpose motor park as one of the solutions to the urban transport problems in Bamenda. Once this park is created, it will accommodate all travel agencies in the inner city further away from the town and reduce the number of buses and vehicles that circulate in the town. With its 40,403m² surface area, the park will not only harbour travel agencies and their buses but will as well permit the operation of businesses which will create employment and improve on the economic activities of the town. The multipurpose park will be an urban planning and development tool to an emergent Bamenda metropolis in the years to come.

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